

# Social Media Marketing and Consumer Buying Behavior: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

Now-a-days, Social media marketing (SMM) has revolutionized modern marketing practices all over the world. As the traditional framework of marketing has morphed into a combination of traditional and social media marketing, consumers of all ages and genders are now increasingly demonstrating changes in their purchase decisions and/or behaviors. SMM and its possible associations with consumer buying behavior, thus, have been the focus of attention for numerous researchers and industry professionals. The aim of this exploratory study, therefore, is to conduct a systematic review of existing work on the concept and different aspects of social media marketing and its influence on consumer behavior. As part of the review, the study offers a brief overview of social media, social networking sites, social media marketing, and consumer behavior as well as of the relations between SMM and consumer behavior in general, between SMM and young consumer behavior, and between SMM and female consumer behavior. Though exploratory, this study has the potential to offer valuable insights into how consumers are heavily influenced by SMM now, especially to small and medium business owners who often do not have sufficient financial resources to utilize traditional marketing tools and are likely to benefit more from social media marketing.

**Keywords:** Consumer Buying Behavior, Facebook, Female Consumers, Social Media Marketing, Social Networking Sites.

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## 1. Introduction

In today's modern technology-driven world, social media marketing (SMM) has become one of the best tools for organizations to connect as well as develop strong relationships with a wider range of consumers (Paquette, 2013). The unique aspects of social media marketing, which, compared to traditional marketing, allow businesses to promote their products and/or services to a larger community at lower costs and receive consumer feedback within a shorter period of time (Weinberg, 2009), have revolutionized marketing practices for numerous firms all over the world (Hanna et al., 2011). Because the buying decisions and behaviors of social media users, starting from information collection to post-purchase behavior, seem to be greatly influenced by social media (Miller and Lammas, 2010), for these firms, using social media has proved to be a highly effective marketing strategy. Therefore, it is no surprise that the topic of how social media marketing influences consumer behavior has garnered a great deal of attention from many academics and scholars in recent times.

The changes in consumer buying behavior can, thus, be ascribed to the evolution of social media from being a mere networking platform for Internet users to staying connected to their family and friends to finally creating a place where consumers can easily acquire as well as share greater knowledge of millions of new and existing brands, products, and services (Paquette, 2013). As many studies over the last 10 years have emphasized on how different social media applications have progressively engaged people's personal and social life, academic life, business and commercial life, and political life (Abed *et al.*, 2015; Algharabat *et al.*, 2017; Hawkins and Vel, 2013; Hinz *et al.*, 2011; Rathore *et al.*, 2016; Usher *et al.*, 2014; Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014; Zhu and Chen, 2015), businesses aiming to build stronger relationships with their target consumers have turned to social media to market their products and/or services (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Evidently, social media has brought about an ocean of opportunities to help marketers understand the real needs of their consumers and provide the products or services by meeting their expectations at optimum level (Hoque *et al.*, 2020). The ever-increasing number of Internet users including those with accounts on different social networking sites in Bangladesh confirms organizations' needs for establishing their presence on social media. A study from back in 2017 shows that there were 21,439,070 internet users just in Bangladesh in the same year (Faruq *et al.*, 2017) while recent data show that the number increased to a hefty 47.61 million in January 2021 (Kemp, 2021). Around 18 percent of the country's total population (which was 165.5 million in January 2021 according to Digital 2021: Bangladesh) are active social media users (FE Online Report, 2018) and 25.3% of them use various social networking sites for at least four hours per day (Faruq *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, among the active social media users, 24% of the declared profiles of the country's Facebook users are female (FE online report,

2018). It is evident, thus, that both male and female social media users make up a large portion of the consumers targeted by businesses. That is why identifying and understanding the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behavior is crucial for all businesses in Bangladesh.

