

The effects of e-marketing orientation on strategic business performance

e-Marketing
orientation
on SBP

Mediating role of e-trust

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Zahid Yousaf

Department of Management Sciences, Hazara University, Mansehra, Pakistan

Noor Sahar

Government College of Management Sciences, Mansehra, Pakistan

Abdul Majid

*Department of Management Sciences,
Hazara University, Mansehra, Pakistan, and*

Amajad Rafiq

Directorate of Commerce and Education, Peshawar, Pakistan

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of e-marketing orientation (EMO) on strategic business performance (SBP) in presence of e-trust.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from CEOs, finance managers, IT managers, Policy makers, owners and Managing Directors of SMEs located in two big cities of Pakistan (Islamabad and Peshawar). Correlation, regression and bootstrap analysis was conducted to check the relationship among independent, mediating and dependent variables.

Findings – Based on empirical findings of the responses from managerial staff, it is suggested that strategic performance largely depends on EMO and e-trust.

Research limitations/implications – The authors recommend that further studies are required to test the propositions in longitudinal research design for achieving in-depth insights.

Practical implications – It has been observed that SMEs in developing countries pay less attention toward its strategic goals. This research discusses an implementation approach based on solid theoretical foundations to achieve the SBP.

Originality/value – This study tests e-trust as a mediator between EMO and SBP, therefore, makes a significant contribution to the literature of SMEs by focusing on the link between EMO, e-trust and SBP.

Keywords Pakistan, SMEs, e-Marketing orientation, e-Trust, Strategic business performance

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

e-Marketing orientation (EMO) is attaining scholarly attention around the globe and is an outcome of technological advancement (Mutlu and Sürer, 2016). Several studies have discussed the use of EMO that will enhance firm performance in terms of competitiveness (Baloglu and Pekcan, 2006), financial performance (Ciunova-Shuleska *et al.*, 2016), market share and growth (Atkinson *et al.*, 1997) but still there are unseen aspects of EMO for establishing superior performance. In the last few years, researchers have explored how to enhance strategic business performance (SBP) and prior studies have found some factors affecting SBP including, organizational flexibility, organizational networks (Yousaf and Majid, 2018), strategic alignment (Chenhall, 2005), internet (Camagni and Capello, 2005) and inter-firm network (Yousaf and Majid, 2016). Nevertheless, relationships of SBP have rarely been discussed with EMO.

Not alone SBP but few more benefits are linked with EMO. Another benefit of EMO is related to e-trust. However, most of previous conceptualizations are confined to explore role



of EMO in enhancing e-trust, i.e. EMO practices like e-WOM (Filieri, 2015), security and privacy in online transaction (Miyazaki and Fernandez, 2001), quick response to queries and complaints, customer oriented marketing strategies and after sale services, facilitate to develop customer e-trust (Hongyoun Hahn and Kim, 2009). But, no comprehensible research is carried out to check the interplay among EMO, e-trust and SBP, especially the mediating role of e-trust

The significant academia attention to growing e-marketing role for overall business performance is still limited regarding EMO opportunities for development of SME sector. Given a lack of research on SME sector in the light of EMO and e-trust for gaining SBP can justify our research model. As in today's business world, SMEs have become key contributor for economic development of country unambiguously (Yousaf and Majid, 2016). The slogan of SBP can assist SMEs to be more competitive and productive, by making them able to respond quickly and efficiently to customers' demands, changing market trends and competitors' strategies (Yousaf and Majid, 2018). So considering primary importance of SBP, number of researchers are conducting to explore how SBP can be achieved by SMEs (Yousaf and Majid, 2016; Guo and Cao, 2014). But, the literature available on SMEs in perspective of Pakistan is very limited. As Pakistan is developing country and SME sector advancement and progress can be very helpful in overcoming economic issues (Yousaf and Majid, 2017). Here, we point out a research gap, to explore SMEs in Pakistan, which can benefit Pakistan as well as other developing countries of world.

