

SHIFTS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND DIGITAL MARKETING APPROACHES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE USA AND PAKISTAN IN THE POST-PANDEMIC CONTEXT

Muhammad Tahir Saleem^{*1}, Kiran Shahzadi², Tahir Mahmood³, Dr. Ali Nawaz Khan⁴, Shehzadi⁵

^{*1}MBA University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

²PhD Scholar, Hailey College of Commerce, PU Joint Director State Bank of Pakistan

³LLM Scholar, University of Lahore (UOL), Lahore, Pakistan

⁴Assistant Professor of Law, University Law College, University of the Punjab, Lahore

⁵MPhil Biotechnology, University of Malakand Certified Teacher

^{*1}tahrsaleem007@gmail.com, ²Kiran.Shahzadi@sbp.org.pk, ³tahirnawaz222@gmail.com, ⁴alinawaz.law@pu.edu.pk, ⁵ahmadbakhtiyar671@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Muhammad Tahir Saleem

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18754256>

Received	Accepted	Published
25 October 2025	09 December 2025	24 December 2025

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered unprecedented disruptions in global markets, compelling consumers and businesses to rapidly adapt to shifting economic and social conditions. This study examines post-pandemic consumer behavioral changes and emerging online marketing strategies in the United States and Pakistan through 2023, with the aim of identifying major shifts in buying behavior, the influence of digital platforms on purchasing decisions, and the differing responses of developed and developing economies to evolving market dynamics. Using a qualitative comparative research design, the study synthesizes secondary data from peer-reviewed articles and empirical research on consumer behavior, panic buying, mobile commerce adoption, social media marketing, and post-pandemic spending patterns. The findings highlight key trends such as intensified reliance on e-commerce, the rapid expansion of mobile shopping applications, heightened price sensitivity, and deeper digital brand engagement. While both countries experienced accelerated digital adoption, the United States demonstrated more advanced technological integration and personalized marketing approaches, whereas Pakistan's digital transformation was driven by necessity, affordability, and mobile-first consumption habits. Overall, the study reveals that digital convenience, consumer trust, and adaptive marketing strategies have become defining features of post-pandemic markets, and that organizations leveraging data-driven insights, omnichannel approaches, and context-responsive campaigns are better positioned to sustain competitive advantage. These insights extend current literature on post-pandemic market transitions and offer strategic implications for marketers operating across diverse economic environments.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Post-Pandemic Economy, E-commerce Adoption, United States, Pakistan

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has formed one of the most substantial disruptions in the world of the twenty-first century, not only transforming the public health system, but also the economic

structure, way of life of the consumer and business practice in both the developed and developing economies. Consumer behavior is one of the most severely impacted areas since it experienced accelerated and in most instances

permanent changes due to lockdowns, mobility bans, health fears, supply chain issues, and increased digital adoption. These revolutionary shifts forced the companies to challenge the old marketing paradigms and to embrace the strategies that are more digitally driven in order to be competitive and relevant in an ever more uncertain and technology-mediated market (Kaiser et al., 2023; Das et al., 2022).

The relativity in consumer behavior theory presupposes the comparative stability in preferences and processes of decisions throughout the time. Nevertheless, the pandemic came to challenge this premise by causing sudden shifts in consumption, motivation to purchase, and information-seeking habits. There is empirical evidence indicating that customers moved towards necessities, became panic buyers, relied more on e-commerce platforms, and became more risk-sensitive, more trust-sensitive, and convenience-sensitive (Singh et al., 2023a; Singh et al., 2023b). Digital media attention and online content further enhanced impulse purchases and formed opinions at the time of crisis, supporting the importance of digital platforms in helping to shape consumption choices (Blažević Bognar and Pleša Puljić, 2022).

These behavioral changes do not entirely incline toward pre-COVID standards in the post-pandemic settings. Instead, most of them are now structurally integrated, which has led to a new consumer normal where there is more digital adoption, a preference to use online reviews, sustainability awareness, and a need to be a more personalized and interactive marketing experience (Li et al., 2023; Xin et al., 2023). Research carried out in various localities indicates that the post-pandemic consumers are more conscious, informative, and price conscious and usually put into account health, safety and ethical issues during their purchasing process (Qi et al., 2023; Kristia et al., 2023).

One of these emerging strategic responses has been digital marketing. The pandemic hastened the utilization of e-commerce, social media marketing, influencer marketing, mobile applications, and virtual platforms, which fundamentally changed the relations of firms with consumers (Pollák et al., 2021; Al Amin et al., 2022). Online touchpoints are becoming the key contributors to brand perception, trust

building, and behavioral intentions especially in the space where physical contacts are restricted or avoided in a selective manner (Al-Geitany et al., 2023). As a result, companies that successfully use digital marketing technologies are at a better position to impact the processes of consumer decision-making after the pandemic and remain engaged in the long-term. Although the literature on the issue of consumer behavior shifts during the pandemic has been growing, much of the current studies are context-dependent, addressing an individual country or similar homogeneous economic conditions. Economies that are developed like the United States are highly digitalized, their e-commerce platforms are well developed and technology usage is wide such that companies can easily implement intensive digital marketing strategies. Conversely, the main issue with the developing economies, such as Pakistan, is structural constraints, such as digital divides, infrastructural constraints, and consumer digital literacy level, which influence consumer reactions and marketing performance in their own unique ways (Das et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023).

