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**Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer
Purchase Action:
A Case Study of SME consumers in Bangladesh**

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Action. A Case Study of SME consumers in Bangladesh. A survey questionnaire was used to conduct the study on Bangladeshi SME customers who utilise online social media sites. The purpose of the research was to examine the significance of social media marketing in Bangladesh and how it influences customer purchase action. In the study's first phase, relevant literature research was conducted to thoroughly comprehend social media marketing techniques. After analysing previous research in the subject matter, the conceptual framework of the study was developed. This framework studied both the causes and consequences of social media marketing on consumer engagement. In the second phase, a cross-sectional quantitative data survey was constructed to evaluate the research framework and hypotheses.

In a pilot test, 16 valid survey questionnaires were distributed to determine how social media is embedded in various situations and locations. The assumptions of the extended model were then verified with 329 valid surveys. The data were analysed through structural equation modelling (SEM). The research found a positive correlation between customer engagement and the social media marketing efforts of SMEs. Moreover, the statistically significant mediating influences of trust, perceived value, and social media antecedents on this connection were discovered.

Furthermore, there was a substantial correlation between customer engagement and client acquisition, indicating that SMEs in Bangladesh might strengthen their customer interactions by using a social media marketing approach. This study also examines how social media marketing influences consumer behaviour, customer engagement, and consumer purchase action in Bangladesh's small and medium-sized enterprises. This study could help Bangladesh's SMEs interact with consumers on social media platforms and establish the framework for future research on the moderating influence of online consumer behaviour.



Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The introductory chapter of this thesis attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the research issue and the significance of the study. It will cover the evolution of social media marketing, its growing importance inside businesses, and its impact on consumer engagement. This chapter will also outline the goals and objectives of the research, justify the significance of conducting this study, and the research methods used. This chapter will give an overview of the Bangladeshi SMEs and how social media marketing is shaping the nature of the business. In addition, the chapter will analyse the existing literature on social media marketing and its impact on consumer engagement, as well as highlight research gaps and the need for more study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Social media has become a popular communication tool, allowing customers to connect and interact with businesses. It has shifted from core dyadic interactions between consumers and marketers to interactions involving a variety of stakeholders, including customers, organisations, influencers, and non-customers (Bryła et al., 2022). Recognizing the growth of customer interaction, academics have demanded further research on the significance of consumer involvement in the SME sector. Kim and Ko (2012) demonstrated that, social media had an impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Beyond conventional marketing channels, customers may now obtain SME's service and product information via a range of social media marketing activities.

Furthermore, consumers actively generate content, provide product evaluations, and participate in social media interactions with businesses and other customers (Yadav and Rahman, 2017). SMEs are regarded as the economic backbone of Bangladesh. Some SMEs have begun to use social media channels to increase customer engagement, which has established to be a key differentiator. For example, Daraz is a popular eCommerce business in Bangladesh and one of the most successful SMEs to use social media platforms. By constantly connecting with their consumers on social media channels, they have been able to grow their customer base and increase consumer purchase action. Magenest (2023) reported that, Daraz's website has over 10.9 million monthly visitors and 12.5% consumer engagement rate. Another Bangladeshi



rapid growth eCommerce firm called Chaldal.com is a successful SME that uses social media marketing. Facebook and Instagram have helped them advertise their items to a wider audience. Islam (2023) contended that, Chaldal.com website has over 1,400,000 monthly visitors.

SMEs in Bangladesh provide 75% of family income, 25% of the country's overall GDP, and 31 million jobs (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2009). SMEs in Bangladesh are faced with marketing issues that impede the development of their company, such as a lack of investment and innovation (Andalib & Rizwan Darun, 2018). Previous researchers (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2009; Alam et al., 2019; Chowdhury, 2007; Doern, 2011; Gill & Biger, 2012) has found that SMEs in Bangladesh have some challenges to growing their business because they do not have enough supervision capability, the right infrastructure, marketing education and training, and a corporate strategy. Although several studies have been conducted on the difficulties that SMEs in Bangladesh encounter, there has been no specific study conducted on the significance of these difficulties or the value of SMEs' market penetration. Prior research has mostly focused on the influence of general user experience and customer engagement in offline (traditional) SMEs communities. With the advent of the internet, consumer habits have changed, along with the ways in which companies' function (Wang *et al.*, 2019). More people are being attracted to online purchasing and therefore, online marketing is getting more attention. The scope of this study is thus expanded to include online consumer engagement on social media domains, which have replaced traditional marketing methods (Tuten and Solomon, 2015). This research aims to address this knowledge gap by expanding scholarly understanding of consumer engagement on social media platforms.

1.3 Definition of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are an important part of the economy in many countries. They account for a significant share of employment and output, and they play a vital role in innovation and job creation (Robu, 2013). However, SMEs often face challenges those larger businesses do not, such as access to finance, markets, and technology (Naradda Gamage, 2020). Therefore, in most countries, governments play a critical role in supporting SMEs by providing them with financial aid with minimum interest, access to government resources, as well as by creating a favourable regulatory environment (Abbasi et al., 2017; Smallbone and Welter, 2001). Different countries define SMEs differently and thus, access to these government resources vary accordingly. The criteria for SME classification can vary across countries due to differences in economic conditions, market structures, and policy frameworks.



Although these criteria vary from country to country, they typically include factors such as the number of employees, turnover, and asset size (Berisha et al., 2015; Pletnev et al., 2015). Table 1-1 provides a comparison of the fundamental SME criteria in the EU, USA, UK, Nigeria, and Bangladesh.

Table 1-1: SME Criteria in Different Countries including Bangladesh.

Country	Number of Employees (Small size business)	Number of Employees (Medium size business)	Turnover
EU	More than 50 employees	More than 250 employees	More than 50 million euros
USA	Less than 500 employees	More than 500 employees	More than 1 million dollars
UK	Less than 250 employees	More than 250 employees	More than 33 million pounds
Nigeria	Less 100 employees	More than 100 employees	More than 50 million naira
Bangladesh	Not above 50 employees	More than 150 employees	More than 100 million takas

Source: EU Commission, (2003). Recommendation 2003/361/EC, (Bangladesh Bank SME Department, 2018).

Table 1-1 provides a general representation of the criteria across different countries. The reason behind the variations lies within the variation in the needs of SMEs which vary depending on the size of the economy, the level of development, and the regulatory environment. Besides, the definition of SMEs can differ based on sector-specific criteria (Sidek et al., 2020). For instance, some industries may have specific regulations or requirements that affect the definition and classification of SMEs. These sector-specific criteria can include factors such as investment in fixed assets, annual sales volume, or specific industry standards. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers to consider these sector-specific criteria when analysing the SME landscape in a particular country or region.



1.4 Contributions of SMEs in Bangladesh

Small and medium businesses (SMEs) are the backbone of Bangladesh's growing economy. Miah et al., (2022) reported that SMEs contributed about 25% of the country's GDP, 80% of industrial employment, and over 90% of all industrial units. Many sectors, including agriculture, industry, and services, have benefited from the contributions of SMEs to the Bangladeshi economy. SMEs also contribute to the country's export revenues. The Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau estimates that in the 2019–2020 fiscal year, Bangladeshi SMEs earned almost \$6.9 billion through exports. In addition to alleviating poverty via the creation of rural and urban employment possibilities, SMEs enterprises have also contributed to the reduction of unemployment. Wang et al., 2012 demonstrated that, SMEs in rural areas helped a lot to reduce poverty by creating jobs and raising the standard of living for the people who lived there. Several studies have examined the competitive advantage issue that Bangladeshi SMEs facing some marketing related challenges, but none have examined their importance or market penetration. This research seeks to determine the best marketing instrument for SMEs to boost company development via marketing. Despite their importance, there is a gap in the academic literature on the contribution of SMEs to the economy of Bangladesh.

In this study, the researcher aims to identify the literature gap on the contribution of SMEs to the economy of Bangladesh and discuss the need for further research in this area. One of the main gaps in the literature of SMEs contribution in Bangladesh is the limited focus on the role of SMEs in promoting entrepreneurship and fostering innovation. While there is some research that examines the role of SMEs in generating employment and supporting the export sector (Bangladesh Bank, 2017; Hossain and Bhuiyan, 2011), there is a need for further research that specifically examines the role of SMEs in promoting entrepreneurship and fostering innovation. Another gap in the literature is the limited focus on the challenges faced by SMEs in Bangladesh and the need for government support to address these challenges. The industrial sector covers an important part of the social and cultural advancement in Bangladesh. Islam et al., (2012) reported that, the contribution of the SME sector to the real growth of the country increased from 29% in the fiscal year 2012-13 to 29.61% in the fiscal year 2013-14.

In addition to this top trade organizing committee, many garment factories and other outsourced factories are also impacted by this pandemic. Compared to July 2019, Bangladesh's ready-to-wear exports fell to nearly USD 26 billion in February 2020. It decreased by almost 4.8% in comparison with the same period last year. Total exports decreased by almost 1.8% in



February 2020 in comparison with the same month in 2019 (Williamson, 2022). Thus, the pandemic has had a direct effect on the global fashion, fibre, textile, apparel, and leather industries. Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature on the impact of COVID-19 on the SME sector in Bangladesh. While some studies examine the impact of COVID-19 on SMEs in emerging economic countries like Bangladesh, there is a need for further research that specifically examines the impact of COVID-19 on the SME sector in Bangladesh and the need for government support to address the challenges faced by SMEs during this pandemic (Miah et al., 2022).

1.5 Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Action

Kim and Ko (2012) reported that, social media marketing significantly affects customer purchase action. The study also demonstrated how customer involvement acts as a moderator of the impact of social network marketing on consumer purchase action. The research placed a strong focus on tracking customer issues to create an efficient marketing plan that would affect consumer involvement. On the other hand, Makudza et al., (2020) demonstrated that social media trust and perceived usefulness had a considerable impact on consumer purchase action. Alauddin and Chowdhury (2015) contended that, social media marketing's dependability and goodness significantly affect consumers' confidence in social media data. Consumer perception of social media's utility is significantly influenced by this social media trust. Social media marketing has a substantial impact on consumers' intentions to make purchases, along with social media trust and perceived utility.

However, Chaffey (2018) contended that, social media marketing has a specific influence over each step of the consumer engagement process. Khan and Fasih (2014), conducted an empirical study to determine how much social media influences consumer engagement and how frequently social media is used to make a purchase decision. The study showed that 61.5% of consumers are motivated to purchase products by seeing the positive post of their friends (Perumal, Krishan, et al. 2017). On the other hand, 59% of respondents made an unplanned purchase of products based on available information on the Internet (Kemp, 2022). Despite this, the study emphasised the increasing use of social media by the consumer to make a purchase decision. Furthermore, Kim and Ko (2012) also discovered that, negative comments from friends and acquaintances have a negative influence on consumer engagement.



1.6 Summary of Research Aims and Objectives

The fundamental aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of social media marketing on customer purchase action in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. The primary purpose of this research is to create a conceptual social media marketing framework that applies to Bangladeshi SMEs. This model is intended to help Bangladeshi SMEs and organization in economically and socially equivalent markets enhance the outcomes of their marketing operations by using social media platforms. To fulfil the fundamental aim of the research, the following objectives have been formulated:

- 1) To examine and evaluate the social media antecedents on the social media marketing platform.
- 2) To investigate the impact of social media marketing strategies on consumer trust and perceived value.
- 3) To develop a conceptual framework concerning the relationships between social media marketing and its antecedents with consumer purchase action.
- 4) To provide recommendations based on anticipated findings that would enhance the overall performance and customer engagement of Bangladeshi SMEs.

To address the research objectives posed above, several research studies were evaluated. Each research study illustrates a significant social media interaction between SME that involves more than one customer connection, also known as dyadic relationships. Because of this, the study differs from conventional case study research by including social media platforms as independent variables of analysis (Grant and Pollock, 2011). This allows the researcher to investigate dyadic social media interaction in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. The theoretical frameworks based on the Technology acceptance model, consumer engagement theory, and social media influence factors were discovered to serve as a lens for data gathering and analysis. Wan et al., (2017) demonstrated that social media marketing has become one of the most successful and preferred marketing techniques in the preponderance of businesses. Among them, the SME sector has adopted social media marketing strategy. Harrigan et al., (2018) also reported that social media plays a significant role in the successful transformation of digital information.



1.7 Rationale and Significance of the Research

1.7.1 Rationale of The Research

The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of social media marketing on customer purchase action in the Bangladeshi SME sector. Alkaya and Taşkn (2017) reported that, social media marketing has become an important aspect of modern life, with over 39 million Bangladeshi users utilising social media platforms, most users are young (Facts, 2020). Harrigan et al., (2018) stated that, the number of users on social media platforms is enormous and growing at a rapid rate, allowing businesses to perform low-cost marketing tactics to reach more consumers with more concentrated efforts. SMEs are increasingly devoting a significant amount of money to social media marketing, with online advertising spending in Bangladesh exceeding \$10 billion, accounting for about a third of total advertising spending (Kemp, 2022). Despite the tremendous growth of social media networks and the widespread interest of businesses in utilising them for marketing reasons, academic papers have not kept up with this fast-industrial adoption (Barger et al., 2016). As a result, the impacts of social media marketing techniques on customer views of companies are still barely understood (Sen et al., 2020). Thus, the goal of this research is to investigate the notion of customer involvement in the context of social media-based brand communities. It intends to investigate the causes and consequences of this involvement. This thesis presents some latest ideas for improving business decision-making based on the usage of social media marketing tools for all companies, especially SMEs.

Manchanda and Pattabhiramaiah (2015) argued that social media marketing may produce consumers and influence social media users by exhibiting items and providing information. This study sheds light on the effects of social media marketing by gathering data and information from chosen respondents, and the researcher then analysed the data using statistical techniques to identify the effects of social media on customer engagement for SMEs' performance. Social media has developed as an effective marketing tool, mainly because targeting a specific audience through social media is comparatively straightforward and cost-effective (Bashar et al., 2012; Paquette 2013; Sharma and Verma 2018). Thus, SMEs in Western economies are heavily utilising social media marketing to engage more consumers and acquire because it is easier and cost-effective.



During the fiscal year 2018-19, about 71% of Bangladesh SMEs utilised social media marketing and spent £3.04 billion on social media advertising (Statista, 2019). Social media is widespread in Bangladesh, and individuals have access to many social media platforms, thus the Bangladesh SME business has adopted social media marketing as an essential approach for customer purchase action. Few studies have been conducted to investigate how social media marketing impacts a developing economy, such as Bangladesh's SME sector. These considerations led the researcher to undertake this research to assess the influence of social media marketing on Bangladesh's SME sector. As a result, the justification for this study created a framework regarding the link between social media and customer engagement approach in the context of Bangladeshi SME sector. The researcher estimated that, this study will help to improve knowledge of social media marketing practices for entrepreneur, as well as the influence of social media marketing on customer purchase action in general. As a result, the outcomes of this study will be producing empirical evidence to make appropriate marketing strategies by enhancing consumer engagement.

1.7.2 Significance of the Research

In Bangladesh, most entrepreneurs do not make appropriate use of social media marketing strategy to enhance consumer purchase action, which is necessary to improve the marketing performance of SMEs in general. There are a variety of causes behind this, including the lack of understanding of social media marketing tools, and social media algorithms, and a lack of information technology expertise (Bryła et al., 2022). They are likely to forego the chance to use social media marketing and increase consumer engagement in their company as well as attract new consumer purchase action. This is the most significant research gap for this investigation. Aside from that, the author wants to build a conceptual framework that enables Bangladeshi SMEs to fill a niche by guiding them in adopting social networking sites to improve customer purchase action. However, the objective is not to duplicate previous studies on physical consumer communities, since the online environment has unique characteristics that will be addressed in more detail later in the literature review chapter. This study will be able to provide a guideline to businesses on how to engage customers more effectively by identifying the antecedents and consequences of consumer involvement in online communities. In addition, several gaps have been found in the research that have yet to be filled; for instance, some of the literature gaps are listed below:



In the social media literature, there is a conflict in defining and understanding the nature and dimensionality of consumer engagement in the context of the SME sector, where some authors consider it a unidimensional concept, e.g., Malarvizhi et al., (2022), while others consider it a multidimensional concept, e.g. (Dholakia, et al., 2011). There have been several research studies conducted on the micro-environment of social media marketing. Those publications, nevertheless, did not sufficiently investigate the effect of social media on customer purchase action. Even though several scholars, such as Dwivedi et al., (2021), Harrigan et al., (2018), Krishen et al., (2021), and O'Reilly and Tynan, (2015) published empirical studies that addressed some aspects of social marketing engagement in general. Previous studies of social media marketing did not deal with the impact of social media marketing as an outcome of consumer engagement in the SME sector. The impact of social media is receiving ongoing attention from academics and marketers (Balakrishnan et al., 2014), where it is also discovered that consumers' emotional bonding to social media is responsible for explaining much of consumer behaviour (Pentina et al., 2018).

Many academic publications have been published about social media marketing, including those by Harrigan et al. (2018), Kim and Ko (2012), and Malarvizhi et al. (2022), which looked at the factors influencing social media marketing engagement in the SME sector. There is a specific restriction to finding characteristics connected to customers' impressions of the brand and the online community. Understanding these elements is crucial to the effectiveness of marketing initiatives because they explain why consumers participate in certain online communities while ignoring others. Most of the research on the issue has been confined to limited comparisons of the antecedents and effects of engagement in the setting of offline communities (Constantinides, 2014). Social media practises arose because of a dynamic collective learning process, resulting in higher-order marketing knowledge and learning, allowing for the production and deployment of substantial marketing skills as well as rapid adaptability to rapidly changing markets (Thoumrungroje, 2014).

The present study will contribute significantly to the research and management of the social media marketing and SME sectors in both Bangladesh and emerging economies countries like-Brazil, India, and Turkey. Because there have been few studies that relate consumer participation to operations in the social media and small company sectors, the present study intends to address this research hole by conducting research in the B2B marketing industry with a focus on social media, engagement, and SMEs. This thesis makes a distinctive and



unique contribution to knowledge, as While several relevant theses have already been completed in the past, none of them were detailed enough to address the effects of social media marketing on SME performance. As a result, this thesis has investigated a new area in SME marketing communication, which has the potential to make SME marketing strategies more effective and low-cost competitive advantages. This thesis' methodological approach uses a cross-sectional primary data set to contribute to the field of marketing communication. The results of this study indicate that there is no precise research that is publicly available about marketing communications for Bangladeshi SMEs.

As a result, this thesis has significantly and uniquely contributed to the field of methodological knowledge. The author also believes that the data analysis used in this research study is innovative and empirical. It employs and adheres to Muijs' (2004) standard data analysis protocols, but by utilising Microsoft Word Office 2011, each sentence in the questionnaire was tagged with the comment function in the right-side margin of each survey transcript, and open codes were colour coded in each factor as stated by their axial code. The IBM SPSS application and AMOS applications were used to generate codes, frequency distributions, and graphical representations such as individual pie charts, tables, and column charts. To summarise, this study fills some of the gaps in the literature, such as the controversy about what defines consumer engagement and the scarcity of studies that look at the antecedents and effects of consumer participation in online brand communities on social media. This research thus seeks to provide an improved understanding of the online brand and consumer relationships that emerge in these communities because of customer involvement (Mehta and Kaye, 2021).

1.7.3 Justification for Conducting This Research

The justification for conducting this research study on the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchase actions in the case of Bangladeshi SMEs is rooted in the theories of planned behaviour and reasoned action. These theories offer valuable frameworks for understanding the factors that shape consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. To the best of my knowledge, this is one of the vital research projects that has investigated the effect of social media marketing on consumer engagement from the perspective of SMEs in a developing nation like Bangladesh. Additionally, this is a cardinal study to examine the SME business phenomena from both a theoretical and empirical standpoint, considering both the consumer and company perspectives. There are a lot of reasons to believe that this research has laid the groundwork for future research in Bangladesh on how people use social media as



marketing tool. By examining the application of the mentioned theories within the context of social media marketing, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in several keyways:

- **Exploring the Predictive Power of Theories:** The theory of planned behaviour and the theory of reasoned action provide insights into the cognitive processes that influence individuals' intentions and behaviours. By applying these theories to the context of social media marketing, this study seeks to investigate how consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control impact their engagement with SMEs through social media platforms. Understanding these underlying factors can help SMEs develop targeted marketing strategies that effectively influence consumer behaviour.
- **Uncovering Consumer Perceptions and Intentions:** The theories of planned behaviour and reasoned action emphasize the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in shaping individuals' intentions. This study aims to examine how these factors influence consumer perceptions and intentions towards SMEs' social media marketing efforts. By identifying the key determinants of consumer engagement and retention, SMEs can tailor their marketing strategies to align with consumer preferences and expectations.
- **Examining the Role of Social Influence:** Both theories highlight the significance of subjective norms, which capture the influence of social factors on individual behaviour. In the context of social media, where users are constantly exposed to peer opinions and recommendations, understanding the impact of social influence on consumer engagement becomes crucial. This study seeks to examine how social media marketing efforts by SMEs can leverage subjective norms to enhance consumer engagement and retention.
- **Informing Marketing Strategy Development:** By integrating the theories of planned behaviour and reasoned action into the research framework, this study aims to provide practical insights for SMEs in developing effective social media marketing strategies. The findings will help SMEs identify the factors that drive consumer engagement, enabling them to optimize their marketing efforts, enhance customer relationships, and ultimately improve business outcomes.



However, this research study addresses the influence of social media marketing on consumer engagement in the context of SMEs in Bangladesh, drawing upon the theories of planned behaviour and reasoned action. By exploring the underlying factors that shape consumer behaviour and decision-making processes, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of social media marketing and provides practical implications for SMEs in developing effective marketing strategies.

1.8 Definition of Social Media Marketing and other forms of Marketing

With the advent of internet and social networking platforms, social media marketing is playing a pivotal role in transforming the idea of consumer engagement and retention, surpassing the capabilities of traditional marketing media. The expansion of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter among the mass population provides businesses with an unparalleled opportunity to connect with diverse audience from different demographics. With billions of active users, these platforms ensure extensive brand exposure and heightened customer engagement. In contrast to traditional marketing approaches, which often involve one-way communication, social media facilitates real-time and interactive dialogues between businesses and their customers, fostering dynamic exchanges of ideas, allowing businesses to actively connect with their audience. Table 1-2 provides a comparative analysis of social media marketing in relation to traditional marketing and direct marketing.

Table 1-1: Comparison of social media marketing with traditional marketing and direct marketing

Factors	Social Media Marketing	Traditional Marketing	Direct Marketing
Reach and Audience Targeting	Wide reach, specific targeting options	Moderate reach, limited targeting capabilities	Limited reach, highly targeted
Cost-effectiveness	Generally cost-effective, flexible budgeting options	Variable costs, potentially high investment	Variable costs, potential cost savings
Interaction and Engagement	High level of interactivity and engagement opportunities	Limited interaction, passive engagement	Personalized interaction, potential for direct feedback



Measurability and Analytics	Robust analytics and tracking tools, detailed insights	Limited measurability, difficult to track ROI	Directly measurable, tangible results
Adaptability and Flexibility	Highly adaptable to changing trends and preferences	Limited adaptability, slower response to changes	Adaptable to specific target audience, customization possible
Brand Building and Loyalty	Effective for building brand awareness and loyalty	Established brand-building methods, mixed effectiveness	Direct brand association, potential for personalized loyalty programs

By providing a comprehensive comparison of these marketing methods, the study enabled SMEs to make informed decisions based on their specific objectives, target audience, and available resources. This information could guide SMEs in formulating effective marketing strategies that enhance customer engagement and retention, ultimately leading to their business growth and success.

1.9 Research Methodology

The preference for a useful method for academic research is based on the nature of the current research objective and the literature that has been used to solve similar research objectives. So, this research is based on an objectivist philosophy, positivism, a deductive approach, and mostly quantitative methods. The research design that was chosen has several stages. After looking at previous studies and noticing that there are some gaps in the literature, a new conceptual model is thought up. The suggested model is mostly based on consumer behaviour theory and digital marketing content. It uses customer trust as the main way to improve online customer engagement. Also, it combines two of the most well-known parts of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Another important thing that is done is to use a web quality scale that is appropriate, as well as other important concepts such as trust, perceived value, and consumer purchase action. A survey questionnaire was distributed to ensure that the model is suitable for statistical analysis. This comprises determining the population and sampling, conducting a pilot study, and establishing data gathering techniques. Subsequently, the ethical considerations surrounding the research are thoroughly examined. Following that, the procedures for data analysis and the statistical programmes utilised are listed along with an



explanation of their purpose. Based on scales that were deemed acceptable and have been proven to be trustworthy in the literature, a survey was performed to measure each component on the scale. Each of the constructs had about five things to measure, and the whole model had 25 things to look at as well (questions). The items were tested by online SMEs consumer, and people who use the internet from the same culture. The survey was made available online because it was the best way to do this study. The social media channels of airline companies were used to get data after a pilot survey. As soon as all the correct answers were in, they were analysed. Factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) were used in the analysis to make sure the model and the hypothesis were correct and to see if they were accurate. Mean differences and invariance analysis were also used in the group analysis. As a tool, SPSS and AMOS software were used for the project.

1.10 Thesis Structure

The thesis is presented in six chapters:

Chapter 1. Introduction. This chapter begins with a basic introduction to the research motivation, research background, research aim, and objectives. It also offers a brief discussion of the research contribution and research gap.

Chapter 2. Literature Review. This chapter is divided into two parts: The first part concerns social media marketing, consumer engagement, and SMEs contribution in Bangladesh, while the second part introduces social impact theory and the research framework applied to Bangladeshi SMEs businesses.

Chapter 3. Methodology: The third section is the research methodology regarding the philosophical and theoretical framework for the research, the research approach and design, the research method, and data analyses. Additionally, it includes a discussion of what comprises ethical approval and the reliability of the data analysis.

Chapter 4. Research Finding Analysis: This chapter reports on the survey's findings regarding social media marketing by Bangladeshi SMEs. The findings are presented as individual statistical manner.



Chapter 5. Discussion and Recommendation: This chapter discusses the research findings from chapter 4 considering the existing literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the aim being to extend knowledge in the studied area.

Chapter 6. Conclusion: This chapter provides the conclusions and recommendations for future research. It also notes the limitations and contributions of the research.

1.11 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided context for the research as well as explanations for its importance. Furthermore, it defined the gap in the literature that this study seeks to address, as well as the research objectives and goals. Finally, the thesis framework was developed, summarizing the substance of each chapter. The following chapter presents the literature review, which is divided into two parts: the first outlining additional details about related Social Media topics, SMEs, and the adoption of technology in the business sector, and the second outlining additional details about the adoption of technology in the business sector. The second section contains information about the research framework as well as an analysis of the literature on the social impact theory used in this study.



Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of the studies that have been conducted on the topic of how social media marketing affects the participation of consumers. To offer a thorough grasp of the current state of knowledge on the issue, this chapter discusses previous research relevant to the thesis and is split into two pieces. The chapter discussion starts with a description of social media marketing and how consumers interact with it. Then, it discusses theories and models that are related to this topic. Finally, this chapter also explain the necessity for more study by pointing out the gaps in the existing literature. In this chapter, the researcher will take a critical look at the current state of knowledge.

2.2 Definition and Measuring Scale of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has gained significant attention in both academia and industry due to the growing influence and reach of social media platforms. However, defining and measuring social media marketing presents various challenges and has led to divergent views in the literature. Researchers have defined social media marketing as the utilization of social media platforms to promote products, services, or brands (Smith et al., 2015). Others have emphasized its focus on gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites (Liang and Turban, 2011). Some scholars highlight the importance of engaging with consumers and building brand awareness through social media channels (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Another perspective emphasizes the promotion and selling of products or services and the building of customer relationships (Chen and Popovich, 2012). The variations in these definitions reflect the multifaceted nature of social media marketing.

Measuring the effectiveness of social media marketing requires diligent monitoring of various indicators that reflect its efficiency and outcomes. Smith et al. (2015) highlight the widespread use of self-reported surveys to gauge social media usage, advertising expenditures, and important engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments. Comprehending the impact of social media sites' traffic can be achieved through the analysis of web analytics data, including click-through rates, page views, and conversions, as highlighted by Liang and Turban (2011).



To assess the influence of social media interaction on brand awareness, researchers employ content analysis of social media postings, sentiment analysis, and monitoring brand mentions, as suggested by Mangold and Faulds (2009). These techniques enable a deeper understanding of how social media activities contribute to brand perception and visibility.

Researchers rely on sales data derived from social media referrals, customer satisfaction surveys, and important social media indicators such as followers, shares, and reach to assess the effectiveness of social media marketing in generating sales and nurturing customer relationships (Chen and Popovich, 2012). The impact of social media initiatives on business outcomes and customer engagement can be better understood with the use of these quantitative and qualitative indicators. Additionally, customer feedback, sentiment analysis, and social media monitoring technologies offer insights into how marketing communication efforts on social media platforms should be coordinated (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

The diverse views on social media marketing measurement stem from the evolving nature of social media platforms and the challenges associated with attributing outcomes to social media efforts. Table 2-1 summarizes the views of different literature in a concise manner.

Table 2-1: Definition and Measures of Social Media Marketing in Literature

Study	Definition of Social Media Marketing	Measurement Approach
Smith et al. (2015)	The use of social media platforms to promote products, services, or brands.	Self-reported surveys capturing social media usage, advertising spend, and engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments).
Liang and Turban (2011)	The process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites.	Web analytics data (e.g., click-through rates, page views, conversions) and social media analytics tools (e.g., reach, impressions, engagement).
Mangold and Faulds (2009)	The practice of using social media channels to engage with consumers and build brand awareness.	Content analysis of social media posts, sentiment analysis, and brand mentions.



Chen and Popovich (2012)	The use of social media to promote and sell products or services and build customer relationships.	Sales data from social media referrals, customer satisfaction surveys, and social media metrics (e.g., followers, shares, reach).
Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010)	The intentional coordination of marketing communication efforts via social media platforms.	Social media monitoring tools (e.g., sentiment analysis, customer feedback), tracking URL codes, and web analytics.

The above discussion suggests that social media marketing is an evolving concept, and it has not yet reached its full potential.

2.3 Social Media Marketing in SMEs

Social media marketing is a kind of communication that establishes a connection between customers and businesses. Since most people in Bangladesh now have access to prominent social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, businesses are seeing this tool as highly effective in engaging with their target consumers. Consumer purchase action and engagement are critical for SMEs since their success is dependent on their ability to maximise customer retention and engagement (Vieira et al., 2019). In modern times, many SMEs have incorporated diverse avenues of social networking sites precisely in their business communication model, which has prompted an intensive transformation in business firms' marketing dynamics (Khan and Fasih, 2014). Acceptance, adoption, and leveraging of social media marketing has become a common marketing practice tool for business firms and this new model of marketing tool extends an unexplored and new opportunity for SMEs to integrate social media platform into their daily marketing activities (Alauddin and Chowdhury, 2015). This scenario calls for in-depth research to examine the impact of social media marketing on customer purchase action to improve the marketing performance of SMEs.

In academic literature, SME performance is a hidden concept with different meanings. Normally, SME performance refers to the firm's meaningful results in terms of efficiency of investment, the effectiveness of strategies, achieving customer satisfaction, customer engagement, acquisition, increasing market share, growth, and returns, which are formed by taking a complex series of actions that assimilate skills and knowledge (Alauddin and Chowdhury, 2015). Nowadays, high SME performance assists to remove blockades and



generates an extensive prospect for SMEs to flourish as well as to compete strongly in the global market (Chaffey, 2018). Therefore, the entrepreneurs who are particularly accountable for administering SMEs, try to gain better market performance via new procedures, plans, and strategies during the entrepreneurial life cycle (Rugraff and Hansen, 2011). In recent times, social media is actively being used for technology-based social interaction in the business world. The most vibrant social media platforms these days are YouTube, Facebook, Myspace, Flickr, and Orkut. These mediums give opportunities for people to express their ideas with ease and helps them to communicate more often even easily (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2016). Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) demonstrated that, social media has numerous advantages including uncomplicated interchange or sharing of information generated by users. Social media is nowadays progressively exercised in the workplace other than only for pleasure-seeking purposes (Khan and Fasih, 2014). Harrigan et al., (2018) reported that, companies have realised that social media may help collaborative learning in the workplace and are using it to exchange ideas and address challenges. Following the trends, SMEs are now using social networks to showcase their products and services to the audience, i.e., the consumers. Sultana (2018) reported that, SMEs with a large Facebook follower have greater probabilities of enhancing their business productivity as Facebook fan page is nowadays a committed relationship builder with customers.

Social media has delivered innovative marketing strategies, substituting older types of promotional activities. SMEs can attract the attention of social media customers by giving a summary of their services and products and if the customers adore the given information, they can follow links to the business website for additional information. Social media, as a communication technology, differs from other systems in its ability to provide clarity, facilitate free discussion, and encourage candidness in the workplace. However, these features of social media systems may conflict with the values and norms of the organization (Khan and Fasih, 2014).

The increasing use of social media for SMEs has been described as an issue persuasive in the growing process of entrepreneurial activity (Bryła et al., 2022)). A meticulous review of the literature about entrepreneurial networks exposed that the most quoted entrepreneurial network types are business networks, social networks, user networks, friendship networks, and recreation networks (Statista, 2021). According to the Global entrepreneurship monitor report by Stephen (2022), entrepreneurs who start businesses are more expected to know and



cooperate with other entrepreneurs than those who do not. Malarvizhi et al., (2022) found that businesses may employ low-cost marketing tactics to reach more consumers with more focused efforts because of the enormous and rapid growth in the number of social media users. Taking into consideration that there will be around 52.58 million people using the internet in Bangladesh by January 2022, the percentage of the entire population that has access to the internet in Bangladesh was 31.5 percent at the beginning of the year 2022. Statistics reveal that in 2022, there will be 5.5 million more internet users in Bangladesh, an increase of 11.6% from the previous year (Kemp, 2022). Due to the diverse groups using social media, SMEs have a great chance of reaching their target clients. However, owing to their limited financial means, SMEs may not always find it simple to utilise social media. Many of them did not properly utilise social media (Csordás and Gáti, 2014). Businesses are unsure of what to do or how to draw in new customers via social media. Because of this, social media activity tends to be more experimental than thoughtfully planned (Siddique and Jahan, 2017). Bangladeshi SMEs that use social media may fall in this category. Social media use in Bangladesh is still in its preliminary stages, with unstructured and unplanned use. Given the constantly growing potential to reach target customers through social media platforms, SMEs in Bangladesh's largest metropolis, Dhaka, have not fully utilised these channels for engaging with consumers. As a result, SMEs are now spending a lot of money on social media marketing. Using information from Bangladeshi SMEs, this study will investigate how and why SMEs utilise social media.

Global social media marketing expenditures total more than \$132 billion, or around 33% of all advertising expenditures (Department, 2023). Additionally, it is anticipated that by 2022, there will be around 3.02 billion monthly users of social media platforms (Statista, 2021). As mentioned in a recent survey, 91% of respondents acknowledged the ability of social media to foster interpersonal relationships and unite people from all other backgrounds (Dixson, 2022). Reaching a specific audience, maintaining conversations, and building connections were all identified as significant social media marketing benefits (Bange et al., 2020). So, social media is an especially valuable tool for marketers who want to talk to their customers. Although in Bangladesh, most small businesses do not know how to effectively use social media platforms to build consumer interaction and acquire new customers, which would help them improve their marketing performance. There are many reasons behind it, some of them are a lack of knowledge about social media marketing tools, and social media algorithms and a lack of knowledge of information technology (Shawky et al., 2020). It means they are losing the



opportunity to utilise the social media marketing tool and failing to increase their customer base. This is the gap that this study seeks to address. Likewise, the study is going to develop a conceptual framework to enable Bangladeshi small businesses to fill a vacuum by assisting them in using social media marketing tools to increase consumer purchase action.

2.4 The Concept of Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the study of how people make purchase choices and interact with the market (Kotler et al., 2017). Previous studies on this issue have shown that a variety of variables impact on consumer behaviour, including personal, psychological, and societal aspects (Solomon et al., 2015). Researchers have also investigated the influence of technology and the digital era on consumer behaviour, such as online purchasing, mobile marketing, and social networking. Consumer behaviour is also interested in the idea of brand loyalty, which means that people tend to buy products from the same brand repeatedly. Wang et al., 2012 demonstrated that several characteristics such as consumer happiness, brand trust, and perceived value may all impact customer retention. In recent years, the study of consumer behaviour has grown in popularity, with an increased emphasis on the influence of technology on purchase choices. Despite discrepancies in approach and outcomes, past research has repeatedly shown that customers are complicated and impacted by a variety of variables, making it critical for marketers and companies to understand and predict consumer behaviour (Verhoef et al., 2016). Kizgin et al., 2020 research study discovered that anticipating customer behaviour may be difficult even for industry specialists. Consumer behaviour describes the psychological processes that consumers go through when they identify their needs, decide how to meet those needs, decide whether to make a purchase and, if so, which brand and where to make the purchase, interpret information, make plans, and carry those plans out (e.g., by engaging in comparison shopping or purchasing a product). Studies of consumer behaviour try to understand how consumers make decisions, both individually and collectively. To understand people's aspirations, it investigates certain consumer characteristics, including demographics and behavioural factors. Consumer behaviour research improves understanding and forecasts of not only the subject of purchases but also the motivations behind them and the frequency of transactions (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). One of the key tenets of modern consumer behaviour research is that individuals often choose products based on their subjectively perceived values rather than their primary objectives (Huang and Sarigöllü, 2014). This is not to suggest that the products' fundamental purposes are meaningless, but rather that a product's



current function goes beyond its primary purpose (Bowden, 2009). Consumers often do not rate products based on their core features (i.e., their main use), but rather on the so-called "real product" (i.e., the qualities of a specific product) and the "extended product," which is the set of intangible factors that give the consumer a desired perceived advantage, such as image, consulting, and after-sale service.

Malarvizhi et al., (2022) reported that, consumer behaviour is the pre-purchase purchasing behaviour of end consumers that influences individuals at the time of purchase and after purchase. It is produced and able to alter due to numerous external and internal causes. Purchase power is a definition of consumer demand. In other words, a customer is willing to pay for a product. Therefore, it is a demand that the economic actors did not set for themselves and do not intend to satisfy for themselves. A demand for a product or service reflects consumer demand in the marketplace. Customers want a product or service to meet their wants and expectations, not to purchase it outright. Businesses should not concentrate on the goods they sell.

According to the Wang et al., (2021) customers may be divided into two groups depending on the magnitude of the prospective benefit and the procurement expenses. How effectively a product satisfies the demands of the client is measured by the value of the product. Consumer value occurs in shifting temporal and spatial dimensions and needs ongoing observation. It has a significant impact on the demand for a product as well as the existing and future marketing environment. External and internal variables impact consumer behaviour. External elements include culture and value systems, social structure and lifestyle, group and reference groups, and the family home idea. Internal elements such as perception, learning, motivation, and personality, as well as attitudes, are all considered. Social variables comprise the greatest category of externally affecting elements. This group is influenced by the following factors: culture, acquired habits, values, ideas, and persuasion that steer consumers in specific circumstances and society. In literature, culture is defined in a variety of ways. Instinct is not a product of society; it is innate. Culture fosters a feeling of community and may also be rewarding. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is the most widely used framework. It consists of the following dimensions: power distance index, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, which refers to men's and women's traditional roles, uncertainty avoidance index, and finally, short-term-long-term orientation (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020).



2.5 Online Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Researchers in social media marketing and e-commerce have extensively studied online consumer purchasing behaviour. One of the key findings from earlier research by Harrigan et al., (2018) and Malarvizhi et al., (2022), consider how trust affects consumers' online shopping decisions. They looked at whether customers' buying decisions were influenced favourably by their trust in internet retailers. The perceived risk associated with the payment is a significant factor that influences online purchase behaviour. Ng Sweeney et al., (2020) stated that consumers purchase online transactions as potentially riskier than conventional in-store purchases and that this perceived risk has a detrimental impact on customers' purchasing intentions. The role of product information and product reviews is also being studied in online consumer behaviour research. Li and Zhang (2017) reported that, product information and product reviews may have a considerable influence on customers' purchasing choices. The authors also discovered that more information and favourable ratings increase the chance of purchasing. Marketing experts and practitioners are continually modifying traditional marketing strategies to satisfy the changing requirements of an expanding population of hyper-aware online consumers in the rapidly expanding virtual purchasing and marketing environment like eBay and Amazon. Marketers are always working to understand the virtual purchasing habits of online customers since there is an increasing focus on Internet retailing in terms of online consumers, transaction volume, and transaction value (Cheung et al., 2015). Several scholars, such as Tafesse, (2016) and Islam et al., (2018), have demonstrated how social resistance and risk aversion limit adoption behaviour in new online channels, reducing the overall efficacy of marketing in certain markets. Other studies, such as Bowden, (2009), emphasise the potential net advantages that brands and businesses may obtain via a strategically focused online presence.

The variance in consumer behaviour and adoption results is fundamentally experiential in nature, emphasising the substantial importance of better knowledge and predictability in modelling future outputs. Nowadays, academics are working to create an online purchasing model or framework that can identify and analyse both internal and extrinsic variables that influence or even shape consumers' buying behaviour in virtual space (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). While some studies found no significant differences between traditional and online purchasing decision-making behaviour, others propose a new stage in the online purchasing process, namely establishing or developing trust and confidence with the online merchant



(Hoque, 2018) Throughout all possibilities, there is a significant connection between brand value and trust-based dynamics, and more data and research will be required soon.

Kim and Ko (2012) reported that, consumer purchase decisions are psychological processes that need a business organisation to understand the customers' mental processes and tapping points to increase consumers' interest in buying the goods. Hanaysha (2017) demonstrated that, consumer purchasing decisions begin with the identification of their requirements, at which point businesses must develop marketing strategies and advertising to attract them and educate them about the goods that would satisfy their demands. Additionally, Harrigan et al., (2018) addressed how a consumer's purchase decision can be influenced by the brand's overall name and reputation, which can assist consumers in deciding between alternatives and comprehending the product's values, where businesses can use digital social media platforms to easily reach them and leverage the platform's benefits. The overall consumer purchase decision can be influenced by a variety of factors that are directly or indirectly related to the purchase and consumers, and marketing professionals must do so to convince consumers to choose the products they promote and to understand the factors that can influence consumer purchase decisions (Hoque, 2018).

Cheung et al., (2013) demonstrated that, a thorough literature analysis, two major types of impact variables influence online customer behaviour — controllable and uncontrolled. Two of these groups are uncontrolled factors: customer traits and environmental effects, while three other groups are under the control of the merchant, such as product/service characteristics, communication/marketing/sales medium characteristics, and merchant qualities (Gvili and Levy, 2018). There is more evidence to support the claim that, much as in conventional bricks and mortar marketplaces, these controlled and uncontrollable variables combine to form an online customer purchase process.

2.6 Previous Studies Relating to Social Media Platforms

In recent years, companies have recognised the value of social media marketing in increasing customer involvement. Researchers have been interested in the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement, and numerous studies have been undertaken to better understand the link between the two. Wang et al., (2012) reported that, social media marketing can boost customer involvement by fostering a more engaging and participatory environment. The authors claim that successful social media marketing may do three things: build a loyal fan



base, encourage conversation, and put the consumer in charge of the product or service. These elements, in turn, boost customer engagement and strengthen consumer-brand connections. Another study conducted by Harrigan et al., (2018) demonstrates the importance of social media marketing in increasing customer involvement. The authors discovered that by enabling customers to connect with companies, voice their thoughts, and get feedback, social media marketing may enhance consumer engagement. This contact may foster a bond between the brand and the customer, resulting in greater engagement and loyalty.

