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PAKISTAN'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY TRADE FACILITATION WITH AFRICA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF KENYA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Exploring the role of business companies in facilitating trade between Pakistan and Africa, this paper focuses in particular on Kenya and South Africa . It examines the impact of these companies on bilateral trade relations, lessons learned from the trade facilitation experiences of Pakistan's business community in Kenya and South Africa and their implications for future trade partnerships.

Design/Methodology: The study utilizes qualitative and quantitative content analysis approach and a comparative analysis method to compare and contrast the role of business companies in trade facilitation between Pakistan, Kenya and South Africa, particularly after the launch of Pakistan's Look Africa policy in 2017 and thereafter Engage Africa Initiative in 2019.

Findings: The key trade facilitation initiatives by Pakistan's business community in Kenya and South Africa have certainly impacted bilateral trade relations, leading to increased trade volumes and export diversification. Major challenges including trade barriers and logistics issues have been addressed through strategic measures and collaboration. The trade facilitation experiences provide significant lessons for future partnerships, emphasizing sector-specific promotion as well as stakeholder engagement.

Originality: There is limited research on trade relations between Pakistan and African countries. Thus this paper contributes a unique perspective by exploring the trade facilitation initiatives, challenges and lessons learned from the viewpoint of Pakistan's business community. Furthermore, the incorporation of network theory as a conceptual framework contributes to the originality of this research.

Keywords: *Pakistan-Africa trade, Trade facilitation, Business community*

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Pakistan has shown a renewed commitment to strengthen its trade and investment ties with African countries. It has initiated an Africa policy aimed at expanding trade partnerships and endorsing investment opportunities in the continent by identifying the vast potential for economic collaboration (Sithole, 2022). In this context, Kenya and South Africa have emerged as linchpins for Pakistan's trade facilitation efforts from among the top ten African countries prioritized by the country (Ali, 2022). The engagement of Pakistan with Kenya and South Africa has been characterized by a series of strategic initiatives as well as activities. Pakistan has organized symposiums, exhibitions and business forums in both Kenya as well as South Africa. This initiative of Pakistan has created platforms for interaction and dialogue between the business communities of the respective nations. These proceedings have served as catalysts for fostering relationships, exploring trade opportunities and expanding economic cooperation (Editorial, 2022).

Pakistan has identified key trade sectors that hold noteworthy potential for collaboration with Kenya and South Africa with a focus on sector-specific promotion. These sectors cover a range of industries such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, agribusiness, information technology and construction. Pakistan's aim is to prioritize these sectors is to leverage its strengths and expertise to facilitate trade as well as investment flow that will create mutually beneficial outcomes for both Pakistan and its African counterparts (Anouar, 2022). The research questions guiding this study were designed to bring about a better understanding of the trade facilitation initiatives, challenges faced and lessons learned from Pakistan's engagement with Kenya and South Africa. The research aims to shed light on the dynamics and relationships between Pakistan's business community and stakeholders in Kenya and South Africa through a comprehensive analysis of the trade facilitation network.

In the case of Kenya, trade relations between the two countries have witnessed significant growth in recent years. As one of the largest economies in East Africa, Kenya presents numerous opportunities for trade and investment for Pakistan (Telecom Review Africa, 2023). The trade engagement between Pakistan and Kenya encompasses a range of sectors including textiles, pharmaceuticals and agriculture, machinery and information technology. Both countries have engaged in trade promotion activities such as exhibitions, business forums and bilateral trade agreements to improve economic cooperation as well as to explore untapped trade potential (Andae, 2023).

Pakistan's trade engagement with South Africa has also gained momentum. As the largest economy on the African continent, South Africa offers a wide-ranging opportunities for trade and investment for Pakistan. Bilateral trade between the two countries has been characterized by the exchange of goods such as textiles, chemicals, leather products, and machinery (DNA, 2022). Both nations have made

efforts to promote trade and investment through high-level visits, participation in trade fairs and the enterprise of business collaborations. Pakistan's trade engagement with Kenya and South Africa is driven by shared goals of economic growth, diversification of trade and mutual benefits (Altaf, 2022).

