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A structural analysis of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in FMCG sector: empirical evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract

Aim of the study is to analyze the underlying structure of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. The design of the study includes a review of literature, primary data collection, structural modeling, and analysis. Data are collected from a panel of experts recruited based on predetermined criteria. Literature discourse is adopted to identify an array of barriers, and Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) is employed as the modeling method. Additionally, scale-centric and data-centric cross-impact matrix multiplication applied to classification (MICMAC) is used as the analytical technique. The literature review revealed a total of sixteen barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. The ISM modeling results indicated that lack of knowledge and skills occupy Level III (bottom), while lack of systematic approach, product innovation, and integrated marketing communication occupy Level II (middle). All other barriers are positioned at Level I (top). The MICMAC analysis, both scale-centric and data-centric, corroborates the findings of the ISM modeling. This study is valuable for marketers, FMCG company management, regulators, researchers, and customers, as it provides an understanding of the underlying structures and relationships among the barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. It contributes a list of barriers, a structural model, and scale- and data-centric driving-dependence diagrams to the existing literature, offering new insights subject to certain limitations inherent in qualitative research.

Keywords: Barriers in implementing marketing strategies, Implementing marketing strategies, Marketing strategies, FMCG sector, Pakistan.

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1. Introduction

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is dynamic and it significantly impacts both businesses and consumers [1]. The sector deals with products that are essential to daily life. It offers convenience, affordability, and variety to consumers. Since FMCG includes beverages, food, household products, and personal care items, they are characterized by high frequency and high demand, making them staples in the distribution and retail sectors. This industry presents stable demand and the potential for good profit margins for businesses through high sales volumes. Market research in this regard has become imperative because it plays a crucial role in providing companies with insights into consumer behavior, preferences, and attitudes, Kaneko and Kajikawa [2]. Effective research findings are particularly vital for FMCG companies to quickly adapt to market changes. Companies that have access to research-based insights gain an edge over competitors and can better manage their teams to execute marketing campaigns [3]. The research also highlights the current trends in FMCG sector.

Research in the FMCG sector is not merely valuable but vital for continued success and growth. It has been high on the research agenda for years. There are thousands of research studies on almost every aspect of this sector, leaving virtually little scope for exploratory research. One can find a plethora of refined and data-driven research on FMCG sector issues. However, there is a dearth of exploratory research in this context, particularly in the case of Pakistan. As data-driven research grows, the scope of exploratory research becomes more significant. The exploratory aspect of implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector is particularly underexplored. Few studies address this issue, especially with evidence from Pakistan. Although no comprehensive study has been conducted to address this issue, some research documents one or a few FMCG industries in Pakistan for the sake of brevity, Adam and Khan [4], Ali Syed and Siddiqui [5], Aman and Hopkinson [6], Dantas et al. [7], Fahad and Ali [8], Hussain and Khan [9], Kalsoom et al. [10], Qazi [11], Rafi [12] and Sulehria et al. [13].

In this context, the authors could not find any study that identified the barriers in the implementation of marketing strategies in the FMCG sector in Pakistan. However, some studies partially address the phenomenon under study across the globe, as reported here: Atalay et al. [14] conducted a research to determine the ways to produce effective marketing message. Stremersch [15] suggested four steps framework that helps marketers to address important marketing issues. Kostyk and Sheng [16] proclaimed general guidelines for the strategic implementation of virtual reality marketing based on purpose-driven design. Risitano et al. [17] explored the impact of sustainability on the Italian fishery sector's business performance and marketing strategy. Chiang [18] deployed a data-driven marketing strategy on CRM to ascertain markets/customers of the coffee industry in Taiwan. These researches are context/country-specific, addressing issues partially. There is a clear research gap in this context; therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap. Research objectives include: i) to identify the barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector, and ii) to model and analyze the underlying structure of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. Therefore, the research questions include: i) which barriers need high priority? ii) which barriers are relatively less important? and iii) what are the contextual relationships among the barriers? To address the issue, meet the objectives of the study, and answer these questions, an array of research methods is considered, including AHP, ANP, COPRAS-G, DEA, DEMATEL, ELECTRE, FANP, GRA, IPA, IRP, ISM, MADM, MICMAC, MOORA, Multi-MOORA, PROMETHEE, RIDIT, SWARA, TACTIC, TOPSIS, VIKOR, WASPAS, etc., and ISM coupled with scale-centric and data-centric MICMAC analysis is found to be appropriate.

