

`Case Study On
"Brand Positioning and Consumer Perception: A Study of Pathao vs. Uber"

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Contents

Declaration	3
Abstract	7
Introduction	7
Objectives of the Study	8
Importance of This Case Study	8
Case Part:	9
Background of Pathao and Uber	9
Service Categories	10
• Pathao App Service Options	10
• Real-Time GPS Ride Tracking Feature	11
• In-App Safety Features	11
• Promotions and Loyalty Programs	11
• Payment Options Screen	11
• Customer Support Interface	12
SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIETY POSITIONING IN UBER AND RIDE SHARING SERVICES	12
Market Analysis	13
1. Market Share & Platform Dominance	13
2. Demographic Trends & User Behavior	13
3. Economic and Employment Impact	13
4. Gender Inclusion & Societal Impact	14
Future Analysis	14
1. Growth of Multi-Service Platforms (Super Apps)	14
2. Expansion into Tier-2 and Tier-3 Cities	15
3. Regulatory Formalization and Industry Licensing	15
SWOT Analysis of Uber & Pathao	15
Strengths: Include Figures for all the swot parts	16
Weaknesses:	18
Opportunities:	19
Threats:	21
Brand Positioning Strategy	23
A. Evolution of Brand Positioning	23
B. Differentiation from Competitors	24

C. Most Effective Positioning Strategies.....	24
Consumer Perception Analysis Survey Insights (n=300, March 2024):	25
Preferred for Daily Quick Rides:	25
Trust in Safety:	25
Pricing Satisfaction:	26
Ease of App Use:	26
Key Insights	26
Marketing Campaigns Impact on Brand Perception.....	26
Pathao Campaigns	26
Uber Campaigns	27
Impact	27
Teaching Notes	28
Case Summary:.....	28
Teaching objectives:	28
Teaching Audience:.....	28
Questions for discussion:	29
1. How do Pathao and Uber differ in their brand positioning strategies to attract urban youth in Bangladesh, and which elements have proven most effective in building brand preference?.....	29
2. What are the key factors influencing service perception among urban youth for Pathao and Uber, and how do these perceptions impact customer loyalty and usage frequency?	30
3. In what ways have local adaptation and marketing campaigns shaped the public image of Pathao compared to Uber among young, urban consumers?.....	32
4. How does the perception of being a local (Pathao) versus a global (Uber) brand influence trust, relatability, and service expectations among urban youth in Bangladesh?	35
5. What challenges and opportunities do Pathao and Uber face in maintaining or enhancing their brand positioning as the ride-sharing market in Bangladesh continues to evolve?	38
Analysis of Freeman’s Stakeholder Theory with Uber and Pathaos overall analysis:	38
1. Customer Relations	39
2. Service Quality.....	39
3. CSR and Societal Impact	39
4. Brand Image	40
5. Value Creation	40
CBBE Model Analysis:.....	41
1. Brand Identity (Who Are You?)	41

2. Brand Meaning (What Are You?)	42
3. Brand Response (What About You?)	42
4. Brand Relationships (What About You and Me?)	43
Conclusion.....	43
Strategic Recommendations	43
References	44

Abstract

This case study discusses the brand positioning strategies of Pathao and Uber, two leading ride-sharing service providers operating in Bangladesh's rapidly growing urban transport market. Pathao, a local startup founded in 2015, and Uber, a global technology company that entered Bangladesh in 2016, have played an influential role in transforming mobility access, especially among the youth population in cities like Dhaka and Chattogram. The intended research of the current study focuses on assessing how both companies have positioned their brands to appeal to the urban population, analyzing the perception of consumers regarding their services, and evaluating the impact of pricing, safety, and marketing communication strategies on user trust and brand loyalty.

Introduction

The urban transport in Bangladesh has witnessed a significant transformation in recent times and it has to a great extent been shaped by the increasing penetration of M-technology and the growth of Ride Sharing Apps. Two key players of this growing mobility landscape are Pathao and Uber, both of which are shaping the mobility sector in major cities like Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet. With 73% smartphone penetration and significantly cheaper mobile internet prices (LightCastle Partners 2023), urban youth in the country, particularly between the age of 18-30, are the leading users of ride-sharing services, and thus an important demographic for market competition and brand loyalty.

Pathao, a homegrown startup founded in 2015, has grown its brand around being a “local-first” ride-hailing option (despite being backed by Go-Jek) that emphasizes affordability, cultural relatability and diversified services, from ride-hailing to food and parcel delivery. Meanwhile, Uber appeared in the Bangladeshi market toward the end of 2016, giving the local population the experience of an international brand, with all of its professionalism, safety and international quality of service standards. These competing brand stories provide fertile ground for understanding the extent to which localization and globalization are confronted by the dynamics of a price-sensitive, youth-led, and rapidly changing digital economy.

The way these two brands frame themselves against one another, speak to customers, and handle challenges on the operations side is a great lesson in brand competition, customer perception and service level differentiation. This case study aims to investigate these dynamics and determine why one brand resonates over the other among young Bangladeshi consumers.

Objectives of the Study

1. **Analyze Brand Positioning Strategy:** To check the brand positioning strategies of Pathao and Uber in Bangladesh.
2. **Assess Consumer Perception:** To determine consumer perception and usage of each platform.
3. **Assess Marketing Campaigns:** To compare and contrast the marketing campaigns of both the companies.
4. **Operational Barriers Identification:** To investigate the obstacles faced by Pathao and Uber in delivery of service.
5. **Give Practical Recommendations:** To recommend actionable recommendation for improving brand position and customer satisfaction.

Intended Case Readers

This case is appropriate for business, marketing, or management undergraduate and graduate students, more specifically in the courses on brand strategy, digital marketing, and consumer behavior. It is equally useful for young professionals in the ride-sharing, technology or service industry who wish to grasp brand positioning and market competition in dynamic markets. This case can be utilized by educators to create classroom discussions, group projects or applied learning approaches to actual business problems and strategies.

Importance of This Case Study

This case has relevance in the emerging digital transportation industry of Bangladesh, where the combination of local innovation and global standardization is altering consumer expectations and service provisioning. As the ride-sharing sector gets crowded, it is important to explore, how Pathao – a local platform – and, Uber – an international player – make use of strategic branding in a dynamic, price-centric, and urbanizing context to differentiate from each other.

The study assumes significance as it explores the attitudes and preferences of the urban youth, possibly the biggest user segment and the most influential market base for ride-hailing services in Bangladesh. It offers useful knowledge to explore what types of emotional branding, affordability, safety assurance, user experience and cultural relevance have on understanding consumer attitudes, behavior and loyalty formation in emerging markets.

Moreover, the case will add to the more general academic and managerial debate on the trade-off between brand localization and global standardization, consumer–brand relationships, and

strategic adaptation in emerging markets. Because knowledge of CSR, digital marketing, and service customization can help brands to gain brand equity and increase competitive advantage, the results of the case will guide decision-making among marketers, brand managers, policy makers, and entrepreneurs working in the transportation as well as other service sectors. At the end, this case can be used as a manual for those who are trying to deal with the delicate balance of the brand, the user, the service and the innovation in terms of market, where the local and global has to find a common ground to success.

Case Part:

Background of Pathao and Uber

Pathao:

Pathao, which launched in 2015, is a Bangladeshi digital platform that offers a broad range of service, beginning as a motorcycle ride-sharing provider before blossoming into an all-encompassing urban lifestyle app. The company's services now include Pathao Bike, Pathao Car, Pathao Parcel and Pathao Food, and serve over a million users in Dhaka, Chattogram and other cities. Its business model is based mostly on driver commissions and delivery fees, which means that it can keep prices down.

Pathao had more than 8 million downloads in the Google Play Store by 2024 and has been one of the most downloaded and used apps in the country. Whereas international platforms make use of much more of 'shotgun' approach, Pathao manages to use of a marketing and pricing strategy focusing on urban areas and demographic segmentation. Its messaging is typically peppered with youth slang, pop culture references, and national identity themes, which have contributed in creating significant emotional resonance, particularly among younger users.

Pathao is frequently described as a "work-in-progress Super App", with eyes in the future on logistics, fintech and everyday services, not just transport. The fact that it's nimble enough to flex to local infrastructure and cultural styles will provide it with market advantage in how it engages with customers.

Uber:

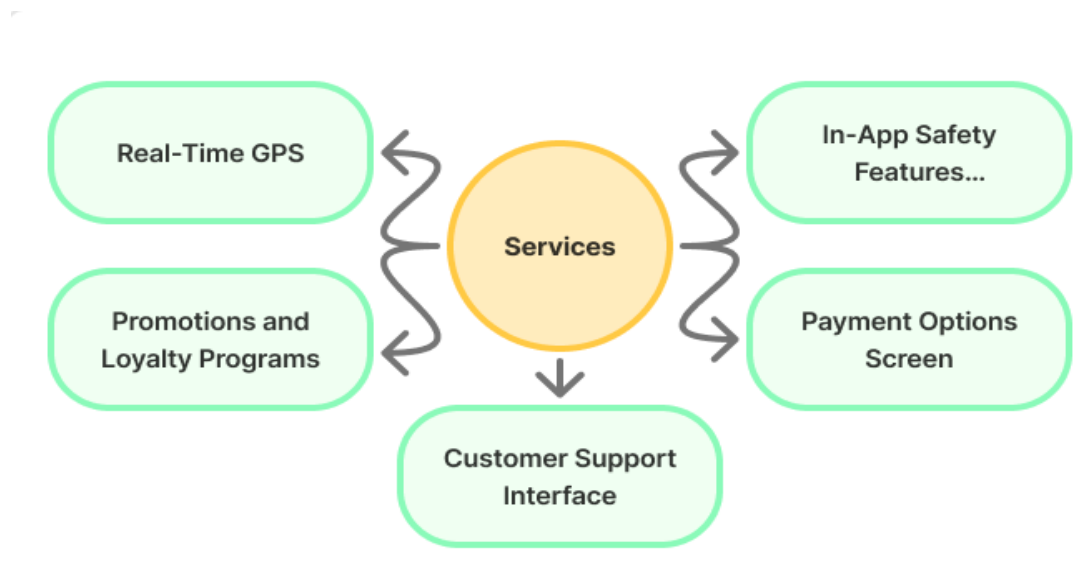
Uber, a San Francisco-based, internationally renowned ride-sharing organization, entered the Bangladesh market in November 2016 as an initiative of its South-Asian branch (operated by Uber India). Uber operates a total of three services including UberX, UberMoto and UberPremier in Bangladesh and they can choose the option depending on budget and need.

