



Inspiring Excellence

Internship Report On
INFLUENCE OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON
PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Submitted to:

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

May 8, 2017

Afsana Akhtar
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Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Madam,

It is an honor and great pleasure for me to hand over the report of my work experience as an Intern at Boomerang Digital along with my research paper on the usefulness of online reviews.

The experience has provided me the opportunity to work with an immensely reputed companies and has also allowed me to gain valuable insights into the professional life in a top notch organization.

The organization has helped me significantly to enhance my knowledge and prowess in the corporate world. I, therefore, convey my earnest gratitude to you for your kind cooperation, supervision and guidance in successfully preparing this report, despite some limitations. I have completed the whole report with great enthusiasm. I hope you will be kind enough to assess this report and oblige me thereby. I shall be happy to provide any clarification if required on any relevant matter.

Sincerely,

Nafees Faraz

12204077

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Almighty for keeping me in good health and spirits and for giving me the strength to successfully complete this report.

I would like to convey my gratitude towards my line manager, Mr. Chowdhury Asifuzzaman for his continued show of support and guidance while this report was being made. He was a constant source of inspiration with his knowledge and humbleness. I am grateful to the entire digital marketing team at Boomerang Digital for their valuable suggestions and assistance in preparing this report.

I would like to thank my institution, BRAC University, and my mentors for giving me the opportunity for self-development through practical experience. My internship advisor, Ms. Afsana Akhtar, was instrumental in the preparation of this report with her insight and experience on the subject on hand.

I would also like to thank Mr. Tazkeer Azeez Chaudhuri, Mr. Isbat Ibne Hasnat and Mr. Imtiaz Ali Prodhan for extending their technical expertise for the completion of this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the internship program at the end of Bachelor of Business Administration program is to familiarize the students with the professional world and give them a real world working experience. With that aim in mind, I started my internship at Boomerang Digital on the January 15th, 2017. In this report, I have worked on “The Influence of Online Reviews on Purchase Intentions” I have tried to overcome all the limitations and tried to construct a successful report.

An overview of Boomerang Digital has been provided, including their origins, values, culture and offerings. Readers will get an idea of how Boomerang functions along with my role in the company. My development as a marketer has also been noted in this section of the report.

For the research part of this report, I have written a literature review for better understanding of the whole topic. Primary data was also collected and analyzed using STATA package. The results went through reliability tests, hypothesis testing along with regression analysis. Ultimately, I was able to show the practical implementations for this research along with scope for further study.



BOOMERANG
D I G I T A L

INTRODUCTION

Background

This internship report has been prepared as a requirement for the completion of the Bachelors of Business Administration (BBA) program at BRAC Business School. The internship program has been designed to allow graduates a chance to exercise the knowledge they have gained in their 4 years of education, in the practical world. I undertook my internship under the careful guidance of Ms. Afsana Akhtar.

Objective

The objective of this report is to provide a comprehensive communication of my tenure at Boomerang Digital as a full-time intern. Before starting my internship, I set the following statements as objectives due to be completed by the end of the internship.

- Learn about implementing different facets of marketing, especially digital marketing
- Understand the relationship between digital marketing and its effect on consumer behavior
- Develop real-time experience in strategy development and client handling
- Build a portfolio of content generated under my supervision

Scope of Report

I worked at Boomerang Digital for three months to allow myself to gather an overview of their culture and methodology. The experience of working at Boomerang Digital has proved to be very rewarding, even with the challenges that comes with being a part of a start-up. The topics of learning from this internship has been diverse and has re-enforced classroom teachings. In my role in the Planning and Strategy team, my primary task was to develop campaign and brand strategies for existing and new clients. I also contributed in content creation, storyboarding, copywriting, pitch design and delivery, market research and business development. This helped me gather a better understanding of how actual businesses and their marketing teams work. I had the privilege

of working with reputed national and international brands such as Grameenphone, Telenor Health, Krispy Kreme Bangladesh, bb.q Bangladesh, Beximco Communications, Purnava and many more. The entire Boomerang Digital Team has gone above and beyond to help me with the construction of this report, with their knowledge, experience and insights.

Limitations

This report is a reflection of my learning at Boomerang Digital. While the knowledge gained has been invaluable to my growth as a business graduate, there were some hindrances that are mentioned below:

- Unavailability of data was a massive issue. Since digital marketing is relatively new in Bangladesh, there are no concrete benchmarks or standards for any metrics to measure the feasibility or success of a particular marketing tactic.
- There were also constraints involving time and resources. It was very difficult to manage time from the manager during office hours because of the severity of work pressure and the nature of the job.

Methodology

This internship is based on both primary and secondary data, collected from various sources inside and outside Boomerang Digital.

- Primary data was collected with online surveys and face-to-face interviews with stakeholders
- Secondary data was gathered by researching documentations of agency processes here in Bangladesh and abroad.

COMPANY PROFILE

Boomerang Digital is a creative marketing agency offering innovative and reasonable marketing solutions to businesses. Their formula of bringing together the right mix of strategy and execution help brands communicate with their consumers, the way they want to.