The governments of Pakistan, Kenya and South Africa have recognized the potential for increased trade and have taken steps to boost trade facilitation as well as address any existing barriers. These efforts include the simplification of trade procedures, endorsement of business partnerships and the establishment of institutional frameworks to facilitate trade flows. The trade engagement between Pakistan and both Kenya and South Africa serves as a podium for expanding economic ties, exploring new markets and fostering a communally beneficial relationship (Salahuddin, 2021). It is essential to further strengthen cooperation, address challenges and capitalize on the unexploited potential for increased trade as well as investment between Pakistan, Kenya and South Africa.

The paper aims to deal with three basic research questions. These are presented below:

What are the key trade facilitation initiatives undertaken by Pakistan's business community in Kenya and South Africa and how have these initiatives influenced bilateral trade relations?

What are the major challenges faced by Pakistan's business community in facilitating trade with Kenya and South Africa and how have these challenges been overcome or addressed?

What are the lessons learned from the trade facilitation experiences in Kenya and South Africa and how can these lessons enlighten future trade partnerships between Pakistan and other African countries?

As the aim of this study was to analyze and explore Pakistan's trade facilitation efforts with Kenya and South Africa, the study explored the role of business companies, identifying opportunities, challenges and best practices for enhancing trade as well as investment between the countries.

Undoubtedly, there is a huge gap of research on Pakistan-Africa relations, not only in trade but also in coverage of other areas. This study fills a noteworthy gap in the existing literature by exploring Pakistan's trade facilitation efforts with Kenya and South Africa. It provides insights into the factors contributing to the trade deficit and the comparatively low trade volume between Pakistan and these nations. By exploring the role of business companies and their activities in trade exhibitions as well as promotions, the study sheds light on the potential areas for improvement and strategies to improve trade relations. This research contributes to the understanding of Pakistan's Africa policy and offers significant recommendations to policymakers and business communities on how to bridge the gap and foster reciprocally beneficial trade partnerships with Kenya, South Africa and other African countries.

Network theory serves as a theoretical lens for understanding the role of business companies in facilitating trade between Pakistan and Africa. It provides a framework to analyze and explain the dynamics of business networks, their structure and the flow of information, resources, as well as collaboration within these networks (Todeva, 2014). This framework is relevant to the research topic for the reason that this explores knowledge about network formation, exchange information, resource mobilization (García and Carter, 2022) trust and cooperation (Storonyanska & Mieszajkina, 2022) and network effects among business community. Researchers can distinguish the motivations, strategies and challenges faced by business companies in building trade networks (Dykan, 2021), impact of these networks and promoting economic cooperation as well as the factors that persuade trust-building process between Pakistan and Africa.

OVERVIEW OF PAKISTAN AFRICA POLICY INITIATIVE

Africa had deep historic relations with Pakistan, which had history dating back from the period of its anti-colonial struggle. Pakistan had provided moral and diplomatic support to African countries to get freedom from the colonial powers (Muzafar, Yaseen and Ishfaq 2016). Pakistan is considered as the highest security partner of most of the African states and has fought back to maintain the peace as well as security in the region through UN peacekeeping operations (Krishnan, 2018).

Pakistan had not formulated clear foreign policy objectives, long term strategy towards Africa that can emancipate the hidden potential for its economic and political relations with the continent as it enjoys with other world regions, in spite of mutual cooperation in the development of peace and institutions in the region. The major phases of Pakistan's foreign policy up till 2017, had not addressed the precise relationship between the African countries in terms of economic cooperation since the independence of Pakistan in 1947 (Saffee 2017). The African continent is very important, dynamic and rich in natural reserves, mineral resources as well as raw materials. Consequently, Africa is a continent with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) representing at the value of \$2.60 trillion US Dollars and an expanding market of around 1.36 billion people that has a huge economic potential (Begashaw 2020). In addition to this, Africa is a vibrant continent that is building rapid economic growth, expanding its infrastructure and connecting itself globally (Ahmadani, 2023).