Already active in major urban centers in the country like Dhaka and Chattogram, the Uber brand is synonymous with professionalism, safety, and quality service around the world. With more than 3 million downloads from the Bangladeshi segment of the Google Play store (2024), Uber has

established a strong user base, especially within the middle and upper-middle-class commuters who put emphasis on organized quality of service.

Its service spans across more than 70 countries and it has the advantage of global best practices, safety standards (including driver background checks, insurance and real-time ride location tracking) and scalable technology platform. But the way of pricing and a bit of formal branding may restrict its mass-market appeal in price conscious market like Bangladesh. For all its international cachet, Uber is still doing the grunt work of localizing various aspects of its service in Bangladesh, bundling up with local transport regulators and running awareness programs around rider and driver safety.

Service Categories



Pathao and Uber both offer urban mobility options so the users in cities can move around the city in a convenient, safe and reliable manner, at the tap of a button (fig1). The services provided by each are pretty similar, but it's what each company's respective take on what those services are that defines their specific brand.

- **Pathao App Service Options**

The Pathao app is a flagship with all the services available under the same banner, ranging from Bike rides, Car rides, Food and Parcel delivery, and with a clean home screen all wrapped in an easy-to-use glossy app. This multi-service strategy serves a wide range of urban mobility and delivery requirements, transforming Pathao into a single-point platform for the many. With the app's easy-to-use navigation, riders can

smoothly find the transportation option that best fits their preference, whether that's a budget friendly bike or a spacious car for a more leisurely ride. That kind of variety has made Pathao especially popular with students and young working people who want to be able to do many things in one app.

- **Real-Time GPS Ride Tracking Feature**

Pathao and Uber also have GPS to track rides. It included a live tracking feature tracking showing the driver location, time of ETA, and route. What's more, customers get fare estimates — based on distance as well as estimated time of travel — before booking. This transparency builds confidence among the riders, who can estimate costs and track their ride, thereby minimizing the ambiguity. In addition, It allows drivers to plan best possible routes and save time. The GPS tracking is an important system for improving users' confidence and satisfaction.

- **In-App Safety Features**

To tackle safety concerns, the two platforms have added an array of in-app security features. With the SOS button, the rider can safely alert friends or local emergency services that they don't feel safe or threatened while out for a ride. The share trip friend feature allows users to share trip details such as driver's license and vehicle information, as well as the live GPS route and ETA with a friend or family member, amplifying the riders' overall security features. And Pathao, and even Uber, have driver review processes that riders can rate drivers and tell them about their experience on each trip. These rideshare apps also do thorough background checks and check the performance of their drivers so only the ones who perform and are trustworthy can drive you. Taken together, these safety features are critical in establishing rider confidence and promoting use.

- **Promotions and Loyalty Programs**

Pathao and Uber always come up with a variety of promotional offers to allure and to keep the customers with them. Promo codes for users both new and existing are helping to cover the cost of rides, making it easier to try for first time users and enticing for repeat riders. Referral rewards encourage users to introduce friends and family into a platform as the community grows virally naturally. Pathao's loyalty program, like Pathao Points rewards regular riders with points which can be cashed out for discounts or future rides, resulting in ongoing engagement. They also run promotional campaigns for festive seasons and special days such as Ramadan, national holidays, back to school etc., not only to keep up the excitement but also to reward the loyal customers from time to time. These marketing efforts are essential in maintaining user retention and brand loyalty.

- **Payment Options Screen**

Both Pathao and Uber have multiple forms of payments in Bangladesh, which is a country of varied transaction conscience. Cash still reigns supreme because it is easy to

use and easy to access. But the platforms are also allowing popular mobile wallets like bKash, Nagad and Rocket that are gradually capturing their market share of tech-savvy customers. Uber sees greater usage of debit and credit card payments from its richer customer base. On top of that, customers are able to redeem promo balances from previous promotions, refunds, or referral bonuses during checkout, giving your customers more options and you a more cost-effective solution. This diversity of payment methods makes the service more user-friendly and is beneficial to a wider audience.

- **Customer Support Interface**

Both apps have in-app help centers where you can report lost items, fare discrepancies, or a problem with your ride, for example. Uber uses a structured ticketing system to categorize and manage user complaints, they deal effectively and as far as possible, in a timely manner with user complaints. Pathao, on the other hand, deploys chatbots to address general inquiries and provides call-back services for complex issues. This blended support of both automated and human support makes it easier to ensure levels of customer satisfaction by being available to give response. Customers request timely services is essential to resolve the problem and restore the user's confidence.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIETY POSITIONING IN UBER AND RIDE SHARING SERVICES

In the context of the fast-changing ride sharing market of Bangladesh, even for companies like Uber and Pathao, in the battle for the urban youth 18–30 demographics, successful-brand positioning is critical. This consumer group considers the brand functioning as per the product but measures it as per its emotional essence, economic pragmatism, and value for trust. In a highly price-sensitive market where consumers are skeptical, ride-sharing brands need to carefully consider four key touchpoints: trust, value, emotional engagement and affordability. The Urban Millennials are looking for a brand that is not just good and cheap, but one that fits their life and culture. Hence, for a ride-sharing brand to succeed in Bangladesh, enabling services should not be the only criteria. It needs to have a strong focus on safety, clear and fair pricing, be engaging with potential customers online and through local marketing that appeals to emotions. So, let's never forget that the stunning service, backed by a consciousness of the local culture, is about creating long-last loyalty. At the end of the day, brands that position themselves as trustworthy and local hero are well placed to emerge victorious in this fiercely competitive market of young, city-based consumers of Bangladesh.

Market Analysis

1. Market Share & Platform Dominance

The Bangladesh's ride-sharing space is tough for new comers as it is dominated by Pathao and Uber in the meantime, with newer entrants and hybrid models slowly making their way to niche spaces.

'Pathao' enjoys nearly a 50% market share of the motorbike-ride-sharing market owing to its hyperlocal model, strong brand recall and vast penetration across key cities such as Dhaka, Chattogram and Sylhet. By comparison Uber has a 38% market share in car-hailing given its world-wide recognition and popularity amongst working professionals and families who place a premium on trust and reliability. In the meantime, other players like Shohoz Rides, Obhai and delivery-centric platforms extending into mobility options, like Foodpanda's Pandamove, contribute the other remaining 12%, usually operating on constrained routes or in only certain parts of a city. These market trend point to the fact that Pathao's affordability and cultural relevance still keep appealing to the young demographic, whereas UBER's premium quality of service that makes it more appealing to more premium user types.

2. Demographic Trends & User Behavior

Approximately 70% of the ride-sharing customers in Bangladesh are aged 18-30 so it is very popular among students, freelance workers, and early career professionals. Of these, 52.3% are currently students, and 60% now uses these platforms at least three times a week, illustrating just how integral ride-sharing has become to daily commuting. In addition, female users – who feel safer and have a greater sense of control – use ride-hailing services in significant numbers. And 90% of the women interviewed claimed that they are most worried about safety while opting for ride-sharing instead of public transport (The Daily Star, 2024). And this youth-dominated, digitally connected user base that will be increasingly reliant on mobile-first experiences, such as real-time trip tracking, loyalty rewards and socially responsible branding, will have a bearing on their platform of choice and brand loyalty.

3. Economic and Employment Impact

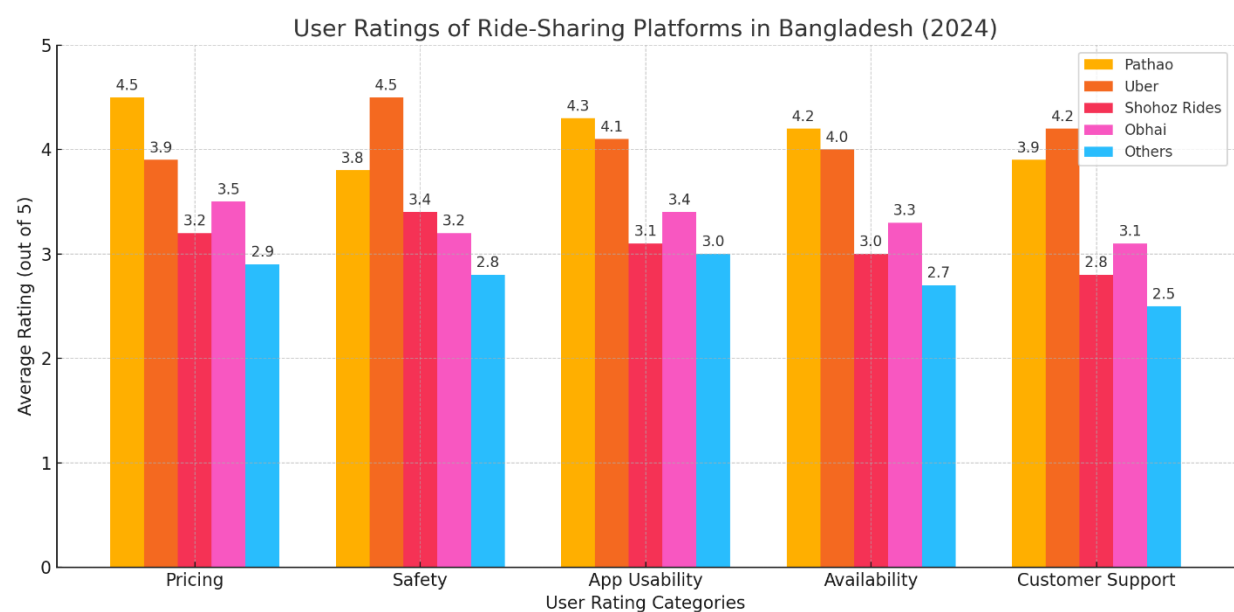
The entry of Uber into the Bangladeshi market has been found to generate positive spillovers in the Bangladeshi Economy and estimated through three channels driver income, Indirect employment and Commuter time savings and is a round BDT 5,500 core (\$500 million) (Uber Bangladesh Report, 2024). And when you consider our user as well, that being 82% of our users use Uber as a primary commuting service to work and home, productivity became something that was conspicuously absent from the Uber metrics dashboard. And Uber drivers in the aggregate earned 42% more per year than the next-best-paying job they could have taken, turning ride-sharing into a real livelihood — especially for young urban men. Pathao also has a market-leading job opportunity to thousands of part-time and full-time riders throughout the multi-service offering

with bike rides, car deliveries, food delivery, and on-demand delivery. And the barrier to entry is low, and the flexibility of the Pathao is quite universal, particularly in a sort of underemployed and semiskilled labor force that you have in an urban context.

