

Social Media Promotions, Online Reviews, and Restaurant Service Purchasing Decisions in Bangladesh: A SEM Analysis

Meher Neger¹  & Tasmia Mahmud² 

¹**Meher Neger**, PhD, Professor of Marketing, Head of the Department, Department of Marketing, Comilla University, e-mail: dmn@cou.ac.bd, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0971-7868>

²**Tasmia Mahmud**, Graduate Student, Department of Marketing, Comilla University, Email: tasmiamahmud2002@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7260-6220>

Abstract

The study examines the influence of social media promotions and online reviews on consumers' purchasing decisions in the restaurant industry of Bangladesh, with brand trust acting as a mediator. A quantitative research approach was adopted. Primary data were collected through a structured online survey using Google Forms, targeting university students and active social media users who frequently order from or visit restaurants. A total of 205 valid responses were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Non-Probability (purposive) sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness. The findings reveal that both social media promotions and online reviews have a significant positive influence on restaurant purchase decisions. Brand trust plays a strong mediating role, indicating that positive reviews and attractive promotions build consumer confidence, which in turn drives actual purchasing behavior. Online reviews were found to exert a comparatively stronger effect on brand trust than promotional offers alone. The study offers actionable recommendations for restaurant marketers in Bangladesh, including effective review management, strategic social media promotions, and trust-building initiatives to enhance customer loyalty and sales performance. Despite this, these features remain important for fostering engagement and building a foundation for trust, as interactive and informative content can enhance the consumer-brand relationship over time. In summary, the findings emphasize the pivotal role of Brand Trust and strategic social media promotions in influencing Purchase Decisions. These results offer actionable insights for marketers in the restaurant industry to optimize their social media strategies by prioritizing trust-building and relevance.

Keywords: Brand Trust, Catering Services., Digital Marketing, eWOM, Online Reviews

JEL Classification: M31, M37, L83

Article Info:

Received: 11 February 26

Accepted: 23 May 26

Research Area: Marketing and Advertising

Author's Country: Bangladesh

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.65626/joird.v5i1a2>

1. Introduction

The concept of consumer purchase decision has garnered substantial attention in contemporary marketing literature. As described by Salem

(2018) the purchase decision involves a series of steps that consumers undertake beginning with the recognition of a need followed by the search for alternatives, the evaluation of options and ultimately the selection of a product or service.

These decisions include key considerations such as what to purchase, where to purchase and at what cost. Consumer purchase decisions are shaped by their perceptions of a firm's offerings, their satisfaction with prior experiences and the brand's ability to meet specific needs. Businesses strive to influence these decisions by using strategic marketing tools such as advertising and promotional campaigns to stimulate consumer interest and drive purchase behavior. With the rise of digital technologies social media platforms have become powerful tools for influencing consumer behavior especially in the restaurant business in Bangladesh. Platforms such as Facebook Instagram and food delivery applications allow restaurants to promote and communicate their offerings and engage directly with customers. These platforms enable businesses to reach large audiences and provide real time updates thereby fostering consumer engagement and trust. Social media platforms also act as interactive spaces where consumers explore brand related content, share experiences and develop purchase intentions. Social media promotions such as discounts special offers limited time deals and targeted campaigns play an important role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions in Bangladesh's restaurant sector. These promotions create immediate interest by highlighting value for money opportunities, especially among price sensitive consumers. At the same time online reviews, also known as electronic word of mouth, influence decisions by providing real experiences related to food quality service hygiene and overall environment. These are factors that are difficult to assess before visiting a restaurant. Positive reviews increase confidence while negative reviews often discourage potential customers. Brand trust plays a key role in this process. It refers to consumers' willingness to rely on a brand's ability to deliver consistent value. When consumers trust a brand, they feel more confident in their purchasing decisions. In the restaurant context social media promotions and positive online reviews help build this trust which then leads to actual purchasing behavior. Social media marketing can strengthen brand trust by providing consistent transparent and reliable information to consumers.