This paper aims to develop the SBP model for SMEs through EMO and e-trust (See Figure 1). In present time, online business practice is still in its early stage in developing countries, such as Pakistan. Nonetheless, the internet has become a significant and immense platform for almost all types of business. Likewise, e-marketing develops as one of the most powerful and essential tools for businesses. In developing countries, such as Pakistan, there is a high potential for SME industry to utilize the perks of online business and e-marketing to grow this industry. According to this study, e-marketing effectively influences thoughts and purchasing decisions of customers, which in result produce positive (negative) e-trust regarding a specific product, brand or company. In the light of this study, managers of SMEs can achieve the positive and high level of e-trust through the effective use of e-marketing which ultimately increases SBP and will contribute to the growth of SME. This paper is arranged in following order. First, the literature about e-marketing orientation, e-trust and SBP is provided. This section shows the conceptual framework and hypothesis. At very next section, we explain the methodology. Next, findings of our empirical analysis are given in details, and finally, last section is comprised of discussion, implications and conclusion along with limitations and suggestions for further research directions.

2. Literature review

2.1 EMO and SBP

To survive in environment entrenched with highly stiffed competition firms need to enhance their competitiveness. The strategic performance is utmost requirement of firms in such

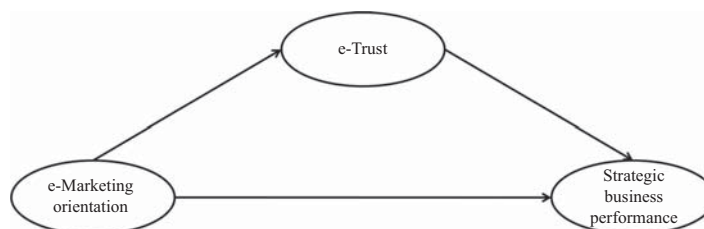


Figure 1.
Theoretical framework

environment (Baird and Baird, 2017). Accomplishing long-lasting objectives including performance and efficiency by managerial resource of firm is called SBP (Bergeron *et al.*, 2004). Implementation of marketing functions through electronic media has produced positive consequences on firm's long-term performance (Brodie *et al.*, 2007). By e-marketing business utilize the electronic channel other than physical channels, thus cutting cost of physical medium and leads to improvement in strategic financial performance (Ciunova-Shuleska *et al.*, 2016). Another attractive aspect of EMO from the customer's side is the accessibility and choice alternatives (Filieri, 2015). Before internet period, when marketing activates was not on electronic media, a typical customer was confined to choosing among a few local products. In the era of the digitalization and web, one can buy online from the seller located anywhere in the world, leading to vanish distance barriers thus creating place utility for business (Mutlu and Sürer, 2016). Market growth and expansion opportunities have been improvised by electronic marketing leading company toward high strategic performance (Petersen and Rajan, 2002).

The EMO is a way of targeting customer in more personalized manner, by communicating diversified customer directly through social media, websites and mobiles (Eid and El-Gohary, 2013). Direct input is taken from customer through information sharing platforms which leads the management to craft customer-oriented marketing strategies (Atkinson *et al.*, 1997). Feeling themselves focus of firm, customer loyalty is developed. It amplifies customer retention level and increases productivity and competitive advantage (Morgan and Rego, 2006; Yousaf *et al.*, 2015) which ultimately provide strategic strength to business. Drilling more SBP by EMO, we find online brand communities, electronic marketing channels and interactive technologies helps to retain and attract new customer (Adjei *et al.*, 2010). EMO has increased the exposure frequency of marketing efforts to greater number of customers, thus supplementing firms to expand market pool size with low cost. It can potentially boost sale activity level (Coviello *et al.*, 2002). Such achievements, including market expansion, low cost, high sale volume and so on, are the ultimate mile stone of SBP. All long-term benefits that EMO derives to business stimulate the management to transform their marketing practices from traditional ways to contemporary one (Gilmore *et al.*, 2007). So, here, we can establish an argument that strategic performance is positively affected with the involvement of EMO. Our above discussion leads to the subsequent hypothesis:

H1. EMO is positively associated with SBP.