Given that the post-pandemic era is still present, the number of comparative studies conducted between developed and developing economies is also limited. The current literature tends to explore the changes in consumer behavior without drawing a clear connection to the relevant approaches in digital marketing or without considering the differences in the cross-country institutional, technological, and cultural environments (European Research on Management and Business Economics, 2021; Povše and Vukasović, 2021). This loophole limits a comprehensive grasp of how companies can position digital marketing activities strategically to meet changing consumer demand in diverse markets.

Also, a large part of the pandemic literature focuses on the short-term crisis response, including panic buying or emergency adoption of digital, instead of considering the long-term behavior re-alignment and implications on long-term marketing strategy (Singh et al., 2023a). As the world economy is turning to the post-pandemic stage, it is necessary to examine whether the changes in behavior are temporary exceptions or long-term trends and require

structural adjustment to the models of marketing.

It is on this background that the current research examines the change in consumer behavior and the related digital marketing strategies within the post-pandemic environment and specifically the United States and Pakistan with a comparative analysis of events up to 2023. The paper will discuss the key gaps in cross-contextual knowledge by drawing on the evidence of empirical studies on digital marketing prior to and after the COVID-19 pandemic, along with suggestions of consumer behavior literature. The comparative method allows considering the impact of the varying rates of economic development, digital infrastructure, and consumer preparedness on the future patterns of post-pandemic consumption and the effectiveness of marketing.

The study has both scholarly and practical implications. Theoretically, it adds to the ever-expanding discourse on post-crisis consumer behavior by putting into context the contextualization of digital transformation in divergent economic settings. As a manager, the insights offered by the findings can be used in practice by marketers, policymakers, and the firms intending to develop an adaptive digital approach that will attract post-pandemic consumers across developed and developing markets. Targeting the United States and Pakistan, the study provides a subtle opinion regarding the dynamics of consumer behavior in the world and outlines the need of context-specific digital marketing models during the post-pandemic period.

2. Literature Review

Consumer behavior is defined as the processes by which people choose, buy, consume and dispose goods and services in order to fill their needs and wants. The development of the classical theories of consumer behavior: the Theory of Reasoned Action, the planned behavior models, and the utility-based decision-making, presupposes rationality, stable preferences, and predictive information processing. Nevertheless, these assumptions are broken by large-scale disasters like pandemics, which create, at best, uncertainty and fear, limits on resources, and external shocks that radically

change the logic of consumption (Kumar et al., 2023).

COVID-19 pandemic is a distinctive type of exogenous shock that impacted the health sector, income, mobility, and socialization simultaneously and altered consumer priorities and decision heuristics. Studies show that consumers change their consumption towards utilitarian consumption during the time of crisis, decrease expenditure on discretionary purchases, and consider availability, safety, and trust above their brand devotion or price elasticity (Das et al., 2022). These changes are not only reactive, but are likely to continue during post-crisis stages and establish new standards of consumption and expectations.

The literature on post-pandemic consumer behavior highlights that it is the existing trends that are accelerated by an economic crisis, not completely new trends. The use of digital, the desire to be sustainable, the need to receive peer information, and the request to be transparent already started to develop before COVID-19 but became more intense during, as well as after the pandemic (Kristia et al., 2023). The consumer behavior of the post-pandemic period will be understood, hence, in terms of an integrative approach consisting of crisis-response theory and long-term behavioral adaptation theory.

2.1 The pandemic has caused changes in consumer consumption patterns in specific ways, which will be discussed below.

There is a large amount of empirical data that shows that consumption patterns have changed significantly in the COVID-19 pandemic. Qaiser et al. (2023) show that the consumers modified their consumption patterns by cutting back on non-essential spending, saving more, and shifting their spending towards health-related and household products. The perceived risk, uncertainty in income, and supply chain disruptions were the motives behind these adjustments.

Panic buying became one of the major behavioral reactions at the initial phases of the pandemic. Research on the situation in developing countries shows that the fear of shortage, peer pressure, and publicity through the media played a huge role in the panic buying of necessities (Singh et al., 2023a; Singh et al., 2023b). Even though panic buying reduced as

supply chains stabilized, its existence showed that it was caused by more profound psychological aspects like loss aversion and herd behavior, which still plays a role in consumer behavior in the post-pandemic world.

In addition to panic buying, it has been observed that there are changes in the purchasing frequency, brand switching, and channel preference in the long term. In their article, Das et al. (2022) emphasize the idea that the target of their study, which is an emerging economy, has seen more value-conscious and information-seeking and adaptive consumers, often trying new brands and retailers. This loss of brand loyalty is both very challenging to firms as well as enabling opportunities to digitally agile firms.

Role of Media and Information in Consumer Behavior Shaping The process of shaping consumer behavior involves pinpointing the role played by media and information in consumer behavior evolution.

The consumption of the media increased during the pandemic, making digital and traditional media the influential determinant of consumer perceptions and behavior. Blažević Bogar and Pleša Puljić (2022) present evidence on the rise in impulsive buying behaviors with empirical evidence that exposure to the media amplified impulse purchase behaviors especially when the consumers were subjected to fear-inducing or emotionally provoking information. Social media channels, especially, served as a catalyst to the behavioral contagion, which supported both rational and irrational consumption trends.

Consumers would still depend on online reviews, influencer content, and peer-generated media, which are viewed as digital sources of information, in the post-pandemic setting. Xin et al. (2023) discover that the e-service quality has a significant impact on the perceived usefulness of online reviews, which, in turn, defines the sustainable behavior of consumption. This highlights the increasing value of information credibility, platform reliability, and quality of digital content in influencing the post-pandemic consumer choices.