The restaurant business in Bangladesh has experienced rapid growth due to urbanization increasing disposable income and a young tech-oriented population. Online food delivery services and social media platforms have significantly changed how consumers choose restaurants. A large number of consumers rely on Facebook Instagram and food delivery apps to explore options compare reviews and make purchase decisions. This growing digital dependency makes it important to understand how these factors influence consumer behavior. Despite increased investment in digital marketing there is still limited research that examines the combined effect of social media promotions and online reviews on purchasing decisions with brand trust as a mediator in Bangladesh. This study focuses on university students and active social media users who represent a

major segment of restaurant consumers. Understanding how social media promotions and online reviews influence trust and purchasing decisions can help improve digital marketing strategies and customer engagement.

1.1 Problem Statement

Social media has significantly transformed the way restaurants interact with consumers in Bangladesh. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram have become essential marketing tools allowing restaurants to promote their offerings and communicate directly with customers. Previous studies have explored the role of social media marketing in influencing consumer behavior. At the same time brand trust has been identified as an important factor that shapes purchasing decisions as it builds confidence in a brand's ability to deliver on its promises. However much of the existing research has focused on purchase intention rather than actual purchasing decisions or has not fully examined the combined influence of social media promotions and online reviews. Studies that consider both promotional activities such as discounts and offers and online reviews together in the restaurant sector are still limited. This gap is more noticeable in Bangladesh where consumer behavior is influenced by factors such as price sensitivity festival driven demand and strong reliance on social media platforms. In Bangladesh restaurants invest a significant amount in social media promotions and online review management. Despite this many businesses depend on assumptions or short-term sales results rather than clear data driven insights. They often lack understanding of which factor has a stronger impact and how brand trust influences the process. This can lead to ineffective marketing strategies unnecessary costs and potential damage to reputation due to unmanaged negative reviews. To address these gaps this study examines the relationships among social media promotions online reviews brand trust and purchasing decisions in the restaurant business in Bangladesh. The findings will provide useful insights for restaurant businesses and for service-oriented organizations to improve their digital marketing strategies and customer engagement.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the influence of social media promotions and online reviews on consumers' purchasing decisions in the restaurant services in Bangladesh. Specific Objectives are: to identify the key determinants social media promotions, online reviews and brand trust that influence consumers' purchasing decisions about restaurant services in Bangladesh; to test the significance level of considered determinants; to provide strategic recommendations for restaurant businesses and service-oriented organizations.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both theoretical and practical understanding by examining the effects of social media promotions and online reviews on consumers' purchasing restaurant services in Bangladesh with brand trust. The findings are also relevant for service-oriented organizations. Restaurant marketers and managers can use the findings to design more effective and cost-efficient digital marketing strategies improve promotional planning manage online reviews better and build long term customer relationships. Academicians and researchers can use this study as a foundation for further research in digital marketing consumer behavior electronic word of mouth and brand trust especially in emerging markets like Bangladesh. Policy makers and industry associations can use the insights to develop training programs and guidelines that support small and medium restaurants in adopting better marketing practices. Consumers can benefit from improved service quality transparency and better overall dining experiences as businesses align their strategies with customer preferences. Overall, this study helps bridge an existing research gap and provides practical insights for improving digital marketing strategies in the restaurant sector and related service industries.

2. Literature Review

The subsequent sections examine each variable in detail, presenting key findings and insights that guide the development of the research hypotheses.

2.1 Purchase Decision

The concept of purchase decision has been extensively explored in prior research, defined as the process through which individuals select a specific product or service from a firm, often in preference to competing options (Kim & Sung, 2009). This decision-making process is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors include consumer beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, personality, perceptions, lifestyle, roles, and status, while external factors are influenced by culture, membership in social groups, and social class. Together, these factors form the foundation for consumer preferences and decisions (Salem, 2018). In today's competitive environment, the vast array of available restaurants and food delivery options has made it challenging for businesses to secure consumer loyalty and sustain growth. Social media platforms have emerged as a transformative tool for addressing this challenge, allowing brands to connect directly with consumers, convey promotional messages effectively, and influence purchasing behavior. Hutter *et al.* (2013) emphasized the pivotal role of social media in building consumer engagement, noting that these platforms enable brands to foster positive perceptions and trust among consumers. Social media

platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and food delivery apps, which are integral to this study, are instrumental in raising consumer awareness and driving engagement. These platforms provide consumers with access to comprehensive information about restaurants, including discounts, special offers, and customer reviews, enabling them to assess value and benefits before making a purchase decision (Sharma *et al.*, 2021). By highlighting promotional offers, showcasing customer reviews, and fostering real-time interactions, social media has become a cost-effective and dynamic medium for nurturing consumer interest and loyalty (Gkikas *et al.*, 2022).