2.2 EMO and e-trust

e-trust refers to the degree to which online customer considers the merchant reliable and confidently involved in online exchanges with him (Ben Mansour and Ben Mansour, 2016). e-trust is the confidence shown in words of seller by online customers (Jin *et al.*, 2008). Trust, according to Yasir *et al.*, 2014, is most vital component that we can say, it is the key to establish exchange relationship among seller and the buyer. However, it is not an effortless task to gain e-trust of customers. The origin of building e-trust is customer satisfaction (Chou *et al.*, 2015) which firm can achieve through EMO. Complaint handling of customer through websites is widely being used by all sizes of enterprise for turning unsatisfied customer into satisfied one, thus maintaining e-trust with them (Miyazaki and Fernandez, 2001). Websites are also being widely used for sending useful information to customer in order to enhance their trust on product or service offerings. Therefore, e-marketing through websites is proving itself very beneficial in perspective of e-trust (Rahimnia and Hassanzadeh, 2013).

Another important application of website is quick response of customer's information queries according to their crave, which is ultimately leading to satisfaction and building up e-trust (Wang *et al.*, 2015). Exploring in-depth impact of EMO, this study derives that it generates word of mouth (WOM) communication. WOM on internet spread more speedily and

widely than offline WOM (Trusov *et al.*, 2009). People keep on sharing reviews with each other through online information sharing platform like Facebook official pages and YouTube. E-WOM (electronic word of mouth) of satisfied customers seems to produce a substantial effect on e-trust of customers (Rahim *et al.*, 2016). e-marketing activities like sale promotion offers (Kaplan, 2012), information of new arrivals, online booking, criticism handling and greetings, etc. Furthermore, online direction to customers through mobiles helps to build up relationship with customer on long-term basis by strengthening e-trust among them (Watson *et al.*, 2013). Adding more, in online shopping, privacy concern of sharing credit card information enhance customer's confidence to avail this e-marketing opportunity. Provision of safety in payments can increase the e-trust of customer on business (Jin *et al.*, 2008). Alongwith privacy concerns ethical concerns are preferred by customers. High standards of ethics, such as preventing kids from accessing adult content, restricting ad which are against religion or society norms, etc., are especially important for online marketing. So, electronic marketing activities that highly esteem ethical issues of customer will lead to increased e-trust (Yousafzai *et al.*, 2003). Summing up the whole discussion, a new electronic environment is really just a different context. It has physical gap between consumer and vendor, absence of sales personal, deficiency of human network attributes and so on that requires a re-examination of procedure to establish trust. EMO is best solution of it which can handle problems of trust issues of customers. So, here it is justified to establish an argument that EMO effect e-trust positively. It leads to the following hypothesis:

H2. EMO and e-trust are positively associated.

2.3 e-trust and SBP

Trust has a key role in all kinds of relationships, also it is a vital catalyst in transactional relationships (Yasir *et al.*, 2014). Specifically, e-trust abolish the uncertainties lies in environment in which consumers feel vulnerable (Şengün and Wasti, 2011). Customer e-trust is considered critically important in today's business environment where almost all businesses are online, in order to achieve long-term results. e-trust radically contributes to the success of business if people feel safe and satisfied in online transactions (Hwang and Kim, 2007). If website is structured and controlled in a way that it makes consumers feeling protected while providing personal information, such as credit card details, they will not hesitate to carry on online buying (Oliveira *et al.*, 2017). As today's consumer is more amenable toward online shopping than before, online vendors should try to build e-trust of customer to improve sales performance and productivity (Harris and Goode, 2004).

The firm strategic performance includes long-term goals like long-lasting relationship development with customer. The customer relationship is measured by customer satisfaction and customer switching. e-trust helps to decrease brand switching and maintain long-run relationship with customer (Jin *et al.*, 2008). e-trust is essential to build good image, truthfulness and consumer attraction leading to the belief that the online vendor will always fulfills their promises, which ensure to increase competitiveness of business (Oliveira *et al.*, 2017). All of the above-mention aspects of e-trust in perspective of competitiveness, productivity, profitability, long-term relationship with customer and so on, are showing that e-trust seems to play a significant role in strategic performance of firm. This allows us to finally arrive at the following hypothesis:

H3. e-Trust and SBP are positively associated.

2.4 Mediation by e-trust

The effectiveness of the EMO contributes to the SBP where e-trust is the byproduct of the EMO (Chang and Wong, 2010). Prior researchers have discussed the constructive outcomes of EMO in the perspective of e-trust (Schlosser *et al.*, 2006; Flavián and Guinaliú, 2006).