The company consists of experienced and knowledgeable professionals who have come together to provide unique solutions to modern day business problems.

Company Vision

Work across borders, driving exchange of ideas, concepts and expertise at an international scale.

Company Mission

Connecting you to your consumers

Core Values

The company's values act as a guiding light for how they work every day, and for what they aspire to be.

Simplicity

They approach all work with a goal to find effective solutions that are simple and minimalistic.

Integrity

The company believes in being transparent and accountable for all their actions.

Excellence

The aim is to delight customers with top quality service and attention to detail.

Innovation

They are always looking to experiment with new and creative ideas, with the hope of coming up with the next big thing.

Customer Satisfaction

All work is dedicated to bringing the right results for the brands and their customers.

Teamwork

They believe in building trust among our employees and in blending complementary skills to give our customers the best solutions.

Company History

Boomerang Digital's journey began in 2009, when founders Affan Mahmud Chowdhury and Iftekhar Azam started a small company called TxPro IT. With a couple of years of experience and insight into the fast-growing digital industry, the founders rebranded the company as Boomerang Digital in 2015. Ever since, the team has continued to grow in size, knowledge and skills and has served over 500 clients worldwide.

CEO Profile

Affan Chowdhury is an entrepreneur with interests in hospitality, IT and HR consulting and has demonstrated great versatility while operating his business ventures. He brings eight years of

experience in entrepreneurship and business development to the management team at Boomerang Digital

His entrepreneurial journey began in 2007 when he founded his own HR consulting firm Skillshop Bangladesh Ltd. in 2007. Later in 2009, he also co-founded an IT company –TxPro IT Ltd –which focuses on graphics and web development. Under Affan’s leadership, TxProIT has secured a strong foothold in both the local and international market sphere and works for renowned corporate names such as Grameenphone, Rahimafrooz, T.K Group, Bangladesh Army, GMG and Bkash among others. Gaining confidence from these two successful entrepreneurial forays, in 2011 Affan made his mark in the hospitality industry with GR Holidays Ltd., and U.K.-Bangladesh joint venture, offering premium hospitality and medical tourism packages. Parallel to this, he also founded a local 3-star hotel chain-Richmond Hotel & Suites and also in 2013, Affan co-founded a New York themed cafe-George's cafe and went onto initiate another restaurant-Veni Vedi Vici, a fine dining Italian restaurant in 2014. He also works as a management consultant to various brands.

Affan is a business graduate from Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, where he completed both his BBA and MBA. He started his career in the Human Resource Department at Standard Chartered Bangladesh.

Company Culture

Boomerang Digital is a group highly driven individuals with unique talents and a burning curiosity to learn and achieve more. The owners see the company as ‘family’ and flexibility is allowed to all employees to exercise their creative talents. Extra-curricular activities and team building exercises are highly encouraged and observed regularly.

Products and Services

They work with cutting-edge media and ideas to provide their clients with reliable and scalable solutions that capture the imagination of the consumers.

Digital Marketing

With experience and vast knowledge, the team tries to connect the clients with their customers through relevant campaigns and strategies.

- Marketing Strategy
- Campaign Strategy
- Campaign Management
- Content Strategy
- Community Management
- Media Buying

UX/UI Design

They specialize in making responsive and interactive web and mobile experiences that guarantee the best user experience, with great design and functionality.

- Research
- Information Architecture
- User Experience Design
- Interaction Design
- Prototyping
- Wireframing
- Storyboarding
- Usability Testing
- Responsive Web UI Design

- Mobile UI Design

Web & Mobile App Development

They use modern and effective work techniques to create web and mobile products that truly represents their client brands.

- Static Web Development
- Dynamic CMS Based Web Development
- Wordpress Web Development
- Native and Hybrid Mobile App Development
- Domain & Hosting

Branding & Print

They create visuals and other branding materials that is unique, interesting and represents the essence of the brand.

- Brand Strategy
- Logo Design
- Visual Identity Design
- Collateral & Assets

Video & Photography

They specialize in both 2D animation video as well as live action videos that brings life to the brand or a particular campaign.

- Video Production
- Scripting

- Storyboarding
- Photography

Content

They know the importance of the right words and how it can connect to the audience on different level. Knowing what to say can actually be the difference between a sale and a disgruntled consumer.

- Content Strategy
- Copywriting

Clients

Their clients come from all corners of the world, encompassing work of all sizes and scope. Here's a look at some of them.