The literature shows that social media utilisation is a popular online engagement, with a predicted rise of 3.43 billion users globally in 2023 (Dixon, 2022). The United Arab Emirates was placed highest with 99 percent social media penetration, while 18 of the 37 nations with greater penetration percentages are emerging economies (Statistics, 2020). Due to the availability of low-cost mobile devices and mobile-first internet access on these platforms, social media adoption is expanding in Asian nations, including Bangladesh (Dixon, 2022). While Americans spend an average of one hour and 57 minutes on social media each day, Bangladesh was fourth with an average of four hours daily (Dixon, 2022). The literature assessment on the topic of social media and SMEs indicated that 2,682 articles were indexed in the Web of Science from 1990 to January 2018. Since 2018, scientific output in this field has increased quickly, with the United States and Business Horizons Magazine being the forerunners in the publishing of this topic, with 1,269 and 73 published pieces, respectively (Tasdemir and Gazo, 2018). Different forms of evaluation were considered, including those that focused on results, those that were methodological, theoretical, or practical, and those that focused on the relationship between social media and SMEs. An outcomes-oriented review analysed and synthesised prior literature with an emphasis on information about a study result gleaned from its findings (Tasdemir and Gazo, 2018).

A methodological review looked at research methodologies to identify relevant variables, measurements, and analytic procedures (Cooper, 1988). Existing hypotheses and their links were developed via a theoretical examination (Cooper, 1988). A practical review of interventions and practises was conducted (Tasdemir and Gazo, 2018). The adoption of social media has prompted ongoing research, particularly into its antecedents, influences, trust and perceived value variables, and characteristics that influence social participation (e.g., Alsharji, Ahmad, and Jabeen, 2017; Humaid and Ibrahim, 2019; Ashamaila, 2018; Odoom et al., 2017). While some studies have concentrated on the behavioural and attitudinal components of social



media adoption (e.g., Matikiti and Mpinganjira, 2018), there is also a growing amount of research on the influence of social media adoption on corporate performance (e.g., Tajudeen, Jaafar and Ainin, 2018; Tajvidi and Karami, 2017; Gvili and Levy, 2018; Odoom et al., 2017). The literature review also highlights social media's influence on SMEs. As indicated by the findings, there is a rising tendency for social media use and user interaction in emerging economies, notably in poor nations like Bangladesh. In addition, the literature emphasised the significance of many categories of studies, such as outcomes-oriented, methodological, theoretical, and practical reviews, for comprehending the present situation and prior academic research in social media and SMEs.

Furthermore, Chai and Nam (2017) discovered that, social media marketing may enhance customer engagement by offering a platform for consumers to interact with other people who share their interests. This fosters a feeling of belonging, which leads to greater engagement and brand loyalty. The authors also said that social media marketing may boost customer involvement by giving them access to information about goods and services, enabling them to make educated choices. Several research studies have identified social media marketing as a strong platform and an important instrument for enhancing the performance and productivity of SMEs (Lin, 2016). It is expected that research into social media marketing will continue to grow as the rate of social media adoption rises. As a result, the need for research on social media and its impact on companies will continue to rise (Godes et al., 2017). Although social media usage is popular among the general population, the adoption of social media for commercial reasons in Bangladesh remains sluggish (Abed et al., 2015). As a result, academics must study the variables influencing social media marketing to understand why social media is only being slowly embraced by companies. Many research studies on social media adoption by businesses have been conducted, but the bulk of them have concentrated on the user side, with little attention paid to the firms' views (Gvili and Levy, 2018).

There is scarcity of studies on the phases of social media implementation and confirmation, as well as post-adoption in SMEs (Al Mamun and Jahan 2017). Moreover, organisations are rapidly developing and implementing social media platforms for internal use (Kietzmann et al., 2011). It is also obvious that companies are utilising social media to undertake a variety of tasks. Recent social media adoption studies give empirical data to support social media marketing's potential beneficial and far-reaching effects on SMEs (Chaffey, 2018; Dholakia et al., 2011; Kim and Ko, 2012). An overview and discussion of the methodologies used in the



existing literature will be presented before revealing the specific approach used in this investigation. Researchers have used a variety of qualitative, quantitative, and combined research technique methods, as shown in Appendix 3, depending on their study topics, paradigms, and preferences. It is important to carry out this research because it adds to our knowledge of the influence that the application of social media marketing has on customer satisfaction. This information can then be used to guide business practises and decision-making.

2.7 Social media marketing vs other forms of digital marketing

In the epoch of technology, social media marketing strategies have witnessed a significant shift towards online platforms. Social media marketing, among other digital forms of marketing has gained substantial attention from both marketers and consumers. There are a ton of reasons why social media platforms are far better than other forms of marketing. However, in this section, the researcher will discuss the empirical evidence and the theoretical perspective of this marketing method to provide an understanding of the unique properties and drawbacks of social media marketing in relation to other digital marketing media.

2.7.1 Empirical Evidence: Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing

Numerous studies have emphasized the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving marketing goals. For instance, a study by Kim and Ko (2012) found that social media marketing positively influences brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intentions. Additionally, research conducted by Stephen and Galak (2012) revealed that social media recommendations from peers have a greater impact on consumer decision-making compared to traditional advertising. These findings highlight the potential of social media marketing to engage and influence target audiences effectively.

2.7.2 Theoretical Perspectives: Unique Characteristics of Social Media Marketing

- **Interactivity and Engagement:** Social media platforms offer unparalleled opportunities for interactive and engaging marketing campaigns. According to Li and Bernoff (2011), social media enables companies to connect with their audience on a more personal level, fostering relationships and building trust. The ability to respond promptly to



customer inquiries, address concerns, and provide real-time updates contributes to higher levels of engagement and customer satisfaction.

- **Targeted Advertising:** Unlike traditional forms of advertising, social media platforms provide robust targeting options based on user demographics, interests, and behaviors. This precise targeting allows marketers to reach their intended audience more effectively (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010). The ability to tailor messages and promotions to specific segments enhances the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of social media marketing campaigns.

2.7.3 Comparison With Other Digital Marketing Channels

- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** SEO focuses on improving organic search rankings to generate website traffic. While SEO remains crucial, social media marketing complements it by enhancing brand visibility, driving referral traffic, and facilitating engagement (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). By combining both strategies, marketers can create a holistic online presence.
- **Email Marketing:** Email marketing continues to be a valuable tool, particularly for personalized and targeted messaging. However, social media marketing offers the advantage of broader reach, enabling companies to tap into wider audience segments and engage with potential customers who may not be on their email lists.

Empirical evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving marketing objectives. The unique characteristics of social media platforms, such as interactivity, engagement, and targeted advertising, contribute to its growing prominence. While other digital marketing channels remain relevant, social media marketing offers distinct advantages in terms of audience engagement, precise targeting, and wider reach. To leverage the full potential of digital marketing, integrating social media marketing with other channels is essential for a comprehensive and impactful marketing strategy.



2.8 Effect of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchase Action

The influence of digital marketing on consumer purchase action has been extensively explored in recent years, for example, Simon et al., (2016), Tafesse, (2016), and Khan and Fasih, (2016). (2014). Ullrich and Brunner (2015) reported that, businesses increasingly use digital platforms to contact and connect with their target audience. Tafesse (2016) also contended that, digital marketing may be a successful technique for attracting and gaining prospective customers. According to Zhang and Li (2018), digital marketing has a beneficial influence on consumer purchase action, particularly when paired with conventional marketing tactics. The authors discovered that digital marketing may assist businesses in reaching a larger audience, increasing brand recognition, and generating more leads. Kim and Lee (2019) conducted another study to explore the influence of various digital marketing channels on consumer purchase action. The authors discovered that the most efficient avenues for recruiting new consumers are social media marketing, search engine marketing, and email marketing. However, to obtain the intended outcomes, businesses must successfully execute and monitor their digital marketing activities. Tran and Nguyen (2021) demonstrated that, organisations with a defined digital marketing plan and data-driven tactics are more effective at recruiting new consumers than companies without a clear strategy or that depend simply on organisation.

Digital marketing is described as "a spectrum of access platforms and communication tools" that are used to promote products and services online (Ford 2018, p. 13). Customers' relationships with marketers are improved because of the use of such online media by marketers. There are many distinct sub-categories of digital marketing, including social networking, online communities, viral marketing, wikis, and blogs, in addition to mobile marketing (Gvili and Levy, 2018). Social media defined as a platform that includes social networks, online communities, wikis, blogs, and microblogs, among other things (Kim, 2012). As a result, this study focuses on social media marketing and mobile marketing as the two components of digital marketing that are being investigated.

Social media marketing is regarded as one of the sub-categories of digital marketing that employs the same methods as the rest of the industry. One of the primary reasons for digital marketing and sales success over conventional marketing is that the former enables organisations to monitor user behaviour in real-time. Every digital campaign can be measured in terms of reach, engagement, and conversion. This has given a whole new meaning to marketing research, allowing it to better grasp the demands of consumers than ever before.



Thus, including digital marketing into a company's entire marketing strategy can only help it achieve its overall marketing and business objectives by allowing businesses to get insights into customer behaviour and better meet their demands. Traditional marketing involves gathering data via market research and then evaluating it to better understand the consumers. The digital nature of Internet technology allows for a complete and deep understanding of customer attributes and behaviour in the electronic environment. (Batini, 2015). This knowledge has altered the way business choices are made. The effect of any marketing activity may be examined in real time while also being personalised for each consumer. Digital marketing communications have grown quickly in the business world. They helped businesses in many ways with their online communication (Dessart, 2017). Mulhern (2009) reported that digital marketing communications help businesses get and keep customers by using new digital channels that allow them to send personalised messages. This can be done by using integrated, targeted, and measurable communications to build stronger relationships with customers (Bryła et al., 2022). The pace at which digital marketing, like social media marketing and mobile marketing, is adopted varies between diverse types of businesses.

People who work for business to consumers (B2C) companies used social media more in their marketing communication than people who work for business to business (B2B) companies (Gvili and Levy, 2018). Thus, social media is believed to be more beneficial to a B2C setting than a B2B setting (Bryła et al., 2022). People are becoming more interested in social media, and this has been the case for businesses who want to use social media (Google Trends, 2004). Many B2B companies still do not use social media as much as they use other traditional tools like face-to-face meetings, telephone interactions, and email interactions (Karjaluoto et al., 2015). This shows how important this context is for B2B marketers who want to use social media.

2.9 Impact of COVID-19 on Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Action

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on various aspects of society, including the business landscape. As organizations faced lockdowns and social distancing measures, they turned to digital platforms to maintain customer purchase action. While the introduction chapter briefly acknowledges the impact of COVID-19 on small and



medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this critical analysis aims to shed light on the significance of the pandemic's influence on social media marketing for customer purchase action.

- The Crucial Role of Social Media Marketing:

Social media marketing has become a crucial component of companies' operations since it offers a direct route for acquiring and engaging with customers. It enables businesses to engage with their target market, increase brand recognition, and provide leads. The COVID-19 epidemic, however, upended these long-standing procedures and forced businesses to adjust to brand-new circumstances.

- Shift in Consumer Behaviour:

Consumer behaviour changed significantly during the epidemic because of lockdowns, limitations, and safety worries. Social media has become a major source of news, interaction, and purchasing as individuals spend more time at home and rely largely on digital platforms for communication and entertainment. Neglecting how COVID-19 has affected social media marketing would be a crucial oversight in how businesses have had to adjust to suit shifting client needs.

- Increased Social Media Usage:

Multiple studies have indicated a substantial surge in social media usage during the pandemic. For instance, a survey by Pew Research Center found that 53% of respondents reported increased social media usage since the outbreak of COVID-19 (Smith & Anderson, 2021). The literature review should have incorporated these findings, as they highlight the significance of social media platforms as key avenues for customer purchase action during the pandemic.

- Opportunities and Challenges:

The COVID-19 crisis presented both opportunities and challenges for businesses utilizing social media marketing. On one hand, companies could leverage the increased online presence and engagement to strengthen their brand positioning, promote products, and build customer loyalty. On the other hand, the heightened competition and saturation of social media platforms demanded innovative strategies to stand out and engage with customers effectively.



- Examples of Successful Adaptation:

To address the demands of the epidemic, many organisations effectively modified their social media marketing strategy. For instance, companies started utilising live streaming services to present their goods, communicate with clients in real-time, and offer engaging shopping experiences. Due of the pandemic's limited in-person experiences, businesses were able to bridge the gap between physical and digital engagements thanks to this change.

The critical analysis above emphasizes the crucial role of social media marketing during the pandemic, the shifts in consumer behaviour, increased social media usage, and the opportunities and challenges faced by businesses. By incorporating this analysis into the literature review, a more holistic understanding of the topic can be achieved, ensuring the comprehensive exploration of the impact of COVID-19 on social media marketing.

2.10 Impact of social media on Consumer Engagement

Social media has become an essential tool for companies to communicate with their target audience. The influence of social media on consumer engagement has been the subject of much study and research. Several studies have investigated the connection between social media and customer engagement for instance Simon et al., (2016) and Tafesse (2016). The results of this research are ambiguous, with some indicating a favourable influence and others a negative one. Lai et al., (2017) reported that, social media has a favourable effect on customer involvement. A survey of 600 customers revealed that individuals with an elevated level of social media engagement were more likely to be engaged with companies. The survey also indicated that social media has a considerable influence on customer involvement, especially in terms of brand recognition, product knowledge, and brand loyalty. As stated by Huang et al., (2017) social media has a beneficial influence on customer involvement when utilised strategically. Consumers are more inclined to interact with companies that use social media to give product information, establish connections with their customers, and create a sense of community. However, companies that use social media just as a means of broadcasting are less likely to engage consumers.



Alternatively, Kim et al., (2016) found that social media had a negative effect on customer engagement. They discovered that social media users are less inclined to interact with marketers and more likely to be distrustful of marketing communications. The research also revealed that consumers who use social media are more susceptible to peer influence and less susceptible to marketing communications. A study of the literature yields a few definitions of social media. Bolton et al. (2013), for example, defined it as an online service that allows people to produce and share a range of content. Another description defined it as "a collection of Internet-based apps that build on the conceptual and technical underpinnings of Web 2.0 and enable the production and sharing of User Generated Content" (Bange et al., 2020). Furthermore, Ward (2016), described it as a social media platform that enables human-to-human interactions, as opposed to conventional media, which does not allow viewers to engage with its material. These three criteria clearly emphasise the critical role of humans in controlling social media. Several social media categories have been proposed in the literature.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media platform divided it into six categories including collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual gaming worlds, and virtual social world. On the other hand, Tuten and Solomon (2015) demonstrated that, social media can be identified into four zones such as: social community zone, social publishing zone, social entertainment zone and social ecommerce zone. Web 2.0 is essential for understanding social media, and it cannot be comprehended without first presenting the idea. It was O'reilly (2005), who invented the term "Web 2.0," which refers to a set of online platforms that are distinguished by their interactive and user-driven behaviour (Baym, 2015). In its most basic definition, Web 2.0 is "a collection of open-source, interactive, and user-controlled online applications that aim to broaden the experience, knowledge, and market power of users as participants in business and social processes." Web 2.0 is also referred to as "the next generation of social networking sites" (Alvarez-Milán, Felix et al. 2018, p. 61). It is heavily reliant on user-generated content, which is material that is created and disseminated on the internet by ordinary people (Bange et al., 2020).

In contrast to earlier versions of the web (Web 1.0), Web 2.0 is characterised by the increased involvement of the audience, enabling user engagement via dialogue, content augmentation by commenting, rating, editing, and sharing, and content augmentation through social networking (Tuten and Solomon, 2015). Social media also influenced the SME industry more than any other industry, For example, medicine/import industry (Bange et al., 2020). Brands put their



clothing in magazines and users consumed ideas and inspiration by flipping through the pages. Social influencer motivated through the shows, and users hoped and prayed that part of it would be covered on social media somewhere, so they could watch. The SME industry created the trendsetters and users followed the trends. Users did not have a say in what they were consuming, they could only opt out of trends that they did not like. Social media has reframed this structure, allowing users to not only consume fashion but to also contribute to it (Bange et al., 2020). Furthermore, social media has brought diversity to the SME industry. People who have felt unrepresented in traditional forms of fashion media now could take matters into their own hands (Mckinsey, 2020).

2.11 Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Action

Social media marketing is a term used to describe market conditions in the current technologically advanced era. The emergence of social networks has enhanced the flexibility of consumers and helped them to create innovative concepts and strategies to search and evaluate, select, and buy diverse products (Bange et al., 2020). The term “social media marketing” refers to a ‘tool’ of social interaction which transforms communication into interactive dialogue, through universally accessible and scalable techniques such as web-based and mobile technologies (Alauddin and Chowdhury 2015). Interactive social media marketing has influenced the relationships between different stakeholders through their interaction with organisations, which enables users to exchange information, create content and form networks (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Malarvizhi et al., (2022), found that the main marketing benefits of social media have been established as the goal of continuing interactions and building relationships among stakeholders. Furthermore, Alauddin and Chowdhury (2015) reported that, social networking represents a valuable tool for marketers who try to communicate with consumers.

Researchers have extensively examined the effect of social media on consumer purchase action in recent years. According to Tauten and Acar (2015), social media has a complicated and context-specific impact on consumer behaviour. Khan and Fasih (2014) reported that, social media may influence customer behaviour favourably by making product information available, promoting word-of-mouth advertising, and raising brand recognition. However, some previous research has been shown that, social media may potentially negatively affect customer behaviour by disseminating incorrect information, raising perceived risk, and sowing doubt or ambiguity about the product (Johnson and Kaye, 2010). For example, the kind of products, the



substance and tone of the social media message, and the degree of confidence in the message's source are all variables that might affect how social media affects consumer purchase action. When creating plans for social media marketing, marketers must carefully consider these variables. Customers today are stronger and busier, thus, businesses on all social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and forums, are open and available at any time.

Wang et al. (2019) stated that, social media marketing enhances flexibility for consumers and helps them create innovative concepts and strategies to search, evaluate, select, and buy diverse products. Numerous studies analysed the perception of consumers about online purchase intentions. A comprehensive analysis of social media is carried out in the business to consumer environment because its structure and advanced concepts are essential to consumers' lives. Social networking sites can become a successful marketing platform for SMEs by giving access to a wide audience at a low cost. The growing popularity of social media has dramatically changed the company's marketing strategy and shaped the B2C business. Over the past two decades, technology has reshaped the system of consumer spending, changed the spread of e-commerce shopping sites, and turned shopping into electronic shopping (Yadav and Rahman (2017). One more development in this technological age is Web 2.0, which offers collaborative mechanisms for Web 1.0. It is a website that focuses on user-generated content to attract consumers. The flagship component of Web 2.0 is social networking. Marketing through social media is the course through which businesses create and distribute products online through social networking sites to engage with stakeholders and maintain engagement by simplifying communication, sharing information, and providing interactive recommendations and personalized purchases of current and trending products and services among stakeholders (Abasin and Huseynov, 2020). The integration of these components (such as seller ratings, reviews, endorsements, suggestions, wish lists, sharing of purchased products on Facebook and Twitter) is part of marketing through social media and is widely used by e-commerce businesses such as Amazon, Flipkart, Ali Express, etc.

Social media marketers emphasize the importance of marketing approaches that aim to develop and increase loyalty through simple gestures (such as presenting rewards or advertisements, or even expressing gratitude to users and confirming their contribution to the conversation over and over). This strong bond can also be built by building close relationships with these loyal consumers, such as building another community (e.g., WhatsApp or a Facebook/Messenger group) for one-to-many interactions (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). Awards and links to other



participants are vital for high-level participation in these media. The marking of the brand name on the product and the use of fashion-related stickers increases business visibility. Luxury consumers can combine societal and self-representation needs (for example, the desire to connect with luxury groups), develop and maintain relationships with brands and other consumers, and share experiences of brand ownership and provide commentary on the brand (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). Content business on social media can have a substantial influence on consumer engagement, which can be measured by likes and comments on posts. According to Lee et al., (2018) influential content (for instance, expressive and charitable posts) has an encouraging effect on consumer purchase action. Businesses can benefit from promoting their brand personalities and content about their societal activities on social media. The content of the product information also has an adverse impact on consumer engagement. This is a challenge for marketers who want to attract huge followers on social networks and use them to spread information and act on innovative products and advancements. These tactics usually work when product information is associated with influential content.

2.12 Social Media Marketing in the Context of Bangladeshi SMEs

Bangladesh has been chosen as a research context for this study. Bangladesh is an emerging economy country. It has seen many natural calamities in recent years, including global pandemic covid 19, floods, droughts, cyclones, and tsunamis. Many man-made instabilities are endemic, such as political unsteadiness, overpopulation, corruption, and terrorism (Fan et al; 2018). GDP in Bangladesh has seen 5.9% per cent growth between 1994 to 2016 (Fan et al; 2018). The sectors which play a very important role in achieving this high performance are manufacturing, services, private consumption, and public investment (World Bank, 2017). With around 164.7 million population, the country is facing the challenge of overpopulation of wealth and widespread poverty. With vast populace and about 4.3 percent rate of unemployment, this country requires to generate new employment opportunities (Shahriar, Alam and Arafat, 2020). Nevertheless, it is not that straightforward to establish sustainable job opportunities for such a massive population for an emerging country with constrained resources and inexperienced or semi-skilled labour.

However, SMEs in Bangladesh are also popular at the level of the individual. Mamun and Griffiths (2019) reported that Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, has 20 million active Facebook users, which is 0.9 % of the total monthly active users of social networking sites around the world. Additionally, the cost of using popular SM sites such as Facebook via smartphone or



broadband connections in Bangladesh is free. In Bangladesh, around one-fifth of SMEs do not expect to grow over the coming years (Anwar et al., 2016).

Bangladeshi SMEs remain apprehensive about a lack of technical skills and access to debt finance as impediments to development. They are also aware of SMEs amongst the public. The median sustainability of SMEs in Bangladesh is quite low compared to other nations. For instance, in the UK, some 31% of SMEs reported a turnover of under £50,000, while 86% reported a turnover of under £1 million in 2017. Business sustainability is not regarded as a problem for SMEs operating in the UK. SMEs in Britain, unlike in Bangladesh, can grow, even when they experience downturns in their financial performance (Richardson, 2015). According to a report published by SMEs in the United Kingdom (2019), from the year 2017 in the UK, SMEs raised 52% turnover which is a higher rate than the SMEs (34%) (Mansfield and Gregory, 2019, p.16). Even though there are many SMEs (approximately 150,000) working in Bangladesh (Anwar, 2016), they are unable to establish the required level of social impact.

The growing number of SMEs can be attributed to the rising numbers of new SMEs. Most of these SMEs face several challenges in seeking to expand. Recognising these issues, there is a clear need for SMEs to improve their marketing effectiveness, such as by appealing to more consumers through brand awareness. The research gaps addressed by this study for SMEs are in the context of emerging nations. SMEs are more prevalent in developing nations like Bangladesh than in industrialised ones, where resources are often more limited. They routinely compete with several other organisations for resources, cash, and expert employees. A lack of adequate funding is considered the main obstacle to the growth of SMEs in developing countries, especially in Bangladesh (Kim and Lim, 2017). Social media marketing has substantially altered the economic landscape in Bangladesh, which is especially true for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). With the growing user base of social media platforms, SMEs now have more ways to interact with their target market, increase their reach, and promote business growth. In this section, the researcher will delve into the impacts of social media marketing on Bangladeshi SMEs by highlighting its advantages and implications.



1. Enhanced Brand Visibility and Reach

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have enabled Bangladeshi SMEs to enhance their brand visibility and reach a larger audience. By creating compelling and shareable content, SMEs can attract followers, increase brand awareness, and generate organic reach (Ahmed et al., 2020). This increased visibility on social media has facilitated the expansion of SMEs' customer base and improved their market penetration (Rahman et al., 2019).

2. Cost-Effective Marketing Strategy

Social media marketing presents a cost-effective alternative to conventional marketing strategies for Bangladesh's cash-strapped SMEs. Social media platforms offer a less expensive and more focused method of reaching potential customers than pricey television or print marketing. To reach demographics and interests while controlling their marketing budget, SMEs can use social media to create customised ad campaigns (Alam et al., 2018).

3. Improved Customer Engagement and Relationship Building

Social media platforms have radically altered how SMEs communicate and engage with their clients. SMEs may interact with their audience, answer questions, and address client issues in real-time through social media. A sense of trust, loyalty, and customer satisfaction are fostered by this direct and tailored involvement (Uddin et al., 2021). SMEs can develop strong relationships with their consumers using social media as a customer service tool, which encourages repeat business and favourable word-of-mouth referrals (Hasan et al., 2018).

4. Increased Sales and Revenue

Social media marketing has proven to be an effective driver of sales and revenue for Bangladeshi SMEs. SMEs can create leads, increase website traffic, and ultimately turn prospects into paying consumers by effectively promoting their goods or services on social media channels (Hossain et al., 2020). Owing to social media advertising features, such as targeted ads and retargeting campaigns, social media platforms allow SMEs to reach potential customers who are more likely to make a purchase. This targeted approach significantly increases the chances of converting social media engagement into actual sales (Islam et al., 2019).



5. Access to Market Insights and Trends

Social media platforms provide valuable data and insights that SMEs can leverage to inform their marketing strategies. SMEs can acquire information on consumer demographics, engagement rates, content performance, and more via the analytics tools and metrics. This data-driven strategy aids SMEs in better understanding their target market, spotting trends, and coming to wise business judgements (Ahmed et al., 2021). SMEs can modify their marketing tactics to stay competitive and relevant in the dynamic business environment by staying up to date on industry trends. However, it is critical to recognise that social media marketing also poses challenges for businesses. These challenges include handling negative comments, maintaining consistency in content development, and keeping up with the evolving social media algorithms. SMEs must make investments in social media management tools, hire qualified digital marketers, and stay current on best practises to alleviate these problems (Haque et al., 2020).

To summarise, social media marketing has revolutionised the Bangladeshi SME sector in ways that not only provided vast opportunities for business growth but also was never anticipated up until very recently. SMEs can leverage the power of social media for enhancing brand visibility by increasing customer engagement, driving sales, and gaining market insights. However, SMEs need to evolve with the ever-changing social media landscape and the associated challenges to maximize the benefits offered by social media marketing in Bangladesh perspective.

2.13 Social Media Marketing Aspects and Components

Building sustainable ties between companies and customers requires powerful customer engagement. Ng Sweeney et al., (2020) demonstrated that social commerce increases brand engagement and consumer loyalty. According to Paraskevas and Peres (2018), social media user interaction may increase brand loyalty and customer trust, which in turn develops closer relationships with customers. The authors also observed that customer orientation may lead to word-of-mouth recommendations, which can help a company's reputation and bring in new consumers. In contrast, Lin, and Hsiao (2015) contended that, strong consumer engagement often causes a decrease in trust and satisfaction. According to their research findings, companies must find a balance between giving customers just enough involvement to foster connections and refraining from sending them too much information. However, Lin and Hsiao



(2015) reported that, consumer engagement is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Businesses must comprehend and adjust their connection tactics to fit the demands of each customer group since the degrees of involvement among various customer categories may fluctuate (Choi and Lee, 2016). This requires a thorough grasp of consumer behaviour, motives, and preferences as well as the creation of a customer-centric strategy that puts the requirements of the customer ahead of those of the company (Park et al., 2014). Additionally, customer interaction is not restricted to conventional marketing and advertising techniques. Businesses must consider how social media and other digital platforms may help them connect with customers in the modern digital world. Kim and Ko (2012) indicated that, social media is a more effective way for customers to interact with companies than conventional marketing methods. This demonstrates the value of integrating social media into a business's overall engagement strategy as well as the need of continually adapting and evolving engagement tactics as customer preferences and habits change over time (Choi and Lee, 2016).

According to Kotler et al., (2016) customer engagement is a psychological state that occurs because of co-creative customer experience and interaction with a focal object/agent (e.g., brand) in a focal service relationship. Consumer brand engagement was described by Hollebeek (2011, p. 790) as "the level of brand-related, motivating, and context-dependent state of mind identified by an explicit level of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural acts in terms of brand interaction." Similarly, around advertising and media engagement, customer engagement is seen as a multidimensional term that combines elements such as interaction, attention, conversation, sensory enjoyment, emotion, and instant activation to create a complete brand experience with consumers (Musa et al., 2016). The use of social media for marketing a company has experienced a notable change in recent years, and it is now an essential strategy for every enterprise that wants to expand. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Google+ are just a few of the many social networking sites accessible to companies today.

Berger and Milkman (2012) contended that; social media have become an effective way to advertise. Keeping these marketing channels up to date on a regular basis will assist businesses in maintaining a steady online presence, which in turn attracts customers. Wang et al., (2012) reported that, for a company's social media marketing efforts to be genuinely effective, they must take several factors into mind during the planning phase. Social media content is one of the most crucial factors for businesses to think about. Making sure the information is interesting, useful, and appropriate for the intended readers is essential. Organizations also need



to think about how often and consistently they connect with customers. Customers will be more interested in company's product and more likely to use it if company update it regularly and consistently. To get customers to spend more time with a company, it is important for companies to carefully plan their social media marketing strategies through the considering the following social media elements:

2.13.1 Affective engagement

Affective engagement is an essential component of the customer engagement that captures the enduring and summative level emotions which is experienced by a customer with respect to their engagement (Calder et al., 2013). Author also reported that, it is not the one-off feelings emerges through recurrent and long-lasting feelings. A recent study has investigated at the effect of social media marketing on affective engagement and the elements that drive it. Yang and Kim (2021) examined the impact of emotion regulation in the link between social media marketing and emotional engagement and purchase intention. They also discovered that social media marketing may boost emotional engagement and implemented it to enhance it. Malarvizhi et al., (2022) reported that, the effect of social support in the link between social media marketing and emotional engagement. They found that social media marketing improves the affective engagement and consumer long term relationship. According to their findings, social media marketing has a favourable influence on emotional engagement, and social support plays a moderating role in this. Theoretically many researchers agreed that affective engagement as dimension of the customer engagement optimise the customer engagement via traditional advertising media.

2.13.2 Enjoyment

Enjoyment is an essential component of the customer engagement that measure the customers feeling of happiness and pleasure, regarding the focus engagement which is derived from the interactions (Soebandhi and Bin Bon, 2019). Enjoyment is understood as a positive impression resulting from positive stimuli or other satisfactions and is an essential element of a balanced life. This is especially important because enjoyment means feeling safe and valued and is a necessary part of the collective, even in the context of a learning community (Mahmoud et al., 2020), enjoyment creates communities, but it also evokes positive memories and makes them stronger. Enjoyment is understood as the state or process of deriving pleasure from something. Kim and Ko, (2012) conducted research regarding the influence of social media on customer



enjoyment/hedonic value. According to their findings, consumers prefer connecting with companies on social media, especially when they can contribute to the development of brand-related content. The authors also found that, making customers feel engaged was an important part of making them happy and satisfied. Soebandhi and Bin Bon (2019) conducted another study that was investigated the association between social media usage and overall enjoyment. The authors found a link between using social media and hedonic, especially when the site is used to connect with other people and facilitated to have fun. Individual traits like openness and extraversion were also found to be predictors of social media satisfaction.

2.13.3 Cognitive engagement

Cognitive engagement is one of the most essential components of the customer engagement, which is a set of active mental state and enduring that a customer experienced relating to focal object of their engagement (Mollen and Wilson 2010). Wang et al., (2012) also reported that, cognitive engagement itself had two sub dimension such as Attention and absorption. Cognitive engagement refers to the participation and interest in learning, motivation to learn, goal setting, learning cognition, learning effort, and the use of self-regulated learning strategies. Cognitive engagement is important as it affects learners' academic and behavioural engagement (Bianchi and Andrews, 2018). Learners with high cognitive engagement are more likely to attend their sessions regularly, complete courses, earn credit, and achieve success.

Although cognitive information is a potential subtype of student information, meaning that it is difficult to observe and measure directly, it can be measured indirectly through thinking aloud, discussion with others, surveys or questionnaires, or written records. Indicators include assessing learning, demonstrating self-efficacy, setting personal proficiency goals, linking success with effort, investing time and energy in learning, and using self-regulated learning strategies such as self-assessment, planning, and self-control (Naumann and Bowden 2015). Identifying cognitive engagement indicators in presence and absenteeism will help identify learners who will benefit from interventions and provide information for selecting appropriate interventions. Interventions can target learners' motivation to learn and / or their ability to choose and implement self-regulated learning strategies (Bryła et al., 2022).



2.13.4 Attention

Attention considered to be an essential component of social media cognitive engagement which is voluntarily dedicated to creating an interaction with consumer through advertisement (Hollebeck, 2015). For a focus of engagement, it is a cognitive ability to being attentive and count the amount of time spent to think about. In terms of advertising, it measures how much time consumer takes to see the advert attentively and how much time they can spend maximum (Hollebeck, 2013). Attention is the process by which consumers select surrounding information for interpretation. This is also the point where consumers are aware of certain environmental stimuli. Ads, brands, and content designed to attract attention can work best by optimizing external attention (Bianchi and Andrews, 2018). Directing external attention boils down to using what the brain naturally pays attention to: change. The brain's emphasis on change has evolutionary significance. Survival is not fully dependent on accepting and experiencing the environment. In fact, always paying attention to every detail will hurt the chances of survival in the end. Learning mode can help to save time and energy. On the contrary, breaking these patterns will attract attention fast forward to today's consumer landscape (Naumann and Bowden 2015).

This strategy of "breaking the rules" uses the external attention of the brain to truly attract the psychological attention of consumers. Before the introduction of this concept, the marketing landscape before the advent of social media was quite different (Hollebeck, 2013; Mollen and Wilson 2010). Brands often use television commercials, billboards, or radio shows for large-scale marketing. This means that they cannot target individuals but must instead focus on attracting a wider audience. With the help of social media, brands can now identify the interests of individual customers and then market them individually. That is why it is important to consider using attention marketing because marketers want their marketing assets to attract customers. Businesses should strive to create a sense of meaning and connect with customers to attract customer attention and encourage engagement opportunities (Bryła et al., 2022). Social media is a crowded field of brands and products vying for customer attention. Therefore, customer engagement activities must have more than one purpose.



2.13.5 Learning

Learning is an essential component of social media marketing for increasing consumer engagement that provide the content, information, experience, and idea of the advertisement if customer seeking (Kietzmann et al., 2011). The cognitive factors that affect participation are related to the fundamental characteristics of the members and emphasize the importance of personal skills and excellence. For example, content from past community events can be used to support individual learning and understanding, thereby encouraging participation (Bryła et al., 2022). Learning is functionally defined as behavioural changes caused by experience or changes mechanically caused by experience in the body. It is defined as individual adaptation, that is, changes in biological behaviour resulting from the regularity of the biological environment. This functional definition not only solves the problems of other definitions, but also has important advantages for cognitive learning research. Since psychology was considered an independent science, learning has been the main subject of psychological research. Learning is any process that leads to a permanent change in the capacity of an organism, not only due to the aging of biological maturity.

Learning involves continuous and active exploration, participation, and involvement in the world around (Constantinides, 2014). Everyone has the potential to learn, regardless of their abilities or background. The learning experience really shapes the brain. Therefore, it is important to know that the skills are not fixed, but constantly evolve. Lifelong learning is the foundation for effective schools, active communities, and meaningful and fulfilling lives (Wang et al., 2012). Therefore, learning only through the direct transfer of knowledge should be replaced by active methods of knowledge construction. This includes meaningful work with the required depth of learning and the assessment of learners' deep understanding rather than actual memory (Kizgin et al., 2020). There is authenticity in this task and there is a feeling that what is done in the classroom is real work that reflects the reality of life in the subject.



2.13.6 Sharing

Constantindes (2014) reported that, Sharing is a core component of social media marketing for increasing consumer engagement. To put it bluntly, it means sharing or replacing elements of a limited nature, such as public pastures or housing estates (Bryła et al., 2022). This is also the process of division and distribution. In addition to the obvious examples that is observed in human activities, there are many such examples in nature. For example, when an organism absorbs nutrients or oxygen, its internal organs are designed to transport and distribute the absorbed energy to supply the parts of the body that need it. The flowers parted and scattered the seeds. More generally, it can include free access to goods (such as information) that can be considered non-competitive goods. More generally, "sharing" can mean giving something directly as a gift: for example, "sharing" someone's food means giving something as a gift (Wang and Calder 2009).

2.13.7 Online Community Platform Based on Social Media

Kizgin et al., (2020) stated that, consumers are more empowered than before because of their association through social networks. Social networks allow users to access quickly and inexpensively access multiple products with multiple functions. Many organizations recognize that it is easy to reach consumers through online social media, and thus outsource their innovation work to online sourcing or knowledge communities. For instance, Lego attracts its consumers by its creation and sharing Lego's creative website. Members of this knowledge community often generate innovative product ideas, comment on other people's concepts, and cooperate with sellers in a variety of ways. However, consumers do not know what characteristics of the knowledge community will lead to the intellectual endeavours of individual members, or what factors will motivate consumers to choose ideas and lead to the success of any innovation (Dessart, 2021). For any business, creating an online community has become the priority of business. In this current pandemic, only business with robust online communities could survive their business (Meese and Hagedorn, 2019). To build an online community, social media platforms play a significant role. In an age where businesses are increasingly competing for consumer attention, social media offers unique opportunities to engage consumers on a deep and meaningful level (Bange et al., 2019). Consumers participate in an interactive experience with brands or community members, not only for simple purchases, but to build a longer and closer relationship with the brand (Dessart, 2021). With 2.2 billion social media users worldwide in 2020, and expected to reach 3.5 billion by 2023, strategic



consumer insights focused on social media are critical for brands (Dixon, 2022). The role of social media in a structured network of rules with respect to other consumers and brands is interesting here.

An online community is a group of people who share common goals, interests, or activities and will get to know each other better over time (Dessart, 2021). Online communities are considered online "spaces" where people "feel part of" and interact with them on common themes or interests. The first communities were created primarily using mailing lists or bulletin boards, but their modern structures are more likely to have a web-based interface. Community refers to a group of people who are constantly evolving, communicating, and acting together to achieve a common goal. It creates a sense of belonging by participating or sharing common interests. It is considered a closed system with stable members and little or no contact with other communities (Bange et al., 2019). With the rapid development of the Internet, geographic boundaries that limit community boundaries are no longer a factor and the role of protecting communities can be played anywhere in the world. This is the essence of online communities and is synonymous with electronic communities or virtual communities (Meese and Hagedorn, 2019). In recent years, some social media sites such as My Space, Facebook, and Orkut have emerged that allow people to create the same circle of friends as themselves (Gvili, and Levy, 2018). Some communities allow simple connections with friends or acquaintances, while others provide guidelines for developing skills or communicating with people with certain types of experience. Only members can start chatting in face-to-face communities. On the other hand, technology systems can also trigger changes in online communities. This opportunity should be exploited by using awareness as a software agent to collect relevant information for users and present it in emails, RSS feeds, or custom portal pages (Abasin, and Huseynov, 2020). These agents often collect information and offer strategies based on keywords or categories stored in configuration files. It is important to keep these configuration files up to date. However, experience shows that members' interests will continue to change over time. Usually, the configuration file configuration dialog is accessed once and then forgotten. Therefore, the quality of personalized services may decline over time (Shareef et al., 2019). It is crucial to monitor user behaviour and have agents ask from time to time if their interpretation of the observations is correct (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). People can change their general attitude towards the community. This may have to do with the degree of participation in the exchange and should be considered at the design stage. The most crucial factor in successfully establishing and maintaining an active online community is keeping members informed of



changes to the community database (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). Cognitive functions allow to understand the activities of other members and the goals and progress of the community; therefore, users can relate and evaluate their own activities accordingly.

2.13.8 Digital Marketing Content Creation

Consumers in the process of becoming members of a brand's online community, collectively create brand awareness and value by writing, competing, and disseminating information about the brand and its relationship to it. More precisely, consumers can build a strong multi-layered brand reputation and status in combination with the methods of brand expression. The brand information is created by the content creators and is officially recognized. It increases the social and individual tone of the brand in the brand's online community (Bange et al., 2019). Nowadays content creators who work online are under enormous pressure. They continue to post information on social networks to maintain the brand image through comic parodies and memes. These comedies and memes cost little but resonate with audiences. Maintaining the online status of this contents allows creators to engage in constant discussions and understand changing trends without the need to preview or promote future content. Additionally, interaction with customers is part of the creator's online activities. Creators should be tactical when contending for attention in online platforms. They need to understand the target audience and create information in content forms that is easy to spread to different communities (Bange et al., 2019). Comprehensive content production and distribution is a key feature of the most popular social media platforms (Meese and Hagedorn, 2019). Memes are posted on all platforms, videos are shared in group chats, images and screenshots are posted and played. This is due to the combination of technological progress and new media production and consumption habits. These changes supported the increasingly widespread distribution of content online and led to structural changes in the media industry (Gvili and Levy, 2018). Media companies have responded to these developments by ceding some of their intellectual property rights to fans. Extensive literature explores how fans and companies are trying to negotiate this ever-changing relationship. Studies suggest that people in creative online communities must adapt to this pristine environment as well (Jersley and Mortensen 2018; Jorge 2020). The community will reach a consensus on when the content can be published; debates on ownership and therefore will be under review of intellectual property law more directly (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020).



However, few people pay attention to the reactions of ordinary people who are not actively involved in fan culture or creative online communities. Although most of the people who use social media have both ownership, and ownership agreements as producers, distributors, and consumers of media. In fact, although people like the fans and online creators must formulate rules for sharing content on social media, they still have the same limitations on the role of major areas of intellectual property law in practice i.e., copyright (Meese and Hagedorn, 2019). The daily production and consumption of online media by individuals is not a problem. People who spend a lot of energy producing something may have a clear interest in conservation work. Similarly, discussions often arise about the use of corporate intellectual property by fans, especially when certain media does not allow certain uses. On the contrary, most people do not want to use their vacation photos for commercial purposes. If someone copied a photo without permission and posted it on their social media profile, neither party would go to court (Abasin, and Huseynov, 2020). However, the consumption and distribution of many online media contents violate copyright laws and therefore create equally complex problems in the distribution and circulation of content.

2.13.9 Social Media Influencer

Social media influencer is a key component of social media marketing for increasing consumer engagement Wang et al., (2012) reported that due to its bridging functionality, Facebook is a more accessible social network site and is assumed to have a lot of social engagement. Facebook facilitates almost free global communication with unknown members of remote networks. Communicating with other consumers out of the social realm can provide new and useful information about the product and thus increase social capital. As a result, Facebook marketers improve their attitude by appreciating the diverse and easy to understand views of other remote consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The benefits of social capital in WhatsApp come from its powerful features. Social capital is an alternative channel dedicated to protecting the privacy of users. Consumer relationships have become one of the major concepts in sales and marketing. Consumer engagement means a wider perspective beyond the relationship and is defined as an important instrument for building and developing relationships with consumers (Fernandes and Esteves, 2016). Loyalty refers to the deepest level of the relationship and therefore plays a significant role in improving the consideration of consumer expectations. This also shows that the company tends to encourage consumers to engage in non-transactional behaviour beyond their purchase intent.



2.13.10 Brand Loyalty

The brand value created by interacting with consumers is the result of consumer actions. The consumer multiplier value reveals consumer behaviour that can benefit from the company's promotion efforts, such as recommendations and other forms of positive comments. Interactions especially a positive form of verbal communication, can create a competitive advantage. Alvarez-Milan et al., (2018) demonstrated that, this positive consumer engagement result is much difficult to assess and manage, but it provides an important opportunity to take advantage of the multiplier effect, and the multiplier effect can be spread through the catalysis of social networks. Consumer brand owners have long struggled to attract consumers with varying scales of service. These efforts maintain brand loyalty by integrating brand elements, standard mechanisms of the marketing mix, and diverse marketing methods. In their article the author emphasized on the fast-growing consumer goods market known as the most widely consumed, rapidly integrated and cheapest commodity place (Abasin, and Huseynov, 2020).