The interactive nature of social media amplifies its influence on purchase decisions through the power of word-of-mouth. These platforms allow consumers to share their experiences and reviews, which, in turn, shape the purchase decisions of others (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Research by Huang *et al.* (2019) and Liu *et al.* (2018) underscores the critical role of social media in facilitating peer-to-peer influence and driving the success of marketing campaigns. In the context of the restaurant industry in Bangladesh, social media promotions and online reviews play a crucial role in influencing purchase decisions by providing consumers with detailed insights into menu offerings, discounts, service quality, and customer experiences. Platforms like Facebook groups and student forums highlight the importance of tailored and engaging social media content in shaping consumer preferences. By leveraging the reach and informativeness of social media, brands in the restaurant industry can forge strong connections with consumers and enhance their purchase decisions. For this research, purchase decisions are examined as the dependent variable, influenced by the independent variables of social media promotions and online reviews, with brand trust as a mediator. These variables collectively offer a framework for understanding how social media marketing elements impact consumer behavior in the restaurant industry.

2.2 Social Media Promotions

Social media promotions refer to the use of discounts, special offers, limited-time deals, and targeted campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram to attract consumers. In social media marketing, promotions are achieved through eye-catching posts that emphasize value, urgency, and exclusivity. This enables restaurants to create immediate purchase intentions, especially among price-sensitive young consumers in Bangladesh. For restaurant brands in Bangladesh, social media promotions play a critical role in engaging consumers. Personalized offers, festival discounts, or weekend deals align with consumers' interests and foster positive brand perceptions. When consumers perceive promotions as attractive and relevant, they are more likely to form positive attitudes toward the brand and make purchase decisions (Pechmann & Stewart, 1990). In this study,

social media promotions are examined as a key feature of social media marketing that impacts consumer behavior. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram are particularly effective in delivering promotional content through advanced targeting tools. Restaurant brands can leverage these capabilities to respond promptly to consumer demand and create campaigns that resonate with individual expectations (Gautam & Sharma, 2017). The impact of social media promotions on consumer behavior and purchase decisions is well- supported by prior studies. Kim and Ko (2012) and Sohail *et al.* (2020) found that promotional messages significantly enhance purchase behavior. Additionally, Thaker *et al.* (2020) observed that promotional content improves consumer purchase intentions by creating emotional connections. Therefore, the hypothesis has been developed:

H₁: Social media promotions positively influence restaurant services purchasing decisions.

2.3 Online Reviews (Electronic Word-of-Mouth)

Online reviews, also known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), refer to customer-generated ratings, comments, and testimonials shared on social media and food delivery platforms. Hajli (2014) emphasized that online reviews enhance trust and equip consumers with the knowledge required to evaluate their options confidently. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Food panda excel in delivering authentic reviews, which strengthen consumer confidence and purchase behavior (Lee & Hong, 2016). The increasing prevalence of smartphones and internet access has revolutionized how information is shared through online reviews. Consumers tend to trust peer reviews more than traditional promotion (Chhonker *et al.*, 2018). This trust is instrumental in shaping positive brand perceptions, as authentic reviews about food quality, service, and hygiene build confidence and foster loyalty (Warren *et al.*, 2014). In the context of this study, online reviews refer to the extent to which social media and delivery apps effectively communicate customer experiences about restaurants to the target audience in Bangladesh. These reviews play a key role in increasing customer engagement by ensuring consumers are well-informed, fostering trust, encouraging frequent interactions, and positively influencing purchase decisions. Therefore, the hypothesis has been developed:

H₂: Online reviews positively influence restaurant services purchasing decisions.

2.4 Brand Trust

Brand trust is a foundational construct in marketing research, defined as the willingness of consumers to rely on a brand to consistently deliver on its promises (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). It encapsulates consumer confidence

in the reliability, authenticity, and integrity of a brand, which is often established through positive experiences and clear, transparent communication. Morgan and Hunt (1994) highlighted that brand trust is essential for building enduring relationships with consumers, fostering loyalty, and encouraging repeat purchases.