Telenor Health	bKash	Metlife	Krispy Kreme Bangladesh	Grameenphone
Bangladesh Army	Lafarge	Kool	Keye	bb.q Bangladesh
Green Delta Insurance	RealVU	Platinum Suites	North South University	Philip Capital Management
Chaldal	BYLC	Bagdoom	Canada Produce	bITS
GBG Sonargaon	Popcornlive.tv	Dhaka Club	IPDC	Shakib's Diner

George's Café	Yellow Submarine	WE	BDRCS	Core Knowledge
UPL	GMG	Saarc	Mir Akhter Group	Elite Force
TK Group	Aspire	Illusive Design	SSD-Tech	MCC
Toru	Carefountain	Farooq & Associates	Euro Kids	NEN
Amaze Power	Tarka	Veni Vidi Vici	Mr. Cutts	Meghdut
Ghurbo	Chilis	BISEC	Bhalothakun	eGen Consultants
Richmond Hotel & Suites	Madly	Foodbank	UCS	Purnava

Challenges

Boomerang Digital has established its position in the digital marketing landscape of Bangladesh in a rather short span of time. To grow further, it must compete with the top agencies of the country like Analyzen, Magnito Digital, Unifox Digital, Beatnik Digital, Bitopi, Asiatec, Cookiejar etc. On the other hand, the digital marketing industry is still in its infancy and already in danger of being over-saturated because of its appeal. There are currently 92 registered digital marketing agencies in Bangladesh. It is to be seen if Boomerang Digital can maintain their current rate of growth.

Learning Opportunities

At Boomerang, I got to develop an in-depth understanding of the marketing industry, with an emphasis on digital. I learnt to turn the creative process on its head and add a special twist to everything I do.

I was assigned as an intern in the Planning and Strategy department under the direct supervision of Mr. Chowdhury Asifuzzaman. Some of the competencies and training I acquired during the internship are listed below.

Training

1. Blueprint E-Learning Program by Facebook
2. The Digital Garage by Google
3. Google Adwords
4. Google Analytics
5. Copywriting Basics

Software Applications

1. Adobe Illustrator
2. Adobe Photoshop
3. Microsoft Powerpoint
4. Google Office Suite
5. Trello
6. Facebook Business Manager

Competencies

1. Online campaign planning
2. Online media buying

3. Visual creation
4. Copywriting



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RESEARCH

Introduction

In the last few years, technology has advanced tremendously and has reshaped the way we lead our lives. The Internet, in particular, has been a vital agent of this change by giving rise to social media and e-commerce platforms. It is becoming increasingly popular in Bangladesh with trust in these websites growing rapidly. Growing online order sales are a testament to the availability of information that are crucial in the decision-making process. Word-of-mouth communication is also manifesting into different forms with social reviews but unfortunately, there are no independent platforms for product reviews in the country. Ultimately, the main purpose of this study is to see the role of online reviews in the sales decision for Bangladeshi customers.

The main assumption here is that potential customers rely on information passed on by customers who have already availed the product or service. Based on the degree of influence and ability to persuade, it is seen that customers rely more on peer reviews rather than information provided by business and authenticated by regulatory board because peer reviews are seen to be more trustworthy and independent.

Furthermore, there is no set pattern or template for customers to follow when posting a review on the Internet. There are two types of reviews that can be found on the Web: customer review and professional review. The focus of each type of review can be different and customer reviews may be critical of the product or service and therefore, brands will try not to divulge these.

Building on this, online reviews have become an important resource for potential and existing customers to judge product quality and service excellence and experience. A recent survey conducted by eMarketer, a market research company on digital media and Internet marketing, found that in the USA alone, nearly two-thirds of Web users relied on assorted digital channels for travel information in 2013 (eMarketer, 2013). Accordingly, alert Bangladeshi e-commerce sites & some Facebook groups such as Foodbank are taking advantage of online reviews as a new tool to attract information searchers and, ultimately consumers. These businesses distribute product information on online platforms/communities and review sites. They encourage virtual

engagements between consumers and incentivize them to publish reviews and comments. This extends to their official websites where they allow reviews as edited testimonials.

Problem Statement

However, the biggest problem here in Bangladesh is, as reviews gain in more popularity, the problem of information overload, spam comments, influenced reviews, paid reviews occur, which make it tougher for the consumers to trust online reviews. As a consequence, the use of more signaling cues to help users diagnose relevant reviews will help e-commerce site owners utilize this marketing tool more efficiently.

Thus, this study investigates how online reviews are influencing individuals' purchase intention in Bangladesh.

Purpose Of The Study

Internship

This research has been conducted with the objective of successful completion of the internship, as a part of the BBA program.

Research

Researchers have started to examine possible indicators that consumers might use to evaluate online reviews, with respect to source credibility and review characteristics. However, there are very few instances of prior research that has been conducted to examine both perspective simultaneously.

To fill this gap in research, this paper hopes to develop a more detailed understanding of the effect of online review qualities and sources features upon customer purchase behaviour. It is generally accepted that online product or service reviews have either positive or negative impacts on a brand's reputation and consequently, to enhance potential customers to the sites or places.

As such, many studies are devoted to examining the causal relationship between online reviews and individuals' intentions and behaviors. These studies mainly examined how online reviews as a whole influence consumers' attitudes toward online products, and then traveling intentions. As content and forms of consumer reviews may vary considerably across products and services, it would be more practically beneficial for site owners to gain a better understanding of how individual aspects influence consumers' decision-making. Besides similarities to traditional WOM, online reviews contain several additional characteristics. In the online environment, both positive and negative reviews can be presented to potential consumers simultaneously. There has been considerable research efforts in comparing the effects of negative and positive reviews on consumer actions in terms of strength and diffusion speed.