The study contributes: i) a list of barriers, ii) a hierarchical structural model of barriers, iii) scale-centric driving-dependence diagram, iv) data-centric driving-dependence diagram, and v) a significant amount of new information about the level-to-level and at-level contextual relationships of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector towards the contemporary literature. The remaining study is arranged as literature review, research methodology, data/analysis/results/discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is vital because it offers essential daily necessities, energizes economic growth through employment and revenue generation, and fuels the retail and distribution sectors, ultimately contributing to overall economic stability and consumer well-being. The review of literature is considered a necessary part of research because it defines the topic and provides an appropriate context, establishes reasons & rationale, helps in the organization of the sequence of the study, and sets the scope of the study. Therefore, the authors have reviewed the contemporary literature in some detail. Research databases, namely Wiley Online Library, Taylor & Francis Online, Springer Link, Emerald Insight, Elsevier (Science Direct), and JStor, are explored. The keywords used for search in the advanced search tab of the aforementioned databases include ‘barriers in implementing marketing strategies in FMCG sector,’ ‘barriers in implementing marketing strategies,’ ‘implementing marketing strategies,’ ‘issues of implementing marketing strategies,’ ‘strategies in FMCG sector,’ ‘issues of FMCG sector in Pakistan,’ ‘FMCG sector in Pakistan,’ ‘problems of FMCGs in Pakistan,’ etc. The searches resulted in thousands of research articles on a wide variety of topics related to FMCG sectors in general. Less literature is found directly relevant to the issue under study. However, sufficient literature is available to set the very outset of the current study.

Selective research articles are reviewed, and a few of them that are found to be highly relevant are reported here, keeping in mind brevity but without compromising contextual relevance. Kaneko and Kajikawa [2] suggested a quantification approach for analyzing technological portfolio in the basis of CIT. Oraman et al. [19] asserted that the threats of new entrants into the FMCG sector are low since it requires large investments to be competitive. For developing any strategy, marketers first need to assess the globalization industry potential, which is driven by market dynamics such as

economic, environmental, and/or competitive conditions. Ma et al. [20] using semi-structured interviews and applying factor-mapping-grid, it was argued that there exists a general desire to reduce plastic in the FMCG sector, but there is also reluctance to be the first to do so. The situation of 'we will if you will' is observed in reality. Consumers are equally a barrier in the transition, acting as a double-edged sword in the FMCG sector. Ali and Dubey [21] bolstered that customer satisfaction is related to their expectations. It is very important for the organization to understand the expectations of the customers and retailer, and if the retailer's expectations are met, it can lead to customer satisfaction. Fornari et al. [22] OLS and GMM techniques concluded that assortment share plays a crucial role in determining private label sales growth. Gupta et al. [23] affirmed that the high cost of investment, lack of monetary resources, inadequate internet connectivity, lack of IT infrastructure, and unclear economic benefits of digital investment are the top five barriers in implementing innovative digitalization technologies in most developing countries. Morgan et al. [24] identified that inherent trade-offs between different components and stages of marketing strategy implementation are important causes of implementation problems and failures. It also asserted that to determine how best to identify the kinds of implementation capabilities that can best enable the identification or selection among the inherent trade-offs. Malshe et al. [25] investigated marketing strategy implementation impediments and remedies and delineated that both level-specific and cumulative effects of impediments necessitate prescriptive remedies for stabilizing the implementation process. Guenther et al. [26] developed a concise checklist that provides business marketing researchers with a shortcut for implementing strategies in upcoming projects. Biswas et al. [27] using Fuzzy TOPSIS for ranking of the solutions in the transport sector revealed that the appropriate transport policy is the top solution that can play a vital role in improving vehicle-fill rate in the long run in FMCG sector. Niyas and Kavida [28] studied FMCG companies' financial brand values using an appropriate financial-brand-valuation model and buttressed that the brand value has a contemporaneous effect on stock prices, but with a negative three-year time-lagged effect. Indasari and Tjahyanto [29] used Latent Semantic Analysis and arguing that the effect of data preparation yielded a result of 0.092, outperforming data without a stoplist and word-based stoplists available by the stopwords library, even though the execution time was 0.01 seconds longer than others. Kamakela et al. [30] collected data from 14 FMCG manufacturing firms, indicating that 29% of the firms are using digital technology to predict and create visibility in the supply chain, and 8% of the firms are still within the emerging level of supply risk capabilities. Azamat et al. [31] confirmed that the majority of FMCG companies are undervalued in terms of the value of intangible assets by comparing the market value of intangible assets with the fundamental and theoretical value. The empirical findings, in a way, support the positive impact of intangible assets on companies' value, based on a dynamic panel approach. Jain and Hudnurkar [32] showed that the need for sustainable packaging is obvious; however, the gap between that need and FMCG's ability is also apparent. Jit Singh Mann and Kaur [33] deployed MANOVA and stated that hypotheses about differences in branding strategies across the sectors vary over time. Rashid et al. [34] suggested that the better supplier trust and the use of integrated technology enhance the capability of the organization to better respond to disturbances. Malhotra [35] focused on low-margin FMCG beauty goods and concluded that marketing communication tools such as: i) advertising, ii) sales promotion, iii) public relations, iv) direct marketing, and v) word-of-mouth can effectively be used to influence the cognitive and affective stages of response. Biercewicz et al. [36] asserted that the consumers of different baskets of goods are conscious and their behavior types differ. Stanciu et al. [37] argued that Romanian products in modern retail networks, in the long run, support domestic products. McDonald et al. [38] analyzed how strong service brands can be established by altering the conventional FMCG branding model to the service sector. Fareniuk [39] revealed that effective marketing strategies lead to optimum short-term and long-term business growth and the advancement of the company's position in the market. Dhingra et al. [40] bolstered that revenue from share/operations is the most significant ratio affecting the evaluation of the company's market performance. Grubor and Milicevic [41] buttressed that products with high sales variation and slow-turning products are problematic in on-shelf availability. They are, in fact, characterized by high out-of-stock rates. Huang et al. [42] proposed efficient methods to predict retail sales by incorporating competitors' prices and promotions information. There is scant diversified literature available in different research databases. In short, it can be found that there are quite a number of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector that are summarized and listed below (Table 1), along with the source, the study is therefore built on the barriers as given in Table 1 (*Step 1 and 2*).