This e-trust lay down basis for business competitiveness in long run (Phan, 2003). Therefore, it is argued that e-trust acts as a driver of EMO to reach SBP. In online business environment, which is filled with great number of uncertainties, business requires to perform in strategic way by focusing on developing e-trust (Schlosser *et al.*, 2006).

EMO has supported the e-trust to be more productive which lifts up the business competency to perform well in all dimensions (Shaltoni and West, 2010). In highly competitive market E-WOM leads to e-trust, for creating successful relationships between business and customers. E-WOM of EMO plays a role of catalyst between e-trust and successful long-term relationships (Trusov *et al.*, 2009). Consumers' perception and attitude toward e-shopping influence their intentions for future buying which builds e-trust (Rahimnia and Hassanzadeh, 2013). Such e-trust offers a platform to set the foundations for SBP. e-trust plays an important role in reducing customer uncertainty and motivating them to buy on 24/7 basis (Pennanen *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, if website is structured in a manner that consumer do not feel any risk in sharing their personal information for transaction like account number it will increase their probability to purchase online (Oliveira *et al.*, 2017). This regulation in instant purchasing builds e-trust to crop up optimistic chances for SBP. Therefore, it could be claimed that EMO is an effective mean to build customer's e-trust to gain SBP. So, our discussion leads the following hypothesis:

H4. e-Trust mediates the relationship between EMO and SBP.

3. Methodology

We tested our hypotheses by keeping main focus on SMEs. The data were collected from CEOs, finance managers, IT managers, Policy makers, owners and Managing Directors of SMEs located in two big cities of Pakistan (Islamabad and Peshawar). We have preferred SMEs that simultaneously meet following criteria:

- SMEs must be involved in e-marketing and deals with customer through e-mail, their official web portals, etc; and
- SMEs must be registered with SMEDA (small and medium enterprises development authority of Pakistan) or chamber of commerce.

Finally a list of 1,520 SMEs was made which were fulfilling our criteria. The survey was based on a structured questionnaire comprises of three distinct sections related to EMO, e-trust and SBP. Four Research Assistants were sent to gather the data. Some of questionnaires were also sent through e-mails. A total of 1,450 SMEs could be contacted to achieve the target of 479 useable responses, resulting in a 34 percent response rate, which is a good response rate (Malhotra and Grover, 1998).

Pakistan is located at the crossroads of Asia and Arabian Sea, providing an attractive market to investors (Yousaf *et al.*, 2014). According to SMEDA, SMEs constitute nearly 90 percent of all the enterprises in Pakistan and their share in the annual GDP is approximately 40 percent (Yousaf and Majid, 2017). Problems faced by SMEs sector of developing countries are almost same like financial constraints, access to markets, low level of technology, lack of access to information and advice, technical and managerial skills shortage and so on (Majid *et al.*, 2017; Yasir and Majid, 2017). So, almost same scenario is been faced by SMEs sector of these developing countries; therefore, this study can help the SMEs sector of other developing countries, such as Pakistan.

3.1 Scale measurement

This study used pretested scales to suite the context, however the instructions of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Fornell and Larcker (1981) have been followed for

confirming scale validations. EMO was measured through 4-items scale, adapted from Shaltoni and West (2010). e-trust was measured through 7-items scale adopted from McKnight and Chervany (2002). SBP scale was measured by 11 item adapted from the work of Yousaf and Majid (2016) and Gelderman *et al.* (2016). The validity and reliability of measurement model was examined by factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), convergent validity and discriminant validity which show that the values of results were above the threshold values (see Table I). Finally all factors model supported the model fitness: GFI = 0.907, AGFI = 0.918, CFI = 0.926, NFI = 0.932, IFI 0.958.