This paper, therefore, primarily aims to conduct a systematic review of the existing literature on social media marketing, its various aspects and possible associations with consumer buying behavior. Moreover, while most of the available studies focus on understanding and measuring the perceptions, attitudes or behaviors of general consumers (Amin *et al.*, 2020; Iblasi *et al.*, 2016; Sohail and Al-Jabri, 2017; Stephen, 2015; Subasinghe and Weerasiri, 2020; Vinerean *et al.*, 2013) and some on those of young consumers (Duffett, 2017; Hasan *et al.*, 2018; Uddin and Razu, 2019) with regard to social media marketing, considerable gap of knowledge prevails in respect of how Bangladeshi female consumers are motivated by different influential factors of social media marketing to make certain purchase decisions and/or change their regular purchase behaviors. Some research fails to notice that when social media marketing is factored in, the behavioral differences between these two groups of consumers can even shape the entire marketing strategies of an organization. This paper, therefore, also intends to shed light, through the literature review, on the findings of the available work on the effects of various SMM factors on young as well as female consumer behavior.

This literature review conducts a systematic review of the existing local and global studies on social media marketing and how it influences buying behavior of consumers of different ages, genders, and backgrounds. It starts with definitions of social media, social media marketing, and consumer behavior while also mentioning differences between social media and social networking sites. The conceptualizations are followed by reviews of studies that explore the relations between social media marketing and consumer behavior in general, the relations between social media marketing and young consumer behavior, and lastly, the relations between social media marketing and female consumer behavior. Lastly, the Conclusion section provides a summarized evaluation of the literature reviewed, identifies research gap, and outlines areas for future work.

## 2. Methodology

To carry out the work, the study employed an exploratory research design by analyzing secondary data gathered from relevant papers on different aspects of social media, social media marketing, and consumer behavior published between 2010 and 2022. The specific time period of this 12 years was chosen as this was the period where the existence social media came to light. Papers that were reviewed were chosen on the basis of several factors. Firstly, those papers were chosen to study which analyzed teenage and female customer segments in Bangladesh and tried to find out a correlation between the contents they consume in social media and their effect on their buying behaviour. Secondly, the papers which in general attempted to find how social media marketing analyzes consumer behaviour were also selected to be reviewed. which analyzed the attempt of the brands Takeaway from this secondary data analysis is discussed briefly in the following literature review section.

## 3. Conceptualization of Social Media and Social Networking Sites

Before delving deeper into the concept of social media marketing (SMM), it is necessary to develop a clear understanding of social media as well as of social networking sites (SNS). Similarly, a complete understanding of the concept of social media is not possible without basic awareness of Web 2.0. The term Web 2.0 refers to a new version of the World Wide Web where end users collaborate with each other to share contents among themselves (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The evolution of Web 2.0 from simple information retrieval to the glorious domain of interactivity, interoperability, and collaboration (Campbell *et al.*, 2011) has defined the core aspects of social media.

Thus, social media has been defined as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). In a broader sense, social media refers to a set of software tools that create shareable user-generated content (Sinclair and Vogus, 2011). A more specific and circumstantial explanation of social media was offered by Filo, Lock, and Karg (2015) who defined it as “new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organizations (e.g., teams, government agencies and media groups) and individuals (e.g., customers, athletes and journalists)”.

Although the terms social media and social networking sites are often used interchangeably, there are fine differences between these two concepts. While social networking sites can be defined as networks of friends who interact with each other socially or professionally (Trusov *et al.*, 2009), social media specifically refers to the environment in which their social networking activities take place. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social networking sites refer to web-based services that offer varieties of networking opportunities to users such as creating public or semipublic profiles within a bounded system, connecting with other users, and visiting the lists of mutual connections within the system. In other words, any website that contains dedicated user profiles and shareable content and allows its users to connect and communicate with each other through posts, likes, and

comments as well as through online groups based on common interests can be called a social networking site (Ellison *et al.*, 2007; Lenhart and Madden, 2007).

#### 4. Conceptualization of Social Media Marketing

In recent years the concept of social media marketing (SMM) has rapidly gained traction in academia and practice and thus, has been approached and defined by researchers and scholars in significantly different ways. In a general sense, SMM can be defined as a particular form of digital marketing that uses social networking sites as a marketing tool (Iblasi *et al.*, 2016). Pham and Gammoh (2015, p. 325) defined SMM as a “company’s process of creating and promoting online marketing-related activities on social media platforms that offer values to its stakeholders”.

