



Future-Proofing Data: Assessing the Feasibility of Post-Quantum Cryptographic Algorithms to Mitigate 'Harvest Now, Decrypt Later' Attacks

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This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the feasibility of post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) algorithms in mitigating "Harvest Now, Decrypt Later" (HNDL) attacks as quantum computing advances threaten classical encryption. Using datasets from the NIST Post-Quantum Cryptography Project, Deloitte's PQC Adoption Survey, and IBM & Google Quantum Roadmaps, the study applied statistical modeling, Monte Carlo simulations, and ARIMA forecasting to assess PQC security resilience, adoption readiness, and quantum decryption feasibility. The findings indicate that CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium outperform RSA-2048 and ECC-256 in quantum resistance, with attack cost thresholds exceeding $1.91 \times 10^{101.91}$ compared to $2.24 \times 10^{82.24}$ for RSA-2048. Industry adoption varies, with government PQC implementation at 79%, finance at 67%, and healthcare lagging at 48%. Quantum decryption probability remains negligible until 2029 but rises to 78.6% by 2033. This study addresses the critical challenge of post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) adoption amid growing quantum threats, particularly "Harvest Now, Decrypt Later" (HNDL) attacks. By evaluating PQC security resilience, industry adoption, and quantum decryption feasibility, the findings provide strategic insights for policymakers and cybersecurity experts. Highlighting the vulnerabilities of CRYSTALS-Kyber to side-channel attacks, this research underscores the need for continuous cryptanalysis, hybrid encryption models, and adaptive security frameworks to future-proof data. Organizations must accelerate PQC adoption, integrate hybrid cryptographic models, enforce regulatory policies, and sustain cryptanalysis efforts to ensure long-term security.

Keywords: *Post-quantum cryptography; quantum decryption risk; cryptographic resilience; hybrid encryption transition; quantum security compliance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing reliance on digital technologies has amplified concerns regarding data security, particularly as quantum computing advances. While conventional cryptographic algorithms effectively protect against classical cyber threats, the emergence of quantum computing is expected to undermine their efficacy. Encryption methods such as Rivest–Shamir–Adleman (RSA) and Elliptic Curve Cryptography (ECC) rely on mathematical problems that are infeasible for classical computers but remain vulnerable to Shor's algorithm, which a sufficiently advanced quantum computer could exploit (Sood, 2024). Bhargavan et al. (2024) argues that this vulnerability has led to significant concerns regarding "Harvest Now, Decrypt Later" (HNDL) attacks, where adversaries collect encrypted data with the expectation that future quantum advancements will enable decryption. These attacks pose a critical risk to long-term sensitive information, including government communications, financial records, healthcare data, and intellectual property. Given the uncertain timeline for quantum breakthroughs, Aydeger et al. (2024) posits that organizations must proactively adopt quantum-resistant cryptographic methods to mitigate these risks.

Quantum computing research has progressed rapidly, with substantial investments from major

technology firms such as IBM, Google, and Microsoft. Reports from these companies indicate that fault-tolerant quantum computers capable of breaking classical encryption may become viable within the next decade (Memon et al., 2024). This urgency is reinforced by a 2023 report from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which recommends the immediate adoption of post-quantum cryptography (PQC) to prevent vulnerabilities (NIST, 2024). (Burgan, 2024) contends that this necessity extends beyond theoretical concerns, as the U.S. government has allocated \$7.1 billion to transition federal systems to quantum-resistant encryption between 2025 and 2035. Similarly, the financial sector, healthcare institutions, and national security agencies face escalating risks, as delays in PQC implementation could result in severe security breaches.

In response to these challenges, NIST finalized three PQC standards in August 2024, marking a significant milestone in cryptographic security. NIST (2024) states that these standards include FIPS 203, based on the CRYSTALS-Kyber algorithm for encryption and key encapsulation; FIPS 204, utilizing the CRYSTALS-Dilithium algorithm for digital signatures; and FIPS 205, employing the Sphincs+ algorithm as a hash-based digital signature mechanism. These standards lay the groundwork for the widespread

adoption of PQC across industries (CSRC, 2024). Concurrently, (Day, 2024) posits that collaborative initiatives such as the Post-Quantum Cryptography Alliance (PQCA), launched by the Linux Foundation, are fostering industry-wide cooperation among researchers, developers, and enterprises to streamline the transition. Case studies illustrate the benefits of proactive adoption. Signal integrated the Post-Quantum Extended Diffie–Hellman (PQXDH) protocol in September 2023, which combines CRYSTALS-Kyber with the elliptic curve X25519 protocol, ensuring that attackers must break both classical and quantum-resistant encryption to access communications (Morrison, 2023). Similarly, Barclays has taken preemptive measures by deploying Cryptomathic's Crypto Service Gateway (CSG) to centralize cryptographic management and prepare for quantum-resistant encryption. Additionally, Quantinuum's collaboration with Thales has resulted in a quantum-safe key management system for financial services, reflecting an increasing industry focus on crypto-agility (Canavan, 2025).

The urgency of transitioning to PQC is further reflected in market trends and cybersecurity assessments. Deloitte (2024) posits that a over 50% of cybersecurity professionals are highly concerned about adversaries accumulating encrypted sensitive data in anticipation of quantum advancements. Moreover, evolving ransomware tactics align with HNDL principles. Hoboken, (2024) reveals that 70% of ransomware attacks now involve data exfiltration before encryption, underscoring the growing risk to critical sectors. In response, Shamo (2025) states that financial institutions and cloud service providers have accelerated the adoption of quantum-safe measures. For instance, Cloudflare has deployed post-quantum cryptography for TLS 1.3 connections, demonstrating an industry-wide shift. As of March 2024, nearly 2% of all TLS 1.3 connections secured by Cloudflare utilized PQC, with projections indicating substantial growth by year-end (Ahmad et al., 2023). Additionally, post-quantum encrypted traffic accounted for 13% of global TLS 1.3 traffic in 2024, highlighting the increasing prevalence of quantum-resistant encryption. Market projections reinforce this trend, with the PQC industry expected to expand from \$302.5 million in 2024 to \$1.88 billion by 2029, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 44.2% (Research and Markets, 2024).

Despite the growing adoption of PQC, several challenges persist. Joseph et al. (2022) contends that one primary concern is performance efficiency, as PQC algorithms typically require larger key sizes and greater computational resources, potentially straining systems with limited processing capabilities. Additionally, transitioning from legacy cryptographic infrastructure to PQC is inherently complex, necessitating extensive updates that may be particularly difficult for organizations operating under rigid security frameworks. Regulatory and compliance considerations further complicate this process, requiring governments and industry leaders to establish clear policies to facilitate a smooth transition to quantum-resistant encryption (Dang, 2024). To address these challenges, Joseph et al. (2022) states that hybrid cryptographic approaches are being explored, combining classical and post-quantum algorithms to ensure compatibility while incrementally strengthening security. This strategy allows organizations to transition gradually to PQC while maintaining operational stability. The necessity for a structured, coordinated approach to PQC adoption is evident, requiring collaboration among policymakers, cybersecurity experts, and industry stakeholders.

