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by Mr Adnan

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Research topic:

Consumer trust and perceptions of reliability in internet, gas, and household services in Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Trust in public utilities and services is fundamental to social and economic wellbeing [1]. In Uzbekistan—a lower-middle-income country with rapid digital adoption—understanding this trust is crucial. Internet penetration in Uzbekistan reached 89% of the population by early 2025 [2], yet infrastructure limitations (e.g. limited local caching) suggest service quality issues [3]. Similarly, Uzbekistan’s gas and electricity sectors are vital for homes and industry, but have faced frequent supply disruptions [4], [5]. For example, severe winter weather in 2022–2023 led to repeated gas shortages and public criticism of energy officials [4]. Consumers’ perceptions of reliability—how consistently services meet needs—strongly influence their trust in providers [6], [7]. For instance, a global survey of appliance buyers found that “brand trustworthiness follows closely as a top-three selection consideration, signaling that perceived reliability remains essential” [7]. In short, reliable service provision is a prerequisite for earning customer trust, which in turn affects satisfaction and adoption of services. However, no comprehensive study has yet measured how Uzbek consumers actually evaluate reliability and trust in these core services. Prior Uzbek surveys have noted generally low institutional trust [8], but have focused on finance or media literacy rather than utilities. The proposed research will fill this gap. Specifically, we will examine (1) how Uzbek consumers perceive the reliability of their internet service, gas supply, and household services; (2) which of these sectors exhibits the largest “trust gap” (the discrepancy between expected versus perceived reliability, or between trust and performance); and (3) what improvements would most effectively enhance consumer trust.

Literature review

In research, trust is defined as the willingness to be vulnerable to a service provider based on positive expectations [1]. Trust has far-reaching effects on institutional performance and economic development [1]. Conversely, a lack of trust can stall innovation and hinder collective goals. Recent global studies highlight a growing “trust gap” between consumers and technology companies [9]. Although those studies focus on data privacy and AI, the underlying message is general: without transparency and reliable performance, even well-designed services fail to gain users’ confidence [9].

Empirical studies of service reliability support this. For example, a Samarkand case study of gas supply found that “system reliability breaches are a major part of consumer complaints” [6]. In other words, reliability (defined as continuous, uninterrupted provision) is a primary quality indicator in gas networks [6]. Likewise, in the white-goods industry, global consumer surveys report that durability and trust dominate purchase decisions [7]. Consumers prize appliances that “last 15–20 years” and indicate they will pay premiums for long-lived products [7].

Despite this, the Uzbek context remains understudied. A recent Uzbek study of digital insurance customers noted the “notable lack of localized studies” on how trust is built in digital services [8]. By extension, consumer trust in utilities is similarly unexplored. Existing literature on Uzbekistan has examined trust in general or in e-commerce [1], [8], but not specifically compared internet, gas, and household services.

Research Questions and Objectives

The central research question is: How do Uzbek consumers evaluate the reliability of internet, gas, and household services, which sector has the largest trust gap, and what strategies would improve consumer trust?

Sub-questions:

RQ1: What are consumers’ perceived reliability levels for internet service, natural gas supply, and household utilities/appliances?

RQ2: Which sector exhibits the largest “trust gap”?

RQ3: What factors most strongly influence trust in each sector, and what improvements would consumers prioritize?

We will also test hypotheses such as: Trust levels differ significantly across sectors, and perceived reliability positively predicts consumer trust in that sector.

Methodology

Mixed-methods approach will be used . Comparative study will be held. A total of 500 participants will be recruited through stratified sampling to ensure balanced representation. In order to assess reliability and trust, each participant will first fill out a standardized questionnaire that collects demographic data and service consumption habits (such as internet access type, gas and electricity provider, and equipment

ownership).² On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes strongly disagree and 5 denotes strongly agree, participants will score statements like "My internet connection is stable and rarely disconnects," "Gas supply interruptions are rare," and "I trust my gas company to provide reliable service" in order to record these perceptions. The survey will be conducted both online and offline over a period of one to two months to reach diverse participants. Data analysis will begin with descriptive statistics to summarize average ratings, followed by inferential tests such as ANOVA to compare trust and reliability levels across sectors, and regression models to identify which factors such as reliability, outages, pricing, or communication best predict consumer trust.³ Open-ended responses will be coded thematically to highlight common suggestions. All statistical tests will use a significance level of $p < 0.05$ to ensure reliable results.

Limitations

Although this study aims to be comprehensive, it has certain limitations. First, rather than objective service performance, the study mainly uses survey data, which may represent subjective opinions. Second, regional differences in service accessibility might not be evenly represented. Third, the extent of data collection and statistical testing may be constrained by time and resource limitations. Lastly, the study's cross-sectional design means it is unable to adequately present the ways in which consumer trust changes over time. However, these restrictions also offer chances for more comparative and longitudinal studies in the future.

Conclusion

This study addresses a gap in understanding consumer trust and service reliability in Uzbekistan. Through rigorous survey methods and inferential analysis, the research collects data about how citizens perceive the stability and quality of these essential services. The findings will not only highlight which sector experiences the greatest trust gap but also solutions. Ultimately, this research aims to improve consumer satisfaction, enhance infrastructure reliability, and foster public confidence in the delivery of household services.

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