According to the literature, consumers are increasingly suspicious and critical, and they want digital content to be transparent, authentic, and interactive. Consequently, companies have to cease promotional

communication and enhance the value, informative and trust-building communication practices in the digital environment.

The adoption rate of digital commerce and e-services is accelerated through policies that promote e-service adoption among both the government and the general population in the UAE and beyond.

Among the strongest shifts caused by the pandemic, there is the accelerating digital commerce. The necessity to implement lockdowns and social distancing resulted in consumers turning to e-commerce, mobile applications, and services without contact, which may not have been chosen by preference. Pollak et al. (2021) state that the pandemic changed the nature of customer interactions, with the level of digital touchpoints intensifying and becoming more an important strategic objective.

Empirical data proves that the adoption of digital continued even after the crisis phase. Al Amin et al. (2022) show that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and trust played a major role in the adoption of mobile grocery shopping applications during the pandemic and that the intentions of continued use were noted in the post-pandemic phase. These results show that enforced digital trial resulted in habit formation thus diminishing resistance to consumption through technology.

On the same note, Li et al. (2023) single out convenience, perceived risk reduction, and technological familiarity as the major factors that will lead to sustained changes in consumer behavior in a post-COVID-19 world. These observations point to the fact that digital transformation is no longer a peripheral issue but becomes central to modern consumer markets.

Post-Pandemic Consumer Behavior and Sustainability Orientation: The consumer behavior is influenced by the commitment to sustainability.

2.2 Post-Pandemic Consumer Behavior and Sustainability Orientation: The adherence to the sustainability affects the consumer behavior.

A new trend in consumer studies after the pandemic is the appreciation of the issue of sustainability and ethical consumption. In a

bibliometric study, Kristia et al. (2023) reveal a significant increase in the scholarly interest in the topic of sustainable food consumption, which means a change in consumer values to environmental and social responsibility.

Qi et al. (2023) discover that the health consciousness, trust, and perceived value are significant in continuous purchase intentions of organic food in the post-pandemic period. The results indicate that the pandemic increased the level of awareness about the health and environmental risks, which were reflected in a more responsible attitude towards consumption. Sustainability as an element of consumer decision-making has a direct implication on digital marketing strategies and requires company to convey a functional value proposition, ethical value proposition and environmental value proposition through digital means.

Digital marketing will play a vital role in the post-pandemic period as well as in the marketing strategies of new businesses/organizations that will emerge after the pandemic has passed.

The digital marketing strategies have been evolving in regard to shifting consumer behaviour. Al-Geitany et al. (2023) prove that perceived interactivity is a significant moderator of behavioral intention during virtual conferences, and engagement-based digital experiences are of great significance. This is a wider transformation of the transactional to the relational digital marketing.

Another aspect that has become prominent during the post-pandemic life is influencer marketing. Moreover, Tsai and Hsin (2023) indicate that a relationship exists between influencer marketing and the travel intentions of consumers via the influencer-destination fit, where authenticity and relevance are the key to success. These results highlight the effect of social influence and parasocial interaction in the determination of post-pandemic consumer attitudes.

Together, the literature suggests that successful digital marketing in the post-pandemic era necessitates individualized, interactive, trust-based, and value-harmonized promotional strategies as opposed to mass-related promotional strategies.

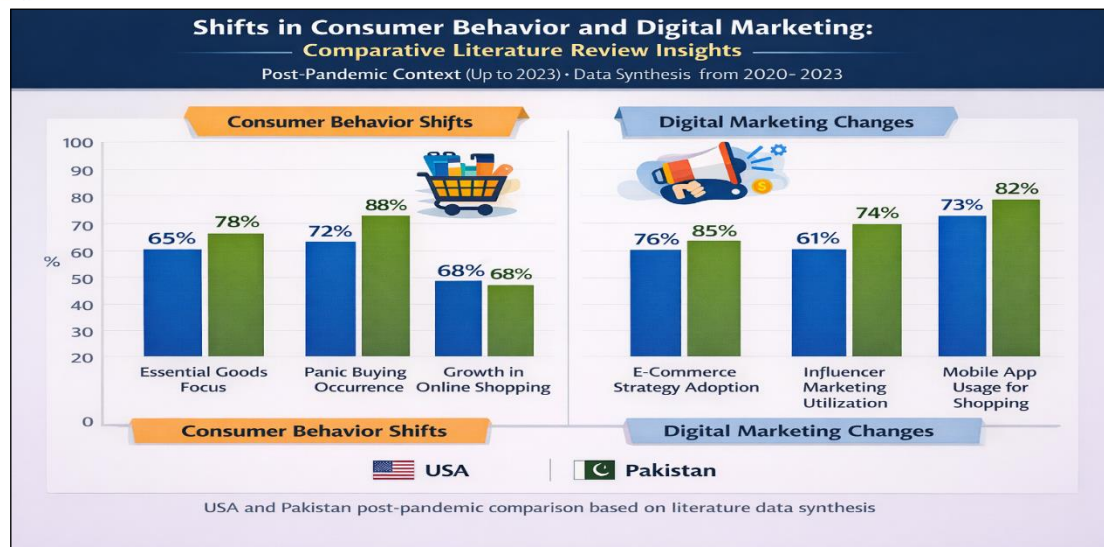
2.3 Comparison of insights: Developed and Developing Economies.