In the realm of social media, brand trust is cultivated through dynamic and meaningful interactions between consumers and brands. According to Calefato et al. (2015), social media platforms enable trust-building through firm-generated content (e.g., promotional posts and discounts) and user-generated content (e.g., online reviews and ratings). Additionally, social proof metrics, such as likes, shares, and comments, amplify consumer trust by signaling a brand's authenticity and credibility. As brand trust grows among consumers in the target market, it becomes easier for firms to convey their desired marketing messages and create favorable impressions about their brands in consumers' minds (Ebrahim, 2020). Jadir et al. (2022) reported that online trust plays a key role in influencing consumers' behavior. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which are utilized in this study, offer brands the opportunity to share engaging promotional content and authentic reviews that resonate with their target audience.

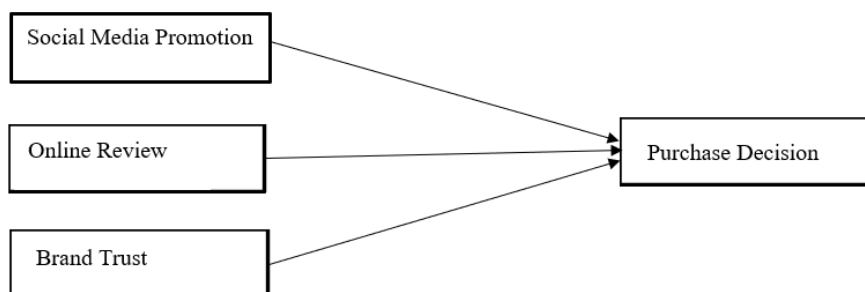
Brand trust is strongly associated with improved consumer perceptions and heightened purchase intentions. Ebrahim (2020) demonstrated that trust allows brands to effectively communicate their value propositions, fostering positive associations and deeper consumer engagement. Similarly, studies by Jadir et al. (2022) and Pop et al. (2022) confirmed that higher levels of trust in a brand correlate with more robust purchase decisions, as trust mitigates perceived risks and reinforces consumer confidence in the brand's offerings. In the restaurant industry, brand trust holds particular significance in shaping consumer behavior. Social media promotions and positive online reviews provide consumers with valuable insights into a restaurant's reliability and service quality. These elements play a crucial role in reducing uncertainty and enabling informed decision-making. For restaurant brands, consistently delivering promises, ensuring transparency in communication, and maintaining quality are vital for cultivating trust and fostering customer loyalty. In this study, brand trust is explored as a mediator in the relationship between social media promotions/online reviews and purchase decisions in the restaurant industry. It complements the effects of promotions and reviews by enhancing consumer confidence in the brand's offerings. Based on this understanding, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₃: Brand trust positively influences restaurant services purchasing decisions.

2.5 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Various theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain consumer purchase decisions in diverse contexts. This study extends such research by investigating the factors influencing purchase decisions within the restaurant industry in Bangladesh. The research framework for this study integrates social media promotions, online reviews and brand trust as independent variables, and restaurant services purchasing decision as the dependent variable. The research model aligns with prior literature and is developed using a combination of established constructs from earlier studies. Social media promotions, online reviews, and brand trust represent key digital marketing elements that influence consumer decision-making.

The proposed model, as depicted in *Figure 1*, was constructed based on an extensive literature review, and the hypotheses developed in this research aim to explore the direct effects on restaurant services purchasing decisions.



(Figure- 1: Conceptual Framework, created by authors)

3.0 Research Methods

A quantitative research design was employed in this study. Quantitative research is appropriate because it enables the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to test hypothesized relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study adopted a descriptive and causal research design to identify the key determinants (social media promotions and online reviews) and to examine the mediating role of brand trust on restaurant purchase decisions. The primary data for this study was collected using a structured online survey, designed to measure the influence of social media promotions and online reviews on consumers' restaurant services purchasing decisions in Bangladesh, with brand trust as a mediator. The survey was

distributed digitally through social media platforms (Facebook groups, Instagram, university pages), WhatsApp groups, and email to reach university students and active social media users who frequently order from or visit restaurants. Non-Probability sampling technique (purposive) used to collect primary data. A total of 250 responses were targeted to ensure sufficient statistical power for PLS-SEM analysis. After screening for incomplete and invalid responses, 205 valid responses were retained for final analysis. This sample size satisfies the minimum requirement of 10 times the number of indicators in the most complex model and aligns with previous studies in the field (Hair et al., 2022). All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adopted and adapted from established literature to ensure content validity. A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used for all items in the main questionnaire. The constructs and their respective measurement items are as follows: The complete set of measurement items is presented in *Table 3.1*. In this study a total of 209 valid responses were collected through the online Google Form survey and analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 Software for Partial Least Squares Least Square Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Table 3.1: Measurement Items and Origin of Factors