Table 1.
List of Barriers in Implementing Marketing Strategies in the FMCG Sector.

Code	Barriers	Description	Source
1	Lack of knowledge and skills	It can be an obstruction to implementing a marketing strategy.	Lynch and West [43]
2	Organizational barriers	Organizational barriers obstruct the implementation of marketing strategy.	Gebhardt et al. [44]
3	Lack of a systematic approach	A lack of a systematic approach to the development of a marketing plan causes hindrance in implementing marketing strategies.	Thomas [45]
4	Failure to prioritize objectives	Failure to prioritize objectives may become a barrier to implementing the marketing strategy.	Cowan and Ketron [46]
5	Hostile corporate culture	Intimidating corporate culture can be a barrier to the successful implementation of marketing strategies.	Moorman and Day [47]
6	Changing consumer preferences	Anticipating and adapting to changing market trends due to the dynamic nature of consumer preferences.	
7	Product innovation	Changing customer preferences and market saturation necessitate a deliberate approach to product innovation.	Longoni and Cian [48]
8	Market expansion	Entering into saturated markets.	Wang [49]
9	Operational efficiencies	Operational efficiencies for execution of marketing strategy.	
10	Technological barriers	The legacy system does not support advanced digital marketing tools.	Hoffman et al. [50]
11	Confusion	Confusion between the marketing function and marketing concept and/or between marketing tactics and strategy.	Kasabov [51]
12	Integrated marketing communication	All the marketing channels are need to be united.	Zhang et al. [52]
13	Lack of marketing leadership	Lack of strategic compassion, unity, and sensemaking drive ineffective marketing practices.	Whitler et al. [53]
14	Lack of market-focused strategic flexibility	Firm's inability to produce firm-specific choices and customer value propositions.	Johnson et al. [54]
15	Lack of business education and training	Lack of higher education, skills and learning related to marketing practices.	Simpson et al. [55]
16	Complex structure and processes	Execution of marketers strategic through complex structure and processes.	Homburg et al. [56]

3. Methodology

The study follows a post-positivist research philosophy and an inductive research approach. The design of the study includes a review of literature, primary data collection, structural modeling, and analysis. The population under study comprises stakeholders of the FMCG sector, including FMCG firms, investors, investment analysts and managers, the government, and policymakers. Data are collected from a panel of experts recruited based on predetermined criteria from within the stakeholders of the phenomenon. A purposive sampling design is employed. The sample size consists of twenty experts from the stakeholders. A matrix-type instrument of measurement (Annexure 1) is used to collect data from the field. Literature discourse is adopted for the ascertainment of an array of barriers. Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) is employed as a method of modeling, and scale-centric and data-centric cross-impact matrix multiplication applied to classification (popularly known as MICMAC) is employed as a technique of analysis Sushil [57]; Warfield [58]; Godet [59]. The schema of modeling and analysis consists of the following steps.

Step 1: Determination of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector through literature discourse.
Step 2: Verification of barriers from experts.
Step 3: Verification of the paired contextual relationship between each pair of barriers.
Step 4: Aggregation of the responses of experts and development of the Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM).
Step 5: Conversion of SSIM into a binary matrix (initial reachability matrix) using rules as devised by Warfield [58].
Step 6: Converting the initial reachability matrix into a fully transitive matrix.
Step 7: Partitioning the transitive matrix into sub-matrices using elementary concepts of set theory.
Step 8: Representing the underlying structural model on the diagonals of a binary matrix.
Step 9: Representing the abridged results of ISM in a single matrix.
Step 10: Developing the hierarchical ISM model.
Step 11: Mapping the driving and dependence power of each barrier on a Cartesian plane along the continuum of scale-centric driving and dependence, which classifies the barriers into the dependency quadrants.
Step 12: Mapping the driving and dependence power of each barrier on a Cartesian plane on the continuum of data-centric driving and dependence that classifies the barriers into the dependency quadrants and provides more realistic insights.
Step 13: Representing the juxtaposed results of literature discourse, scale-centric MICMAC analysis, data-centric MICMAC analysis, and ISM.