Another characteristic of online reviews is measurability. Online reviews also enable customers to intuitively measure the quality and volume of online review content, as most of them are published in written form. This enables researchers to estimate the extent to which online reviews can influence consumers' attitudes and subsequent sales. In addition, for brands, especially those renowned or infamous ones, different customers may comment about them in different time periods. As such, volume and timeliness of online reviews could influence consumers' purchasing decisions as well. Furthermore, it is reasonable to argue that reviewers' reputation and reliability of reviews content could influence consumer choice.

The current study sets out to explore impacts of the above-mentioned five attributes of online review content, in the following section.

Literature Review

This paper pursues to identify how individual attributes of online review influence potential consumers' buying intentions. The current study focuses specifically on four attributes of online reviews and empirically testifies their respective impacts upon online purchase intentions.

Usefulness of online reviews

Usefulness of online reviews is “the degree to which consumers believe that online reviews would facilitate their purchase decision-making process (Park and Lee, 2009. p. 334). Willemsen et al. (2011) suggested that the usefulness of a review is the primary aspect for users to gauge online reviews.

One of the main reasons for consumers to search product information online is to plan their next purchase, and it would be reasonable to argue that usefulness of online product reviews will no doubt influence consumer expectations. More importantly, the technology of Web has introduced a platform which enables information aggregation from a huge cluster of different individuals (Goodman, 2007). This development facilitates an unlimited number of people to potentially join virtual networks by posting and gaining marketing intelligence about brands of interest. Confronting the tremendous amount of information, only those valuable comments and opinions would influence consumers' decision-making. Usefulness of online reviews have been suggested as an effective predictor of consumers' intent to comply with a review. Several other researchers have shown that usefulness of online reviews could also determine the frequency of usage (Davis, 1989; Wöber and Gretzel, 2000; Wöber, 2003). Chen et al. (2008) found that the quality of a review, as measured by the number of helpfulness votes, positively influences consumer decision-making.

Reviewer expertise

Another distinctive feature of online reviews is that they are provided by anonymous individuals (Lee et al., 2008). In fact, information sharing is not a genuinely random behavior, as there exists

market “experts” who have a particular propensity to post messages about shopping and the marketplace messages (Feick and Price, 1987). Consumers can identify such market experts and follow them in the process of making purchasing decisions. As such, the characteristics of communicators, both senders and receivers, play a critical role in information persuasiveness (Dholakia and Sternthal, 1977). More importantly, in the online background, people who made postings tend to search for travel information from others who engage in similar activities (Akehurst, 2009).

To what extent an information source can be regarded as a “market maven” is decided by his or her expertise in a certain topic of interest (Bansal and Voyer, 2000). As suggested by Bristor, to the extent to which the source is perceived as being capable of providing correct information and expertise is expected to induce persuasion because receivers have little motivation to check the veracity of the source’s assertions by retrieving and rehearsing their own thoughts.

Timeliness of online reviews

During the information search process, consumers may encounter a large amount of relevant information which is associated with a particular time stamp, which leads to the research concept of timeliness. Timeliness refers to “whether the messages are current, timely, and up-to-date” (Cheung et al., 2008, p. 465). Despite its generally agreed importance, timeliness is frequently ignored in online reviews research (Ives et al., 1983). Madu and Madu (2002) pointed out that a Web site needs to be updated consistently to deliver value-added information to users. Its influence may be even tougher if comments are labeled as “spotlight reviews” because these are shown before other reviews on the comments page. From consumers’ perspective, as time elapses, the average helpfulness of reviews declines. (Jindal and Liu (2008) In a similar vein, e-commerce environment, more recent product reviews would get more user attentions.

Volume of online reviews

Volume is another important attribute of WOM, and it measures the total amount of interactive messages. Variations in the volume of online customer reviews provide evidence that not all hotels

are treated equally, and hence, it is reasonable that not all reviews are treated equally. It has been regarded as a key antecedent of the WOM effect (Bone, 1995). In online settings, volume of reviews is the number of comments from reviewers about a specific product or service (Davis and Khazanchi, 2008). Several studies demonstrate that volume significantly correlates with consumer behaviors like customer-initiated contacts with manufacturers and market performance in terms of sales. This effect is moderated by the increase of customer awareness. Before consumers decide to buy a product about which they have little information, some awareness has to be built. Higher volumes of comments, either positive or negative, in online communities are more likely to attract information seekers and then increase product awareness (Davis and Khazanchi, 2008). The number of online comments also signals the level of agreement among consumers (Elliott, 2002).

However, Davis and Khazanchi (2008) argued that an increase in volume of online reviews alone has no significant impact on book sales in e-commerce multiproduct sales.

Comprehensiveness of online reviews

The Internet contains diverse types of messages ranging from simple recommendations with several evaluative key points to more complex comments and factual descriptions. This relates to comprehensiveness, which is a measure of how detailed and complete the messages are. In unfamiliar situations, consumers need detailed and specific knowledge to make decisions. Money et al. (1998) also suggested that personal references are the most efficient source of comprehensive information, highlighting the role played by WOM. According to Gremler et al. (2001), detailed and extensive knowledge implies, to a certain extent, a connection between reviewers and information seekers. The comprehensiveness of reviews could, therefore, be a key factor for consumers considering whether to buy a product in the uncertain online environment.