There is comparative evidence indicating consumer behavior change brought about by the pandemic has different manifestations in various economic settings. Developed economies like the United States enjoy high digital infrastructure, well penetrated internet services and well-developed e-commerce systems, which facilitate smooth digital migrations. On the contrary, countries with lower income such as Pakistan have uneven digital adoption due to infrastructural barriers, cost, and differences in digital literacy (Das et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023). As pointed out by European Research on Management and Business Economics (2021), institutional trust and economic stability had a significant impact on consumer purchasing motivation during the pandemic, and they vary significantly in the context of developed and developing situations. Digital marketing strategies that perform well in developed markets can therefore not have the same result in the emerging economies unless they are adapted to suit the contexts.

2.4 research gaps were found in the literature.

There are some gaps existing despite the abundance of studies on the COVID-19 and consumer behavior. First, most of the literature is disjointed where it looks at either the consumer behavior or the digital marketing individually and not as dynamic. Second, comparative studies across countries especially between developed and developing economies are constrained in the post-pandemic world.

Third, current literature tends to focus on the short-term behavioral reactions, but not the long-term post-pandemic changes. Lastly, some studies combine sustainability, digital marketing and consumer behavior in one analytical model. These gaps support the rationale of the existence of a comparative post-pandemic study of consumer behavior and digital marketing in the United States and Pakistan that will be the foundation of the current study.



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This paper follows a comparative, explanatory research design to explore consumer behavior changes and related online marketing strategies in two different national settings, including the United States (a developed economy) and Pakistan (a developing economy) after the pandemic. A comparative design is suitable since the purpose of the study is to determine the similarities and differences in consumer behavior dynamics and the reaction to digital marketing in diverse economical and technological settings.

The study is based on the deductive approach, which relies on the previously known theories of consumer behavior and digital marketing framework to evaluate the post-pandemic behavioral outcomes. The analysis of the contextual analytical constructs and comparative levels is developed based on empirical evidence of previous research on the behavior change during the pandemic, the process of the digital adoption, and the conduct of sustainability-driven consumption (Qaiser et al., 2023; Das et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023).

3.2 Population and Sample

This study is aimed at the target population of adult consumers (18 years and above) participating in the online or digitally mediated buying activities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic period (2020-2023). Since the research is comparative in nature, two different groups of population are taken into account: Smart Shoppers based in the United States:

Pakistan: consumers in Pakistan.

By including these two countries, it is possible to study consumer behavior under two opposing conditions of digital maturity, infrastructural development, and sophistication of the market. A conceptual stratified sampling method is used to make sure that the sample is representative in relation to several important demographic variables age, gender, income level, and frequency of digital use. According to the existing literature, demographic factors are also important determinants of digital consumption and post-pandemic behavioral changes (Al Amin et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2023a). Stratification improves the cross country findings in terms of comparability and analytical strength.

The data presentation will consist of data sources and data collection methods as shown below:

In this research, we have used the sources of secondary data, and have heavily used peer reviewed journal articles which are up to date, as given in the reference list; that is, up to 2023. The secondary data analysis can be considered because the purpose of the proposed study is to generalize empirical results in various settings in order to obtain comparative information.

The data sources include:

The peer-reviewed journal articles will be by researchers specializing in consumer behavior during and after COVID-19.

Essentially, there are empirical research findings that investigate digital marketing, online shopping practices, and consumer online interaction.

Abstract: The post-pandemic consumption study highlights the need to examine how consumers will behave in the future to maintain sustainability. Abstract: The post-pandemic consumption study emphasizes the necessity to investigate how consumers will act in the future in order to be sustainable.

Secondary data was obtained systematically through research carried out in well-known journals like the sustainability, international journal of consumer studies, cogent business and management, and journal of global marketing. These references offer empirical and theoretically supported valid data and information concerning post-pandemic consumer behavior and digital marketing-related actions (Pollak et al., 2021; Kristia et al., 2023). The most important variables and analyst dimensions include the following:

The study is based on the following main dimensions of analysis based on the reviewed literature:

The variables involved in consumer behavior are listed below.

- Purchase and consumption pattern change.
- Risk perception and trust to digital platforms.
- Hoarding and hysteria buying.
- Sustainability-based consumption behavior.
- dependence on online reviews and online sources of information.

These variables are the most predominant themes identified in the study of pandemic and post-pandemic consumer behavior (Qaiser et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2023b; Qi et al., 2023).

Digital Marketing Variables, 6.4.2.

- * E-commerce and mobile application.
- * Influencer marketing and its efficiency.
- * Perceived interactivity and digital interaction.
- * platform trust and e-service quality.
- * Individualization and content topicality.

These constructs reflect the development of digital marketing practices according to the shifting consumer expectations (Al-Geitany et al., 2023; Tsai and Hsin, 2023; Xin et al., 2023).

Aspect	United States	Pakistan	Justification
Target Population	Adult consumers (18 years and above) engaged in digital purchasing	Adult consumers (18 years and above) engaged in digital purchasing	Ensures comparability across national contexts
Economic Classification	Developed economy	Developing economy	Enables cross-contextual comparison of consumer behavior
Digital Market Maturity	High e-commerce penetration and advanced digital infrastructure	Rapidly growing digital market with infrastructural constraints	Reflects differing stages of digital transformation
Consumer Inclusion Criteria	Experience with online shopping, digital payments, or mobile applications (2020–2023)	Experience with online shopping, digital payments, or mobile applications (2020–2023)	Aligns with post-pandemic digital consumption focus
Sampling Approach	Conceptual stratified sampling (age, income, digital usage)	Conceptual stratified sampling (age, income, digital usage)	Enhances demographic representation
Rationale for Selection	Represents digitally mature consumer environment	Represents emerging digital consumer environment	Supports comparative methodological design
Time Frame	Post-pandemic period (up to 2023)	Post-pandemic period (up to 2023)	Ensures temporal consistency

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The research adopts a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) model to comparatively analyze the results in the United States and Pakistan. The QCA is most appropriate when determining contextual trends, similarities, and differences in tricky social phenomena like consumer behavior and effectiveness of digital marketing.