4. Analysis

Mean, standard deviations, correlation and regression analysis were conducted to check variables' descriptive and their association. Table II presents values of mean, standard

| Items details | FL | α | CR | AVE | Source |
|---|------|----------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| <i>e-Marketing adoption</i> | | 0.91 | 0.87 | 0.89 | |
| 1. We use e-marketing resources (such as website and e-mail) to communicate with our customers | 0.82 | | | | Shaltoni and West (2010) |
| 2. We use e-marketing resources to support our firm's traditional commercial activities (e.g., pricing information, customer service) | 0.87 | | | | |
| 3. We use e-marketing resources to conduct commercial transactions (e.g., selling products and accepting payment via website) | 0.79 | | | | |
| 4. We have a computerized customer database that we use to perform marketing activities (e.g., inform customers about new products) | 0.78 | | | | |
| <i>e-Trust</i> | | 0.93 | 0.88 | 0.86 | |
| 1. Our website demonstrate enough technical expertise and skills | 0.83 | | | | McKnight and Chervany (2002) |
| 2. Our website is reliable and ethical | 0.84 | | | | |
| 3. The information exchanged by our website with customer has developed trust | 0.86 | | | | |
| 4. The information quality provided by our website is consistent | 0.81 | | | | |
| 5. Our website appears to be well qualified in the area of this industry | 0.79 | | | | |
| 6. Our website should have a strong sense of integrity | 0.78 | | | | |
| <i>Strategic business performance</i> | | 0.94 | 0.91 | 0.85 | |
| 1. Our firm performs well for gaining a foothold in the industry | 0.83 | | | | Yousaf and Majid (2016) |
| 2. Our marketing efforts have increased awareness of the firm and brand | 0.79 | | | | |
| 3. Our firm positively response to challenges created by competitors | 0.81 | | | | |
| 4. Our firm has improved financial performance | 0.84 | | | | |
| 5. Our firm focuses on relationship with its clients which have led to more product development | 0.78 | | | | Gelderman <i>et al.</i> (2016) |
| 6. Our firm focuses on relationship with its clients have led to the entrance of new markets | 0.79 | | | | |
| 7. Our firm focuses on relationship with its clients have led to the development of new technologies | 0.81 | | | | |
| 8. Our firm focuses on relationship with its clients have led to better customer knowledge | 0.83 | | | | |
| 9. Our firm focuses on relationship with its clients have led to a better market understanding | 0.84 | | | | Self developed |
| 10. Our firm has achieved its strategic goals in term of achieving high productivity | 0.86 | | | | |
| 11. Our firm has achieved its strategic goals in term of achieving larger market share | 0.85 | | | | |

Table I.
Factor loading, CR,
AVE, Alfah values

Notes: FL, factor loading; CR, composite reliability; Alpha, Cronbach α ; AVE, average variance extracted

deviations and correlation. Scores were less than the threshold VIF value of 10.0 indicating that multi-collinearity is not an issue.

Results presented in Table III supports the *H1*, *H2* and *H3*. *H1* is accepted (β value = 0.301, $p < 0.000$) and it is proved that EMO positively impact SBP. *H2* is accepted (β value = 0.512, $p < 0.000$) and it is proved that EMO is positively associated with e-trust. Finally, *H3* is accepted (β value = 0.563, $p < 0.000$) and it is proved that e-trust is positively associated with SBP.

H4 is also supported by results and this study tests how e-trust mediates the relationship between EMO and SBP. To check mediating impact of e-trust, this study used Preacher and Hayes' (2004, 2008) approach at 95 percent level of the confidence interval. Confidence interval does not include any zero in all hypotheses and it is argued that there is a significant mediation effect. Table IV presents results of path *a*, *b*, *c*, and *c'*. Table V presents the results of bootstrapping for indirect effect of EMO (independent variable) on SBP (dependent variable) through e-trust (mediator). Bootstrapping is the class of computer-intensive statistical method allows re-sampling method for creating estimates of population distribution. The aim of bootstrap is to provide accurate statistical estimates. By sampling with replacement, it takes

Table II.
Mean, SD and
correlation

| S.No. | Variable | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-------|--------------------------------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|---|
| 1 | Respondent Age | 2.59 | 0.78 | 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | Respondent Experience | 2.86 | 0.81 | 0.028* | 1 | | | | |
| 3 | Respondent Education | 2.98 | 0.69 | 0.069* | 0.098* | 1 | | | |
| 4 | e-Marketing Orientation | 2.54 | 0.71 | 0.104 | 0.112 | 0.067 | 1 | | |
| 5 | e-Trust | 2.44 | 0.64 | 0.091 | 0.034 | 0.101 | 0.28** | 1 | |
| 6 | Strategic Business Performance | 2.74 | 0.76 | 0.023 | 0.048 | 0.091 | 0.29** | 0.35** | 1 |