Pakistan has given importance to develop further economic relations with Africa by formulating the "Look Africa Policy Initiative" approach in 2019. The Government of Pakistan in collaboration with Ministry of Commerce and Pakistan Development Authority has arranged an international conference in Kenyan capital on the trade development to identify the areas for enhanced engagement, south-south cooperation and bilateral trade as well as economic opportunities. Pakistan has selected top ten African countries and important African trading blocs to discuss bilateral agreements as well as prioritized six sectors to promote its exports to African countries (Raza, 2020). These highly approached African countries are

Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Morocco, Senegal, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia as well as Tanzania being premier economies from the African region (Bugchio, Z. N, 2021). Pakistan's overall trade with Africa is \$3 billion as against the full trade capacity of \$3 trillion. Pakistan's contribution in the total trade of African countries was 0.3 percent (Look Africa Policy Initiative, 2019).

The "Look Africa Policy Initiative" can be regarded as a vision for the relations between Pakistan and Africa for their economic partnership to achieve full trade potential through the articulation of priorities as well as new directions (Khan, M. Z. (2017). Pakistan is focusing to engage with the African continent to enhance economic relations and especially the preferential trade agreements with the African trading blocs as well as business communities which are essentially the Southern African Customs Union, East African Community (EAC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Pakistan's Africa policy aligns with the BRI, which endorses regional connectivity and economic integration. The BRI offers opportunities for Pakistan to strengthen its trade ties with East African countries and explore new avenues for collaboration. Both Kenya and South Africa are signatories to the AfCFTA, a milestone initiative aimed at creating a single market for goods and services in Africa (Khan, Naidu, & Muresan, 2021). Pakistan has expressed interest in engaging with the AfCFTA and exploring opportunities for trade and investment within the framework of this continental trade agreement (Asif, 2023). Active participation in the AfCFTA can guide to enhanced market access and increased trade volumes between Pakistan, Kenya, South Africa as well as other African countries (Baliño, 2021). Kenya and South Africa are members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, a regional organization promoting economic cooperation, trade and investment among Indian Ocean Rim countries. Participation in IORA provides a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing and collaboration on a range of economic initiatives including maritime trade, blue economy, and tourism and infrastructure development.

Exploring Pakistan's Engagement with Kenya

Why did Pakistan Prioritize Kenya?

Pakistan preferred to engage with Kenya as it is the most important and big industrial economy in East Africa. Kenya is a gateway to East as well as Central African states because it provides financial and logistical services to the region (Siddiqui, 2019). The key constituents of the economy of Kenya are agriculture or horticulture and small scale industry with the total GDP of \$95.5 billion in 2019. Moreover, Kenya has a liberalized trade system at regional and global level. The largest exports of Kenya include tea, which reports 22.9 percent share in Kenya's global exports in addition to other exports of Kenya are trees as well as mineral products. The global trade of Kenya was set at \$23.6 billion along with approximated exports to \$5.84 billion and imports to \$17.22 billion in 2019 (Khan, U.E 2022).

Pakistan-Kenya Bilateral Trade (2018-2021)

The aggregated position of trade in goods between Pakistan and Kenya was at the value of \$730.56 million along with total exports to Kenya approached at the value of \$289.38 million and imports from Kenya at \$441.18 million in 2018-20 (Trading Economics Online, 2021). The overall trade in services between Pakistan and Kenya remained at \$15.64 along exports to Kenya at \$5.82 million and imports from Kenya at \$9.82 million in 2018-20. Pakistan's trade balance Kenya has remained in deficit which shows a negative trade of Pakistan with Kenya with the rise of imports as well as decrease of exports since 2017. Recently, Pakistan and Kenya are trying to evaluate trade agreements for further economic relations (Too 2021).

Pakistan's Major Exports to Kenya

The highest export sector of Pakistan to Kenya is agriculture which makes up seventy three percent shares in Pakistan's export to Kenya. Other top ten exports to Kenya are rice, clothing, medication mixture, cotton, sugar confectionery, furniture, wooden materials and chemical products, knotted nets of rope or cordage (Mahmood, T., & Arshed, N. (2022).

Pakistan's Major Imports from Kenya

Pakistan's important import sector from Kenya is agriculture which is approximately 89.1 percent in total. The largest sector of import from Kenya is black tea, which shares 96 percent in total imports from Kenya. Additional top imports from Kenya are dry vegetables, all types of skins of animals, carbonates, flower bouquets, tanning extracts of vegetables and derivatives, natural oleoresins and coconut (Ngugi, 2020).

