

# A Pragmatic Study on Viral Marketing Scenario of Bangladesh

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## Abstract

Viral marketing is today's electronic equivalent of old-fashioned word of mouth marketing. In present circumstance, this marketing system may be the most time and cost effective tool for building long term relationship with the customers. The paper aims to identify and analyze the overall system of viral marketing exist in Bangladesh to access the present scenario of this country. At first the study used qualitative approaches to illustrate what viral marketing system (VMS) actually is. The study also attempted to highlight the issues associated with the viral marketing system like significance, classifications, tools, strategies and present situation of Bangladesh. After attaining deeper understanding about VMS through qualitative approaches, the study used quantitative approaches and in this case the primary data has been collected from 100 respondents through survey method. Bangladesh has huge potentials in case of viral marketing system development. But this nation needs to ascertain the scope through development of sufficient technological awareness and internet capacity.

**Keywords:** Viral marketing system, internet marketing, social network marketing system, virtual community and online communication system.

## 1. Introduction:

Viral marketing system engrosses creating an online connotation that entertaining enough to prompt customers to pass the specific information on to others for spreading the message across the Web like a virus at no cost to the advertiser. It is also known as viral advertising, or marketing buzz referring to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks to produce or increase brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives such as offerings sales through self-imitating online processes, equivalent to the broaden of viruses or computer viruses. In 1996, the system was first developed. Viral marketing messages have a click through price of 5% to 15%. Video clips, interactive Flash games, advergames, ebooks, software, images, or text messages are the popular forms of viral marketing system. To make viral marketing effective the three basic criteria must be met, i.e., providing the accurate message to the exact messengers in the right environment. In case of viral marketing system target marketing is based on three important principles which are social profile gathering, proximity market analysis and real-time key word density analysis. Viral marketing can be used when the marketers want to create an existence for the business within the target market. The main aspect behind it is based on enabling the company's website visitors to let other people know about the site and the company. This is achieved by offering something to the target market that encourages others to pass the message around, therefore building momentum. Two most common types of viral marketing system can be identified as incentive model system and service based model system. Low expenses and low effort are the main viral marketing benefits. In Bangladesh viral marketing may formulate a great change in the world of marketing campaign to access the large number of consumers effectively and efficiently in terms of cost and time. To ensure the effective use of viral marketing, the proper internet facility through the country is a prerequisite. The Government of Bangladesh has already started the journey to digitalize the overall operating systems of the country that will satisfy the prerequisite for using viral marketing system in near future.

## 2. Objective(s) of the study:

**Broad Objective:** To analyze the existing viral marketing scenario of Bangladesh.

### Specific Objectives:

- a) To project the recent trends and practices of viral marketing system in Bangladesh;
- b) To identify the most advantageous factors for organizations and customers to use the viral marketing system.

## 3. Research Design:

To conduct the study, at first *qualitative data* has been collected that belong to *exploratory research*. Exploratory research is used mainly to gain a deeper understanding of this paper. In case of the study, exploratory research is conducted by collecting relevant qualitative information from the secondary data sources, which include books, articles, reports etc. published by various author(s) in websites and blogs. The secondary data focuses on necessary and related information about the principles, characteristics, components, types, advantages and disadvantages of viral marketing system. After deeper understanding about the viral marketing system, the *quantitative data* has been collected from samples through using Convenient Sampling technique that is used for *descriptive research*. In this case, a questionnaire consists of close ended questions was prepared and asked to

the more than two hundred people and among them 100 were familiar with Viral marketing system. That's why the primary data were collected from those relevant 100 samples. In this paper the primary data focuses on relevant information about the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the product categories that may be frequently sold by Viral marketing system and the perception of the respondents about this system. As the researchers planned to identify the significance of the viral marketing system to access the customers of Bangladesh effectively and efficiently and also to designate the recent viral marketing situation and to project future possibilities depending on the recent trends and distinctions, secondary data and primary data both are relevant in these circumstances. Each type of data served its purpose for this paper. Relevant data collected from different journals, magazines, articles and primary data collected from 100 samples and assessed and then the significance of the viral marketing system to access the customers of Bangladesh is tinted on the basis of the exploratory research and descriptive research.