Previous studies have consistently identified a relationship between the comprehensiveness of online reviews and consumer behavior. Sullivan (1999) found that the more comprehensive the information is on a Web site, the more varied the user categories are, which are closely related to the likelihood of user acquisition and retention. Cheung et al. (2008) showed that the comprehensiveness of online reviews is one of the most effective elements of online postings in

terms of the extent to which people are willing to accept and adopt online reviews, as well as the factors encouraging adoption.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between Online Review and Review Expertise?
2. Is there a significant relationship between Timeliness of Online Review and Online Review?
3. Is there a significant relationship between Volume of Online Review and Online Review?
4. Is there a significant relationship between Purchase Intention and Online Review?

Hypotheses Testing

1. Ho: There is no significant relationship between Online Review and Review Expertise.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between Online Review and Review Expertise.

2. Ho: There is no relationship between Timeliness of Online Review and Online Review.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between Timeliness of Online Review and Online Review.

3. Ho: There is no significant relationship between Volume of Online Review and Online Review.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between Volume of Online Review and Online Review.

4. Ho: There is no significant relationship between Comprehensiveness of Online Review and Online Review.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between Comprehensiveness of Online Review and Online Review.

Methodology

This study seeks to extend current knowledge by integrating four attributes of online reviews and empirically testifying their effects upon travelers' online purchase intentions. In an empirical research, the development of measurement scales which reflect the meanings of constructs of interest is the crucial determinant of the whole research. One of the seminal works of measurement scale development is conducted, in which a procedure consisting eight steps was recommended.

Furthermore, the research involves a quantitative analysis using a survey method. This descriptive research is conducted using a close ended online questionnaire as the main instrument in order to collect data. Respondents were asked to indicate the option which best defined their opinion. A five-point likert scale ranging from, strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), Neither Disagree nor Agree (Neutral) (3) Agree (4) and strongly agree (5) was used. An online questionnaire was developed on Google Forms for the respondents to fill out the survey and conduct the research.

Research Design

Research design provides the researcher with the following:

1. Blueprint
2. Plan
3. Guide
4. Framework

The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unmistakably as possible. Research design is an outline of how an investigation will take place. A research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing data collected. The descriptors of this research design are as follows:

Degree of Question Crystallization

In terms of the degree of question crystallization, this is a formal study. It begins with the hypothesis, and the research questions are answered later in this report.

Data Collection Method

The data collection method included communication. Questionnaires consisting of the research questions were distributed among sample, and collected by google form. Which is an online based survey platform.

Topical Scope

The topical scope of this research is statistical study. Here the hypotheses are tested quantitatively; focuses on the breadth of the research, and the findings are generalizable.

Research Environment

The research environment of this study states that this research is done based on field conditions. All the information is collected from the field through survey. This is because the research is conducted at the principal branches of the respective commercial banks.

Experimental Effects

This research is experimental design which is appropriate when one wishes to discover whether certain variables produce effects in other variables. Experimentation provides the most powerful support possible for a hypothesis of causation.

Perceptual Awareness

The participants were aware of my presence and well aware about the purpose of the research.

Sampling

This research involved non probability sampling. This process is also known as non-probability testing. On non-probability testing, samples are selected on the basis of their accessibility. Selected respondents from different organizations are surveyed.

Sampling unit

Sampling unit for this research were chosen from different people who purchased online goods or search for goods online. The respondents were from Bangladesh, mostly from Dhaka.

Sample size

The sample size for the study is 117, from different age groups, education and occupation levels. This sample size has been selected based on convenience.

Sampling Procedure

A sampling procedure defines the rules that specify how the system calculates the sample size and it contains information about the valuation of an inspection characteristic during results recording (attributive, variable, manual etc.). The sample of the research has been selected on using a method, where each elements of the sample has been randomly picked

Instruments

For conducting this research, a survey questionnaire was used. There were 17 questions related to 5 variables and 4 demographic questions related to age, gender, and educational qualification and working status. The measurement of the questionnaire items in this study is by means of “five-point of Likert scale from 1 to 5” rating from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

Variables

In total, there are 5 variables which include of four independent variables and one dependent variable.

Independent Variable

Reviewer Expertise (3 questions under this variable)

Timeliness of Online Review (3 questions under this variable)

Volume of Online Review (2 questions under this variable)

Comprehensiveness of Online Review (2 questions under this variable)

Dependent variable

Usefulness of Online Review (4 questions under this variable)

Scale

All constructs are measured by 5 point Likert-scale, starting from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Strongly Disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Neither Agree nor Disagree/Neutral (3)

Agree (4)

Strongly Agree (5)

Data Collection

Data was collected from various sources that can be defined in two categories.

Primary Sources

Online conversation with individual respondents

Online group discussion with participants.