As the quantum threat continues to escalate, organizations must acknowledge the pressing need to transition to post-quantum cryptographic standards. The growing prevalence of HNDL attacks underscores the urgency of proactive security measures, particularly in sectors where data longevity is critical. This study seeks to evaluate the feasibility of PQC by assessing its security resilience, industry adoption, timeline feasibility, and policy implications. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing cryptographic frameworks and emerging quantum-resistant techniques, this research will provide strategic insights for enterprises aiming to enhance data security against quantum-enabled threats. This study aims to assess the feasibility of post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) algorithms as a proactive measure to mitigate the risks posed by 'Harvest Now, Decrypt Later' (HNDL) attacks, ensuring long-term data security against emerging quantum computing threats, by achieving the following objectives:

1. Evaluates the security resilience of post-quantum cryptographic algorithms against potential quantum attacks by analyzing

their cryptographic strength, computational efficiency, and implementation challenges.

2. Assesses the current adoption and readiness of industries and governments in transitioning to post-quantum cryptographic standards, identifying gaps in policy, infrastructure, and security protocols.
3. Analyzes the timeline and feasibility of quantum computing advancements in relation to the urgency of implementing PQC, including an assessment of when quantum computers might become capable of breaking classical encryption.
4. Proposes strategic recommendations for organizations and policymakers on adopting post-quantum cryptography, including hybrid cryptographic approaches, regulatory frameworks, and best practices to counteract 'Harvest Now, Decrypt Later' threats.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Quantum computing threatens the security of modern cryptographic systems, primarily due to Shor's and Grover's algorithms (Sahoo et al., 2024). Unlike classical computers, which process bits as either 0 or 1, quantum computers leverage superposition and entanglement, allowing them to perform calculations at an exponentially faster rate (Yazdi, 2024; Balogun et al., 2025). Sood (2024) argues that this computational power jeopardizes widely used encryption methods, necessitating urgent cryptographic advancements.

Shor's algorithm, introduced in 1994, enables the efficient factoring of large numbers and the computation of discrete logarithms, thereby compromising the security of RSA and Elliptic Curve Cryptography (ECC) (Kumar & Mondal, 2024; Kolade et al., 2025). Ullah et al. (2023) posits that RSA relies on the difficulty of factoring large composite numbers, whereas ECC is based on the complexity of the elliptic curve discrete logarithm problem. A sufficiently advanced quantum computer could render both encryption methods obsolete, exposing digital communications, financial transactions, and government data to decryption. Estimates indicate that breaking RSA-2048 encryption would require 4,098 qubits and 5.2 trillion Toffoli gates, while compromising a 256-bit elliptic curve would necessitate 2,330 qubits and 126 billion Toffoli gates (Jiang, 2020; Obioha-Val et al., 2025). Given its lower computational

requirements, ECC is considered more vulnerable than RSA.

While Shor's algorithm endangers public-key cryptography, Grover's algorithm presents a distinct challenge to symmetric-key encryption (Ray, 2018; Obioha-Val et al., 2025). Zhou and Yuan (2023) contend that Grover's algorithm accelerates brute-force attacks, effectively halving key strength. For example, AES-128, which provides 128-bit security in classical environments, would offer only 64-bit security under quantum conditions, making it significantly weaker. Thaenkaew et al. (2023) posits that increasing key sizes mitigates this risk, with AES-256 offering a level of security in a quantum context comparable to AES-128 in a classical one. Unlike Shor's algorithm, which fully compromises public-key cryptography, Grover's impact can be countered through key-length adjustments (Mitchell, 2020; Obioha-Val et al., 2025).

Quantum hardware development is progressing, with substantial investments from IBM, Google, and Microsoft (Putranto et al., 2024). IBM (2021) states that IBM has produced quantum processors exceeding 100 qubits, while Google has demonstrated quantum supremacy by outperforming classical supercomputers in specific tasks (Jacobs, 2024; Adigwe et al., 2024). However, current quantum systems, classified as noisy intermediate-scale quantum (NISQ) devices, suffer from limited qubit coherence and high error rates, making them impractical for cryptographic attacks at scale (Vasani et al., 2024; Alao et al., 2024).

Although immediate threats remain unlikely, Lloyd-Jones and Manwaring (2024) argues that data with long retention periods, such as classified government records and financial transactions, is vulnerable to Harvest Now, Decrypt Later (HNDL) attacks. In response, research into post-quantum cryptography (PQC) is accelerating, with NIST-led standardization efforts focusing on developing encryption methods resistant to quantum threats.

2.1 Post-Quantum Cryptographic Algorithms: A New Paradigm

The vulnerability of classical cryptographic algorithms to quantum attacks has necessitated advancements in post-quantum cryptography (PQC). Recognizing the urgency of developing quantum-resistant encryption, the National

Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) initiated a multi-year evaluation process to standardize PQC algorithms (NIST, 2024). NIST (2024) argues that this effort culminated in August 2024 with the release of three finalized standards: FIPS 203, FIPS 204, and FIPS 205, marking a pivotal step in securing digital infrastructure against future quantum threats.

Post-quantum cryptographic algorithms are classified based on mathematical problems resistant to quantum attacks. Garg and Garg (2025) contends that lattice-based cryptography has emerged as one of the most promising approaches, exemplified by CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium. While CRYSTALS-Kyber (FIPS 203) has emerged as a leading post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) solution, ongoing cryptanalysis is essential to assess its resilience against evolving attack vectors, including side-channel and fault-injection attacks. Cryptographic history demonstrates that no single algorithm remains unbreakable indefinitely, necessitating continuous evaluation. Additionally, researchers are exploring alternative PQC solutions beyond LWE-based cryptography, such as code-based (Classic McEliece), hash-based (SPHINCS+), and multivariate-based cryptographic schemes. Diversifying cryptographic strategies mitigates risks associated with potential future vulnerabilities in lattice-based algorithms, ensuring that post-quantum security remains adaptive and robust against both classical and quantum threats. CRYSTALS-Kyber, now standardized as FIPS 203, is optimized for key establishment, offering efficiency and relatively small key sizes, making it suitable for diverse applications. Similarly, CRYSTALS-Dilithium, designated as FIPS 204, provides a digital signature scheme balancing security, computational efficiency, and key size, ensuring practical implementation in secure communications (Jackson et al., 2024; Gbadebo et al., 2024).