Another process-centric definition of SMM focuses on the way SMM is used by companies to gain website traffic or attention by creating attractive and shareable content on social networking sites (Bajpai *et al.*, 2012). Dwivedi, Kapoor, and Chen (2015) offered a marketing perspective of SMM in their definition by focusing on the dialogue created around a market offering while Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2016) offered a holistic framework for strategic SMM. Table 1 contains various conceptualizations of SMM focusing on different perspectives of different researchers.

Table 1: Definitions of Social Media Marketing

Authors	Definition	Key Aspects/Focus
Chi (2011, p. 46)	Social media marketing refers to the “connection between brands and consumers, [while] offering a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction”.	■ Interaction
Dwivedi <i>et al.</i> (2015, p. 291)	Social media marketing refers to “a dialogue often triggered by consumers/audiences, or a business/product/services that circulate amongst the stated parties to set in motion a revealing communication on some promotional information so that it allows learning from one another’s use and experiences, eventually benefitting all of the involved parties”.	■ Interaction ■ eWOM
Tuten and Solomon (2016, p. 21)	Social media marketing “is the utilization of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization’s stakeholders”.	■ Interaction ■ Co-creation ■ Business objectives
Felix <i>et al.</i> (2016, p. 6)	Social media marketing “is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders”.	■ Interaction ■ eWOM ■ Business objectives
Yadav and Rahman (2017, p. 3)	Social media marketing is “a process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media platforms to build and maintain stakeholder relationships that enhance stakeholders’ value by facilitating interaction, information sharing, offering personalized purchase recommendations, and word of mouth creation among stakeholders about existing and trending products and services”.	■ Interaction ■ eWOM ■ Business objectives

Several other studies in their empirical investigations of the specific objectives of SMM found that many companies use social media as a marketing tool to boost their sales, increase brand awareness and brand loyalty, improve the overall brand image, and reduce marketing costs (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Bernoff and Li, 2008; Bianchi and Andrews, 2015; Schultz and Peltier, 2013) by personally engaging and interacting with potential and existing consumers and building more intimate and meaningful relationships with them (Mersey *et al.*, 2010). Most of these companies capitalize on the two basic elements of SMM – electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and social media advertising.

eWOM, also known as viral marketing, has gradually shifted marketers’ attention from traditional word of mouth toward itself. Nowadays consumers feel more comfortable communicating with others on social media whenever a new product, service, or brand is launched in the market (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). This way eWOM can have positive and/or negative impacts on the sales, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand image of a company (Longart, 2010). Similarly, advertising on social media can help companies reach a greater number of potential and existing consumers with more targeted content and less expensive marketing than traditional advertising on TV, radio, newspapers, or magazines (Thao and Anh, 2020).

#### 5. Conceptualization of Consumer Behavior

Much of the success of the various social media marketing strategies, decisions, and actions by business firms, nonprofit organizations, and other agencies largely depends on a sound understanding of concepts that describe

why consumers behave in certain ways i.e., consumer behavior (Mothersbaugh and Hawkins, 2016). Consumer behavior which is viewed by many academics, scholars, and professionals as an inextricable part of marketing is such a complex, dynamic, and multidimensional process that defining it has never been free of challenges (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). Differences in individual viewpoints, styles, and approaches have, thus, resulted in a number of definitions of the concept of consumer behavior.

One of the most popular and widely accepted definitions of consumer behavior was provided by Schiffman, Kanuk, and Hansen (2012, p. 2) who described the concept as “the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs”. In conceptualizing the term, they emphasized on how individual consumers make decisions on the utilization of their available (and oftentimes, limited) resources such as time, money, and effort in purchasing and consuming different products and services. Their definition also encapsulates myriad aspects of consumer behavior including what (product/service) consumers buy;

- why they buy it;
- when they buy it;
- where they buy it;
- how often they buy it;
- how often they use it;
- how they evaluate it post-purchase;
- how their evaluations of the product/service influence future purchases;
- how they dispose of it.

A similar definition was offered by Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg (2006, p. 6) who described consumer behavior as “the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”. Mothersbaugh and Hawkins (2016, p. 6) added to this definition “the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society”. Alternatively, it can be defined as “the buying behavior of final consumers, both individuals and households, who buy goods and services for personal consumption” (Kumar, 2010, p. 218). Some other well-known definitions of consumer behavior are included in table 2.

