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## Facebook Marketing

### Creating Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh

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**ABSTRACT:** *Facebook marketing is the most popular method for online marketing today. You will hardly find any business now without a Facebook presence. The main advantage of Facebook marketing is its vast audience. According to Facebook, there are currently over one billion daily active users on average. The number of businesses using Facebook is growing rapidly around the world, even in our country. From large conglomerates to small businesses, most are on Facebook. Both large and small companies are promoting their products on Facebook. In Bangladesh, like most of the world, Facebook marketing has created opportunities for women entrepreneurs who can now sell different products from their home. Many fashion boutiques have flourished over the last few years solely depending on Facebook for their marketing efforts. Even though the number of Facebook "likes" seems to be related to the popularity of the brand, research shows that the key performance indicator is the Facebook Engagement Factor (F.E.F), i.e., the number of people interacting with the page. This research paper contains survey results and in-depth analysis of 50 fashion boutiques in Bangladesh that use Facebook for marketing their products, the majority of which are run by women. They use paid advertisement, word of mouth, and frequent posts as tools to promote their page. The Facebook Engagement Factor, not the number of likes, is the determinant of how well the page is doing. Small business owners who market their products through Facebook pages thus have to concentrate more on increasing F.E.F than the number of likes of their page in order to be successful.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Facebook Marketing, Women Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, Facebook Engagement Factor.*

## Introduction

MARK ZUCKERBERG, THE CEO and founder of Facebook, said, “When everyone has a voice and power, the system works very well.” Facebook has become an addiction. It has introduced a new viral culture. When a person meets another, they now say “Are you on Facebook?” rather than “Can I have your number?” According to Facebook statistics, there are currently over one billion daily active users on average.

Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and his college roommates in 2004. It has now become a very powerful and important communication tool. Facebook is no longer limited only to social networking; it has become a platform for all kinds of businesses. As Mark Zuckerberg said “If I had to guess, social commerce is the next area to really blow up.” It is estimated that 90 per cent of all purchases are subject to social influence, and by 2015 the social commerce market is expected to be worth \$30 billion (Smith 2015).

The scenario in our country is no different. According to Internet World Stat there are 28 million Facebook users in Bangladesh (as of November 2015). All the top brands of Bangladesh, such as Grameenphone, Robi Axiata, Airtel Buzz, Aarong, Ponds, Unilever, Qubee and others, are on Facebook. Apart from the established brands, many small businesses are on Facebook.

Social media is affecting our lifestyles. Facebook can be a powerful tool for promoting any cause. We can see today that there has been a steep increase in the number of bicycle riders in Dhaka. That is in part because many different pages have started promoting the use of bi-

cycles as a healthier transportation system and an alternative to avoid traffic jams. Social media has also changed the way we shop. The rise in the number of online businesses indicates that our buying behaviour has also changed. We have now become habituated with online shopping. Avoiding all traffic, pollution, and hot weather, people now find it convenient to shop sitting at home.

In Bangladesh, there are, at present, numerous small businesses on Facebook, and many of these businesses are fashion boutiques (Zabeen et. al. 2013). This research paper will give an insight into these businesses.

## Literature Review

Digital marketers are shocked by the fact that Facebook now has more users per month than Google (Ingram 2015). Marketers also now realize that apart from social networking, Facebook can offer unique marketing opportunities for businesses. Facebook offers a free marketing tool that almost any businesses can use. A Facebook page allows a businesses to introduce themselves by telling what they do. Business owners share images, posts, offerings, etc. to keep viewers engaged. This is a great platform to personally interact with customers. Any news regarding your business, such as new products or services, can be posted here so that prospective customers can view it. Facebook pages are a great way to achieve quality leads for products or services. Some Facebook pages have an e-commerce component linking shoppers directly to make purchases, but users can also share what they’ve purchased, and “like” products at the same time (Stampoulaki 2012).

Some businesses used to even sell directly through Facebook. The first Facebook transaction can be dated back to February 2007, when Facebook's Virtual Gift Store was opened. After two years, the virtual store 1-800-Flowers made its first Facebook transaction for \$34 (Stampoulaki 2012). However, there was not much prospect in selling directly through Facebook. Most companies instead use Facebook as one of their major marketing tools. The top three brands of the world Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and Disney all actively maintain their Facebook pages for promoting their brand.