Panel of Experts: The panel of experts is constituted to collect data when data is either unavailable or unreliable. In the issue at hand, in fact, the data is not available on the relationship of barriers in the implementation of marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. There are two types of panels of experts (i.e., homogeneous and heterogeneous) chosen by researchers according to the nature of the study Clayton [60]. This study uses a heterogeneous panel of experts. The size of the panel also varies from situation to situation; the minimum is eight experts, and the optimal is twenty-five Khan and Khan [61]. This study uses a panel size of twenty [62]. Experts on the panel are recruited based on predetermined criteria. The criteria for recruiting experts for the current study are: i) each expert must be a university graduate, ii) each expert must have at least ten years of experience as a marketer, manager of an FMCG firm, supplier, regulator, researcher, buyer (retailer/wholesaler), etc., iii) must have some acumen in research, iv) must be willing to participate in the study as a respondent, and v) must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation. In this way, a total of twenty experts have been recruited for the panel (i.e., 3 researchers, 2 regulators, 4 marketers, 3 managers of FMCG firms, 2 retailers, 2 wholesalers, 2 manufacturers, and 2 analysts). For data elicitation, a matrix-type VAXO-based questionnaire is used (Annexure 1). The technique used for data elicitation is face-to-face, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews in a field setting (*Step 3*). The detailed procedures for constituting the panel, setting criteria for recruiting experts, determining the panel size, methods of eliciting data from experts, measurement instruments, and conducting interviews in the field setting can be learned from Sushil [57] and Warfield [63] as these are adopted from these studies.

Data, Modeling, Analysis, Results and Discussion: Stepwise procedure of ISM modeling and MICMAC analysis is adopted from Attri et al. [64], Warfield [58], Warfield [63] and Sushil [57].

Data: The data is collected according to the aforementioned procedure from the panel of experts, and the same is aggregated in MS-Excel sheets by using some MS-Excel functions. The rule employed for aggregation is 'minority gives way to majority' [65, 66].

ISM Modeling: As a first step of ISM modeling from the aggregation of data (*Step 4*) as aforementioned, a Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM) Table 2 is prepared.

Table 2.
Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM).

Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1		V	V	V	O	O	V	V	V	O	V	V	A	V	V	V
2			V	V	O	O	V	V	A	O	O	A	X	A	A	X
3				V	V	O	V	O	V	V	A	V	A	V	V	X
4					O	A	A	V	V	A	O	A	V	A	A	A
5						V	A	A	V	A	O	X	A	V	V	O
6							V	A	O	V	O	A	V	A	V	A
7								V	V	A	A	A	V	A	V	A
8									V	A	V	A	V	V	A	V
9										V	V	A	V	O	A	X
10											V	A	V	V	V	X
11												X	X	A	A	A
12													V	A	A	V
13														X	X	A
14															A	A
15																A
16																

As the *Step 5* SSIM (Table 2) is converted into an initial reachability matrix (Table 3) using rules as given in Sushil [57]; Warfield [58], and Warfield [63].

Table 3.
Initial Reachability Matrix.

Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
3	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
6	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
7	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
8	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
10	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
11	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
12	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
13	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
14	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
15	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
16	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1

As the *Step 6* initial reachability matrix (Table 3) is made fully transitive final reachability matrix (Table 4) by checking the possibility of conversion of every 0 into a transitive 1*.

Table 4.
Final Reachability Matrix.

Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Driving
1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	**16**
2	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1	**16**
3	0	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	**15**
4	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	0	1	1	1*	1*	0	1	1*	1*	1*	**14**
5	0	1*	0	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*	**14**
6	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1*	**16**
7	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1*	**16**
8	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	**16**
9	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	**16**
10	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	**16**
11	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*	1*	**16**
12	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	**16**
13	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	**16**
14	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	**16**
15	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1*	**16**
16	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	**16**
Dependence	**14**	**16**	**15**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**15**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**15**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	

As the *Step 7* final reachability matrix (Table 4) is partitioned into sub-matrices, Table 5-7 by using the rules as devised in Warfield [58] and Warfield [63].

Table 5.
Iteration-I.

Code	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level
1	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	
2	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
3	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	
4	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,16	*I*
5	2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
6	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
7	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	
8	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
9	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
10	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
11	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
12	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	
13	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
14	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
15	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*
16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	*I*

Table 6.
Iteration-II.

Code	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level
1	1,3,7,12	1,7,12,13	1,7,12	
3	3,7,12	1,3,7,12	3,7,12	*II*
7	1,3,7,12	1,3,7,12	1,3,7,12	*II*
12	1,3,7,12	1,3,7,12	1,3,7,12	*II*

Table 7.
Iteration-III.

Code	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level
1	1	1,13	1	*III*

Partitioned sub-matrices Table 5-7 are arranged in Table 8 in conical form at diagonals (*Step 8)*.

Table 8.
Conical Matrix.

Code	2	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16	3	7	12	1
2	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*
4	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	0	0	1*
5	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	0	1*	1	0
6	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*
8	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*
9	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*
10	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*
11	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*
13	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1
14	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*
15	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*
16	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*
3	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
7	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*
12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*
1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

As the Step 9 all the matrices given above in Table 2-8 are presented into as condensed form in one table as Table 9.

Table 9.
Condensed Presentation of ISM

		Reachability Set																	
Antecedent Set	**Level**	**Code**	**2**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**3**	**7**	**12**	**1**		**Driving Power**
	I	**2**	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*	**16**	
		4	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	0	0	1*	**14**	
		5	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	0	1*	1	0	**14**	
		6	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	**16**	
		8	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	**16**	
		9	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	**16**	
		10	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	**16**	
		11	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	**16**	
		13	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	**16**	
		14	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1*	**16**	
		15	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	**16**	
		16	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	**16**	
	II	**3**	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	**15**	
		7	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1*	**16**	
		12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1*	1	1	1*	**16**	
	III	**1**	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	**16**	
			16	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**14**		
		Dependence Power																		

The model extracted and appearing on the diagonals of Table 8 and 9 is translated into an ISM graphical model (Figure 1, *Step 10*) in which level-to-level and at level inter barrier relationships are represented by hierarchies and arrows.