4. Gender Inclusion & Societal Impact

More than 300,000 women will enter the Dhaka work force by 2028, according to the World Bank and private industry studies, and ride-hailing applications are a key facilitator, offering safer, more flexible and efficient travel. Pathao, Uber etc. made this transition happen by embedding indispensable in-app safety features such as SOS alerts, real-time trip sharing, driver identification, GPS tracking, which built a lot of confidence in female commuters. Similarly, Pathao is piloting SheRides, testing a model that helps women use transport in city Bangladesh by matching female drivers with female clients.

Future Analysis



Bangladesh’s urban public transport infrastructure is also changing rapidly, so too will the company that rode in on that infrastructure nearly a decade ago. With the proliferation of smartphones, evolving consumer preferences and growing demand for accessible and affordable transportation, players like Pathao and Uber are moving away from ride-sharing aspect. But regulatory shifts and wider social and economic changes, as well as new technology, are likely to redefine how service is provided and who fights to do it. This shape of thing is on the horizon:

1. Growth of Multi-Service Platforms (Super Apps)

Bangladeshi ride-hailing firms are branching out into multi-service platforms. Services like Pathao are also growing beyond transport itself to offer food delivery, courier, payments and

eventually other financial services. This trend, towards super-apps—like apps, (think, Grab- SEA or Gojek- Indonesia) is likely to win more business and also detain customers more through convenience and integration. This could be one way for Uber to continue to expand their reach and compete with major cab sharing companies.

2. Expansion into Tier-2 and Tier-3 Cities

With Dhaka and Chattogram approaching saturation levels, the second wave will take place in second-tier cities such as Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi and Barishal. The emergence of smartphone and urbanization in these regions creates new markets. Companies will also have to adjust pricing, attract local drivers and manage infrastructure constraints to scale successfully.

3. Regulatory Formalization and Industry Licensing

With the growth and maturity of the ride-sharing sector, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is anticipated to enforce more stringent regulations such as requirement for formal licenses, insurance rules and compliance with vehicle standards. This may very well add to the cost of doing business for platforms, but it would help establish greater consumer confidence, systematize the gig economy, and perhaps solve some of the problems that both kill and embolden service quality.

SWOT Analysis of Uber & Pathao

	Pathao	Uber
Strengths	• Strong local brand identity • Affordable pricing • Deep understanding of local culture • Diverse services (bike, car, food, parcel) • Flexible payment options	• Premium global brand image • High safety standards • Professional service model • Advanced, user-friendly app • Strong integration with maps
Weaknesses	• Inconsistent service quality • Limited rural reach • Slow customer service	• Higher fares than local options • Less flexibility in local adaptation • Limited payment options for unbanked users
Opportunities	• Expand to smaller cities • Strengthen loyalty programs • Integrate food/parcel delivery	• Target urban youth segment • Collaborate for sustainable transport

	• Build B2B logistics partnerships	• Localize app features • Expand Moto/shared rides
Threats	• Rising local competition • Regulatory pressures • Rider/driver dissatisfaction	• Strong local competition • Regulatory/legal challenges • Negative perception from high fares/safety incidents

Strengths: Include Figures for all the swot parts

Pathao

- **Strong local brand identity (“Made in Bangladesh” appeal)**

Pathao has successfully positioned itself as a local Bangladeshi brand and is closer to the hearts of Bangladeshi consumers with its “Made in Bangladesh” tag. Their latest rebrand is all about connectivity, partnership, and making the lives of Bangladeshis as easy as possible. Pathao is currently considered to be more than just a service, is a verb and represents innovation, reliability, and local empowerment. With the brand identity being so deeply intertwined with the brand promise, millions in Bangladesh have made it into a household name that they can rely on with their lives.

- **Affordable pricing tailored to mass market**

Pathao’s prices are heavily competitive, far-far lesser than thalla-taxi fares. Pathao, for example, typically charges BDT 10-20/km when compared with taxis, which charges BDT 25-50/km for their rides. The company also offers an approachable fare estimation (so you know exactly what you’re getting into), and they regularly run promotions – like 20% off for new users or seasonal price reductions of up to 30% – to make your cast experience affordable. This strategy has proven to be very attractive to students, young professionals and the wider mass market encouraging more engagement and retention.

- **Deep understanding of local traffic and cultural nuances**

Pathao’s early success can be attributed to its intricate understanding of the chaotic traffic flows of Dhaka and the daily struggles commuters in the city contend with. With a focus on motorcycle ride-sharing—a model that has succeeded in other crowded emerging markets-Pathao has offered a practicable solution to the notorious congestion in the city. Its services are adapted to local interests as well, including incentive such as flexible payment options (they accept cash and popular mobile wallets), and marketing promotions that address the Bangladeshi culture and values.

- **Offers diverse services (bike, car, food delivery, parcel)**

Pathao has expanded to become a super-app, providing a variety of services in addition to ride-sharing. You can reserve a bike ride or book a car ride, order food, remove parcels and what not, you can do even digital payments and availing the services where you can buy now and pay later-all at one roof. This variety serves not only the needs of various city dwellers but also make Pathao a routine part of life for many Bangladeshis, driving more repeat use.

Uber

- **Premium brand image with global trust**

Uber Bangladesh is trying to portray itself as a premium global ride-sharing service to gain entry into the Bangladeshi market using its global brand name. The arrival in Dhaka was perceived as a source of trustworthiness and professionalism - which struck a chord with many customers who appreciate brand status and continuity. Uber enjoys a strong brand identity among Bangladeshi city dwellers interested in a high standard of service and its international standards combined with its presence in more than 600 cities across the world help to maintain this identity.

- **High safety standards and professional service model**

Uber, which said it has taken a number of steps to protect customers and drivers during the pandemic, including requiring masks, pre-trip mask verification for drivers and a Go Online Checklist for riders and drivers, said any alcohol or route changes during rides must be ordered by riders through its app. Together with frequent provision of safety products and improved feedback channels, these announcements emphasize Uber's clean bill on safety and professionalism. Riders and drivers are also free to cancel a trip if safety protocols are not being followed, again underscoring Uber's focus on safe, quality service.

- **Advanced app interface with international consistency**

Uber's app offers a straightforward and easy-to-use experience, it is actually the same interface used in other countries around the world. This uniformity means that a user who has previously used Uber in another country will have an easy time acclimating to Uber Bangladesh. Standardized to meet international standards, the app's elements such as real-time ride tracking, fare estimates and digital payment support offer a polished and dependable experience to the keen user in India.

- **Strong integration with Google Maps and navigation tools**

The difference with Uber is most visible when it comes to its seamless interaction with Google Maps and the computerized driver guidance. This allows for the precision planning of routes, fare calculation, and matching of riders with drivers close by. Besides improving the user experience, such integrated functionality allows drivers to assure themselves that they are

adhering to the optimal route to minimize their transit time and increase their overall service reliability.

Weaknesses:

Pathao

- **Inconsistency in rider professionalism and service quality**

Pathao's very quick growth has resulted in certain unpleasant service quality and rider professionalism discrepancies. Some users share that drivers can be rude, the drivers don't follow rules and are usually late because they don't know their way. This is evident by the 70% user dissatisfaction rate with service reliability, particularly in sectors such as ride-sharing and food delivery. This is only aggravated with bugs in the app occasionally popping up and the inability of drivers and riders to communicate effectively because of poor network or lack of driver training.

- **Limited-service availability in certain rural or semi-urban areas**

Pathao's services run in Dhaka, Chattogram and other cities but is not available in the more rural and semi-urban areas. The company's operations are very localised, concentrating mainly in the cities (less than 5% of the users come from the other, non-main cities in Bangladesh). As a result, many smaller cities and towns are underserved, or can't access the full suite of services Pathao offers, potentially making them reliant on traditional transport.

- **Customer service response can be slow or inconsistent**

While it provides a 24 hour call center for customers, according to those same customers, response times can be spotty and/or sluggish, particularly during peak and holiday periods. "Although our metrics are much better than 30 seconds, the product and service roadmap growth has at times outstripped our ability to keep up And that can lead to delays and open issues. This disjointed presentation of the information, however, can undermine the passenger's confidence in the system, causing dissatisfaction, especially for issues in which time is a concern, such as fare disputes or lost items.

Uber

- **Higher fare rates compared to local alternatives**

The fare costs of Uber in Bangladesh are usually much higher than the fares charged by its local competitors, and therefore much more expensive than older traditional modes of public transport like rickshaws or auto-rickshaws. Riders have also often lamented a surge pricing and fare estimate system that does not always give them a good idea of what they will actually be paying. These much steeper prices make Uber less attractive to price-sensitive people in Bangladesh – such as students and low-income commuters.

- **Limited flexibility in adapting to hyperlocal conditions**

The business concept that makes Uber so powerful in much of the world doesn't always take into account the specifics of the Bangladeshi market. It is mainly operational in Dhaka and Chattogram, and does not have a significant presence in smaller towns and rural areas. On the other hand, Uber's across-the-board planet-wide strategy is likely to overlook whatever quirks people have around local commuting habits and language choices, not to mention the value of cheap motorbike rides, which, most short distances in clogged Bangladeshi cities are whisking along.

- **Dependence on credit/debit cards still affects lower-income riders**

To date, even after the app began allowing for mobile wallet payments such as bKash and Nagad, the app's reliance on debit/credit card payments from the onset meant a huge community of lower-income users (who largely live as the unbanked) have no access to the payment facilities that help them use the overall platform. In reality, this reliance has left even the overwhelming majority of the population unable to reach Uber — whose digital banking penetration in Bangladesh is still very low. And in places where card payment is available, uptake among the wider population is low, indicating the need for payment systems that are more inclusive.