Some interesting statistics regarding Facebook (Smith 2016, Cooper 2013):

- There are currently 1.591 billion monthly active Facebook users.
- Canada has the highest number of active Facebook users per capita in the world.
- On average, people spend 20 minutes on Facebook daily.
- 91 per cent of Facebook users are millennials (15 to 34 years old).
- 300 petabytes of user data are stored on Facebook.
- On average, there are 934 million mobile daily active Facebook users.
- The highest Facebook traffic occurs between 1 pm and 3 pm.
- Engagement rates on Thursdays and Fridays are 18 per cent higher.
- 35% of Facebook users have liked a page in order to participate in contests.

Consumers' buying behaviour has changed. Consumers now trust recommendations three

times more than online ads (Knight 2011). According to Nielsen's 2015 report on Global Trust in Advertising, trust in ads on social networks is 46 per cent. Facebook marketing lets shoppers view what friends "like" on Facebook and with the use of social intelligence, make better shopping decisions. On the other hand, consumer brands promote their products and services on Facebook for brand insight (trial), brand loyalty (repurchase), brand advocacy (word of mouth), brand experience, and return on investment (low advertisement cost). Shopping spreads like a virus on Facebook; anyone who provides good content will benefit from its viral nature. Researchers say there are two reasons why businesses need Facebook: engagement and data. But sales are not equal to data and engagement (Marsden 2011).

The experience of Facebook marketing relates to brand engagement, consumer support, and information sharing. Diesel's DieselCam was one such example. DieselCam was a mirror in a fitting-room that was connected to Facebook. This let shoppers share images of clothing they were trying and get feedback from their Facebook friends on which clothing looked good on them (Marsden 2011). Heinz's 'Get Well Soup' campaign is another example of using Facebook marketing to promote a brand. Heinz' idea was simple; it let consumers buy a can of soup for a friend who was ill and asked for it to be sent along with an individualized 'Get Well Soon' message. The campaign offered something personal that created a strong customer engagement. Sally Meekins, the Marketing Executive of Heinz at that time said, "It wasn't just the offer that people were engaging with, it was the idea

and what it says about the brand by bringing people closer” (Soen 2015).

Research shows that small businesses are the real innovators of Facebook marketing. A survey conducted among 1,600 businesses, most of them small and medium enterprises (SMEs), revealed that 17.7 per cent of their company’s revenue for the year 2012 came from Facebook marketing campaigns (Hershkovitz 2013). Generally speaking, it is a common understanding that social media is not good for selling directly; however, social media has a major role in companies’ branding. Owners of many small businesses believe that the fact that large audience can be reached through Facebook promotions, events, video and photo sharing has played an important role in building rapport with prospective customers (Ouimet 2012).

## Millennial Shoppers

Changes in buying behaviour are in large part due to the rise of the millennial. Aged between 18 and 30, millennials don’t give much importance to holding a product in their hands in deciding whether to buy it; instead, they focus on the use and easy acquisition of a product. There has been a decrease in engagement with malls and physical media. For example, in 2013 there was a drop in CD sales by 13 per cent, and an increase in digital formats by 9.1 per cent. The same condition is observed for mail; people prefer electronic bill payments. Millennials watch five hours and 39 minutes of online video every day, instead of watching TV; they prefer reading magazines on laptop or tablet (Bonini 2013).

A recent study by e-tailing group and Power Review indicates that 57 per cent of customers take the help of search engines to find information related to entertainment, restaurants, nightlife, etc. (Business Wire 2010).

Research by Service Management Group and The Boston Consulting Group, Barkley revealed the following interesting insights about millennials:

- Millennials see the Internet as a broadcasting platform for sharing their experiences and thought. They are very comfortable using social media and technology.
- Millennial are extremely engaged in activities like rating services and products (60 per cent of millennials compared to 46 per cent of non-millennials) and uploading images, blogs and videos on the Internet (60 per cent of millennials compared to 29 per cent of non-millennials).
- Millennials prefer ease, speed, convenience, and efficiency in their transactions. For example, they shop more often, almost double, at convenience stores for groceries compared to non-millennials.
- Millennials depend more on peer recommendations than expert recommendations.
- More millennials than non-millennials admitted reading user reviews using a mobile device and researching products while shopping (50 per cent of millennials compared to 21 per cent of non-millennials).
- Millennials are much more likely than non-millennials to research on brands on social networks (53 per cent of millennials compared to 37 per cent of non-millennials).