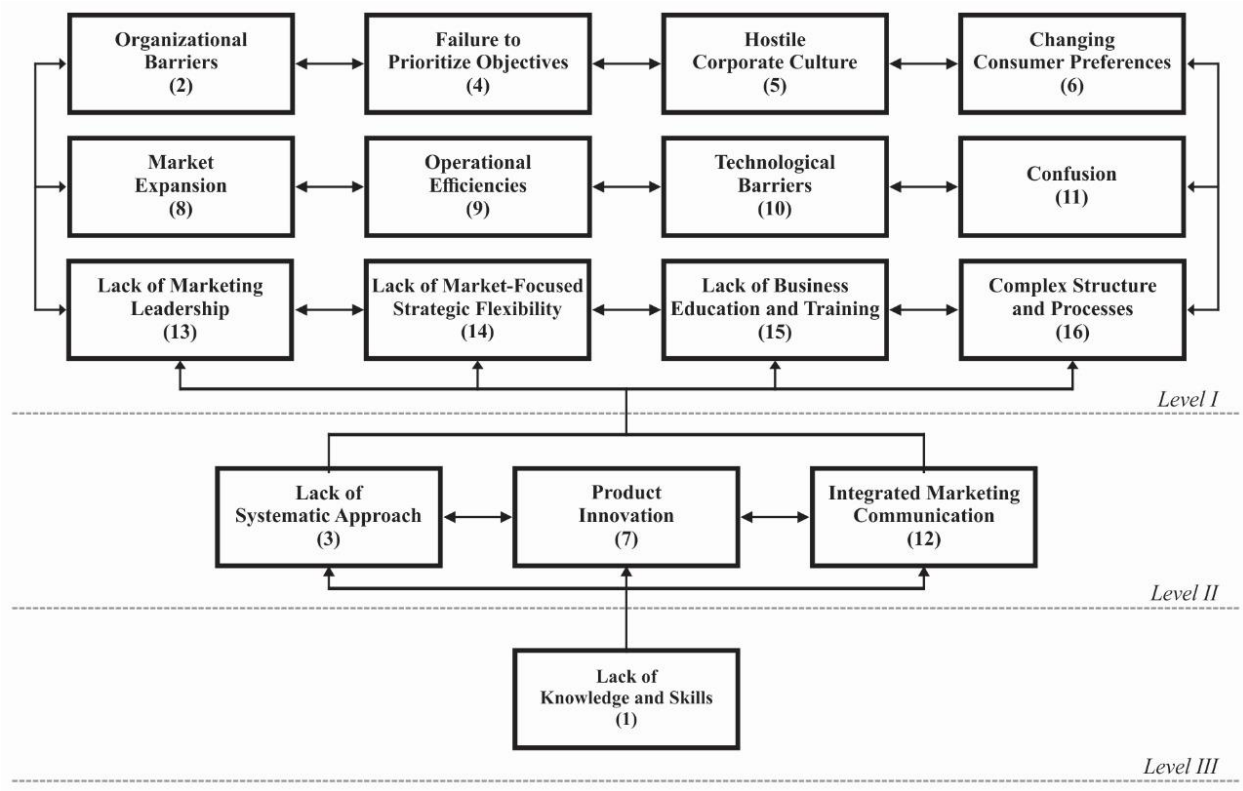

Figure 1.
ISM Model.

ISM Model (Figure 1) reveals that barriers coded as (2), (4), (5), (6), (8), (9), (10), (11), (13), (14), (15), and (16) occupy Level I (top level that contains the least critical barriers). Barriers coded as (3), (7), and (12) occupy Level II (middle part of the model that contains moderate critical barriers), and barrier (1) occupies Level III (bottom of the model that contains the most critical barriers). All barriers have two-way relations at each level.

MICMAC Analysis: Matriced' Impacts Croise's Multiplication Appliquée a UN Classement (Cross Impact Matrix Multiplication Applied to Classification) analysis is performed in Figure 2 and Figure 3 [59].