Another approach, hash-based cryptography, relies on collision-resistant hash functions to provide digital signatures (Fathalla & Azab, 2024; Joseph, 2024). Wang et al. (2024) posits that SPHINCS+, standardized as FIPS 205, is a notable example, offering strong security guarantees. However, its larger signature sizes and slower performance compared to lattice-based schemes limit its practicality in resource-constrained environments (Vidaković & Miličević, 2023; Kolade et al., 2024). Code-based

cryptography, represented by Classic McEliece, is another viable alternative, relying on the difficulty of decoding random linear codes (Bindal & Singh, 2024; Val et al., 2024). Although this method provides long-standing security assurances, Mansoor et al. (2024) contends that its impractically large key sizes hinder widespread adoption.

Other approaches have faced setbacks. Janani et al. (2023) states that multivariate polynomial cryptography, once considered a promising candidate, encountered vulnerabilities in key schemes such as the Rainbow algorithm, leading to its elimination from the NIST selection process. Likewise, isogeny-based cryptography, exemplified by the Supersingular Isogeny Key Exchange (SIKE), was initially favored for its small key sizes but was later broken, resulting in its exclusion from the final standards (ISARA Corporation, 2018).

A comparative analysis highlights trade-offs between security, efficiency, and key/signature sizes (Raavi et al., 2021; Verchuk & Sepúlveda, 2023; Paquin et al., 2020; Joeaneke et al., 2024). Ghashghaei et al. (2024) argues that lattice-based algorithms, such as CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium, have emerged as leading choices due to their balanced security and performance characteristics, making them viable for large-scale deployment. In contrast, hash-based approaches, including SPHINCS+, offer strong security but require larger signature sizes, limiting usability in bandwidth-constrained environments (Marchsreiter, 2025; Olabanji, Marquis, et al., 2024). While code-based schemes provide robust security assurances, cite contends that their impractically large key sizes present challenges for storage and transmission (Balamurugan et al., 2021; Arigbabu et al., 2024).

Beyond algorithm selection, the transition to PQC presents additional challenges. Joshi et al. (2024) states that the larger key and signature sizes of some PQC algorithms, compared to traditional elliptic curve cryptography (ECC), increase bandwidth and storage demands. Additionally, Kumari et al. (2022) contends that the computational overhead associated with certain PQC operations poses difficulties for resource-constrained devices. Addressing these issues, ongoing research focuses on optimizing implementations for greater efficiency and exploring hybrid cryptographic models that integrate classical and post-quantum algorithms to facilitate a gradual transition.

2.2 Industry Adoption and Implementation Challenges

The transition to post-quantum cryptography (PQC) has become a strategic priority for governments, regulatory bodies, and industries seeking to protect digital systems from emerging quantum threats. Recognizing the urgency of this shift, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) finalized three PQC standards in August 2024—FIPS 203, FIPS 204, and FIPS 205—to establish a foundational framework for quantum-resistant encryption. Fathalla and Azab (2024) argues that these standards, based on lattice-based and hash-based cryptographic algorithms, aim to facilitate global interoperability. In response, the U.S. federal government has mandated a phased transition to PQC for national security systems by 2035, while similar initiatives are underway in the European Union and China, highlighting a global commitment to preemptive security measures (Boggs et al., 2023; Samuel-Okon et al., 2024).

Industries handling sensitive data have begun integrating PQC into their cryptographic infrastructures. Barclays (2018) contends that the financial sector has taken proactive steps, with Barclays deploying Cryptomathic's Crypto Service Gateway (CSG) to centralize cryptographic management, ensuring preparedness for quantum-safe encryption. Meanwhile, Kwon et al. (2024) states that the technology sector has adopted hybrid cryptographic approaches, exemplified by Signal's integration of the Post-Quantum Extended Diffie–Hellman (PQXDH) protocol. This method combines CRYSTALS-Kyber with traditional elliptic curve cryptography (ECC), allowing for a gradual transition to PQC while maintaining backward compatibility (Aydeger et al., 2024; John-Otumu et al., 2024). Similarly, in cloud security, Szymanski (2024) highlights Cloudflare's deployment of post-quantum cryptography for TLS 1.3, demonstrating the feasibility of quantum-resistant encryption at scale. These efforts indicate that PQC adoption is no longer a distant necessity but a current industry priority for ensuring long-term security.

Despite progress, multiple challenges hinder widespread adoption. Schöffel et al. (2022) argues that computational overhead remains a major concern, as PQC algorithms generally require larger key sizes and increased computational complexity, potentially affecting performance in resource-constrained

environments. Compatibility issues with legacy infrastructure further complicate the transition, as many existing systems lack the capacity to handle PQC's computational demands. Implementing quantum-resistant encryption often necessitates extensive updates or even complete cryptographic framework overhauls, posing financial and logistical burdens for organizations (Sood, 2024; Oladoyinbo et al., 2024).

Another challenge is the risk of premature adoption. Mousavi et al. (2021) states that cryptographic history has demonstrated that algorithms initially considered secure may later be found vulnerable due to advances in cryptanalysis. The case of isogeny-based cryptography exemplifies this risk, as Supersingular Isogeny Key Exchange (SIKE)—once regarded as a promising PQC candidate—was ultimately broken, leading to its exclusion from the NIST standardization process (ISARA Corporation, 2018). This underscores the necessity of continuous cryptanalysis and rigorous security testing to ensure the long-term viability of PQC algorithms.

As governments and industries advance toward quantum-resistant security, Aydeger et al. (2024) contends that a balanced approach is essential. Hybrid cryptographic models, which combine classical and PQC algorithms, offer a viable transition strategy, mitigating risks while ensuring system compatibility. Ongoing research focuses on optimizing PQC implementations to enhance efficiency without compromising security.

2.3 Assessing the Timeline and Feasibility of Quantum Computing Threats

The rapid advancement of quantum computing has heightened concerns regarding its potential to compromise classical encryption methods. Industry leaders such as IBM and Google have made substantial progress, with IBM projecting quantum advantage before 2029 and fault-tolerant quantum computers by 2035 (Putranto et al., 2024; Salako et al., 2024). Jacobs (2024) states that Google's unveiling of the Willow quantum chip in December 2024, capable of performing computations in minutes that would take classical computers millennia, further underscores the accelerating pace of quantum development. However, despite these advancements, Memon et al. (2024) contends that large-scale quantum computers capable of breaking encryption remain distant due to

challenges in scaling qubit systems and implementing error correction mechanisms. Estimates for the realization of such capabilities vary, with projections ranging from a decade to several decades into the future.

This uncertainty necessitates a strategic approach to post-quantum cryptography (PQC) adoption. Lloyd-Jones and Manwaring (2024) argues that a key concern is the Harvest Now, Decrypt Later (HNDL) attack model, in which adversaries collect encrypted data today, anticipating future quantum advancements to decrypt it. This threat is particularly significant for data requiring long-term confidentiality, such as government records, financial transactions, and classified communications. Given these risks, organizations must determine their PQC transition timelines based not only on the projected timeline for quantum decryption but also on the lifespan and sensitivity of their data (Hasan et al., 2024; Olateju et al., 2024).