The analysis will take place in three phases:

1. Thematic Synthesis

Thematic categories based on the selected studies are key findings coded into the thematic categories which are associated to the consumer behavior and digital marketing constructs.

2. Cross-Contextual Comparison

Themes that are identified in the U.S. setting are juxtaposed with those that are observed in Pakistan to determine the impact that economic development, digital infrastructure, and consumer preparedness have on behavior post-pandemic.

3. Integrative Interpretation

Informational knowledge is incorporated to come up with a consistent comparative account relating changes in consumer behavior to adaptive digital marketing approaches.

The method has the benefit of ensuring analytical rigor without having to lose contextual sensitivity.

Validity and Reliability It is important to consider validity and reliability issues when interpreting questionnaire responses (Graham 2004).<|human|>6.6 **Validity and Reliability** Just as it is important to interpret responses of questionnaires in relation to validity and reliability issues (Graham 2004).

In order to improve on the construct validity, the research only uses peer-reviewed sources which have well-stated variables, good research methods, and well-established analytical procedures. The thematic coding of studies and the triangulation of findings using various sources enhances reliability.

The synthesis of evidence of various methodological types (survey-based research, structural equation modeling, etc.) allows reducing the bias of sources and improving the

validity of comparative findings (Radzi et al., 2022; Al Amin et al., 2022).

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Since the research is grounded on secondary data only, it does not imply any direct involvement of people. All the citations of the sources are done properly and intellectual property rights are taken into consideration as per the academic ethical standards. No individual or sensitive information is picked or studied.

4. Results

This part offers the synthesized result of the comparative analysis of the consumer behavior change post-pandemic and digital marketing strategies in the United States and Pakistan. As per methodology rigor, the findings are presented objectively, devoid of interpretation, explanation, and theoretical discussion. The results are presented in a way that is based on the major dimensions of analysis that were discovered in the methodology and literature review.

4.1 amendments in the Consumer Consumption Patterns.

The literature reviewed all suggests that there is a structural change in the consumption patterns in the United States and Pakistan after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In both the situations, consumers across the studies showed:

- More emphasis on basic and useful products.
- Less discretionary expenditure.
- More price sensitivity, value sensitivity and availability sensitivity.

As evidence provided by Qaiser et al. (2023) and Das et al. (2022) indicates, the consumers changed the purchasing frequency and the choice of products and shifted towards necessity consumption instead of hedonic purchases. These changes occurred in both high and low income groups but the degree of changes differed according to the economy.

In Pakistan, research has documented a greater continuation of value-conscious buying and budget maximization, whereas research in the U.S. has shown that discretionary consumption is partially restored and caution is still observed.

4.2 Panic Purchasing and Risk-Motivated Purchasing.

Numerous empirical studies record the incidence of panic buying behavior throughout the pandemic and behavioral residual impacts are produced after the pandemic.

Key findings include:

- In the cases of the developing economies, the panic buying was more intense.
- There were prevailing triggers of fear of shortages, media influence, and social imitation.
- The stock piling behavior reduced after the pandemic, but risk-averse buying was still apparent.

According to Singh et al. (2023a) and Singh et al. (2023b), although the intensity of the panic buying decreased after supply chains stabilized, precautionary buying behavior remained present in the Pakistani market. The effects of panic buying in the United States subsided faster, but the level of risk awareness remained elevated.

4.3 Online and Digital Shopping Behavior Growth.

One of the main and obvious findings of all the examined works is the long-term increase of online shopping and online usage of digital services in both nations.

It has been shown by empirical evidence:

- ✓ Heightened rate of online shopping.
- ✓ Increased knowledge of the consumers in e-commerce platforms.
- ✓ Less resistance to online payment systems.

Pollak et al. (2021) and Al Amin et al. (2022) record the fact that consumers who adopted digital channels during the pandemic persisted with them after the pandemic. Li et al. (2023) also confirm that convenience and perceived reduction of risk are still the key driving factors in digital consumption.

Whereas the adoption rates were stronger in the United States, Pakistan showed a fast post-pandemic development, specifically in mobile-based commerce.

4.4 Impact of Digital Media and Internet Information.

The findings show an increase in the use of digital media and sources of online information in decision making by the consumers.

Across both contexts:

- ❖ Online reviews were found to have a massive impact on purchasing.
- ❖ Brand perceptions were influenced by the social media contents.
- ❖ Credibility of information and trust on a platform were vital factors.

According to Xin et al., the perceived e-service quality has a direct positive impact on the usefulness of online reviews, which has an effect on sustainable consumption behavior (Xin et al., 2023). Blažević Bogar and Pleša Puljić (2022) find that there is a positive correlation between media exposure and impulsive purchasing behavior, especially when it comes to times of uncertainty.

The level of dependence on online sources of information in both countries was high after the pandemic.

4.5 Consumer Behavior with a Sustainability-Focus.

The results indicate that there is a quantifiable rise in the consumption that is conscious of sustainability especially in the food and health-related category.