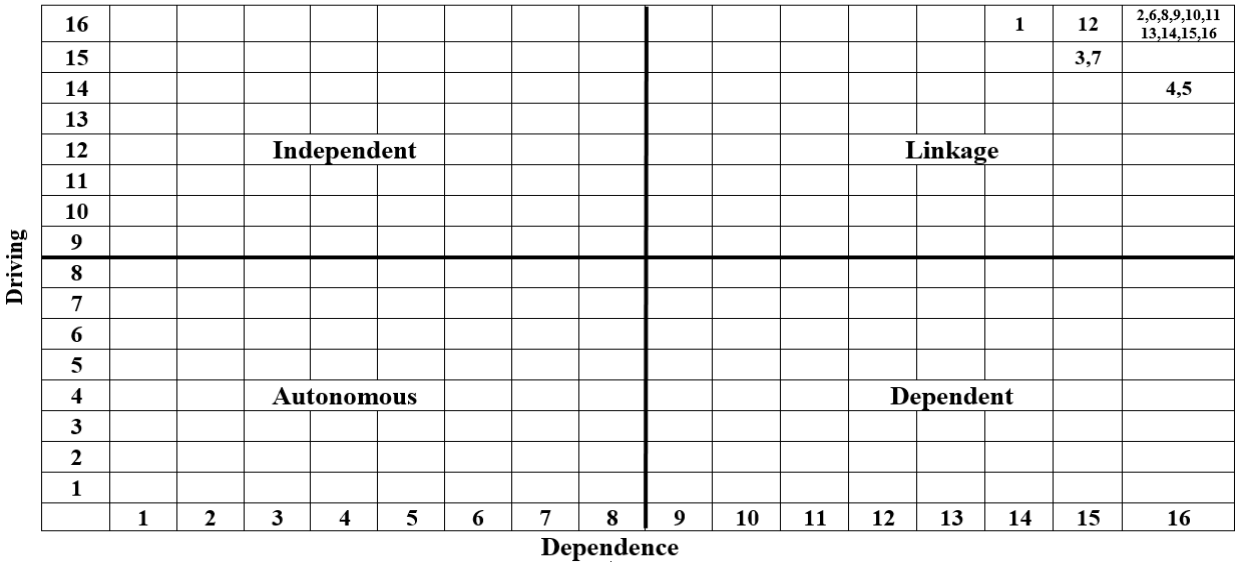

Figure 2.
Driving-Dependence Diagram (Scale-Centric).

The scale-centric driving-dependence diagram (Figure 2, *Step 11*) reveals that independent, dependent, and autonomous quadrants are empty, whereas, all factors i.e. coded as (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), and (16), fall in linkage cluster.

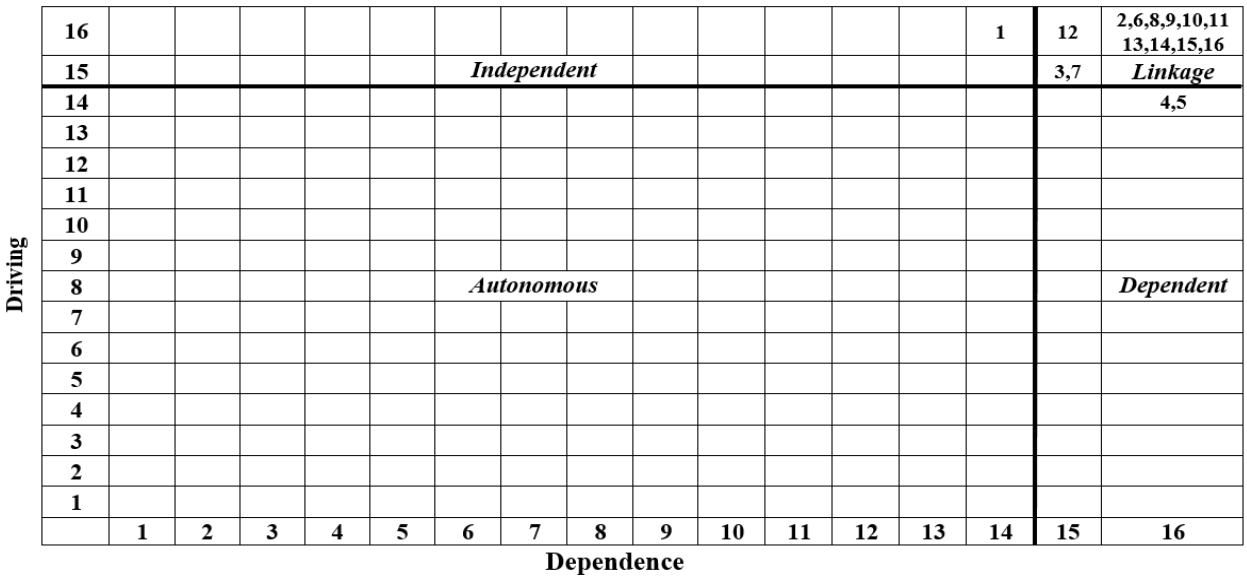

Figure 3.
Driving-Dependence Diagram (Data-Centric).

The data-centric driving-dependence diagram (Figure 3, *Step 12*) reveals that the barrier coded as (1) falls in the independent quadrant, barriers coded as (4) and (5) fall in the dependent quadrant, the autonomous quadrant is empty, and all remaining barriers, i.e., (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), and (16), are categorized in the linkage quadrant.