**Data Processing and Analyzing Technique:** The collected data has been processed manually at first and then the statistical devices like average, percentage and ratios have been used.

#### 4. Literature Review:

Viral Marketing System came about in the year 1996. Viral marketing messages have a click through rate of five to fifteen percent. According to Dr. Ralph F. Wilson (2005) Viral marketing describes any strategy that supports individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's revelation and sway. Like viruses, such strategies take benefit of rapid increase to explode the message to thousands, to millions.

There is deliberate on the origination and the popularization of the term *viral marketing*, though some of the earliest uses of the present phrase are attributed to the Harvard Business School graduate Tim Draper and faculty member Jeffrey Rayport. The term was later popularized by Rayport in the 1996 *Fast Company* article "The Virus of Marketing," and Tim Draper and Steve Jurvetson of the venture capital firm Draper Fisher Jurvetson in 1997 to describe Hotmail's exercise of affixing promotion to sociable mail from their users.

According to Howard, Theresa (2005) Viral marketing, virtual promotion, or marketing buzz are buzzwords consigning to marketing systems that exercise pre-existing social networks to construct raises in brand awareness or to accomplish other marketing objectives, such as manufactured goods sales through self-duplicating online processes, similar to the spread of viruses or computer viruses. It can be delivered by word of mouth or improved by the system effects of the Internet.

Douglas Rushkoff, the detractor of media was the first among the all who wrote about viral marketing on the Internet. The assumption is that if such an advertisement appears at a "susceptible" user, that user becomes "stained" i.e., accepts the thought and shares the thought with others "contaminates them," in the virtual analogy's terms. As long as each infected user shares the thought with more than one apt punter on usual, the number of soiled users grows according to an exponential curve. Of course, the marketing movement may be successful even if the message spreads more gradually, if this user-to-user sharing is continued by other forms of marketing communications, such as public relations or advertising.

#### 4.1. Issues Associated with Viral Marketing System

##### 4.1.1. The significance of Viral Marketing System

Viral Marketing is the only way to inform the regulars about the brand, product or services and the company through internet in which users become "ruined" i.e., accepts the thought, and allocates the thought with others that infect them also. As long as each soiled punter shares the thought with more than one flat user on average, the number of ruined users grows according to an exponential curve. This is the best ever way of the communication system.

The viral marketing and the enormous buzz can provoke on the web through people participation and forwarding something on. For example, Facebook. The more populace use it and the more individuals will see it. You Tube is one more example of viral marketing. Acquire a video that is somewhat off the wall and put it on You Tube. If it is good they will tell another 100 persons and another 100 and so on until the company or maker have over 1,000,000 views of its video.

According to Lee Samson (December 13, 2010), there are four main reasons for attempting some kinds of viral marketing by the company or the businessmen:

**Reach:** A successful viral marketing campaign may exponentially improve the accomplish of the communications by inclusion the brand, product or services and/or the company in touch with thousands of prospects which, with the company's traditional communication loom, the company might not have ever intermittent.

**Awareness:** The more populace will notice the company's content, the more populace will recognize which it is, what the company perform and what the company can proffer clients.

**Distribution:** Virtual content extends similar to virus, in an ever mounting sphere which may never end. For an

online marketer, dissemination of content everlastingly from person to person represents a superior scheme to support content at a portion of the effort and costs required by traditional marketing techniques.

*Cost:* Viral marketing is relatively economical as the company do not have to plan a huge fund to endorse its products or commence campaigns that convene the needs of all its potential customers.

#### 4.1.2. Types of viral marketing system

There are two most common types of viral marketing can be identified as incentive and service based models of viral marketing system.

*Incentive Based:* These types of models offer customers credit, cash or other incentives for letting their friends know about the company. Due to the incentives, this sculpt encourages individuals to actively extend the company's message.

*Service Based:* In this replica, the purchaser is required to inform their friends about the product or the company and stretch the information so as to obtain service. A good example of a model that is service-based is Netscape immediate messaging.