Opportunities:

Pathao

- **Expand further into second-tier and smaller cities**

Pathao's footprint in big cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet is good but there is substantial scope of expansion in the third tier and smaller cities in other parts of the country. With presence in over 64 districts, including Suburbans and Upazillas under Pathao Courier network, the company is set to penetrate markets outside of the capital and major cities. It becomes ride sharing and food delivery, for example, that's what you're actually answering if because of lack of presence, you think and you as a business, can you go and tap into that demand which is lying latent in a lot of these low penetrated areas where today with the smartphone penetration, the digital penetration in these, can you get those new customer segments to come into the overall market?

- **Leverage loyalty programs for increased customer retention**

Pathao could also enhance and scale some of its existing loyalty programs such as Pathao Points to increase customer retention and lifetime value. Users engagement and churn on Pathao can be enhanced using point systems, say, for instance regular riders or delivery users earning points that can be redeemed in the form of discounts or exclusive deals. In a price

conscious country like Bangladesh – where the majority of the users of both ridesharing, food delivery and other fintech products are the youth, a Hong Kong based digital marketing company could not only tie them as loyalty programs altogether, but also work to make an ecosystem with them where a consumer can have all he needs at 1 place – and having an ecosystem where they'll have to stick on with Pathao for a lot more daily.

- **Strengthen food and parcel delivery integration**

Pathao Food and Pathao Courier I have found to be the company's bread winners as far as services go, especially when, in the Covid-19 situation, home delivery demand skyrocketed. Pathao Courier has already gone to 64 districts, and in 34plus districts, it now provides the 24-hour service, so obviously, there's a possibility in further ingraining these logistic services within the uniform concept of ride-sharing in the multi-service offering. By way of cross-selling, bundling, or simply by ensuring greater on-the-ground availability, there is a lot we can do to make life easier for the customers and maximize the earnings potential.

- **Build B2B logistics partnerships**

There is big a potential to integrate with Bangladesh's expanding e-commerce and SME ecosystem for Pathao to further grow its B2B Logistics services. With local business owners, online merchants, and other stakeholders on board, Pathao can use its delivery network to provide stable and scalable logistics. This would give the company a spread of sources of revenue beyond consumer ride-sharing and food delivery, tapping into the growing digital economy and cheapening delivery for small businesses.

Uber

- **Tap into growing mid-income urban youth segment**

It will capitalize on Uber's premium image and global brand sentiment to focus on urban youth in Bangladesh who are increasingly part of the middle-income segment of society and tech-savvy and seeking a comfortable and trustworthy mobility option, added Uber. With increasing smartphone usage and digital proficiency, the generations want convenience, security and ease of use from their apps and Uber wins on all three. Tailored marketing and service packages for this segment can assist Uber in strengthening its brand presence across Dhaka and its key cities.

- **Collaborate with local governments for sustainable transport solutions**

There are some fairly serious urban congestion and pollution issues in Bangladesh, and there might be opportunities for Uber to work with city officials around sustainable transportation. Those partnerships could consist of ramping up the deployment of electric vehicles, ride-sharing and working with public transit systems. That type of collaboration could help promote Uber's corporate image as a leader in social responsibility, and signal the

government's priorities, which could in turn help cut through some regulatory red tape and encourage adoption of the service.

- **Introduce more localized features in the app (language, mobile wallet)**

There's actually some pretty big urban congestion and pollution problems in Bangladesh, and there could be opportunities for Uber to partner with city officials around sustainable transportation. Those relationships could involve accelerating the rollout of electric vehicles, ride-sharing and cooperation with public transportation systems. That could go a long way toward the company's self-presentation as a leading social citizen — just as it might go a long way toward declaring the government's priorities, which might also help cut through some regulatory red tape and encourage adoption of the service.

- **Expand Uber Moto and shared ride options for cost-conscious riders**

Cheap, cramped two-wheeler rides in Bangladesh's teeming cities are a way of life for many. Another potential area where Uber could expand more of its Uber Moto service is in this dense market as well, giving people faster and cheaper ways to get around town. Furthermore, increased rollout of ride sharing services (e.g. car sharing) would satisfy the needs of all price sensitive users who would find the minimum fare (including ride sharing) cheaper. These slashed-price services, he added, would give Uber a better chance of holding its own against hometown competitors like Pathao, by siphoning more of the mass market and providing it with a decent quality of service.

Threats:

Pathao

- **Increasing competition from newer local platforms (e.g., Shohoz, Obhai)**

Pathao is facing competition from newly established local ride-sharing companies like Shohoz and Obhai that have, almost overnight, captured market share by offering a variety of services on competitive terms. Take Shohoz, for example, which isn't simply a ride-sharing platform but also brings in online ticketing for buses, trains and even launches as part of its ecosystem. Obhai, which has CNG auto-rickshaws in its fleet, proved to be a favorite amongst economy passengers. This increasing competition puts more pressure on Pathao to continue to innovate and edge out its peers in this space, where consumers frequently jump between rival apps to get the best prices and services.

- **Regulatory pressure and changing transport policies**

Bangladesh is seeing increasing regulation of its ride sharing industry. Companies such as Pathao have been granted licenses to operate since 2019, but shifting transport policies and government interference continue to cause problems. There are also a host of legal and regulatory issues, as well as safety, fare regulation and licensing mandates that can drive up costs and limit options. What's more, criticism over the ride-sharing business model's long-term sustainability, and concerns about passenger E-safety, have seen the industry become ever-more regulated — again, something which has made Pathao operate in a challenging and, at times, uncertain regulatory space.

- **Rising rider dissatisfaction due to commission cuts and pay issues**

Pathao has seen its fair share of internal controversy including driver unrest over its commission rate increase and wage disputes. Gorgeous are drivers, and even the most remotely excessive impression of cuts will result a) protests, or b) shittier service. The frustration could lead to reduction in customer satisfaction and increase in ride cancellations. Moreover, the drivers are the brand face; what a driver has to say about Pathao influences the perception, and the dependability of its service in a cutthroat competition.

Uber

- **Cultural misalignment with local service expectations**

Pioneering what was termed as 'ride sharing' (though it's not actually sharing the ride), and being global brand, Uber have struggled in fully integrating with the local Bangladeshi culture and service. While Uber talks up professionalism and uniformity, riders in many parts of the world prefer relations that are more personal and flexible, like negotiating over fares or being able to pay with cash, and until now Uber had not accommodated those differences. Such cultural divides can make user experience — and loyalty — quite visceral, especially when there are home-grown alternatives that such as Pathao are at least partly built to cater to Bangladeshi social norms and sense of taste.

- **Price sensitivity among Bangladeshi users may reduce long-term loyalty**

The ride-hailing market in Bangladesh is hyper sensitive to pricing and most of the customers decide on the basis of, what is cheaper, not what is better. Uber is exposed to the risk of losing its market to lower priced alternatives like Pathao, Shohoz or inDrive, given its greater pricing vis-a-vis local transportation. If surge pricing continues to be the norm and fare structures remain rigid, it could discourage sustained use among budget-focused younger and low-income riders and ultimately erode Uber's ability to turn a profit.

- **Regulatory barriers specific to foreign entities**

Uber, being a global company, has a higher set of standards to meet than most local companies of Bangladesh. Challenges For foreign companies, compliance and licensing regime is difficult to navigate and are sometimes considered from a political viewpoint. These barriers could slow service increases, complicate changes in procedures and inflate prices. The other factor is that even simplified regulations that protect local business through enforcement can place people pressure on Uber, always in need of a high spend on local partnership and effort to win.

Brand Positioning Strategy

A. Evolution of Brand Positioning

This part analyses how Pathao and Uber have constructed their brand identities in Bangladesh, with two different brands speaking to two different target markets and finding a place in the market.

Pathao - Emphasized affordability and national pride: “আমাদের পাঠাও আমাদের রাইড”

The brand developed on the basis as local company in Bangladesh and Market Fit best Lap and boda share company. Its marketing highlights affordability and national pride, summed up in slogans like “আমাদের পাঠাও আমাদের রাইড” (“Our Pathao, Our Ride”). Pathao has positioned itself as an urban mobility champion in addressing the daily requirements of Bangladeshis since it was established in 2015, transforming itself from a delivery service to a super app featuring a range of services such as ride sharing, food delivery and logistics. It is this local flavor and cultural relevance that has made Pathao a verb in the Bangladeshi language: a word of trust, accessibility and national pride.

In Bangladesh, an Uber ad made a lot of noise about global safety standards: “Move Bangladesh Forward.”

Brand Position in Bangladesh Lever up the brand's global claim, excellent quality and professional experience of ride-sharing (safe, reliable, reliable first, safe first) by UBER. The companies' messaging, such as “Move Bangladesh Forward,” focuses on the promise of modern urban transport, complete with international safety standards, rigorous driver verification and insurance-backed protections installed. Underprivileged High End users Uber's goal customers are individuals who want to have good quality service as what brand all over the world become known of, which challenged local companies by trust, safety and technology.

B. Differentiation from Competitors

In this article, we delve into the key aspects that set aside both Pathao and Uber from other ride-sharing services and outline marketing strategies and features of the services that cater to the needs and preferences of targeted customers.

Pathao: Cultural fit, relatable marketing ads source: Pathao Pathao, a motorcycle based rideshare company also took to combining cultural polygons and local memes for its latest marketing rampage.

Pathao has even more distinguishing marketing strategies that resonate with life in Bangladesh in a very real way. Its campaigns also make extensive use of local language, humor and even social media influencers targeting the young and urban population. Our meme marketing, influencer integrations and services has been a very powerful in maintaining an emotional connect and making it relatable and accessible for our users. This cultural match seems to extend to the services too, with rides on its bikes being not only cheap and tailored for Dhaka's traffic and customer behavior, but also amenable to cash and mobile wallet payments.

Uber: Safety checks, high-end user experience

Uber sets itself apart by concentrating on the quality of service, and safety." It has strict driver vetting, mandatory training and insurance for your safety. The in-app interface of Uber's point to point service is sleek and reflects the global presence of the brand, with today's niceties like real-time tracking on GPS and cashless payment. This premium proposition appeals particularly to safety and comfort-conscious consumers, who are those common in urban, often middle and higher-income, shoppers who value global brand cachet and high service levels.

C. Most Effective Positioning Strategies

In this section, we analyze the branding and promotional strategies that have proven most successful for Pathao and Uber, highlighting how these tactics have effectively engaged urban youth and built consumer trust.