- In considering purchases, millennials tend to prefer brands having mobile websites and Facebook pages (33 per cent of millennials compared to 17 per cent of non-millennials).
- Millennials admit their life feels worthwhile when they are on social media like Facebook (47 per cent of millennials compared to 28 per cent of non-millennials).

Millennials are thoughtful and intelligent customers, according to marketing experts. They are always looking for good bargains. In fact, their behaviour is forcing companies to alter their way of doing business. Phillips, a professor of marketing at the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business, said, “While others may take time to research the best deal on major purchases like a TV, this generation does it for lipstick.” A study conducted in 2010 by Edelman and its research arm StrategyOne indicates that 42 per cent of millennials look at at least four sources before making their final buying decision (Dexheimer 2012).

## Women Entrepreneurs

A revolution is taking shape among women nowadays. Women today are leaving the workforce in multitudes in favour of being at home; not for becoming homemakers—but for being entrepreneurs. Women will create over half of the 9.72 million new small business jobs expected to be created by 2018 and more and more are doing this from home offices across the country (VanderBrug 2013). Studies by the Small Business Administration show that in the last 10 years women-owned businesses

increased by almost 90 per cent. Internet marketing is a major part of business. Many stay at home mothers who were once in the corporate world are the biggest advocates of business ownership because they see that it as the best way to create a balance between their family needs and the ability to do something creative. The majority of women entrepreneurs view the Internet as their most important business tool (Ray, n.d).

There are more than 28 million active Facebook users in Bangladesh (Internet World Stat 2015). Facebook marketing is growing fast in our country. Some popular Bangladeshi e-commerce websites are Bikroy.com, Hutbazar.com, Akhoni.com, Technobd.com, Cellbazaar.com, ClickBD.com and Ekhanai.com. Facebook marketing has made a strong foothold in businesses in this country. Like the rest of the world, women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh are also on the rise.

## Survey Objectives

**BROAD OBJECTIVE:** To find out whether Facebook marketing has created opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

- To find out whether women are mostly the owners of these small businesses.
- To find out the various motivational factors behind doing these businesses.
- To find out the various promotional activities done on these Facebook pages.
- To find out whether the number of “likes” is the only key performance indicator for business success.

## Methodology

**RESEARCH DESIGN:** Exploratory research was conducted. Secondary data analysis and online survey were used for this research.

**TARGET POPULATION:** The target population for this research is fashion boutiques that use Facebook marketing.

**SAMPLING FRAME:** Owners of these online fashion boutiques were chosen for survey.

**SAMPLE DESIGN AND SAMPLE SIZE:** Non-probability sampling (judgment sampling) was used. Online fashion boutiques with more than 300 likes were chosen. Fifty such stores were chosen as sample.

**DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:** Both primary and secondary data collection procedures were used. Primary data was collected through surveys. Sources of secondary data were websites of the stores, books and periodicals, media sources, and online articles, essays and journals. The owners of these small businesses were asked to fill in a questionnaire.

**DATA ANALYSIS:** Content analysis procedure was used to analyze the survey data. The attribute that has the greater number of respondents is said to be true.

**LIMITATIONS:** All fashion-boutiques using Facebook marketing in Bangladesh could not be covered due to lack of information. No database yet exists on such businesses. The validity of some answers, e.g., income per month, are dubious.

## FINDINGS

The findings are based on the questionnaires filled in by the owners of 50 fashion boutiques that use Facebook marketing and by analyzing the activities of these pages.

### *Owner's personal attributes*

Attribute	Response
Gender of owners	Female: 96%    Male: 4%
Age group of owners	16–20: 6%    21–30: 38%    31–40: 30%    41–50: 26%
Owner's educational qualification	SSC & HSC: 10%    Bachelors: 52%    Masters: 38%
Owner's profession	Service holder: 16%    Student: 28%    Home maker: 56%