#### 4.1.3. Functioning

According to marketing professors Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2011), to make viral marketing work, three basic norms must be assembled i.e., giving the precise message to the accurate messengers in the exact environment:

*Messenger:* Three exact types of messengers are requisite to construct sure conversion of an usual message into a viral one: market mavens, social hubs, and salespeople. *Market mavens* are individuals who are known as information professionals; they are usually among the first to find bare to the message and who broadcast it to their instant social network. *Social hubs* are people with a amazingly large number of social relations; they often know hundreds of diverse individuals and have the capacity to dish up as connectors between diverse subcultures. *Salespeople* might be needed who collect the message from the market maven, make stronger it by making it more important and influential, and then express it to the social centre for more partaking.

*Message:* Only messages that are both incredible and rightfully appealing to be approved on to others have the impending to push a viral marketing occurrence.

*Environment:* The environment is vital in the rise of victorious viral marketing – small amends in the environment guide to enormous results, and individuals are much more responsive to environment. The timing and circumstance of the movement launch must be accurate.

#### 4.1.4. Tools of viral marketing system:

Viral marketing is a shape of promotion that is successfully used either online or offline to carry marketing benefits to the concerning party. In this case, the successful vital marketing tools are conversed below:

*Videos:* Videos are a magnificent tool of viral marketing for its good looks and fame. YouTube is currently the second prime search engine right after Google, and it invites hundreds of videos on an every day basis. Marketers are taking the most excellent out of YouTube to get a rim to the business.

*E-Books:* With a well-written and good-looking content, e-books can be sold athwart the sphere to understand the benefits of advertising. This method is cost-effective and has the aptitude to target a huge user base.

*Newsletters:* Newsletters have always been a superb technique of viral marketing to realize a variety of benefits. Weekly, fortnightly or monthly, newsletters can be sent as per the require and option to get the message across. It is one of the most successful tools to always stay in touch with the users.

*Article Marketing:* A neatly-written article with sales pitch tangled with reasons can go a long way to carry benefits. If used deliberately, Article marketing can be a amazing trick of viral marketing. The similar article can make a lot of buzz and might draw a lot of concentration to bring home the benefits.

*Social Media:* Viral marketing and social media are identical to each other in the essence and reason. Without the social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, it is tough to imagine the thought of viral marketing.

*Tweet Button:* Working as a useful widget, the tweet button has the potential to authorize users the facility of tweeting from any source. For example the company website that has tweet button fit would facilitate users to respond to the website through the tweets.

#### 4.1.5. Viral Marketing Strategies:

According to Herman Drost (Undated), there are some Viral Marketing Strategies, which are given below:

*Write articles:* Permit individuals to reprint the articles on their web site, in their ezine, newsletter, magazine or e-books. Include the company resource box and the alternative for article reprints at the bottom of each article.

*Create a free e-Book:* Give the company e-book away to the visitors and other editors or webmasters within the target market. Encourage them to pass it on. Insert ezine subscription links or affiliate links to the products all through the company e-book.

*Set up an affiliate program:* Associate programs offer an economic inducement for other sites to link to the company. Make sure the company commission is sufficient to make this beautiful to web site owners.

*Getting sites to link to your site:* The Company can receive ongoing traffic from other websites. If it is a site that already has lots of traffic, the company will see an immediate increase in traffic to the company own site.

*Send out news releases:* Create a free service or product that is available on the company website. The most important aspect is to have a truly newsworthy event, contest, free service, or digital download.

*Viral software:* Offering a free download of a script, e-book, calendar, etc. is an effective method for gaining of new subscribers to the company's website. The company can also market its product by including its logo or marketing message with its download process.

*Create an e-course:* Give the company's visitor frequent chances to react to its offer by creating an email course or courses. The company achieve this by writing a series of small articles exactness the benefits of its product, and then deal out them mechanically over numerous days or weeks with an auto responder.

*RSS Feeds:* RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication". This is a relatively new viral marketing system. It was initially used by news organizations to group their news stories.

#### 4.1.6. Viral Marketing Practices in Bangladesh

Practice of viral marketing does not widen much but some scope it have to scatter such as accessible blog and forum recognized for Bangladeshi populace and few organizations performs viral marketing through it. Teenagers are fond of Facebook and some fashion houses make available pages to like on it which updates about their new collection and information. Some jobs sites also offer viral marketing contents. Telecommunication companies operating in Bangladesh such as, sell bazaar, robi market etc.