Pathao's meme marketing and influencer campaigns proved highly effective among youth

Social media-Led Meme marketing and collaboration with popular influencers have assisted Pathao to create a brand in the minds of Bangladesh's tech-savvy youth. Such campaigns involve high levels of humor and a cultural reference that leads to viral content, where your brand is seen and loved. This approach has been a key factor in making Pathao a youth-oriented, relatable brand, that emotionally connects companies with their core demographic and help drive user acquisition and engagement in a competitive market.

Uber’s professional driver vetting and insurance-backed safety measures strengthened consumer trust

Public confidence in Bangladesh’s ride-sharing service has grown on the back of Uber’s strict driver scrutiny and safety policy, which is underwritten by insurance. In so doing – and by making these safety credentials part of its structure – UBER has been able to set itself apart by offering assurance through the delivery of a premium quality service. This emphasis on security and quality has engaged new customers whom otherwise would be wary of hopping into a ride-share, solidifying long-term loyalty with those whom prioritize safety.

Consumer Perception Analysis Survey Insights (n=300, March 2024):

A recent empirical study of 300 urban youth in Bangladesh creates awareness about different optic through which consumers perceive Pathao and Uber and their relative advantages and preferences.

Preferred for Daily Quick Rides:

Pathao has a clear lead with 63% respondents preferring the service for daily short-haul commutes, with 32% having opted for Uber. This preference mirrors Pathao’s unique attractiveness as a cost-effective and easy option for short trips, serving as a significant driver of rapid uptake among students and young professionals in congested urban environments.

App	Percentage (%)
Pathao	63
Uber	32

Trust in Safety:

Uber, in comparison, has a significant lead in the minds of users about safety indeed 62% of users trust its safety compared to the 30% looking at Pathao. This shows that Uber has been able to rebrand themselves as a less risky and safer service for riders’ looking for a more reputable experience.

App	Percentage (%)
Pathao	62
Uber	30

Pricing Satisfaction:

Pricing is still a crucial issue, and 71% of people are content with the pricing of Pathao, while only 18% with the pricing of Uber. Pathao is effective among price-conscious users since it is cheap and offers constant promotions in a price-sensitive market and thus a preferred choice.

App	Percentage (%)
Pathao	71
Uber	18

Ease of App Use:

Both have simple-to-use apps, but Pathao has the lead over Uber with 54% satisfaction compared to Uber's 42%. This is perhaps due to the localized features like cash payment solution, Bangla language support, etc. on its platform that makes it more user-friendly for varied users.

App	Percentage (%)
Pathao	54
Uber	42

Key Insights

The evidence demonstrates that when riders are looking for direct, no frills, affordable transportation, the app they turn to is Pathao. Providing value for money and local adaptation to the market, it has become widely used on a daily basis by urban youth. On the other hand, Uber is the choice of those who appreciate a safer and more regulated experience, even at a premium.

Marketing Campaigns Impact on Brand Perception

Pathao Campaigns

“Ektu Bhalo Cholo” (“Ride a Little Better”) is Pathao’s new campaign to empower both riders and drivers to be nicer and more respectful leading to a better ride experience. The company also heavily engages in influencer marketing on platforms including TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, relying on relatable content and influencers popular with younger users to stay top-of-mind with the brand.

Uber Campaigns

Uber's "Safe Mobility for All" puts rider and driver safety front and center, shoring up its reputation as a safe, trustworthy option. Uber has also worked with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and local traffic police on a road safety awareness campaign, providing drivers with helmets and hosting educational workshops for both drivers and riders.

Impact

For Pathao anyways - which is also involved in tourism and deliveries - campaigns such as "Ektu Bhalo Cholo" and influencer-based marketing tactics in apps like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube have solidified the brand's more down to earth and culturally heavy presence. These projects have not only raised brand recognition, but they have also worked to educate and engage riders in a sense of community and responsibility, encouraging courteous behavior and creating positive social standards. The success of these campaigns showed the power of personalized, youth-targeted content in building engagement and loyalty. Pathao also picked up to the significance of emotional storytelling and interactive social media contests: the "Pathao Diamond for Maa" campaign helped tie-in emotional connections with users, by echoing a celebration of cultural values and family. Relationships. This methodology made Pathao a brand that not just relates but also celebrates the daily life of its users so, that they trust and remain loyal over a longer period.

Uber's safety-conscious initiatives, such as "Safe Mobility for All" and local authorities' tie-ups to ensure helmet distribution, have markedly bolstered the perception of Uber as a high-quality and safe ride-share provider. These efforts spoke to the top concerns of parents, young women, and professionals – groups that are more concerned with safety and reliability than price. By working closely with traffic police, and focusing on the importance of regulation and professionalism, Uber built confidence among consumers and stood out in a price-sensitive market. It learnt from these campaigns that in new markets like Bangladesh, such practices help in building trust in driver partners and that supporting public safety initiatives is an important part of being a responsible corporate citizen. The emphasis on safety further reinforced Uber's universal brand promise while tailoring it to local norms, making it more attractive to cautious or discerning, quality-oriented riders.

In general, these campaigns have been a learning experience for both firms, in the sense that local culture and what customers care about locally should be taken into account, in their messaging marketing. Pathao's edgy, cool and community building initiatives have contributed to its popularity among youth and its overall brand affinity, while Uber's safety and professionalism initiatives appeal to users who are more risk averse, by creating a sense of trust. Collectively, these approaches have allowed both brands to elevate to the position of trusted lifestyle partners as opposed to mere ride-hailing services, ensuring continued expansion within a highly competitive ride-sharing market in Bangladesh.

Teaching Notes

Case Summary:

This case study examines how two leading ride-sharing companies in Bangladesh — Pathao and Uber — develop their brands, and how people feel about the implications of using them. On the one hand, Pathao is a local company which is cheap and you already know, on the other, Uber is an international brand, you will feel safe and get professional service. The research homes in on millennial (aged 18-30) attitudes to both apps in relation to pricing, safety, ease of use and customer service. It compares the two brands using surveys and other research. It's also an illustration of how companies that market at high-churn, low-dollar points online attempt to bond with their users. The case explores the strengths, weaknesses and future opportunities of both brands as they expand in a rapidly evolving market.

Teaching objectives:

- Evaluate the brand positioning of Pathao and UBER in the ride-sharing market in Bangladesh.
- Compare how consumers feel about both brands in important aspects such as safety and value.
- Analyze the effect of their promotions on brand content and engagement.
- Investigate The impact of CSR activities on brand trust and loyalty.
- Analyze the difficulties and opportunities they encountered in re-pivoting their brand.

Teaching Audience:

- Undergraduate or graduate business/ marketing students
- Early-career professionals in management or marketing training
- Learners interested in brand strategy, market competition, and real-world application of business theories
- Pathao and Uber users (No age restrictions)

Questions for discussion:

1. **How do Pathao and Uber differ in their brand positioning strategies to attract urban youth in Bangladesh, and which elements have proven most effective in building brand preference?**

Answer:

Pathao's brand positioning revolves around three brand pillars – affordability, local resonance and cultural relevance. It markets itself as a “Made in Bangladesh” brand that gets the daily grind of city youth, including the slog of getting through the gridlocks that have plugged Dhaka traffic. Pathao emphasizes faster, cost-efficient motorcycle rides for short trips, and it is popular with students and young professionals who are looking for affordable convenience. The company advertises with local language, humor and social media influencers to make the brand accessible and fun. This in-our-chains memetic, bottom-up approach has helped Pathao plant the seed of some strong emotional connections among its core fans.

Uber, on the other hand, is a premium global brand oriented to safety, propriety and trust. It's targeted at urban youth who are willing to shell out more money for security they can trust, regulated service and a smooth app experience. While some in the younger generation may be price-sensitive themselves, but the general assumption stands: Uber's brand, and all of the trust and visibility that are intrinsic to it, is paying off with users who prioritize trust and quality over down-and-dirty price. Tech savvy users might also be attracted by its top-of-range app features and Google Maps compatibility.

Most effective elements:

For Pathao: What has helped it gain mass adoption among the youth locals is the low price, local cultural fit and influencer lead marketing!

For Uber: an assurance that rides would be safe and professional and adults would treat drivers with respect; an impression that customers want reliability and safety in their commercial transportation and fleet (they want a known, trusted transportation solution where the presence of an Uber icon offers the guarantee of a professional and safe ride).

Survey Questions:

a. Which ride share app best understands that there is no one size fits all in daily commuting? (Pathao/Uber/Other)

When respondents were asked which ride-sharing app that is best at acknowledging daily commuting is different for everyone, they had mixed opinions, showcasing the evolving demands of city commuters. A lot of users found Pathao to be the most useful app considering the various commuting purposes it serves. Many praised Pathao for its vast array of ways to travel, from motorcycles and cars to parcel and food delivery services. The fact it was able to suit local road conditions, have all sorts of pricing and cater to different types commuting habits was taken as a positive sign its suited to local needs rather than a “one size fits all” proposition.

Others liked that Uber was also uniform and standardized all over the world, as well as the fact that there were premium service levels and that the drivers were professional. But others said that Uber’s model might feel too intransigent and disconnected from local commuting realities, especially in the already congested, price-sensitive or infrastructure-constrained cities. A smaller, but significant number selected “Other” platforms – sometimes local or new services – citing innovations such as flexible payment options, subscription models or public transit integration. Instead, such users are drawn increasingly to new entrants that are building services around hyperlocal insights and narrow use cases.

The feedback as a whole seems to indicate an emerging need for customization, flexibility, and cultural fit within ride-sharing products. The more an app can accommodate different daily schedules, budgets and locations, the closer it gets to that elusive goal: creating users who are hooked for life.

2. What are the key factors influencing service perception among urban youth for Pathao and Uber, and how do these perceptions impact customer loyalty and usage frequency?

Answer:

Drivers of service perception Cost, trust, app availability, payment type, service coverage apart from the above were found to be strong drivers of service 39 perception. But it generally gets fine reviews anyway despite all that (fare \$\$\$, fares may be lower, and you can pay as a cash fare to the drivers) because, theoretically, people could just approximate it through what is sort of an app-based local service. That’s why, IMO, if you regularly have to travel a short distance and you’re a student or a low-budget young professional, the easiest way to use Pathao. But Some customers also complain drivers are very bad type, unprofessional, and drives so rash and below a quality of driver as well. Uber’s answer is,

naturally, that it offers a safer, more professional service, complete with background-checked drivers, and insurance, and with safety features like S.O.S. buttons and the ability to share trips with family members. And that, my friends, is the one other demerit of Uber — it is, obviously, the preferred app for anyone hoping for a modicum of peace of mind (women, parents, the mobocrats, et al). Its app is also winning points for a well-designed interface and a smooth experience with mobile payment — although, price and not being a digital payment, there you're out of luck.

