



Research Proposal On “The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers’ Purchase Intention in Bangladesh”

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"The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention in Bangladesh"

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The world is constantly changing and digital technologies have dramatically altered the way that organisations communicate with consumers and market their products. Social media, especially, allows companies to connect with their customers directly, develop customer relationships, and shape the decision-making process. Social media is interactive unlike traditional marketing where consumers are only able to react to the brand's messages, they can engage, share opinions, and respond (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have a profound impact on brand awareness and consumer behavior. Consumer perceptions and purchase intentions are influenced by marketing efforts such as providing information, entertainment, involvement and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Kim and Ko, 2012). This relationship is important to know as more and more consumers are seeking out online information before making a purchase.

The current consumers are more likely to comment, share, review and recommend brands, which has moved the focus of organisations from mere promotion to engagement and relationship-building (Dwivedi et al., 2021). This is particularly significant in a country like Bangladesh, where the accessibility of the internet and social media has drastically transformed the consumer behaviour. Social media platforms have become a great place for many consumers to find products, compare various brands, and gauge brand trust before buying, creating opportunities for businesses to craft effective digital marketing strategies.

1.2 Research Problem

Previous studies on social media marketing and consumer behaviour focus mainly on developed or other emerging markets, with limited evidence from Bangladesh. Organisations invest heavily in social media advertising, but evidence of effectiveness is unclear. Marketing factors such as content quality, entertainment, interaction and credibility can differently influence purchase

decisions in Bangladesh. This study aims to fill the research gap by examining the impact of social media marketing on Bangladeshi consumers' purchase intention, providing insights for both researchers and practitioners.

1.3 Research Aim

The aim of this research is:

To examine the influence of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention in Bangladesh.

1.4 Research Objectives

To achieve the research aim, the study will pursue the following objectives:

RO1: To examine consumers' perceptions of social media marketing activities in Bangladesh.

RO2: To investigate the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intention.

RO3: To identify the social media marketing factors that influence consumers' purchase intention.

RO4: To analyse how consumer engagement with social media content affects purchasing decisions.

RO5: To provide recommendations for businesses to improve their social media marketing strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept and Evolution of Social Media Marketing

With the evolution of digital technologies, the way they communicate has evolved from one-way to interactive between business and consumer. Social media provides consumers with the opportunity to interact with brands and share their views and opinions to affect others' buying habits (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Social media marketing is the use of social networking websites to market products, engage customers and develop brand relationships. Social media is a key medium to influence consumer

behaviour because consumers can join in by reviewing, recommending, sharing and so forth, which is different from the traditional communication mediums (Kim and Ko, 2012). Recent studies suggest that social media marketing has gone beyond just advertising effectiveness, and is now also used to engage consumers, online communities and electronic word of mouth (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

This is especially relevant in Bangladesh where there has been a surge in internet connectivity and smartphone usage and consumers are turning to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. for product discovery, information search and purchase.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

There are a number of theories that account for the relationship between social media marketing and consumer behaviour. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), the usefulness and ease of use of technology will help people accept it more, and if the content of social media is good and beneficial, it is expected that its acceptance will be greater. Social influence theory emphasizes the importance of reviews and recommendations and consumer engagement theory demonstrates that engagement with brands results in increased brand perception and positive impact on purchase intention (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014).

2.3 Dimensions of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a multidimensional concept that has a number of factors affecting the consumers such as informativeness, entertainment, interactivity and credibility.

2.3.1 Informativeness

Informativeness is a property of how well the content of social media is useful and relevant to the product. People typically check out products on social media platforms before buying. Kim and Ko (2012) revealed that valuable social media marketing activities have a positive effect on consumer engagement and Erkan and Evans (2016) showed that useful information on the internet has a positive impact on purchase intention.

2.3.2 Entertainment

Entertainment is the degree to which consumers enjoy and find content on social media entertaining. Creative videos and interactive campaigns can boost consumer attention and build

brand relationships. But entertainment should be mixed with solid information to have a strong impact on purchase decisions (Kim and Ko, 2012).

2.3.3 Interactivity

Interactivity enables consumers and brands to interact by posting comments, messages and feedback. Godey et al. (2016) determined that interactive social media activities increase the involvement of consumers and the relationship between the brand and the consumers. In Bangladesh, especially, many companies have social media pages where they communicate with their customers mostly.

2.3.4 Credibility and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

Before buying a product, consumers are turning more and more towards reviews, recommendations, and user-generated content. Erkan and Evans (2016) discovered that eWOM has an impact on purchase intentions when the information is perceived as credible and useful. In the same way, Lou and Yuan (2019) emphasized the significance of credibility of influencers in the establishment of consumers' trust.

2.4 Social Media Marketing and Consumers' Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is an indicator of consumers' willingness to buy a product/service following assessment of information available. Research shows social media marketing has a positive impact on purchase intention through enhancing awareness and engagement and trust. Kim and Ko (2012) reported that the use of social media marketing activities enhances customer relationships and consumer responses. Likewise, Godey et al. (2016) found that social media marketing improves the brand perception and behavioural intention. Eti, Horaira and Bari (2021) found significant effect of social media marketing on purchase intention in Bangladesh and Halim (2022) emphasized the importance of brand equity. Purchase decisions are also influenced by trust, perceived value and brand related factors on Facebook (Nandi and Rakib, 2020).