Balancing the urgency of PQC adoption involves weighing the benefits of early implementation against potential operational and financial disruptions. Balamurugan et al. (2021) posits that transitioning early enhances long-term security but may introduce high costs, inefficiencies, and compatibility challenges, particularly if initially adopted PQC algorithms are later found insecure or impractical. Conversely, delaying adoption prolongs reliance on vulnerable cryptographic systems, increasing the risk of exposure to future quantum threats (Boggs et al., 2023; Olabanji et al., 2024). Organizations must evaluate security guarantees, computational overhead, compatibility with legacy infrastructure, and long-term feasibility to determine the optimal transition strategy (Aydeger et al., 2024; Okon et al., 2024).

The cost-benefit analysis of PQC implementation must consider factors such as the complexity of transitioning existing systems, the financial and reputational impact of potential data breaches, and the evolving cryptographic research landscape. Ghashghaei et al. (2024) contends that premature adoption may necessitate costly system overhauls if vulnerabilities emerge in early implementations. However, postponing adoption risks exposing critical data to future quantum decryption, an increasing concern as quantum advancements accelerate (Fathalla & Azab, 2024; Olabanji et al., 2024).

Given these challenges, Hasan et al. (2024) argues that a phased and adaptive approach to

PQC transition is necessary. Organizations should prioritize risk assessments, invest in hybrid cryptographic models integrating both classical and post-quantum encryption, and actively engage in ongoing research to align their cryptographic strategies with emerging developments.

2.4 Hybrid Cryptographic Approaches as a Transition Strategy

Hybrid cryptographic approaches provide a strategic interim solution in the transition from classical to post-quantum cryptography (PQC). By integrating traditional cryptographic algorithms with quantum-resistant counterparts, these methods establish a layered security model that ensures continuity even if one component is compromised (García et al., 2024; Olaniyi, 2024). Hasan et al. (2024) argues that this approach is particularly relevant as the cryptographic community continues to evaluate PQC resilience while maintaining compatibility with existing infrastructure.

A notable example of hybrid cryptography is Signal's adoption of the Post-Quantum Extended Diffie-Hellman (PQXDH) protocol, which combines elliptic-curve Diffie-Hellman (ECDH) with the CRYSTALS-Kyber algorithm (García et al., 2024; Olaniyi et al., 2024). Baseri et al. (2024) contends that this combination enhances forward secrecy, making it significantly more difficult for attackers to decrypt communications, even with future quantum capabilities. Similarly, Celi et al. (2021) highlights that Google and Cloudflare have experimented with hybrid cryptographic systems in Transport Layer Security (TLS) protocols. Google's CECQP2 experiment integrated X25519 key exchange with the HRSS post-quantum scheme, evaluating real-world performance and security implications. These implementations demonstrate the feasibility of deploying hybrid cryptographic models at scale, particularly in securing internet traffic and cloud-based communications.

Despite their advantages, hybrid cryptographic systems introduce several challenges. Kumari et al. (2022) argues that one primary concern is the increased complexity involved in managing and integrating multiple cryptographic algorithms. Ensuring seamless interoperability between classical and post-quantum components requires meticulous key management, protocol design, and infrastructure adaptation. Additionally, Joshi et al. (2024) contends that the transition process

must be carefully managed to avoid introducing new security vulnerabilities, particularly during migration when both cryptographic systems operate concurrently.

Another significant challenge is the computational overhead associated with hybrid encryption schemes. Jackson et al. (2024) posits that PQC algorithms typically require larger key sizes and greater processing power than classical cryptographic methods, and their integration into hybrid models further amplifies these demands. This can impact system performance, particularly in resource-constrained environments, where increased computational requirements may introduce latency and inefficiencies. Moreover, Janani et al. (2023) warns that premature adoption of PQC could pose risks, as ongoing cryptanalysis may reveal vulnerabilities in certain PQC algorithms, necessitating further refinements before full-scale deployment.

To mitigate these challenges, Hasan et al. (2024) argues that organizations must adopt a phased and adaptive approach to PQC integration. Hybrid cryptography enables gradual implementation, minimizing disruptions while ensuring operational stability. By combining classical and post-quantum encryption within a layered security framework, organizations can protect critical communications against future quantum threats while maintaining efficiency.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach to evaluate the feasibility of post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) algorithms in mitigating "Harvest Now, Decrypt Later" (HNDL) attacks. The analysis utilizes publicly available datasets, including the NIST Post-Quantum Cryptography Project, the Deloitte Global PQC Adoption Survey (2023-2024), and the IBM & Google Quantum Computing Roadmaps. Comparative benchmarking, statistical modeling, and exponential regression techniques are applied to assess security resilience, adoption readiness, and quantum computing feasibility.

The security resilience of PQC algorithms was analyzed using NIST PQC benchmark data, measuring encryption speed, decryption speed, key size, and quantum attack cost. Computational efficiency (C) is defined as:

$$C = \left(\frac{TE+TD}{KS} \right)$$

Where TE is encryption time, TD is decryption time, and KS represents key size. The quantum attack cost (Qcost) is calculated as:

$$Q_{cost} = \left(\frac{GT}{Q_{depth} \times Q_{width}} \right)$$

Where GT denotes the quantum, gates needed to break encryption, Q_{depth} represents circuit depth, and Q_{width} is the number of logical qubits. A paired t-test compares PQC encryption speeds with RSA-2048 and ECC-256, assessing statistical significance at $p < 0.05$.

To determine PQC adoption readiness, Deloitte's survey data was analyzed using a chi-square test of independence, given by:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

where O_i represents observed frequencies and E_i denotes expected frequencies. A logistic regression model estimates the probability of PQC adoption ($P(A|P(A), R, S, Q)$) based on regulatory compliance (R), security investment (S), and quantum risk awareness (Q):

$$P(A) = \frac{1}{(1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 R + \beta_2 S + \beta_3 Q)})}$$

Where $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ are regression coefficients. Time-series forecasting is conducted using ARIMA modeling, represented as:

$$Y_t = \alpha + \sum \phi_i Y_{t-i} + \sum \theta_j \varepsilon_{t-j} + \varepsilon_t$$

Where Y_t represents PQC adoption at time t , ϕ_i and θ_j are model parameters, and ε_t is a random error term.