Impact on loyalty and usage:

Pathao is also cheap and you do it every day, multiple times per day but when they're making it this blatantly obvious that they're coming for you on whatever service you'd rather they didn't, it's more difficult for people to want to stick around. The Uber safe ride assurance, as tested with their quality premium riders," is what reassures the average regular Uber rider (not average every day rider) that they can expect a safe, quality experience.

Survey Questions:

b. How happy are you with pricing of your favorite ride-sharing app? (Very satisfied/Satisfied/Unsatisfied)

Pricing continues to be a major driver of rider satisfaction of ride-sharing platforms. Based on the answers received, most are considered the pricing of their preferred app either "satisfied" or "very satisfied." This indicates that most ride-sharing services out now are seen to be providing decent value for money flow through ease and service levels. "Very satisfied" customers tend to emphasize an honest fare structure, predictable surge and the contrast with promotional codes or discounts. Such users like clear and pay-giving services which fit their budget and day-to-day commutes. The generally positive "satisfied" group, for its part, sometimes raises small concerns about occasional spikes in surge pricing (or "surge fares"). They still perceive the total expense to be appropriate versus other options, such as taking a taxi or driving their own car or using public transport.

In the other hand, "Unsatisfied" users mention surge pricing, fare transparency, or inconsistent fare experience between trips. These users could perceive that current pricing models are not consistent with levels of service quality or local affordability. To grow and sustain the level of satisfaction, ride-sharing companies need to look into providing better clarity around fare breakdown, offer loyalty benefits and experiment with regional, dynamic pricing which caters to local economic conditions.

**c. How frequently do you rely on ride-sharing to get to work every day?
(Daily/Weekly/Occasionally)**

The frequency of commuting time on the use of the ride-sharing is also quite different, indicating the difference on work, distance, cost and other vehicles, etc. Just fewer users say they use ride-sharing services on a daily basis, but it is still part of the weekly lifestyle for many people. Reliability, time saving, and comfort are among the key benefits to daily ride-sharing users over public transport and driving a car. This group is largely composed of urban professionals who spend significant amounts of time commuting or experiencing parking shortages. Riders who use ride-sharing once a week are a mix of convenience and cost. That might be a service that they use in addition to other modes they turn to, like buses, trains and cycling, on those days when they're pinched for time or feel like they could benefit from added flexibility. Largest on the list, the occasional users, often find themselves share-riding without any planning when the weather is spontaneously terrible, work runs long or the bus, train or subway connection was missed. So, services like ride-sharing are here used to fall back on, not to actually do most of the driving to work.

These results represent the necessity of making multidimensional price plans and tariffs. It could also offer tiered plans, or corporate plans for rides, or some kind of hybrid mobility deals that could help brands transform casual users into higher paying customers.

3. In what ways have local adaptation and marketing campaigns shaped the public image of Pathao compared to Uber among young, urban consumers?

Answer:

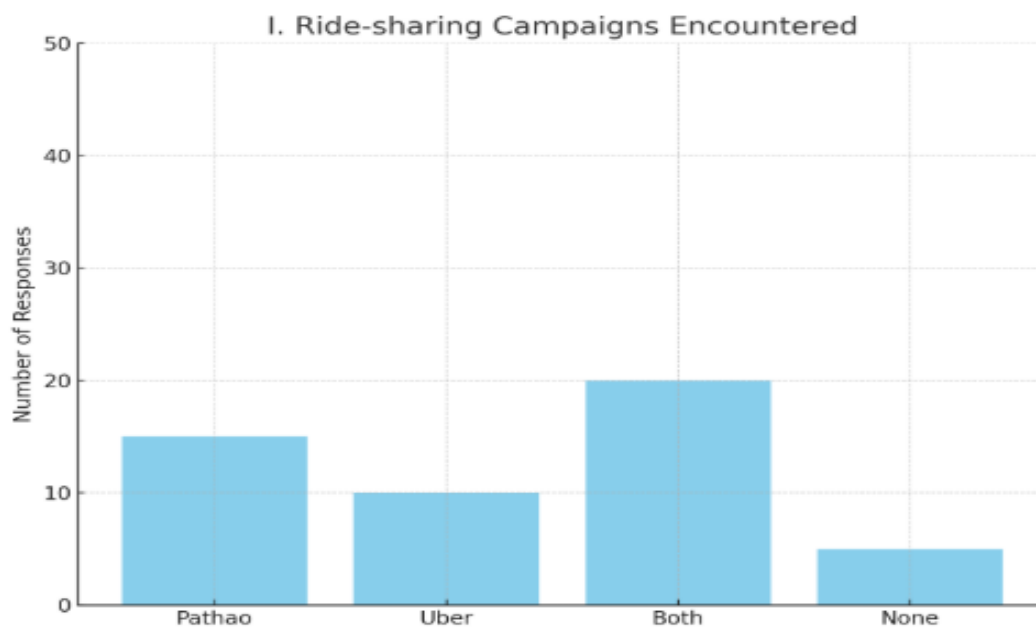
Pathao's marketing is uniquely local, tending to use the Bangla language, cultural references and humor to talk to urban youth. Programs like "Ektu Bhalo Cholo" also motivate responsible riding, generating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for "the commons" as it is. The brand's social media footprint on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, in addition to influencer partnerships and meme marketing has created an enviable well of viral content that has resonated with young consumers. It has paved the way for Pathao to integrate itself into the fabric of city life, so much so that even amidst negative press, its dedicated community sticks by them in a testament to the emotional connection their ads have formed.

The Uber campaigns are about safety and professionalism and they appeal to divisions in society that might be looking for safety, whether that's young women, parents or working professionals. "Safe Mobility for All" channels and collaborations with traffic police for the

helmet program are testimony to Uber's commitment to responsible and safe riding. Even though Uber is a worldwide brand, a project served from an initiative such as these is a place to build its trust and create a credibility in the context of Bangladeshi market.

Survey Questions:

- d. Have you encountered any ride-sharing campaigns on social media or elsewhere? Whose brand campaigns come to mind? (Pathao/Uber/Both/None)**



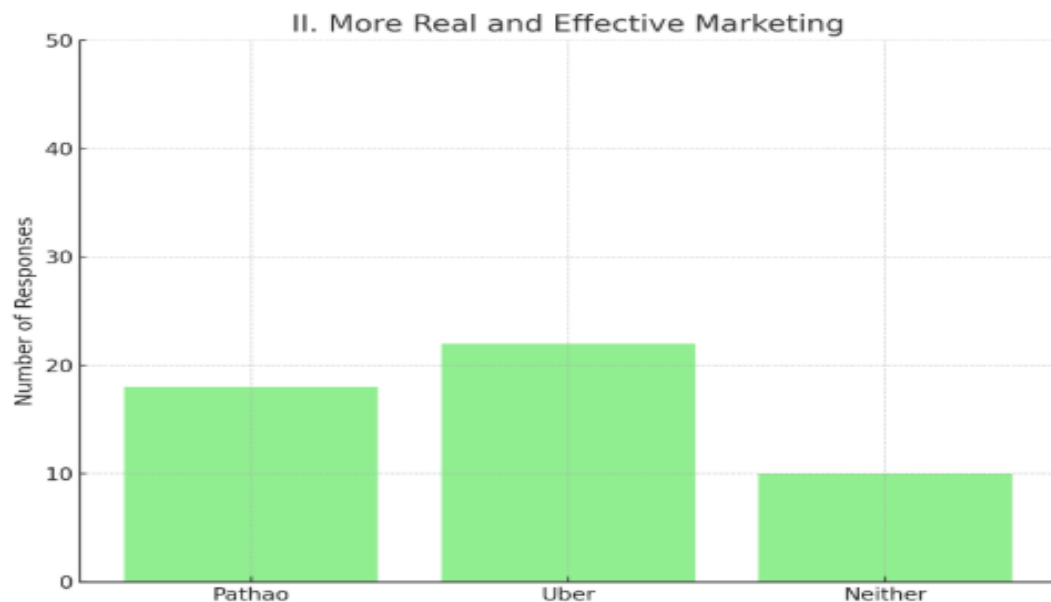
Findings from the survey drawn on below show that the brand penetration of ride-share services is already quite significant in Bangladesh, with 90% of our respondents saying they have seen at least one of the campaigns by Pathao, Uber or both. Notably, 40% said that they had seen campaigns from both brands, which suggests that both of the companies are investing heavily in cross-platform marketing tactics (presumably across social media, digital advertising, and could even include some of the offline, including out of home such as billboards, or in-app advertising).

Only brand I have seen campaign for and used so its common name in the market Format 30% of respondents believe Pathao is the only brand they had seen campaigns for and possibly reflecting on its relative local dominance and intrinsic cultural association with the brand in the local market. Uber – as a global brand, only 20% of consumers included Uber in their answers. Notably, 10% of people surveyed had not seen any of the

campaigns, which could indicate targeting and/ or reach gaps in specific demographics or regions.

These figures insinuate that perhaps Pathao is slightly ahead with localized engagement while Uber still possesses strong recall. For both brands, there is already a chance to improve focal messaging and expand messaging to new unserved.

**e. Whose marketing seems more real and effective to you?
(Pathao/Uber/Neither)**



Asked whose marketing would have come across as more genuine and impactful, 44% said Uber and 36% said Pathao. Suggesting that there's something about Uber's campaigning that is striking a chord: a note of clarity, or tone, or sincerity. This might be deconstructed to the challenges of an internationally coherent brand narrative, confidence and message, being the 'brand' itself. "One of the factors at play here is trust," explained Aye Thein Naing, chief executive officer and founder of AIM, a Yangon-based digital marketing agency. "Pathao isn't leading in terms of social media engagement, but it is leading in terms of how much the community trusts them." And part of the reason Pathao has been able to develop this high level of trust and engagement among users may be the fact that it is a local service that has developed its content strategies accordingly. It could be campaign stories, but local, needs-based, value based, daily commuting come-to-life kind of thing." But 20% said neither brand's marketing was especially compelling to them or felt authentic. Such feedback tells you that real user expectations or usage do not match

user claims as per marketing. It may be because of over-repeated messages, impersonal messages, inadequate contextualization with real-world user stories as reference.