Role of Business Companies in Facilitating Trade

Trade Promotion Activities

Business companies from Pakistan and Kenya play an energetic role in promoting bilateral trade. They organize trade exhibitions, business forums and pertinent events to connect businesses from countries, facilitating trade interactions as well as development partnerships. The Ministry of Commerce organized the Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, from January 30-31, 2020. Over 200 delegates from 20 African countries participated in the conference, as well as officials and businessmen. The conference aimed to promote trade and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Africa. (Wasike, 2020).

The Pakistani business delegation, led by the Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, attended the conference. The Foreign Minister and

Trade Minister of Kenya, along with the State Minister of Trade from Uganda, were also there. The Kenyan government provided full support for the event, and it was inaugurated by President Uhuru Kenyatta.

The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) arranged a delegation of over 100 leading Pakistani companies representing various sectors, including Textile and Apparel, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture, Tractors & Agricultural Implements, Banking and Transportation, Surgical Instruments, Leather & Sports Goods, Light Engineering and Electronics, IT & Software, and Cement & Construction services. The conference provided a platform for Pakistani businesses to explore African markets and set up trade ties, aiming to boost bilateral trade relations and promote economic growth between Pakistan and African countries.

Market Access and Distribution Networks

Pakistani business companies support exporters in accessing the Kenyan market by providing market intelligence, identifying potential buyers and establishing circulation networks (Kahongeh, 2020). They play a fundamental role in market research, identifying consumer preferences, and ensuring effective distribution of Pakistani products in Kenya.

Investment Facilitation

Business companies facilitate investment between Pakistan and Kenya. They make out investment opportunities, provide market information, and facilitate business matchmaking between potential investors as well as local partners (Kahongeh, 2020). Their expertise in navigating the investment background and regulatory environment contributes to the growth of bilateral investments.

Challenges Faced by Business Companies and Strategies Adopted

Business companies face trade barriers and regulatory challenges, such as non-tariff barriers and cumbersome customs procedures. They engage in dialogues with government authorities and trade associations to advocate for trade facilitation measures and policy reforms to overcome these challenges. Business companies address challenges connected to capacity building and skills development through training programs, technical support and knowledge-sharing initiatives (Bishnoi & Kumari, 2020). They collaborate with local partners to enhance skills and expertise in sectors of communal interest. Business companies energetically engage with government authorities to advocate for a suitable business environment. They contribute in policy dialogues, provide feedback on trade policies and emphasize issues faced by businesses. They work towards creating an enabling environment for trade and investment through collaborative efforts (Fatima, 2023).

Exploring Pakistan's Engagement with South Africa

Why did Pakistan Select South Africa?

Pakistan has chosen South Africa to promote trade relations with the fact that it is an emerging market that can supply plentiful of natural resources such as gold, chromium, coal, iron, manganese, nickel, uranium, phosphate, diamond as well as natural gas. South Africa is advanced in finance, communication, energy as well as transport sectors (Pakistan aims to double trade with Africa in five year The News, 2020). GDP of South Africa was at the value of \$351.4 billion in 2019. Moreover, South Africa's stock exchange is among highest twentieth stock exchange markets around the world and representing as Africa's largest market. By and large the global trade of South Africa was estimated at the value of \$178.64 billion along with global exports at \$90.42 billion and imports calculated at \$88.22 billion in 2019. The largest global export sectors of South Africa are natural or cultured pearls which make up the total 17 percent share of global exports. The top import sectors of South Africa include mineral fuels which share 16 percent of total global imports with additional imports of mechanical appliances (Madikiza, Personal Communication, 2021, 2023).

Pakistan-South Africa Bilateral Trade (2018-21)

According to trading economics and other trade forums, the full trade in goods between Pakistan and South Africa has grown at \$1120.63 million along with exports to South Africa at \$179.71 million and imports from South Africa at \$940.92 million in 2018-20. But total trade dropped to \$762.44 million in 2020-21 (Trading Economic, 2021). Pakistan's trade balance with South Africa has remained in deficit which shows a negative trade of Pakistan with South Africa with the increase of imports as well as decrease of exports since 2013.

Pakistan's Major Exports to South Africa

Pakistan's most significant exports to South Africa are textiles and apparel, rice, paper, cement and leather garments. Other additional exports are woven cotton fabrics and men's clothing.