Notes: * $p < 0.005$; ** $p < 0.000$

Table III.
Regression results
for testing *H1*,
H2 and *H3*

| <i>H</i> | Details | R^2 | F | β | t | Remarks |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|--------------------|
| <i>H1</i> | e-marketing orientation → SBP | 0.219** | 15.133** | 0.301 | 10.321** | <i>H1</i> Accepted |
| <i>H2</i> | e-marketing orientation → e-trust | 0.381** | 42.198** | 0.512 | 11.056** | <i>H2</i> Accepted |
| <i>H3</i> | e-trust → SBP | 0.414** | 51.239** | 0.563 | 12.891** | <i>H3</i> Accepted |

Note: ** $p < 0.000$

Table IV.
Results of mediation
effects showing paths
a, *b*, *c* and *c'*

| Paths | Model details | Coefficient | t -value | SE | Sig |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------|--------|--------|
| Path <i>a</i> (IV to mediator) | e-marketing orientation → e-trust | 0.5128 | 11.056 | 0.0802 | 0.000 |
| Path <i>b</i> (direct effect of mediator on DV) | e-trust → SBP | 0.5638 | 12.891 | 0.0423 | 0.000 |
| Path <i>c</i> (total effect of IV on DV) | e-marketing orientation → SBP | 0.3011 | 10.321 | 0.0621 | 0.000 |
| Path <i>c'</i> (direct effect of IV on DV) | e-marketing orientation → e-trust | 0.0917 | 1.4739 | 0.0923 | 0.1891 |

Table V.
Results of indirect
effect through
bootstrap

| Model detail | Data | Boot | Bias | SE | Lower | Upper | Sig |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| e-marketing → e-trust → SBP | 0.224 | 0.2245 | 0.0027 | 0.12 | 0.1188 | 0.1928 | 0.000 |

Note: Bootstrap for indirect effect of IV on DV through mediator "ab path"

samples of sample and computes the empirical estimates. Doing this again and again, bootstrap allows evaluating errors of estimates (Efron and Tibshirani, 1994).

Table IV shows results of direct and total effect, i.e. paths a , b , c and c' . Results proved that EMO is positively associated with e-trust ($\beta = 0.5128$, $p = 0.000$, path " a " is significant). The mediator, e-trust has a positive association with SBP ($\beta = 0.5638$, $p = 0.000$, path " b " is significant). EMO is positively associated with SBP ($\beta = 0.3011$, $p = 0.000$, path " c " is significant). Additionally, results revealed that the direct effect of EMO on SBP when e-trust is controlled is non-significant indicating full mediation (coefficient = 0.0917, $p = 0.1891$, path " c' " is non-significant). Because both paths " a " and " b " were significant, mediation analysis was tested using the bootstrap method. In current research, the 95 percent confidence interval of the indirect effect of 5,000 bootstrap re-samples was used. Table V shows results of mediation analysis through indirect effect. It is proved that e-trust acts as mediators in the relationship between EMO and SBP ($\beta = 0.224$, CI = 0.1188 to 0.1928), hence $H4$ is accepted.

5. Discussion

Growth in the technology has also brought evolution in field of business. New trends are emerging in business environment. EMO is the outcome of technology that seems to derive enormous benefits in business (Tsotsou and Vlachopoulou, 2011). The objective of the present study was to investigate the role of EMO and e-trust for improving strategic performance of business. More specifically, a mediating role of e-trust between EMO and SBP was modeled. Through testing our $H1$, we get the result as expected, EMO positively and directly influences the SBP that extended the research work of Yan (2010) who has investigated the role of e-marketing in enhancing the performance exclusively.