2.5 Social Media Marketing in Bangladesh Context

Bangladesh is an important context to examine social media marketing because of the rapid digital transformation and growing online consumer behaviors. Social media also is an inexpensive and effective way for companies, in particular small and medium businesses, to reach out to the public and converse with them directly.

Studies show that Bangladeshi consumers are increasingly relying on social media information prior to buying products. Eti, Horaira and Bari (2021) found a positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention, which Halim (2022) further emphasized the importance of brand equity to strengthen the relationship.

Moreover, Rahman et al. (2023) revealed that social media advertisement has an impact on young consumers in Dhaka buying decisions. Shetu (2024) also found that UGC and micro-celebrity posts affect the online buying behaviour of the Generation Z consumers.

But, previous Bangladesh-specific research tends to investigate one dimension of digital consumer behavior and not consider multiple dimensions on the same study.

2.6 Critical Review of Existing Research

The literature indicates that social media marketing has an impact on consumer purchase intention. International studies emphasize the importance of engagement, information quality and credibility (Kim and Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016; Erkan and Evans, 2016), though there is disagreement over which is the most influential. Some emphasise entertainment and engagement, others trust and information quality. Most research has been conducted in restricted countries and/or sectors. Few studies have investigated the integrated effect of multiple dimensions of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention in Bangladesh, although there are some studies about Facebook commerce, advertising or influencer marketing.

2.7 Research Gap

Although there has been a lot of research on social media marketing and purchase intention around the world, there is still limited research on Bangladeshi consumers. Previous research in Bangladesh primarily focuses on individual topics like Facebook buying, the effectiveness of ads, or influencers' content.

Moreover, there is a lack of evidence on the most effective social media marketing dimensions, such as informativeness, entertainment, interactivity and credibility on consumers' purchase intention in Bangladesh context.

Hence, this study is focused on filling this gap by exploring how social media marketing affects consumers' purchase intention in Bangladesh.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy in this study will be positivism as it seeks to understand the measurable relationships between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intention through the use of quantitative data. The positivist approach is based on the idea that social phenomena can be studied objectively, by observing, measuring and statistically analysing the phenomena (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

The positivist approach is appropriate for this research because the study aims to gather numerical data from consumers, and analyze relationships among variables such as social media marketing activities and purchase intention. This will enable the researcher to see the patterns and to test relationships through statistical techniques.

3.2 Research Approach

The approach of the study will be deductive approach. The deductive approach starts with the theories and research findings and then check with the collected data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

This study adopted the dimensions of social media marketing based on previous literature as potential factors that affect purchase intention, which are informativeness, entertainment, interactivity and credibility. A structured questionnaire will be used to explore these concepts among the Bangladeshi consumers.

3.3 Research Strategy

For this research a survey strategy will be followed. Surveys can be used when the researcher wants to gather data from a larger group of respondents, and when the researcher wants to investigate the relationship between variables.

The questionnaire will be prepared using Google Forms and sent to the users of social media of Bangladesh. This is appropriate, as the research topic is about digital consumer behaviour and many of the potential respondents are active users of online platforms.

The survey method also allows the researcher to collect data from the respondents in Bangladesh, when the researcher resides in the UK.

3.4 Method of Research and Data Collection

This study will be quantitative research method, due to the objective of this study is to measure the relationship social media marketing to purchase intention.

The main data will be obtained by conducting an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will contain statements that will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree

5 = Strongly Agree

The questionnaire will explore participants' attitudes towards:

- Activities on social media;
- informativeness;
- entertainment;
- interactivity;
- credibility;
- purchase intention.

Primary data collection is suitable since the researcher can collect the up to date information from the Bangladeshi consumers about their social media use and buying behaviour.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The research will target Bangladeshi consumers actively using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok. Convenience sampling will be employed due to time and accessibility constraints. The online questionnaire will be distributed through social media groups, messaging platforms, and personal networks. Approximately 120–150 respondents are expected, which is sufficient for quantitative analysis of relationships between variables.

3.6 Designing Questionnaires and Measurement

There will be three parts of the questionnaire.

Section A: Demographic Information

This section will gather background information such as:

- age;
- gender;
- education level;
- occupation;

Frequency of use of social media.

Part B: Social Media Marketing Dimensions

This section will gauge the perception of the respondents on:

- informativeness;
- entertainment;
- interactivity;
- credibility.

In this section, participants were asked about their intention to buy the product.

This section will assess consumers' purchase intention of products affected by social media marketing efforts.

The items in the questionnaire will be modified from previous academic studies so that they are reliable and in line with previous studies.

3.7 Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed with the help of SPSS software.

The following techniques will be used:

- Descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the characteristics of the respondents and their responses.
- Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) to check the consistency of measurement.