Pakistan's Major Imports to South Africa

Pakistan's most important import sectors from South Africa are coal, ferrous waste and alloys, plastics, food preparation, alcohols, polymers and motor cars.

Role of Business Companies in Facilitating Trade

Trade Promotion Activities

Business companies play an imperative role in promoting trade between Pakistan and South Africa. They actively participate in trade exhibitions, business forums, and investment conferences to facilitate trade interactions and build networks between Pakistani and South African companies. In December 2022, the third conference under the "Look Africa Policy initiative" took place in South Africa. The Ministry of Commerce organized the Pakistan-South Africa Trade Development Conference, with the purpose of strengthening trade and economic ties between the two countries (ProPK Staff, 2022).

The conference brought together delegates from Pakistan and South Africa including officials and businessmen. It served as a platform for promoting bilateral trade and exploring fresh business opportunities. The conference received significant support from the South African government, emphasizing their commitment to fostering trade relations with Pakistan. During the conference, a delegation of prominent Pakistani companies, selected by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), showcased their offerings in a range of sectors. The Pakistan-South Africa Trade Development Conference aimed to facilitate business collaborations, encourage investment, and increase trade volumes between the two countries (Kundi, 2022). The conference sought to pave the way for mutual growth and prosperity by bringing together key stakeholders as well as highlighting the potential in various sectors.

Market Access and Distribution Networks

Pakistani business companies have helped out exporters in accessing the South African market by providing market intelligence, identifying potential buyers and establishing distribution networks. They contribute to the expansion of market reach for Pakistani products in South Africa (Ilyas, 2021).

Investment Facilitation

Business companies facilitate investment between Pakistan and South Africa by identifying investment opportunities, providing market insights and connecting potential investors with local partners. They play a central function in attracting Pakistani investment in sectors such as agriculture, energy and infrastructure in South Africa (Rashid A & Anjum Ghauri, 2020).

Challenges Faced by Business Companies and Strategies Adopted

Trade Barriers and Regulatory Challenges

Business companies have come across trade barriers and regulatory challenges such as customs procedures, non-tariff barriers, and complex regulations. They engage in dialogue with government authorities, trade associations and relevant stakeholders

to advocate for trade facilitation measures as well as streamlined regulations to overcome these challenges (Khan, Dr.U.A, 2022). Infrastructure gaps such as transportation and logistics pose challenges to trade between Pakistan and South Africa. Business companies address these challenges by collaborating with logistics service providers, advocating for infrastructure development and exploring innovative solutions to get better connectivity as well as efficiency (Khaliq, Nadeem, & Abbasi, 2022). Differences in business practices, cultural norms and market dynamics can pose challenges to trade. Business companies employ strategies such as market research, cultural sensitivity and establishing local partnerships to navigate these challenges as well as to promote effective business relationships (Khan, A.A, 2021).

Pakistan's Engagement with Kenya and South Africa: A Comparative Analysis Trade Promotion Activities

Pakistani companies have actively organized various trade promotion activities in both Kenya and South Africa. In Kenya, remarkable events included the Pakistan-Kenya Trade Expo and the Pakistan-Kenya Business Forum. Correspondingly, in South Africa, the Pakistan-South Africa Trade Expo and the Pakistan-South Africa Business Summit were organized. These events served as platforms for Pakistani businesses to showcase their products, explore business opportunities and establish connections with local companies. The trade exhibitions, business forums and connecting events organized both in Kenya and South Africa were proved to be highly effective. These promotional events have successfully produced awareness about Pakistani products and services in the respective markets. These activities facilitated direct interactions between Pakistani exporters and potential buyers, resulting in the formation of new business contacts. Moreover, these events have provided significant opportunities for knowledge sharing, market intelligence and understanding the local market dynamics (Ahmad, 2022). The impact of these activities can be measured by the number of business deals, contracts and partnerships that took place as a result of the engagements.