Here, the buyers put a lot of effort into the purchase. Therefore, he measured the impact of brand association in terms of consumers through social networks in the rapidly developing consumer products market. Wang et al., (2012) mentioned four mechanisms of social media marketing to monitor and build brand loyalty. These mechanisms are social media advertising, e-WOM, consumer engagement, and virtual brand communities. Dixon (2022) showed that Turkey's global Internet use at stage 12. The number of people using the Internet has reached almost 30 million, which means that the penetration rate has reached 41.6% and almost 33.9 hours per month using the Internet and Internet visitors in Turkey and this country is the fifth country to become the largest internet users in the world. Turkish citizens use the Internet more than people in developed countries. Statistics show that the rate of sending emails is the highest, reaching 72.4% followed by news 70% collaboration over the Internet. Facebook has the highest usage rate among Turkish social networking sites (Dixon, 2022). Shareef et al., (2019) contended that social media customers and online community members not only write, compete, and disseminate different information about brand personality, but also weave and practice self-identification. This category of brand engagement and interaction makes a positive contribution to co-creation and loyalty of brand, and overall equity of brand.



2.13.11 Online Consumer Culture

Understanding consumer culture is key component of social media marketing to increase consumer purchase action. Compared with Internet search engines, the increase in social mobility during the period in which social media platforms were used frequently changed users' information search habits which has built a separate online consumer culture (Chaffey, 2018). Furthermore, social networking sites play a significant role in fulfilling the requirement of young consumers to assimilate with the latest emerging cultures and trends in consumer culture by providing them with relevant information. In this trend, technology is the emotional, cognitive, and social path of millennials. The generation born after 1981 often communicate with each other, seek entertainment, and calm their emotions through their chosen social networking sites (Kotler et al., 2016). The desire to be independent thinkers or post-cultural forward people motivates them to deliberately use social networking sites. For this reason, one of the social networking sites preferred by young people is Instagram, a photo and video sharing application where users can upload information about their daily life and social activities to their Followers and allow shared posts to be publicly discussed (Chaffey, 2018). It is one of the popular and mostly used consumer culture. Posting on Instagram has become a way to educate and raise awareness about food and services to followers (especially users with many followers). The social and emotional support of other Instagram fans by clicking the "Like" button on the image helps them stay committed to their goals. Currently, using these unique hashtags on social media is the fastest and most convenient way to find a new restaurant or dining experience, thus stimulating social trends. At the same time, attitudes towards food and drink are fast becoming the focus of discussion on social media. Consumer eating behaviours captured through online reviews or social media posts will leave a digital footprint and influence viewers' attitudes online (Bryła et al., 2022). Food and beverage revenue skyrocketed since 2014, as many start-ups as possible and online entrepreneurs realized that social media platforms created opportunities to grow their businesses. Instagram is a great food investigation and research forum where the obsession with foods like desserts, snacks, and healthy eating is called #foodporn (Kotler et al., 2016). Furthermore, the unique dining experience world-wide sparked a happy image of restaurants in the media and attracted regulars.



2.13.12 Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is a vital component of social media marketing to increase consumer engagement. A prevalent marketing premise underpins celebrity endorsement in advertising. Celebrity spokespersons, the business discovered, might boost the credibility and preferences of ads, as well as brand image, popularity, and purchasing behaviour. Celebrities have pre-existing images and followings, making them strong influencers for prospective customers (Ford et al., 2019). For marketers, selecting the appropriate speaker may be a difficult choice. According to the inherent characteristics of celebrity endorsement, trustworthiness is superior to attractiveness and dependability of beauty. Advertisers that use celebrity endorsements should choose an appealing celebrity who is reputable and can appeal to both high and low engagement customer segments (Olenski, 2014).

There are varying degrees of connection between celebrities and their followers. This influences the consumer's response to the backup relationship, which may depend on the celebrity's occupation (Ford et al., 2019). Celebrities with more outlandish occupations, such as movie actors, have a distinct perspective than celebrities with performance-oriented occupations, such as sports. Interesting motivations have more to do with celebrities than fascinating careers, while passionate motivations have more to do with celebrities related to performance-related careers (Olenski, 2014). The impact of celebrity ads on consumers can be universal, and the result (i.e., brand attitude) may depend on the celebrity's occupation and brand innovation. In pre-social media times, celebrity endorsements happened in a few limited ways: commercials, interviews, and public stunts. Recently, celebrities can endorse products on their Facebook pages, Instagram profiles, and Snapchat stories. And boy, oh boy, do users gobble it up. Celebrity endorsements can have a negative impact and provide many benefits for endorsement brands i.e., Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong, Martha Stewart and many more (Ford et al., 2019). This is evident in a personal scandal involving famous speakers like Simpson. Sponsors who adopt a more positive attitude towards negative emotions can be a way to improve the brand image. Changing the definition of celebrity in advertising will affect consumers' perception of the reality of celebrities. They believe that consumers will believe that celebrities are not so friendly if they: 1) have a negative attitude towards celebrities; 2) when the celebrities they encounter do not show a (fake) smile. On the other hand, when celebrities appear in ads that show authentic smile, consumers will: 1) think the celebrity is more real, 2) have a more positive attitude towards the ad and be more willing to buy.



Celebrities can fall from grace even if something goes wrong, cautious advertising can offset negative associations with celebrities, meaning that premature destruction and replacement of celebrity spokespersons can be avoided (Chaffey, 2018).

2.14 Theories of Consumer Purchase Behaviour

With the widespread usage of internet and online media, a range of theories and models have been developed regarding online consumer behaviour. Researchers have highlighted the suitability of online retailing for products that are primarily chosen based on search attributes, where direct experience is not a prerequisite (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Rosenberg, 1997). Klein (1998) further emphasizes that the Internet is particularly beneficial for information search related to search products due to the perceived low search costs. These insights demonstrate the relevance of understanding consumer behaviour in the context of online retailing. However, there is still a call for more rigorous and analytical research in the literature on online consumer behaviour. In response to those calls, the researcher will discuss two well-known consumer theories in this section.

2.14.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a widely recognized social psychological theory that explains human behaviour and behavioural intentions. It was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991 and is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 2011). Figure 2-1 shows the relationship between these two theories and their mediating variables. TPB suggests that human behaviour is influenced by three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

- a. Attitudes: Attitudes encompass an individual's assessment, either positive or negative, of a specific behavior. Concerning social media marketing and Bangladeshi SMEs, attitudes hold substantial influence in determining consumers' inclination to participate with SMEs via social media platforms (Chang et al., 2019). Favorable attitudes towards social media marketing can prompt consumers to actively follow and engage with SMEs, thereby bolstering their level of engagement.



- b. **Subjective Norms:** Subjective norms entail an individual's perception of the societal pressure exerted on them to either engage or refrain from engaging in a particular behavior (Lortie and Castogiovanni, 2015). In the context of this study, subjective norms can shape consumers' engagement with SMEs on social media. For instance, if consumers perceive that their peers or social network value interacting with SMEs on social media, they are more likely to emulate this behavior and actively engage with such businesses.
- c. **Perceived Behavioral Control:** Perceived behavioural control relates to an individual's belief in their own capability to successfully perform a specific behavior (Lihua, 2022). Concerning Bangladeshi SMEs and social media marketing, consumers' perceived control over engaging with SMEs via social media can significantly impact their actual level of engagement. When consumers feel confident and competent in interacting with SMEs on social media, they are more inclined to do so.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) can be used by businesses to understand how customers perceive a brand or product and how they make decisions about purchasing or engaging with a brand (Ajzen and Schmidt, 2020). By understanding these factors, businesses can develop strategies to influence customer behaviour and increase customer purchase action. For example, businesses can use the TPB model to identify the factors that influence customer behaviour and develop marketing campaigns that target these factors (Ajzen and Schmidt, 2020). Through this approach, businesses can effectively enhance customer purchase action by influencing customer behaviour (Lihua, 2022). Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model is not universally applicable and may not suit all businesses or industries (Lortie and Castogiovanni, 2015). Consequently, businesses should thoroughly assess the suitability of the TPB model to their industry and customer base before implementing it as a strategy (Lortie and Castogiovanni, 2015).

In this study, TPB influences two main variables: consumer engagement and behavioural intentions. Consumer engagement is a critical outcome variable as it reflects the extent to which consumers actively interact with SMEs on social media platforms. TPB helps explain the factors that lead to higher engagement levels, such as positive attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioural control. Behavioural intentions represent consumers planned or



anticipated behaviours towards engaging with SMEs on social media. TPB plays a crucial role in understanding the determinants of these intentions and provides insights into the potential action's consumers are likely to take regarding social media engagement with SMEs.

2.14.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is an influential social psychology theory developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975. TRA posits that human behaviour is primarily determined by an individual's behavioural intention, which is influenced by their attitudes towards the behaviour and subjective norms surrounding the behaviour (Fishbein and Aizen, 1975).

Attitudes: Attitudes in TRA refer to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a specific behaviour (Zhang et al., 2014). In the context of this study, consumers' attitudes towards engaging with Bangladeshi SMEs through social media marketing will impact their behavioural intentions to interact with these businesses.

Subjective Norms: Subjective norms in TRA encompass an individual's perception of social pressure to perform or not perform a particular behaviour (Madden et al., 1992). Consumers' perceptions of the social norms related to engaging with SMEs on social media will shape their behavioural intentions to engage with these businesses.

In this study, TRA primarily influences the variables of consumer engagement and behavioural intentions. Consumer engagement represents the level of active interaction between consumers and Bangladeshi SMEs on social media platforms. TRA sheds light on how consumers' attitudes towards social media marketing and their perceptions of social norms impact their engagement decisions.

Behavioural intentions reflect consumers' planned actions or anticipated behaviours towards engaging with SMEs through social media. TRA helps explain the underlying factors that drive these intentions, such as attitudes and subjective norms, providing valuable insights into consumers' expected actions and their implications for social media marketing strategies.

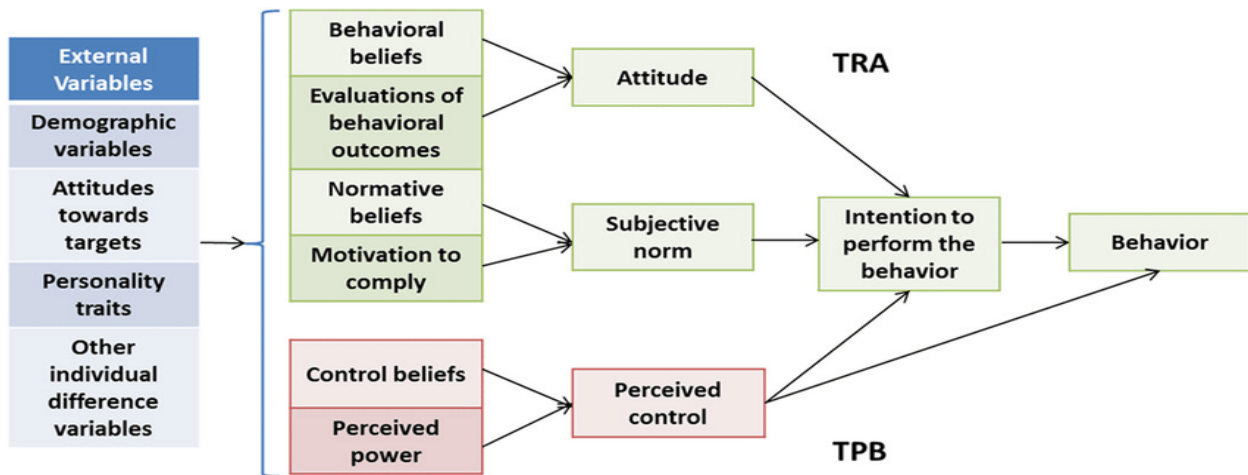


Figure 2-1: Relation between theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behaviour (Retrieved from Glanz et al., 2008)

2.15 Technology Acceptance Model

Irani et al., (2008) demonstrated that the *Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM) is a widely researched and significant extension of Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) *Theory of Reasoned Action* (TRA). They noted that TAM has been extensively studied in various fields and has become an essential framework for understanding individuals' technology adoption behaviour. As an important addition to the TRA, Davis et al., (1989) produced a model that explains why people are willing to use technology in a certain way. He introduced two new ways to explain how people feel and what they want to do with a computer programme. Granić and Marangunić, (2019), explained the relationship between constructs of a model. Figure 2-3 shows how the original model and the relationships between constructs are connected.

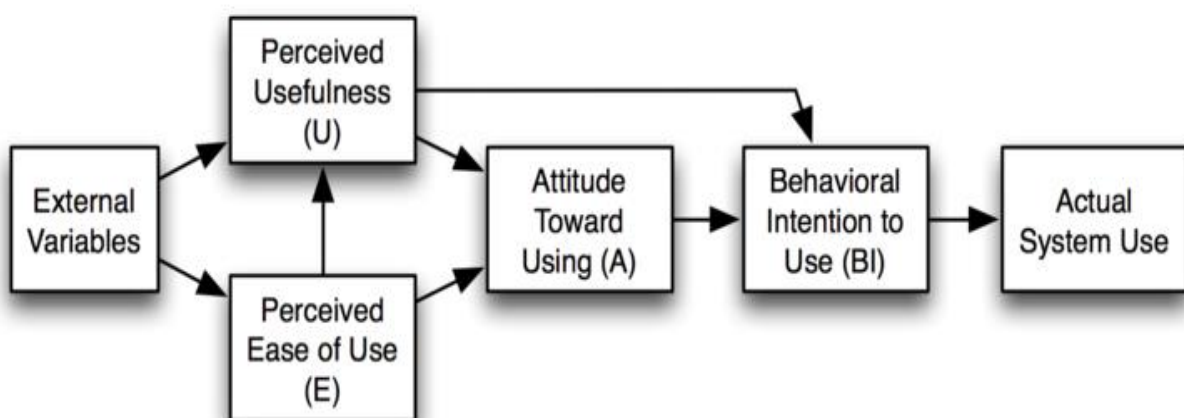


Figure 2-2: Relationships between constructs (Granić and Marangunić, 2019).



Davis et al., (1989) found that there was a link between perceived usefulness and ease of use, as well as a direct link between perceived usefulness and behavioural intentions and an indirect link through the attitude toward use. The TAM model has been widely accepted as a valid and reliable way to measure how people feel about diverse types of technology. Ng Sweeney et al., (2020) demonstrated that many researchers have investigated and tested the two TAM constructs and agreed that they are good predictors of how people will accept different corporate information technologies. The TAM model has been used for more than two decades in many different technologies, and it has been established to be a good model for predicting and explaining behaviour in many different fields (Davis 2013; Irani 2008). Furthermore, Kotler et al., (2016) reported that the technology acceptance model (TAM) is a viable and resilient model that has been frequently employed in a meta-analysis of 88 published papers. Nonetheless, the concept has a broader range of application. Another significant finding from this study indicated that many TAM studies have utilised students as surrogates for experts. This was a particular issue of contention, and it will be addressed later in this thesis. Another critical point about TAM is that, in contrast to TRA, Davis et al., (1989), proposed that, in the specific case of IT usage, attitude may only partially mediate the associations between beliefs and intention, and that IT usage decisions are dominated by beliefs such as perceived usefulness rather than effects such as attitude. As a result, several recent TAM research investigations have removed attitude totally from their models (Gautam and Sharma, 2017). A comparative summary of TAM along with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and Rigid Action Theory (RAT) is presented in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Comparative summary of Theory of Planned Behaviour, Reasoned Action, and Technology Acceptance Model

Theory	Assumptions	Applications to social media marketing on consumer purchase action	Reference
Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)	1. Attitudes towards the behaviour. 2. Subjective norms. 3. Perceived behavioural control.	Marketers can use TPB to understand how consumers' attitudes, beliefs, and social pressures influence their purchase decisions. They can then use this information to create marketing campaigns that target these factors. For example, a marketer could create a campaign that emphasizes the positive benefits of using their product (attitudes), or that features testimonials from	(Ajzen, 1991)



		satisfied customers (subjective norms).	
Theory of reasoned action (TRA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The behaviour is important to the individual. 2. The individual can perform the behaviour. 3. The individual can perform the behaviour. 	<p>Marketers can use RAT to understand how consumers' motivation, ability, and opportunity to purchase a product influence their purchase decisions. They can then use this information to create marketing campaigns that address these factors. For example, a marketer could create a campaign that offers a discount on the product (motivation), or that makes it easy for consumers to purchase the product online (opportunity).</p>	(Gollwitzer, 1999)
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perceived usefulness 2. Perceived ease of use. 	<p>Marketers can use TAM to understand how consumers' perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of a product influence their decision to purchase it. They can then use this information to create marketing campaigns that emphasize the benefits of using the product (perceived usefulness) and make it easy for consumers to use the product (perceived ease of use). For example, a marketer could create a video tutorial that demonstrates how to use the product (perceived ease of use), or that features testimonials from consumers who have benefited from using the product (perceived usefulness).</p>	(Davis, et al., 1989)

While TPB, TRA, and TAM share commonalities in their theoretical foundations, they differ in terms of their specific focus and application scope. TPB and TRA provide a broader framework for understanding human behaviour, whereas TAM specifically addresses technology acceptance and adoption. Therefore, the choice of which model to use depends on the research context and the specific behaviours or technologies under investigation.



2.16 Firm Generated Content on Social Media Platforms

There is a type of social media communication that is called "firm generated." This is the content that the company that owns a social media page posts and uploads (Poturak and Softic, 2019). Bharucha (2018) contended that; firm-generated content is anything that the company posts on its social network. Firm-generated content is content that comes from inside the company, demonstrated by Poturak and Softic (2019). It is usually the marketing and public relations department that takes care of the company's social media content because user-created communication is thought to be the most principal factor in people's decisions to buy the company. Users on the social network platform are more likely to make other people want to do something in a certain way than companies are (Brodie et al., 2013). Because of this, Wang et al., (2012) reported that people's views are more rational and unbiased, which makes them more useful when people are buying things. Ng Sweeney et al., (2020) demonstrated a significant difference between social media content made by users and content made by businesses. Some scholars, on the other hand, say that user-created communication may not be real and may not provide the level of information that people need. For example, Lu and Wu (2012) reported that, people who make their own communication may be motivated by their competitors. It is possible for competitors to pretend to be users and write negative reviews about a company's products and services. When other people on the same social network see it, it may look like it was made by the consumer, but in fact, it will be made by the competitor. Even though Lu and Wu (2012) demonstrated that, user-created content does not work, he agreed with (Bryła et al., 2022), that the link between user-created content and consumer behaviour is strong and good enough to communicate each other.

2.17 Social Media Word of Mouth

Social media word of mouth (WoM) refers to interactions on social media by other social participants who are not influenced by the firm (Schivinski and Dbrowski, 2013). These conversations frequently move quickly from one user to the next and might be about either good or negative elements of the firm (Putter, 2017). As a result, they are also known as "viral communications" since they spread from user to user (Bryła et al., 2022). Word-of-mouth communication is created not on the company's social page but on social networks other than its own. Therefore, it is effective at spreading good news to other consumers through different social networks. Hoyer and MacInnis (2016) demonstrated that, positive viral communication



refers to positive word of mouth, while negative viral communication refers to negative word of mouth. In many situations, marketers aspire for positive viral communication, while other organisations have developed unusual marketing messages that may be easily shared via positive viral communication (Nikita, 2019). Social media word-of-mouth has a tremendous influence on client behaviour.

Consequently, consumers are more likely to accept information obtained from people with whom they have a connection because they have similarities (they share the same ideas and likes) and feel part of the same groups (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2016). Diebes and Iriqat (2019) evaluate the countless likes from users on Facebook. Facebook, As explained by Oleynikova and Zorkina (2016), may bring people together by enabling them to make friends, connect, share interests, and spread ideas. Twitter users may also be followed and thus gain a following. All fresh and relevant content from their favourite companies is shown to followers (Bryła et al., 2022). Twitter also allows for group follow-ups and arguments. This is important for influencing user behaviour through reference groups. YouTube has been used to sell products using videos and jingles. Firms produce viral videos with the aid of comedians and distribute them as fresh videos. Organizational advertisements with a comedic appeal that are put on YouTube are more likely to catch user attention and lead to consumer purchase intent (Bryła et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Tapfumaneyi (2015) also demonstrated that, YouTube users may write comments on public videos, influencing the purchase decisions of their peers. Flickr is useful for branding since it enables satisfied consumers to submit photographs of their brands and products. Flickr also enhances the product's attractiveness and safeguards the company's advertising data.

2.18 Consumer Purchase Action Strategy Through Social Media

Consumer purchase action is identified as an effective strategy that seeks to create revenue, target high-value customers, and communicate with new consumers. Concentrating only on consumer purchase action may force businesses to alter not just their marketing tactics, but also their goods, services, pricing, and geographical arrangements (Perumal et al., 2017). Social media can offer consumers with alternative support channels and increase facility and its worth. This can lead consumers to fully assess the reputation of the brand and expect consumers to endorse the marketer and its products in the future. A social media consumer purchase action strategy is critical in today's digital and social world. Consumers' interactions with a variety of



brands are increasingly influenced by novel technological arrangements. As a result, managers' ability to attract as many customers as possible via the use of these technologies has been established to be a significant problem.

Marbach et al., (2019) claimed that society must cooperate online to satisfy consumer expectations for social value. Social recognition may be shown in a variety of ways by online brand communities, their staffs, or other managers. Due to social media's impact, many restaurant businesses may use numerous points of contact in the media to establish their own brand. Perumal et al., (2017) argued that innovative technology gives catering service companies the chance to find new methods to comprehend consumer purchase action and maintenance. Malaysia's catering business relies heavily on the usage of social media. There are many social media setups to choose from but picking one to put into practise may be difficult. As a knowledge platform, catering businesses utilise social networks like Facebook and Twitter, and customers in Malaysia often consult a wide range of sites to get information. Marketers have a constructive association with social networks and use it as a marketing tool for consumer purchase action and retention and correlation analysis. It is exceedingly difficult for any catering company to acquire new clients and retain existing clients.

Therefore, by maintaining a good marketing strategy, catering companies can gain a competitive advantage (Perumal et al., 2017). In the labour market, companies in emerging economies are responding to the emerging usage of the Internet, innovative automated shopping approaches, and a variety of social networks and online sales media (Bryła et al., 2022). Yet, marketers are not clear on the impact model of the business launch (e.g., paid media, professional media, and inbound digital marketing) and the go-to-market (i.e., social media visits) and search tactics for consumer purchase action. Business-to-business clients produce a large amount of produce that is beneficial to sellers, even if it is structured and tough to understand. This is especially significant in developed markets, as there are large institutional gaps between these markets, making it difficult for sellers to obtain appropriate information (Kotler et al., 2016). This research was conducted in a B2B environment in Brazil and worked on company-initiated digital communications (such as paid media, private networks, and inbound promotion) and self-initiated digital communications (such as natural search) for consumer purchase action. A single vertical dataset uses this kind of sales and consumer purchase action as indicators of marketing response. This adds extremely strict requirements when sellers discuss the status of ROI limitations in explaining problems with



advertising effectiveness. US companies invest approximately USD 130 billion each year in traditional promotion tactics (such as radio, television, print, and out-of-doors advertising) to create their own identity and rise sales (De Vries et al., 2017).

However, practical evidence recommends, for example, that companies pursuing similar goals are slowly changing their outmoded ad spending to social media. Especially many companies create social media images by running pages on these media sites like Facebook. The company posts content on these pages to connect with consumers and uses its network structure to create brands and promote sales. To use this information, sellers must be aware of the effectiveness of business-to-client social research in influencing brand and consumer behaviour. The fact is traditional promotion is the most active way to build consumer awareness, consumer thinking, and consumer engagement. These social contents and the impersonations they produce can effectively mobilize people's attention and go beyond traditional marketing. On the contrary, customer-to-customer social messaging can generate preferences and income effectively (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). In other words, the number of this marketing encourages preferences as well as consumer purchase action. However, this social messaging is the least active in attracting consumers. For businesses, understanding consumer buying behaviour is essential when designing consumer purchase action and retention approaches.

Gautam and Sharma (2017) demonstrated that, purchasing intentions are closely related to preferences toward brands or products. Since consumer relationships are based on brand attitude, it is expected that consumers' purchasing intentions will be affected by these dealings. Marketing in social media has turned into a regularly active and convenient communication network between global marketers and consumers. There is an urgent need to change the methods to meet the needs of consumers to remain competitive and efficient. Marketing activities in social media offer marketers with improved communication prospects to expand their reach and build effective long-term relationships with clients. The development of marketing activities in social media has simplified virtual interaction between consumers and other consumers around the world for all brands in diverse product groups. For luxury brands, consumers continue to use social media to share information and preferences. Therefore, understanding the impact of marketing activities in social media, consumer relationships and consumers' purchasing intentions is consistent with the great interest of sellers.



Hossain and Rahman (2018) reported that, numerous trends have arisen in corporate settings throughout the years, and these trends have swiftly disappeared. The arrival of some events may have a significant impact on corporate settings. Social networking is one of these trends, which is often used interchangeably with Web 2.0. There are many kinds of social networking sites, ranging from general social media to specialised social media, blogs, and Weibo. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, WordPress, Viber, Flickr, Google+, YouTube, Quora, Reddit, Pinterest, and Snapchat are some of the most popular and widely used social networking platforms. Even though social media was founded in 1997, the growth of social media occurred in 2000, when the number of social media sites grew substantially. As a result, the way customers and sellers interact has changed, as the platform has enabled businesses to reach a larger audience by recognising shifting requirements and wants; enhancing and updating products and services; and attracting consumers to join the company.

Therefore, people who manage online communities should inspire and recompense these communities through several types of online identification (such as providing recognized badges, etc.), inviting for website content (such as authoring articles), or other invitations such as an arrangement of important team meetings to share experiences and get involved in community decision making. It can provide promotional opportunities for active online brand communities, including receiving officially recognized awards or interviews. Even for those members who are less active, regular gratitude from the community can assist to create value. These types of awards can be symbolic or have monetary worth. For instance, while company-branded items (like T-shirts or mugs) can be used to show support, digital signs or certificates are a free choice to show gratitude to users who earn a certain amount of value. Consumer engagement plays a crucial part in enhancing notable consumer involvement, and the growth of frequently associated social networks has given consumers greater control over these experiences. While digital media offers companies unique ways to interact with consumers, it also allows them to decide when and where to interact with consumers (Marbach et al., 2019). Therefore, a well understanding of the way consumers interact online is crucial to building a stronger emotional bond with consumers and creating consumer engagement.

Tafesse and Wien (2018) demonstrated that, social media's fast growth has provided novel possibilities for marketers to interact with customers. Social media offers an active platform for attracting customers, connecting with them, and amplifying the influence of their voices.



Nevertheless, marketers are trying to use social media effectively to promote strategic marketing activities. As companies make social media strategies, distinct media are often viewed as separate elements rather than part of the whole. Furthermore, social media signifies a fast-developing environment and emphasizes the status of public opinion. Social media act focuses on consumer-based results. These results are the thoughts, feelings, or behaviours of consumers regarding the company's social media activities. These results assist a marketer to modify the impact on consumers, consumer engagement, fan groups, and network traffic. In contrast, it captures the consumer-based marketplace based on results generated by consumer purchases and post-purchase behaviour promoted on social media, including results such as marketing performance, acquisition of potential consumers, consumer satisfaction, consumer service, and consumer loyalty. Consumer loyalty programs have a positive impact on social media performance by showing the value of a marketer's success on social media. The social network is an attractive platform where people's connections and social associations are at the centre (Tafesse and Wien, 2018). Therefore, it is so important for companies to focus on loyalty and successfully integrate it into social media. Research has shown that interaction strategies - such as networking with clients on an individual level or promoting a transformative experience - trigger good emotional responses, and these responses can easily translate into specific behavioural consequences and these consequences lead to purchases by the consumer.

2.19 Research Hypothesis Development

The popularity of the internet and social media marketing has contributed to an increase in the number of people making purchases of goods and services online. It is now feasible to purchase products anywhere because of the proliferation of gadgets that have internet connectivity (Lu and Wu, 2012). It is anticipated that there will be 2.14 billion purchasers using digital platforms by the year 2022, representing rapid growth in this market. projected increase of 3.43 billion users worldwide in 2023 (Dixon, 2022), which is more than 55 percent of the total population of the world. TikTok has 732 million active users worldwide, which is much more than YouTube's over 2.2 billion, Instagram's 1.2 billion, and Facebook's 2.8 billion members (Dixon, 2022). Social commerce, often known as s-commerce, is a new category of electronic commerce that has emerged because of the increasing popularity of social media and social networking sites (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). Users may engage, connect, communicate, and purchase or sell products and services on social media, which might be considered as a new kind of e-commerce. The use of social media has generated significant economic benefits and



changed how consumers receive and digest information. Social media components implemented into SME websites have allowed for two-way communication between users, enhancing the shopping experience and allowing customers to share their knowledge and interactions with others on social media (Malarvizhi et al.,2022).

Previous studies have conflicting results regarding the impact of distinct factors on customer involvement in social media marketing. As an example, Bugshan and Attar (2020) question whether trust has a major influence on customer involvement, but Nadeem et al. (2017) showed that trust had little to no effect on consumer engagement. Zhang et al., (2014) showed that social media significantly affects client acquisition. However, Javalgi et al., 2018 and Chua et al., (2019) found the opposite to be true. While previous research offers crucial insights into the factors that affect consumer participation and the use of social media in SMEs, there does not seem to be any conclusive generalisation of these findings in the literature. In the context of SMEs, previous research has tried to consolidate existing results (Levenburg et al., 2005). However, such investigations are often restricted to a review of theories and models, the identification of limits, and the presentation of potential future research paths.

SME sector research conducted by Javalgi et al., 2018; Chua et al., (2019) as well as Mou and Benyoucef (2021) demonstrated significant insights into the variables that influence behavioural intention. Detailed studies of the inter-relationships between variables influencing consumer purchase action and usage of social media, on the other hand, seem to be lacking in the larger body of literature. Thus, the present study proposes an integrated theoretical model that analyses the elements that influence consumer engagement and uptake of SME content. Combining ideas can help me gain a better understanding of consumer engagement on social media platforms. This research uses meta-analytic structural equation modelling (MASEM) to synthesis and reconciles conflicting findings on the factors affecting customer intention and use of consumer online behaviour (Dwivedi et al., 2019; Jeyaraj and Dwivedi, 2020). Thus, this research addresses the fragmented nature of theoretical advancements, the inconsistency of previous studies, and the lack of decisive findings regarding many theoretical concepts and relationships inside social media platform engagements.

The researcher believes that such an integrated view also synthesises existing knowledge and promotes a better understanding of consumer behaviour predictors in the SME sector. Social media consumer behaviour data can directly assist firms and have a demonstrable effect on sales volumes. Based on empirical study, the author also created the following research model



and hypothesis to assess the effect of social media marketing on customer purchase action in Bangladesh's SME sector. Figure 2-4 shows the conceptual framework developed by the author that will be used as a guide for implementing the research model.

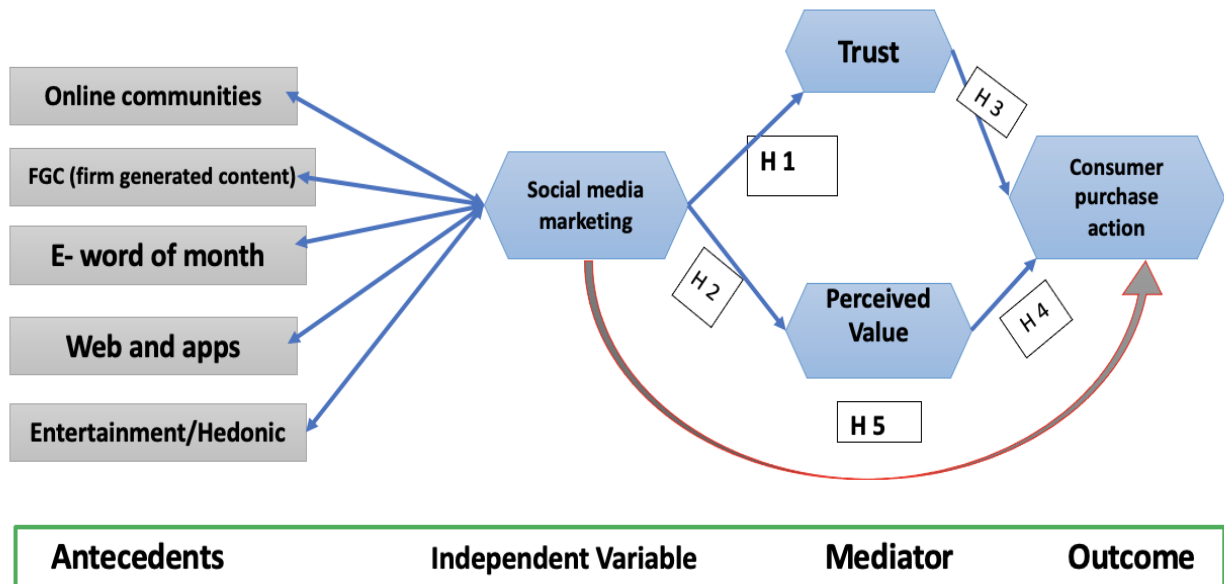


Figure 2-3: Proposed Research Model and Hypothesis (Source: Conceptual framework developed by the author)

2.20 Effects of Social Media Antecedents on Social Media Marketing

Dixon (2022) demonstrated that, by the year 2023, there will be around 3.43 billion individuals utilising social media network sites, which is almost one-quarter of the population of the whole globe. Three years later, Globe Stat states that the number of social media users has significantly exceeded three billion. This demonstrates that users' time spent on social media platforms has risen over the last several years. In addition to this, Alnsour et al., (2018) forecast that the amount of time spent on social media would increase at a rate of 7% per year. Most people who used social media were either teenagers or children; individuals over the age of 50 made up a ridiculously small percentage of users (Putter, 2017). In addition to that, Lilima (2020) identified an interesting fact about the user age in relation to their participation of social media. Malarvizhi et al., (2022), revealed that, although consumers aged 20 to 30 were more likely to be social media users, the rate of inexperienced users was high among older citizens (aged between 40 and 50 years). Correa et al., (2010) investigated the association between age and social media usage and found that there are significant differences between age groups and



that each age category has a particular tendency to use social media. An examination of several social networking research studies discovered that most of them focused just on social media without providing a full grasp of how to analyse the dynamics of social media.

Poturak and Softic (2019) discovered a link between a company's social media content and a customer's willingness to purchase. Malarvizhi et al., (2022) assert that the two variables have a direct positive link. However, when firm-generated social media content is produced by adequately trained workers, Poturak and Softic (2019) discovered that it is regarded as authentic and informative. This was shown by (Rahi, 2017), who observed that official assessments offered by the business were predictive of consumer purchasing intent and behaviour. Firm-generated material, on the other hand, is self-reflective and hence lacks credibility in balancing the viewpoints between genuine product performance and marketing sentiments. Lu and Wu (2012) reported that, the reason for this is that corporations do not want to air their dirty laundry in public due to goodwill management. Given the above research investigation, Wang et al., (2012) concludes that firm-generated communication has a tiny impact but statistically significant ability to increase consumer interaction. A recent study on social media marketing has revealed numerous characteristics that have a significant impact on social media marketing. Breech et al., (2017) identified two of these elements in their research on the relationship between universities and fans: university reputation and frequency of updates. Leung, Bai, and Mehmet Erdem (2017) discussed the content type of social media. Their research focused on hotel social media marketing, namely Facebook, and discovered that the most successful sorts of posts were those linked to goods, trust, and interaction, rather than prizes and promotions. As explained by Malarvizhi et al., (2022), the elements that drive social media engagement include product participation, perceived value towards the online community, and a desire for online connection. Furthermore, Odoom, Anning-Dorson, and Acheampong (2017) separated two kinds of social media motivations: product-based and service-oriented. Malarvizhi et al., (2022), identified open, collaborative business models and dispersed leadership as two precursors of social media marketing. Furthermore, viral marketing via social media refers to electronic word-of-mouth communication used to promote goods or services (Guede et al., 2017). Following these results, the primary hypothesis of this research was developed to investigate the impact of social media antecedents on strategic social media marketing:



H₀: SMM antecedents (online community, web and apps, entertainment, FGC and EWOM) have significant effect on social media marketing.

2.21 Effect of Trust on Consumer Purchase Action

Weisberg et al., (2016) demonstrated that, trust is defined as the consumer's credibility and compassion toward the vendor. Social media marketing should be trustworthy and charitable. To maintain trust in social media marketing, businesses must offer accurate information. Kim and Ko (2012), argued in support of this, stating that social media marketing should include authentic information. It should not offer target consumers any misleading information. False information results in erroneous decisions. Thus, Casidy and Wymer (2015) claimed that information must be trustworthy; else, customer trust and credibility are eroded (Mishra et al., 2012). On the other hand, Harrigan et al., (2018) suggested that social media comments, sharing, and reviews have a significant impact on customer purchasing decisions. Pehlivan et al., (2014) support this by stating that social media has a significant effect on customer perceived usefulness attitudes and purchase intention. Trust is described as confidence in one's ability to depend on another is promise and in the other's ability to behave with kindness and benign intent toward oneself in the face of unexpected events (Bryła et al., 2022).

Trust is critical in online activity to attract new and existing consumer. Due to the important level of perceived danger and uncertainty in the online world, consumers may be sceptical of the security of online commerce transactions (Bryła et al., 2022). In the context of social media marketing, trust encompasses both technology and people/companies (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). Thus, social media trust relates to customers' subjective views about the trustworthiness of other people and the reliability of technology for engaging in social media activities successfully (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). A lack of confidence in technology will make people reluctant to participate in social interactions or make online purchases. Consumers must have confidence in the platform or website for it to have a positive effect on their purchasing choice (Chen and Shen, 2015). Thus, increased confidence in social media will result in customers feeling more at ease with requests and interactions from peers and merchants, increasing the likelihood of purchase. Similar studies argued that consumer purchasing intentions are influenced by (Bryła et al., 2022). For instance, Sheikh et al., (2019) found that trust increases online purchase intentions, which has a noticeable impact on customer behaviour. As a result of the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:



H₁: Trust has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.

2.22 Effect of Perceived Value on Consumer Purchase Action

Consumer purchase action are significantly influenced by perceived value. According to the TAM (technology acceptance model), a consumer's purchase intention is greater when he or she receives more than they provide. On the other hand, Liang et al., (2016) found that perceived had a positive effect on purchase intention through digital networking and encouraged customers to make a positive and well-informed purchasing choice. Al-Tit et al., 2020, argue that consumer purchasing intention is positively related to perceived value. Lee and Ma (2015) demonstrated that, perceived utility refers to consumers' perception that social media would assist them in making a more informed purchasing choice. Perceived worth and usefulness are positively linked. According to prior research, perceived value increases purchasing intention. The perceived effectiveness of social media marketing raises the likelihood of making further purchases. It has been discovered that increasing the number of social media marketing users results in an increase in the company's revenues. Tang et al., (2012) marketing research study shows that customers perceive social media marketing provides a holistic picture of a product or service since customers can see prior user comments on the product. As a result, the perceived utility of social media marketing has a positive effect on customer purchase intention.

Han and Windsor (2016) reported that, perceived value has a substantial impact on social media marketing efficiency. Social media marketing should be successful to make effective decisions. It was found that social media marketing provided an essential foundation for making optimal purchase decisions by analysing relevant information. On the other hand, Liang, and Dang (2015) argued that social media marketing might aid customer to make proper purchasing decisions. According to their findings of the research, social media marketing should provide enough information about products or services. It should not hide any vital information. The perceived value of social media marketing is reduced if the information provided is insufficient to make an informed buying decision. Schonlau et al., (2016) reported that social media should be participatory. It should allow for interaction between the buyer and vendor. To improve the customer experience, companies should emphasise solving customer problems. As a result of the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Perceived Value has a significant impact on consumer Purchase Action.



2.23 Effect of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Action

Poturak and Softic (2019) demonstrated that, social media may have a substantial impact on brand image by facilitating consumer feedback, followed by the customization and engagement of both. Husnain et al., (2017), made an investigation on the relationship between social media marketing and customer behaviour. The findings of his study show that both good and negative comments from other users have a substantial effect on customer behaviour. The findings of Husnain et al., (2017) showed that other customers have a significant role in influencing consumer behaviour to make purchase decision. Social media platforms gather information on different businesses, brands, goods, and services, and most social media users do so through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This phenomenon arises because of marketing conducted through social media. Toor et al., (2017) reported that social media marketing has a significant effect on customer purchase action. Additionally, the research found that customer engagement serves as a partial mediator in determining the effect of social media marketing on consumer purchase intention. As a result, the research is to determine the need to monitor customer concerns to develop an effective marketing strategy that influences consumer purchasing decisions. Harrigan et al., (2018) found that individual purchase decisions are influenced by social media trust and perceived utility. The research established that social media marketing's legitimacy and beneficence had a substantial impact on customer confidence in social media information. This social media trust has a significant effect on consumers' perceptions of social media's utility. Along with social media trust and perceived utility, social media marketing has a significant impact on customer purchase intentions. However, according to Lashari and Rrustemi (2017), social media marketing has a distinct impact on each stage of the customer purchasing decision-making process. The research was undertaken to determine the degree to which social media influences consumer purchase decisions and the extent to which consumers utilise social media to make purchase decisions.

Pjero and Kercini (2015) stated that, research investigation, 61.5 percent of customers are influenced to purchase goods by positive posts from their peers. On the other hand, 59% of respondents made unexpected purchases based on information accessible on the Internet. Despite this, the research emphasised how consumers are increasingly relying on social media to make purchasing decisions. On the other side, Schonlau et al., (2002) found that unfavourable remarks from friends and acquaintances had a detrimental effect on customer purchasing decisions. McCole et al., (2015) contended that social media marketing had a



substantial impact on customer purchasing decisions in the retail sector. The research discovered that social media information had a significant impact on customer purchasing intention. It demonstrated that consumers place a high premium on online information. However, since social media information is more reliable than that on the internet, it affects customers' intentions to buy. Lee (2016) claimed that a customer's purchasing intention was affected by social media comments from other consumers. Positive feedback, on the other hand, has a substantial effect on customer purchase intention, while negative feedback has a negative effect. Consumers are also more likely to share their experiences on social media, which improves their level of engagement. As a result of the information presented above, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H₃: Social media marketing has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase action.

2.24 Effect of Perceived Value on Consumer Purchase Action

Customer perceived value may be defined as the difference between the benefits obtained by a consumer from a product and the expense incurred in obtaining that product. The cost-benefit analysis is critical because customer satisfaction can only be achieved if they incur less expense while reaping greater advantages from a given product or service (Bryła et al., 2022). There are four types of advantages associated with a product, and there are four types of costs associated with a product. Each of the four advantages is broken down into four categories: product advantage, service advantage, personnel advantage, and image advantage. While the four types of costs are as follows: monetary cost, psychological cost, time cost, and energy cost, there are four types of costs. There are two ways in which a company may boost customer value: either by increasing customer advantages or by lowering customer costs. When comparing the monetary cost of a product to the non-Monetary cost of the same, the monetary cost is significant. In a similar vein, the product benefit is more significant when compared to the service benefit, personnel benefit, and image benefit. However, it is dependent on the product's type and market sector. However, it is a critical element for a firm to determine which component is more significant for their customers since these criteria differ from person to person and depend on their circumstances (Barger et al., 2016). Customer perception is what leads to customer satisfaction. Consumer happiness, in turn, leads to customer loyalty



eventually. As a result, a firm must maintain the notion of customer value if it wants to increase consumer loyalty to its brand (Bryła et al., 2022).