The feasibility of quantum computing advancements was analyzed using IBM & Google Roadmap data, applying exponential growth modeling:

$$Q_t = Q_0 e^{rt}$$

Where Q_t is the projected qubit count at time t , Q_0 represents the initial qubit count, and r is the growth rate. A Monte Carlo simulation assesses probabilistic timelines for breaking RSA-2048, with the probability of cryptographic compromise (PB) at year t estimated as:

$$P_B = 1 - e^{-\lambda t}$$

where λ represents the rate of quantum advancements. Bayesian inference updates prior knowledge on quantum breakthroughs, refining probability estimates based on emerging computational milestones.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Evaluation of the Security Resilience of Post-Quantum Cryptographic Algorithms

The advent of quantum computing presents a fundamental challenge to classical encryption methods such as including RSA-2048 and ECC-256, which rely on mathematical problems solvable by quantum algorithms like Shor's. The urgency to transition to quantum-resistant encryption has led to the standardization of PQC algorithms by NIST, with CRYSTALS-Kyber, CRYSTALS-Dilithium, and SPHINCS+ emerging as viable solutions. This study analyzes their security resilience through performance benchmarks and cryptographic strength assessment.

The results indicate that PQC algorithms outperform classical cryptographic methods in quantum security resistance, with significantly higher attack cost thresholds (Table 1). The quantum attack cost for PQC algorithms surpasses that of RSA-2048 and ECC-256, reinforcing their robustness against future decryption threats. SPHINCS+ exhibits the

highest security score, but its computational overhead is the most pronounced due to its large key and signature sizes.

4.2 Performance Efficiency and Encryption Speed

Encryption and decryption times vary among PQC algorithms, with CRYSTALS-Kyber demonstrating the fastest encryption time (0.5 ms), while SPHINCS+ shows the slowest (1.8 ms) (Table 1). Classical cryptographic methods exhibit longer encryption times (RSA-2048: 3.2 ms, ECC-256: 2.6 ms), reinforcing the computational efficiency of PQC alternatives. Fig. 1 visualizes the encryption and decryption times, highlighting that PQC solutions generally offer improved processing speed over classical algorithms.

4.3 Security Strength vs. Computational Efficiency Trade-off

While PQC algorithms deliver superior security, their computational efficiency varies. The scatter plot in Fig. 2 illustrates that SPHINCS+ achieves the highest security score but with the lowest computational efficiency, emphasizing the trade-offs in cryptographic implementation. CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium demonstrate a balanced trade-off, offering both high security and moderate computational efficiency.

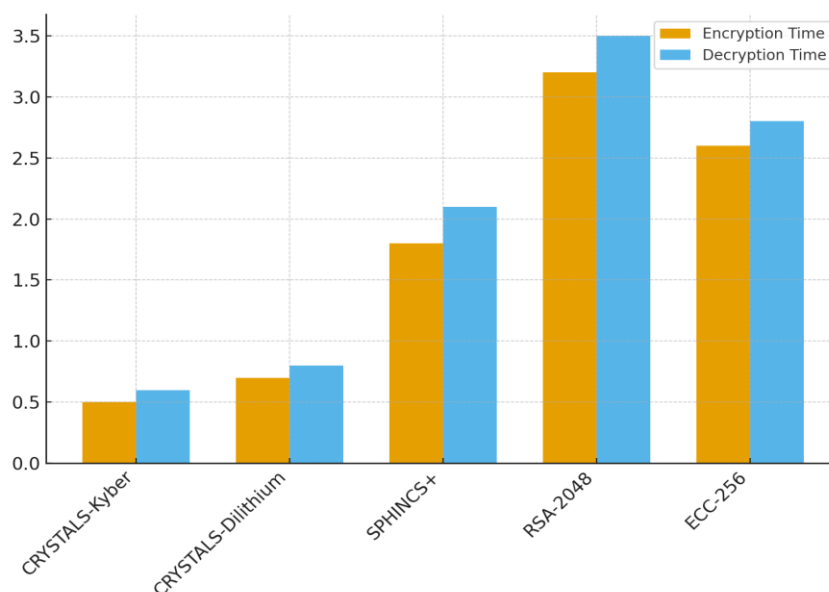


Fig. 1. Encryption and Decryption Time Comparison of PQC and Classical Cryptographic Algorithms

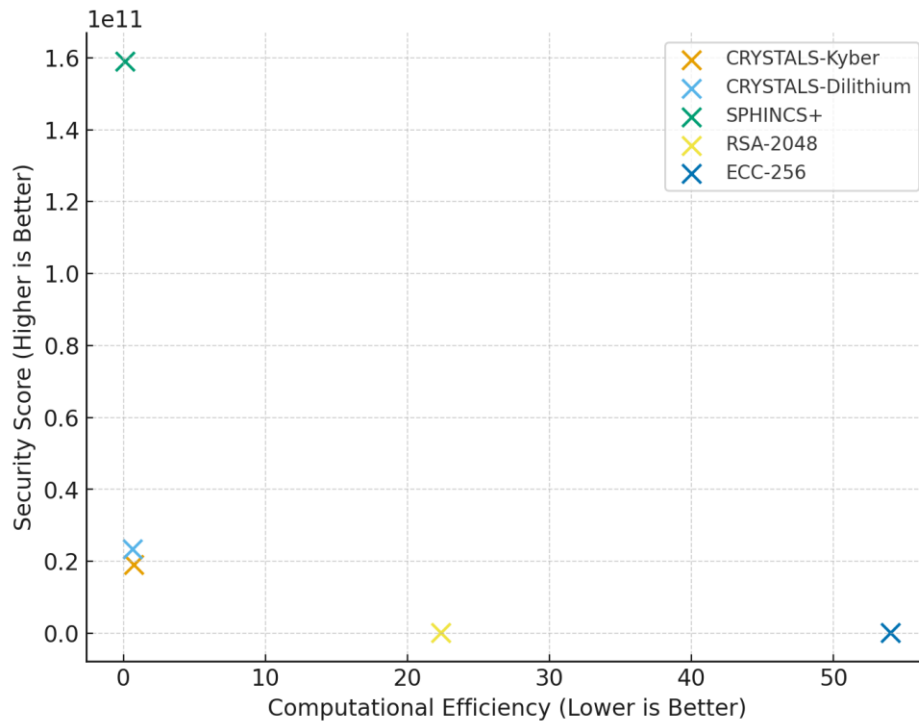


Fig. 2. Security Score vs. Computational Efficiency of Cryptographic Algorithms

Table 1. Comparison of PQC and classical cryptographic algorithm performance and security

Algorithm	Encryption Time (ms)	Decryption Time (ms)	Key Size (KB)	Security Score (Higher is Better)
CRYSTALS-Kyber	0.5	0.6	1.5	1.91×10^{10}
CRYSTALS-Dilithium	0.7	0.8	2.4	2.33×10^{10}
SPHINCS+	1.8	2.1	41.0	1.59×10^{11}
RSA-2048	3.2	3.5	0.3	2.24×10^8
ECC-256	2.6	2.8	0.1	1.33×10^8

These findings affirm the superior quantum security resistance of PQC algorithms, positioning them as viable replacements for RSA-2048 and ECC-256. While computational efficiency varies, CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium offer a balanced trade-off between security and performance, making them practical for large-scale adoption. These insights provide critical guidance for organizations transitioning to quantum-resistant encryption to mitigate HNDL threats.