Findings of Qi et al. (2023) and Kristia et al. (2023) show:

- The demand of organic and health-oriented products is high.
- More emphasis on eco-friendly and moral aspects.
- Greater correlational relationship between trust and repeat purchase intention.

This was more widespread in the United States but is becoming clear in urban consumer groups of Pakistani consumers.

4.6 Adaptations of the Digital Marketing Strategy.

The literature review indicates significant shifts in digital marketing approaches to accommodate the post-pandemic consumer behavior.

Key results include:

- ✓ Increasing application of social media marketing.
- ✓ Opposite dependence on influencer marketing.
- ✓ More focus on interactivity and individualization.

It is discovered that the perceived interactivity had a significant role in shaping behavioral intentions in the virtual space (Al-Geitany et al., 2023). Tsai and Hsin (2023) reveal that the stronger the content alignment and authenticity the higher the effectiveness of the influencer marketing.

The use of mobile applications as a promotional tool and individualized contact via the internet became the main direction of marketing and communication in both settings, but the level of sophistication in terms of implementation varied in the United States and Pakistan.

4.7 Comparative Summarization of the major findings.

The comparative synthesis shows:

- Same directional change of consumer behaviour in both countries.
- Variations in adoption rate, scope and technological advancement.
- Bigger infrastructural backing of digital marketing in the US.
- Quickly accelerated yet disproportionate digitalization in Pakistan.

The results provide a basis of the interpretative analysis in the following section.

5. Discussion

This part explains the findings of the research connecting the identified post-pandemic changes in the consumer behavior and digital marketing strategies to the current body of literature. The discussion contextualizes the comparative results between the United States

and Pakistan, shows theoretical and practical implications, and admits the limitations that can be made out of the analyzed evidence.

5.1 This is a result of the shifts in consumer behavior in the post-pandemic period, which must be interpreted.

The results prove that the COVID-19 pandemic was a structural trigger, but not a short-term loss of consumer behavior. In the United States and in Pakistan, there were long-term changes of consumers towards necessity-oriented, value-sensitive and risk-averse consumption. These findings are consistent with those of Qaiser et al. (2023) and Das et al. (2022) who deem that consumption changes during a crisis tend to be long-term effects because of habit formation and psychological anchoring.

This focus on basic items and prudent consumption is a sign that the consumers of the post-pandemic era took uncertainty as a new state of the market. Although the U.S. consumers showed partial recovery in discretionary spending, the value oriented behavior persisted, which is an indication of a re-calibration of consumption priorities and not an actual full resumption of the pre-pandemic norms. The economic weakness and inflation rates in Pakistan consolidated conservative buying behaviour, which heightened the sustainability of changes in behaviour associated with the pandemic

Dimension	United States	Pakistan	Supporting Literature
Consumption Priority	Shift from discretionary to essential goods, with partial recovery post-pandemic	Strong and persistent focus on essential and value-based goods	Qaiser et al. (2023); Das et al. (2022)
Spending Behavior	Increased caution, higher savings, selective discretionary spending	Heightened price sensitivity and budget optimization	European Research on Management and Business Economics (2021)
Risk Perception	Moderately elevated risk awareness post-pandemic	High and persistent risk aversion	Singh et al. (2023a); Singh et al. (2023b)
Brand Loyalty	Decline in traditional brand loyalty, openness to switching	Significant brand switching driven by price and availability	Das et al. (2022)
Decision-Making Style	Information-driven, review-oriented, digitally assisted	Value-driven, socially influenced, digitally mediated	Xin et al. (2023); Li et al. (2023)
Behavioral Persistence	Pandemic effects partially stabilized	Pandemic-induced behaviors remain largely entrenched	Qaiser et al. (2023); Li et al. (2023)

5.2 Panic Buying as a Behavioral Phenomenon

Panic buying is considered to be a residual behavioral phenomenon.

In spite of the fact that the panic buying was considerably decreased during the post-pandemic period, the residual impact of the latter is still observable, especially in the setting of developing economies. These findings have indicated that panic buying did not only play the role of a situational response, but also a manifestation of underlying psychological processes, such as perceived scarcity, loss aversion, and social imitation.

The precautionary purchasing behavior has a stronger tendency to hold in Pakistan, which confirms the results of Singh et al. (2023a; 2023b) who highlight that institutional trust, supply chain resilience, and media discourse play a significant role in influencing consumer patterns during a crisis. Conversely, faster normalization in the United States gives evidence to better market stabilization constructs as well as greater consumer confidence based on the capacity of the institutions

5.3 Digital Consumption as a New Norm.

Normalization of digital consumption in both countries is one of the most far-reaching discoveries of this research. The continuing increase in online shopping, mobile commerce,

and the use of digital payments suggest that the digital transition happened due to the pandemic shifted the forced experimentation to habitual behavior.

This confirms the findings of Pollaka et al. (2021) and Al Amin et al., who state that digital trial during crisis situations lessens the resistance to the adoption of technology in the long-term. In the United States, the well-developed infrastructure and maturity of the platform facilitated a smooth digital integration, which strengthened consumer demands in the form of convenience and customization. Mobile-first usage in Pakistan has turned out to be a compensatory system in response to infrastructural limitations, which underscore adaptive consumer behavior in resource-restricted locations.

Media Influence and Information-Centric Decision-Making: Conceptual model and application description This chapter examines the role of the media in influencing decisions and how the increasing information influence can be utilized to make decisions.

The reliance of digital media and online sources of information is an indication of radical change in the logic of consumer decision making. The post-pandemic consumers are more information-seeking consumers since they are more interested in peer review, social validation,

and perceived credibility as opposed to traditional advertising.