Questionnaire

Secondary sources

Journals

Websites

Data Analysis

After the data was collected, every question was reviewed to make sure that all the questions are answered. The data gathered from the survey into a database and then analyzed using STATA.

Validity and reliability tests were conducted; Demographic profiles have been analyzed using frequency distribution methods. The reliability of the scales measuring the variables has been tested using the Cronbach's Alpha value. Each hypothesis has been tested using Pearson's correlation approach. The regression analysis indicates R (square) values.

Descriptive Analysis (Frequency)

Reliability Analysis

Hypotheses Analysis (Pearson)

Regression Analysis

Key Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Gender

Table 1 in the Appendix shows that the majority (68.38%) of the respondents are male. This is correspondent with the statistics that around 80% of Facebook users in Bangladesh are male. 29.91% of the people were surveyed and 2 people responded to being in the “Others” category.

Age

According to Table 2 in the Appendix, most of the respondents were in the age groups of 18-23 and 24-28 with 55.56% and 41.03% respectively. This is because they are the most active on social media and have the combination of both willingness and ability to purchase online. Two of the respondents were from the 13-17 age groups and both 29-35 and 36+ had 1 representative each.

Education

Table 3 in the Appendix states that 85.47% of the respondents are pursuing their Bachelor’s Degree. The second biggest group, in terms of frequency, are those currently doing their Higher Secondary degree (11.11%) followed by Master’s Degree (0.85%) and Post-Graduate Degree (2.56%).

Occupation

Followed by the statistics found for Age and Education, Table 4 gives us the same insight that most of the respondents are students (69.23%) and entry-level professionals (23.93%). Other occupations are also represented in the survey results with mid-level professionals (2.57%), upper-level professionals (1.71%) and others (2.57%).

Percentage Analysis

Reviewer Expertise

There were 3 questions in this particular segment. The response to the first question “Should reviewers possess expertise on the product they are reviewing” was mostly positive with 34.19% saying that they somewhat agree while another 24.79% strongly agreeing that reviewers must have the expertise. When asked if reviewer expertise made the reviews more reliable or made the purchase decision easier, the reaction was similar with only 5.98% of the respondents saying that it did not make the reviews more reliable or help in making their purchase decision easier.

Volume of Online Reviews

It was also discovered that potential customers check multiple reviews before buying a product. 38.46% of the respondents said that they check “A lot” of reviews while 22.22% said they check all reviews of the product. They also validate the information by checking various different reviews sites with 35.04% saying that they check “Quite a Few” review sites and 34.19% saying they check a “A Lot”. The figures could have been higher if there were more review sites available for Bangladeshi consumers.

Timeliness of Online Reviews

Respondents were not satisfied with the availability of online reviews with 39.32% saying that they could only find relevant reviews “Sometimes”. 27.35% said they found relevant reviews “Often” while another 17.09% responded with “Rarely”. When asked if they found newer reviews more relevant, the answers were mostly positive with 33.33% and 31.62% responding with “Somewhat Agree” and “Strongly Agree” respectively. The respondents also suggested that the reviews needed to “Always” be kept updated with 55.56% of the responses.

Comprehensiveness of Online Reviews

Respondents were not entirely satisfied with the amount of details explained with 41.03% saying they were on a neutral position in the matter while 37.61% said that they “Somewhat Agree” that reviews are detailed enough. The responses also indicated that reviews tend to sometimes get off-topic with 41.03% staying in the neutral ground for the question that asked if the reviews focused solely on the subject matter. 37.61% said that they “Somewhat Agreed”.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is used to determine the consistency of the items being used to define a scale, using a pre-determined standard. We will be using the Cronbach’s alpha to measure the reliability of the variables used in this particular research.

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Internal Consistency
Usefulness	0.7998	Good
Reviewer expertise	0.7473	Good
Volume	0.7676	Good
Timeliness	0.5607	Poor
Comprehensiveness	0.5615	Poor

Referring to Table 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the Appendix, the results showed us that the questions for usefulness, reviewer expertise and volume were reliable which questions for timeliness and comprehensiveness are not very reliable. The Cronbach’s Alpha for some of the subsets within these two variables is lower than 0.5 and should therefore be omitted from the regression analysis altogether.

Correlation Analysis

All four dependent variables were tested against the single independent variable in the equation. These variables were also checked for significance at 5% level, to corroborate the analysis results. Below we will see a summary of the results taken from Table 10,11,12 and 13 in the Appendix.

Variable	Correlation	Significance (at 5% level)
Reviewer expertise	0.4550	Significant
Volume	0.2008	Significant
Timeliness	0.3468	Significant
Comprehensiveness	0.3230	Significant

All variables are positive correlated with the independent variable, showing that an increase in any of these variables would mean that online reviews become more useful. However, the correlation is weak as it is less than 0.5 but all variables are significant at the 5% level. This means that there is a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Regression Analysis

Ideally, a research like this where most data are on a likert scale, an ordered logit regression model is used. This model can identify the incremental changes in the responses to individual questions.

A robust linear regression model was used for the purpose of this study. Questions were aggregated into different segments (i.e. usefulness, reviewer expertise, volume, timeliness and comprehensiveness) by averaging the responses for all individual questions under that segment.