The term consumer behavior is characterized by the behavior of two consuming entities – individual or personal consumers and organizational consumers – both of which act in their own interests. Individual or personal consumers purchase products and services for personal consumption, to fulfill the collective needs of the household, or as a gift/donation for others while organizational consumers purchase products and services primarily to accomplish certain organizational goals (Jaakkola, 2007; Schiffman *et al.*, 2012).

Table 2: Definitions of Consumer Behavior

Authors	Definitions of Consumer Behavior	Key Aspects/Focus
Blackwell <i>et al.</i> (2001)	Consumer behavior refers to the various activities people involve in to order, obtain and consume products and services.	■ Activities
Gabbott and Hogg (1998)	The activities and processes followed by consumers to buy or dispose of products and services on the basis of past experiences and ideas are known as consumer behavior.	■ Activities ■ Processes ■ Experiences and ideas
Lago <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Consumer behavior, also known as consumer attitude, refers to how an individual, prompted by factors such as feelings, emotions and beliefs, reacts to a specific product, service or brand.	■ Reactions to a product, service, or brand

## 6. Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behavior in General

The topic of how consumer behavior is influenced by social media marketing has become a nascent research agenda with the flourishing growth of these platforms (Liang and Turban, 2011). In the new age, content creation on social media has become a popular trend as individuals now can easily share their life, thoughts, and information with others on these sites (Chen *et al.*, 2011). As a result, in terms of promoting a brand and creating awareness about it, social media has proved to be one of the most effective tools as compared to the other more traditional promotional tools (Sohail and Al-Jabri, 2017).

Unlike the other older methods of marketing, social media marketing generates a pathway for interactive two-way communications where consumers can search for information about products or services, purchase them, and consume them. Especially, during the post-consumption period, consumers can mold the image of the product or service according to their own experience and share it with others through word of mouth in various online communities (Muntinga *et al.*, 2011; Stephen, 2015). Iblasi *et al.* (2016) established in their research that people spend a long time on the social networking websites, which are quality places for many businesses to practice e-marketing and to influence the consumers’ purchasing decisions. At the same time, being engaged with a company



on social networking sites makes people more aware of the company and also encourages them more to buy and recommend the product to other consumers (Jackson, 2011).

Several studies suggested that among the many sources of information, social media and social networking sites have become more popular with consumers than the official corporate websites in terms of searching for reviews and information about a new product (Clemons, 2009). In one study, it was found that 54% of online consumers use social media for product research (Young, 2018). Another study found that consumers tend to continuously search for product reviews on social media before actually buying the products and/or services and use the available information and reviews to guide their future purchases (Akar and Topçu, 2011). The reason behind it is that sixty percent of online consumers do believe in the product reviews by other consumers more than what the brands themselves promote about their product on traditional marketing channels (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2006).

Moreover, according to one Deloitte report, consumers influenced by social media are four times more likely to spend more on purchases than those who are not. Moreover, 29% consumers can be so highly influenced as to make a purchase on the same day of using social media (Roesler, 2015). Evidently, social media has become a deciding factor in many consumer's purchase decisions, which, in turn, has made its use as a marketing tool a ubiquitous part of marketing strategies in many firms (Miller and Lammam, 2010).

In a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, Sohail and Al-Jabri (2017) stated using the reasoned action in their findings that knowledge of social media and its following has positive impacts on attitude towards SMM whereas foresight about social media has negative impacts on attitude towards SMM, with fear having no mentionable effect. In another study in the Philippines, Lago, Nolasco, and Caliwag (2019) used a 20-item scale comprising four variables; the result of the study showed that even though all four factors used have an influence on consumers' attitude, word-of-mouth has the most influence. After that come perceived usefulness, attitude, and reliability respectively. As per the findings of this work, social media marketing has significantly strong effects on all these four factors and thus, influences consumer behavior to a great extent (Hajli, 2014).