Keller and Kotler (2013) demonstrated that, social media marketing may have a substantial impact on customer value and brand equity by increasing involvement, personalization, and feedback. This procedure may influence the purchasing intentions of consumers. In their research on social media and its effect on customer engagement. Pjero and Kercini (2015) also reported that, information on goods and services supplied in the virtual world may have a favourable effect on consumer purchasing behaviour. The value of a customer may be changed by social media marketing conducted by other users. A similar trend involving the virtual world is emerging quickly in Bangladesh. Bilal et al., (2016) demonstrates that social media use has effectively affected the purchasing choices of Bangladeshi users of online platforms. Most of them utilise microblogs to obtain information on a variety of firms, brands, goods, and services via online social media. This result is consistent with the Bangladesh Advertisers' Society's (2015) study, which claims that sales of beverages, ice cream, sunscreen, swimming suits, and other summertime goods have peaked in contrast to prior years. This phenomenon is a result of the SME's social media marketing efforts. Manchanda et al., (2015) discovered that sharing post-purchase experiences on social media boosts consumers' favourable perceptions of value in the online community. In addition to the company's emphasis on facts and benefits, are social media sites also fostering favourable attitudes? The influence of featured product recommendations via social media on a consumer's purchasing choice is substantial. Therefore, it has been said that social media has played a significant part in building positive customer value for a product or service, hence increasing consumer purchase intent. Pehlivan et al., (2014) demonstrated that social media has a major influence on consumer perceived value and purchase intention, lending support to previous research. As a result of the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Consumer perceived value has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.



2.25 Effect of Social Media on Consumer Purchase Action

Utilization of social media by organisations influences businesses by enhancing consumer engagement, information accessibility, and acquisition. When it comes to resolving consumer inquiries and fostering customer connections, social media has a profound impact on digitally based businesses. Harrigan et al., (2018) contended that social media is a collection of Web 2.0-based internet applications, such as blogs, forums, picture and video sharing, social networking sites, product or service evaluations, online communities, etc., that enable organisations to produce and share user-generated content. Consequently, Kietzmann et al., (2011) and Kotler et al., (2016) proposed that SMEs use social media as a collection of interconnected strategic resources to attain better performance. The second explanation for the hypothetical association between social media adoption and SME performance is based on the resource-based perspective of Kietzmann et al., (2011), in which social media adoption is seen as a resource that allows SMEs to obtain a competitive advantage. This is because online social media platforms are a particularly important way for businesses and their stakeholders to share information. In addition, Hussain (2019) proposed that, management experts acknowledge the growing significance of social media use for enterprises. He advocated that academic concentrate on how social media permits organisations and Researcher to increase their knowledge co-creation and performance-related research. Thirdly, several studies have shown the significance of social media usage in enhancing the performance of SMEs. The operationalization of a SME's performance has been operationalized differently in a number of these studies. These studies have also shown that contextual evidence on the usage of social media to improve a company's performance is required. Specifically, there is scant evidence in the context of development. These studies have also urged more research into the relationship between social media use and SME success. Regarding the effect of social media adoption on SME success, further empirical research is required. This is important because most of the little information we have been able to get our hands on has been based on cross-sectional data. Researchers propose that the use of social media has a direct influence on the performance of SMEs and that this should be explored using a more holistic, longitudinal approach. Using a time-lag methodology, the present research tries to give stronger empirical evidence. To increase customer engagement, businesses should put a significant emphasis on problem resolution. Taking into consideration the above debate, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₅: Social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchase action.



2.26 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the potential concepts of identifying social media, consumer engagement, and small and medium-sized businesses, along with the associated constraints and variables influencing the adoption process of social media technologies, were discussed. The literature examined dealt with current social media adoption and how it works in SMEs in general, as well as in the Bangladesh setting, which was especially important to achieve the goals of the study. To achieve optimal company operation in SMEs, a comprehensive combination of effective social media adoption methods is specifically influenced. Online networks, multimedia-sharing sites, bookmarking sites, virtual worlds, and rating sites all come under the category of social media (Ng Sweeney et al., 2020). Some marketing experts argue that consumer engagement in social media is now required for companies to be considered a member of the internet. Businesses may utilise social media to communicate with customers directly and quickly, while also saving money compared to more conventional forms of media. This chapter concentrated on the development of a research hypothesis and conceptual framework of the social media platform for Bangladeshi SMEs using market demand forecast.

A thorough review of relevant literature was included, as were explanations and reasons for the variables used for the model. Many theories may clarify the dynamics of social media marketing through SME performance, but further study is required, particularly on how to use this fresh marketing model in Bangladesh's SME context. There is still a dearth of information and guidance regarding how to utilise social media for business, even though many companies are doing so. The chapter emphasised the need to develop a framework for describing how adoption processes affect the successful use of social media by SMEs to improve company performance. Thus, the variables affecting the social media engagement process of SMEs in Bangladesh must be thoroughly investigated to offer an incentive for SMEs interested in using social media platforms. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and its rationale.



Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter explains the research approaches and techniques employed. It includes the strategy and methods for data collection and analysis, sample approaches, and the equipment and techniques used to measure the variables. This chapter is critical because it acts as a road map for the study and a design for how it will be carried out. It contributes to the credibility and dependability of the study and gives the reader a clear picture of how the findings were reached. The goal of this chapter is to explain why the study design was chosen and to offer a full explanation of the research process. The main organisation of this chapter, as indicated in Figure 3-1, was based on Easterly-Smith et al., (2015). These philosophical assumptions then define the entire study process, which in turn drives the selection of methodologies and procedures for data gathering and subsequent analysis. The methodology chapter is organised as follows: The ontological and epistemological foundations that underpin this thesis are then clarified. This is followed by an explanation of the methodological technique used in this investigation. Finally, the research methodologies and analytical procedures used in the two studies described in this thesis are outlined.

3.2 Structure of Research Methodology

Easterly-Smith et al., (2015) reported that research methodology is broken down into four layers: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and procedures. Appropriate methodological techniques must be provided to validate the given model and test the proposed hypotheses. This chapter thus begins by providing a summary of the philosophical perspective used throughout this study. Following this, a discussion of the various research methodology options is provided, along with an explanation of why these specific techniques were chosen for this study. Using the research strategy as a guide, a research plan was made so that each step of the study could be done in a methodical way. The author provided an in-depth description of the steps used to create the measuring scale, from whence the items came through the validation and translation processes to the creation of the online questionnaire. Following that, information gathering methods and sample sizes were discussed. Ethical concerns raised by the research were addressed here, and the procedures and methods used to analyse the collected data were revealed.

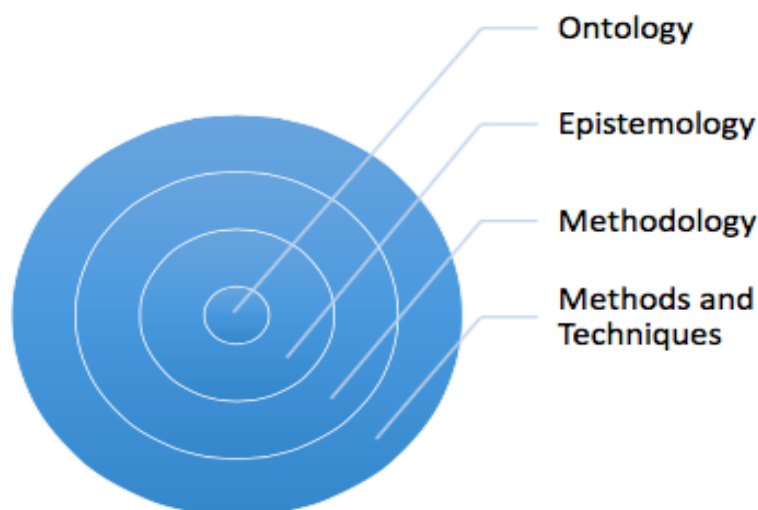


Figure 3-1: Structure of Research Methodology (Easterby-Smith et al. 2015)

3.3 Research Philosophy

Numerous research philosophies, including positivism, interpretivism, and ontology, are founded on the aspects of ontology and epistemology. Only existent objects are discussed in ontology and philosophy, which excludes human analysis of the study question. The philosophy of epistemology examines the research question considering the knowledge already accessible on the market (Davies and Hughes, 2014). It makes it possible to get data from people. Research philosophy is split into positivism and interpretivism based on epistemological characteristics. Based on readily accessible market data, the positivism research philosophy is utilised to analyse current and established research topics. It explores the research question from theory to consequence and analyses it objectively (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The premise that everything is real serves as the foundation for philosophical discussion (Easterly-Smith et al., 2015). What it means to "be" and "be there" is the basic question that ontology aims to solve (Angeles, 1981). To put it another way, the ontological aspect is concerned with the concept of existence and actual life (Tadajewski, 2004). Ontology is shown in marketing literature as a line with two extremes: realism and relativism (Hanson and Grimmer, 2007). According to the realism perspective, the world may be seen as a single entity that is independent of the researcher who is researching it (McGregor and Murnane, 2010). This school of thought contends that we may discover a reality that exists independent of our



thoughts. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 102), the study of "the way things are" can be used to summarise the realism philosophical point of view. In contrast, relativism ontology says that reality only exists in the way that the person who knows it sees it. Rather than having a single, real world that can be measured objectively, it is said that there are many different socially constructed realities (Harrison and Reilly, 2011). As a result, social Researcher who believe in this way of thinking said that the world is essentially "unknowable," because each person sees the world differently. Thus, it is impossible to predict the world in an objective way (Marsden and Littler, 1998).

The term "research philosophy" pertains to the nature of knowledge development and its characteristics. It involves fundamental assumptions on how individuals understand the world and how it operates. In examining research philosophy, three main types, ontology, epistemology, and methodology are considered (Guba and Lincoln ,1994). Ontology primarily concerns the nature of reality and questions the researcher's underlying assumptions on how the world operates and their commitment to specific viewpoints (Saunders et al., 2007). It comprises objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism addresses how social entities can be distinct from social actors, while subjectivism deals with how people's perceptions and actions shape social phenomena. In contrast, epistemology focuses on the accuracy of knowledge types appropriate for a particular field of study. Positivism and interpretivism are the two primary research types. The nature of the current study facilitated the adaption of an objectivist study which was done on positivism epistemology.

Figure 3-2, adapted from Saunders et al., (2007), presents what they called the "research onion," which shows different ideas, approaches, strategies, and choices for developing the research methodology. The research philosophies and approaches that were chosen for the current study are shown in red ellipses on the figure, but there will be a detailed explanation of why they were chosen. Therefore, in the next few sections, researcher talked about the diverse ways to do research. This general overview then explained why this choice was the best one for this research.

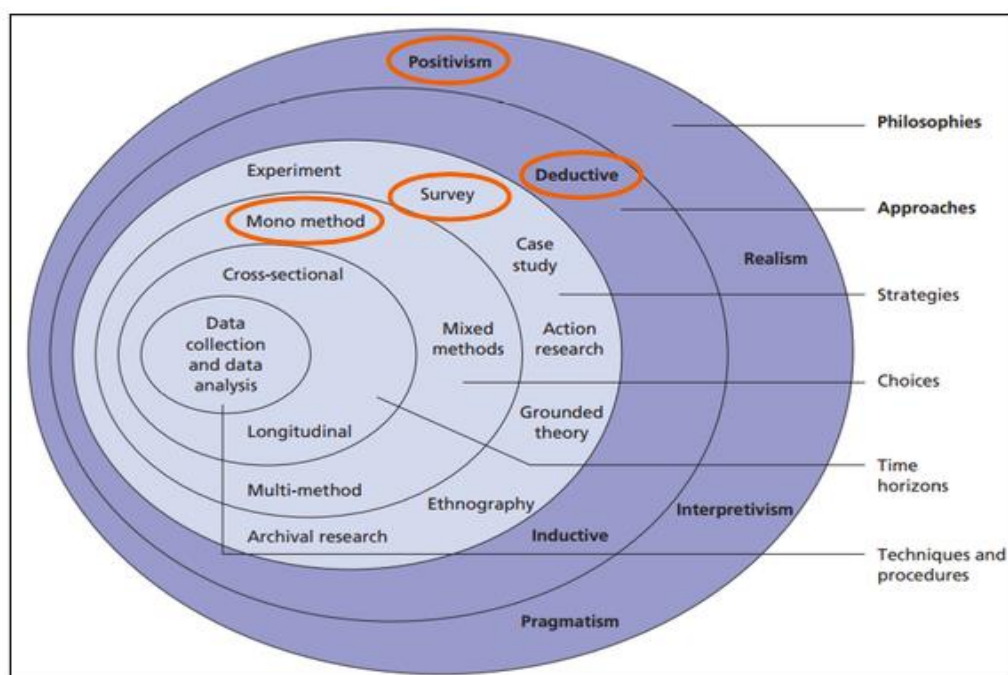


Figure 3-2: The Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2007).

In addition to this, Saunders et al., (2007) contended that research philosophy is primarily concerned with the nature and growth of knowledge in a particular field, whether this knowledge is novel or fundamental new knowledge intended to address a particular research question in a particular context. Many aspects of a researcher's worldview and approach to doing research are reflected in their research philosophy. So, it changes how the study is done and what the researcher thinks is most important or valuable (Saunders et al., 2009). Using a positivist epistemology with an epistemology component, this investigation was carried out. This study's objective was to investigate how social media affects interactions between SME clients. Previous researchers like Simon et al., (2016) and Tafesse (2016), suggested a positive relationship between social media and consumer purchasing choices; therefore, this is a well-known issue. Understanding how consumers see social media and how it affects their purchase behaviour is crucial for validating earlier findings. Consequently, the completion of this investigation requires human participation. This illustrates how positivism's approach to research is in line with the nature, goal, and objectives of the study. However, the study needs quantitative analysis. In comparison to qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis is more statistically accurate according to Rahi, (2017). As a result, the positivist philosophy is validated in the research on the influence of social media on customer purchase action in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs.



3.4 Research approach

The method of analysis for the research study is speculation. The terms "deductive" and "inductive" refer to two different sorts of research methodologies. Examining established research topics involves using deductive reasoning. This method involves picking a well-established research topic that needs to be examined using the most recent data (Collis and Hussey, 2013). Therefore, it all begins with the theory, and it all concludes with the theory being either accepted or rejected. However, deductive reasoning is used to develop a novel hypothesis from a shaky observation. In this case, the researcher saw a social phenomenon and attempted to tie it to the phenomenon to develop a new theory or hypothesis.

The deductive strategy was chosen by the researcher. The influence of social media marketing on customer behaviour was the hypothesis that the researcher created after looking at existing literature. Numerous theories, propositions, studies, etc. were done on this subject by researchers of different time. The researcher wished to examine the hypothesis that was generated from an earlier study in the Bangladeshi SME business. Therefore, the researcher tried to look at the research problem from the perspective of the customers in the retail business. In this instance, the researcher critically assessed the past study on social media, consumer interaction, and the development of the hypothesis. This proposition was examined statistically; hence a deductive strategy was the most suitable method. The study's methodology was selected after careful consideration of the topic at hand and relevant prior research. The study's primary goal was to examine the factors that influence customer involvement with SMEs. The study also wanted to find out what role demographics, internet experience, and social media usage among other things.

Through an extensive literature review in sections 2.4 and 2.5, it was found that previous literature on consumer behaviour presented many theories and models that investigated different goals of social media adoption (Ullrich and Brunner, 2015). Due to this, there is a sizable and expanding body of study that explores these structures and their relationships in the areas of consumer interaction and online characteristics. As a result, there was no need to develop additional variables or investigate possible justifications for the patterns found.



Considering all these factors, the positivist method was proved to be appropriate for this investigation from an ontological standpoint. As mentioned earlier, the goal of positivist research is to identify a predetermined phenomenon or truth. To generalise the theory, it was necessary to test a set of hypotheses or relationships to see whether they hold water. In Chapter 2, we saw an illustration of the recommended model, detailing the interrelationships between the various independent and dependent variables. Researching several recent papers covering the same ground led to this conclusion. As a result, positivism was adopted as the research philosophy for this research, and a theoretical research model was created based on this philosophy. This led to the use of a deductive strategy, which, in accordance with Collis and Hussey (2010), usually starts with a literature review to define an adequate theory and produce hypotheses. Next, the theory was verified and experimentally tested to support the findings. Data gathering should thus be a part of the validation process. Many participants were employed for this research to confirm and generalise the causal linkages between the variables in the conceptual model. Because of this, the quantitative technique was preferable to the qualitative method. Creswell (2009) contended that, objectivism in ontology, positivism in epistemology, and deductive reasoning in technique are the bedrock of the quantitative approach. So, to accomplish its goals, this research mostly used this strategy. Saunders et al., (2011) also included a list of various qualitative data sources, including structured observation, secondary data (such as raw data and published summaries), lab experiments, and surveys.

The utilization of the survey technique aligned well with the positivist-deductive approach, making it a suitable and fitting method for conducting this investigation. The survey approach, characterized by its structured and quantitative nature, enables the collection of empirical data that can be subjected to rigorous statistical analysis, which can assist in drawing objective conclusion and testing the hypothesis derived from the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2. To generalise results about the attitudes, behaviours, or traits of a group over a wide geographic range, survey is the ideal tool (Pinsonneault and Kraemer, 1993). It also offers a rapid, affordable, effective, and accurate way to evaluate data on a target demographic. The quantitative (hypothetico-deductive) technique was modified for this study, although qualitative inquiry may also be applied in a tiny portion of it. This relates to the model's validation of the items used to assess each component. The benefits of using it are as follows, and they will be shown later in Chapter 6: First, it is clear from looking at how the research model was developed in Chapter 2 that all the variables that were ultimately selected for this study were examined in a setting that was not directly relevant to the business under



investigation (i.e., the SME sector). Second, this study will be carried out in Bangladesh, a developing nation with little research on it, which may have cultural differences and a lot of untested variables. To confirm if the measuring scale (items) still makes sense for this study's setting, quantitative work will be helpful. The items may be reviewed in small focus groups or interviews to accomplish this.

The techniques used in earlier studies in the literature on the same issue area should also be considered when choosing specific research methodologies. As stated by Chapter 2, when studying customer attitudes and behaviours, most academics studying consumer behaviour and information systems prefer to use positivist and deductive techniques. Ai et al. (2008), Mills and Morrison (2003), and Premkumar and Bhattacharjee (2008) conducted studies that used positivism, a logical approach with a survey technique. Other scholars share this viewpoint, which is consistent with what was discovered in the literature that was accessible for this thesis. Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010) contended that, one purpose of a survey is to learn the thoughts and feelings of a certain group of people. Surveys are often used in business and management research. Furthermore, Chen and Hirschheim (2004) reported that, most information systems studies rely on techniques and approaches that test hypotheses to provide empirical results for their investigations. Thus, the positivist, deductive, quantitative survey approach used in the current study to accomplish comparable goals is most like that used in previous studies.

3.5 Research Method

Research methodologies may be divided into three categories: mixed, qualitative, and quantitative. The quantitative approach to study analysis uses computation and statistics (Rahi, 2017). Mathematical and statistical analysis are both used in the computation. A source of information that can be transformed into numbers is used by the quantitative technique to gather data (Denscombe, 2010). The analysis of a research hypothesis that may be described in numerical form is therefore referred to as the "quantitative approach to research." The positivist philosophy and logical process better suited to this strategy. Quantitative research methods were used to evaluate the impact of social media marketing on customer engagement since it can produce empirical data and identify causal relationships between variables. Quantitative research techniques were appropriate for examining the impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement due high accuracy and reliability to quantify numerical data and analyse that information in a controlled setting. By collecting and analysing numerical



data in quantitative research approach, researcher can quantify study results more precisely and extrapolate them to a wider sample of the population. This was especially beneficial for researching the impacts of social media marketing since it allows researchers to conduct a more thorough and organised examination of the connection between social media marketing and consumer engagement.

Previous studies on the influence of social media marketing on customer involvement employed quantitative approach as well. For example, Kabadayi and Price (2014) examined the association between social media marketing and brand loyalty used a quantitative survey technique. According to the findings of Kabadayi and Price (2014), social media marketing has a beneficial influence on brand loyalty, demonstrating the relevance of social media marketing for companies. Mangold and Faulds (2009) conducted another study that employed a quantitative data analysis technique to investigate the influence of social media marketing on customer involvement. In general, the goal of quantitative research is to “provide explanations and forecasts that may be applied to other people and locations”. The objective is to create, confirm, or verify correlations, as well as to build generalisations that will help to advance current ideas (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: p.95).

To fulfil these objectives, relevant data must be gathered in a manner that can be statistically quantified and analysed to support or refute the hypotheses suggested. This necessitates the employment of an appropriate research approach. As a result, selecting an acceptable research technique comes first, followed by data collection and analysis. The techniques for gathering data were discussed in the coming sections. In 2016, Davis et al., contended that, even though experimental research can be used to test causal relationships more accurately, the research findings may not apply to people who were not in the study. Thus, they stated that the experimental design is not real and does not show how it would work in the real world. Similar claims have also been made by other authors like Marsden and Littler, (1998) and Creswell, (2014). Thus, the main problem with an experimental study is that it does not know if the findings can be used outside of the study itself. Because of the limitations of an experimental study, this thesis did not use this method of research. The goal of this study was to investigate the influence of social media marketing on consumer engagement and produce a marketing strategy that can be used. Based on this goal, the two investigations must be done in a real-world setting. So, the survey method was used for this research.



3.6 Survey Method

The practice of survey research is strongly bound to marketing literature (Stewart, 2019). The survey method's reliability in marketing is based on its widespread usage and its commitment to the positivistic concept of knowledge creation via the collection of empirical data for statistical analysis (Tamilia, 2015). The survey approach involves the use of a structured questionnaire to elicit data from a targeted study population (Malhotra et al., 2017). Questionnaires were utilised to obtain data from the participants for this thesis. The primary benefit of doing survey-based research is that it can capture more abstract notions. In consumer research, survey tools may be used to elicit customers' ideas and sentiments that are not immediately visible (McGregor and Murnane, 2016). Rather than that, data were gathered in numerical form. As a result, survey results may be utilised to ascertain customers' fundamental requirements, desires, and motivations. The relevant criteria may then be applied to comparable customers using suitable analytical methodologies (Pachauri, 2002). In this thesis, survey questionnaires were utilised to quantify the psychological values and consumer behaviour of the participants in relation to their home and host countries. These research findings will subsequently be generalised to other participants. Another significant benefit of survey-based research, particularly when using an Internet-based questionnaire, is its capacity to gather data from a greater number of participants more quickly and cost-effectively than other approaches (Malhotra et al., 2017). Hence, an Internet-based survey research approach was chosen for this research.

However, survey research does have certain limits. As compared to experimental research, it is believed that the survey approach has a lower level of internal dependability. This is because the environment in which the study takes place cannot be precisely controlled. As a result, it is seen as being less capable of forming causal linkages (Davis et al., 2013). Nonetheless, this issue was addressed by the theoretical explanation of correlations and statistical control of irrelevant variables during data analysis. This constraint was addressed in this thesis using structural equation modelling, which enables the integrated theoretical research model to be evaluated while accounting for the effect of exogenous elements (Kaplan, 2000). A particular example of this was the research on the participants' gender in the host country. Another major downside of survey research is the findings' reliability and validity. While surveys are often used to collect empirical data for generalisation, it is critical to consider how closely the data collected from a sample of respondents represents those of the wider study population (Rea



and Parker, 2005). This is motivated by a fear that insufficiently constructed research instruments and sample procedures may result in inaccuracy and misleading interpretations. These difficulties, in turn, have a detrimental effect on the external validity of the study results. To avoid this trap and mitigate the possible consequences of measurement mistakes, this thesis employs a questionnaire creation procedure recommended in the methodological literature. Following that, the phases of the questionnaire development process are discussed.

3.7 Questionnaire Development Process

The questionnaire preparation technique is based on Collis and Hussey (2013), questionnaire design framework sequential survey research guideline. Figure 3-2 depicts the six-step approach. The identification of the research population is the first step in the procedure. Various sample techniques were evaluated before deciding to the best approach. The phrasing of the statements and questions used to assess the values of sojourners is then modified from existing measurement scales. Following that, the forms of the scale items are established. Pilot testing and data collecting are the last stages of the development process. Due to the psychological values and consumer behaviour of each nation vary significantly, as demonstrated in the study conceptual models in Figure 2-1, two studies are planned. Nonetheless, since the two studies have comparable research methodologies, they use a similar questionnaire preparation approach (Rahi, 2017). As a result, each stage of the questionnaire creation process will be covered first. The operational definition, scale item adaption, pilot-testing findings, and implementation plan will then be reviewed individually for each research in the home and host countries.

3.7.1 Definition of Target Audience

Target audience is a group of individuals or an organisation having a set of shared traits from which a researcher can select a sample (Creswell, 2012). According to Creswell, a researcher must first select the group or organisation that will be studied, i.e., the target population. Additionally, the researcher needs to be able to choose a sample, which is a portion of the total population and is equally representative of the complete population. The target demographic for this study is SME consumers in Bangladesh who use social media platforms to make purchasing decisions. The audience or the participants of this research must represent the mass population of Bangladesh, varying in age, occupation, income, internet literacy and social media usage.



3.7.2 Questionnaire Distribution

The application of the questionnaire enables the researcher to gather evidence on the category distribution of the respondents on certain factors including sex, age, and educational background. The questionnaires will consist of carefully selected statements and/or questions directed at the respondents to produce vital data to test the applicable hypotheses. In addition, the suggested sample questionnaire for the theory of planned behaviour is quite lengthy; therefore, the researcher refined the questionnaire by making the questions simple, direct, optional, and easy to assimilate by the respondent, allowing for a smooth and fast administration. The researcher used cluster sampling method and distributed the questionnaire in four major divisional area in Bangladesh which are - Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Rajshahi. For distributing the questionnaire, the researcher took advantage of the internet. The questionnaire was distributed via email invitation, social media platforms and online survey tools. Among all the audience that has been reached out, 329 participants responded with valid responses. Those responses were automatically saved in a spreadsheet for further processing and analysis.

3.7.3 Early and Non-response Bias

In questionnaire study, early response and non-response bias are two crucial factors and need to be addressed carefully. Early response bias is a scenario when the early respondents' data differ from those who take the survey later. This delay in response may occasionally skew the results of the survey. Non-response bias occurs when some respondents decline to engage in the survey even though they may be different from those who do, which may have an impact on the data gathered. Researchers have a few options for addressing these biases during data processing. To evaluate if there are any notable distinctions, they can contrast the traits of people who respond promptly and those who respond slowly. To account for any variations between those who answer and those who don't, they can also employ statistical techniques. By doing these things, researchers can make sure their findings are more accurate and reliable.



3.8 Survey Instrument Development

This research survey was divided into five sections: qualifying questions, demographic information, personal information about social media usage, questions about their perception of the company's social media page characteristics, and questions about online consumer engagement, specifically questions about acquiring new customers, trust effects, and participation engagement questions about brand loyalty and repurchase intentions. The survey included measuring questions for the following variables: perceived value, perceived pleasure or hedonic, product trust, online consumer engagement influence, and social media impact on customer perception. In addition, the poll queried respondents about their experience with the brand, which was included as a covariate. Respondents were also questioned about their social media use in general, as well as their "liking" behaviour. Finally, demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and income were included in the questionnaire. The demographic information offered a better understanding of the survey respondents. Demographic questions – gender, age, ethnicity, education, and income – are usually included in consumer behaviour surveys to "seek out fundamental socio-demographic data," As indicated by Collis and Hussey (2013), The following procedures were followed to create the survey for the research. The first stage was to do a thorough literature study and design a prototype poll. Reagan (2006) contended that, the first stage in constructing a survey is to undertake a complete literature review to discover ideas and tested links, as well as measurements of associated variables. Reagan claims that after this is completed, a pilot poll may be prepared. Following that, Phase One, which included focus groups, was carried out. The poll was pre-tested as the last phase of its preparation. According to Reagan, pre-testing a survey with "actual" individuals might assist the researcher in identifying any faults or probable flaws in the survey. Hansen et al., (1998) state that pre-testing a survey may "iron out many of the possible challenges with which the researcher, who is linked closely to the topic, cannot always predict" (p. 247).

Furthermore, Hansen et al., (1998) reported that, a researcher only requires a small sample of participants to pre-test a survey. As a pilot survey, a convenience sample of 10 participants comprised of college students, staff, and this researcher's co-workers was used for this investigation. To be qualified for the pre-test, individuals must have "liked" a firm on social media. This ensures that they have the same credentials as the people utilised in this research. Participants completed the survey online and were asked to record notes on question coherency



and comprehension, questionnaire flow, survey technological mechanics, survey length, and language (Hansen et al., (1998), and Wimmer and Dominick, 2003). The survey was adjusted based on the pre-test participants' input. First, multiple page breaks and a progress bar were included to ensure the questionnaire's flow and usability. Second, the language of questions and replies was changed to improve clarity.

3.9 Pilot Study

Hundley et al., (2015) demonstrated that, pilot studies are often used in social science research for two purposes: to determine feasibility and to set up the major study. As stated by Baker (1994), a research instrument may be pre-tested or "tried out" in a pilot test. A pilot study can also be used as an early warning system for areas where the primary study may falter, such as if the Researchers do not adhere to the correct research protocols or if the data collection method or questionnaire (or any other research tool) is too involved or unsuitable for the study. Do not take a chance; conduct a pilot test first, advises De Vaus (1993, p. 54). Therefore, the pilot test was used in this study prior to the main experiment. A scholarly agreement on the minimum size of a pilot study's sample is lacking, explained by Johansson and Sieverbo (2009). However, a minimum number of items to the sample size is advised for various research goals; for example, the study should include between 10 and 15 participants for feasibility, between 25 and 40 participants for instrument development, and between 20 and 25 participants for intervention effectiveness. Additionally, there is no fixed number of samples required for pilot test, but a sample size of 10–30 is considered adequate for social science research (Collis and Hussey, 2013). Whatever, the sample size may be, the samples should represent the overall population. Using the Pearson correlation, Kumar et al., (2010) looked at how a larger sample size affected the width of the confidence interval. Simple random selection was employed by the researcher to choose the sample for this investigation. As a result, the researcher had access to reliable data for the pilot experiment. It is devoid of whatever prejudice the researcher may have personally. The researcher has acquired information to assess the veracity of the data by conducting surveys with 16 different online SMEs' consumers.



3.10 Measurement Purification: Pilot Test

Before the pilot test, the content and face validity of the items developed in the qualitative research were assessed, assuring the reliability and validity of scale items, and referring to whether the test "looks valid" to examinees who take it (Anastasi, 2015). Although some of the items' phrasing was judged to be inconsequential, it was subsequently altered to guarantee that respondents understood them correctly. Hinkin (1998) demonstrated that, a clear relationship between the items and the theoretical structures being evaluated is required, which is why so much time and effort was spent to ensure the items were acceptable.

The data-gathering instrument for the pilot test was created during the pilot test phase. The 29 questions on the questionnaire were culled from existing research as well as semi-structured participant interviews. Hinkin (1998) also discovered that, the sample must be representative, and the data are free of common method bias when using items that have completed validity testing as indicated above, hence it is recommended to gather data from many sources. As a result, the researcher selected responders from a variety of backgrounds. Characteristics. Malhotra et al., (2013) further propose that the background characteristics of the pilot test participants should be quite comparable to those of the main data-collecting participants. There has been substantial discussion over the sample size required to run the tests properly (Hinkin, 1998). In most circumstances, a sample size of 50 observations should be enough for exploratory factor analysis (Guadagnoli and Velicer, 1988), whereas a sample size of 200 is advised for confirmatory factor analysis.

For the factor analysis, Hair et al., (2009) recommends a sample size of 90-100 observations, whereas Yu and Cooper (1983) discovered that the response rate is typically around 81.7 percent. As a result, the researcher's goal in this study was to send 16 questionnaires to target respondents. All respondents consented to be contacted to complete the survey. To attain the desired reaction, the researcher utilised the snowballing strategy. The questionnaires were delivered to people of various ages, genders, occupations, and other characteristics. The researcher delivered 16 surveys in two weeks. There are numerous methods for scaling the items, but Cook et al., (1984) reported that, the Likert scale is the most widely employed in survey questionnaire research. As a result, the respondents were asked to score issues on a 5-point scale ranging from (Strongly disagree) to (Strongly agree). This scale was chosen because it is more dependable (Churchill, 1979; Churchill and Peter, 1984). To eliminate any ambiguity



in the phrasing, the researcher hired a competent Bangla-to-English translator to select a comparable term that would be clearly understood by respondents, particularly with local SMEs consumer. Sixteen completed surveys were obtained after the questionnaires were delivered during two weeks of data gathering. That was used to administrate pilot tests.

3.11 Measurement Scales

A variety of items from relevant scales were used to measure the various components in the framework. The scales that were used to measure the constructs in the framework are listed in the following table. Each variable is measured using a variety of things, as stated in the table below. To assess consumer involvement, three factors were used: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive. Following up on brand posts on social media, brand followers' observable attitude toward the brand was measured using six items from scales developed by Lee, and Jin (2011). These items included sharing brand posts, commenting on brand posts, and following up on brand posts on social media regularly. There were five elements in the emotional dimension, which were taken from Cheung, Lee, and Jin (2011) and Malciute et al., (2012), and they related to the amount to which brand followers were engaged in the postings on the brand pages. There were six questions on the cognitive dimension that had been adapted from questions that were reported by Collis and Hussey (2013). They looked at how much attention customers paid to their brands when they visited brand pages. Purchase intention, perceived value, consumer purchase action, and trust were all increased because of increased consumer interaction.

The consumer engagement variable was measured using scales adapted from Collis and Hussey (2013), and it consisted of six items concerning the likelihood of repurchasing a given brand in the future, encouraging, and recommending friends of the same brand to other people. There were three questions in the trust variable that were taken from the scale developed by Vivek (2009) to measure individual connection and attachment to the brand. Three components in the perceived value of consumer variables were taken from Rahi (2017) and Gustafsson et al., (2005) and they were related to the expectations and performance of the brand. The trusted scale consisted of four questions that were adapted from the scales developed by Collis and Hussey (2013), and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), and which were linked to how consumers regarded the brand as being safe and secure in their interactions with it.



Table 3-1: Measures and scales of the survey questionnaire

Variables	Description	Scale development from	Item number	Internal consistency ratio
Social media antecedents	Individuals' chances to utilise social media, as well as their views of market preparedness, peer influence, and organisational support, are seen as important social media antecedents.	(Dessart 2017) (Keinänen, Kuivalainen 2015) (Odoom, Anning-Dorson et al. 2017) (Almohaimmed 2019)	05	0.8123
Trust	This refers to the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function.	Malciute 2012. Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001	04	0.8235
Consumer engagement	Refers to a deeply held commitment to rebuy a preferred product or service consistently in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts aimed at causing a switching behaviour. And refers to verbal communications (either positive or negative) between groups such as product providers, family, and friends, and potential or actual consumers.	Vivek 2009; Reitz 2012; Malciute (2012); Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001)	04	0.7235
Social Media Marketing	Social media is one of the most popular online services and has become a wonderful way for any firm to connect with prospective customers.	(Ziga and Jung, 2012), (Neti, 2011), Cheung, Lee, and Jin, (2011). Malciute, et al., 2012	04	0.8324
Perceived value	Refers to the degree to which a business's product or service performance matches up to the expectation of the customer.	Malciute 2012. Gustafsson et al., 2005	04	0.76139



3.12 Research Design

All research must begin with a comprehensive plan outlining the specifics of how the study will be carried out, down to each individual step. Creswell (2009) demonstrated that, a research design is an overarching plan for developing research questions, detailing the scope of the study, outlining how data will be collected and analysed, discussing any ethical considerations that must be considered, presenting the results, and discussing the study's significance. The author has created Figure 3.3 for this study to illustrate the broad framework of the study. Pursuant to the review of the literature in earlier chapters, there are still some questions about what makes social media marketing work and get people interested. Therefore, a conceptual model was created to explain the factors that contribute to e-satisfaction and future purchases. Because positivism and deductive reasoning are used, there needs to be a way to collect data to show that the hypothesis is true. Building an appropriate instrument or scale to measure each construct, obtaining ethical approval, validating the questionnaire, constructing the full survey, piloting the survey, defining the sample population, and finally conducting the main data collection are all steps involved in employing a survey methodology (Goldstein, 2022). To get hard proof for the model's links and the groups' differences, the gathered empirical data must first undergo a series of statistical studies. Following a discussion of the results in the literature, the researcher will make conclusions and analyse their significance. In the following sections, I will show you how to implement each phase of this research plan and describe how you would document your findings.

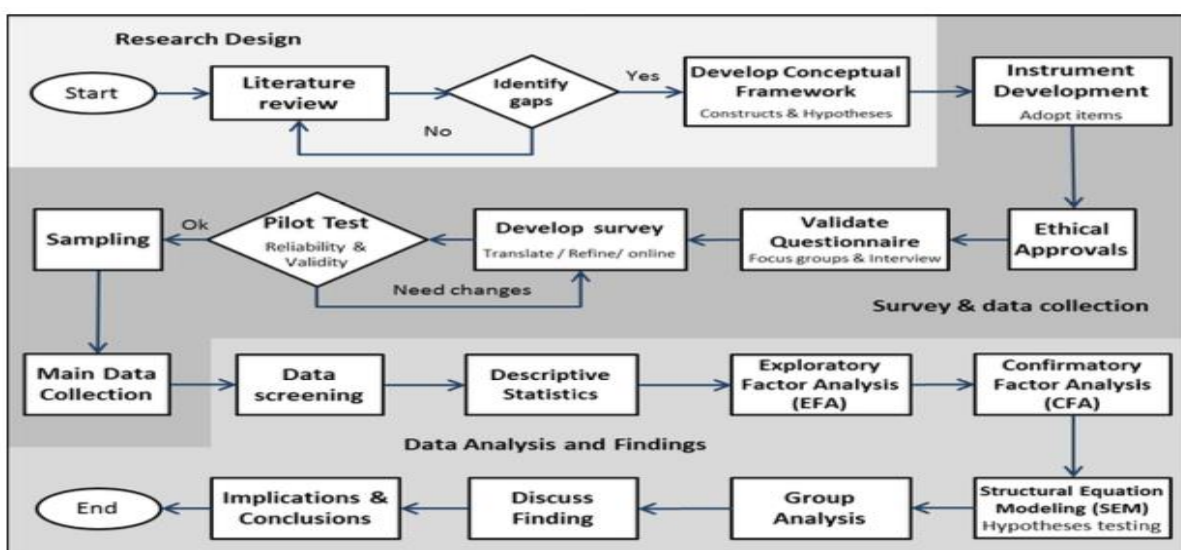


Figure 3-3: Research Design by (Wahyuni, 2012).



A methodical strategy for performing the study is known as research design. To provide a credible study result, it is critical to use a strategic research plan. Research designs often fall into one of four categories: exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, or evaluative. An exploratory research strategy is used to test a novel theory or hypothesis after making a preliminary observation (Kumar, 2014). Explanatory research designs are designed to address what, how, and why of the researchable issue. A detailed analysis of the study issue is connected to the descriptive design. A programme or approach is evaluated using an evaluation study design. Correlational research design, experimental research design, quasi-experimental research design, and other varieties are all subcategories of descriptive research design (Quinlan et al., 2015). The link between two variables is examined using various statistical methods and instruments in correlational study designs.

A cause-and-effect connection study is done using an experimental research design. In this instance, the researcher is attempting to gauge the influence of the dependent variable via variations in the independent variable. The descriptive research approach has made it possible for the researcher to utilise the study results going forward and to use them as a starting point for another research. Descriptive analysis eases the way of acquiring in-depth information, which may be quantitative and qualitative data, allowing the researcher to undertake multidimensional methods (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Because the researcher intended to examine the occurrence in a natural and unaltered natural context, the descriptive research approach was chosen for this study. This approach enabled the gathering of quantitative data and the analysis of that data using various statistical methods and tools.

3.13 Research Strategy

A research strategy is designed to gather information from essential and reliable sources. Case study, observation, and survey techniques are examples of research strategies. The case study technique refers to analysing research based on geographical or unique criteria (Kumar, 2014). In the process of this study, the researcher carried out a quantitative survey analysis. The researcher collected information by online survey questionnaire. It is applicable to the analysis of quantitative research. Survey approach is a method of gathering information from a primary source using a questionnaire. The questionnaire approach is the process of gathering information from respondents who have a restricted number of options (Ridley, 2012). A close ended survey questionnaire was administrated to collect primary data.



In the case of quantitative research, the researcher often employs a survey technique, while the case study strategy is used in qualitative research. In exploratory research designs, qualitative research is often used to generate innovative ideas and get a deeper understanding of how people behave. This is a method of interpreting things (Zikmund-Fisher et al., 2012). People employ this strategy when they do not know how to organise their data. They achieve this using free-form data and small sample numbers (e.g., case studies, focus groups, and interviews). While quantitative research is often used with descriptive and causal research designs to evaluate hypotheses and correlations, it is also frequently employed with these kinds of research designs. This is a method of examining real-world data to determine its veracity. Because the information originates from many individuals, it may be used to draw broad generalisations (e.g., through experiments, questionnaires, and psychometric tests).

To gather information, the researcher used a closed-ended questionnaire as part of the survey approach and rejected both case studies and the observation technique. Case study and observation procedures are rejected because they are good at gathering qualitative data from primary sources. Quantitative data is required for this study. Because it is acceptable to acquire information from a primary source that can be turned into numerical form, the researcher has chosen a closed-ended questionnaire to collect information. The researcher created a closed-ended questionnaire concentrating on the influence of social media on consumer purchasing choices. A questionnaire is being developed to examine the influence of social media on each stage of customer buying choices, including need identification, information search, alternative assessment, purchase decision, and post-purchase response. The researcher asked respondents to rate the influence of social media on each step of a consumer purchase decision on a scale of 1 to 5. The acquired data was then transformed into a numerical format so that statistical methods could be used. Another advantage of using a closed-ended questionnaire is that it eliminates complexity and assures that respondents' replies are consistent. As a result, the researcher used a closed-ended survey questionnaire to gather data from the main source.



3.14 Time Horizon

This study employed a cross-sectional timeframe; therefore, the time horizon of this research is confined to a specific moment in time when data collection occurred. By adopting a cross-sectional design, the data was collected from the participants at a specific timeframe, which provides a snapshot of their attitudes, behaviours, or perceptions at that moment. Unlike longitudinal studies that track changes over an extended period, the time horizon of a cross-sectional study is relatively short. This approach allowed for the efficient collection of data from a diverse group of participants, offering insights into the relationships between variables and their prevalence within the defined timeframe. By adopting this method, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic's dynamics at the time of data collection.

3.15 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Research studies must address sampling methods and sample size. They define the degree of accuracy of the research results as well as the representativeness of the sample that was used. In research investigations, one of the most typical types of sampling that is done is simple random sampling. It entails picking people at random from a population in which there is no bias present. The researcher must consider the margin of error, the degree of confidence, and the variability of the population before deciding what the optimal sample size should be for an investigation that uses simple random sampling. In most cases, it is recommended that the sample size for a research study be at least 30 participants. Yet, in studies that have a high degree of variability, it is possible that a larger sample size is required to boost accuracy.

3.15.1 Sampling Strategy

Several sample strategies, including convenience sampling, probability sampling, and snowball sampling, have been employed in previous research on social media marketing (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). These strategies rely on non-random selection and may be skewed by sampling, so the samples they generate may not be representative of the population of interest. Rahi, (2017) demonstrated that, the most reliable method for obtaining data that is representative of the entire population is by simple random sampling. Using a random selection technique that offers each member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample ensures that it is representative. Researcher used



simple random sample approach to reduce statistical error considering the policies and advantages. A key component of research methodologies is the sample size. It is dependent on several variables, including the population's size, the study's design, the study's degree of accuracy, and the level of confidence. In Bangladesh, there are many distinct types of SMEs customers. Hence, a sample size of 329 is sufficient for research on this demographic. This sample size reduces the margin of error and guarantees a reasonable level of accuracy. The projected sample size of 329 is sufficient since it is within the range of sample sizes that are advised for populations between 10,000 and 100,000. (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) Due to the large population of Bangladeshi SMEs, a sample size of 329 is sufficient to provide reliable and representative data. Finding differences or correlations between crucial variables may be achieved with a sample size of 329. For instance, research may look at the connection between consumer perceptions of value and customer involvement with Bangladeshi SMEs.