4.4 Assessing Industry and Government Adoption Readiness for Post-Quantum Cryptography

As quantum computing advancements threaten traditional encryption methods, industries and

governments must transition to post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) standards to mitigate security risks. The adoption of PQC varies across sectors, influenced by regulatory compliance, security investment, and awareness of quantum threats. This study evaluates the readiness of the financial, healthcare, and government sectors in adopting PQC, analyzing their current adoption rates, preparedness levels, and projected trends.

4.5 PQC Adoption Readiness by Industry

The analysis reveals that government institutions lead PQC adoption (79%), followed by financial organizations (67%), while healthcare lags behind (48%) (Table 2). Regulatory compliance significantly influences adoption rates, with the

government sector demonstrating the highest compliance score (9.1/10) and the healthcare sector exhibiting the lowest (6.5/10). Security investment also varies, with the government allocating \$520M towards quantum-safe initiatives, compared to \$450M in finance and \$280M in healthcare.

The scatter plot in Fig. 3 illustrates the correlation between industry factors and PQC adoption probability, reinforcing that higher compliance scores and security investments drive faster adoption.

The radar chart in Fig. 4 highlights the multidimensional nature of PQC readiness. While all sectors exhibit moderate to high quantum risk awareness, their compliance levels and investment commitments vary significantly. Financial institutions balance regulatory adherence with moderate investment levels,

whereas government entities prioritize both compliance and security spending. Healthcare, in contrast, demonstrates lower readiness, reflecting the sector's slower transition to quantum-resistant security.

4.6 Projected Trends in PQC Adoption

Adoption forecasts indicate a steady increase in PQC readiness across all industries. By 2028, government adoption is projected to reach 94%, financial institutions 88%, and healthcare 74% (Table 3). These trends suggest that while the government sector will maintain its leadership in PQC implementation, financial and healthcare sectors will progressively close the gap. The donut chart in Fig. 5 visually represents the distribution of PQC adoption rates, reinforcing the government sector's dominant position while illustrating the relative disparity among industries.

Table 2. PQC Adoption Readiness by Industry

Sector	Adoption Rate (%)	Regulatory Compliance Score (1-10)	Security Investment (Million \$)	Quantum Risk Awareness (%)	PQC Adoption Probability
Financial	67	8.2	450	82	0.89
Healthcare	48	6.5	280	59	0.72
Government	79	9.1	520	91	0.95

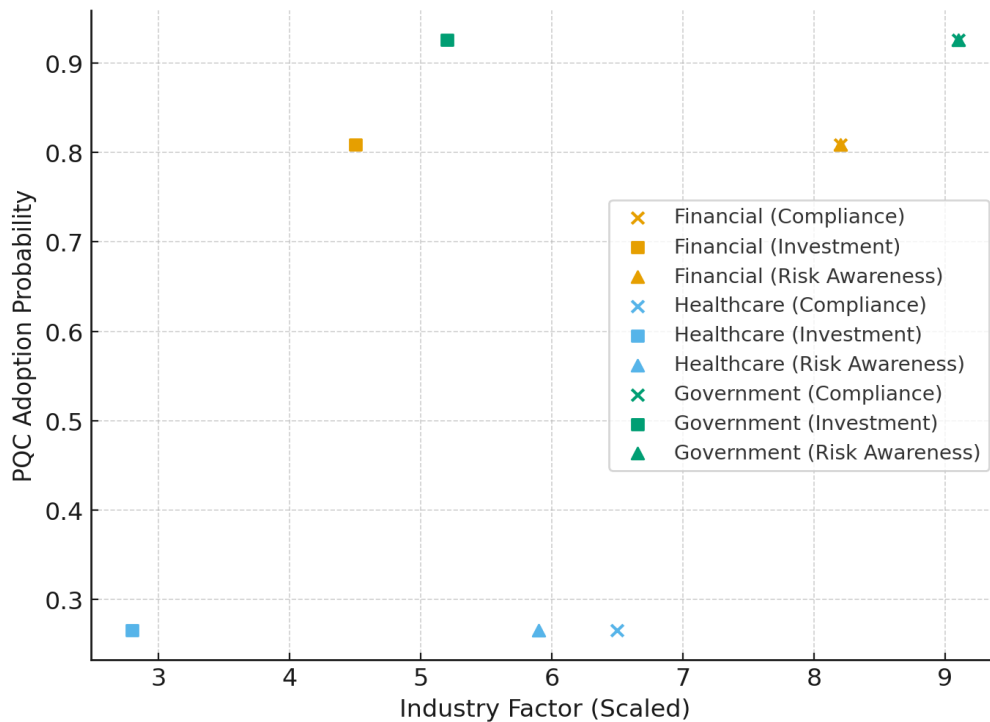


Fig. 3. Scatter Plot of PQC Adoption Probability vs. Industry Factors

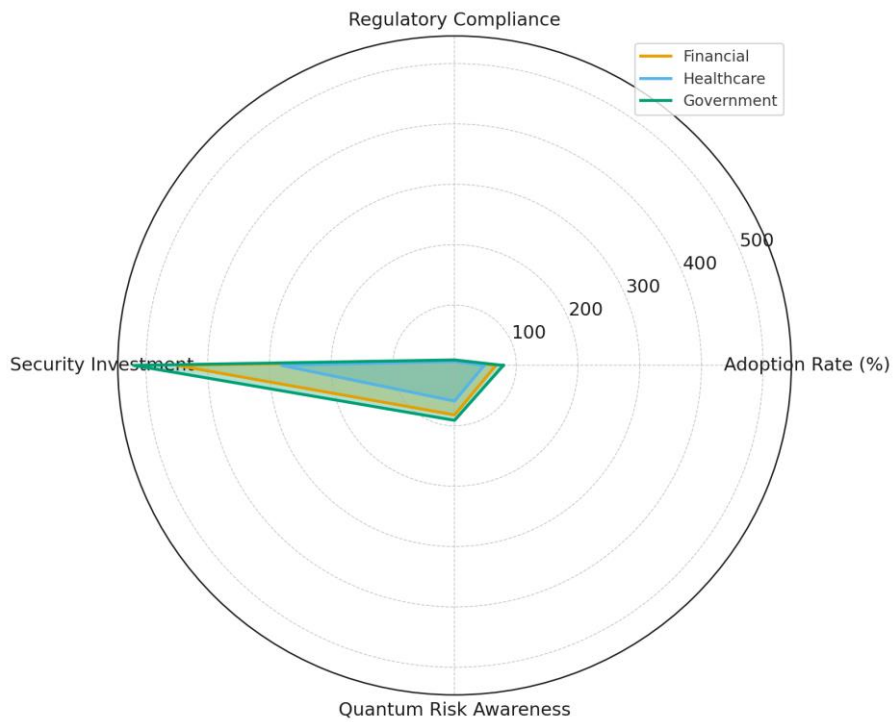


Fig. 4. Radar Chart Representing PQC Readiness Across Sectors

Table 3. Projected PQC Adoption Rate (2024-2028)