Furthermore, one study conducted in Sri Lanka (Subasinghe and Weerasiri, 2020) used content marketing as the independent variable and purchase intention of consumers as the dependent variable, with age being the moderating variable and perceived trust the mediating variable. The study found that content marketing has a noteworthy impact on consumers' purchase intention. The variable 'age' moderated the relationship between content marketing and consumers' purchase intention while also moderating the mediated effects of perceived trust on this relationship.

Stephen (2015) focused on establishing five themes binding social media and consumers' response and the effects of social media marketing on consumers. His work also shed light on how consumers influence and are influenced on social media. In another study, it was found that "brand loyalty of the customers is positively affected when the brand (1) offers advantageous campaigns, (2) offers relevant content, (3) offers popular content, (4) appears on various platforms and offers applications on social media." (Erdogmus and Cicek, 2012, p. 1353). This indicates how the different social media marketing activities performed by brands can motivate target consumers either to go back to their regular brand once and again or switch to a different one. Moreover, besides creating product awareness among consumers through social media marketing, brands can attract customers greatly through various promotional offers (e.g., discounts and deals) on social media platforms. This can be backed by data from a survey that revealed 64% of online consumers wait for products or services to go on sale before actually making their purchase decisions. What's more, social media influencers who share their experience about a certain product or service are now trusted more by consumers who regularly ask them for recommendations ("How does social media influence consumer behavior?", n.d.).

In a study (Khan & Rahman, 2015) that aimed to review the existing literature on brand experience, a conceptual framework (figure 1) was presented by the authors based on the variables identified in the literature to have a better understanding of the antecedents and consequences of brand experience. Khan and Rahman (2015) found that most of the prior studies failed to explore many vital aspects of brand experience. According to their findings, while most of the previous research discussed customer satisfaction and brand loyalty as two major brand experience outcomes, only a few studies shed light on other variables like brand equity (Chen 2012; Kumar, Dash, & Purwar, 2013; Shamim & Butt, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013), brand attitude (Fransen, van Rompay, & Muntinga, 2013; O'Cass & Grace, 2004; Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014; Shamim & Butt, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013), brand credibility (Shamim & Butt, 2013), brand equity (Chen 2012; Kumar et al., 2013; Shamim & Butt, 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2012), and purchase intention (Gabisch, 2011; Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013).

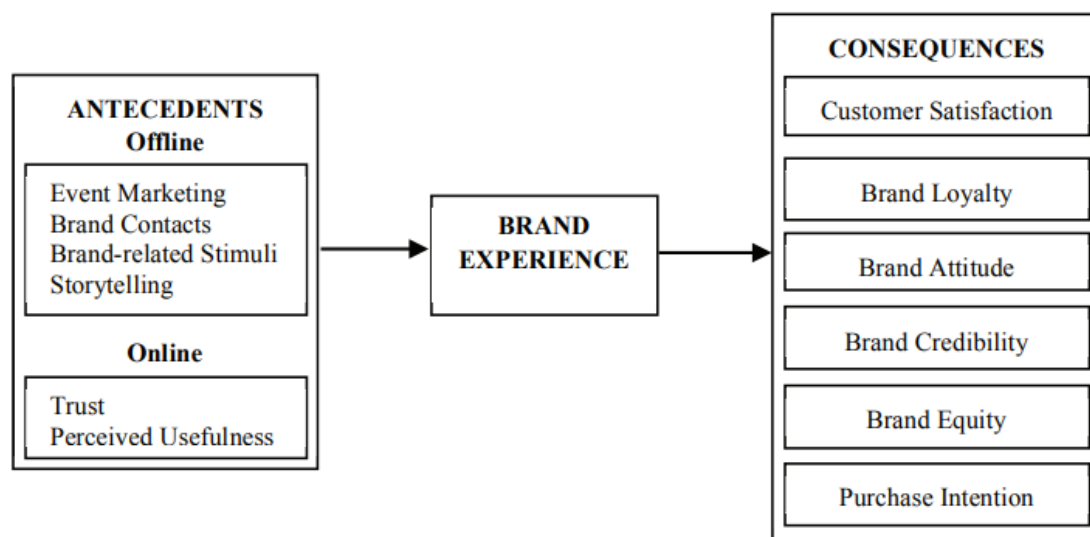


Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework of Brand Experience (Khan & Rahman, 2015)