3.15.2 Sample Unit

The sample unit is defined as "one of the units into which an aggregate is divided or is regarded as divided for the purpose of sampling, each unit being regarded as individual and indivisible when the selection is made" (Dodge, 2003, p. 360). As a result, it is critical to identify the sample unit, as data will be collected from the sample unit specified to answer the purpose of the research (Davis, 2004). The Bangladeshi SME online customers who utilise social media platforms to make product/service purchases have been designated as the sample unit for this study. According to the literature analysis, Bangladeshi SME online consumers are the primary users of the social media network.

3.16 Data Analysis

The researcher collected information from the primary source of data that can be converted into numeric form. Therefore, quantitative data analysis was conducted to reach a valid conclusion regarding the impact of social media on consumer engagement decisions. As previously said, it is required to validate the results of the exploratory factor analysis, which at this point had been conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis is therefore carried out to enable the researcher to confirm or reject the predetermined theory and to determine whether that theory fits reality (Hair et al., 2009). The researcher might next use confirmatory factor analysis to verify whether the five elements identified as motivating drivers of social media, trust, and perceived value by the exploratory factor analysis accurately represent reality and whether this



hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. Following the completion of research objective 1 and the end of the confirmatory factor analysis, a final conceptual model and hypotheses were established to test research objectives 2 and 3. Path analysis was utilised to evaluate whether personality-related factors including personality characteristics and causality orientations are mediated by motivational drivers in influencing trust, perceived value, and acquisition in social media engagement, as required by research objectives 2 and 3.

The researcher was able to identify whether influencing factors also serve as a mediator in the link between consumer engagement, trust, perceived value, and acquisition via the use of path analysis. This technique was chosen because it allows users to test the effect that intervening or mediating variables, such as motivation, have on relationships using path diagrams, which allow Researcher to draw all the proposed relationships, which can then be translated into the equations required for analysis. Path analysis was therefore carried out using the SPSS and AMOS software platform. The 95 percent bootstrapping confidence interval approach was used to explicitly explore the indirect correlations. This method of analysis was chosen over other traditional methods such as the causal steps approach, which was found to have low statistical power and Type I error rates, and the t-test or product of coefficients method, which is dependent on the normal distribution and is only visible in large samples. Descriptive statistics such as percentile, cumulative percentile, mean, mode, and standard deviation have been used to show the central tendency of the responder's response. Inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis have been conducted to show the impact of social media on consumer purchase behaviour.

3.17 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are essential factors for producing credible research. The reliability of the research refers to the internal consistency of respondent replies and the comparability of the study's results to those of the previous researcher. On the other hand, validity is associated with the suitable methodology used by prior Researcher to perform comparable studies. The researcher ensured the study's validity and reliability by establishing internal consistency among the variables. To establish internal consistency, the researcher used a systematic questionnaire to verify that respondent replies are internally consistent. As the option is unavailable to respondents, the respondent must choose from the remaining possibilities. In contrast, the researcher used the proper technique, such as positivist philosophy, a logical approach, the quantitative method, a survey strategy, a simple random sample, etc., in



accordance with the predetermined study subject. In addition to the pilot test, which served the purpose of instrument verification, the researcher collected in total of 329 subjects' data for this study. Ideally, the larger the population, the better the reliability of the data. However, the 329 subjects have been proved to have provided reliable information to visualise the scenario of the research.

3.18 Research Ethics and Responsibility

Individual humans are essential to the current research being conducted. Therefore, the researcher must take care to address several ethical concerns to gather data from respondents and use it. If the researcher intends to provide conclusions that may be implemented in practise, he must pay special attention to ethical concerns throughout the investigation (Creswell, 2014). First, the researcher had his ideas reviewed by an institutional review board, which looked through the proposed study and any accompanying paperwork to make sure it complied with ethical standards (Creswell, 2014). The ethics committee of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, approved both parts of this research before they could proceed. The researcher submitted the following items to the ethics committee to gain approval for the study: the data collection instrument, an ethical approval form detailing how any ethical concerns will be addressed, the study's rationale and justification, a detailed description of the participants to be investigated and how those participants will be recruited, and any consent forms or additional information that will be given to participants. In this part, researcher discuss the ethical considerations that should be considered when looking at how social media marketing affects customer engagement for Bangladeshi SMEs.

Informed Consent: Informed consent is an important ethical factor in research, especially when working with human participants. All risks and advantages, as well as the study's goals, must be explained to participants before they agree to take part in the research. In addition, participants should be free to say "no thanks" without repercussions (World Medical Association, 2013). Before participants complete the online survey questionnaire for this study, the researcher has provided a consent form giving him permission to perform this research. The permission form includes detailed information about the study's goals, methodology, and any associated risks or rewards. A consent form is also attached in the appendix:6 section.



Confidentiality and Anonymity: Participants' privacy and confidentiality must be respected throughout the study process. This may be done in several ways, including the use of anonymous or pseudonymous data, the use of secure data storage technologies, and the acquisition of informed permission from participants prior to the use of their data (National Institute of Health, 2000). To successfully carry out this research project, I have ensured the privacy and anonymity of the participants by coding their names and the demographic information about them. Therefore, information will be saved on my laptop in an anonymous manner.

Collecting Data: The researcher should be aware of the possible effects on participants and use only ethical procedures to gather data. For example, if the study uses social media platforms, the researcher must take the terms of service and privacy rules into account and get permission from participants before accessing and using their data (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2016). To maintain research ethics, the researcher strictly followed the data privacy policy and did not collect any data that might reveal the identity of the participants.

Cultural Sensitivity: It is important to consider the cultural beliefs and values of the Bangladeshi people while doing research there. (American Anthropological Association, 1998), Scientists should pay attention to local customs and avoid doing anything that could be seen as offensive. For this research, these ethical issues were addressed by including an introduction to the online questionnaire. This introduction statement promised participants that their participation was anonymous, outlined the research's goals, and explained how the obtained data would be handled and maintained. Participants were also notified in that introduction section that the University of Wales Trinity Saint David is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, which administers the Data Protection Act 1998, and that any personal data submitted will be governed by this Act. This introduction statement also satisfied the ethical norms related to safeguarding the research community, since it prevented misrepresentation about the study, disclosed the researcher's connections, and told participants how the data obtained would be used to prevent misleading information about research results.

Appropriate Use of Information: The researcher has collected information for an academic study, and he is committed to using this information for academic purposes only. The researcher strictly followed the data safety policy of the university and limited the access to the dataset. However, after the study will be made public, any enthusiastic researcher who want to



further study on the dataset, may acquire them with proper authorisation. The researcher is committed to prepare a dissertation reflecting his contributions to the research domain. The researcher provides proper credit to the previous researcher through appropriate citations and references.

3.19 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research approach employed in this thesis based on a justifiable philosophical viewpoint. The quantitative research (online survey) was conducted through the using social media online survey technology. A pilot survey was distributed to 20 individuals, and 16 valid responses were received. The objective of the pilot test was to confirm the reliability and validity of the measuring items and to eliminate those that were irrelevant. The remaining questions were included in the main poll, for which 329 valid responses were anticipated. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The subsequent chapter will focus on the quantitative data results.



Chapter 4 Data Analysis

4.1 Overview

Results have been reported in this chapter based on primary data that was gathered via a questionnaire. The findings have been derived using a variety of data analysis approaches after the collected data has been processed for analysis using the SPSS programme. As stated in the introductory chapter of the research study, the data analysis has instead been guided by the study's objectives and purposes. Also, since they were created in the research's second chapter, the assertions for the hypotheses are tested. The main goal of the data analysis was to determine how using social media technologies will affect the SMEs performance as well as how various mediators, including brand equity, marketing prowess, and customer focus, will affect the outcome. A summary of both structural equational modelling and other statistical analysis are provided in this chapter, along with respondent profiles, reliability tests, and other information. An overview of hypothesis testing is also provided at the end of Chapter 4.

4.2 Demographics

After the successful completion of the pilot study, the main data collection process was started. The data were collected from a total of 329 Bangladeshi participants of various age groups, gender, educational background, and social media usage. This study's target population is SME customers in Bangladesh who make purchase decisions using social media platforms. The audience or participants in this study must be representative of the general population of Bangladesh, with a range of age (18-60 years old), occupation, income, internet literacy, and social media usage.

The researcher employed the cluster sampling approach and disseminated the questionnaire in four major divisional areas of Bangladesh: Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, and Rajshahi. The researcher made use of the internet to distribute the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent out via email, social media sites, and online survey tools. 329 individuals out of the total 500 audience contacted answered with valid replies. Those replies were recorded automatically in a spreadsheet for later processing and analysis.



4.3 Age Categories

The questionnaire was passed on to participants of different age groups and categories. Based on the data received, it has been seen that most of the participants belonged to the age group between 31 and 40 years. This group comprises 51% of the total population. The next highest number of participants were from the age group between 18 to 30 years which consists of 25% of the total number of participants. In the pilot study, an opposite trend was noticed. 23% of the participants belong to the age group 41 to 50 years and only 1% of the participants are from the age group 51 to 60 years old.

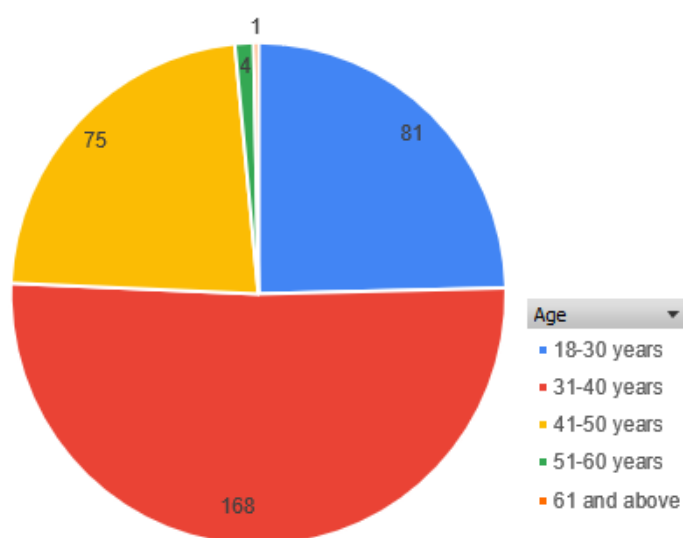


Figure 4-1: Pie chart showing participant age group.

4.4 Gender

Of the total 329 participants in the questionnaire study, 53% (n = 175) of the participants were female, while 45% (n = 149) of the participants were male. However, 5 participants preferred not to reveal their gender which comprises 2% of the sample size.

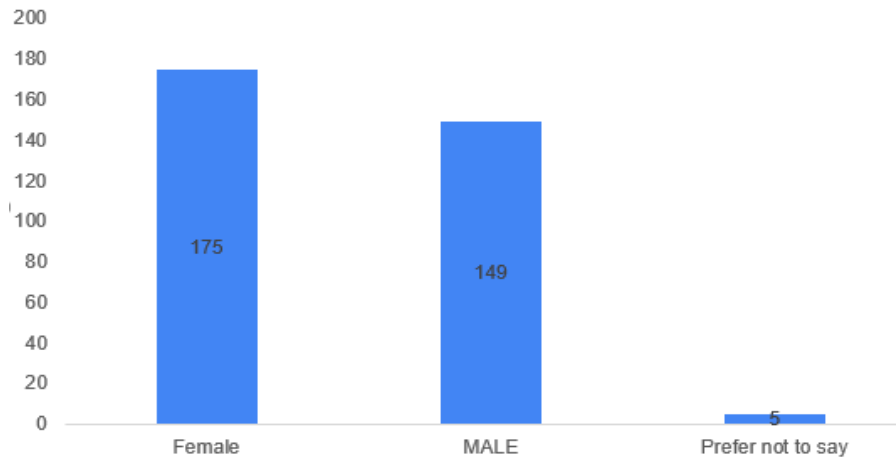


Figure 4-2: Bar diagram showing participant gender.

4.5 Occupations

Most of the study population has some sort of job. 43% of the sample size are employed in various jobs while 35% of the population were self-employed. Many participants were unemployed. This group represents 20% of the total sample size. The remaining 2% is employed in other uncategorised occupations.

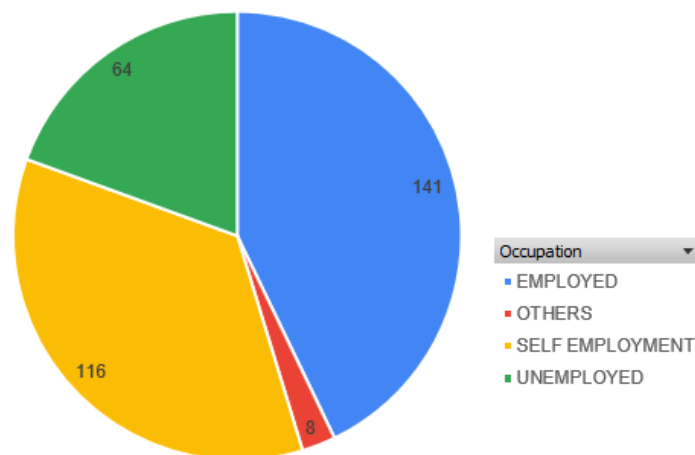


Figure 4-3: Pie chart showing participant occupation.



4.6 Education Level

The study participants showed a prominent level of education. 28% (n = 92) of the participants have Foundation level degrees and another 28% (n = 91) hold a bachelor's degree. 21% (n = 68) of the participants have a master's degree. 10% of the sample population have HSC or A Level education while 4% of the participants only have SSC or O Level education. There were also 23 participants from other educational backgrounds.

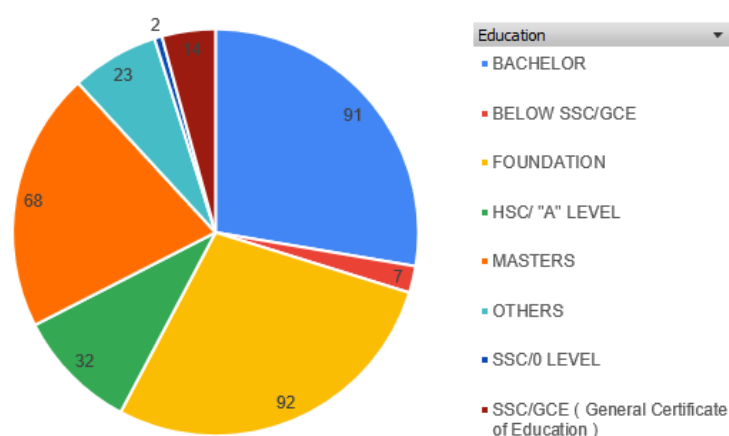


Figure 4-4: Pie chart showing participant education level.

Table 4-1 shows a summary of the demographics of the participants.

Table 4-1: Demographics of the sample population

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Female	175	53%
	Male	149	45%
	Prefer not to say	5	2%
Age	18-30 years	81	25%
	31-40 years	168	51%
	41-50 years	75	23%
	51-60 years	4	1%
	61 and above	1	0%
Education	Bachelor	91	28%
	Below SSC/GCE	7	2%
	Foundation	92	28%
	HSC/ "A" Level	32	10%
	Masters	68	21%
	Others	23	7%
	SSC/O Level	2	1%
	SSC/GCE (General Certificate of Education)	14	4%
Occupation	Employed	141	43%
	Others	8	3%



Self-Employment	116	35%
Unemployed	64	19%

4.7 Social Media Usage of the Participants

Most of the participants had some level of social media usage. 95% of the participants extensively use social media. The remaining 5% of the population does not use any social media. The most common of most of the population use are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. A respectable number of the sample population use YouTube and Snapchat. Another trend that has been noticed is that most LinkedIn users were unemployed. This is a subtle indication that they are using the platform to earn a job.

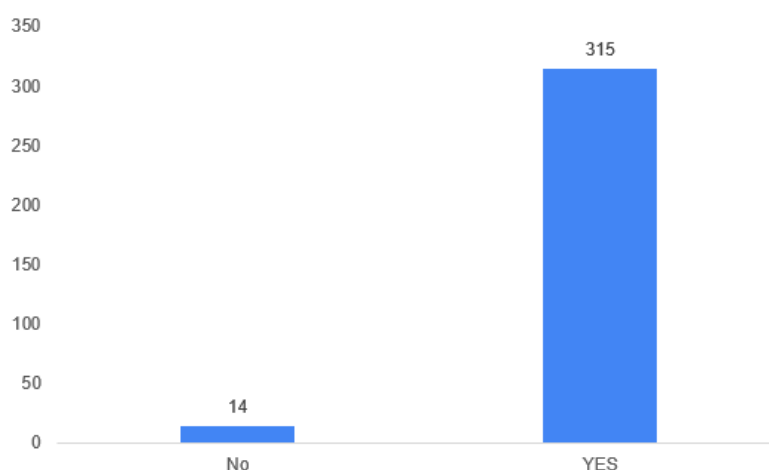


Figure 4-5: Bar diagram showing participant social media usage.

The participants showed varied levels of social media usage. 42% of the participants claim that they use social media once a week although the percentage of everyday users is also high (37%). 14% of the participants use social media a few times a month while 7% of the participants rarely use the media.

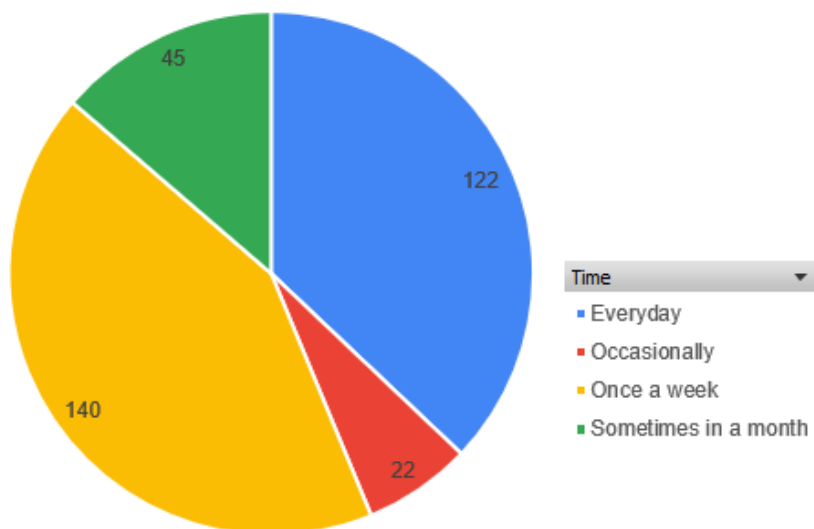


Figure 4-6: Pie chart showing time spent on social media.

A summary of the demographic details of the population is presented in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2: Summary of participants' social media usage

SM Usage	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media Usage	No	14	5%
	Yes	315	95%
Time Spent on SM	Everyday	122	37%
	Occasionally	22	7%
	Once a week	140	42%
	Sometimes in a month	45	14%



4.8 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Before analysis, the SPSS statistical tool was used to check each research instrument item for data entry accuracy, missing values, and outliers. After that, pre-request assumptions were investigated. The multivariate statistical analytic technique called structural equation modelling (SEM) is used to explore structural correlations (Hair et al., 2009). This method examines the structural link between measured variables and latent constructs by combining component analysis and multiple regression analysis where the variables can be either continuous or discrete (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The researcher favours this approach since it estimates numerous and connected dependencies in a single investigation. For a variety of reasons, SEM is preferred in social science research (Kline 2010; Wu and Bentler 2012). First, it offers the best and most appropriate approximation analysis for several concurrently estimated relationships. It considers the impact of the overall model, as opposed to the use of discrete multiple regressions. Second, even when a dependent variable turns into an independent variable in other interactions, the independent and dependent variables can still be analysed. Third, the researcher can calculate direct, indirect, and mediating effects by utilising SEM. Finally, SEM makes it simple to do invariance analysis. Model specification, identification, parameter estimation, model assessment, and model change are the five logical phases in SEM (Byrne 2013; Hoyle 2011; Kline 2010). Based on one's understanding, the model specification describes the assumed relationships between the variables in a SEM. Model identification involves determining if a model is over-, just-, or under-identified. Only the just identified or over-identified model allow for the estimation of model coefficients. With the aid of quantitative indicators that are derived for the overall goodness of fit, model evaluation evaluates model performance or fit. Modification, also known as post hoc model modification, alters the model to improve model fit. The process of validating a model aims to increase its stability and dependability. Popular SEM software packages like AMOS, Mplus, LISREI, Lavaan (R-package), piecewiseSEM (R-package), and MATLAB frequently come with user-friendly instructions (Byrne 2013; Lefcheck 2015; Rosseel 2012). As stated by Hair et al. (2009), SEM has a few steps where the EFA is the initial step, and the CFA is useful for analysing the structural model and testing the hypothesis. In this study, the researcher first performed the exploratory factor analysis to establish the reliability of the variables under consideration and then applied confirmatory factor analysis to investigate the model fit and suggest necessary modifications. The detailed results discussed in the following sections.



4.9 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA is a data-driven methodology that is typically applied as a method of investigation to discover correlations between variables. SEM is an a priori theory technique that is typically used to assess the degree to which empirical facts support an existing hypothesis regarding correlations between variables. When doing an EFA, the data must be screened and made ready for analysis, after which the eigenvalues must be extracted, the number of factors in the solution determined, the factors rotated to a more interpretable solution, and the solution's interpretation given. The EFA technique is used to examine the data and inform the researcher of the number of potential factors that would most effectively reflect the data. To test hypotheses, CFA techniques are utilised to validate or confirm the measurement elements that are present within sets of variables employed in a theoretical model (Hair et al., 2009). This study, therefore, employed EFA first, followed by CFA, before looking at the hypotheses.

In the statistical research community, numerous methods are practiced for factor analysis, such as principal components analysis, unweighted least square, generalised least square, principal axis factoring, maximum likelihood factoring, etc. (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993; Mulaik 1972). In this study, the method used for EFA is the principal components analysis. The reason behind this is that it is the most common of all the methods being practiced and it is also the default setting in SPSS for extracting maximum variance from a dataset (Pallant, 2010). The maximum likelihood method was also tested for the dataset, but the results were not satisfactory. Therefore, the principal components analysis was used for all calculations. Another advantage of the PCA method is that it can extract the maximum variance from the dataset such that the first element has the highest variance, and the last component has the lowest variance. Owing to the variance maximising ability and higher generalisability and reliability, the orthogonal varimax rotation method was selected. The maximum number of iterations was set to 25. Two statistical measures are suggested first to evaluate the factorability of the data to produce appropriate factor analysis results. These include the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. For the correlation to be considered significant, Bartlett's test of sphericity must provide a value of at least .05 is higher than 0.3, and EFA is regarded as suitable among the measurement items. To demonstrate that the link between items has statistical significance and is suitable for factor analysis, the KMO index should be above 0.6 (Hair et al., 2009; Pallant, 2010). The outcome using the most recent data is shown in Table 4-3. As a result of the significant results of



Bartlett's test ($p = .000$) and the KMO value of .805, EFA is established to be acceptable in the context of the current investigation.

Table 4-3: KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)		0.805
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2140.360
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

In the following step, the researcher assessed the adequacy of the extraction process as well as the number of factors extracted. Several criteria can be considered for the assessment from which the percentage of variance criterion and the latent rot criterion are followed.

4.10 Percentage of variance

The term "community" refers to the sum of the variances of the original and shared variables (Hair et al., 2009). If the communality values are more than or equal to 1, then there may be issues with the solution, argues Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). For instance, it can imply that the amount of data is insufficient, that the initial communality values are incorrect, or that the number of elements collected is incorrect. On the other hand, extremely low values for communality suggest that the variables in the set are unconnected to one another. Weak things are those with communality lower than 0.5 (50%) are those with this value (Hair et al., 2009). An acceptable cut-off value for a large sample size is 0.3 communality (Pallant, 2010). It is advised to exclude items with poor communality from scales to improve or refine them (Hair et al., 2009). The information on communalities explained by each item is shown in Table 4-4 below. Each object had a communality with its parts that was more than 0.5 except for PV1, Engagment1, and Engagment2. Therefore, these three components need to be removed.



Table 4-4: Items communalities

Communalities					
Construct	Initial	Extraction	Construct	Initial	Extraction
SMANT2	1.000	.538	Trust1	1.000	.591
SMANT3	1.000	.562	Trust2	1.000	.595
SMANT4	1.000	.568	Trust3	1.000	.565
SMANT5	1.000	.581	Trust4	1.000	.627
SMFactors1	1.000	.580	PV1	1.000	.390
SMFactors2	1.000	.505	PV2	1.000	.518
SMFactors3	1.000	.601	PV3	1.000	.504
SMFactors4	1.000	.653	Engagment1	1.000	.431
			Engagment2	1.000	.472
			Engagment3	1.000	.623
			Engagment4	1.000	.673
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					

4.11 Latent root criterion

The eigenvalue is a main component extraction technique that demonstrates the factor's actual significance. The size of the eigenvalues produced as part of a principal component extraction run can be used to assess how many factors are present (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Hair et al. (2009) state that if an Eigenvalue is greater than 1, it meets the latent root requirement; however, if it is less than 1, it is viewed as unimportant and can be ignored. A solution meets the variance percentage requirement if it accounts for 60% of the total variance or more (variability in score). The eigenvalues approximated from the data are recorded in Table 4-5 below. Here, although the dataset has five variables, the results extracted only four factors rather than five, whose eigenvalues were greater than 1. These four factors have resulted in a total variance of 60.466% which fulfils the requirement of total variance to be at least 60-70% (Bartlett 1994; Hair et al., 1998). This component indicates that the dataset contains four constructs rather than five.



Table 4-5: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	4.090	29.214	29.214	4.090	29.214	29.214	3.112
2	2.068	14.774	43.988	2.068	14.774	43.988	3.068
3	1.237	8.834	52.822	1.237	8.834	52.822	2.481
4	1.070	7.644	60.466	1.070	7.644	60.466	1.852
5	0.825	5.890	66.356				
6	0.789	5.633	71.989				
7	0.690	4.930	76.919				
8	0.611	4.361	81.280				
9	0.579	4.133	85.413				
10	0.537	3.834	89.247				
11	0.460	3.284	92.532				
12	0.431	3.076	95.608				
13	0.336	2.397	98.005				
14	0.279	1.995	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

4.12 Scree Test

The Scree test is the third criterion used to determine the number of components. The graph for the latent roots against the number of factors in their extraction order is plotted using the Scree test (Cattell, 1966). (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The cut-off point is established using the curve's form inside the plot (Hair et al., 2009). When it reaches the final element with the lowest eigenvalue, the shape falls from the first factor with the ascending order of eigenvalues (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The change in the plot's shape, which is typically shaped like an elbow, demonstrates obvious differences between components of interest with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and factors to be ignored having an eigenvalue of 1. (Hair et al., 2009). A similar number of components were recovered using the latent root criterion in this investigation, according to a visual assessment of the Scree plot (Figure 4-7). The breakdown



shown on the graph ranges from 3 to 5 components. In this way, components 1 to 4 explained or caught a lot more variation than the other components.

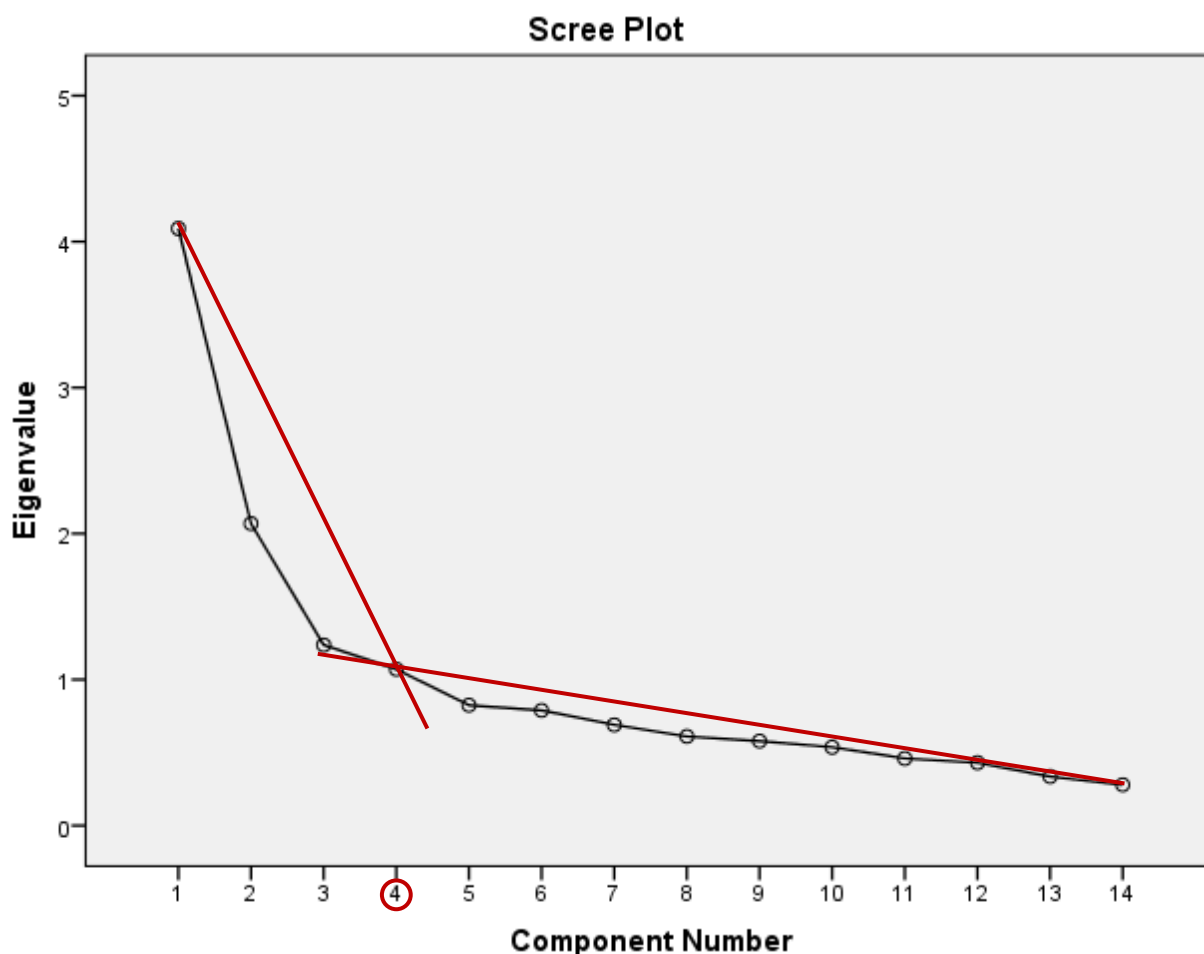


Figure 4-7: Scree Plot

4.13 Rotated Component Matrix factor Loading.

Finally, the rotated component matrix could be used to evaluate the number of factors. It is advised that the items with a factor loading of < 0.40 or cross-loading of > 0.40 be eliminated because they show weak consistency within the scale (Hair et al., 2009). The selection of the number of factors is made based on Eigenvalue throughout the factor extraction process. This is SPSS's default setting and can be used to determine how many variables should be considered. The rotated component matrix in Table 4-6 makes it abundantly evident that an eight-factor solution is once more validated, with few things cross-loaded. The prior findings for several parameters are supported by this.



Table 4-6: Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
SMANT2		.595	.383	
SMANT3		.673	.320	
SMANT4			.624	.305
SMANT5		.690	.305	
SMFactors1	.380		.636	
SMFactors2			.641	
SMFactors3		.747		
SMFactors4	.417	.670		
Trust1		.659		.391
Trust2	.342	.676		
Trust3	.733			
Trust4	.766			
PV1	.551			
PV2	.665			
PV3	.666			
Engagment1	.577			
Engagment2	.654			
Engagment3				.712
Engagment4				.799

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 4.5 shows that there are some cross-loaded elements in the matrix. These need to be eliminated as suggested by Hair et al. (2009). Based on the preliminary results, it was decided to repeat the EFA, omitting the cross-loaded items and indicating just 8 variables this time. Instead of using Eigenvalues in SPSS, the number of components had to be loaded as eight factors. This strategy, recommended by Pallant (2010), can aid in evaluating the new 8-factor solution. The second round caused the rotated component matrix to load in a much clearer and better structure, as can be seen in Table 4-7 below. In this round, only one item (SMFactors2) did not offer loading greater than 0.4. The solution removed this thing from it. The final measurement shows that a three-component solution exhibits a total variance of 57.426%. Other tests were repeated as well. The outputs of the final tests are attached in Appendix 7.



Table 4-7: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
SMANT2		.773	
SMANT3		.819	
SMFactors3		.835	
Trust3	.701		
Trust4	.773		
PV1	.633		
PV2	.693		
PV3	.677		
Engagment1	.560		
Engagment2	.669		
Engagment3			.786
Engagment4			.836

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

4.14 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to test (confirm) certain hypotheses or ideas on the structure underlying a set of variables (Pallant, 2010). In SEM (structural equation modelling), CFA is considered as the measurement part, and it helps to evaluate if and how the observed variables impact the unobserved variables (Kline 2010; Tenehaus 2005). The main result of a CFA is the assessment of the fit of the data to the proposed measurement model. This is done by comparing the observed covariance matrix of the data to the expected covariance matrix based on the factor structure of the model (Marsh et al., 1996). The fit of the model is evaluated using various fit indices, such as the chi-square statistic, the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) (Hair et al., 1998). The ideal fit of the data to the model is indicated by values of the fit indices close to 1, while values far from 1 indicate a poor fit and suggest that the model needs to be revised or improved (Steiger 1990). The results of the CFA also provide information about the reliability and validity of the measures used in the study. The researcher thus uses CFA to support or refute the theory and validate the conceptual model. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that there is a significant relationship between the variables. A well-



fitted model was found with a GOF index of 0.950, which is well above the standard minimum value (Table 4-7). To make sure that the study worked well, the paths were tweaked several times to find the parts and the main connections between them. For instance, in AMOS, modification indices (like covariance, variance, and regression weights) were used to get rid of several paths that seemed hard. The changes that followed gave the data a better GOF. After getting a significant p-value and good model fit, the hypothesis test was done. The researcher mostly looked at distinct aspects of social media marketing and how it affects consumer purchase action. Six hypotheses were made to find a valid link between social media marketing and consumer purchase action. The test results (Table 4-8) show that the data support all six hypotheses with a significant regression weight and p-value.

4.15 Model Estimation

The model to run confirmatory factor analysis was built after the final iteration of EFA in AMOS version 21. The first few iterations of EFA showed poor loading for the factors and cross-loading between multiple factors. Therefore, EFA was run several times until a clean pattern matrix was found. The model can be built manually, or it can be built using the Pattern Matrix Builder plugin for AMOS. The two-headed arrows in the figure represent covariance between variables.

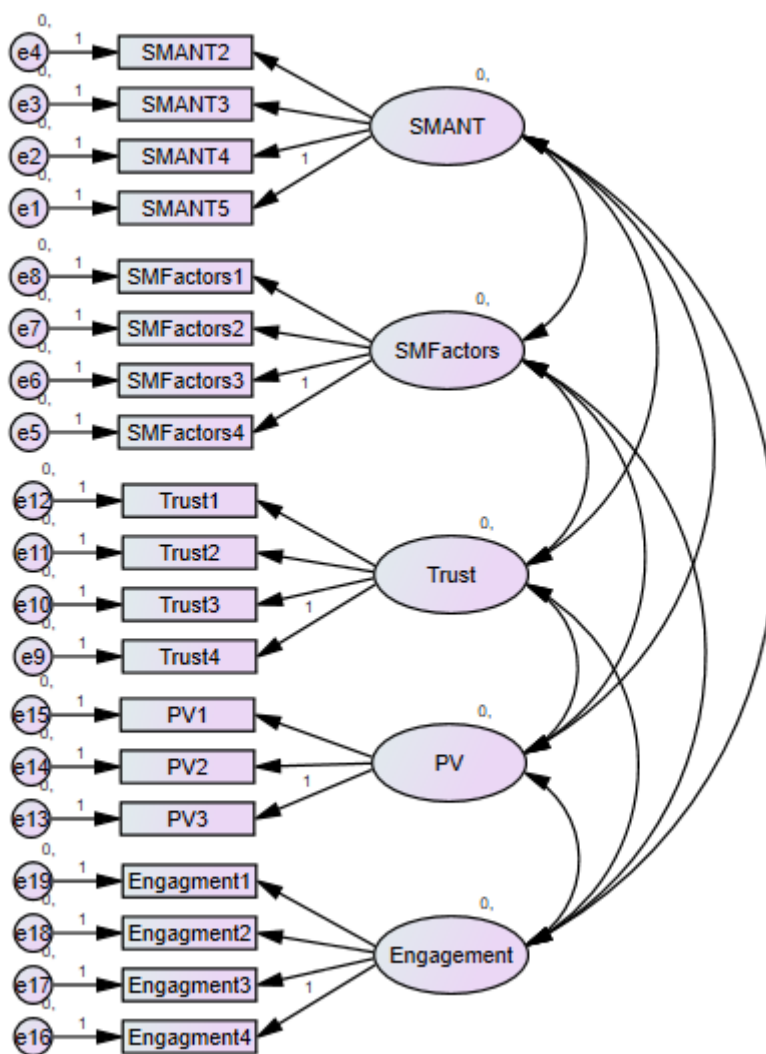


Figure 4-8: Measurement model

Figure 4-8 shows the constructed measurement model at its initial state. This model is built in the AMOS Graphic window following the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) step. The final pattern matrix needs to be considered when the model is built. From the AMOS graphic window (Figure 4-9), first the latent variables were drawn with the indicated number of dependent variables. When all the variables were drawn and properly named, the covariances between the variables were drawn using the two-headed arrow. Using the Analysis properties option, the study details (Figure 4-10) were provided for standardised estimates, and then the estimates were calculated.

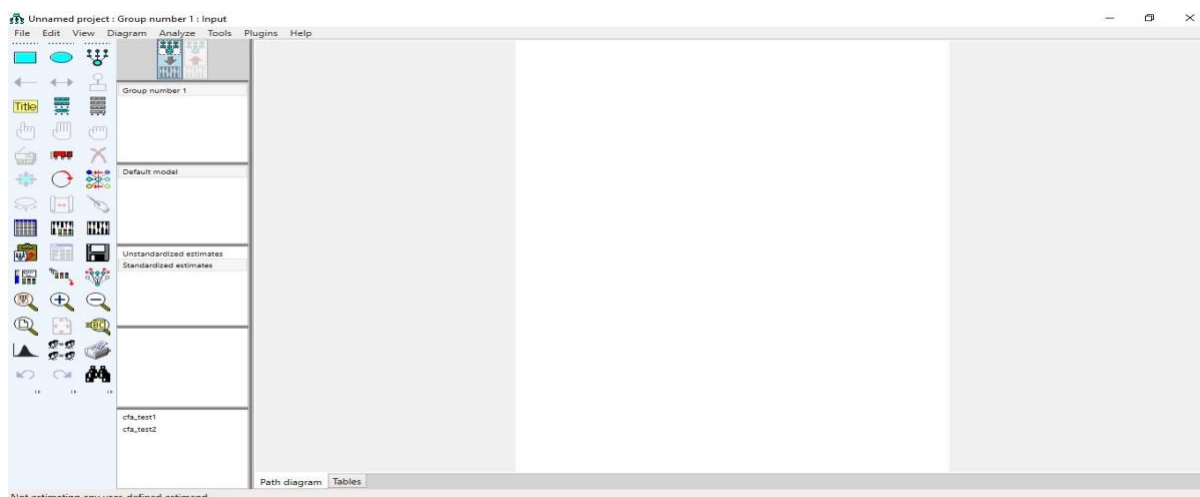


Figure 4-9: AMOS Graphic window

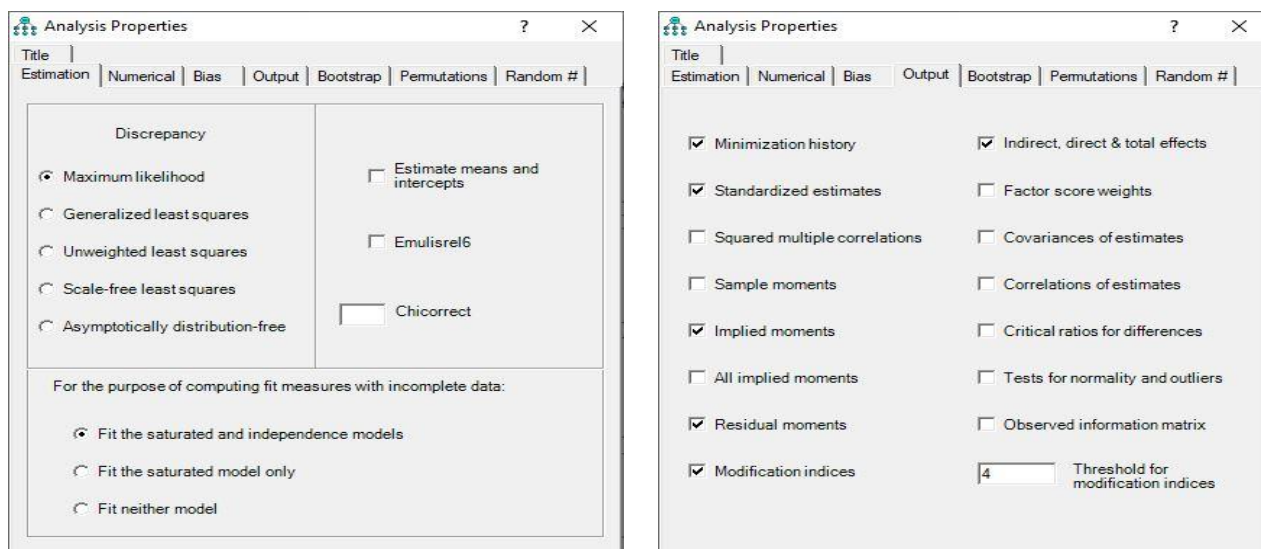


Figure 4-10: Analysis Properties

Before finalising the results, the GOF measures need to be investigated. From the investigation, it was found that the measures are below the standard value. Therefore, those needed adjustment. For that, the dependent variables were adjusted following the pattern matrix and the mean error. This process was repeated several times till the GOF measures crossed the standard values. The overall Goodness-of-fit index achieved was 0.950 which is way above the standard value that is 0.85. The standardised values are recorded in Table 4-7 and explained in the following sections.



Running the measurement model is an efficient method to estimate the overall model fit. Model fit describes how well the suggested model considers the correlations between the dataset's variables. This also indicates the significance of the data and by default, the significance of the research. Many fit indices are produced by all SEM software. To find the right model, it is difficult to rely on a single fit index, though (Byrne, 2001). The threshold values of the goodness of fit indices can be challenging to determine because they are frequently varied for various research models. In general, the intricacy of the framework, the number of components, and the size of the sample should be considered while evaluating the model. The following is a description of the highly regarded and cited model fit indicators used by the researcher:

- **Chi-Squared statistics (χ^2).** The discrepancy between the observed and latent covariance matrices is demonstrated by the chi-squared test. Values that are nearer to zero represent a better match; there is less of a discrepancy between the observed and the expected covariance matrices. The fit of nested models to the data can also be directly compared using chi-squared statistics. However, a drawback of the chi-squared test of model fit is that it can lead to failure to reject an incorrect model in small sample sizes and failure to reject an adequate model in big sample sizes (Gatignon, 2014). Other fit metrics have been created as a result. The CMIN/DF is another measure used to estimate GOF, which represents the ratio between χ^2 and degrees of freedom. The standard value for this measure is below 3 for a better model fit. The CMIN/DF value achieved for this study was 2.73 (< 3.0) indicating a well-fitted model.
- **Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).** By examining the disparity between the hypothesised model, with ideally specified estimates for the parameters, and the population covariance matrix, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) eliminates sample size concerns (Hooper et al. 2008). Smaller values of the RMSEA, which has a range of 0 to 1, indicate better model fit. Acceptable model fit is indicated by a value of 0.07 or less. However, in this study, this value was achieved to be 0.073, which is above the standard value, indicating a moderately fitted model.
- **The Goodness of Fit (GOF).** The statistical test known as "goodness-of-fit" evaluates how well sample data fits a distribution from a population having a normal distribution (Muijs, 2004). Simply put, it makes assumptions about whether a sample is biased or accurately reflects the facts that would be present in the wider population. The disparity between the actual values and those predicted by the model in the case of a normal



distribution is established via goodness-of-fit. The chi-square is one of the techniques for figuring out goodness-of-fit. The expected value for GOF is between 0 and 1, while a value above 0.85 indicates a well-fitted model. Table 4-7 reveals that GOF index achieved in the study is 0.95, thus, confirming the goodness of fit of the model.