Market Access and Distribution Networks

Pakistani companies have implemented various strategies to overcome trade barriers and facilitate market access both in Kenya and South Africa. These strategies included comprehensive market research to understand the local demand and preferences, product adaptation to meet specific market requirements, and collaboration with local trade associations as well as business chambers. Pakistani companies have also actively engaged with trade promotion organizations and government agencies to navigate trade barriers as well as regulatory frameworks. Pakistani companies have productively established distribution networks both in Kenya and South Africa. They have accomplished this by forging partnerships with local distributors, agents and retailers. Pakistani companies have ensured the

efficient and widespread distribution of their products through direct exports, establishing local warehousing facilities as well as leveraging collaborations with customary distribution channels. They have focused on maintaining reliable supply chains and establishing strong customer service networks to address challenges related to logistics and after-sales support (Amir and Khan 2020).

Investment Facilitation

According to Trade Development Conferences that was held in Kenya and South Africa, Pakistani companies have keenly promoted investment opportunities both in Kenya and South Africa. They have targeted sectors such as manufacturing, infrastructure, energy and agriculture. Business companies have organized investment road shows, business seminars and coordinating events to attract potential investors. Pakistani companies have also collaborated directly with local investment agencies and government bodies to provide comprehensive investment-related information as well as assistance (Sulaiman, 2022). In Kenya, successful Pakistani investment projects were made in the textile sector, manufacturing and agro-processing industries. Hence, In South Africa, Pakistani investments were made in sectors such as telecommunications, information technology and construction. These investments often led to the development of partnerships between Pakistani and local companies that have facilitated joint ventures as well as technology transfers.

Identification of Commonalities, Differences and Patterns

Both Kenya and South Africa have benefitted from trade exhibitions, business forums and relevant events organized by Pakistani companies. Pakistani businesses have faced similar challenges related to market access, regulatory compliance and cultural adaptation in both countries. Therefore, common strategies that have been utilized were establishing strong networks, conducting market research and adapting products to local preferences. Kenya and South Africa have distinct market sizes, consumer preferences and regulatory frameworks. Kenya offers opportunities in the agriculture and services sectors, while South Africa boasts a larger market and a more diversified economy. The business environments in each country also possess unique challenges and requirements that necessitate tailored approaches for effective trade facilitation.

In analyzing the patterns and trends observed in Pakistan's engagement with Kenya and South Africa, several noteworthy aspects have emerged:

Pakistani companies recognized the importance of building strong networks and establishing collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders in both countries. This approach has allowed them to gain valuable insights into the local market, navigate regulatory frameworks more effectively and promote mutually beneficial

business relationships. Pakistani companies have strategically targeted specific sectors for trade promotion and investment facilitation based on the market potential and demand in each country (Bughio, 2021). For instance, the agriculture sector, including rice and sugar exports, played a significant role in trade promotion activities both in Kenya and South Africa. Meanwhile, investments in sectors such as telecommunications, information technology and construction were prioritized in South Africa. Pakistani companies have actively engaged with relevant government bodies, trade promotion organizations and investment agencies both in Kenya and South Africa. This collaborative approach has helped in leveraging government support, accessing market information and overcoming regulatory barriers. Ultimately, this has enhanced trade facilitation and investment promotion efforts. Pakistani companies have demonstrated flexibility by adapting their products and services to align with local preferences as well as requirements. This approach has allowed them to accommodate effectively to the diverse consumer base in Kenya and South Africa, enhancing market acceptance and facilitating market access (Rafique, 2020). The trade promotion, market access and investment facilitation strategies have evolved to align with changing market dynamics as well as emerging opportunities throughout Pakistan's engagement with Kenya and South Africa. Pakistani companies have demonstrated a capability to adapt their approaches based on lessons learned, emerging trends and feedback from local partners to ensure consistent improvement as well as effectiveness in their engagements.

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis is an organized method used for analyzing and interpreting textual, visual and audio data (Rössler, 2013). It involves categorizing and analyzing various sources such as trade reports, policy documents and promotional materials to identify patterns as well as themes related to Pakistan's trade facilitation efforts with Kenya and South Africa. Comparative analysis involves comparing and contrasting different variables or cases to uncover similarities, differences and relationships (Cho, J. Y., & Lee, E. H. (2014)). In this study, comparative analysis is used to explore trade promotion activities, market access, distribution networks and investment facilitation in both countries.