➤ Virtual organizations which operate their business activities through social networking site:

Name of Organization	Address	Products Available
GlaMgrL.bd	www.facebook.com/GlaMgrL.bd	Designer jewellery, block 3piece, 1 piece designer kameez, designer and ornamented beautiful lace for saree, block share, designer party share and mehedi service call.
Mansha	www.facebook.com/pages/Mansha/168863129879844	Saree and salwar kameez.
Aboron	www.facebook.com/pages/AbORon/222414067804319	Designer jewellery, block sharee & selwar kameez, designer party sharee & selwar kameez, bed sheets, curtain, purse and other fashion materials.
Shimmer	www.facebook.com/ShimmerShoes	Shoes & leather related items
Get-Gorgeous	www.facebook.com/pages/Get-Gorgeous/125815590840939	Information about different women's clothing stores, such as Aarong, Deshi Dosh etc.
Cats-eye	www.facebook.com/pages/CATS-EYE/30870795982	Men and women's clothing, Shoes for ladies and gents, silver jewelry and fashion Accessories.
Zariffashion	www.facebook.com/zariffashion	Jamdani sharee, silk saree, mosline shari, bridal sari, designer share, salwar kamiz and fatua

➤ Existing Online Shops in Bangladesh

Name of Organization	Address	Products Offer	How its work
Akhoni	www.akhoni.com	Apparel, mobile, computer, electronics, watches, bags, accessories, perfume, beauty and health and books etc.	It offers entertainment, movies, spa, healthcare services, fitness centres, beauty parlors and so on.
Bdgift	www.bdgiftz.com/	Jewelry, pets and gadgets etc.	Mainly provide information and links of online shops.
Deshikenakata.com	www.deshikenakata.com/	Women shoes, exotic apparel, lingerie, corsets, bustiers, bras, panties, bra sets and Korean jewelry	It works as link page and search engine of shopping for Bangladeshi people to wholesale basis especially for importers.
Clickbd	www.clickbd.com	Agro & livestock, cars & vehicles, car parts & accessories, computing & gaming, electronics, fashion, accessories, jobs, CVs & resumes, vacancies, mobiles & telephony, musical instruments, properties and rents services etc.	It's the largest online shop in Bangladesh; It works as middleman and links between buyer and seller including organizational and individual seller.

Name of Organization	Address	Products Offer	How its work
Ajkerdeal.com	<a href="http://www.ajkerdeal.com/">http://www.ajkerdeal.com/</a>	Restaurant & hotel tours & travels electronics & gadgets, fashion & lifestyle.	It always offers price at discount rate; Payment can be made through master card, DBBL nexus card, visa and cash on delivery and home delivery; Home delivery service at Dhaka and for outsides of Dhaka courier service charge is applicable to reach product home.
Banglacllick	<a href="http://www.banglacllick.co.uk">www.banglacllick.co.uk</a>	Bangla books, movies, songs and tale-films.	Its aim to provide taste of bangle culture to interested people.
Boromela.com	<a href="http://www.boromela.com">www.boromela.com</a>	Car, motorcycles, movies, music, games real estate, computers and books etc.	Both business and individual sellers have to open a seller account but in different way at free of cost; It provides spaces on their web pages to advertisement individually and organizationally; Buyer can select from list and need to contract with seller with their own efforts and no online payment system.
BDstall	<a href="http://www.bdstall.com">http://www.bdstall.com</a>	Real estate and land, tours and travels, computer and software, mobile and telephone, camera and photo, electronics, industry and lab, energy and light, furniture, health, beauty & jewelry, sports & bikes, services	It is the largest online stall in Bangladesh; Buyer has to maintain membership and can order to online if product seller use e-commerce channel;
Dinrat.com	<a href="http://www.dinrat.com">www.dinrat.com</a>	Greeting card, show piece, kitchen appliances, crockery, baby products, toys, candle, perfume, ornaments, chocolate, grocery, books, CDs, ice-cream, beverages, fast food, fruit baskets, sweets, flowers, calling cards, cakes, rechargeable pin.	USA based online shop whose main theme is to send gift to Bangladesh; Needs user account to purchase; Payment are made through online card; Product are ordered from USA for Bangladeshi people; Home delivery service is provided.
Bengalcommerce.com	<a href="http://www.bengalcommerce.com">www.bengalcommerce.com</a>	Gift items like showpiece, candle, flowers, cards etc	Online gift shop site both for Bangladeshi and Indian specially Bengali language people; Needs to maintain account and pay through visa card, master card etc.; Delivered to receivers address.
Bd bazaar.com	<a href="http://www.bdbazaar.com">www.bdbazaar.com</a>	Music, movies & dramas, fashion & jewelry, grocery, religious, ayurvedic herbals, sports	Shopping and sending gift to Dhaka, Chittagong and Calcutta city; Paid through card and home delivery services.