- **Relative fit indices.** Relative fit indices compare the chi-square for the proposed model to one from a "null" or "baseline" model. They are also known as "incremental fit indices" and "comparative fit indices". This null model usually includes a model with zero correlation between any of the variables, which has an exceedingly high chi-square value (indicating poor fit). The normed fit index (NFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) are examples of relative fit indices.
- **Normal fit index (NFI) and Comparative fit index (CFI).** The NFI is an incremental index that shows the ratio of the difference between the chi-squared value in a fitted model. Literature suggests that the value of NFI should be larger than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2009). The CFI is alike NFI but an improved form of the NFI. For a good, fitted model, the value of CFI should be above 0.9. Although the NFI value for this study (0.888) was below the standard value, the above-threshold CFI value (0.924) explains a good, fitted model.

The maximum likelihood estimation was used to estimate the data for CFA. The test reveals a Chi-squared value of 114.672 with 42 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates a significant chi-square (χ^2) which is justified given the size of the dataset. As a result, additional fit indices must be assessed. Figure 4-9 shows a summary created by Hair et al. (2009) of their recommendations for the traits of several fit metrics in various model scenarios (Hair et al., 2009). They also advise reporting the Chi-squared statistics along with an additional absolute index like RMSEA and an incremental index like CFI. They claim that the recommendation to evaluate both a goodness-of-fit index and a badness-of-fit index is satisfied by employing the RMSEA and the CFI. The Normed Chi-Square, AGFI, and NFI are a few more metrics that some people have suggested looking at (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).



No. of Stat. vars. (<i>m</i>)	<i>N</i> < 250			<i>N</i> > 250		
	<i>m</i> ≤ 12	12 < <i>m</i> < 30	<i>m</i> ≥ 30	<i>m</i> < 12	12 < <i>m</i> < 30	<i>m</i> ≥ 30
χ^2	Insignificant <i>p</i> -values expected	Significant <i>p</i> -values even with good fit	Significant <i>p</i> -values expected	Insignificant <i>p</i> -values even with good fit	Significant <i>p</i> -values expected	Significant <i>p</i> -values expected
CFI or TLI	.97 or better	.95 or better	Above .92	.95 or better	Above .92	Above .90
RNI	May not diagnose misspecification well	.95 or better	Above .92	.95 or better, not used with <i>N</i> > 1,000	Above .92, not used with <i>N</i> > 1,000	Above .90, not used with <i>N</i> > 1,000
SRMR	Biased upward, use other indices	.08 or less (with CFI of .95 or higher)	Less than .09 (with CFI above .92)	Biased upward; use other indices	.08 or less (with CFI above .92)	.08 or less (with CFI above .92)
RMSEA	Values < .08 with CFI = .97 or higher	Values < .08 with CFI of .95 or higher	Values < .08 with CFI above .92	Values < .07 with CFI of .97 or higher	Values < .07 with CFI of .92 or higher	Values < .07 with CFI of .90 or higher

Note: *m* = number of observed variables; *N* applies to number of observations per group when applying CFA to multiple groups at the same time.

Figure 4-11: Characteristics and expected values of different fit indices (Hair et al., 2009).

The GOF measure's accomplished outcomes are shown in Table 4-8 along with their indicated degrees. The results suggest that the GOF of the data towards the model was poor and should be rejected since it must be negligible to fit the model, with CMIN statistics equal to 114.672 and Df equal to 42, providing a CMIN/Df of 2.73 that is significant at *p* 0.05. (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). The Chi-square is no longer used as a basis for acceptance or rejection, though, as it is likewise susceptible to sample size (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). Thus, considering both the sample size and the complexity of the model, the use of several fit indices, including RMSEA, AGFI, TLI, CFI, and NFI, has established to provide a more comprehensive perspective of GOF (Gallagher, Ting, and Palmer, 2008). The results showed absolute fit values for RMSEA, GFI, and AGFI of 0.073 and 0.950, and 0.907, respectively, and incremental fit measures for TLI, CFI, and NFI of 0.881, 0.924, and 0.888, respectively (given in Table 4-8). These GOF measurements confirm that the model adequately accounts for the data.



Table 4-8: The GOF test results

			Absolute fit measure				Incremental fit measures		Parsimonious fit indices
	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	AGFI	TLI	CFI	NFI
Standard			≤ 3	>0.85	<0.07	0.85	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9
Achieved	114.672	42	2.73	0.950	0.073	0.907	0.881	0.924	0.888

Figure 4-12 shows the measurement model after it has been adjusted to achieve desired Goodness-of-Fit parameters.

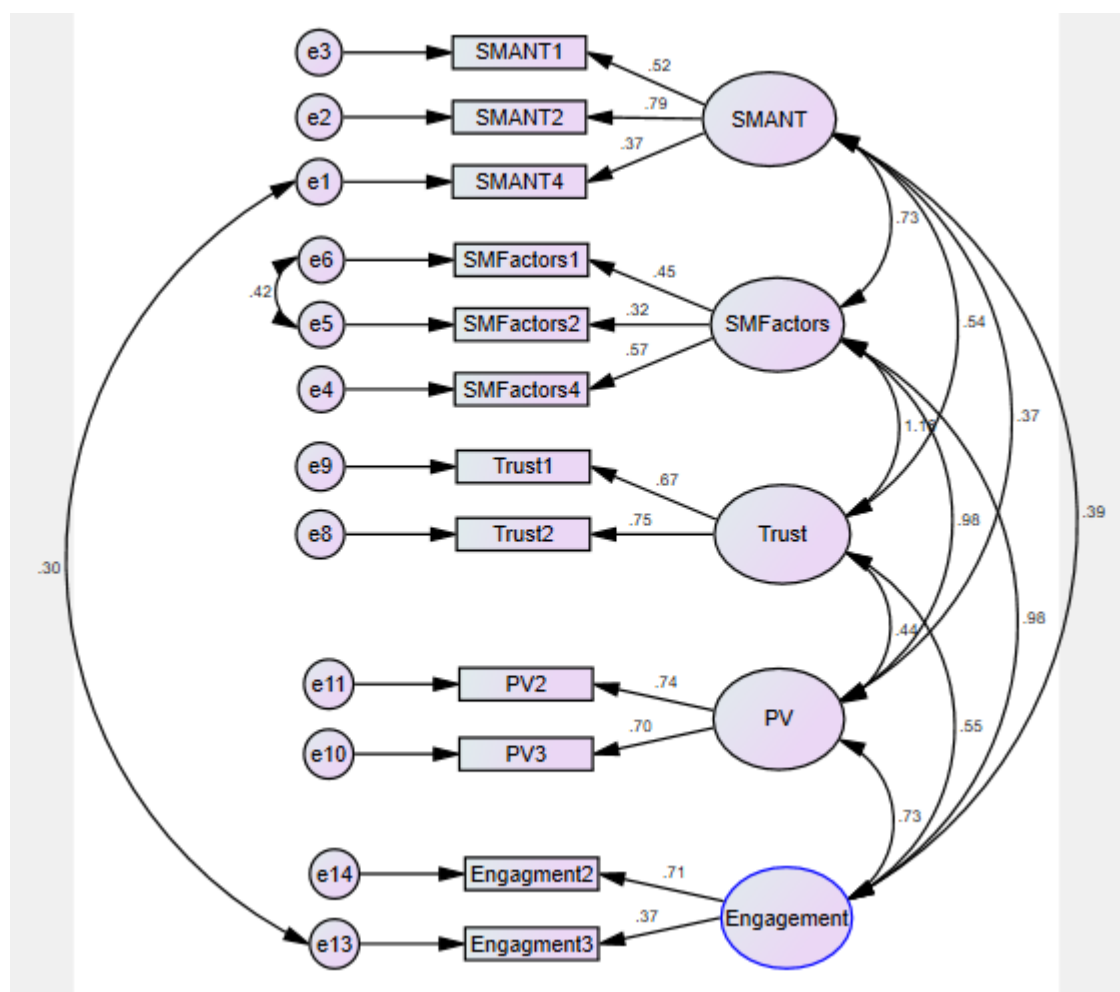


Figure 4-12: Adjusted measurement model with respective standardised estimates



4.16 Construct Validity and Reliability Assessment

Qualitative research's validity and reliability are crucial components of its quality. The reliability and validity parameters can help distinguish between high-quality and low-quality research when used cautiously. Additionally, they reassure readers that the study's results are reliable and genuine. This factor becomes especially important in case studies that analyse primary data. Here, the researcher's subjectivity has a significant impact on how the findings are interpreted.

4.16.1 Construct Reliability (CR)

Reliability testing is done to make sure that the measurements are accurate and consistent overall. When applied repeatedly to the same object, a measure can be said to be dependable (Gallagher et al. 2008; Hair et al., 2009; Sekaran, 2003). The consistency of the measures was tested by comparing all item responses within the measure to Cronbach's alpha reliability assessments, which is the most widely used estimate of Internal Consistency. The dependability of each of the latent constructs used in the model was then investigated using construct reliabilities. When the score is good or acceptable, validation can continue. A score of 0.70 or higher is accepted as a reliable indicator (Gallagher et al. 2008).

4.16.2 Construct Validity

The most critical factor to consider when assessing a study measure is construct validity. Construct validity is the most principal factor to consider when evaluating a study measurement. Regarding whether the proxy accurately reproduces its concept, it provides an estimated reality. In other words, a measurement is only reliable if it captures the intended phenomenon (Gallagher et al. 2008). To assess the validity and reliability, standardised loading estimates were analysed, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), Maximum shared variance (MSV), and average shared variance (ASV) estimates were calculated. AMOS does not have the feature to calculate these metrics automatically. Therefore, MS Excel was used for the calculation by the equations provided by Hair et al., (2009).

$$CR = \frac{(\sum \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum \epsilon_i)}$$



Here, λ is the standardised factor loading and ϵ is respective error variance.

Table 4-0-9: Validity and reliability

Constructs	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
SMMANT	0.775	0.958	0.563	0.487
SM Factors	0.898	0.698	0.577	0.576
Trust	0.704	0.644	0.463	0.584
Perceived value	0.707	0.546	0.543	0.498
Consumer Engagement	0.809	0.519	0.596	0.522

4.16.3 Convergent Validity

According to Gallagher et al. (2008), convergent validity measures how much the indicators (items) of a given construct converge or have a high ratio of variance in common. It is evaluated using average variance extracted (AVE) metrics, where Fornell and Larcker (1981) determined that the lowest acceptable value is 0.50. The AVE is referred to as "a summary measure of convergence among a series of items reflecting a latent construct" by Hair et al. (2009) It is the typical proportion of variation among a construct's elements that can be explained or retrieved. Therefore, AVE should be more than 0.50 for all options to produce convergent validity (Lin and Wang, 2006).

Convergent and discriminant validity of measuring constructs are highly suggested in the literature. The convergence validity of this study was examined using correlation coefficients, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), as recommended by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2010). The results in Table 4–9 reveal that both the factor loadings and the composite dependability measured in this study were higher than the minimum threshold of 0.7. The items used to assess the constructs exhibited significant levels of convergence, as shown by the fact that the extracted average variances (AVEs) for all five constructs were greater than 0.50.



4.16.4 Discriminant Validity.

A construct's discriminant validity is defined by results showing that it is genuinely different from the others (Brown, 2015). Alternatively, discriminant validity evaluates the degree of correlation or divergence between two components that are operationalized but should not be logical analogues. For example, the degree to which a construct differs from others and avoids assessing something comparable. This is essential for classifying a variable and comprehending its importance (Gallagher et al. 2008).

The researcher used the method recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2010) to evaluate discriminant validity. According to the technique, the square root of the AVE should be more than the correlation between the constructs, and the AVE should be bigger than the maximum shared variance (MSV) or average shared variance (ASV). In this study, the author discovered compelling evidence that all the AVEs were appreciably higher than the MSVs and ASVs. Moreover, the correlation between the constructs was less than the square root of AVE (the square roots of AVE are mentioned in bold across diagonals in Table 4–9). As a result, discriminant validity between the constructs was established. §

4.17 Group Analysis

Examining the part that the various responder groups played in the final model is one of the study's secondary objectives. Thirteen respondent characteristics are studied in Appendix 9 and divided into three primary categories: One's demographic traits, such as gender, age, education level, gross monthly income, occupation, and location, are followed by two and three in terms of internet usage and purchasing patterns. For the various groups, there were two different test kinds used. To determine how each group viewed a given variable, the first test compares the mean scores between various groups for each variable separately. The model and the connections between the various variables were the focus of the second test (i.e., invariance analysis). Consequently, it will be clear how the various groups influence the supported relationships in the model. The group study is the first stage in further research into potential variations among user segments.



4.18 Inferential statistics

This section defines the collected findings from the multiple regression model, which is based on several factors that impact customer purchase action. Multiple regression analysis refers to a collection of approaches for investigating the linear relationships between two or more variables. This research explains the original findings by conceptually defining variables and showing the econometric results of the intended model, which are as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta X + \mu$$

Where; “Y” is a dependent variable.

“α” is a constant.

“β” is a coefficient of independent variables.

“x” is an independent variable.

“μ” is an Error term.

Established on certain variables, the multiple regression equation of this study will be:

$$Z = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \epsilon_i$$

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	sig
1	.582 ^a	.338	.328	33.566	.000

The table above summarises the model and includes some critical data that must be explained considering multiple regression. This table outlines the researcher's principal area of interest. It specifies the R², as well as the adjusted R square and standard error of estimation, which may be used to measure how well a regression model fits the data. The R column displays the value R, which represents numerous correlation coefficients. It may be thought of as one measure of the quality of the dependent variable's prediction; in this example, the value of R is 0.582, indicating a good degree of prediction. Similarly, the R square column displays the value of R², also known as the coefficient of determination, which is the amount of variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable. The R² value is 0.338, and our independent factors explained 33.8% of the variability in the dependent variable. Similarly, the



next measure is the adjusted R square, which is used to assess the explanatory power of regression models with varying numbers of predictors. The adjusted R square is a modified version of R² that has been adjusted for the number of predictors in the model, and it increases only if the new term improves the model more than would be expected by chance, and it decreases when the predictor improves the model less than would be expected by chance. The adjusted R square can be negative, but it is rarely so, and it is always lower than R².

Furthermore, in this table, one of the most crucial discoveries from the calculated regression model is the F ratio, which indicates whether the overall regression model is a good match for the data. The f-test score of 33.566 indicates that the independent variable statistically substantially predicts the dependent variable, indicating that the regression model is a good fit for the data. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the value of significance is less than 5%, indicating that the explanatory factors have a favourable relationship to the response variable.

Table 4-9: Results of inferential statistics

Variables	Coefficient	Standard error	Significance	t-test
Social media antecedent	0.149	0.049	0.002	3.056
Social media marketing	0.120	0.054	0.027	2.221
Consumer Trust	0.310	0.042	0.000	7.468
Perceived value	0.243	0.045	0.000	5.432
Consumer purchase action	0.842	0.223	0.000	3.123

Within these analyses, the determination coefficient, which is also often referred to as the t-test value, was investigated as well. The result of the t-test reflects the proportion of the variation in the dependent variables that can be attributed to the variation in the independent variables. It is also possible to see this with the use of the t-test value, which is 3.056 for SMAT, 2.221 for SMM, 7.468 for TR, 5.432 for PV, and 3.123 for CEA.



The t value should be greater than ± 2 , which is shown by the outcomes of our study. Similarly, the coefficient of social media demonstrates that if there is a one percent rise in the usage of social media, there will be a 0.149% increase in the level of consumer engagement, provided that all other independent variables remain the same. This measure offers a relevant assessment of the hypotheses' connection to the linear regression function to better inform future research. The results of the model's application of the t-test are as follows: 38% for social media marketing (SMM), 33% for trust (TR), 27% for perceived value (PV), and 23% for social media antecedents (SMANT). The data suggest that this model has a plausible middle-ground explanation.

4.19 Hypothesis Testing

The results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) shown in Table 4-7 indicates a good model fit. This indicates that the individual factors considered in this study have a significant effect on social media marketing. Since the CFA supports the assumption that a well-fitted model has been developed, the hypothetical paths proposed should support this claim as well. In this study design, six hypotheses are proposed: H0, H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5. The tests were performed in terms of a fixed confidence interval. In this case, the confidence interval is set to 95% meaning that the researcher is 95% confident that a given approximation is true. So, in the software, a 95% confidence interval is represented as a p-value of 0.05. The p-value is the interval within which the approximation must reside in order to support or reject a given hypothesis. In this research, the hypothesis testing was performed in SPSS with a p-value < 0.05 . This means that if for a certain criterion, the hypothesis test results in a p-value smaller than 0.05, the hypothesis will be accepted rejecting the null hypothesis.

On the other hand, if the hypothesis test gives a p-value greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis will be accepted rejecting the alternate hypothesis. The analyses show that all the hypotheses were supported by the data in hand. The degree of significance in the relationship between different paths depends on the standardised regression weight, β . The analyses show that the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) and trust (TR) carries the most significant weight (H1 with $\beta = 0.621$). This is true because a consumer's primary impression of a specific product or service builds on how the product or service is marketed to them. The more convincing the marketing, the better the impression. The second most meaningful relationship exists between trust (TR) and consumer purchase action (CEA) (H3 for which $\beta = 0.582$). The



next in line is the relationship between perceived value (PV) and consumer purchase action (CEA) (H4 with $\beta = 0.520$). A summary of the hypotheses test is given in Table 4-8 below. One critical point to note in Table 4-11 is the p-value. Although the p-value in the table is shown as 0.000, it is not zero. This is a number close to zero, but not exactly zero. For generalisation, Researcher consider this value as smaller than 0.001.

Table 4-10: Summary of hypotheses test

Hypotheses	Paths	Std. regression weight (β)	Standard error, SE	p-value	Decision
H0	SMANT→SMM	0.482	0.549	0.001	Supported
H1	SMM→TR	0.621	0.477	0.001	Supported
H2	SMM→PV	0.456	0.544	0.001	Supported
H3	TR→CEA	0.582	0.464	0.001	Supported
H4	PV→CEA	0.520	0.488	0.001	Supported
H5	SMM→CEA	0.406	0.522	0.001	Supported

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than or equal 0.001

The full form of above abbreviation is,

SMANT = Social Media Antecedents

SMM = Social Media Marketing

TR = Trust

PV = Perceived Value

CEA = Consumer Purchase action

The determination coefficient, often known as the R^2 value, was examined within the parameters of this analysis. The R^2 number indicates how much of the variation in the dependent variables can be accounted for by the dependent variables. This metric provides a



meaningful evaluation of the relationship of the hypotheses to the linear regression function. For social media marketing (SMM), trust (TR), perceived value (PV), and social media antecedents (SMANT), the model yields $R^2 = 38\%$, 33% , 27% , and 23% , respectively. The findings point to a moderate explanation for this model.

Hypothesis H0: SMM antecedents have significant effects on social media marketing.

To test hypothesis H0, the null hypothesis (H_0) has been considered and has been tested based on the data collected from both types of Bangladeshi SME consumers who have already supported the resulting outcome (0.482) which is greater than a p-value < 0.05 .

H_0 : social media antecedent has a positive impact on consumer purchase action (established).

Table 4-11: Test result of H0 Hypothesis: Social media marketing and its impact on consumer purchase action: A Case of Bangladeshi SMEs

Decision	variable		One Sample Statistics					One Sample Test				
			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
											Lower	Upper
Supported	329	3.72	1.065	0.482	-3.924	219	0.000	-0.282	-0.42	-0.14		

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than 0.001

Hypothesis H1: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on customer trust.

To test hypothesis H1, the null hypothesis (H_1) has been considered and has been tested based on the data collected from both types of Bangladeshi SME consumers who have already supported the resulting outcome (0.621) which is greater than a p-value < 0.05 .

H_1 : social media trust has a positive impact on consumer purchase action (established).

Table 4-12: Test result of H1 Hypothesis: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on customer trust.



Decision	variable		One Sample Statistics					One Sample Test		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Supported	329	3.72	0.621	0.477	-3.924	219	0.000	-0.282	-0.42	-0.14

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than 0.001

Hypothesis H2: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on consumers' perceived value.

To test hypothesis H2, the null hypothesis (H_2) has been considered and has been tested based on the data collected from both types of Bangladeshi SME consumers who have already supported through the resulting outcome (0.456) which is greater than a p-value < 0.05 .

H_2 : social media marketing has a positive impact on consumer perceive value (established).

Table 4-13: Test result of H2 Hypothesis: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on consumers' perceived value.

Decision	variable		One Sample Statistics					One Sample Test		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Supported	329	3.72	0.456	0.544	-3.924	219	0.000	-0.282	-0.42	-0.14

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than 0.001

Hypothesis H3: Trust has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.



To test hypothesis H3, the null hypothesis (H_3) has been considered and has been tested based on the data collected from both types of Bangladeshi SME consumers who have already supported the resulting outcome (0.582) which is greater than a p-value < 0.05 .

H₃: social media trust has a positive impact on consumer purchase action (established).

Table 4-14: Test result of H3 Hypothesis: Trust has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.

Decision	variable		One Sample Statistics					One Sample Test		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Supported	329	3.72	0.582	0.464	-3.924	219	0.000	-0.282	-0.42	-0.14

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than 0.001

Hypothesis H4: Perceive value has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.

To test hypothesis H4, the null hypothesis (H_4) has been considered and has been tested based on the data collected from both types of Bangladeshi SME consumers who have already supported the resulting outcome (0.520) which is greater than a p-value < 0.05 .

H₄: social media trust has a positive impact on consumer purchase action (established).



Table 4-15: Test result of H4 Hypothesis: Trust has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.

Decision	variable		One Sample Statistics					One Sample Test		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Supported	329	3.72	0.520	0.488	-3.924	219	0.000	-0.282	-0.42	-0.14

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than 0.001

Hypothesis H5: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.

To test hypothesis H5, the null hypothesis (H_5) has been considered and has been tested based on the data collected from both types of Bangladeshi SME consumers who have already supported the resulting outcome (0.406) which is greater than a $p\text{-value} < 0.05$.

H_5 : social media marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase action (established).

Table 4-16: Test result of H6 Hypothesis: Trust has a significant positive effect on customer purchase action.

Decision	variable		One Sample Statistics					One Sample Test		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Supported	329	3.72	0.406	0.522	-3.924	219	0.000	-0.282	-0.42	-0.14

Note: p-value in the table is taken as less than 0.001



4.20 Data analysis validation

In this chapter, a statistical analysis method is developed and performed in support of the conceptual model developed in the previous chapters. There are several layers in the conceptual framework consisting of exogenous and endogenous variables. The research hypotheses were designed considering that each of these variables has a positive impact on the others. For example- the mediators, trust, and perceived values should depend on social media marketing. Therefore, when a hypothesis test is conducted, these variables should have a significant impact on the endogenous variables. These claims have been confirmed by the statistical analyses performed in this chapter. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) have been conducted to ensure model fit. A statistically significant KMO and Bartlett's test results (Table 4-3) with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.805 was obtained along with a significant correlation between the variables. A high Cronbach's alpha (standard value of alpha is 0.7 or above) for the test variables indicates that the variables are internally consistent, meaning the variables are related to each other which was outlined in the study design.

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed that there was indeed a significant correlation between the variables and a well-fitted model was achieved with a GOF index of 0.950 which is well above the standard minimum value (Table 4-8). To ensure that the study performed well, the paths were refined multiple times to look for the components and the major correlations among them. For instance, several paths that seemed challenging were eliminated by utilising modification indices (such as covariance, variances, and regression weights) in AMOS. The modifications that followed gave the data a superior GOF.

Finally, after achieving a significant p-value and model fit, the hypothesis test was conducted. The researcher focused on distinct aspects of social media marketing and its impact on consumer purchase action. Six hypotheses were developed to establish and justify a valid relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase action. The test results (Table 4-8) indicate that the data support all six hypotheses with significant regression weight and p-value. This result points towards strengthening the objectives of this study. The social media antecedents significantly affect social media marketing which means that the marketing should be target-specific and different strategies need to be followed to reach diverse groups of prospective consumers. The marketing strategy plays a significant role in gaining consumers' trust and improving consumers' perceived value of the product or service (Poturak and Softic 2019, Leung et al., 2017). These secondary variables along with the primary



variables affect the goal which is consumer purchase action. Based on the analysis, the correlation between social media marketing (SMM) and trust (TR) bears the most weight in terms of significance (H1 with $\beta = 0.621$). This is valid because the way a product is marketed shapes the consumers' initial perception of a particular good or service (Ba and Pavlou 2012). The impression is improved via persuasive marketing. Trust (TR) and consumer purchase action (CEA) have the second-strongest association (H3 for which $\beta = 0.582$). Based on the hypotheses test, a refined structural model is developed. The overall hypotheses test results confirm that the conceptual model developed by the researcher is conspicuously backed up by statistical data.

4.21 Chapter Summary

To evaluate the proposed hypotheses, this chapter focuses on the main data analysis and all the methodologies required to verify the accuracy of the survey items and the proposed model. The analysis and findings from the pilot test, which was conducted with 16 respondents before the start of the main data-gathering period, were presented by the researcher in the opening remarks. All results show that the survey's items and structure were sound, and the only minor textual changes that were suggested for a few items were supported by the results. The primary study data analysis was then developed, beginning with a dataset screening that looked at the accuracy of the numbers and looked for outliers. The assumption of normality and multicollinearity were then investigated. These actions must be taken before any factor analysis is carried out. No corrections to the data set were necessary because all the results were satisfactory. The reader was then given details about the features of the sample as the next phase. This included demographic data, social media activity history, and purchasing history.



Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Overview

The results of the current study will be discussed in this chapter, and the findings will be described regarding past research. The discussion will begin by focusing on the outcomes of the model validation and scale purification processes. The second part of this report contains an analysis of the importance of the study objectives that were determined. In the last phase, it is determined whether the conceptual framework and the six hypotheses are relevant. This entails explaining the reasoning behind the results and assessing them considering both the recent academic literature and earlier studies on the topic.

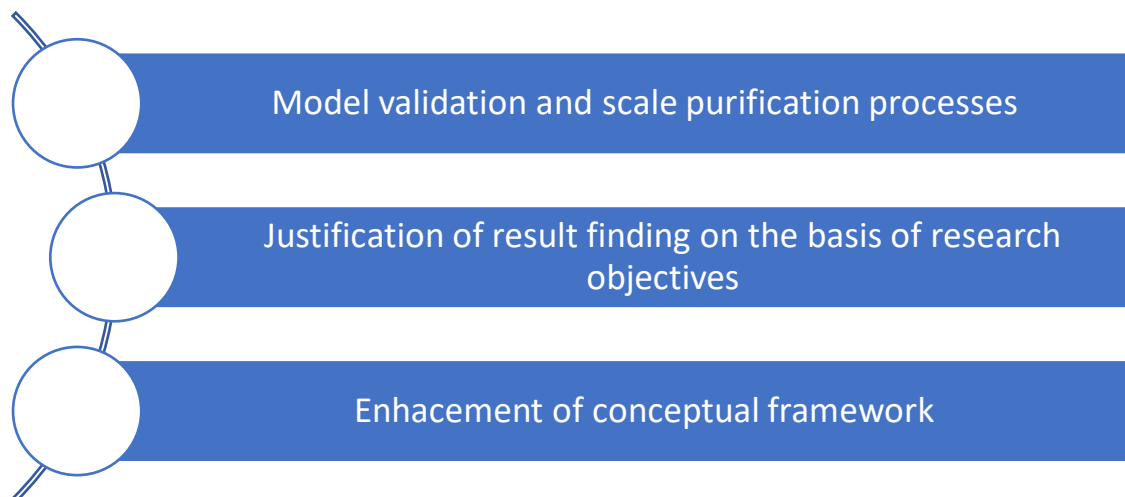


Figure 5-1: Outline of Chapter 5

The research sought to investigate the role of social media marketing in the growth of Bangladeshi (SMEs) based on consumer purchase action. This study aimed to analyse the factors that influence social media engagement behaviours. Chapter 5 of this thesis contains the findings as this study attempted to achieve its goals and objectives. Consequently, this chapter will go into great depth about those findings, going through each study objective's findings one at a time, describing what was found, why these results could have happened, and how this relates to or complements the existing literature on this issue.



5.2 Discussion of Scale and Model

In this study, the scale of measurement was developed based on existing literature. The researcher developed a conceptual framework that was used throughout the study. Although the framework is in coherence with previous literature, this needs to go through an instrumentation validation process. To validate the framework, a pilot test was conducted with 16 participants. The pilot study provides additional enhancements to the questionnaire as it helps to assess the quality of the question set (Pachauri, 2002). The questionnaire was created by reviewing several pieces of literature; therefore, the instrumentation validity was supported (Tamilia, 2015; Malhotra et al, 2017). Due to the robustness of the questionnaire, only few changes were also recommended. This confirms the instrument's face validity. The collected data underwent a reliability and correlation examination, which is immensely helpful for helping Researcher to support the reliability and validity of the instrument in advance. In contrast to the five constructs that were first proposed, the EFA indicated that the conceptual model only has four. By using the Scree plot and the latent root criterion (Eigenvalues) test, together with the Rotated Component Matrix Factor Loading, this was empirically established.

The KMO and Bartlett's tests yielded notable findings (Table 4-2), indicating that such values are above the usual threshold. The percentage variance test determined the communality of each item. Items with communalities smaller than 0.5 were recommended to be eliminated by Hair et al., (2009) and Pallant et al., (2010). Therefore, PV1 (perceived value), Engagment1, and Engagment2 - these three components were removed, and the test was run once more with the remaining items. This time, better communalities were found which is in coherence with Amanatidis et al., (2022) and Hadi et al., (2016). The results of earlier studies on the latent root criteria by Javalgi et al., (2018) and Chua et al., (2019) are supported by the findings of the current investigation. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), to meet the latent root requirement, the cumulative proportion of total variance explained must be at least 60%. This study's cumulative percentage of 60.466% indicates that it has successfully met this requirement. Javalgi et al., (2018) investigated the association between customer happiness and brand loyalty in the telecommunications market. According to the research, customer engagement strongly predicted brand loyalty, so businesses should concentrate their efforts on increasing customer engagement to increase brand loyalty.



The four-constructs model mentioned in the EFA satisfies here as well. In the Rotated Component Matrix, some variables (SMANT4, SMANT5, SMFactors1, SMFactors2, Trust1, Trust2) showed cross-loading, and therefore, they were eliminated. The final Rotated Component Matrix shows a positive relationship between Social Media Antecedents and Social Media Marketing factors since they are loading in the same column. In addition to this, Trust and Perceived value are loaded in the same column indicating a relationship between consumers' trust and perceived value. These measures indicate the effectiveness of the conceptual model in establishing a relationship between the construct variables (Miao et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Table 5-1 contains the complete listings of the remaining items (Survey questions). These ideas can be reliably accepted by future studies in a comparable setting because they were empirically supported at various levels of the investigation. Considering measuring scales for constructs in social media marketing, this contributes to the database of knowledge that is currently out there.

Table 5-1: Final constructs items

Factors	Questions
Social media antecedents	Social media marketing information is more attractive than traditional marketing
	Consumers follow others' product reviews on social media to take purchase decision
Social media marketing factors	Social media network improves customer relationship via the two-way product feedback
Trust	Social media changes consumers' initial purchase choice after attaining relevant information
	Consumers buy a product/service recommended by a friend or family
Perceived value	Comments from social media change consumers' value towards a brand/product/service.
	Social media tools have features that entice one to ask for a recommendation for a product
	Social media network contributes to consumers' perception of product based on updated information.



Engagement	Feedbacks on social media affect consumer’s purchase behaviour
	Online sales service gives consumers the strength to purchase more regularly
	Social media allows consumers to communicate with companies that produce products directly
	You share comments about a product to friends via social media after a purchase

This study's insights are in accordance with previous research in the disciplines of social media antecedents and social media marketing. Kim et al. (2016) and Dabholkar (2016) both addressed the importance of social media antecedents in social media marketing. This theory is supported by the fact that the standard regression weight of 0.482 is not zero. This shows that there is a meaningful relationship between social media antecedents and social media marketing. The p-value derived from this research is likewise extremely modest (0.001), which is less than the specified value of 0.05, demonstrating a satisfactory model fit for the influence of social media antecedents on social media marketing. This is backed up by the results of Devlieger et al. (2016) and McPherson and Huang (1974), who found that the results of this study also substantially within a good range. Furthermore, As'ad and Alhadid (2014) performed a similar analysis, although the p-value derived from our study is higher (0.37%) than theirs. The research by Nofal et al. (2020) showed even better results (0.59), but they are still within the acceptable range. Those analysis showed that the hypothesis/corelation between social media antecedents and social media marketing significantly supportive each other.

5.3 Research Objective One

The first research objective sought to examine and assess the impact of social media antecedents on social media marketing engagement behaviour, including online communities, word-of-mouth, FGC, and entertainment. Following exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the motivational drivers that influence online consumer engagement behaviour are presented in Chapter 4. This chapter discusses each of these motivational drivers. The analysis of the antecedents of social media marketing has become crucial for both Researcher and online business owners because of the ever-growing popularity of e-commerce. Since many people are inclined to online shopping, business owners are now rethinking their marketing strategies based on the antecedents of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer satisfaction (Ho and Wu 1999; Thakur 2018).



The present research found a significant correlation between the dependent and independent variables ($r = 0.482$), indicating a strong connection between them. Amoah et al., (2021), who also did a comparable investigation, reported a value of 0.194, which is consistent with the current result. The value in the present research is greater than in the previous study by Amoah et al., (2021), suggesting a stronger link between the variables. A value of 0.482 was observed between the dependent and independent variables in the present investigation, which is much higher than the value obtained by Amoah et al., (2021). Therefore, this is considered an open problem of business research. The antecedents of customer satisfaction have been studied in this research using case and survey approaches. One of the objectives of this study sketched in the conceptual model (Figure 2-4), was to identify the relationship between SMM antecedents (SMMANT) on social media marketing (SMM). Several Researcher have published reports on the impact of social media antecedents on consumer behaviour (Puturak and Softic 2019; Likula 2020; Rad et al., 2011; Ho and Wu 1999; Thakur 2018).

However, they only considered one or two factors in their analysis which is not the true scenario. Although the individual effect of one element can indeed help businesses focus on strengthening one element, a collective effect study can be highly beneficial to any type of business and for the research community (Thakur, 2018). Researchers need to consider the collective effect of these elements in social media marketing and consumer engagement. Therefore, in this study, a novel research model containing hypotheses is built using case methods. Additionally, statistical analyses are used to further study and analyse the connections between antecedents and SMM. Five SMM antecedents have been identified and their individual and collective effects on social media marketing and consumer engagement have been analysed. Those five antecedents are online communities, firm-generated content (FGC), e-word of the month, web and apps, and entertainment. To support the first hypothesis generated for this experiment ***“SMM antecedents (online community, web and apps, entertainment, FGC and EWOM) have a significant effect on social media marketing”*** a hypothesis test was performed where the model explained that ($R^2 = 0.23$) 23% the participants were affirmative about the relationship between the SMMANTs and SMM. Compared to similar studies, this determination coefficient is in close competition. For example, Teng et al. (2014) found an R^2 value of about 19.5%, which is less than the current study. In addition to this, their dataset was small with only 78 participants while the dataset of the current study consists of 329 participants showing data diversity and much more reliable results. Algharabat et al., (2020) also found a slightly higher R^2 value which is 26% on a dataset forming 500



Jordanians. However, the limitation of this study was that it uses only a certain group of people with similar interests, which does not confirm the diversity and inclusiveness of the study. Another study conducted by Amoah et al., (2021) presented a similar result, but the analysis was done in terms of β value = 0.194 which is much less than the β value found in this study which is $\beta = 0.482$. Most of these studies include only one or two antecedents along with other factors limiting the full potential of those studies. However, in the current study, the individual and collective effects of five SMM antecedents were considered which supplies valuable contribution to the research domain. The effects of these antecedents will be discussed individually in the following subsection considering the hypotheses and earlier literature.

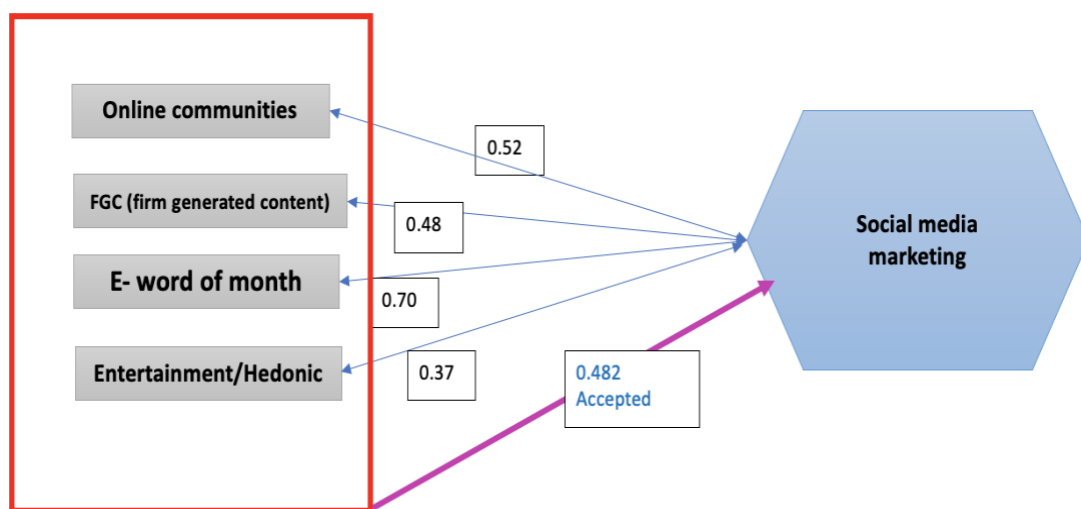


Figure 5-2: Hypothesis linking social media antecedents to social media marketing.

Figure 5-2 shows the hypothesis relating the social media antecedents and social media marketing where the numbers indicate the standardised regression weights. For all these links, the p-value was less than 0.001. The non-zero (0.482) standard regression weight or β coefficient indicates that the statistical analyses support this hypothesis. This can be confirmed by the p-value (< 0.001) which is smaller than the set value of 0.05. These metrics indicate a good model fit for the impact of social media antecedents on social media marketing. Devlieger et al., (2016) and McPherson and Huang (1974) show that the obtained results are in an acceptable range. Kim and Ko, (2012) presented a similar study, but the β -value obtained from the current study is much better than theirs ($\beta = 0.37$). However, the study of Nofal et al., (2020) provided better results ($\beta = 0.59$) than the current study, but this is still within the acceptable range indicating the validity of this hypothesis.



5.3.1 Role of Online Community

The current study aims at finding the relationship between the online community and consumer engagement in social media marketing for SMEs. Online communities have been found to play a significant positive impact in increasing consumer engagement for social media marketing in the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector (Grewal et al., 2018; Fernandes and Remelhe 2016; Nguyen and Mutum 2012). The first survey question under social media antecedents of this study was “*Do you follow online consumer recommendations to buy a product?*” Most participants who use social media responded “Yes” to this question indicating the significance of online community in social media marketing and consumer engagement. This discussion is supported by Balakrishnan et al., (2014) and Miller et al., (2009) who argued that communities are expected to be helpful and tolerant towards each other in helping others make the right decision while shopping online. Likewise, online communities provide businesses with valuable insights into the needs and preferences of their customers (Peters et al., 2017).

Wang et al., (2020) and Yoo et al., (2018) emphasized monitoring and analysing the interactions within the community and argued that this way businesses can tailor their marketing efforts and communication strategies. The results of my research suggest that online communities have a significant impact on consumer engagement in social media marketing. This finding is consistent with studies conducted by Wang et al., (2020) and Yoo et al., (2018), which emphasized the importance of tracking the tastes and preferences of the community and adapting to changing consumer requirements. In addition, Al-Msallam and Alhaddad (2016) and Quinton and Harridge-March (2010) also highlighted the significance of community dynamics in shaping consumer engagement. Many businesses maintain a social media presence and private groups to engage with their communities and offer exclusive deals. Consumers can also share their experiences and reviews of products or services within these communities. However, Bugshan (2015), Balakrishnan et al. (2014), Hajli (2018), and Zheng et al., (2015) noted that reluctance to maintain the community can be a barrier to effective social media marketing. Overall, the evidence suggests that online communities can be a valuable resource for businesses looking to increase consumer engagement through social media marketing in the SME sector (Lee et al., 2019). By fostering a sense of community, providing valuable insights and user-generated content, and encouraging active engagement with the brand, businesses can effectively leverage online communities to drive more meaningful and impactful marketing efforts (Grewal et al., 2018).



5.3.2 Role of Firm-Generated Contents

Firm-generated content (FGC), which is content created and shared by a business or organization, can play a significant role in increasing consumer engagement. DE Vries et al., (2016) demonstrated that, firms that regularly publish high-quality content on their social media channels tend to experience higher levels of customer engagement. Kumar et al., (2016) describes FGC based on three crucial customer metrics: spending, cross-selling, and customer profitability on social media. Lee and Park (2014), provide the reason for this is that such content can help to establish the company as a thought leader in its industry and provide value to customers by offering relevant and useful information, which is supported by the study of Wan and Ren (2017). The current research considers firm-generated content an especially important antecedent of social media marketing for being able to reach out to a wider community. This leads to the second survey question under SM antecedents to which, more than 80% of the participants agreed while only around 2% of participants disagreed; the remaining portion of the participants had a neutral opinion. This data indicates how effective and engaging FGC is for social media marketing. In addition to increasing engagement, Fournier, and Avery (2011) and Bickert et al., (2015) suggests that firm-generated content can also help to build trust and credibility with customers by providing informative and useful content. Their studies also found that businesses can demonstrate their expertise and commitment to their customers, which can lead to increased loyalty and advocacy.

Furthermore, firm-generated content can be used to highlight the company's products and services more authentically and engagingly (Herr et al., 2012). By sharing customer stories and testimonials, for example, businesses can provide a more personal and relatable perspective on their offerings (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). This can help to increase the perceived value of the products and services, leading to higher levels of consumer engagement and potentially driving sales (Luo et al., 2018). However, in most of these studies, the participants are young adults since they spend a higher amount of time on social sites, which makes the dataset and the study biased (Lee et al., 2013; Wan and Ren, 2017). But currently, adults and senior citizens are also being attracted by social media and they are turning to online shopping for convenience (Bai and Yan, 2020). Therefore, the participation of this group of people was ensured (a quarter of the total 329 participants) (Table 4-1) and the analyses indicate the effectiveness of this approach. Overall, the evidence suggests that firm-generated content can be an effective tool for increasing consumer engagement in the SME sector. By providing high-



quality, informative, and authentic content, businesses can build trust, establish themselves as thought leaders, and highlight their products and services more engagingly, leading to increased loyalty and advocacy among customers.