The data for content analysis was extracted from various sources such as interviews, trade reports, policy documents, business publications, promotional materials and pertinent literature on Pakistan's trade relations with Kenya and South Africa. These sources were selected based on their relevance and reliability in providing information about trade facilitation efforts, business activities as well as trade statistics. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative analysis involved identifying patterns, themes and trends, whereas quantitative analysis included statistical analysis of trade data and numerical trends (Vaismoradi & Bondas, 2013).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Pakistan's engagement with Kenya and South Africa has yielded a number of key findings concerning trade and investment between these countries. These results and findings shed light on the patterns, challenges and opportunities in Pakistan's trade relations with both Kenya and South Africa.

Preference for Kenya

Pakistan's selection for engaging with Kenya is motivated by Kenya's status as a major industrial economy in East Africa and its strategic position as a gateway to the region. Kenya's liberalized trade system, diverse export portfolio and condition of financial as well as logistical services make it an eye-catching partner for Pakistan.

Trade Performance with Kenya

The trade achievement between Pakistan and Kenya has shown fluctuations, with Pakistan experiencing a trade deficit. Though, efforts have been made to evaluate trade agreements and enhance economic relations. Agriculture, particularly horticulture, has emerged as the dominant export sector from Pakistan to Kenya.

Preference for South Africa

Pakistan has chosen to engage with South Africa due to its emerging market status and plentiful natural resources. South Africa's advanced sectors in communication, finance, energy and transportation have captured Pakistan's concentration for trade partnerships.

Trade Performance with South Africa

Bilateral trade between Pakistan and South Africa has displayed growth over time, although Pakistan continues to face a trade underperformance or deficit. Pakistan's main exports to South Africa include textiles, apparel and other related products, whereas imports mainly consist of coal, plastics and motor vehicles.

Role of Business Companies

Business companies from Pakistan have played a significant role in facilitating trade between Pakistan and both Kenya and South Africa. They have organized trade exhibitions, business forums and networking events to connect businesses from both sides as well as promote trade interactions. Business companies have also supported exporters in accessing the Kenyan and South African markets providing them marketplace intelligence and facilitating investment between the countries.

Trade Promotion Activities

Business companies have energetically engaged in trade promotion activities such as organizing or participating in exhibitions and events to facilitate trade between Pakistan and both Kenya and South Africa. These activities have played a central role in building networks, fostering partnerships and expanding market reach.

Market Access and Distribution Networks

Business companies have contributed to market access and distribution of networks. They have provided market intelligence, helped in identifying prospective purchasers and establishing distribution channels. They have assisted Pakistani exporters in navigating the markets of Kenya and South Africa and to make effective distribution of products.

Investment Facilitation

Business companies have made promising investment between Pakistan and both Kenya and South Africa. They have identified investment opportunities, provided market insights and coupled potential investors with local partners. Their efforts have contributed to attracting Pakistani investment in different sectors.

Challenges and Strategies

Business companies have faced challenges interrelated to trade barriers, regulatory issues, infrastructure gaps and cultural differences. They have been engaged in dialogue with government authorities, trade associations and relevant stakeholders to overcome these challenges. They are the supporters for trade facilitation measures, streamlined regulations and infrastructure development. The capacity building, collaboration and cultural understanding have been fundamental approaches adopted to tackle challenges.

Nevertheless, the results of the analysis and discussions emphasize the significance of sector-specific approaches, collaboration and advocacy in promoting trade and investment. They provide valuable insights into the dynamics of Pakistan's trade relations with Kenya and South Africa and the strategies employed to overcome challenges. These findings can enlighten future trade facilitation efforts, help identify new opportunities and strengthen economic partnerships between Pakistan and African countries.

DISCUSSION

Pakistan's decision to prioritize engagement with Kenya is based on its status as a key industrial economy in East Africa and its role as a gateway to the region. Kenya's liberalized trade system and strong financial and logistical services make it an attractive trade partner for Pakistan. The bilateral trade between Pakistan and Kenya has shown mixed trends. The total trade in goods between the two countries has fluctuated, with Pakistan experiencing a trade deficit. In recent years, efforts have been made to evaluate trade agreements to further strengthen economic relations. Pakistan's major exports to Kenya primarily revolve around the agriculture sector with a significant share in rice, clothing, medication mixtures and other products. Pakistan's major imports from Kenya mainly consist of agricultural products, with black tea being the largest import. Other imports include dry vegetables, animal skins, carbonates, and tanning extracts. Business companies have played a crucial role in facilitating trade between Pakistan and Kenya. They engaged in trade promotion activities, provide market access and distribution networks and facilitate investments. They face challenges such as trade barriers and regulatory issues but employ strategies to overcome them.