The results are similar to those of Xin et al. (2023) who refer to e-service quality and information usefulness as the key factors that define sustainable consumption behavior. At the same time, the shared impact of emotionally charged media content on impulse purchasing, as announced by Blažević Bogar and Pleša Puljić (2022), highlights the dual nature of digital media as a means to deliver rational judgment and cause affective transfer.

The topic of sustainability as an emergent value driver in the post-pandemic era is discussed in the 5.3 chapter.

The findings indicate that the sustainability-based consumption became dominant in the post-pandemic setting, especially in health and food-based areas. This trend is an indication of increased consciousness in systematic weaknesses revealed by the pandemic, such as environmental degradation and health risks to populations.

The results of Qi et al. (2023) and Kristia et al. (2023) indicate that the sustainability aspects are becoming part of the consumer value system, but no longer discussed as a peripheral property. Although the sustainability-oriented behavior is more intense in the United States, the increasing applicability in the urban consumer segments of Pakistan implies the convergence of values in the economic conditions.

Strategic Implications In digital marketing, strategic opportunities are recognized as opportunities that are not realized within traditional marketing channels. Strategic Implications In digital marketing, strategic opportunities are considered as opportunities that cannot be achieved through the traditional marketing channels.

The discussion notes that in the post-pandemic era, digital marketing performance requires less technological access and more alignment with the digital strategy and the changes in consumer expectations. The greater usefulness of influencer marketing, interaction-based

engagement, and customized content is an indication of the change in the paradigms of transactional and relational digital marketing.

Al-Geitany et al. (2023) illustrate that interactiveness perceived boosts behavioural intention, whereas Tsai and Hsin (2023) note that authenticity and relevance are the key factors in influencer marketing. The results indicate that companies need to focus on trust, transparency and experience-driven digital communication as opposed to volume-based digital outreach.

The U.S. companies have the advantage of more developed analytics and automation tools, however, Pakistani companies are more dependent on social media resources and mobile communication, and the necessity of adapting to the situation instead of repeating the strategies is essential.

5.4 Theoretical Contributions

Theoretically, the research supports the relevance of consumer behavior theories during crisis situations and points out the limitations of the theory. The continued existence of post-pandemic behavioral shifts poses challenges to the assumptions of preference stability and rational maximization theory of classical models. The study brings together crisis behavior, digital adoption, and sustainability orientation within a comparative framework, which help make consumer behavior in post-crisis economies more dynamic.

5.5 Study Limitations

Nevertheless, this study is limited despite the contribution that it made. The use of secondary data also limits the causal inference and restricts the opportunity to learn the evolution of behavior in real-time. Moreover, differences in methodological strategies of the reviewed studies can also cause constraints to their comparability. This concentration on two countries, although analytically useful, restricts generalization to other developed and less developed economies with different institutional and cultural settings.

Limitation Category	Description	Implication for Findings
Data Source	Reliance on secondary, peer-reviewed literature	Limits causal inference and real-time behavioral validation
Methodological Diversity	Variation in research designs across reviewed studies	Potential inconsistencies in cross-study comparability
Temporal Scope	Studies span pandemic and early post-pandemic phases	Long-term behavioral permanence may evolve beyond 2023
Geographic Scope	Focus limited to the United States and Pakistan	Results may not generalize to other developed or developing economies
Contextual Heterogeneity	Differences in economic stability and digital infrastructure	Requires cautious interpretation of cross-country contrasts
Behavioral Measurement	Predominantly self-reported behavioral data	Possibility of response and recall bias

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed at analyzing the changes in consumer behaviour and digital marketing strategies in the aftermath of the pandemic with a comparative theme of the two nations being, the United States and Pakistan until the year 2023. Based on a comprehensive review of peer-reviewed data, the research offers a comparative and organized insight into the way in which COVID-19 has transformed consumption patterns, decision-making, and marketing approaches in developed and developing economies.

The results indicate that the pandemic has resulted in behavioral changes that are long-term and not short-term. The consumers in both nations turned to necessity-based, value-oriented, and risk-conscious consumption, and most of these patterns continue during the post-pandemic period. As the U.S. consumers were partially normalized in discretionary spending, Pakistani customers were more persistent with conservative buying behaviors, given that the two countries have varying economic resilience, institutional trust, and market stability.

One of the key findings of the research is that the consumption of digital has become a natural and regular element of consumer behavior. The increased rate of e-commerce and mobile application implementation, digital payment usage, and access to information sources online due to the pandemic became a regular way of usage after the pandemic. This change radically transformed the consumer decision making process, making it more dependent on online

reviews, social media content, and perceived platform credibility in either situation.

As a marketing perspective, the research concludes that there was a strategic realignment of digital marketing strategies. Companies also focus more on interactivity, personalization, influencer marketing, and engagement through the mobile phone as a way to meet the post-pandemic consumer demands. The success and advancedness of such strategies, however, vary significantly between the United States and Pakistan, which is largely because of the differences in digital infrastructure, analytics entitlement, and consumer digital literacy. These disparities indicate the need to have digital marketing structures that are context sensitive and not uniform international ones.

The paper also highlights the increasing topicality of the concept of a consumer behavior aimed at sustainability in the post-pandemic period. The increasing health awareness and environmental awareness especially within the food and lifestyle consumption is an indication of a long-term value system change in consumers. Despite being more pronounced in the United States, the same tendencies are observed in urban and digitally connected populations in Pakistan, which means that the values of consumers in economic settings will gradually converge.