5.3.3 Role of E-Word of the Mouth

E-WOM, which refers to the exchange of opinions, recommendations, and experiences about products or services through online channels, can play a significant role in increasing consumer engagement (Sowaydan, 2011). In addition to its influence on consumer decision-making, e-WOM can also help to increase consumer engagement by providing a platform for customers to connect and share their experiences with a brand (Buttle, 2016; Dutta et al., 2019; Xiaofen and Yiling, 2009). This can create a sense of community and connection, leading to increased loyalty and advocacy (Hsu et al., 2015). Positive feedback from a comment, like, or share is crucial in lowering uncertainty regarding the product being exhibited and the level of decision-making uncertainty which is evident from the work of Gremler et al., (2001).

However, Shahana and Dawn (2007) claimed that consumers are more impacted by unfavourable online reviews than positive ones. This study strengthens this claim by showing that 72% of the participants of the current study agreed with the third survey question indicating the significance of the e-word of mouth in consumers' trust and engagement. Furthermore, e-WOM can serve as a source of valuable feedback and insights for businesses (Javalgi, White, and Ali, 2010). Wang et al., (2020) emphasized monitoring and analysing e-WOM about the products or services so that businesses can gain a deeper understanding of what their customers want and how they can better meet those needs. This can help businesses tailor their marketing efforts and communication strategies to better resonate with their target audience (Yoo et al., 2018; AL-Abdullah and Bataineh, 2018).



5.3.4 Role of Web and Apps

Changes in consumer behaviour require firms to rethink their marketing strategies in the digital domain (Tiago and Verissimo 2014). Web and app-based technologies can play a significant role in increasing consumer engagement for SMEs in Bangladesh. Studies found that businesses in Bangladesh that have an online presence, including a website or mobile app, tend to experience higher levels of customer engagement and loyalty compared to those that do not (Islam et al., 2018; Lesidrenska and Dicke 2012; Tiago and Verissimo 2014). This is because such technologies can provide a convenient and easily accessible platform for consumers to interact with the business and access information about products or services (Rahman et al., 2016; Toh et al., 2011; Weinberg, 2009).

On top of increasing customer engagement towards online shopping, web and app-based technologies can also help businesses in Bangladesh to reach a wider audience and expand their customer base (Hossain et al., 2020). By having an online presence, businesses can more easily connect with potential customers beyond their immediate geographic location (Mondal et al., 2017). This claim aligns with the fourth survey question to which surprising changes can be seen. 60% of the participants were neutral towards this question while only around 25% agreed on the matter. However, this still proves that consumers prefer a reliable web platform or an app where they can browse for products while being able to see product reviews and other information. This finding can be particularly important for SMEs in Bangladesh, which may have limited resources for traditional marketing efforts (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Additionally, web- and app-based technology can give Bangladeshi firms insightful information on the wants and preferences of their clients (Mondal et al., 2016). Businesses can better understand their customers' wants and how to better serve them by studying the data generated by online interactions (Islam et al., 2018). This can assist organisations in adjusting their marketing initiatives and communication plans to reach their target demographic more effectively (Rahman et al., 2016). Finally, it is worth noting that the adoption and effectiveness of web and app-based technologies for consumer engagement in the SME sector in Bangladesh may be influenced by several factors, such as the level of technological infrastructure and connectivity in the country, as well as the digital literacy and awareness of the target audience (Hossain et al., 2020). This study suggests that understanding and addressing these factors can be key to maximizing the impact of web and app-based technologies on consumer engagement for SMEs in Bangladesh.



5.3.5 Role of Entertainment/Hedonic

Entertainment and hedonic factors, which refer to the pleasurable and enjoyable aspects of products or services, can play a significant role in increasing consumer engagement. According to one study, products or services that are perceived as fun or enjoyable can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). This is because such products or services can provide a sense of enjoyment or escapism for customers, which can lead to a more positive overall experience (Herr et al., 2012; Verma, 2014). In addition to increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty, entertainment and hedonic factors can also help to drive word-of-mouth (WOM) communication about a brand (Dholakia et al., 2011). By providing a pleasurable and enjoyable experience, businesses can encourage customers to share their experiences with others, which can help to increase the reach and impact of their marketing efforts (Buttle, 2016). Keeping these points in mind, the fifth survey question was constructed, and the researcher investigated the dataset and the responses of the participants. In this case, participants showed mixed responses. Most consumers prefer to have all in one place, Kim, and Hwang (2015) report. The reason can be understood by Kimiagari and Malafe (2021); Wu et al., (2019). They said that some consumers do not feel comfortable redirecting to external websites as these kinds of acts possess the risk of important security breaches; thus, explaining the mixed response from the participants.

Additionally, including entertainment and hedonic components in marketing campaigns can serve to distinguish a brand from rivals and increase consumer recall of it (Elliott et al., 2016). This might be crucial in the SME sector as companies may compete with more established, larger brands (Grewal et al., 2018). Businesses may stand out and boost customer engagement by providing a distinctive and entertaining experience. In conclusion, the research points to the potential effectiveness of entertainment and hedonic variables in boosting consumer engagement in the SME sector. Businesses may boost consumer happiness and loyalty, promote WOM, set themselves apart from rivals, and improve engagement with the brand by offering a joyful and enjoyable experience.



5.4 Research Objective Two

The second objective of this research was to investigate how social media marketing methods affect customer trust and perceived value, regarding the connection between trust, perceived value, and engagement behaviours on social media platforms. The outcomes of the study revealed that social media marketing has a substantial effect on customer trust and perceived value. Multiple investigations have been conducted, including Kim et al., (2016), Dabholkar (2016), Harrigan et al., (2018), AL Sudani (2017), Kim and Lee (2018), and Chen and Zhang (2018). Due to the prevalence of online communities, these studies discovered that organisations have been more communicative with their customers and have committed to developing a motivated audience. The perceived value of the product and mutual trust generate a sustainable competitive advantage for a customer-focused firm. This study's findings confirm the hypothesis **H1** that, social media marketing has a significant influence on customer trust and perceived value. The standard regression weight of 0.621 and the p-value of 0.001 show that the effect of social media marketing on customer trust and perceived value is well accounted for using the model. This result is consistent with the findings of Devlieger et al., (2016) and McPherson and Huang (1974), who determined that equivalent values were within the acceptable range of 0.589.

However, Nofal et al., (2020) reported a lower finding, which is 0.613; however, the p-value acquired from the present investigation is more significant in comparison to the previous result. This study adds to the current understanding of the CEB (conditional entropy bottleneck) phenomenon. Businesses may focus their marketing efforts and tailor information exchange more precisely to keep and attract consumers by determining the most valuable customer characteristics for forecasting buyer behaviour. This leads to the second purpose of this study, which is to examine the effect of social media marketing methods on customer trust and perceived value. The findings of this research confirm the assumptions **H1 to H4**, demonstrating that social media marketing may have a substantial effect on customer trust and perceived value. This study may assist firms in comprehending the significance of trust and perceived value in establishing a sustainable competitive advantage, as well as directing their marketing activities to successfully target and engage consumers. The literature review for this study indicates that trust and perceived value act as mediators in the interaction between social media marketing and consumer engagement factors which are shown in the conceptual framework (Figure 2-4). This leads to the second research objective which is “*Investigate the*



impact of social media marketing strategies on consumer trust and perceived value". This research objective covers hypotheses H1 to H4 (Table 4-9). The hypotheses will be discussed one by one in this section.

5.4.1 Social Media Marketing and Consumer Trust

Social media marketing has a substantial effect on customer trust. The findings of this investigation support **H1** with a standard regression weight of 0.62 and a p-value less than 0.001. This implies a significant correlation between social media marketing and customer trust. The findings are consistent with prior research by Devlieger et al., (2016) and McPherson and Huang (1974), and they are statistically more significant than the findings of As'ad and Alhadid (2014). The study by Nofal et al., (2020) also supports this idea, with a standard regression weight of 0.593. Research has shown that consumers are more likely to engage with and purchase products from brands that they trust (Hafez 2021; Karim 2020). A study conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Management found that trust in a brand was the most principal factor in determining consumer purchasing decisions in the Bangladeshi market (Bangladesh Institute of Management, n.d.).

Another study published in the Journal of Business Research (Khan and Ali 2018) found that trust in a brand can lead to increased brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth recommendations, both of which can have a significant impact on a brand's success in the Bangladeshi market. These points have a clear reflection in the hypothesis testing. The hypothesis relating to social media marketing (SMM) and trust (TR) was supported with a p-value less than 0.001, rejecting the null hypothesis. This hypothesis showed the highest standard regression weight (SRW), β -value of 0.621, indicating the highest significance among the variables. It has a standard error close to 0.5 (0.477). During the hypothesis testing, the model explained ($R^2 = 0.33$) that 33% of the participants were positive towards the relationship between SMM and TR which is in close comparison with similar studies. Chahal and Rani (2017) conducted a study to investigate how trust and consumer engagement are related and found $\beta = 0.52$ which is lower than the current study. Although they showed a GFI comparable to the current study, their dataset is biased since they only considered the 'Gen Y' population. Another study by Kujur and Singh (2016) showed a relationship between trust and purchase action. They found an SRW of 0.707 for engagement and trust and 0.271 for acquisition and trust. Although they considered 'trust' as a form of 'clarity of available information', the study is like the current one, indicating the viability of this study.



5.4.2 Social Media Marketing and Perceived Value

Perceived value is significantly influenced by social media marketing. With a p-value of less than 0.001 and a standard regression weight of 0.456, this research confirms the H2 hypothesis. This shows a significant correlation between perceived value and social media marketing. The findings support prior research findings (0.455), which point to trust and perceived value as mediating factors in the link between social media marketing and customer involvement (Chen and Zhang, 2020; Gupta and Verma, 2019). This study's findings are also supported by earlier research that indicates a strong correlation between perceived worth and trust, with a value of 0.561. (Harrigan, Evers et al., 2018). The study conducted by Harrigan et al., (2018) found that consumer engagement with a brand on social media is positively related to perceived value. This in turn relates to purchasing intention and brand loyalty- two crucial factors for SMEs. Users' sense of community is found to be a key factor affecting their online engagement with brands (Dessart et al., 2015).

The hypothesis constructed by relating perceived value and social media to consumer engagement shows the reflection of these points. Consumer engagement affects perceived value. This study supports the H4 hypothesis with a p-value of 0.001 and a standard regression weight of 0.520. Perceived value and social media marketing are strongly correlated. Trust and perceived value mediate the relationship between social media marketing and consumer engagement, as stated by a previous study (0.545). (Chen and Zhang, 2020). The results of this study are also corroborated by prior research, which shows a substantial association between perceived worth and trust ($r = 0.461$) and supports the findings of this study. (2016). Hypothesis testing gave an impressive SRW or β -value of 0.520 for consumer engagement and perceived value. The determination coefficient R^2 value of 0.27 explains that the model indicates a positive response from 27% of the participants. The study of Hussein and Hassan (2017) divided perceived value into perceived usefulness, enjoyment, and connectedness. The SRW achieved for perceived usefulness, enjoyment, and connectedness was 0.161, 0.215, and 0.140, respectively. Although their data collection process was very scientific, however since the data is almost eight years old, this may not reflect the current scenario, especially in the post-COVID era. Since they failed to establish a strong connection within the variables, the current study is superior in this sense. Rather (2018) showed that, trust is the most significant construct in consumer engagement along with the perceived value of commitment and satisfaction.



5.4.3 Social Media Marketing for Consumer Purchase action

SMEs can use social media marketing to connect with consumers and attract new clients. According to research, customer social media participation is favourably correlated with word-of-mouth recommendations, perceived value, and trust. Tadesse (2016) showed that, transparency and user-generated material can contribute to boosting perceived value and fostering consumer trust. For maximum impact, SMEs should concentrate on delivering high perceived value and fostering trust through sincerity and open communication. Burger et al., (2016) emphasised exercising a cautious manner when disseminating inaccurate or misleading material on social media because doing so can significantly harm the credibility and perceived worth. Figure 5.3 shows the relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement while keeping trust and perceived value as mediators. The relationships were established through a series of hypotheses testing and verified against existing literature.

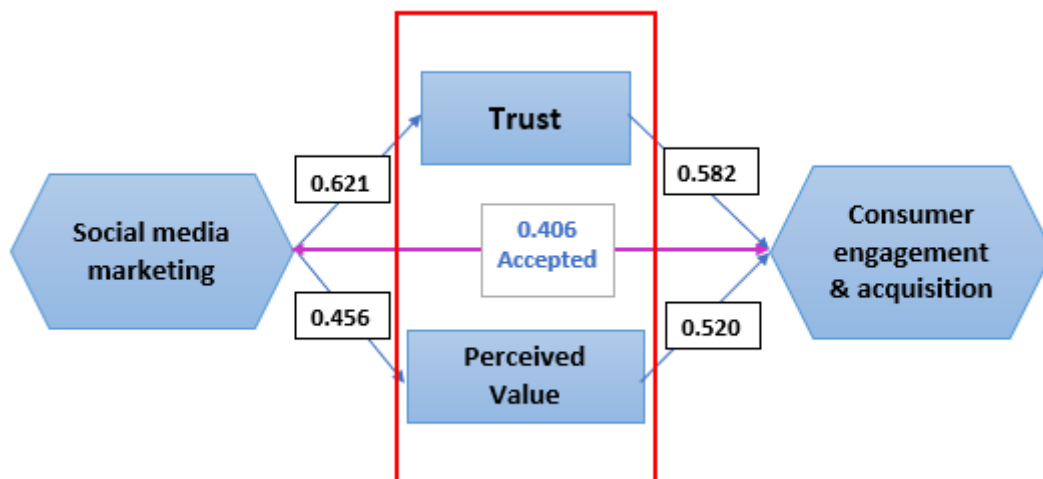


Figure 5-3: “Effects of trust and perceived value in the context of social media marketing and consumer engagement”

Additionally, the strategies used in social media marketing might impact how valuable a product or service is perceived. Harrigan et al., (2018) demonstrated that, using user-generated information, such as customer reviews or testimonials, can raise the perceived value of a good or service. This is because consumers frequently trust their friends' opinions over those of businesses. Ashley and Tauten (2015), therefore highlighted the necessity of adopting creative and engaging marketing strategies.

On the other hand, misleading or false information in social media marketing can lead to decreased trust and perceived value. Lee et al., (2014) found that, misleading or false



information can include manipulated images or fake reviews, which can lead customers to question the authenticity of the brand and the value of its products or services. Harrigan et al., (2018) also provided an insightful analytical technique for data verification. They used 10-fold cross-validation for data stratification. This provides a scope for improvement for the current study. In conclusion, the methods used in social media marketing can have a significant impact on customer trust and perceived value. Businesses that use authentic and transparent communication, customer engagement, and interaction, and avoid misleading or false information can increase customer trust and perceived value. On the other hand, misleading or false information can lead to decreased trust and perceived value. To build customer trust and perceived value, businesses should focus on authenticity, customer engagement, and providing valuable information to customers.

5.5 Research Objective Three

The researcher initially developed a conceptual framework. The statistical analysis model was structured based on that conceptual framework (Figure 2-4). The hypothesis testing was also designed concerning this framework and all six hypotheses were supported by data analyses (Table 4-8). Within the scope of this analysis, the determination coefficient or the R^2 value was also investigated. The percentage of variation in the dependent variables that can be explained by the dependent variables is provided by the R^2 value. This metric is a significant measure of the linear regression function concerning the hypotheses. The model gives $R^2 = 38\%$ for social media marketing (SMM), 33% for trust (TR), 27% for perceived value (PV), and 23% for social media antecedents (SMANT). The results indicate a moderate explanation for this model. The structural model combining confirmatory factor analysis results (Table 4-7) and hypothesis testing results (Table 4-8) is shown in Figure 5-4 below.

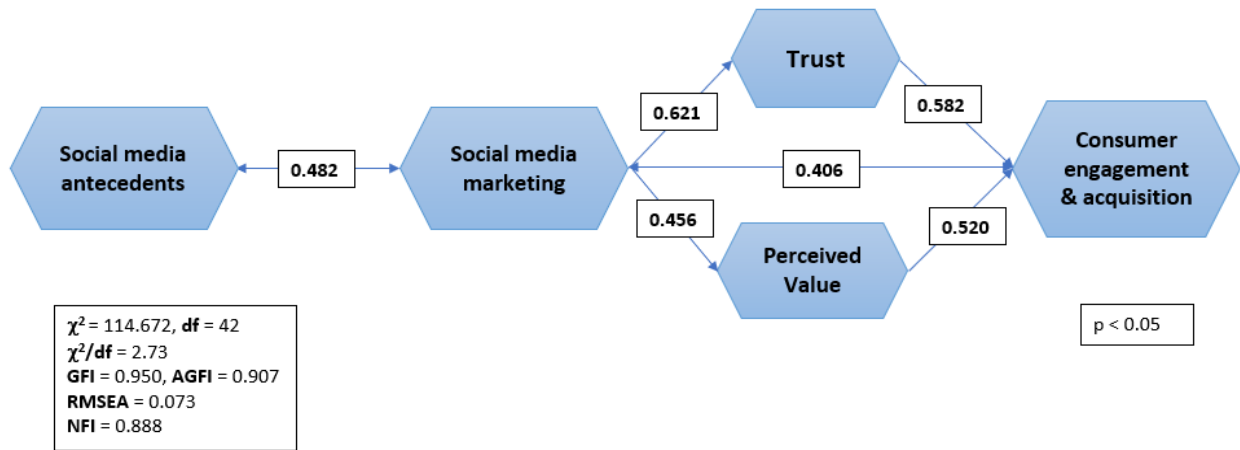


Figure 5-4: Refined Conceptual Framework

5.5.1 Final Conceptual Framework

In this study, the starting point is the social media antecedents naming the online community, firm-generated content, e-word of mouth, web, and apps, and entertainment/hedonic. These are attributes that influence the calibre or the attainable goals of social media marketing. Online communities highly influence someone's intention to buy a product or service. Firm-generated content can elevate the consumer's outlook toward a product. The other factors similarly impact the ability of social media marketing by creating a positive outlook among the consumers towards the business. Social media marketing acts as the bridge between consumers and business owners. A person's attitude towards a product depends on how that specific product is being marketed. Therefore, social media marketing is the independent variable here. Effective social media marketing enhances trust and increases the perceived value of a product. These two mediators have a significant impact on consumer engagement by stimulating a positive viewpoint for the target audience. What effective social media marketing will be for consumer purchase action depends on the transparency of the business owners. If everything a potential consumer needs to know is present in the advertisement, they feel assured and inclined to buy that product. On the other hand, hidden information makes consumers suspicious about the authenticity of the business and consumers feel reluctant towards that business. All these propositions are summarised and presented in the framework given in Figure 5-5. The framework explains the nature of the relation among the variables with their standardised regression weights.

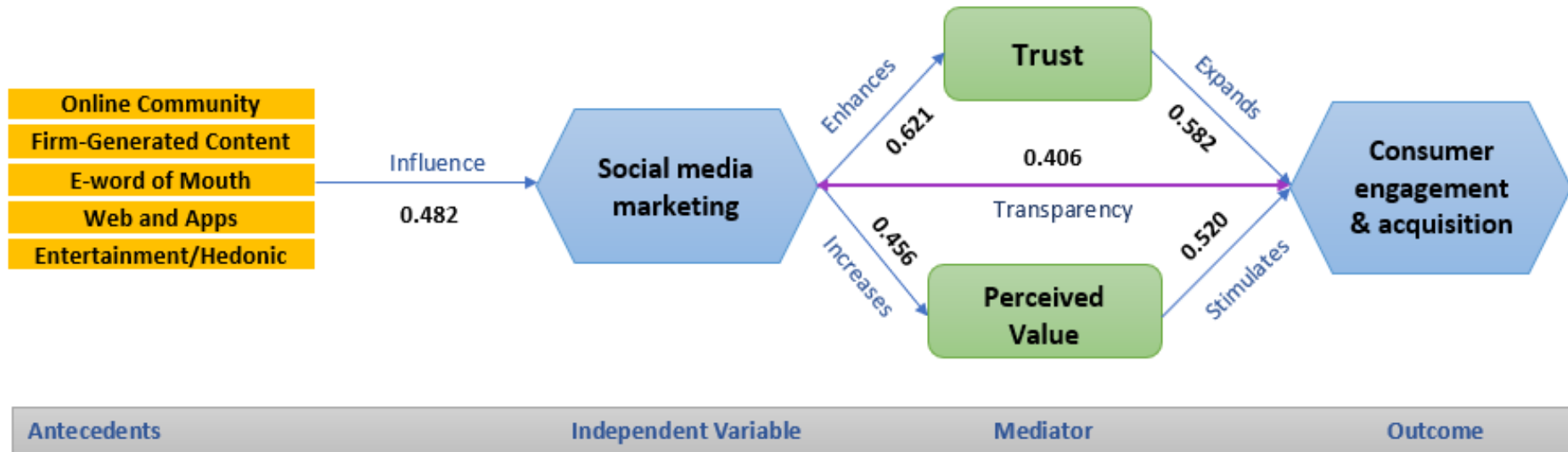


Figure 5-5: Final conceptual framework developed by the author.



5.5.2 Validation of the Framework

The validation of the proposed framework was done in several steps starting from the literature review. From a wide range of published literature, social media antecedents were identified. The theoretical foundation developed from the literature provided a skeleton of the framework and a basis for constructing the hypotheses. The literature review also provided a strong background for evidence-based research methodology design. Under the design constraints, a questionnaire was constructed to conduct a pilot test. The pilot test served as a research instrument, justified the questionnaire, and provided constructive feedback. A total of 329 participants returned the questionnaire with valid answers and after refining the dataset, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. EFA assisted in identifying the underlying factor structure of the constructs and provided evidence that the measures of the constructs are reliable and valid. EFA also identified the constructs that have the least effect on the expected outcome and provided evidence in favour of discarding those factors, thus refining the model further.

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the measurement model and confirm the factor structure. With a few modifications in internal correlation among factors, the analyses showed a good model fit. The model achieved a goodness-of-fit index of 0.950 satisfying the standards and providing validation for the model and the framework. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used for testing the hypotheses and assessing the relationships between the constructs in the framework. Hypotheses testing results showed that all six hypotheses were supported with evidence and provided standard regression weight and standard error in the acceptable range. Benchmarking these results with existing literature gave external validation to the model. The ultimate step for the framework validation is practical implementation. In this step, the framework needs to be tested in real-world situations. For example, in the case of the current study, the researcher needs to randomly select a respectable number of small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh and familiarise them with the framework and model and encourage them to change their marketing strategies. External procedures should also be followed to ensure that the marketing campaigns reach the target population. Finally, the end-users, i.e., the consumers need to be studied to assess how much they were able to engage with the businesses. However, this is a lengthy and time-consuming process that requires a lot of infrastructural resources in addition to time and financial support. The researcher developed a second framework for this practical implementation which is given below.

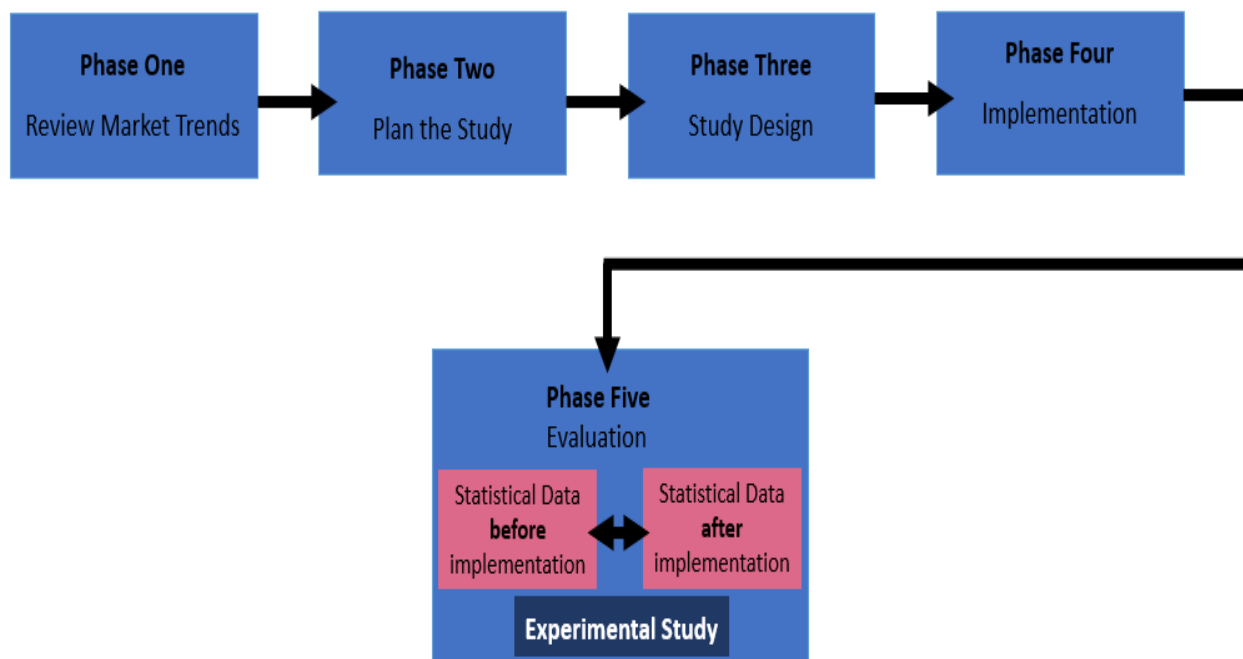


Figure 5-6: Practical implementation framework

5.6 Research Objective Four

The researcher advises SMEs to focus on generating continuous customer engagement data by conducting ongoing marketing evaluations since "knowledge is power." This information is critical for making effective marketing decisions. The data must be obtained in a professional manner, which means it must be well-organized, accurate, and well-examined. Making important choices may sometimes be tremendously difficult, but they can also be very advantageous to the status of SMEs. Furthermore, in the challenging ecosystem of social media, SMEs must constantly adapt and enhance their services and products. They must also have plans for future marketing techniques.

Traditional marketing is too expensive for SMEs, and it also wastes a lot of time and effort. This is because traditional marketing receives a low response rate from customers, has a limited reach and view of the advertisement, and does not reach the audiences that are intending to see it. For SMEs, social media is like a long-held dream that has finally been realized. Therefore, SMEs must begin promoting their products and services on social media as soon as humanly feasible. It improves SMEs' quality control, business processes, monitoring, and customer



service; helps new businesses come into existence; helps improve communication processes; is a good place for gathering customers' information; assists SMEs in the learning process; assists SMEs in accessing new markets; and makes news travel faster. Social media is cost-efficient, saves time and energy, helps bring target customers together, improves SMEs' quality control, and improves business processes, monitoring, and customer service. Because of their size and limited resources, SMEs might benefit from using social media. On the other hand, marketing on social media may often be done for no cost, and even its sponsored advertising is remarkably successful due to the targeted nature of the platform; in addition, it offers a variety of useful features for the marketing of small and medium-sized businesses. Also, its ads are seen and interacted with by an unlimited number of people. This is a huge opportunity for SMEs.

SMEs may focus on attracting many active consumers or prospective customers to their social media profiles. Furthermore, SMEs must choose the appropriate social media sites that match their promotional campaigns and sell their goods or services on them. In addition, SMEs may utilise social media platforms to acquire client information and provide customer support. Some SMEs already have a dedicated team that takes care of consumers and supports them on the SMEs' social media platforms. Furthermore, SMEs may follow their customers or prospective customers on social media sites, including the most popular sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The above paragraph provides a list of suggestions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to enhance their social media marketing strategy and increase their overall sales. The suggestions include conducting market research, developing a brand, creating perceived value, constantly planning, and adapting, engaging with customers, offering distinctive goods or services, building consumer trust, providing online services, promoting offers, targeting the right audience, using social media platforms effectively, having the right person in the right position, exchanging information, and utilizing social influencers. By implementing these suggestions, SMEs can improve their social media marketing strategies and attract more customers, leading to increased sales. SMEs should begin focusing their marketing efforts on social media to accomplish their marketing objectives and boost sales. It is simple to target them if SMEs know where their intended clients are via social media. It is also critical to the segment before targeting on social media. Social media includes quite a lot of segmentation and targeting approaches that may help SMEs boost their marketing. Furthermore, social media targeting has the potential to save a significant amount of time, money, and energy. Furthermore, the study suggests that social media is one of the finest places



for targeting methods. SMEs might have a variety of payment options to make payments as appealing to consumers as possible, increasing sales. By making payment an appealing experience, SMEs may promote and influence consumers' purchasing choices. SMEs may also have numerous payment methods to make it simpler for clients to pay and to guarantee that payments are processed smoothly. Furthermore, social media marketing is free, making it an excellent marketing tool for SMEs with limited budgets, people, and resources.

5.7 Recommendations

Social media marketing has become an essential tool for SMEs to connect with potential customers and promote their products or services. However, for many Bangladeshi SMEs, effectively using social media to reach out to potential customers can be challenging. Based on current research and industry best practices, there are several strategies that Bangladeshi SMEs can implement to improve their performance and engagement on social media and reach out to more potential customers.

First, SMEs should focus on building trust with their audience through authenticity and transparent communication. This can be achieved by actively responding to customer queries and complaints, and by sharing real-life examples of how their products or services are being used. Second, SMEs should make use of user-generated content as it can increase perceived value and provide customers with social proof of the value of a product or service. This can be achieved by encouraging customers to share their experiences, feedback, or reviews on social media platforms. Third, SMEs should use targeted advertising and marketing campaigns to reach their specific audience. This can be achieved by using the targeting options provided by social media platforms to reach specific demographics, interests, behaviours, etc. Fourth, SMEs should use analytics to measure their performance on social media and use that data to optimize their strategies. By analysing engagement rates, reach, and conversions, SMEs can identify which strategies are working and which are not. However, it is important to note that these strategies may not be effective for every SME and that it is important to consider the unique characteristics of each business. Additionally, SMEs need to keep up to date with the latest trends and updates in social media marketing, as the industry is constantly evolving.



To sum up, Bangladeshi SMEs can improve their performance and engagement on social media by building trust, utilizing user-generated content, targeting specific audiences, and using analytics to measure performance. With these strategies in place, SMEs can reach out to more potential customers and increase their chances of success.

5.8 Recommendation for Marketing Managers

Marketing managers play a huge role in expanding the network of a new business since they are responsible for setting the marketing strategies for the products. Marketing managers for SMEs can take several steps to improve consumer engagement on social media. Here are a few recommendations:

- **Build trust through authenticity and transparent communication:** Marketing managers should be responsive to customer queries and complaints and share real-life examples of how their products or services are being used. Avoid spreading misleading or false information and make realistic promises, as it can decrease trust and perceived value.
- **Use analytics to measure performance:** Analyse engagement rates, reach, and conversions to identify which strategies are working and which are not. Based on the analytic findings, use the targeting options provided by social media platforms to reach specific demographics, interests, behaviours, etc.
- **Keep up to date with the latest trends:** Stay informed about the latest trends and updates in social media marketing, as the industry is constantly evolving.
- **Develop a content strategy:** Develop a content strategy that aligns with specific business objectives and target audience. It should be consistent, visually appealing, and aligned with the brand. Also, monitor and measure the performance of the strategic campaigns and adjust as needed.
- **Engage with the audience:** Engage with your audience by asking questions, responding to comments, and encouraging feedback.
- **Invest in paid advertising:** Invest in paid advertising to reach a larger audience and increase your visibility on social media platforms.



The researcher believes that by following these recommendations, marketing managers can improve consumer engagement through social media marketing, leading to increased sales, customer loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

5.9 Recommendation on marketing strategies for improving the performance and engagement of Bangladeshi SMEs

In addition to the recommendations made for the marketing managers, the researcher suggests a few more strategies for improving the performance and engagement of Bangladeshi SMEs. These recommendations are like the previous ones, but more specific. Given below are the recommended marketing strategies suggested by the researcher.

- **Building a strong online presence:** Establishing a strong online presence through social media, email marketing, and search engine optimization can help to increase brand awareness and reach potential customers.
- **Focusing on building trust:** Building trust with potential customers is essential. Bangladeshi SMEs should focus on authenticity and transparent communication to build trust and credibility.
- **Utilizing user-generated content:** Encouraging customers to share their experiences, feedback, or reviews on social media platforms can increase perceived value and provide social proof of the value of a product or service. These contents can also be used for personalisation. Personalisation of communication and offers for the target audience can increase the chances of customer engagement. But the businesses should take caution to not violate audiences' privacy.
- **Keeping up to date with the competitors:** In addition to keeping up with the latest trends, businesses should stay informed about the strategies their competitors are adopting to strengthen their presence on social media.
- **Investing in sponsored advertising:** Sponsored advertisements can reach a larger population by frequently appearing on their feed. However, it should be noted that sometimes these ads become annoying as they appear too frequently. Collaborating with influencers and social media celebrities can help to increase brand awareness and reach new audiences, particularly in the younger demographic.



In conclusion, by implementing these strategies, Bangladeshi SMEs can improve their performance and engagement on social media and reach out to more potential customers. Building trust through authenticity and transparent communication, utilizing user-generated content, targeting specific audiences, and using analytics to measure performance are all strategies that can help Bangladeshi SMEs to improve their social media marketing efforts. Additionally, SMEs should always be transparent and honest in their communication, avoid spreading misleading or false information and make realistic promises, as it can decrease trust and perceived value.

5.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter evaluated the data analysis findings and examined them in connection to earlier research, offering a rationale for the results. First, the model structure and the validation of the study's scale were examined. The proper scale items were determined to be twenty-five items, and the five constructs model was preferred for the context of this study. Concerning the model connections, four deterrents of consumer engagement to reach the target audience were verified and ranked by strength as follows: word of mouth, trust, perceived value, and engagement. Similarly, four antecedents of social media marketing were presented in the following order: web and applications, entertainment, online communities, and company-provided content.

The results of the group difference analysis were also addressed. The primary goal of the group study was to investigate and uncover variations across customer groups, such as the role of demographics, social media marketing experience, and consumer involvement. The proposed model was found to be universally applicable across nine of these segments. Even though just four segments had varied correlations, the model was nevertheless accepted. They were income, occupation, gender, and education level. Another interesting finding was the impression of each variable for each customer category. The research found that demographics and internet experience had no discernible effect on perception. On the other hand, most social media marketing elements, such as trust and perceived value, showed variances across some of the model's variables, although the link was still maintained. There has been little study on customer involvement, acquisition, and the influence on purchasing behaviour. This study fills a need and opens the door to additional investigation in this area.



Chapter 6 Conclusion and Contributions

6.1 Overview

The thesis's closing chapter specifies the conclusion by outlining the several contributions, consequences, restrictions, and suggested directions for further research. It starts by explaining how the latest information affects customer engagement and the social media marketing strategy. Additionally, it considers the methodology's effects on consumer engagement. Second, it presents the descriptive and theoretical implications that are based on a variety of contributions. Thirdly, it will highlight this theory's limitations. In the last part, recommendations for further study related to this research subject are provided. As a network for communication, social media is seen as an important part of daily life in the information age. These platforms represent consumers' preferences, consumption patterns, likes, dislikes, experiences, and views (Dessart et al., 2015). Internet studies have shown that social media technology is crucial to how consumers perceive companies (Vernuccio et al., 2015). This widely used platform for online user interaction has a variety of opportunities for marketers. These networking platforms provide marketers with great chances to streamline their product marketing efforts, save money and time, and expand their audience. Businesses can use social media networks to create their brand profiles, organise social events, and create various video or picture contents to share with large consumer populations to engage people with their brand. The purpose of this thesis is to determine if social media platforms have a major impact on how customers connect with and learn about SMEs' performance.

6.2 Summary of Research Findings

This research examines the influence of social media marketing on customer purchase actions in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. The study's results indicate that social media marketing has a vital impact on boosting customer engagement and overall performance for Bangladeshi SME businesses. In addition, the study data reveal that consumers in Bangladesh are more inclined to interact with businesses on social media, share brand content with their friends, and make purchases from firms they follow on social media. The study's data analysis fully supports the six assumptions that social media marketing has a major impact on customers' trust, engagement, and acquisition. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) revealed a satisfactory



model fit and highlighted the relevance of the study's individual elements. The testing of hypotheses was conducted using a 95% confidence interval and a p-value of 0.05, indicating that all hypotheses were supported by the data. With a standardised regression weight of 0.621, the association between social media marketing (SMM) and trust (TR) was determined to have the greatest significant weight (H1). This conclusion is consistent with a prior study, which revealed that marketing had a significant impact on a consumer's first impression of a product or service (Harrigan, Evers et al., 2018). The association between trust (TR) and consumer purchase action (CEA) was shown to be the second most significant ($H3, = 0.582$). This lends credence to the notion that customer purchase action is strongly influenced by trust (Ng, Sweeney et al. 2020, Wang, Yu et al. 2012). Also, the study revealed that the association between perceived value (PV) and consumer purchase action ($H4$ with $= 0.520$) was the second most significant. This conclusion is consistent with earlier findings that perceived value is a significant predictor of customer purchase action (Harrigan et al., 2018). This research offers insightful information on the effect of social media marketing on customer involvement. The findings suggest that social media marketing may play a significant role in establishing customer trust, boosting consumer purchase action, and altering consumer perceptions of value. These results have significant ramifications for marketers and companies seeking to leverage the power of social media to reach and engage customers.

This study builds on prior research in the subject by giving actual evidence for the importance of the social media marketing aspects evaluated. The findings of this research show the significance of trust, perceived value, and customer purchase action in determining the effectiveness of social media marketing and give significant insights for firms seeking to enhance their social media marketing strategy. To investigate the link between these characteristics in more detail and to acquire a deeper knowledge of their influence on social media marketing performance, further study is required.

6.2.1 Influence of the Control Variables

The control variables of the theoretical framework have significant influence on the outcome of the analysis. Analysing the control variables such as age, gender, occupation, income, and social media usage provides valuable insights into their influence on the study's outcomes and sheds light on their practical implications.



Age emerged as a significant control variable with notable implications for consumer engagement. Younger participants displayed higher levels of engagement with social media marketing efforts. This finding suggests that SMEs targeting younger age groups may have a greater chance of fostering consumer engagement through social media platforms. On the other hand, older participants might require distinct marketing strategies that align with their preferences and interests to effectively engage them in the online sphere.

Gender, another crucial control variable, yielded interesting results. Female participants exhibited higher levels of engagement with SMEs through social media channels. This finding implies the importance of gender-specific marketing approaches, tailoring campaigns to address the preferences and needs of female consumers. Such targeted strategies could lead to improved engagement and brand loyalty among this segment.

Occupation also had an impact on consumer engagement in social media marketing. Professionals and students showed higher engagement compared to other occupational groups. This insight suggests that businesses should focus on designing marketing content and promotions that resonate with the interests and demands of these specific occupational segments, potentially leading to more fruitful outcomes.

Income, as a control variable, played a noteworthy role in influencing consumer engagement through social media. Participants with higher income levels demonstrated greater engagement with SMEs' marketing efforts. Consequently, SMEs aiming to target higher-income consumers should prioritize social media marketing, recognizing its potential to effectively engage and appeal to this demographic.

Social media usage, an essential control variable, unsurprisingly showed a direct relationship with consumer engagement. Participants with higher social media usage were more engaged with SMEs' online content. This underscores the significance of social media as a powerful tool for businesses to interact with their target audience and build lasting customer relationships.

In essence, the analysis and discussion of the control variables have provided valuable insights into their impact on consumer engagement in social media marketing for Bangladeshi SMEs. Recognizing the implications of age, gender, occupation, income, and social media usage allows businesses to refine their marketing strategies, catering to the preferences and characteristics of different consumer segments. The researcher believes that the SMEs can



enhance their consumer engagement and acquisition efforts, by strategically leveraging the power of social media and ultimately leading to improved business performance and sustainable growth.

6.3 Research Contributions

This thesis has made several theoretical and practical contributions by constructing and analysing the conceptual model that determines the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement and consumer purchase action in today's digital world. The study's quantitative results review individual characteristics through descriptive and statistical analysis, identifying a distinct set of individual characteristics that enables SMEs to understand the individual's behaviours and attitudes. The results also highlight the numerous opportunities that social sites offer SMEs to reach and engage their potential customers through various online activities. Fundamentally, the study identifies several aspects as contributions to literature, both theoretical and practical, and the study examines these contributions in the sections below.

6.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

The first contribution of this research is to give a detailed knowledge of the function of social media platforms and their significance in terms of technological progress, which may lead to greater ease of access between consumers and entrepreneurs. Social media can be used for a variety of activities such as cooperating, exchanging evidence, allocating and transferring messages over an electric standard, appealing jointly and interrelating, allocating fillings such as thoughts, texts, and images, and it has become an essential component in many businesses. Social media was utilised to link individuals, and blogs were used to argue certain issues in front of the public. However, other trades are now studying these networks to progress and strengthen their communication networks for customers by identifying new chances. Simon et al., (2016) and Tafesse (2016) contended that, the widespread use of online social platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook have aided SMEs in finding trends, individual traits, and culture without regard to regional borders. Social media is taking power away from marketers and giving it to consumers. According to the survey results, most people utilise social media channels many times every day, and they prefer to use these online platforms to keep



involved with companies. The findings of this study recommend the marketers take advantage of this chance to advertise their goods by targeting prospective customers on social media platforms.

Moreover, one way that consumers might discover new products is through the market. Social media networks are used to discover trends, compare items, and, most importantly, read other users' reviews to build engagement. Second, this study shows how modern ways of social media marketing are replacing old and traditional ways of marketing which helps to build customers' trust and interest in brands that are likely to be good for them (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Many small businesses and the latest brands cannot afford to run marketing campaigns on TV and other traditional ways to reach their potential customers because it is too expensive. However, social media marketing has changed the ways people talk to each other and gives them new ways to reach their potential customers (Singh and Diamond, 2012). Also, social media channels offer SMEs the same marketing opportunities as large businesses. These social platforms are extremely helpful for making strategies based on how people act and what they like. Marketing blogs that are on the forefront tend to be active on important social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. The main goal of blog marketing is to reach as many potential customers as possible.

The research also shows how important trust is. A consumer's trust in a brand is seen as a key to a successful purchase. It also shows a common mistake that businesses make, which is that they do not think about the two people who are doing business with them. Any business that is about to start up needs respect and loyalty from its stakeholders. In the same way, businesses should see their customers as allies and send them messages that are tailored to their interests. Trust is measured as a mutual desire to continue a common and promising relationship that help customer to take purchase decision (Luck and Ginanti, 2013). So, if one party acts dishonestly without the other's knowledge, it can lead to the end of the relationship. A successful brand works hard to build strong, long-term relationships with potential customers. This makes it easy for businesses to invest in brand improvement. Thirdly, the thesis finds critical social media marketing elements that might increase consumer engagement. Word of mouth is one of the most effective ways to set up a brand, second only to the product itself, and it is crucial for fostering brand engagement (Vark, 2007). Customer satisfaction is considered a key factor in deciding customer engagement and brand retention since it increases the feeling of value associated with a business. By connecting these trusted customers through various



social marketing initiatives, it has been shown that public confidence can be expanded (Khan and Fasih, 2014). These related customers then help to increase customer engagement among other customers through word-of-mouth marketing, which is highly valuable for any brand and encourages customer retention (Tripathi, 2014).

Fourthly, this research offers SMEs a wider understanding of consumer engagement in value development from the customer's viewpoint. Social media plays a crucial role in consumer engagement, and the results of this research illuminate the relationship between customer interaction with companies through social media by shedding light on several areas. Social media supplies online networks for interpersonal connection and brand involvement (Stelzner, 2009). Since social media marketing activities feature entertainment, interaction, e-word of mouth, web and apps, and online communities. Kim and Ko (2016) reported that, these activities may increase customer engagement. In addition, entertainment/hedonic is seen as a significant part that stimulates people's attitude/behaviour, stability, and continuity to follow up, and that generates pleasant sentiments and emotions in the followers' attitude toward a brand.