Pakistan's engagement with South Africa is driven by South Africa's emerging market status and its abundant natural resources. South Africa's advanced sectors such as finance, communication, energy and transport, make it an attractive trade partner for Pakistan. The bilateral trade between Pakistan and South Africa has experienced fluctuations, with Pakistan having a trade deficit. However, the total trade in goods between the two countries has grown over time. Pakistan's major exports to South Africa include textiles and apparel, rice, paper, cement, and leather garments. Other exports include woven cotton fabrics and men's clothing. Pakistan's major imports from South Africa consist of coal, ferrous waste and alloys, plastics, food preparation items, alcohols, polymers, and motor cars. Business companies play a vital role in trade facilitation between Pakistan and South Africa. They engage in trade promotion activities, facilitate market access and distribution networks, and support investments. They encounter challenges such as trade barriers and infrastructure gaps but employ strategies to overcome them.

LESSONS LEARNED AND PRACTICES FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Pakistan's engagement with Kenya and South Africa in terms of trade facilitation has yielded important lessons and identified best practices for promoting trade and investment between Pakistan as well as African countries. Based on these experiences, the following lessons, best practices and recommendations are presented below:

- Build full-bodied networks with local stakeholders including government bodies, trade associations and business chambers, to expand market insights, navigate regulations and foster long-term relationships.

- Accomplish comprehensive market research to understand local demands, preferences and regulatory requirements, adapting products and services accordingly.
- Adjust to local preferences and cultural nuances to ensure market acceptance as well as enhance competitiveness.
- Engage with government bodies and trade promotion organizations to access market information, navigate trade barriers and leverage support as well as investment opportunities.
- Target sectors that have high growth potential and demand such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, IT as well as construction.
- Promote investment through road shows, seminars and networking events to showcase Pakistan's investment potential.
- Address trade barriers by working directly with authorities to streamline processes, simplify trade procedures and advocate for the elimination of non-tariff barriers.
- Focus on capacity building through training, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing platforms.
- Foster cultural understanding and effective communication to build trust as well as nurture long-term relationships.
- Collaborate with local distribution networks including distributors, agents and retailers to ensure efficient product distribution as well as after-sales support.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While this study has provided important insights into Pakistan's business companies role in Kenya and South Africa under the Africa policy, there are certain limitations arising from its scope which offer trajectories for further exploration on the topic. Firstly, future studies should focus on examining the business initiatives and engagement strategies executed under the Africa policy in other African countries. This would provide a more inclusive understanding of Pakistan's trade relations across the entire African continent. Additionally, investigating the challenges and problems faced by business companies in these countries would contribute to identifying areas for improvement and developing effective strategies. By conducting more interviews and gathering primary data from business representatives, policymakers and other stakeholders, future research can provide a deeper understanding of the outcomes as well as the effectiveness of these initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan's engagement with Kenya and South Africa in trade and investment evidences its commitment to enhancing economic ties with African nations. Kenya is

esteemed for its robustness as an industrial economy and strategic location, whereas South Africa offers a promising market and abundant resources. Efforts have been made to review trade agreements, overcome trade barriers and promote economic relations. The agriculture sector enjoys prominence in Pakistan's exports to Kenya, while advanced sectors attract Pakistan's interest in South Africa. Business companies play a fundamental role in facilitating trade, supporting market entry and promoting investments. Challenges such as trade barriers and cultural differences have been addressed through dialogue as well as partnership. Sector-specific approaches and cooperation between stakeholders are essential. Lessons from these engagements provide significant insights for trade facilitation in African markets. Pakistan should strengthen its economic partnerships, identify new opportunities and address challenges to advance mutually beneficial relations. Leveraging experiences with Kenya and South Africa can help to develop future trade facilitation efforts and establish long-term partnerships with other African nations too.

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