### 7. Social Media Marketing and Young Consumer Behavior

In recent years, there has been a significant amount of work done by researchers regarding the influence of social media marketing on young consumers' behavior. According to the findings of one such study, 47% of millennials get influenced by SM in making buying decisions, compared to 19% for all the other age groups, so the young generation is much more influenced by social media marketing than others (Roesler, 2015). This is mainly because among the social media users, a big portion belongs to the young generation. But the factors that influence Generation Z's buying behavior are more or less the same as the general factors discussed in other researches. Research done in India among young people found that the development of the attitude of young consumers towards social media marketing is determined by perceived usefulness, reliability, and word-of-mouth (Ahmad and Khan, 2017). In one study by Bharucha (2018), it was discovered that 65.7% of the times a social media post or campaign has some influence on the purchasing decision or behavior of young consumers.

An in-depth review of available literature also showed that factors including access, length of usage, log-on frequency, log-on duration and profile update incidence, gender, age, and population group have great influence on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes of young consumers (Duffett, 2017). A study based on South African teenagers discovered that SMM has a positive impact on young consumers' attitude, but on a declining scale, which correlates to the purchase funnel (Duffett, 2017). Thao and Anh (2020) decided to take performance expectation, effort expectation, social influence, and physical condition as the variables to measure the influence of social media marketing. They determined that perceived usefulness is the most important premise of attitudes to electronic word of mouth. "An interesting fact from the research results is that most of the survey respondents prefer advertising methods through YouTube and Facebook." (Thao and Anh, 2020, p. 90). In addition, according to Ashley and Tuten (2014), there are correlations between social popularity (i.e., number of followers on social media), social influence, and engagement score.

In many other studies, brand communications on social media were found to have major impacts on the functional image of the brand (Bruhn et al., 2012). One particular study on the Bangladeshi youth groups proved that 'Encouraging and motivational factors of FB ads' which include phrases or sentences like 'Recommend friends and colleagues', 'More reliable', 'Engaged in purchasing activity', 'Take a chance and purchase items advertised on FB', 'Purchase new brands, no inconvenience in acquiring information on brands and products on FB', 'More usage facilities', 'Share positive advertisements', 'Variety of products/items', 'Available pocket money', 'A positive influence on my purchase', 'New electronic word-of-mouth marketing technique', 'Buy products in the near future', 'Varieties of information about different brands and products', 'Items promoted on FB' influence the buying behavior of the consumers (Uddin and Razu, 2019).

According to another similar study, the reference of friends and family influences the customer to purchase through Facebook. Moreover, sometimes marketers offer sales promotions if consumers purchase through Facebook. This pointed out how price can positively affect the purchase decision of consumers through Facebook. (Hoque et al., 2020). The same study revealed that a consumer's intention to purchase through Facebook is reinforced when brands deliver the promised after sale service.

A similar study on Bangladeshi teenage consumers showed that factors like online peer communication, social networking groups, brand fan pages, and advertising on SNSs influence their purchase decisions to a great extent (Hasan et al., 2018). Social media marketing has also been found to play a huge role in encouraging

consumers to shift their shopping from bricks-and-mortar markets or shopping malls to e-shopping or online shopping malls. Such decisions made by consumers are usually motivated by (i) company factors, (ii) consumer demographics and (iii) technological environment (Hoque et al., 2020). A study on the e-commerce business in Bangladesh showed that social media is praiseworthy in terms of increasing customer acquisition.

### **8. Social Media Marketing and Female Consumer Behavior**

The present study faced a setback when it looked deeper into the nature and intensity of the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior and tried to find similar associations with regard to female consumers, particularly in Bangladesh. No academic investigation has been dedicated to the determination of how different social media marketing practices influence the female consumers here in Bangladesh. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to shade some light specifically on this topic.