## Owner's Business Attributes

Attribute	Response
Year of opening business	2010: 2%    2011: 8%    2012: 14%    2013: 66%    2014: 10%
Reason behind doing such business	Extra income: 44%    Unable to work outside for maintaining family: 56%
Means of doing business	Import: 42%    Buy from wholesaler: 28%    Self-design: 30%
Number of "likes"	0–1,000 likes: 30%    1,000–5,000 likes: 30%    5,000–20,000 likes: 16% 20,000–50,000 likes: 18%    >50,000 likes: 6%
Engagement ratio	<1: 22%    >1 & <5: 64%    >5: 14%
Promotional method used to increase fan base	Only advertise on Facebook: 56%    Run contest and advertise: 10% Word of mouth: 26%    Frequent posts: 26% Email marketing: 0%    Distribution of leaflets: 0%
Means of advertising on Facebook	Contact Facebook directly: 100%    Use local agency: 0%
Kind of posts given	Only new products: 84%    New products and other interesting posts: 16%
Reason why customers buy	Cheaper than stores: 10%    Quality products: 70%    Ease of shopping: 20%
Have physical store	Yes: 54%    No: 46%
Status of business	Loss: 0%    Struggling: 0%    Profit: 100%
Average income per month	<10,000: 0%    10,000–30,000: 44%    30,000–50,000: 0%    >50,000: 56%

## ANALYSIS

The survey found that the majority of these business owners are female. Not only in Bangladesh, globally the number of female entrepreneurs has increased. Statistically, approximately 37% of enterprises globally represent women-owned entities – a market worthy of attention by businesses and policy makers alike. Despite the equal-rights movement in favour of equality for women, Bangladesh still remains a male-dominated society. Women in Bangladesh still face the obstacle of working

outside, especially after they have children, even though they are highly educated. This is one of the main reasons behind the increase in the number of women entrepreneurs.

As convenient payment gateway systems are still not underway in Bangladesh, many businesses find it hard to use the Facebook's advertisement and other features that require paying through international credit cards. New businesses are flourishing in Bangladesh to solve this problem. DevsTeam and Trump

Marketing Solutions are two such firms that support online marketing, including Facebook advertisements. Findings of our survey show that pages that depend on Facebook advertisement for promoting their business contact Facebook directly. This is because either people are not yet aware that local online marketing firms now exist or because they want to manage these tasks themselves.

Facebook is now generating revenue from its business user base, which is bad news for the small businesses. New York Times columnist Nick Bilton describes how he had a Facebook subscriber list of 25,000 and would receive 535 “likes” after posting a link to one of his columns. His subscriber list had since grown to 400,000, but he now averaged only 30 “likes” per post. He did an experiment and found that when he paid \$7 to promote a post on Facebook, he had a 1,000 per cent increase in interaction.

According to the survey findings, the majority of the pages are depending on Facebook ads to increase their fan base. There are other effective methods to increase a fan base, such as making interesting posts or run contests, but this is only a minority of the cases. Most of these fashion boutiques are importing Pakistani lawns and Indian dresses. There is huge demand for these products in our country right now. Whenever businesses post pictures of new clothing items, people view that clothing and possibly click “like.” This might be one of the reasons they don’t have to give other interesting posts on their page.

Running contests has been a trend for large companies. Ponds’ selfie photo contest and Qubee’s movie contest for the Valentine’s season were successful in creating “buzz” in the

market. Imagine you bought a Ponds cream or installed Qubee in your computer. Do you feel like going to their Facebook page and clicking “like”? But if you know that by clicking “like” you could win a chance to have romantic dinner at a five-star hotel, or win a movie ticket, then you perhaps would click the “like” button. Contests can be a promising area that small businesses might focus on.

Once a business page is created, the owner needs to get users to visit it and, hopefully, to “like” it. If people “like” the page, posts will then appear on that user’s Facebook newsfeed. Over time this will allow the business, according to Facebook, to start “building loyalty and creating opportunities to generate sales.”

Our research findings show that most of these Facebook-based fashion boutiques started operating in 2013. The number of followers (fan base) of some of these stores are huge, some even exceeding 50,000 likes in just one year. Gaining this volume of fans in such a short time isn’t possible without using Facebook’s paid ad and “promote” options. But whether these “likes” represent actual potential consumers is sometimes questionable.

## **False Likes**

Business Insider reported that Raj KapurBrar, the owner of a number of fashion magazines, had his Facebook fan page overcrowded with fake likes from false accounts. There is no way a user can differentiate between fake fans and the real ones. This man’s \$600,000 Facebook disaster is a warning for all small businesses (Edwards 2014).

Then there are fake clicks from click companies, which is an illegitimate business within

social media marketing. Mostly available from Asia, these click companies deceive by providing huge numbers of cheap clicks that would not occur otherwise (Edwards 2014). This emphasis on likes is considerable with customers. Research suggests that 27 per cent of consumers will have a look at the likes and 90 per cent of them will look at the online reviews before deciding to buy a product (Rudolf 2015). This shows that click companies could easily misdirect consumers.