Construct	Code	Item Statement	Source
Social Media Promotions	SP1	Restaurant discounts and special offers on social media attract me.	Adapted from Kim & Ko (2012)
	SP2	Promotional campaigns on Facebook/ Instagram influence my decision to order food.	Adapted from Thaker et al. (2020)
	SP3	Limited-time offers increase my intention to purchase from a restaurant.	Adapted from Kim & Ko (2012)
	SP4	I am more likely to try a restaurant when I see attractive promotions online.	Adapted from Thaker et al. (2020)
Online Reviews	OR1	I read online reviews before choosing a restaurant.	Adapted from Hajli (2014)
	OR2	Positive online reviews increase my confidence in a restaurant.	Adapted from Lee & Hong (2016)
	OR3	Ratings on social media influence my restaurant choice.	Adapted from Hajli (2014)
Brand Trust	BT1	I trust restaurants that have many positive online reviews.	Adapted from Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001)
	BT2	Social media presence increases my trust in a restaurant.	Adapted from Ebrahim (2020)
	BT3	I feel confident purchasing from restaurants I trust online.	Adapted from Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001)

	BT4	Trust plays an important role in my restaurant selection.	Adapted from Ebrahim (2020)
Purchase Decision	PD1	Social media promotions influence my final purchasing decision.	Adapted from Salem (2018)
	PD2	Online reviews affect my decision to order from a restaurant.	Adapted from Sharma et al. (2021)
	PD3	I often choose restaurants based on information seen on social media.	Adapted from Salem (2018)
	PD4	I am likely to purchase from restaurants with attractive promotions and good reviews.	Adapted from Sharma et al. (2021)

(Source: Adapted from Previous Studies, prepared by authors)

4.0 Findings & Their Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondent

The demographic profile of the respondents provides important insights into the sample characteristics and confirms that the data represent the target population of young, active social media users who frequently engage with restaurant promotions and online reviews in Bangladesh.

Table 4.1: The Demographic Background of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Female	102	48.8%
	Male	107	51.2%
Age	20-25	124	59.3%
	26-30	39	18.7%
	31 and above	23	11%
	Below 20	23	11%
Occupation	Businessman	22	10.5%
	Housewife	4	1.9%
	Job holder	64	30.6%
	Student	119	56.9%
Income	10,000-20,000 BDT	48	23%
	20,001-40,000 BDT	29	13.9%
	40,001-60,000 BDT	17	8.1%

	Above 60,000 BDT	14	6.7%
	Under 10,000 BDT	101	48.3%
How often do you order/visit restaurants?	Monthly	76	36.4%
	Occasionally	52	24.9%
	Yearly	17	8.1%
	Weekly	64	30.6%

(Source: SPSS 26.0 outcomes based on primary data, authors' calculation)

Female respondents constituted 48.8% while male respondents accounted for 51.2%. The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents (59.3%) were between 20 and 25 years old. This age concentration aligns perfectly with the study's focus on university students and young professionals who are highly active on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. In terms of occupation, 56.9% were students, 30.6% were job holders, 10.5% were businessmen. Monthly income analysis revealed that 48.3% of respondents earned under 1010,000 BDT, indicating a price-sensitive segment that is particularly responsive to social media promotions and online reviews

4.2 Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The square root of AVE for each construct (shown in bold on the diagonal) was greater than its correlations with all other constructs. This confirms that each construct is empirically distinct from the others.

4.3 Discriminant Validity: HTMT Ratio

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was also examined as a more stringent test of discriminant validity. All HTMT values remained below the conservative threshold of 0.85, further confirming that the constructs are sufficiently distinct.