A great number of existing studies focus on differences in the buying behavior of male and female consumers. Reviewing these studies is of vital importance, especially for marketers who intend to design successful female consumer-specific social media marketing strategies and activities for their organization. One of these studies on the shopping behavior of urban women conclusively proved that women demonstrate higher shopping behaviors as compared to men and have a propensity to have a higher hedonic shopping orientation than men (Wahyuddin *et al.*, 2017). This is partly due to the fact that men and women have different brain structures which lead to men being more likely to be mission-oriented and/or task-oriented shoppers and women to be discovery-oriented shoppers. Many online businesses with social media profiles have taken this into serious consideration and tried to leverage that by designing different interfaces in their website and different content on social media for men and women. Zappos, an American online shoe and clothing retailer based in Las Vegas, Nevada, has designed two different versions of its landing page for its male and female consumers. The version for men offers a clear navigation by product categories whereas the version for women focuses on selling an emotion. Asos, a British online fashion and cosmetic retailer, uses different layouts for men and women during its Halloween campaigns. These gender-specific layouts allow men to view individual products and women to see how the products would look on them (Zoovu, 2015).

Studies on similar topics have showed how women's shopping enjoyment, brand/fashion consciousness, price consciousness, shopping confidence, and convenience/time consciousness significantly vary from those of men (Seock and Bailey, 2007). As per findings of a major study conducted by Erasmus University, when it comes to making purchase decisions for products like automobiles, home electronics, fashion, and financial services, male consumers are more loyal to brands that work for them while female consumers are more loyal to brands that offer them great service. This study also revealed that for businesses, it is crucial to build and maintain personal relationships with female consumers to effectively advertise their products, services, and/or brands to them (Zoovu, 2015). On social media, brands can emphasize on building stronger and more intimate relationships with consumers, so capitalizing on these findings to design female consumer-centric content on social media may prove to be lucrative for these brands. These differences, therefore, are significant for businesses when they design their social media marketing strategies. It has been suggested by many marketing strategists that while targeting female consumers, providing online chat options, discussion groups, high-resolution visuals, product/service reviews by other consumers, video clips, and slide shows in case of apparels will result in higher chances of attracting consumers. Furthermore, building user-friendly websites that let consumers easily go back to recently viewed products and switch between related categories will result in higher sales. Therefore, the right strategy for attracting female consumers is making it social (Kaplan, 2011).

### **9. Conclusion**

The purpose of this review paper was to anatomize the existing work on social media marketing and its influences on consumer buying behavior. The overwhelming number of existing studies on various aspects of social media marketing is indicative of the growing interest of numerous academics, scholars, and professionals in this modern style of marketing. This has also led different researchers to build the concept of social media marketing in different but unique ways.

While many researchers disagree on conceptualizations and other key aspects of social media marketing, all researchers recognize the fact that there exists a correlation between social media marketing and consumer behavior. However, different researchers have looked at the use of social media marketing and its influence on consumer behavior at different times from distinct points of view. The most used variables in measuring the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior are perceived usefulness, trust, word-of-mouth, knowledge about social media marketing, reliability, response against social media marketing, access, and other usage variables including demographic variables such as age, gender, area, and population growth. As per the findings of many such studies, companies cognizant of the ever-increasing presence of consumers on various social networking sites make the most of social media marketing through targeted and consumer-specific content, which consumers then share online with others, helping them make their purchase decisions through eWOM. The very

fact that many consumers now turn to social media instead of the traditional marketing channels for product/service reviews before deciding to make a purchase indicates the strong influences of social media marketing on consumer behavior.

Though the early studies focused on this correlation, over the last few years general interest has grown in work that focuses on the buying behaviors of particular groups of consumers (e.g., teenage consumers, young consumers, urban consumers, etc.) influenced by different social media marketing factors. These studies have found that factors like online product/service recommendations by family and/or friends, ease of collecting product/service-related information, online groups, brand fan pages, Facebook ads, and e-shopping on social media platforms influence different groups of consumers to behave in certain ways. However, there is little to no academic investigation on finding the correlation between this modern approach of marketing and the buying behavior of female consumers, especially in Bangladesh. While the present study intended to explore this certain area of research, further work needs to be done in future to examine and comparatively analyze the correlation between social media marketing and buying behaviors of specific groups of female consumers (e.g., female consumers living in urban areas, suburban areas and/or rural areas, female consumers in different professions, female consumers of different age groups, etc.).

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