Overall, Uber just doesn't quite snatch the crown for the feel something that just feels effective marketing but platforms from both might have things to work on – in specific these could be authenticity, a narrative focus on their users, and a more consistent tone across everything.

4. How does the perception of being a local (Pathao) versus a global (Uber) brand influence trust, relatability, and service expectations among urban youth in Bangladesh?

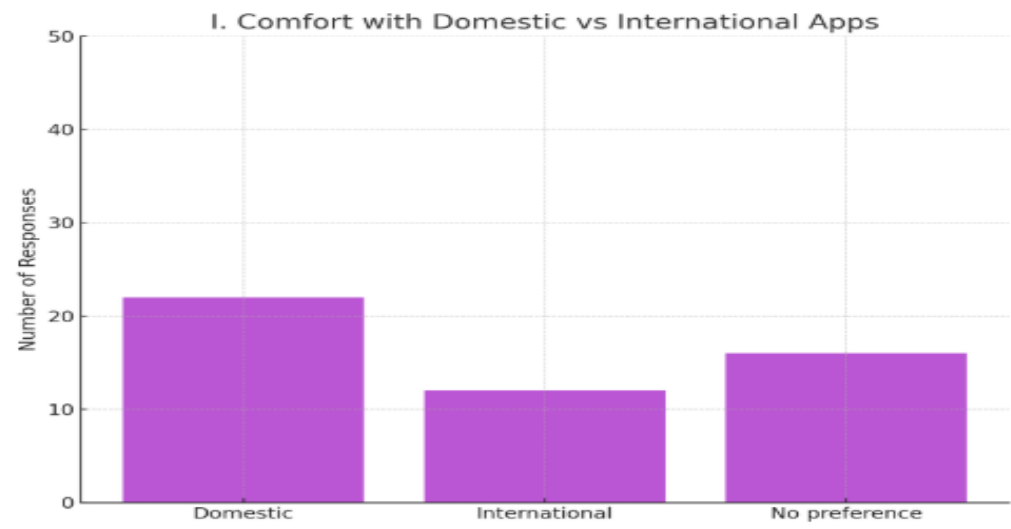
Answer:

Pathao's locally rooted identity creates engaging and emotional connections through shared culture, language and lifestyle. In the eyes of urban youth, Pathao is a brand that "speaks their language" and "gets" local problems (think traffic congestion and payment preferences). This relationality creates trust based on familiarity and community-centered core values. Users demand low cost, payment flexibility (including cash), and culturally relevant services.

Uber's international brand is grounded in professionalism, safety, and technological prowess. It appeals to customers who demand reliability and quality with an international standard. But Uber's global brand can also seem less adaptable or less tied to local customs, and may not strike the right emotional chord for all users. Uber comes with the expectations that you're paying for a luxury, a "once-in-a-while"-type treat, that safety measures will be followed down to the detail and that payment will be a smooth digital experience.

Survey Questions:

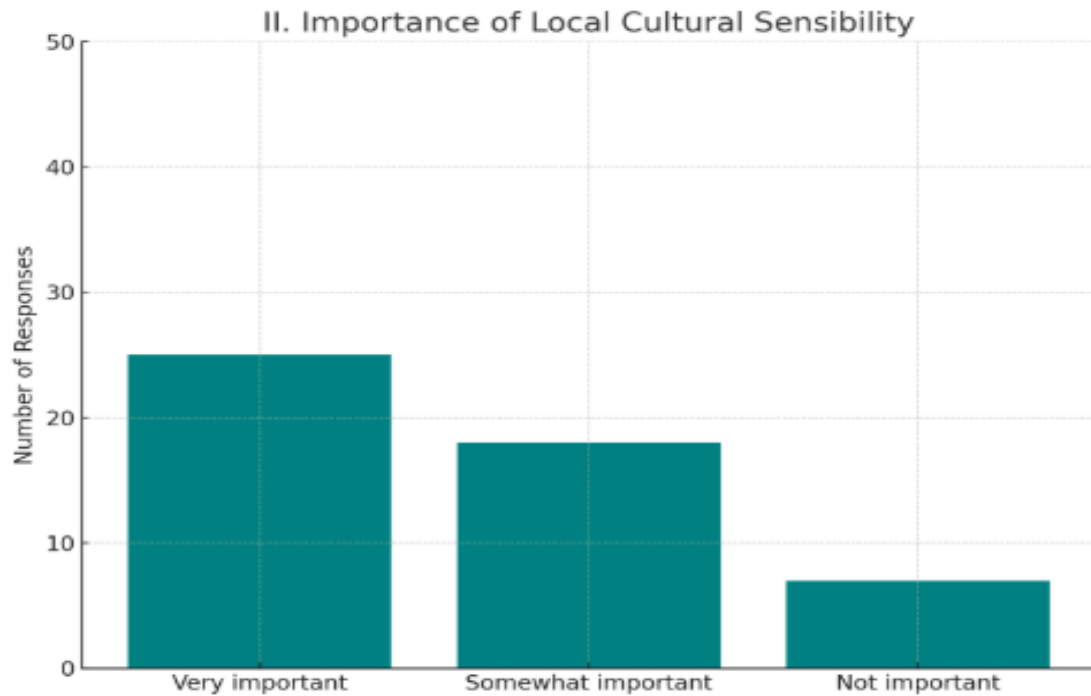
- f. Are you more comfortable with a domestic or an international ride-hailing app? (None/Abroad/Neither do I care is there any difference)**



User perception on home and international ride-hailing platforms is generally associated with their trust, usability and cultural value adapted. However, regardless of however, many says that they are more comfortable while using the local apps like Pathao as its purse contains the local people who are well-versed in the local lingo and also they have the region specific features and the customer support. These apps are more likely to include local payment systems and more attuned to region-specific quirks, like traffic patterns or local holidays. But several say they trust international brands such as Uber because of their worldwide profile, safety standards and app reliability. Such users might view foreign apps as having better infrastructure, technology and accountability. More an more also interesting to know that it seems like it is “nobody gives a shit any more, we don’t care what the brand is as long as it’s got the service and pricing and safety”. And to them, user experience is what matters; being in the right global place for that brand means very little.

This implies that because of the cultural relevance of app design, domestic apps enjoy a ‘home advantage,’ however, both domestic and international brands should address practical and trust concerns in their apps to secure user retention.

- g. How much does a brand’s sensibility about local culture factor in your choice? (Very/Some/Not) important**



Cultural relevance has a significant impact on the choice of a ride-hailing service. In this survey, 55 percent said it's "very" or "somewhat" important to them that a brand has a grasp on local culture. Brands that understand the local customs, values and communication styles and build their service in to that, will create that stronger emotional connection with their users. Apps such as those doing local services on local key festivals, using local's relevant images in their campaigns or on native language interface naturally have more user trust and satisfaction. Respondents who deemed cultural sensitivity as being "very important" commonly believed that brands that "get" their community are more apt to understand their day-to-day challenges, and customize services to accommodate them. Meanwhile, users who have said that it's "somewhat important" generally value cultural consciousness, but not when it comes at the expense of ease, cost, or a sense of safety.

Some users ranked this item as "of no importance" which means that there was a tendency toward globalization strategies and that functionality was deemed more important than local branding differences. At a high level, cultural sensibility isn't a "nice to have" — for many, it's a competitive differentiator that can dramatically impact brand loyalty and user perception.

5. What challenges and opportunities do Pathao and Uber face in maintaining or enhancing their brand positioning as the ride-sharing market in Bangladesh continues to evolve?

Answer:

Challenges:

Credibility and professionalism is a slight concern, and that's where trust can be lost for the service users. It also competes with regulatory pressures and newer competition from local imitators like Shohoz and Obhai. Customer support is still slow and unreliable and consistent reliable service outside of the major cities remains a bane of the network. Uber struggles with perception of high-priced fare in a over-sensitive market and lack of operational flexibility to cater to super local conditions: right from cash payments to bike rides. The regulatory barriers for foreign companies are a complicating factor, and Uber must do more to adapt its services and potential payment offerings to local tastes to expand its user base.

Opportunities:

Pathao has a chance to dethrone in smaller cities and suburbs, thanks to strong local branding and loyalty programmes. Deeper integration of its food delivery and parcel service carousel with ride-sharing could also unlock super-app ecosystem benefits, raising DPUs and user engagement and diversifying revenue streams. There are more growth possibilities with B2B logistics partnerships. Uber: Potential There are opportunities that Uber can tap into the increasing mid-income urban youth with more app capabilities localized (Bangla support, on the wallet). Toss in Uber Moto and some ride-sharing to attract budget conscious riders. Maintaining cordial and good relations with the authorities by participating in sustainable transport with them will certainly make the brand a well reputed one.

Analysis of Freeman's Stakeholder Theory with Uber and Pathaos overall analysis:

Freeman's Stakeholder Theory posits that healthy companies build value not just for shareholders, but for all stakeholders – customers, employees, communities, and regulators. Using the framework, we analyze Uber and Pathao as two prominent ride-sharing companies in Bangladesh to show how they navigate their multiple stakeholders. This paper investigates how they manage relationship with their customers, the quality of their service, CSR, brand image and value added as a whole. These dimensions of analysis demonstrate the ways in which Uber and Pathao negotiate

the interests of stakeholders to generate confidence, support growth, and penetrate and continue to compete within the dynamic urban mobility market in Bangladesh.

1. Customer Relations

Customer satisfaction is at the center of both Uber and Pathao's success in business. Both companies will have to put an extra emphasis on people management because without the fear of poor rating, people will stop providing quality services. Pathao, being local, focuses on affordability, cultural relatability and convenience, attracting a large share of urban youth and daily commuters. Uber's emphasis on safety, professionalism, and quality of service is marketed towards users who are willing to pay more for a practical way of transportation/regulated service. [Both companies] use digital platforms to gain a foothold--Pathao through its app, social media, and localized payment options, Uber through its consistent app interface and safety features--building trust and loyalty. These customer connections, as Freeman would argue, are essential moments of stakeholder engagement that work towards building brand and long-term value.