Table 4.2: Summarizes the measurement model outcomes

Constructs	Items	Factors Loading Value	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social Media Promotions	SP1	0.812	0.848	0.687
	SP2	0.849		
	SP3	0.847		
	SP4	0.802		
Online Reviews	OR1	0.871	0.874	0.726
	OR2	0.877		

Brand Trust	OR3	0.847	0.852	0.693
	OR4	0.811		
	BT1	0.853		
	BT2	0.824		
	BT3	0.858		
Purchasing Decision	BT4	0.792		
	PD1	0.807	0.864	0.711
	PD2	0.890		
	PD3	0.832		
	PD4	0.840		

(Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.0, authors' calculation)

4.4 Structural Model Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was tested using bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. All hypothesized relationships were found to be statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, providing strong empirical support for the proposed research framework.

Table 4.3: Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BT	OR	PD	SP
Brand Trust (BT)	0.832			
Online Reviews (OR)	0.762	0.852		
Purchasing Decision (PD)	0.729	0.739	0.843	
Social Media Promotion (SP)	0.694	0.811	0.691	0.829

(Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.0, authors' calculation)

Table 4.4: Discriminant Validity: HTML ratio

	Brand Trust (BT)	Online Reviews (OR)	Purchasing Decision (PV)	Social Media Promotions (SP)
Brand Trust (BT)				
Online Reviews (OR)	0.879			
Purchasing Decision (PD)	0.847	0.846		
Social Media Promotions (SP)	0.810	0.941	0.803	

(Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.0, authors' calculation)

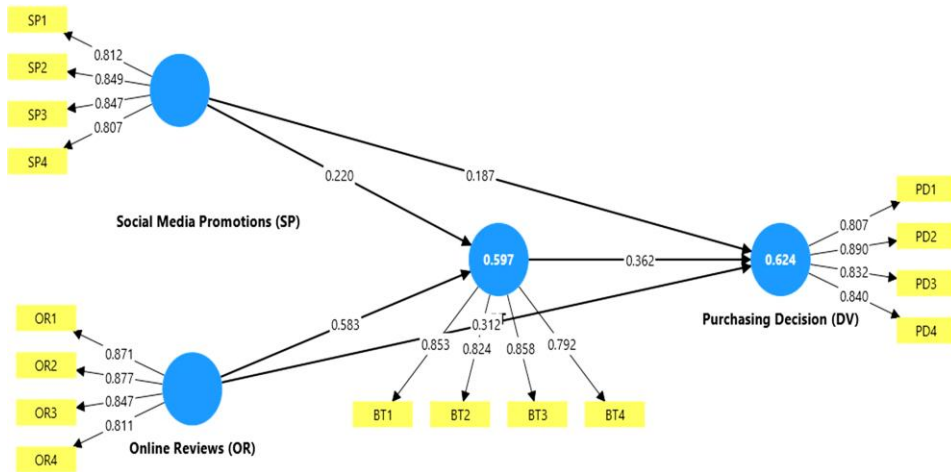


Figure 4.2: Measurement Model Summary (Source: created by authors)

Path coefficient values are standardized and typically range between -1 and $+1$, indicating both the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The results presented in Table 4.5 demonstrate that all estimated path coefficients fall within this acceptable range, confirming the model's validity in terms of structural relationships. The analysis examines the influence of Online Review (OR) Social Media Promotion (SP) and Brand Trust (BT), as well as the effect on Purchasing Decision (PD). First, Online Review (OR $\rightarrow$ BT) shows the strongest positive and highly significant relationship, with a path coefficient of 0.583, a t-value of 7.705, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that positive online reviews play a crucial role in building brand trust. A one-unit increase in online review leads to a 0.583 unit increase in brand trust, holding other factors constant. Second, the relationship between Brand Trust (BT $\rightarrow$ PD) is strong and highly significant, with a path coefficient of 0.362, a t-value of 3.519, and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that brand trust has a substantial positive influence on consumers' purchase decision. Third, Online Review (OR $\rightarrow$ PD) also demonstrates a positive and significant direct effect on purchase decision with a path coefficient of 0.312, t-value of 3.226, and p-value of 0.001. Finally, Social Media Promotion (SP $\rightarrow$ PD) has a positive and significant effect on purchasing restaurant services decision (path coefficient = significant relationship (path coefficient = 0.220, $t = 2.744$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that effective social media promotion contributes meaningfully influence on purchasing decision about restaurant services.