The regression results were not very encouraging with an R-squared value of 0.2549, according to Table 14 in the Appendix. This means that the independent variable only explains 25.49% of the dependent variable. Furthermore, only reviewer expertise was significant at the 1% level with a p-value of 0.001.

To check whether the inconsistencies were because of the use of aggregated indexes for independent variables, another regression was run using all the subset questions. As seen on Table 15 in the Appendix, the results were only slightly better with a R-squared value of 0.3469. This is an increase of just .0920. The root MSE value is also quite similar with a value of 0.61579. This means the mindset of the respondents can be put on a wide spectrum, when it comes to aspects of online reviews. Endogeneity or a bias is suspected and there needs to be further analysis using IV instruments.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations for this particular research paper, related to the research subject and the researcher. Some of the limitations faced are listed below.

- All data was collected via an online survey. The conversion rate (amount of survey responses vs number of people contacted for the survey) was very low. The credibility of the responses can also be questioned as there were no surveillance while the respondents were filling out the surveys.
- Secondary data with conclusive evidence was difficult to find, especially in the context of Bangladesh.
- Lack of experience in questionnaire design and data analysis affected the quality of the research significantly.
- There were severe time constraints because of the responsibilities incurred as a full-time intern and as there is also strict deadline for the completion of the research.

Significance of the Study

The study tries to understand how online reviews affect consumer purchase intentions, in the context of Bangladesh. The quantitative effect of online marketing and reviews as a consequence has not yet been explored in Bangladesh. Therefore, the outcomes of this research may have practical implications for all companies who are currently investing in the digital ecosystem, especially e-commerce and f-commerce businesses.

Conclusion

This study's limitations provide directions for future study. One of the major findings is that the interrelationships among features and usefulness of online reviews, which were discussed in other similar studies, were not considered. As such, future studies look at this in their efforts. Additionally, future research could investigate firms' online and offline marketing strategies and compare their effectiveness in increasing sales.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Frequency Distribution for Gender

```
. tab gender
```

What is your gender?	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Female	35	29.91	29.91
Male	80	68.38	98.29
Other	2	1.71	100.00
Total	117	100.00	

Table 2: Frequency Distribution for Age Group

```
. tab age
```

What is your age?	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
13-17	2	1.71	1.71
18-23	65	55.56	57.26
24-28	48	41.03	98.29
29-35	1	0.85	99.15
36 and above	1	0.85	100.00
Total	117	100.00	

Table 3: Frequency Distribution for Education Level

. tab education

What is your level of education?	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Higher Secondary Education	13	11.11	11.11
Bachelor's Degree	100	85.47	96.58
Master's Degree	1	0.85	97.44
Post-Graduate Degree	3	2.56	100.00
Total	117	100.00	

Table 4: Frequency Distribution for Occupation Level

. tab occupation

What is your level of occupation?	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Student	81	69.23	69.23
Entry-level professional	28	23.93	93.16
Mid-level professional	3	2.56	95.73
Upper-level management	2	1.71	97.44
Others	3	2.56	100.00
Total	117	100.00	

Table 5: Cronbach' Alpha Analysis for Reviewer Expertise

Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
Doyouagree~d	117	+	0.8347	0.5790	.4309608	0.6629
Doyouagree~t	117	+	0.8749	0.6827	.3304598	0.5279
Towhatexte~t	117	+	0.7313	0.4821	.658046	0.7623
Test scale					.4731555	0.7473

Table 6: Cronbach' Alpha Analysis for Volume of Online Reviews

```

Test scale = mean(unstandardized items)

Average interitem covariance:      .6847922
Number of items in the scale:      2
Scale reliability coefficient:      0.7676
    
```

Table 7: Cronbach' Alpha Analysis for Volume of Online Reviews

Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
Doyoufindt~u	117	+	0.7260	0.3458	.3209549	0.4999
Doyoubelie~s	117	+	0.7632	0.4132	.234748	0.3901
Howoftendo~w	117	+	0.6990	0.3560	.3379016	0.4827
Test scale					.2978682	0.5607

Table 8: Cronbach' Alpha Analysis for Timeliness of Online Reviews

Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
Doyoufindt~u	117	+	0.7260	0.3458	.3209549	0.4999
Doyoubelie~s	117	+	0.7632	0.4132	.234748	0.3901
Howoftendo~w	117	+	0.6990	0.3560	.3379016	0.4827
Test scale					.2978682	0.5607

Table 9: Cronbach' Alpha Analysis for Comprehensiveness of Online Reviews

```

Test scale = mean(unstandardized items)

Average interitem covariance:      .3159446
Number of items in the scale:      2
Scale reliability coefficient:      0.5615
    
```