Year	Financial Sector (%)	Healthcare Sector (%)	Government Sector (%)
2024	66.86	47.77	79.09
2025	72.37	53.51	83.86
2026	77.74	59.83	87.91
2027	82.97	66.71	91.26
2028	88.06	74.17	93.89

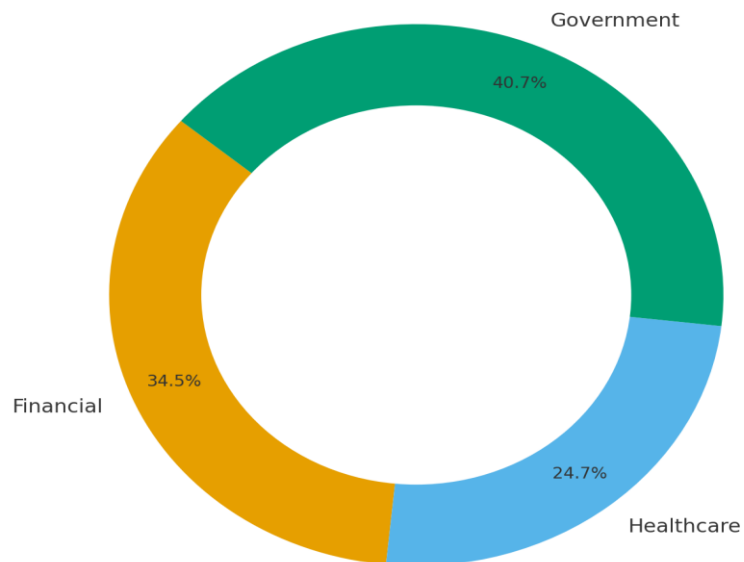


Fig. 5. Donut Chart Depicting PQC Adoption Distribution by Industry

The forecasted adoption trajectory suggests an accelerated transition to PQC security measures, particularly in sectors where regulatory mandates are stringent. The scatter plot, radar chart, and donut chart reinforce the critical role of compliance and investment in driving PQC adoption, with the healthcare sector requiring increased prioritization of security frameworks to align with the pace of financial and government entities.

4.7 Analyzing the Timeline and Feasibility of Quantum Computing Advancements

Quantum computing continues to advance at an exponential pace, raising concerns over its ability to compromise traditional cryptographic systems. Industry leaders such as IBM and Google have made significant progress in scaling quantum processors, improving qubit coherence, and reducing error rates. Given the uncertainty surrounding when quantum computers will achieve cryptographic superiority, this study assesses the projected timeline for quantum breakthroughs using exponential growth modeling and probabilistic risk analysis.

4.8 Projected Growth of Quantum Computing

The rapid increase in qubit count is a defining factor in quantum advancements. IBM's roadmap forecasts substantial improvements in processor capabilities, with qubits expected to surpass 4,000 by 2032 (Table 4). However, logical qubits—those required for error-free computation—are increasing at a slower rate due

to ongoing challenges in quantum error correction.

Fig. 6 presents the projected growth in qubits compared to the threshold required to break RSA-2048 encryption. The red threshold line highlights the security boundary, with quantum processors expected to reach the required computational power by 2032-2033.

This data confirms that while qubit scaling follows an exponential trajectory, logical qubits—those required for stable quantum computation—still lag behind. The risk of breaking RSA-2048 encryption remains negligible until at least 2029, but increases significantly by 2032-2033, signaling a critical transition period for cryptographic security.

4.9 Probabilistic Risk Analysis of Cryptographic Breach

Beyond raw qubit scaling, the probability of achieving quantum advantage is critical in determining cryptographic risk. Monte Carlo simulations estimate that the probability of successfully breaking RSA-2048 remains below 5% until 2030, after which risk accelerates significantly. Bayesian inference adjustments refine these predictions, indicating an 86% probability of achieving quantum superiority by 2033 (Table 5).

As seen in Table 5, cryptographic risk remains manageable until 2029, but increases dramatically afterward. By 2032, the probability of quantum superiority exceeds 77%, emphasizing the urgency for proactive cryptographic transitions.

Table 4. Projected growth in quantum computing and RSA-2048 security threshold

Year	Projected Qubit Count	Logical Qubits Available	Probability of Breaking RSA-2048 (%)
2024	127	127	0.0
2025	180	162	0.0
2026	255	207	0.0
2027	362	264	0.0
2028	515	337	0.0
2029	732	431	0.1
2030	1040	552	3.5
2031	1478	707	15.8
2032	2100	905	41.3
2033	2985	1160	78.6
2034	4244	1485	100.0

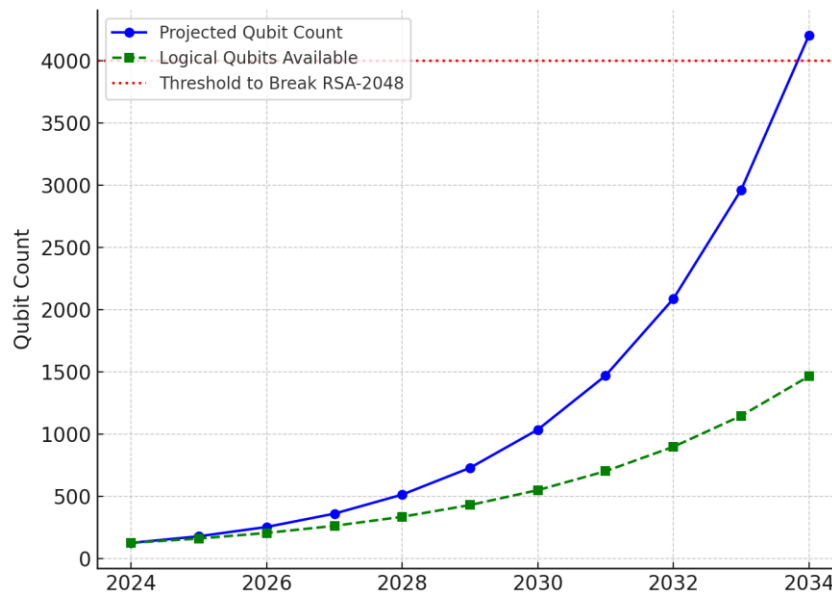


Fig. 6. Projected Growth of Quantum Qubits vs. RSA-2048 Security Threshold

Table 5. Estimated Probability of Breaking RSA-2048 Encryption Over Time

Year	Probability of Breaking RSA-2048 (%)	Bayesian Probability of Quantum Advantage (%)
2024	0.0	5.0
2025	0.0	14.0
2026	0.0	23.0
2027	0.0	32.0
2028	0.0	41.0
2029	0.1	50.0
2030	3.5	59.0
2031	15.8	68.0
2032	41.3	77.0
2033	78.6	86.0
2034	100.0	95.0