Name of Organization	Address	Products Offer	How its work
Cellbazar.com	www.cellbazaar.com	Any product offers by seller especially second hand product.	Controlled by grameen phone(Bangladeshi Telecommunication Company) where seller needs to open account or registered through GP cell number; Buyer visits online page and trace seller in his/her own way.
GiftZHaat.com	www.giftzhaat.com	Men, women and babies' dresses, home decor items, books, Islamic books, women scarf, jainamaz, audio CD, musical staff, package gift and fruit juice etc.	USA, UK and Australia based online shop whose main theme is to send gift to Bangladesh; Payment are made through online card; Product are ordered from USA for Bangladeshi people; Home delivery service is provided.
Bikroy	www.bikroy.com	Buy and sell everything from second-hand cars to mobile phones, or even find a new home.	Provide information of seller; Buyer searches seller and contact with seller personally.

➤ Blog sites for Bangladeshi people:

Addaa Blog	Bishorgo.com	Jeebonzatra Blog	Rongmohol.com
Adibasee Blog	Biggani.com	Muktangan Nirmaaan Blog	Sonarbangladesh.com/blog
Amar Blog	Bokolom Blog	Mukto Blog	Somewhere in Blog
Amar Bornomala	Bolte Chai Moner Kotha	Mukto-Mona Blog	Shamokaldarpon
Amar Thikana	Biborton Bangla	Nirmaaan	Shopnobaz Blog
Amar Bangla	Biggan Projukti	Nree.org	Shoily Blog
Amra Bondhu	Cadet College Blog	Nagorikblog.com	Sobkichu Blog
Amaderrajshahi	Choturmatrik	Nilanchol Bangla Blog	Sabuj Bangla Blog
Ananda Bazar	Coffee Houser Adda	Nature.com.bd	Sachalayatan
Anukabbo	Drishtipat Blog	Pechali Blog	Shobdoneer Blog
Bangali Blog	Ekushey Blog	Opest Blog	Shodalap
Bangla Blog	Ekushey TV Blog	Ojana Info	Technology Today
Bangla Kobita	Ever Green Bangla	Priyo Blog	Tech tunes
Banglai Online Blog	Ekushey blog	Prothom Alo Blog	Techmaster Blog
Blog bdnews24	Globalvoicesonline	Rongdhonu	Youth media

➤ Forum for Bangladeshi people:

Al-Ihsan Forum	Alor Nnishan	RMC Forum
Amader Projukti Forum	ID Bangla Forum	Science & Technology
Amader Dunia Forum	Projanmo Forum	Trivuz Bangla Forum

## 5. Study Result: Findings and Analysis

The study results have been analyzed under the following captions:

**Personal Profile of the Respondents:** The total number of respondents is 100 individuals. According to the age of the respondents, 10% are below 20 years, 41% are in between 20 to 30 years, 40% in between 30 to 40 years, 7% are in between 40 to 50 years and 2% are above 50 years of age (Table- 1).

According to the educational qualifications of the respondents, 2% have below Secondary education, 7% have minimum Secondary education, 28% have minimum Higher Secondary education, 43% completed their Graduation and, 20% have completed their Post-graduation (Table- 1).

The study shows the occupation of the respondents at a glance. According to the occupation of the respondents 2% are Service Holder, 20% are Businessmen, 19% are Professionals, 54% are Students and 5% are in other category (Others indicate the respondents that are housewives, unemployed, retired and disable persons etc.) (Table- 1).

The study also shows the monthly income level of the family which are given below:

- The most of the respondents' family income level are 60,000-80,000 taka per month (41%);
- 38 respondents' or 38% respondents' income are 40,000-60,000 taka;

- 12 respondents' or 12% respondents' income are 20,000-40,000 taka;
- 7 respondents' or 7% respondents' family income are 80,000+ taka.
- 2 respondents' or 2% respondents' family income are below 20,000 taka per month (Table- 1).