Effect of EMO on e-trust was also tested ($H2$), results of which showed that EMO can play a significant role in developing e-trust (Ritchie and Brindley, 2005). To check how trust of online customer supports the business to achieve long-term performance, we have tested the effect of e-trust on SBP. The results of $H3$ reveal that relationship between e-trust and strategic performance is significant. This result shows that our findings support the work of (Harris and Goode, 2004). On the basis of Ratnasingam (2005) findings about e-trust role in business various aspects, we also examined the mediating effects of e-trust. The final results indicate that e-trust as mediator performs positive mediating effects between EMO and strategic performance ($H4$).

5.1 Theoretical implications

Previous work on EMO and e-trust factors in perspective of SBP has been addressed in very limited way in the literature. Most of the researcher has simply discussed performance in relation with e-marketing (Olson *et al.*, 2005; Brodie *et al.*, 2007). Results of this study compliment the literature on strategic performance and EMO by signifying the mediation effect of e-trust between e-marketing and SBP. This is the new addition in the literature because there is very limited work on e-trust in relation to improve SBP through EMO. As this paper propose new ways to think about implementation of EMO in case of Pakistan's SMEs, it has advanced the knowledge related to impact of e-marketing and e-trust on strategic performance in case of emerging economies.

5.2 Practical implications

However along with theoretical implication, this paper endures some vital managerial implications for the SME sector. This paper has added to understating of SMEs managers the impact of EMO and e-trust in their business environment. It is important for managers of SMEs to harness the potential of EMO in firm strategic performance. e-trust can be effectively gained by providing a protected and reliable websites. SMEs have to, therefore, increase e-trust by improving the quality of their websites, in perspective of security and

quick responses to information queries and complaints. e-Trust can also be achieved by improving their reputation by e-WOM, efficient provision of after sale services and building online brand community. The knowledge derived from this paper can give a helping hand to top management of SMEs to meet long-term performance objective.

5.3 Limitations and future directions of research

Beside all of contribution, this study posses several limitations. The conceptual framework of SBP proposed in this research can further be refined in several other contexts. In our model, we have considered e-trust as mediating variable linking EMO and strategic performance. However, this model can be altered by considering other antecedents such as e-loyalty, brand tribalism or brand equity as mediating variable between e-marketing and strategic performance. So, variables that effect strategic performance other than e-trust could also be examined in future research. Another limitation is this study has employed an analysis of SMEs only and not overall industries. So in future, this research can possibly be extended to other industries.

5.4 Conclusion

To cope up the current situation of business environment that is filled with tough competition, firm need to act in a way that helps us to move strategic performance in the positive direction. We have developed a model comprises of EMO, e-trust and SBP in which e-trust played a role of mediator. We have enriched the literatures by exploring e-trust as mediator. At the end, our studies chat about areas for future research to search out other variables and sectors with respect to strategic performance.

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About the authors

Zahid Yousaf is a Lecturer at Government College of Management Sciences, Mansehra, Pakistan. He obtained a MCom Degree from the University of Peshawar, Pakistan. He obtained the MS Degree in Management Sciences from Hazara University, Pakistan. He is a PhD scholar in the Department of Management Sciences, Hazara University Mansehra. He is an author of ten publications in different peer-reviewed research journals. He has also presented three research papers in international conferences. His work is published in *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. Zahid Yousaf is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: muhammadzahid.yusuf@gmail.com

Noor Sahar received a MBA (3.5) Degree from Government commerce college of Management sciences, affiliated with Hazara University Mansehra. She held the top position throughout her course and awarded with a distinction certificate from the college. Her academic background and work mostly covers the field of marketing and business research. She has expertise in academic writing, qualitative research and report writing. She has also done additional degree in education. She is currently conducting different research projects under the supervision of Zahid Yousaf and Dr Abdul Majid.

Dr Abdul Majid is an Assistant Professor at Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan. He received a PhD Degree from the University of Peshawar, Pakistan. He did his Post-Doctoral Research from the University of Sheffield, UK. He wrote more than 40 papers in different peer-reviewed research journals and presented various papers in different international research conferences. He is a coordinator of PhD and MS Program in the Department of Management Sciences, Hazara University Pakistan.

Dr Amajad Rafiq is the Director Commerce, in Directorate of Commerce and Education Peshawar, Pakistan. He is a well-known researcher in the field of Commerce and Management. He has various publications in different peer-reviewed journals.