Table 4. 5: Hypothesis Testing Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample Mean(M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values	Result
BT -> PD	0.362	0.367	0.103	3.519	0.000	Accepted
OR -> PD	0.312	0.306	0.097	3.226	0.001	Accepted
SP ->PD	0.187	0.188	0.080	2.336	0.020	Accepted

(Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.0, calculated by authors)

0.187, $t = 2.336$, $p = 0.020$). Although this is the weakest relationship among the supported paths, it still confirms that social media promotion positively influences consumers' restaurant services purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that all hypothesized relationships are supported. Among a determinant, Online Review emerges as the most influential factor, particularly in building Brand Trust, which in turn significantly affects Purchasing restaurant services. Both Online Review, Social Media Promotion and Brand Trust play important roles in influencing Purchasing restaurant services. These results emphasize that digital factors, especially online reviews, play a more critical role than other elements in shaping brand trust and purchasing restaurant services among consumers.

5.0 Recommendation

This study provides clear empirical evidence that both social media promotions and online reviews significantly influence consumers' purchasing restaurant services decisions in Bangladesh, with brand trust acting as a strong influence. Based on outcomes some recommendations are: they should invest in professional social media management dedicated resources to daily monitoring, content calendar planning, and analytics. Tools for sentiment analysis of reviews can help identify improvement areas quickly, turning potential negative feedback into opportunities for trust-building.

5.1 Implications

The findings have direct and immediate practical implications for the restaurant industry in Bangladesh. Restaurant marketers and owners should shift from a purely promotional, discount-heavy approach to a balanced digital strategy that gives equal or greater weight to authentic online reviews and trust-building activities. Brand trust is the critical bridge between social media efforts and actual purchasing restaurant services. Therefore, investing in review monitoring tools, community management, and transparent content creation will deliver higher long-term returns than paid promotions alone. The study suggests allocating a reasonable portion of the marketing budget toward

encouraging and managing reviews rather than spending everything on advertisement

5.2 Future Research Direction

This research opens several promising avenues for future investigation: firstly, a longitudinal study could track how the influence of social media promotions and online reviews on purchase decisions evolves over time, especially after major events such as festivals or economic changes; next future researchers may include additional variables such as influencer marketing, user-generated content, perceived risk, or price sensitivity to develop a more comprehensive model; after that, A mixed-method approach combining quantitative survey data with qualitative in-depth interviews or focus group discussions could offer richer understanding of consumer psychology behind review trust and promotion effectiveness.

6.0 Conclusion

The study has successfully examined the influence of social media promotions and online reviews on consumers' restaurant purchasing decisions about restaurant services in Bangladesh. The study confirms that both digital marketing elements play significant roles, while brand trust substantially strengthens the pathway from social media exposure to actual purchase behavior. Online reviews, in particular, emerged as the dominant factor, underscoring the power of authentic electronic word-of-mouth in today's digital-first restaurant industry. In Bangladesh's rapidly growing restaurant, success depends not only on food quality and service but equally on how effectively businesses manage their digital presence. Restaurants and catering services that strategically combine attractive promotions with genuine online reviews and consistent trust-building initiatives are far more likely to achieve sustainable growth, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage. The present study contributes both academically and practically by offering localized, data-driven insights tailored to the Bangladeshi context. It is hoped that the recommendations and implications provided will assist restaurant owners, marketers, cloud kitchen operators, and conglomerates in developing more effective and efficient digital marketing strategies. Ultimately, this research reaffirms that in the age of social media, trust remains the most powerful driver of consumer purchasing restaurant services.

Authors' Declaration

We declare that the submitted manuscript is our original work and has not been published, nor is it under consideration for publication elsewhere. All sources have been appropriately cited, and the work is free from plagiarism, falsification, and fabrication. Any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in preparing this

manuscript has been transparently disclosed, and full responsibility for the content rests with the authors.