Therefore, from the above discussion it can be concluded that the 100 respondents that are familiar with Viral Marketing System in Bangladesh are of different ages, different occupations, different income levels and have different educational background (Table- 1).

#### ***Viral Marketing System of Bangladesh: Existing Users' Perspective***

The customers which were already experienced about the viral marketing system in Bangladesh asked on different relevant factors of this system and which are preferred product categories purchased through this system, most advantageous matters and worst matters related to this system.

The opinions of the respondents were measured using Five-point Likert Scale and the study shows that the customers or users think that viral marketing system is more preferable in Export-Import or International Business with a mean score of 4.56; music, movie and software may be purchased without any hesitation with a mean score of 4.23; Home appliance may be purchased with a mean score of 1.43; Office equipments and furniture may be purchased with a mean score of 3.23; Capital machineries for office or industry may be purchased with a mean score of 1.43 (Table- 2).

In case of Viral Marketing System, the study shows that the 41% customers or users think that the most advantageous factor of viral marketing system is its instant buying facility; 32% customers or users think that the most advantageous factor is it minimizes the distant problem of buying; 15% customers or users think that the most advantageous factor is it provides comparatively reasonable handling charge of the products and 12% think that it reduces total time to purchase and shopping (Table-3).

The study also shows the problems for using Viral Marketing System which may reduce the attractiveness and interests of the customers in Bangladesh. The study shows that the customers or users think that the internet facility of Bangladesh to use viral marketing system is not sufficient with a mean score of 4.88; lack of technological knowledge and support to use VMS with a mean score of 4.11; lack of initiative taken by the government and the private sector to make familiar the VMS in Bangladesh with a mean score of 3.21; lack of trust on purchased product quality and design through VMS in Bangladesh with a mean score of 4.56 (Table- 4).

## **6. Conclusion**

Bangladesh has enormous opportunities to get proper technological and government support to flourish the viral marketing system which can save huge time and cost of the organizations communicating with the existing and potential customers or clients and on the other side, the customers or the interested persons can get information or purchase anything efficiently in terms of time and cost through it. The great challenge for establishing this system is making the business organizations of Bangladesh reliable to ensure product quality and customer service and building the customers' interest to the viral marketing system. By developing this system in everywhere in Bangladesh, both the organizations and the customers may be mutually beneficial and advantageous.

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**Appendix**

**Table- 1**

The demographic characteristics of relevant 100 samples those are familiar with VMS. The description of the respondents is stated below:

No	Focus	Details of Respondents	No. of Respondents
1	Occupation	Service 2 Business 20 Teaching 19 Student 54 Others 5	100
2	Monthly Income (Family)	Below 20,000 00 20,000-40,000 12 40,000-60,000 40 60,000-80,000 41 80,000 and above 7	100
3	Age	Below 20 10 20-30 41 30-40 40 40-50 07 50 and above 02	100
4	Education	Below SSC 02 SSC 07 HSC 28 Graduate 43 Post-Graduate 20	100

**Table- 2**

Users' (organizations and customers) assessment on the basis of their understanding regarding viral marketing system

Assessment on the basis of their understanding	Mean score
Viral marketing system is more preferable in Export-Import or International Business	4.56
Music, movie and software may be purchased without any hesitation	4.23
Home appliance may be purchased	1.43
Office equipments and furniture may be purchased	3.23
Capital machineries for office or industry may be purchased	1.43

**Table- 3**

Users identified the advantageous factors concerning viral marketing system

Advantageous factors	Percentage
Instant buying facility	41%
It minimizes the distant problem of buying or selling	32%
It provides comparatively reasonable handling charge of the products	15%
It reduces total time to purchase or shopping	12%

**Table- 4**

Users identified the tricky factor concerning viral marketing system

Tricky factors	Mean score
The internet facility of Bangladesh to use viral marketing system is not sufficient	4.88
Lack of technological knowledge and support to use VMS	4.11
Lack of initiative taken by the government and the private sector to make familiar the VMS in Bangladesh	3.21
Lack of trust on purchased product quality and design through VMS in Bangladesh	4.56