Results: The results of discourse from the literature review revealed that there are a total of sixteen barriers in implementing marketing strategy in the FMCG sector, i.e., lack of knowledge and skills (1), organizational barriers (2), lack of systematic approach (3), failure to prioritize objectives (4), hostile corporate culture (5), changing consumer preferences (6), product innovation (7), market expansion (8), operational efficiencies (9), technological barriers (10), confusion (11), integrated marketing communication (12), lack of marketing leadership (13), lack of market-focused strategic flexibility (14), lack of business education and training (15), and complex structure and processes (16). The results of ISM modeling revealed that organizational barriers (2), failure to prioritize objectives (4), hostile corporate culture (5), changing consumer preferences (6), market expansion (8), operational efficiencies (9), technological barriers (10), confusion (11), lack of marketing leadership (13), lack of market-focused strategic flexibility (14), lack of business education and training (15), and complex structure and processes (16) occupy Level I. Lack of systematic approach (3), product innovation (7), and integrated marketing communication (12) occupy Level II. Lack of knowledge and skills (1) occupies Level III. The results of scale-centric driving-dependence diagram (Figure 2) revealed that independent, dependent, and autonomous quadrants are empty, whereas all factors, i.e., lack of knowledge and skills (1), organizational barriers (2), lack of systematic approach (3), failure to prioritize objectives (4), hostile corporate culture (5), changing consumer preferences (6), product innovation (7), market expansion (8), operational efficiencies (9), technological barriers (10), confusion (11), integrated marketing communication (12), lack of marketing leadership (13), lack of market-focused strategic flexibility (14), lack of business education and training (15), and complex structure and processes (16), fall in linkage cluster. The results of the data-centric driving-dependence diagram (Figure 3) revealed that lack of knowledge and skills (1) falls in the independent quadrant, barriers failure to prioritize objectives (4), and hostile corporate culture (5) fall in the dependent quadrant. The autonomous quadrant is empty, and all remaining barriers, i.e., organizational barriers (2), lack of systematic approach (3), changing consumer preferences (6), product innovation (7), market expansion (8), operational efficiencies (9), technological barriers (10), confusion (11), integrated marketing communication (12), lack of marketing leadership (13), lack of market-focused strategic flexibility (14), lack of business education and training (15), and complex structure and processes (16), are categorized in the linkage quadrant. Therefore, as the *Step 13*, juxtaposed results of literature discourse, scale-centric MICMAC analysis, data-centric MICMAC analysis and ISM are represented below as Table 10.

Table 10.
Summarized and Juxtaposed Results of the Study.

Result of Literature Review		Results of Scale-Centric MICMAC Analysis				Results of Data-Centric MICMAC Analysis				Results of ISM	Comments
Co	**Factors**	**Driving**	**Dependence**	**Effectiveness**	**Cluster**	**Driving**	**Dependence**	**Effectiveness**	**Cluster**	**Level**	
1	*Lack of knowledge and skills*	*16*	*14*	*2*	*Linkage*	*16*	*14*	*2*	Independent	*III*	*Key Factor*
2	Organizational barriers	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
3	Lack of a systematic approach	15	15	0	Linkage	15	15	0	Linkage	*II*	
4	Failure to prioritize objectives	14	16	-2	Linkage	14	16	-2	Dependent	*I*	
5	Hostile corporate culture	14	16	-2	Linkage	14	16	-2	Dependent	*I*	
6	Changing consumer preferences	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
7	Product innovation	16	15	1	Linkage	16	15	1	Linkage	*II*	
8	Market expansion	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
9	Operational efficiencies	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
10	Technological barriers	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
11	Confusion	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
12	Integrated marketing communication	16	15	1	Linkage	16	15	1	Linkage	*II*	
13	Lack of marketing leadership	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
14	Lack of market-focused strategic flexibility	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
15	Lack of business education and training	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	
16	Complex structure and processes	16	16	0	Linkage	16	16	0	Linkage	*I*	

Discussion: The Aim of the study is to analyze the underlying structure of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. The design of the study includes a review of literature, primary data collection, structural modeling, and analysis. Data are collected from a panel of experts recruited based on predetermined criteria. Literature discourse is adopted to identify a range of barriers, ISM is employed as the method of modeling, and scale-centric and data-centric MICMAC are used as techniques of analysis. From the results of the literature discourse, it can be learned that there are numerous barriers hindering the implementation of marketing strategies in the FMCG sector in Pakistan. This fact can be fairly generalized to other economies of the world. However, this list (Table 1) cannot be claimed as exhaustive; rather, it can be improved through an exhaustive review of the literature. From the results of the ISM model (Figure 1) it can be learned that the lack of a systematic approach (3), product innovation (7), and integrated marketing communication (12) that occupy Level II are moderately critical, whereas the lack of knowledge and skills (1) that occupies Level III is the most critical barrier. They deserve immediate attention from management and policymakers. All other barriers are driven by these and hence are less critical. From the results of scale-centric MICMAC analysis (Figure 2) it could not be distinguished among the barriers. However, data-centric MICMAC analysis (Figure 3) corroborated the results of the ISM model, i.e., lack of knowledge and skills (1) is independent, and failure to prioritize objectives (4) and hostile corporate

culture (5) are dependent; all others are linkages. The levels of the model and classification in quadrants in MICMAC analysis can be understood in the light Sushil [57]; Warfield [58]; Godet [59] and Warfield [63]. The study has profound practical and theoretical implications for FMCG firms, investors, investment analysts, managers, the government, and policymakers since it provides a lot of new information about the inter-barrier relationships and offers deeper insights to all these stakeholders. However, it also has a few limitations. Firstly, the study is designed based on a limited literature extract of barriers, and this list could have been made more robust. Secondly, it is a qualitative study; the results need to be corroborated through some statistical models. Thirdly, evidence is collected from one country, i.e., Pakistan; therefore, to generalize the results, it is advised to replicate the study in different contexts to ratify the results.