Table 10: Pearson's Correlation Analysis for Reviewer Expertise

	useful~s	rev_ex~r
usefulness	1.0000	
rev_exper	0.4550*	1.0000
	0.0000	

Table 11: Pearson's Correlation Analysis for Volume of Online Reviews

```

pwcorr usefulness volume , sig star (.05)
    
```

	useful~s	volume
usefulness	1.0000	
volume	0.2008*	1.0000
	0.0299	

Table 12: Pearson's Correlation Analysis for Timeliness of Online Reviews

`pwcorr usefulness timeliness , sig star (.05)`

	useful~s	timeli~s
usefulness	1.0000	
timeliness	0.3468* 0.0001	1.0000

Table 13: Pearson's Correlation Analysis for Comprehensive of Online Reviews

`. pwcorr usefulness comprehensiveness , sig star (.05)`

	useful~s	compre~s
usefulness	1.0000	
comprehens~s	0.3230* 0.0004	1.0000

Table 14: Regression analysis using 4 indexed independent variables

Linear regression

Number of obs = 117
 F(8, 108) = 5.50
 Prob > F = 0.0000
 R-squared = 0.2836
 Root MSE = .62675

usefulness	Robust		t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
	Coef.	Std. Err.				
comprehensiveness	.1173576	.1140535	1.03	0.306	-.1087162	.3434314
timeliness	.1685891	.1183675	1.42	0.157	-.0660358	.4032141
volume	-.0231481	.0758404	-0.31	0.761	-.1734768	.1271807
rev_exper	.3053107	.0896859	3.40	0.001	.1275377	.4830838
occupation	.0154015	.0736371	0.21	0.835	-.1305599	.1613629
education	-.0541017	.1064	-0.51	0.612	-.2650049	.1568016
age	-.1859545	.1165487	-1.60	0.114	-.4169743	.0450653
gender	-.0158561	.1245977	-0.13	0.899	-.2628304	.2311182
_cons	1.721131	.5198778	3.31	0.001	.6906429	2.751619

Table 15: Regression analysis using 14 subset variables

Linear regression

Number of obs = 117
 F(14, 102) = 7.67
 Prob > F = 0.0000
 R-squared = 0.3469
 Root MSE = .61579

usefulness	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Doyouagreethereviewersshould	.015108	.0650415	0.23	0.817	-.1139014	.1441175
Doyouagreethatreviewerexpert	.147191	.0799509	1.84	0.069	-.0113912	.3057732
Towhatextentdoyouthinkthat	.1835138	.084909	2.16	0.033	.0150972	.3519304
Howmanyreviewsdoyoucheckbef	.0675776	.0636278	1.06	0.291	-.0586277	.193783
Howmanyonlinereviewsitesdoy	-.097224	.0829766	-1.17	0.244	-.2618078	.0673597
Doyoufindthereviewswhenyou	.158489	.1202603	1.32	0.190	-.0800468	.3970248
Doyoubelievethelatestreviews	.0692832	.0592763	1.17	0.245	-.0482911	.1868575
Howoftendoyouthinkthereview	-.0827896	.0570771	-1.45	0.150	-.1960018	.0304226
Doyouthinktheinformationprov	.0717195	.0867208	0.83	0.410	-.1002908	.2437298
Towhatextentdoyoubelievetha	.0546817	.093124	0.59	0.558	-.1300293	.2393928
gender	.0322615	.122487	0.26	0.793	-.2106909	.2752139
age	-.1363352	.1238036	-1.10	0.273	-.3818991	.1092287
education	-.0364673	.1091321	-0.33	0.739	-.2529303	.1799957
occupation	-.005538	.0782539	-0.07	0.944	-.1607543	.1496782
_cons	1.535783	.5214037	2.95	0.004	.5015814	2.569985

QUESTIONNAIRE

Effectiveness of online reviews

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Others

What is your age?

- 13-17
- 18-23
- 24-28
- 29-35
- 35+

What is your level of education?

- Primary Education
- Higher Secondary Education
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Post-Graduate Degree

What is your level of occupation?

- Student
- Entry-level professional
- Mid-level professional
- Upper-level professional
- Other

Usefulness of reviews

Do you think online reviews are relevant to the product?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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Do you think online reviews are genuine?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

Do you think online reviews are neutral?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

Online reviews are useful in making purchase decisions

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	-------------------	---------	----------------	----------------

Reviewer Expertise

Do you agree the reviewer should possess expertise on the product being reviewed?

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	-------------------	---------	----------------	----------------

Do you agree that reviewer expertise makes the review more reliable?

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	-------------------	---------	----------------	----------------

To what extent do you think that review expertise helps decide in your purchase decision?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

Volume

How many reviews do you check before buying a product?

None	Some	Quite a Few	A lot	All
------	------	-------------	-------	-----

How many online review sites do you visit before buying a product?

None	Some	Quite a Few	A lot	All
------	------	-------------	-------	-----

Timeliness

Do you find the reviews when you need them?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

Do you believe the latest reviews are more relevant than the old ones?

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	-------------------	---------	----------------	----------------

How often do you think the reviews should be updated?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

Comprehensiveness

Do you think the information provided in the review encompasses most of the things that are needed to make a purchase decision?

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	-------------------	---------	----------------	----------------

To what extent do you believe that the reviews are focused on the subject matter. (Disagree if you believe that the reviewer wanders to different topic)

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	-------------------	---------	----------------	----------------

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