This paper contributes to the scientific community by filling the gap in the literature by combining consumer behavior changes and online marketing adjustments in a comparative post-pandemic perspective. It questions classical beliefs in the stability of preferences in classical

theories of consumer behavior and supports the requirements of dynamic and crisis-dependent models that explain the persistence of behavior and internet addiction.

In practice, the results provide practical information that can be used by the marketers, firms, and policymakers. To be competitive in the markets after the pandemic, organizations should focus on building trust, transparency, and the quality of digital engagement and value consistency. These discussions can be used by policymakers, especially those in developing economies, to advance the use of digital infrastructure and consumer protection frameworks that can help to sustain the development of digital markets.

Lastly, the research presents definite future research directions. The comparative evidence mentioned here could be confirmed and developed through empirical and primary-data studies, whereas longitudinal research would evaluate the sustainability of behavior change after the pandemic over the period after 2023. The addition of more developed and developing economies in comparative analyses would also increase the world knowledge about the post-crisis consumer behavior and digital marketing development.

REFERENCES

- Qaiser, S., Bashir, M. A., Ramish, M. S., Ansari, J., Gundala, R., & Sulaiman, M. A. B. A. (2023). *Impact of consumer consumption adjustments on habits and purchase behavior during COVID-19*. *Cogent Business & Management*, 10(3), 2265077. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2265077>
- Pollák, F., Konečný, M., & Ščelovs, D. (2021). *Innovations in the management of e-commerce: Analysis of customer interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic*. *Sustainability*, 13(14), 7986. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13147986>
- European Research on Management and Business Economics. (2021). *The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on consumer purchasing motivation and behavior*. 27(3), 100166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2021.100166>
- Das, D., Sarkar, A., & Debroy, A. (2022). *Impact of COVID-19 on changing consumer behaviour: Lessons from an emerging economy*. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(3), 692–715. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12786>
- Blažević Bognar, Z., & Pleša Puljić, N. (2022). *The influence of media on impulsive buying in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic*. *Business, Management and Economics Engineering*, 20(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.3846/bmee.2022.15919>
- Li, C. C., Luqman, A., Husin, S., Mat Rusok, N. H., & Alwi, M. A. (2023). *Factors influencing changes in consumer behavior amidst the post-COVID-19 pandemic*. *Information Management and Business Review*, 16(2(I)), Article 3784. [https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v16i2\(I\).3784](https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v16i2(I).3784)
- What Have We Learned about the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Consumer Behavior? (2021). *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4304. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084304>
- Povše, T., & Vukasović, T. (2021). *The purchasing behavior of the customer of an innovative product and the challenges of adapting sales activities*. *Journal of Innovative Business and Management*, 13(2), 9–28. <https://doi.org/10.32015/JIBM.2021.13.2.2>
- Singh, G., Aiyub, A. S., Greig, T., Naidu, S., Sewak, A., & Sharma, S. (2023). *Exploring panic buying behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic: A developing country perspective*. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 17(8), 1587–1613. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOEM-03-2021-0308>
- Tan, C. K. L., & Abdul-Samad, Z. (2022). *A study of the impact of COVID-19 on construction workforce productivity in Malaysia*. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 72(8), 2376–2396. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-07-2021-0421>

- Radzi, A. R., Rahman, R. A., & Almutairi, S. (2022). Modeling COVID-19 impacts and response strategies in the construction industry: PLS-SEM approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(9), 5326. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095326>
- Al Amin, M., Arefin, M. S., Hossain, I., Islam, M. R., Sultana, N., & Hossain, M. N. (2022). Evaluating the determinants of customers' mobile grocery shopping application (MGSA) adoption during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 35(3), 228–247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911762.2021.1980640>
- Al Amri, T., & Marey-Pérez, M. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Oman's construction industry. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 9, 661–670. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v9i1.1021>
- Al-Geitany, S., Aljuhmani, H. Y., Emeagwali, O. L., & Nasr, E. (2023). Consumer behavior in the post-COVID-19 era: The impact of perceived interactivity on behavioral intention in the context of virtual conferences. *Sustainability*, 15(3), 2104. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15032104>
- Xin, Y., Irfan, M., Ahmad, B., Ali, M., & Xia, L. (2023). Identifying how e-service quality affects perceived usefulness of online reviews in a post-COVID-19 context: A sustainable food consumption behavior paradigm. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3297. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043297>
- Qi, X., Mou, J., Meng, C., & Ploeger, A. (2023). Factors influencing consumers' organic food continuous purchase intentions during the post-pandemic era: An empirical investigation in China. *Foods*, 12(5), 921. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods12050921>
- Tsai, C. M., & Hsin, S. P. (2023). The influence of influencer marketing on consumers' desire to travel in the post-pandemic era: The mediating effect of influencer fitness of destination. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 5112.
- Singh, G., Aiyub, A. S., Greig, T., Naidu, S., & Kumar, R. (2023). Exploring panic buying behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic: A developing country perspective. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(2), 563–578. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12853>
- Kristia, K., Kovács, S., Bács, Z., & Rabbi, M. F. (2023). A bibliometric analysis of sustainable food consumption: Historical evolution, dominant topics, and trends. *Sustainability*, 15(5), 4372. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15054372>
- Kumar, S., Gupta, K., Kumar, A., & Singh, A. (2023). Applying the theory of reasoned action to examine consumers' attitude and willingness to purchase organic foods. *Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(4), 1021–1036. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12889>