- Correlation analysis to see the relationship between the dimensions of social media marketing and purchase intention.
- Regression analysis to identify the significant effects of the factors of social media marketing on the purchase intention.

These techniques will enable the researcher to assess the correlation between the independent variables (social media marketing dimensions) and dependent variable (purchase intention).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles will be upheld during the research process. The participation will be voluntary and the respondents will be informed of the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire.

No personally identifiable information will be collected and all responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. The gathered data will solely be used for academic functions and kept securely.

The researcher will also take care of the research ethics requirements of the university before collecting primary data.

4. Expected Findings

It is expected that this study will be able to establish a positive correlation between social media marketing and the consumers' purchase intention in Bangladesh. The informativeness, entertainment, interactivity and credibility are expected to affect attitudes and purchase behaviors of consumers. The study will also determine which dimensions are most influential, offering actionable insights for businesses to maximize their digital marketing efforts and boost engagement and the effectiveness of their social media campaigns.

5. Limitations

This study might have some limitations. Convenience sampling could limit the generalisability of the results to the broader Bangladeshi community. Further, online distribution of questionnaires might lead to higher participation rate from younger consumers and more active online consumers. In addition, the study does not measure actual purchase behaviour, but purchase intention which may result in discrepancies between consumers' intentions and actual purchase behaviour.

6. Research Timeline

Research Activity	Jul	Aug	Sep
Review of academic literature & theoretical framework			
Proposal preparation & submission			
Ethical approval & instrument development			
Questionnaire distribution & data collection			
Data analysis & interpretation			
Dissertation writing & findings integration			
Final review, editing & proofreading			
Final submission			

7. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the impact of social media marketing on consumers' buying intention in Bangladesh. Although, there are some studies which indicate that engagement, trust, information quality and online interactions have impact on consumer behaviour, limited studies have been conducted on the integrated impact of multiple dimension of social media marketing in the context of Bangladesh. Consumer responses will be analysed using a quantitative approach, which will

offer practical recommendations for businesses looking to improve their social media marketing effectiveness.

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APPENDIX A

Research Questionnaire

Research Title: The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention in Bangladesh

Participant Information

Dear Participant,

I am conducting this survey as part of my Master's dissertation. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention in Bangladesh.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential. The collected information will be used only for academic research purposes. The questionnaire will take approximately 5–7 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your valuable participation.

Consent

☐ I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Section A

Demographic Information and Social Media Usage

Please tick (✓) ONE appropriate answer.

A1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

A2. Age

- ☐ 18–25 years
- ☐ 26–35 years

- ☐ 36–45 years
- ☐ 46 years or above

A3. Highest Educational Qualification

- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate (PhD)
- ☐ Other _____

A4. Current Occupation

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Private sector employee
- ☐ Government employee
- ☐ Business owner/self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other _____

A5. How frequently do you use social media platforms?

- ☐ Less than 1 hour per day
- ☐ 1–3 hours per day
- ☐ 3–5 hours per day
- ☐ More than 5 hours per day

A6. Which social media platform do you use most frequently?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Other _____

A7. Have you purchased any product or service after seeing it on social media?☐ Yes☐ No**A8. How often do you purchase products after seeing them on social media?**☐ Never☐ Rarely☐ Sometimes☐ Often☐ Very often**Section B****Social Media Marketing Activities**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Scale	Description
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Part B1**Informativeness**

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B1	Social media platforms provide useful information about products and services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B2	Social media content helps me understand product features before purchasing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B3	Brands provide accurate and relevant information through social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B4	I use social media to search for product information before making purchase decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part B2

Entertainment

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B5	I find brand-related social media content enjoyable and interesting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B6	Creative videos and visual content increase my interest in products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B7	Entertaining social media content improves my perception of brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B8	I am more likely to engage with brands that create attractive social media content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part B3

Interactivity

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B9	Brands respond effectively to customer questions on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B10	Social media allows me to communicate directly with brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B11	I value brands that encourage customer feedback through social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B12	Interaction with brands through social media increases my trust in them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part B4

Credibility and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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B13	I consider customer reviews on social media before purchasing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B14	Recommendations from other social media users influence my purchasing decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B15	I trust brands that provide transparent information on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B16	Influencer recommendations affect my perception of products or brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C

Consumer Engagement with Social Media Content

Please indicate your level of agreement using the same scale.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
C1	I regularly interact with brands through social media platforms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C2	I like, comment on or share brand-related social media content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C3	I follow brands on social media to receive product updates.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C4	Social media engagement increases my interest in brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C5	I discuss products or brands with others through social media platforms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D

Consumers' Purchase Intention

Please indicate your level of agreement using the same scale.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
D1	Social media marketing influences my intention to purchase products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D2	I am more likely to purchase products promoted through social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D3	I consider purchasing products after seeing positive information on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

D4	Social media marketing helps me make purchasing decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D5	I intend to purchase products from brands that actively engage with customers on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D6	I intend to continue purchasing products influenced by social media marketing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E

Recommendations for Businesses

E1. What improvements should businesses make to increase the effectiveness of their social media marketing strategies?