4. Conclusion

FMCG sector is vital because it offers essential daily necessities, energizes economic growth through employment and revenue generation, and fuels the retail and distribution sectors. The research problem under investigation is the identification and analysis of the barriers in the implementation of marketing strategies in the FMCG sector in Pakistan. The aim of the study is to analyze the underlying structure of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. The design of the study includes a review of literature, primary data collection, structural modeling, and analysis. Data are collected from a panel of experts recruited based on predetermined criteria. Literature discourse is adopted to identify a range of barriers, ISM is employed as the modeling method, and scale-centric and data-centric MICMAC are used as analysis techniques. The ISM model (Figure 1) reveals that barriers coded as (2), (4), (5), (6), (8), (9), (10), (11), (13), (14), (15), and (16) occupy Level I; barriers coded as (3), (7), and (12) occupy Level II; and barrier (1) occupies Level III. The scale-centric driving-dependence diagram (Figure 2) reveals that independent, dependent, and autonomous quadrants are empty, whereas, all factors i.e. coded as (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), and (16), fall in linkage cluster. The data- centric driving-dependence diagram (Figure 3) reveals that the barrier coded as (1) falls in the independent quadrant, barriers coded as (4) and (5) fall in the dependent quadrant, the autonomous quadrant is empty, and all remaining barriers, i.e., (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), and (16), are categorized in the linkage quadrant. It is an original study built on real-time data collected from stakeholders that uses a unique type of non-traditional data analysis techniques and provides different and in-depth insights into the phenomenon. This study is useful for marketers, management of FMCG companies, regulators, researchers, and customers because it offers an understanding of the underlying structures of the contextual relations of barriers in implementing marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. It contributes a list of barriers, a structural model, and scale- and data-centric driving-dependence diagrams to contemporary literature, providing new information subject to certain limitations of qualitative research. It is pertinent to note that the study has numerous theoretical and practical contributions to contemporary literature, which are specifically mentioned in the last part of the introduction section. The authors, recognizing the needs of stakeholders for removing these barriers in applied situations, have formulated a set of policy guidelines based on the study's results. Therefore, policymakers and stakeholders should: i) appreciate that a multitude of barriers can be detected from contemporary literature, as some of them have been identified in this study; ii) realize that barriers in the implementation of FMCG marketing strategies need to be addressed holistically; iii) consider that addressing the barrier 'lack of knowledge and skill (1)' is key, as it is the primary driver of all remaining barriers; and iv) recognize that barriers such as 'lack of systematic approach (3)', 'product innovation (7)', and 'integrated marketing communication (12)' are also vital and require high attention. Other barriers are driven; hence, they attain the least importance within the system. v) Since none of the barriers have low driving and low dependence, or to say none of them is autonomous of the system, this fact indicates that all the barriers studied are relevant, important, and vital to the system under study. vi) All the barriers are categorized in linkage clusters in terms of scale-centric MICMAC analysis, except for the barriers coded as 1, 4, and 5 in data-centric MICMAC analysis. This result leads policymakers to understand that the barriers are agile, uncertain, unsystematic, and capable of affecting each other and, in turn, themselves. Therefore, policymakers need to exercise extra caution when taking action on the barriers during the implementation of FMCG strategies. vii) In light of the study's results, policymakers are also advised to investigate the situation in different contexts, with different sets of respondents, using various structural methodologies, and with a more exhaustive list of barriers.

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Annexure 1

A Structural Analysis of Barriers in Implementing Marketing Strategies in FMCG Sector: An Empirical Evidence from Pakistan

We are conducting research regarding the title mentioned above. Your input will be a valuable contribution to our research work. This questionnaire will be used solely for research purposes in combined statistical statements.

Section-1.

Personal Information

Name:

Designation:

Phone:

Demographics:

Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female	**Marital Status**	☐ Married ☐ Single
Age Group	☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ Above 50	**Qualification**	☐ 16 Years education ☐ Above 16
Income (in thousands)	☐ <40 ☐ 40-80 ☐ 81-100 ☐ 101-200 ☐ 201-300 ☐ Above 300	**Experience**	☐ 5 - 10 Years ☐ 10 -15 Years ☐ Above 20

Section 2: Research Questionnaire

1. Contextual Relationship = leads to
2. What to enter in the white cells?

- Enter **V** when the row influences the column
- Enter **A** when the column influences the row
- Enter **O** when there is no relation between the row and the column
- Enter **X** when row and column influence

Code/Desc.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**
1	Lack of knowledge and skills																
2	Organizational barriers																
3	Lack of a systematic approach																
4	Failure to prioritize objectives																
5	Hostile corporate culture																
6	Changing consumer preferences																
7	Product innovation																
8	Market expansion																
9	Operational efficiencies																
10	Technological barriers																
11	Confusion																
12	Integrated marketing communication																
13	Lack of marketing leadership																
14	Lack of market-focused strategic flexibility																
15	Lack of business education and training																
16	Complex structure and processes																