According to an article published in the newspaper ProthomAlo, some people click “like” when they really like the brand, and some do it to show off. Kevin Lewis and fellow researchers at San Diego University, California, found that “like” doesn’t reflect actual liking. Mining information from a revolution page “Save Darfur” up to January 2010 they found there were 1.2 million “likes.” But the fund earned was only 8 cents. The amount collected was much more through direct emailing. Only in 2008, they were able to earn \$1 million through direct emailing. Another article from the same newspaper says that software called ‘BOT’ can be used to automatically generate “likes” on Facebook page. Whether these likes are really reflecting the customer’s choice of brands is an outstanding question.

### **Customer Engagement – the Key Performance Indicator**

One quick indicator for the health of a Facebook page is the “Talking About This” metric. This metric shows how engaged your audience is. According to the blog ReferralCandy, the number of “talking about” divided by the

number of “likes” is a good indicator of the number of actively engaged users on your page. This is called the Facebook Engagement Factor.

$$\text{Facebook Engagement Factor (F.E.F.)} = \left( \frac{\text{Number Talking About This}}{\text{Number of Likes}} \right) \times 100$$

Engagement is needed to convert your audience to action. Facebook engagement rates are measured in terms of interactions, for example comments, likes, and shares of your posts. According to Michael Leander, a marketing expert, engagement rate greater than 1% is considered good, 0.5 to 0.99% is considered average, and less than 0.5% is poor.

The top 10 stores, from my survey, with the highest Facebook Engagement Factor were:

- Parizaat Online Fashion Attire, F.E.F = 0.17; 21,131 likes
- Azwaa, F.E.F = 0.19; 58,321 likes
- ViVaciOus, F.E.F = 0.77; 66,385 likes
- Tress Fashion, F.E.F = 0.25; 2023 likes
- Womanhood Fashion, Health and Beauty, F.E.F = 0.15; 27,808 likes
- Okay Fashion, F.E.F = 0.12; 40,067 likes
- Monsoon Online Shopper’s Stop, F.E.F = 6.75; 155,523 likes
- Panache Women’s Wear, F.E.F = 0.13; 65,155 likes
- Apsara’s Style World, F.E.F = 0.13; 16,486 likes
- Fashion Stitch, F.E.F = 0.11, 9,001 likes
- Fashion Reveal, F.E.F = 2.17; 670,301 likes

The figures above show there is no clear correlation between the number of Facebook likes and Facebook Engagement Factor. For those pages whose number of Facebook likes is high, but the engagement factor is low, it's time to reconsider strategies to improve page posts.

## Recommendations

After analyzing the results of this research, we recommend the following:

1. Marketing through Facebook has become viral.
2. It is important for shop owners to study the different marketing strategies that can be used for their business.
3. It may be beneficial to assign some budget for advertisement and other promotions like coupons or contests.
4. Frequent and interesting posts keeping customers engaged.
5. Many people buy from these shops because of recommendations from friends. So updating the page on a regular basis with recent information is very important.
6. Having a sales website along with the Facebook page is required.
7. Number of "likes" does not tell the whole story in measuring the success of Facebook marketing. Numbers of engaging customers are the key to sustainable business operation through Facebook marketing. Therefore, the focus should be not just to increase the number of "likes," but to increase the number of engaged customers.

## Annex

Questionnaire (you can provide multiple answers to a question, if needed):

- Which age group do you fall in? 16-20; 21-30; 30-40; 40+
- What's your educational background? Up to SSC and HSC; Bachelor's degree; Master's Degree; Other (please mention)
- What's your profession? Service holder; Business man/Woman; Student; Home maker; Other (please mention)
- What inspired you to do such business? Wanted it as an extra income generator besides my own profession; Just for fun; Unable to work outside home so doing something home-based; Other (please mention)s
- How do you get the products? Import; Buy from local wholesaler; Other (please mention)
- Which method do you use to increase your fan base? Advertising on Facebook; Email to friends; Distribute leaflets in your locality; Run Facebook contests; Word of mouth; Frequent post
- If you are advertising on Facebook, how do you do it? Contact Facebook directly; Use a local agency to do the work
- Do you have a physical store? Yes; No
- How do you describe your business? Loss; Struggling; Profitable
- What's your average income per month from the page? Tk. <10,000; Tk.10000-30000; Tk. 30000-50000; Tk. >50000

- Why do you think customers buy from you? Cheaper than stores; Quality products; Ease of shopping; Other (please mention)

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