Finally, this research gives insight into customer behaviours and preferences in everyday life. It was needed to analyse the customers' everyday interests to supply the best plan for engaging and attracting them. To carry out this goal, this research had various questions in an online survey, and the results gave significant information and insight into their preferences (Chapter, 4). According to the literature, one of the critical components that stimulate people's behaviour is entertainment, which builds favourable sentiments and emotions about the brand in the minds of social media network followers. Manthiou et al., (2013) demonstrated that, a user emphasises the material that piques his interest if he finds it attractive and humorous. Businesses may encourage people to like and share enjoyable information in this manner and use it to their advantage by reaching a wide audience (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015). This research supplies an overview of the customer engagement process, answering the issues of when, where, and how consumers may be engaged. In addition, this research analysed which behaviours are engaged in the effective promotional process. Precisely, the findings of this thesis show that most consumers prefer to interact with companies through social media and actively take part in social activities started by businesses.



Furthermore, these customers often explore and connect with international brands throughout the day. It is obvious from descriptive studies that consumers like discussions and contacts with SMEs. The research was able to create a conceptual model by evaluating the information through the lens of the theoretical model. This conceptual model illustrates the influence of social media marketing settings on engagement by proving how SMEs can be used as a marketing platform. The conceptual model highlights the importance of three significant stimulating factors that were originally responsible for the consumer engagement, trust, and perceived value of the social media marketing phenomenon, as shown in a few social networks in Bangladesh. These three deciding variables are the relative merits of adopting social media as a marketing platform and the relevant client involvement with social media. Additionally, the final framework created for professionals serves as a managerial tool that SMEs, entrepreneurs, and managers may utilise to create an efficient social media marketing strategy. In Bangladesh, there are no regulations for small enterprises about the use of social media for marketing and business-related activities; thus, the research's management contribution in the form of a framework is vitally important. The framework that was created defines the fundamental social media concepts that may be used to make effective and efficient use of this medium. By finding the aspects that need to be considered, the team and management may effectively manage their time and resources using this framework. Also, the suggestions and suggested strategic actions for each principle will help practitioners plan and run their business social media sites in the right way.

6.3.2 Practical Contributions

This thesis was able to make some practical contributions to helping SMEs reach their potential customers through social media marketing strategies on international networking platforms. First, like some other studies (e.g., Erkan and Evans, 2016; Kim and Song, 2018), this research uses a sample of people (male and female) between the ages of 18 and 60 who are active on social media and follow international brands. This sample is not a general consumer sample. This study figured out which types of customers are more likely to find out about brand-sponsored events on social media than people who mostly use traditional media. This helped Researcher figure out why customers interact with brands. In the same way, social media networks run online businesses and supply a lot of information for SMEs that want to go online and improve their marketing by building a brand. The importance of different social media sites has grown a lot, and it shows in how they look online.



Second, this research was done during a pandemic using an online survey through the Microsoft Survey tool. The results are vastly different and help us understand how brands and customers are doing in the current pandemic, while also giving an idea how the situation will be for future crisis. On the other hand, many studies show that many SMEs would rather use tried-and-true marketing methods than use different blogs to address marketing issues that may not be related to customer issues.

Third, people between the ages of 18 and 60 were chosen as the target groups for this research by using an online survey. This way, the results can be used for all modern consumers who use social media sites. Based on the descriptive and econometric results of this study, if social media is used as a way for customers and brands to share information and talk to each other, it will lead to a higher level of brand awareness and consumer engagement. So, SMEs can improve their brands by looking at the traits of individuals in terms of products and brands and figuring out what they mean. In the next section, researcher talk about what this research means considering these contributions.

6.4 Contributions to the SMEs Sector

The findings of this research provide SMEs with significant chances to perfect their product communication activities, including time and cost which makes it easier for them to connect with large audiences. The researcher recommends that SMEs develop their brand profiles, take part in social media activities, and produce pictures and video material to share with huge customer populations to draw people in and keep them interested in their businesses. The results also show how social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube may aid SMEs in discovering trends, personality traits, and cultural norms without being constrained by geographical limits. Additionally, the findings prove that contemporary customers like sharing their experiences with friends, family, and other online groups. This may lead to word-of-mouth advertising, which is crucial for building brand recognition. Like this, having a good brand experience increases consumer happiness, which is seen as a key factor in increasing customer engagement and brand loyalty. The report recommends that SMEs support social activities that foster customer-to-customer relationships and motivate them to share their experiences.



Additionally, it has been shown that social media platforms can increase customer satisfaction by connecting these satisfied customers through various social marketing activities. These satisfied customers then help to increase brand awareness among other consumers through word-of-mouth marketing, which is highly valuable for any brand and fosters consumer loyalty (Khan and Fasih, 2014). Furthermore, present research data and literature have shown that social media platforms make it simpler to engage current customers than conventional methods do, and that good customer feedback may foster positive word-of-mouth and increase customer satisfaction, both of which promote consumer loyalty. The study confirms and clarifies that people utilise online social networks to discover and understand market styles and trends as well as other sought-after information. As a result, SMEs with a social media presence may also discover the most contemporary trends and customer behaviour. User-generated content (UGC) has recently become increasingly popular, and consumers highly value its authenticity. Results (Graph 20) write down that 74% of respondents agree that they trust user-generated content (UGC) and prefer to buy a product that a friend or family member has recommended. It also appeared from the study that these user- or consumer-generated videos supply in-depth information about the product.

It is advised that SMEs seek out experts and social media influencers that have a large following so that they may utilise their goods and supply detailed reviews on social media platforms. The study's findings also offer SMEs and marketers several other contemporary consumers' preferences and patterns of daily routines about brands and products on social media sites, including specific methods for finding product information, whether they read product reviews before making a purchase, whether they think reviews are reliable, how they prefer to contact brands, etc. Pursuant to this study, social media sites improve interactions between customers and businesses, which boosts consumer engagement. Social media platforms provide a variety of benefits, but they also come with several problems and challenges. As indicated by the study's findings, consumers do not buy products with negative reviews, so SMEs should handle this feedback as soon as possible. Negative reviews and feedback can seriously damage a brand's image and reputation (Ullrich and Brunner, 2015; Cheung et al., 2009), which will undoubtedly make it more difficult to attract and engage customers. Additionally, the study's quantitative findings prove that customers check product reviews before making a purchase and believe the evaluations posted on social media platforms; therefore, SMEs' marketers must carefully manage both positive and negative reviews. To handle crises more effectively, such as fake news (Berthon et al., 2018), brand sabotage (Kahr et al., 2016), negative publicity



(Gendel-Guterman and Levy, 2017), negative reviews (Ullrich and Brunner, 2015), and collaborative brand attacks or online firestorms (Rauschnabel et al., 2016), this research advises SMEs to allocate adequate time for these social media channels. Because reputational dangers may often outweigh reputation advantages on social media networks, social media marketing must be managed appropriately.

6.5 Practical Implications

This study supplies several implications and directions for SMEs in the formulation of social media marketing strategies and initiatives that encourage and increase consumer engagement through social media. First, the social media users who took part in the production of this thesis and related their experiences with worldwide companies and various social media networks tended to be modern or young consumers between the ages of 18 and 60 who were regularly active on social media. Most of them were familiar with the purpose of this investigation. Through social media, they have communicated their purchasing preferences and experiences with items and businesses. According to the study's findings, SMEs and major brands may set up and maintain a long-term engagement with these modern consumers by making strategic use of social media platforms, and marketers can increase consumer engagement with their current customers by employing social media activities to increase customer trust. Similarly, research suggests that brands must make added efforts to include entertaining and other essential elements in their marketing campaigns on social media channels to attract more consumers and that marketers must continue posting on these channels often to keep their engagement. Numerous participants agreed, based on the results, that they use their spare time on social media channels to search for trends, fashion-related information, humorous videos, user-generated videos, and new companies or items. Furthermore, the data show that customers are heavily influenced by user-generated content and are more likely to share information after using a product or brand. Based on quantifiable data, the report offers the following tips for marketers:

1. Helping social media marketing that increases customer-to-customer engagement

According to the quantitative results of descriptive and statistical research, consumers spend most of their free time on social media platforms, where they want to share their purchase experiences and other relevant information with other customers. As a result, marketers must construct their social or other marketing activities in such a manner that they can encourage



consumers to communicate and share thoughts with other prospective customers. Furthermore, the data write down that, although contemporary consumers are more autonomous than ever before, they still largely rely on friends and family's recommendations and other consumers' views, buying experiences, and reference groups on social media. As a result, marketers must persuade these customers to ask their colleagues or friends to take part in brand activities with them.

2. Encouraging customers to share their interests by helping social media

According to the literature, social media allows people who share similar interests to come together and share their opinions, ideas, and other valuable information. The findings also show that consumers have more opportunities to interact with other users who share similar interests on social media. As a result, brand marketers can create various interesting topics (such as travelling, film, music, news, and festivals) based on consumer interests to encourage them to share with other users or customers who share similar interests, and then brands can build and expand their relationship with these new consumers on social media following the interaction.

3. Encouraging customers to aid one another via social media

According to research, shoppers want to tell their friends and other internet users about their shopping experiences and thoughts to help them select the best product or service. When they notice questions from others on social media or a brand page, the company's marketers should encourage these customers to aid. Customers who consistently share their knowledge to help others should be rewarded by businesses. Because these favourable consumer encounters may lead to word-of-mouth advertising, which can quickly draw in many added prospective customers.

Comparing social media marketing to other traditional methods like television, radio, and magazines, for example, shows that there are more opportunities to engage and reach modern consumers through social media marketing. This may enable consumers to compare shared interests between brands and themselves, as well as relevant aspects that they need for their purchases. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram promote and target users based on their search habits, opinions, and daily routines. Additionally, the results prove that customers' engagement is also possible when they express their own opinions. This enables SMEs to launch successful campaigns while keeping in mind consumer demands, and it may



also inspire brands to encourage customers by examining the level of interaction with social media activities. The thesis also highlights how crucial it is for customers to contact companies via their chosen social media channels, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok, among others. In a similar vein, research defines the level of client satisfaction while obtaining information through social media networks.

Third, this thesis' descriptive and statistical data prove that raising promotional efforts and taking local conditions into account may both raise brand recognition. According to the results, consumers' prominent levels of happiness and increased customer engagement may be generated if they get prompt responses to their questions from the companies they like. More precisely, the quantitative results show a clear correlation between the rise in happiness and consumer brand knowledge and engagement. In other words, businesses need to employ passionate social media staffs who can try to attract prospective clients and provide them with a feeling of joy when interacting with businesses' social media networks. For example, the results of this study suggest that a brand finds a celebrity or influential person to promote its products on its social media profile.

6.6 Research Limitations

The purpose of this research was to assess the impact and role of social media networks on consumer engagement and consumer purchase action. This thesis has made several significant contributions to knowledge and practise, but it also has several limitations.

First, there are a lot more aspects that may not have been considered when analysing customer connections with brands on social media. This research has found several social media usage and consumer behaviour elements that might shed light on consumers' online behaviours with their interactions with companies on various social networking platforms. However, because using social media and consumer involvement are the only two criteria that may generate engagement—a notion that is not too complex—further research is necessary to show other characteristics that may show brand awareness. Second, in terms of consumer engagement, this research did not cover the entertainment aspects of social media in precise detail. For instance, celebrity endorsements, which are often employed. A lot of businesses use celebrities as a public relations instrument, but the celebrity chosen must fit with the culture and society. Future research should examine certain topics that should be elaborated on in terms of social media entertainment. Other terms like organic e-WOM and amplified e-WOM also need to be



re-defined and appropriately supported. Third, in terms of the scale of consumer engagement on social media for marketing strategy, this thesis has focused on the positive rather than the negative outcomes of excessive use of social media. However, it is important to learn about the drawbacks and conflicts that may result from the excessive use of social media for brand awareness. By examining these drawbacks, the researcher will be able to better understand how consumers interact with brands on social networking sites. Fourth, the findings of this research are relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic period. During the pandemic crisis, the respondents' data was gathered. Customers' opinions may have altered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as changing consumer buying patterns because of the pandemic helped to increase SME sales because of the lockdown and people's fear of getting the virus, which kept them away from the physical shop. Furthermore, the researcher only collected individual responses; it is conceivable to conduct future studies in which reactions from branded firms towards their prospective clients are also obtained. Another important concern and limitation of this research is the early and non-response bias. The researcher overlooked the importance of considering the early and non-response biases during data analysis. As stated in section 3.7.2, early and non-response biases can alter the results of quantitative analysis, therefore, future research can be conducted by implementing strategies to address and mitigate early and non-response bias to ensure a more diverse and representative sample.

Fifth, the study attempted to collect a sample of ($n = 350$) to generate a consistent outcome of the regression model, but 21 of the respondents' data were removed in terms of clearing data, and the target respondents of this sample were individuals aged 18–60, indicating that the findings from the online survey could not provide very comprehensive findings. For future research, it will be important to talk to people older than 25 to get a full picture of how customers engage with companies through social media. This will aid SMEs in developing an effective social media marketing strategy.

6.7 Directions to the Future Research

The purpose of this section is to supply ideas for future studies to expand our knowledge of consumer engagement strategies and social media adoption. Initially, this research tried to build a case study on SMEs' use of social media networking sites to engage prospective clients. This thesis aims to figure out the features and characteristics of targeted clients using social media platforms. Social media marketing tactics provide SMEs and businesses with a cost-effective way to market their products, but a lack of understanding and improper methods might be a



barrier. It is well acknowledged that SMEs are often unable to compete with major corporations due to limited resources and ineffective marketing techniques. Due to the reasons listed above, it is suggested that future studies investigate why SMEs inside of large organisations fail in terms of their potential talents and how to create the right resources for brand engagement. Secondly, by examining social media and consumer involvement, this thesis shows useful implications using a descriptive study and multiple regression approach. To gain insight into the consumer engagement process, however, new, and alternative methods, such as interviews and experiments, are essential and must be adopted in future research, as new methods that are connected to an individual's nervous system can supply more correct insights into the consumer mind and logic. These new tactics may aid in obtaining more valuable implications, which will eventually aid SMBs and businesses to contact prospective consumers worldwide.

Thirdly, future research must compare customer behaviours, preferences, and engagement logic across several cultures. This sort of research would be able to analyse the psychological elements that affect western and non-western consumers' online social behaviour. In addition, future research might analyse brand comparisons by including demographic and cultural characteristics that affect customers. In addition, future studies may propose finding alternative online platforms for brand awareness outside of social media, in both Western and non-Western cultures, which may have important consequences for the development of marketing strategies by firms. According to the results of this thesis, brand engagement is favourably correlated with the usage of electronic media, and a large majority of customers are happy with online purchasing when positive customer evaluations and consumer-generated content are considered. The findings also highlighted that the increased usage of social media in the present day is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic scenario, so future studies may explore the impact of the pandemic condition on buying choices and social behaviour participation among people.



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Appendices

Appendix 1- Social Media Definitions:

Author(s)	Definition / Description
Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010	A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content'
Schaupp & Belanger, 2013	Social media creates value for SMEs in regard to internal operations, marketing, customer services, and sales which are very important factors in case of small and medium sized enterprises
Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane and Azad, 2013.	We use the term social media to refer to a group of Internet-based technologies that allows users to easily create, edit, evaluate and/or link to content or to other creators of content
Kane , Alavi, Labianca and Borgatti, 2014	Social media networks possesses four essential features, such that users (1) have a unique user profile that is constructed by the user, by members of their network, and by the platform; (2) access digital content through, and protect it from, various search mechanisms provided by the platform; (3) can articulate a list of other users with whom they share a relational connection; and (4) view and traverse their connections and those made by others on the platform.
Scott and Orlikowski, 2014	Social media websites are characterized by the active engagement and online contributions of large numbers of people across time and space. Such websites depend predominantly on what is known as user-generated content, provided through members ongoing and often informal contributions.
Atanassova and Clark, 2015	Social media enables two-way real time communication, tacit information dissemination, engagement with this information, and relationship building.
Parven, Jaafar and Ainin, 2016	Social media enables open communication, which helps organizations to understand customer needs and motivates them to respond proactively and efficiently to those needs.
Zhang, Guo, Hu, & Liu, 2017	Social media allows the users, without any need to physical presence, to communicate and generate content
Humaid and Ibrahim, 2019	Social media enables and supports information sharing, communicating, and collaboration that allows businesses to accelerate their work by working in global markets.



Appendix 2-Defination of SMEs in Bangladesh:

Table 1. Definition of SME in Bangladesh (Note 1)

Type	Sector	Fixed asset, other than land and building		Employed manpower
		BDT (In Million)	U.S Dollar*	
Micro	Manufacturing	1.0 -7.5	\$ 12, 294 - \$ \$ 92, 213	16-30
	Service	Less than 1.0	Less than \$ 12, 294	15
	Business	Less than 1.0	Less than \$ 12, 294	15
Small	Manufacturing	7.5 -150	\$ 92, 213 - \$ 18,44,258	31-120
	Service	1.0-20	\$ 12, 294 - \$245,872	16-50
	Business	1.0-20	\$ 12, 294 - \$245,872	16-50
Medium	Manufacturing	150 -500	\$ 18,44,258 - \$ 61,47,527	121-300
	Service	20-300	\$245,872-\$ 3,687,450	51-120

* 1 USD = 81.3430 BDT (Note 2).

Appendix 3- Previous research on social media marketing:

Main Author(s)	Region	Research Objectives	Approach	Method
Kim, Lee, and Lee (2011)	US	Analyse Web 2.0 usage	Qualitative	Secondary data
Michaelidou et al. (2011)	UK	Usage, barriers and measurement of social media marketing	Quantitative	Questionnaires
Barnes et.al (2012)	UK	Investigate the benefits of Web 2.0 and characterize the type	Qualitative	Case study Semi structured interview
Durkin & McGowan (2012)	Europe	Exploring social media adoption in small to medium-sized enterprises in Ireland	Qualitative	Case study Action research
Marshall et.al (2012)	US and UK	The impact of social media and related technology on the selling environment	Qualitative	Focus group Semi structured interview
Witzig, Spencer, and Galvin (2012)	US	To determine the extent of Linked In usage compared to business organization	Qualitative	Secondary data
Fosso and Carter (2014)	Australia, US, UK	Social media usage and impact to SMEs	Quantitative	Questionnaires
Schaupp (2014)	US	The antecedent and value of social media for small businesses	Qual → Quan	Semi structured interview Questionnaires
Janice (2014)	Malaysia	Analyzing the use of Web 2.0 for brand awareness and competitive advantage	Quantitative	Questionnaires



Appendix 4- Online survey questionnaire in English language

Impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement and acquisition.

Dear Participant

I am conducting a survey on how social media impact on consumer engagement and acquisition in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. The questionnaire is completely anonymous and prepared only for my academic doctorate research. The topic of the research is, "Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer engagement and acquisition: An empirical Study of Bangladeshi SMEs ". I am requested you to spend few of your valuable time to express your opinion concerning the survey questions.

* Required

Section : 1 Demographic Variables

1. What is your gender ? *

Mark only one oval.

- MALE
- Female
- Prefer not to say

2. What is your age group ? *

Mark only one oval.

- 18-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years
- 61 and above



3. What is your highest educational level ? *

Mark only one oval.

- BELOW SSC/GCE
- SSC/GCE (General Certificate of Education)
- HSC/ 'A' LEVEL
- Foundation
- Bachelor
- Masters
- Others

4. What is your employment status ? *

Mark only one oval.

- EMPLOYED
- UNEMPLOYED
- SELF EMPLOYMENT
- OTHERS

5. What is your monthly household income (BDT Taka) *

Mark only one oval.

- BELOW 50,000
- 50,001-150,000
- 150,001-250,000
- 250,001-350,000
- Over 350,000

Section :2 Social Media Marketing Antecedents



6. Do you use Social Media Network *

IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES THEN PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION OTHERWISE GO TO THE STRAIGHT TO THE Q:28

Mark only one oval.

- YES
 No Skip to question 29

7. Which social media network do you use ? *

Check all that apply.

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	linkedin	whatsapp	Snapchat	Other
Chose all if applies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. How often do you use social media *

Mark only one oval.

- Everyday
 Once a week
 Sometimes in a month
 Occasionally

9. Do you follow online consumer's recommendation to buy a product *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No



10. Do You think social media marketing information are more attractive than traditional marketing (newspapers, magazines, telephone, books) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 NeUtral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

11. Do you follow others product review on social media to take purchase decision *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 strongly disagree

12. Do you find company's apps/websites are more reliable than random platform (Daraz,Chaldal,Rokomari) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree



13. Do you feel happy to buy a product/service that connect you to company website through the social media *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

Section : 3 Social Media Marketing Factors

14. Do you use social media network to find your desire product *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

15. Do you use social media to maintain brand engagement *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree



16. Do you believe that social media network improves customer relationship via two-way product feedback *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

17. Does social media platform advertisement attract you more than traditional marketing(Books,TV, radio) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

TRUST

18. Does Social media network have a higher reliability than traditional media (Tv, radio) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree



19. Do you believe that Social media is more reliable than other marketing dimension *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

20. Social media changes your initial purchase choice after attaining relevant information *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

21. Do you buy a product/service which is recommended by friend or family *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

Perceived value



22. Comments from social media changes your value towards a brand/product/service *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

23. Social media tools(BuzzSumo, Google Trends) have features that entice you to ask for recommendations of a product *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

24. Social media network contribute towards your perception of product based on the updated information *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neutral
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

Consumer Engagement



25. Does feedbacks on social media affect your purchase behaviour *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

26. Does online sales service gives you strength to purchase more regularly *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

27. Social media allows you to communicate with companies that produce products directly. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree



28. You share comments about a product to friends via social media after a purchase *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Non Social Media User

29. Which platform do you like to do shopping *

Mark only one oval.

- Store website
- Offline
- company outlet

30. Do you support the idea of using social media for online shopping in Bangladesh *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Netural
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

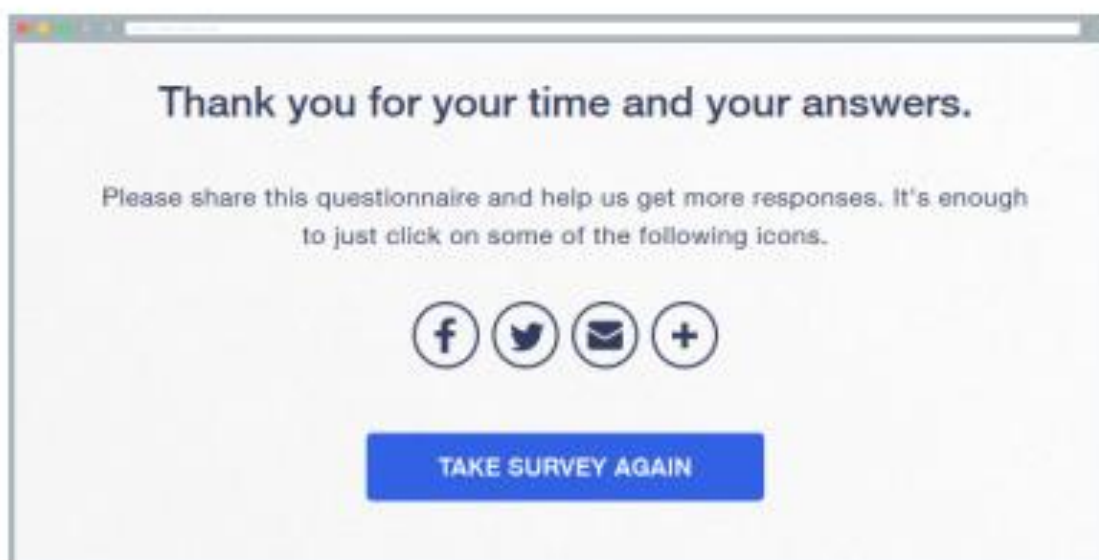


31. Do you get motivated to buy products that are advertised on social media *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SERVEY FORM



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Appendix 5- Survey questionnaire in Bangla Language

জরিপের পত্রখানা

প্রিয় অংশগ্রহণকারী,

আমি একটি সমীক্ষা পরিচালনা করছি, যার প্রশ্নসমূহ সম্পূর্ণ নামহীন এবং শুধুমাত্র আমার একাডেমিক ডক্টরেট গবেষণার জন্য প্রস্তুত করেছি। গবেষণার বিষয় হল, “ভোক্তাদের সম্পৃক্ততা এবং অধিগ্রহণে সামাজিক যোগাযোগে বাজারজাতকরণের প্রভাব: বাংলাদেশি এসএমইগুলির একটি অভিজ্ঞতামূলক গবেষণা”। আপনার কাছে অনুরোধ, আপনি আপনার মূল্যবান সময়ের কিছু ব্যয় করে সমীক্ষার প্রশ্নগুলির বিষয়ে আপনার মতামত প্রকাশ করবেন।

জনসংখ্যার ভিন্নতা

1. লিঙ্গ নির্বাচন করুন

- পুরুষ
- মহিলা

2. বয়স

- ১৮-৩০ বছর
- ৩১-৪০ বছর
- ৪১-৫০ বছর
- ৫১-৬০ বছর
- উর্ধ্বে ৬০ বছর

3. আয়ের পরিমাণ (বার্ষিক)

- ৮,৫৮,০০০/= নিম্নে
- ৮,৫৮,০০১-১৭,১৬,০০০
- ১৭,১৬,০০১ -৩০,০০,০০০
- ৩০,০০,০০১-৩৪,৩২,০০০
- ৩৪,৩২,০০০/= উর্ধ্বে



4. পেশা

- ছাত্র/ছাত্রী
- চাকরিজীবী
- শিক্ষক
- পেশাদার
- অন্যান্য

5. শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা

- ফাউন্ডেশন কোর্স
- উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক
- স্নাতক
- স্নাতকোত্তর
- অন্যান্য (পি এইচ ডি/ ডক্টরাল)

6. সামাজিক যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম ব্যবহারের কারণ

- কর্ম সম্পর্কিত
- পড়াশোনা
- বিনোদন
- সেবা সমূহ
- পণ্য ক্রয়

7. সামাজিক যোগাযোগের কোন মাধ্যমটি আপনি বেশি ব্যবহার করে থাকেন? (আপনি ব্যবহার অনুযায়ী আপনার মাধ্যমগুলো নির্বাচন করতে পারেন)

- সামাজিক যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম (ফেসবুক, লিংকডিন)
- মাইক্রোলগিং (টুইটার)
- ব্লগ/ফোরাম
- সামাজিক বুক মার্কিং সাইট/ সামাজিক খবর
- ছবি এবং ভিডিও বিনিময় সাইট (ফ্লিকার, ইউটিউব, ইন্সটাগ্রাম, স্নেপ চ্যাট, পিন্টারেস্ট)

8. আপনি কি পণ্য ক্রয়ের জন্য সামাজিক মাধ্যমগুলো ব্যবহার করে থাকেন?

- হ্যাঁ
- না



জরিপের প্রশ্নাবলী

ভোক্তার সম্পৃক্ততা এবং অধিগ্রহণে সামাজিক যোগাযোগের মাধ্যমে বাজারজাতকরণ এর প্রভাব খুঁজে বের করার জন্য অনুগ্রহ করে নিম্নলিখিত প্রশ্নগুলিতে আপনার ভোট দিন।

দৃঢ়ভাবে অসম্মতি	অসম্মতি	নিরপেক্ষ	একমত	দৃঢ়ভাবে একমত
1	2	3	4	5

Scale		1	2	3	4	5
Code	SOCIAL MEDIA ANTECENTS					
ANT: 1	আপনি কি কোন পণ্য কিনতে অনলাইন সম্প্রদায়ীদের সুপারিশ অনুসরণ করেন?					
ANT: 2	আপনি কি দৃঢ়-উত্পাদিত বিপণন তথ্য ঐতিহ্যগত বিপণনের চেয়ে বেশি আকর্ষণীয় মনে করেন?					
ANT: 3	আপনি কি কোন পণ্য ক্রয়ের সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়ার সময় সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে অন্যদের পণ্য ধারণা পর্যালোচনা করেন?					
ANT: 4	আপনি কি কোম্পানির অ্যাপস/ওয়েবসাইটকে অন্যান্য প্ল্যাটফর্মের চেয়ে বেশি নির্ভরযোগ্য মনে করেন?					
ANT: 5	আপনি কি সরাসরি দোকানের চেয়ে সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে পণ্য কিনতে অধিকতর খুশি হোন?					
CODE	SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING					



SMM:1	আপনি আপনার পছন্দসই পণ্য খুঁজে পেতে কি সামাজিক মাধ্যম অন্তর্জাল ব্যবহার করেন?					
SMM: 2	আপনি কি ব্র্যান্ডের ধারাবাহিকতা বজায় রাখার জন্য সামাজিক মাধ্যম ব্যবহার করে থাকেন?					
SMM: 2	আপনি কি বিশ্বাস করেন যে সামাজিক মাধ্যমের অন্তর্জাল দ্বিমুখী পণ্য প্রতিক্রিয়ার মাধ্যমে গ্রাহকের সম্পর্ক উন্নত করে?					
SMM: 2	সামাজিক মাধ্যমের বিজ্ঞাপন কি আপনাকে ঐতিহ্যগত পরিবর্তনে বেশি আকর্ষণ করে?					
TRUST						
TR: 1	সামাজিক মাধ্যম কি প্রথাগত মাধ্যমগুলোর চেয়ে বেশি বিশ্বাসযোগ্য?					
TR: 2	আপনি কি বিশ্বাস করেন যে সামাজিক মাধ্যম অন্যান্য বিপণনের মাত্রার চেয়ে বেশি নির্ভরযোগ্য?					
TR: 3	সামাজিক মাধ্যমে প্রাসঙ্গিক তথ্য পাওয়ার পর আপনার প্রাথমিক ক্রয় পছন্দ কি পরিবর্তন হয় ?					
TR: 4	আপনি কি এমন একটি পণ্য/পরিষেবা কিনছেন বা নিয়েছেন যা একজন বন্ধু বা পরিবারের দ্বারা সুপারিশ করা হয়েছে?					
PERCEIVED VALUE						
PV: 1	সামাজিক মাধ্যমের উপাধানগুলি একটি ব্র্যান্ড/পণ্য/পরিষেবার প্রতি আপনার মান পরিবর্তন করে					
PV: 2	সামাজিক মাধ্যমের উপাধানগুলিতে এমন বৈশিষ্ট্য রয়েছে যা আপনাকে পণ্যের সুপারিশ চাইতে প্রলুব্ধ করে					



PV: 3	সামাজিক মাধ্যমের উপাধানগুলি আপডেট করা তথ্য কি পণ্য সম্পর্কে আপনার উপলব্ধিতে অবদান রাখে?						
PV: 4	আপনি সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে বিজ্ঞাপন দেখে কি পণ্য কিনতে অনুপ্রাণিত হন?						
	CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT						
CE: 1	সামাজিক যোগাযোগে মাধ্যমের প্রতিক্রিয়া কি আপনার ক্রয় এবং ভবিষ্যতের ক্রয়কেও প্রভাবিত করে।						
CE: 2	বিক্রয়োত্তর পরিষেবা কি আপনাকে আত্মবিশ্বাসের সাথে ক্রয় করার শক্তি দেয়?						
CE: 3	সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যম আপনাকে সরাসরি পণ্য উত্পাদন করে এমন সংস্থাগুলির সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে দেয় কিনা।						
CE: 4	আপনি কোন পণ্য ক্রয়ের পরে কি সামাজিক যোগাযোগের মাধ্যমে বন্ধুদের কাছে সেই সম্পর্কে মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করেন?						



Appendix 6- Ethical consent form

Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate a short Internet survey for “Investigating impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement and acquisition in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. Currently I am doing DBA at University of waled trinity saint David London. I am conducting this research as part of my DBA thesis project.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement and acquisition in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs You can participate for this survey by clicking provided web link where this letter let you know the background of survey. Your participation is voluntary and you may avoid answering if you thought, this is not high time to do it.

All your answers will remain confidential. Data from this research will be safely stored, as declared in privacy policies of surveys. Even the researcher, will not know the identity of the respondents.

If you do agree to participate in my research, please answer the questions of the survey to the best of your ability. It should take 5-10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be automatically stored, and I will only collect mass data.

If you have any questions about this survey, privacy, or goals of research, please email me at 1805534@student.uwtsd.ac.uk Sincere and full answers would help me to gain my target research objectives.

Thank you for your help in my research.

Kind Regards,

Mohammad Mofizur Rahamn



Appendix 7- Pilot Test results

For the intended study to conduct, a pilot test is required before collecting data from the survey questionnaire can be started. It is necessary for assessing the validity of the study in the instrumentation validation process. The pilot study provides additional enhancements to the questionnaire as it helps to assess the quality of the question set.

A sample survey questionnaire was prepared and provided to a group of people in Bangladesh. After the end of the survey period, 16 responses were recorded. Out of these 16 people, 56.3% were male participants, 37.5% were female and the remaining 6.2% of participants preferred not to reveal their gender. Again, most of the participants (43.8%) belonged to the youth population (aged between 18 and 30). 31.3% of participants were from 31 to 40 years old. 12.5% of participants each belonged to the age group between 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 years old. On average, completing the questionnaire takes 10-12 minutes. This duration was specifically mentioned during the invitation for data collection.

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER

16 responses

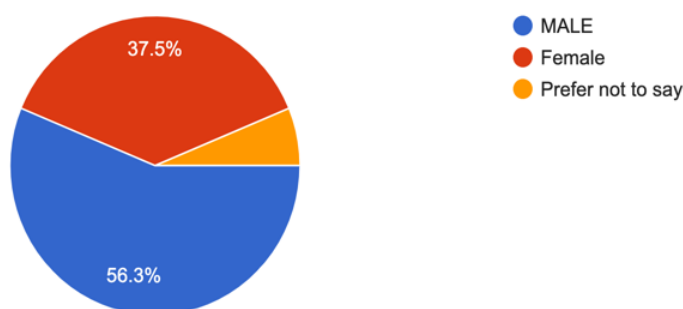


Figure 0-1: Gender information of pilot test



WHAT IS YOUR AGE GROUP

16 responses

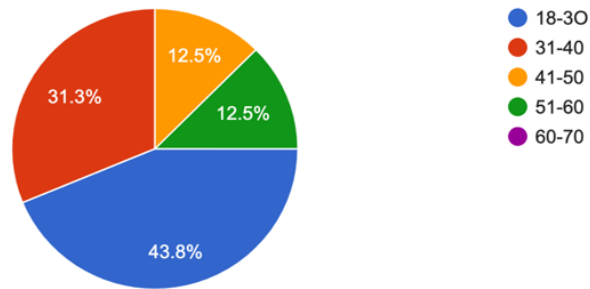


Figure 0-2: Age information of pilot test

WHAT IS YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS

16 responses

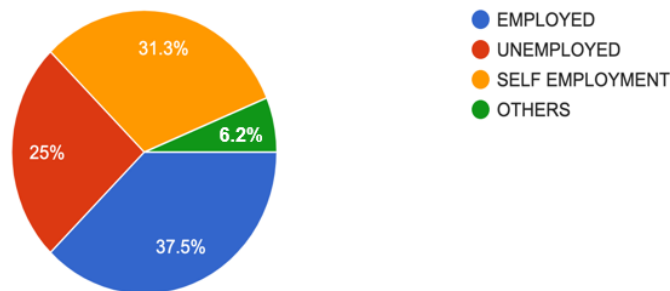


Figure 0-3: Employment information of pilot test

Table 0-1: Results of internal consistency test

Variable	Description	Value	Internal Consistency
K	No. of Item	21	Acceptable
ΣS^2Y	Sum of Item Variance	20.3565089	
S^2X	Variance of Total Score	63.6686391	
a	Cronbach's alpha	0.71	

The questionnaire was prepared by exploring a range of literature and therefore, the validity of the instrument was justified. Moreover, only a few modifications were suggested due to the robustness of the questionnaire. This ensures the face validity of the instrument. Data gathered went through a reliability and correlation assessment which are beneficial for assisting Researcher in justifying the reliability and validity of the instrument beforehand.



An internal consistency test was performed on the pilot data where the alpha value (Cronbach's alpha) was found to be $\alpha = 0.71$ (Table 0-1) which lies above the recommended threshold of 0.7. There were 21 fields of interest which has a variance of 63.6686391. The correlation between the items has been calculated where most of the items show a value above the rule of thumb value that is 0.3 with a few exceptions. The negative correlation between SMANT and CE indicates that there is an opposite relationship between these two variables. The summary of the correlation study is provided in Table 0-2.

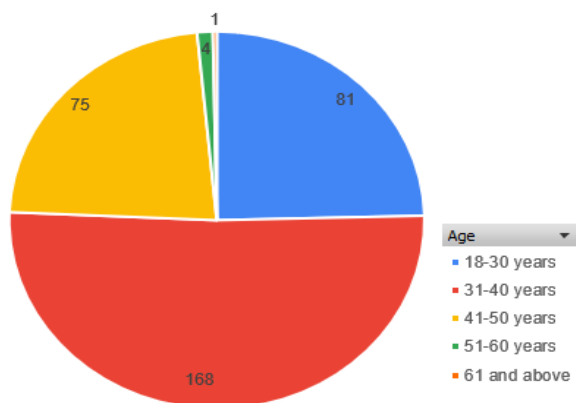
Table 0-2: Correlation study for the items of the pilot study

Inter-Item Correlation					
	SMANT	SMM	TR	PV	CE
SMANT	1.000	.519	.242	.438	-.050
SMM	.519	1.000	.359	.397	.481
TR	.242	.359	1.000	.023	.625
PV	.438	.397	.023	1.000	.305
CE	-.050	.481	.625	.305	1.000

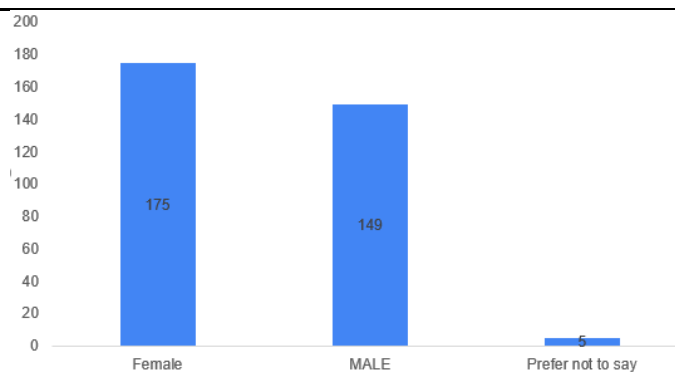


Appendix 8- Graphical representation of the demographics of main data

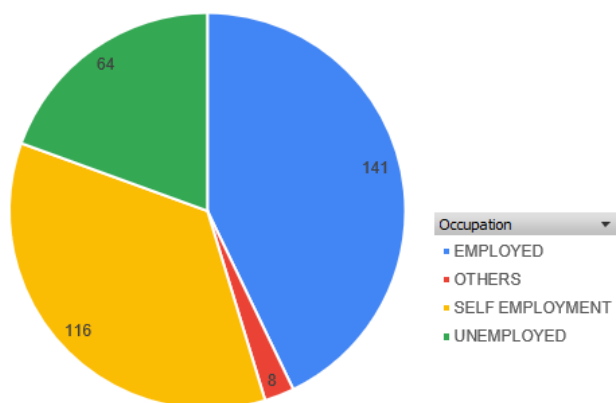
Age



Gender

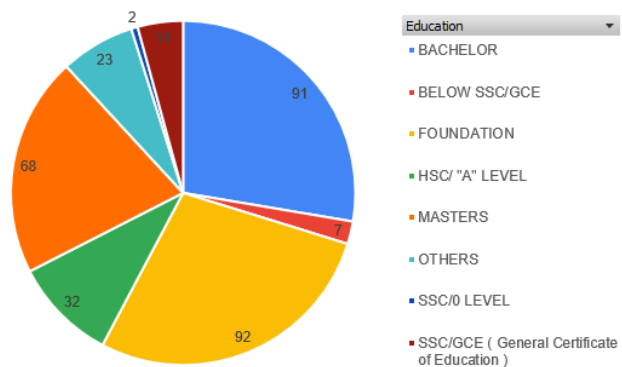


Employment

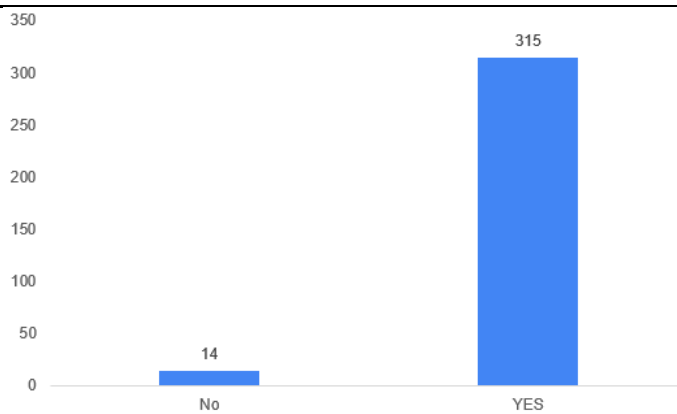




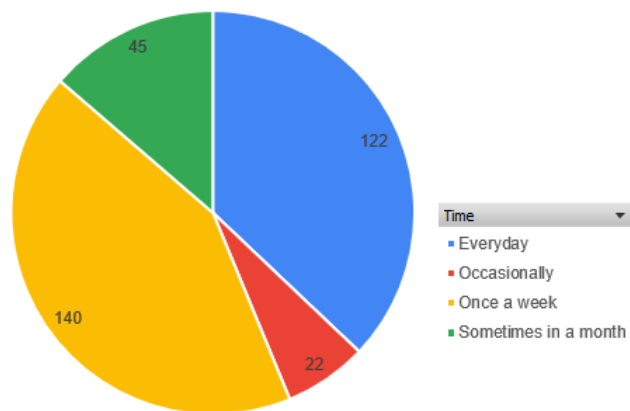
Education



Social media usage



Frequency of social media usage





Appendix 9- Final round of group analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.792
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2245.029
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

Communalities					
	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
SMANT2	1.000	.529	Trust1	1.000	.625
SMANT3	1.000	.512	Trust2	1.000	.691
SMANT4	1.000	.671	Trust3	1.000	.636
SMANT5	1.000	.635	Trust4	1.000	.703
SMFactors1	1.000	.709	PV1	1.000	.414
SMFactors2	1.000	.708	PV2	1.000	.534
SMFactors3	1.000	.609	PV3	1.000	.662
SMFactors4	1.000	.695	Engagment1	1.000	.531
			Engagment2	1.000	.506
			Engagment3	1.000	.645
			Engagment4	1.000	.696
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis					



Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	4.361	31.150	31.150	4.361	31.150	31.150	3.319
2	1.755	12.536	43.686	1.755	12.536	43.686	3.291
3	1.253	8.949	52.635	1.253	8.949	52.635	2.495
4	1.093	7.807	60.442	1.093	7.807	60.442	1.711
5	.893	6.377	66.819				
6	.823	5.876	72.694				
7	.741	5.291	77.985				
8	.604	4.314	82.299				
9	.574	4.099	86.398				
10	.482	3.444	89.842				
11	.415	2.965	92.807				
12	.387	2.768	95.575				
13	.344	2.460	98.035				
14	.275	1.965	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.



Appendix 10- Model fit indicator with suggested links

Model fit indicators in relation to the conceptual model.

	χ^2	df	Absolute fit measure				Incremental fit measures		Parsimonious fit indices
			χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	AGFI	TLI	CFI	NFI
Standard			≤ 3	>0.85	<0.07	>0.85	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9
Achieved before refining	132.253	45	2.94	0.914	0.079	0.896	0.863	0.890	0.892
Achieved after refining	114.672	42	2.73	0.950	0.073	0.907	0.881	0.924	0.888