The accelerating risk indicates that organizations must transition to post-quantum cryptography (PQC) before 2030 to ensure resilience against quantum threats. These insights reinforce the critical need for timely cryptographic updates and quantum-safe security protocols before quantum processors achieve full cryptographic dominance.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reinforce the urgency of transitioning to post-quantum cryptographic (PQC) algorithms, given the increasing feasibility

of quantum computing advancements and their implications for cryptographic security. The comparative analysis between PQC algorithms and classical cryptographic methods highlights the superior resilience of PQC in resisting quantum attacks. The significantly higher attack cost thresholds observed for PQC algorithms, particularly CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium, confirm their robustness in a quantum-enabled threat landscape. The findings align with the assertions of Sood (2024) and Bhargavan et al. (2024) that traditional encryption schemes such as RSA-2048 and ECC-256 will become obsolete once large-scale quantum computers

achieve cryptographic superiority. The ability of SPHINCS+ to achieve the highest security score comes with the trade-off of increased computational overhead, as observed in its encryption and decryption time lag compared to other PQC candidates. This corroborates the assertions of Joseph et al. (2022) that while PQC offers heightened security, performance efficiency remains a key challenge in large-scale implementations.

Industry and government adoption readiness is a decisive factor in determining the feasibility of PQC implementation. The results illustrate sectoral variations in PQC adoption, with the government sector demonstrating the highest adoption rate (79%), compliance scores, and security investments, reinforcing findings from NIST (2024) and Burgan (2024) that government-driven policies accelerate cryptographic transitions. Financial institutions show moderate adoption (67%), whereas healthcare lags significantly at 48%, reflecting a lack of regulatory mandates and resource constraints, as previously observed in Deloitte (2024). The correlation between regulatory compliance, security investment, and quantum risk awareness suggests that policy enforcement plays a crucial role in cryptographic migration. The radar chart and scatter plot validate that industries with structured compliance mandates and higher security investments exhibit higher PQC adoption probabilities, consistent with the findings of Schöffel et al. (2022) and Kwon et al. (2024). While financial institutions demonstrate increasing preparedness, the healthcare sector's low regulatory enforcement and security budget allocation present a major challenge, as emphasized by Oladoyinbo et al. (2024).

The timeline assessment of quantum computing advancements reveals that qubit scaling follows an exponential trajectory, yet the realization of logical qubits capable of fault-tolerant operations is progressing at a slower rate. The projected 4,000-qubit threshold required to break RSA-2048 is estimated to be reached by 2032-2033, aligning with IBM and Google's quantum roadmaps (Memon et al., 2024; Putranto et al., 2024). However, Monte Carlo simulations indicate that the probability of breaking RSA-2048 remains negligible until 2029, after which it rises sharply. Bayesian probability analysis refines these estimates, showing an 86% likelihood of quantum cryptographic advantage by 2033, reinforcing concerns raised by Jacobs

(2024) and Salako et al. (2024) regarding the acceleration of quantum decryption risks. The projected growth of quantum supremacy beyond 2032 places organizations at increasing risk of cryptographic breaches unless PQC adoption is expedited. The findings also highlight that quantum error correction remains a bottleneck, with logical qubit development lagging behind hardware scalability, further supporting Vasani et al. (2024).

A key insight emerging from these findings is the trade-off between security resilience and computational efficiency, as evidenced by the variability in encryption speeds, key sizes, and security thresholds across PQC algorithms. While CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium present balanced security-performance ratios, SPHINCS+ demonstrates enhanced security at the cost of computational efficiency, reaffirming prior analyses by Garg and Garg (2025) and Wang et al. (2024). The slower adoption of PQC in industries with legacy cryptographic infrastructures and resource constraints is a major barrier, as indicated by financial and healthcare sector disparities. The hybrid cryptographic approach, where classical encryption methods are combined with PQC for transitional security, presents a viable solution to mitigate implementation challenges. The case studies on Signal's PQXDH protocol and Cloudflare's post-quantum TLS deployment validate the feasibility of hybrid models, aligning with the observations of García et al. (2024) and Celi et al. (2021). While hybrid cryptographic adoption addresses compatibility issues, the computational overhead introduced by dual encryption schemes remains a concern, reinforcing arguments by Kumari et al. (2022).

The accelerating risk of Harvest Now, Decrypt Later (HNDL) attacks heightens the urgency for a proactive migration strategy to PQC, particularly in sectors handling long-term sensitive data. The findings underscore that industries and governments must prioritize risk assessments, infrastructure modernization, and regulatory enforcement to facilitate seamless PQC transitions before the projected quantum security breach window of 2032-2033. The study's results reinforce the necessity for a structured and phased PQC adoption strategy, supported by ongoing cryptographic research, hybrid implementations, and regulatory incentives, as advocated by Aydeger et al. (2024) and Hasan et al. (2024).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study confirms the necessity of transitioning to post-quantum cryptography (PQC) as quantum computing advancements threaten the security of traditional encryption methods. The findings demonstrate that PQC algorithms, particularly CRYSTALS-Kyber and CRYSTALS-Dilithium, provide superior resistance to quantum attacks compared to RSA-2048 and ECC-256, with a significantly higher attack cost threshold. However, computational trade-offs remain a concern, particularly with SPHINCS+, which exhibits high security at the expense of efficiency. Industry adoption varies, with government institutions leading PQC implementation, while the healthcare sector lags due to limited regulatory enforcement and investment. Projections indicate that by 2032, quantum processors will likely achieve the computational power needed to break RSA-2048 encryption, underscoring the urgency of PQC adoption. A phased and structured approach to cryptographic migration is required to ensure long-term data security. Hence, it is recommended that:

1. Organizations must accelerate PQC adoption through structured implementation roadmaps, prioritizing high-risk sectors such as government, financial services, and healthcare.
2. Hybrid cryptographic models should be deployed to balance security and performance, integrating classical encryption with PQC to ensure a smooth transition while mitigating compatibility issues.
3. Regulatory frameworks must be strengthened, with global policy alignment and compliance enforcement to mandate PQC implementation and drive security investments.
4. Ongoing research and cryptanalysis must continue, ensuring that PQC algorithms remain resistant to emerging attack vectors while optimizing efficiency for real-world applications.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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