2. Service Quality

Stakeholder management of two companies revolves around quality of service. Pathao is good at understanding local traffic patterns and culture nuances, the services it offers covers bike rides, car rides, food delivery and parcel, etc. Although service is erratic at times, for the most part, Pathao is convenient and cheap. Uber, on the other hand, emphasizes safe rides, professional driver screening, and tech-forward apps which provides you with a trustworthy, consistent and secure ride experience. It is an understanding of both the companies that service quality is important for maintaining and enhancing customer satisfaction and stakeholder loyalty as Clarke and Turner (2005) stress the view of Freeman that relationships that are key and value delivering are essential.

3. CSR and Societal Impact

Pathao and Uber pursue CSR practices, which are indicative of their long-term commitment to social responsibility, and beyond profit. It's campaigns of Pathao focusing on raising awareness regarding road safety and engagement with the community set it apart from other competitors, while Uber partners with local bodies to give away helmet's and safety workshops. These endeavors prove their status as socially responsible corporate citizens for the benefit of society and the environment. According to Freeman's Stakeholder Theory, organizations need to satisfy not only their profits but also their social responsibilities and the

performance of these CSR actions enhances their brand image and relations with various stakeholders including local communities, regulators and customers.

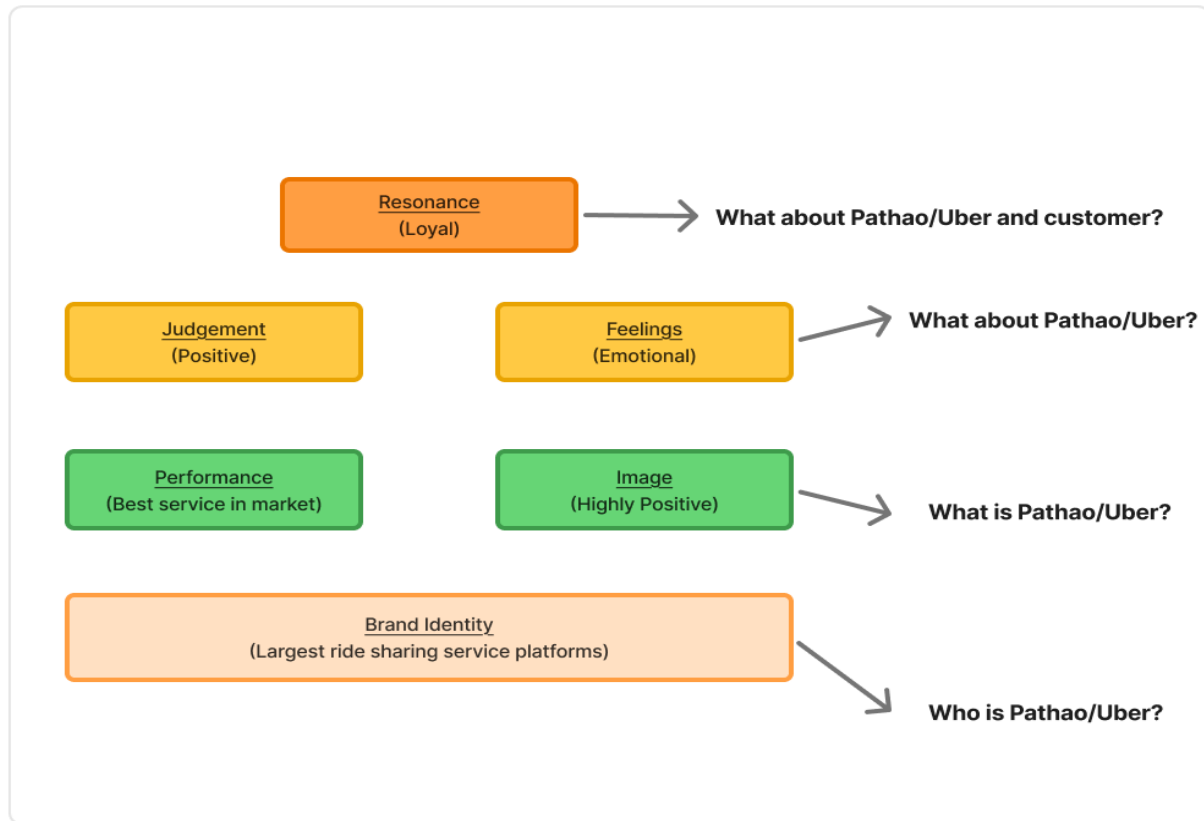
4. Brand Image

Pathao's brand image is founded on being economical, locally culturally relevant and connecting with the youth via influencer marketing and reliable marketing. It's viewed as a fun, approachable, and homegrown brand. The brand image of Uber is “global professional, become safe and high-quality service values” and applies to the ones focus on trust and reliable service as users. Both brands spend significantly on marketing as well as technology in order to maintain a strong brand image, which Freeman acknowledges as important because "A lot of stakeholders want to see corporations maintain a good public image.

5. Value Creation

Both companies have multiple stakeholders for which they create value. Pathao offers urban mobility facilities like lakhs of users to people, allowing them cheap and convenient rides and drivers and couriers with the opportunity to earn a livelihood. Providing quality, safe rides to higher-end and safety-concerned consumers, keeping drivers professional and incentivized with higher costs of living, as defined by the customer. Both are positively involved in social development through CSR and community involvement. Sustainable success, Freeman argues, is “about creating and balancing value for all stakeholders – customers, employees, communities, and regulators,” the center of a dynamic proposition to which both Uber and Pathao are committed as they compete in Bangladesh’s emerging ride-sharing market.

CBBE Model Analysis:



1. Brand Identity (Who Are You?)

Brand Salience

- Pathao: Very strong local brand appeal to urban youth / daily commuters. Known for fast and culturally appropriate urban mobility at low cost, particularly popular for motorcycle rides that zoom through Dhaka's traffic, the brand "Pathao" had become a byword for getting around the city.
- Uber: Internationally and nationally known for professional high-end ride sharing service. Uber has strong brand salience around its consistent app experience and global footprint to users looking for safety and trust.

Uber's brand saliency is founded on the reliability of the app, exposure and focus on international presence, which caters to users' sense of security and reliability.

Both are familiar brands, but Pathao's local roots lends it a little more share-of-mind in the farmers' market daily context among the mass-market users.

2. Brand Meaning (What Are You?)

Performance

- Pathao: Provides an array of affordable services, from bike rides, car rides, food delivery to parcel delivery. It caters to local needs through flexible payment options' (cash, mobile wallets) and the apps are adaptable to traffic realities. Nanoparticle-based services may be of varying quality but generally seem to be approachable and convenient.
- Uber: Speaks about safety, professionalism, and technology up-gradation. Its features include driver vetting, insurance-backed rides and digital payments that operate in the background so traders can focus on haggling. Uber is an always good premium experience but always more expensive.

Imagery

- Pathao: Perceived as a young, relatable and community-driven brand that has a deep cultural sensibility and a strong understanding of everyday struggles of the common man. Its marketing relies on local language, humor and influencer campaigns that help forge emotional connections.
- Uber: Present Uber as a reliable, secure and professional brand. Its image can resonate for urban professionals, parents and women who value security and quality more than price.

3. Brand Response (What About You?)

Judgments

- Pathao: Considered cheap and convenient, service and driver quality sometimes inconsistent. It has the right culture and it's cheap, and users like that.
- Uber: Rated very highly for safety, reliability, and app experience, but seen as more expensive and less flexible on the payment side.

Feelings

- Pathao: Depicts familiarity, fun, and belonging, especially amongst young, price conscious users.
- Uber: Makes you feel -- safe, professional, ease of mind.

4. Brand Relationships (What About You and Me?)

Brand Resonance

- Pathao: Has a firm and almost blind adherence amongst urban youth who use it on a daily basis for low-cost rides and deliveries. A lot of users use the brand through/engagement in social media and loyalty and have also included Pathao into their daily lives.
- Uber: Retains a core audience of safety conscious riders and white-collared professionals willing to pay a bit more for convenience. Although not as common in daily use, these users endorse Uber for being good and reliable.

Conclusion

Pathao and Uber epitomize two diverging brand manifestations in the Bangladesh's ride-sharing sector. Pathao represents a local, emotionally engaged, and price dependent brand that is built on the cornerstone promise of being “near, and affordable” and is the obvious choice for the many city-dwellers cruising the congested cities. In contrast Uber has established a feature-rich global image that is centered around a professional, safe and high-quality service. In today’s fast-changing urban mobility context, the race is not solely about providing rides eventually, but about gaining trust – trust in reasonably priced, reliable service, rider safety and brand. In the end, the winners in Bangladesh’s ride-sharing game are those brands who can best establish and maintain trust with a cost-effective, safe, and culturally appropriate service offering best suited to the Bangladesh market.

Strategic Recommendations

Pathao as well as Uber are two brand incarnations in the Bangladesh ride share market – local connect, value and cultural relevance are assigned to Pathao while global professionalism, safety and top end service is ascribed to Uber. “It’s increasingly a fight for trust, in quality, price, safety and brand,” said Ms. Welter. Six, to protect its market leading position, Pathao should also create a strong rider training programme to also elevate the professionalism of the drivers, bettering in-app safety features, and a more diversified loyalty programmes for bolstering user stickiness. While it faces those challenges, Uber has to make sure it can provide cheaper options — shared rides and student pricing — expand its footprint — it has to market its service in different ways in different cities — and offer as many forms of payment as possible, adding popular local wallets and cash options. By drawing on these priorities, both brands can provide for the evolving desires of Bangladesh’s urban riders and enable long-term development in a difficult market.

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Appendix

Survey Questions:

1. How happy are you with pricing of your favorite ride-sharing app?

Scale: (Very satisfied/Satisfied/Unsatisfied)

2. How happy are you with pricing of your favorite ride-sharing app?

Scale: (Very satisfied/Satisfied/Unsatisfied)

3. How frequently do you rely on ride-sharing to get to work every day?

Scale: (Daily/Weekly/Occasionally)

4. Have you encountered any ride-sharing campaigns on social media or elsewhere?
Whose brand campaigns come to mind?

Scale: (Pathao/Uber/Both/None)

5. Whose marketing seems more real and effective to you?

Scale: (Pathao/Uber/Neither)

6. Are you more comfortable with a domestic or an international ride-hailing app?

Scale: (None/Abroad/Neither do I care is there any difference)

7. How much does a brand's sensibility about local culture factor in your choice?

Scale: (Very/Some/Not)