References

- Alalwan, A. A. (2018). Investigating the impact of social media advertising features on customer purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, vol.42, pp.65–77.
- Alawadhi, S., & Morris, A. (2008). The use of the UTAUT model in the adoption of e- government services in Kuwait. In *Proceedings of the 41st Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* pp. 1–11.
- Arfi, W. B., Nasr, I. B., Khvatova, T., & Zaied, Y. B. (2021). Understanding acceptance of eHealthcare by IoT natives and IoT immigrants: An integrated model of UTAUT, perceived risk, and financial cost. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 163, Article 120437.
- Arjun, R., Kuanr, A., & Suprabha, K. R. (2021). Developing banking intelligence in emerging markets: Systematic review and agenda. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 1 (2), 1–11.
- Aswani, R., Ilavarasan, P. V., Kar, A. K., & Vijayan, S. (2018). Adoption of public WiFi using UTAUT2: An exploration in an emerging economy. *Procedia Computer Science*, 132, 297–306.
- Bilgin, Y., & Kethüda, Ö. (2022). Charity social media marketing and its influence on charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 1–12.
- Blanco, C. F., Blasco, M. G., & Azorín, I. I. (2010). Entertainment and informativeness as precursory factors of successful mobile advertising messages. *Communications of the IBIMA*, 2010 (2010), 1–11.
- Buzeta, C., De Pelsmacker, P., & Dens, N. (2020). Motivations to use different social media types and their impact on consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs). *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 52, 79–98.
- Calefato, F., Lanubile, F., & Novielli, N. (2015). The role of social media in affective trust building in customer–supplier relationships. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 15 (4), 453–482.
- Chatterjee, S., Kar, A. K., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2021). Intention to use IoT by aged Indian consumers. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 1–12.
- Chen, S. C., & Lin, C. P. (2019). Understanding the effect of social media marketing activities: The mediation of social identification, perceived value, and satisfaction. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 140, 22–32.
- Cheung, M. L., Pires, G., & Rosenberger, P. J. (2020). The influence of perceived social media marketing elements on consumer–brand engagement and brand knowledge. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 32 (3), 695–720.
- Courtois, C., Mechant, P., De Marez, L., & Verleye, G. (2009). Gratifications and seeding behavior of online adolescents. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15 (1), 109–137.
- De Vries, L., Gensler, S., & Leeftang, P. S. (2012). Popularity of brand posts on brand fan pages: An investigation of the effects of social media marketing. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26 (2), 83–91.
- Dhanesh, G. S., & Duthler, G. (2019). Relationship management through social media influencers: Effects of followers' awareness of paid endorsement. *Public Relations Review*, 45 (3), 1–13.
- Ebrahim, R. S. (2020). The role of trust in understanding the impact of social media marketing on brand equity and brand loyalty. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 19 (4), 287–308.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18 (1), pp.39–50.
- Gautam, V., & Sharma, V. (2017). The mediating role of customer relationship on the social media marketing and purchase intention relationship with special reference to luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 23 (6), 872–888.
- Ha, Y., Park, K., Kim, S. J., Joo, J., & Cha, M. (2020). Automatically detecting image–text mismatches on Instagram with Deep Learning. *Journal of Advertising*, 50 (1), 52–62.

- Hafez, M. (2021). The impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity in the banking sector in Bangladesh: The mediating role of brand love and brand trust. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 39 (7), 1353–1376.
- Hair, J., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). Multivariate data analysis. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education International 7th edition.
- Hajli, M. N. (2014). A study of the impact of social media on consumers. *International Journal of Market Research*, 56 (3), 387–404.
- Huang, L., Clarke, A., Heldsinger, N., & Tian, W. (2019). The communication role of social media in social marketing: A study of the community sustainability knowledge dissemination on LinkedIn and Twitter. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 7 (2), pp.6475.
- Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S., & Füller, J. (2013). The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: The case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22 (5/6), 342–351.
- Ibrahim, B., & Aljarah, A. (2018). Dataset of relationships among social media marketing activities, brand loyalty, revisit intention. Evidence from the hospitality industry in Northern Cyprus. *Data in brief*, vol.21, pp.1823–1828.
- Islam, H., Jebarajakirthy, C., & Shankar, A. (2021). An experimental based investigation into the effects of website interactivity on customer behavior in on-line purchase context. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 29 (2), pp.117–140.
- Jayasingh, S. (2019). Consumer brand engagement in social networking sites and its effect on brand loyalty. *Cogent Business & Management*, 6 (1), Article 1698793.
- Jensen, J. F. (1998). ‘Interactivity’: Tracking a new concept in media and communication studies. *Nordicom Review*, 19 (1), 185–204.
- Jo, S. A. (2013). Impact of company’s sms marketing activities on perceived value and customer loyalty. Focusing on Facebook (master’s dissertation. Hong-Ik University).
- Kang, H. J., Shin, J. H., & Ponto, K. (2020). How 3D virtual reality stores can shape consumer purchase decisions: The roles of informativeness and playfulness. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 49, 70–85.
- Kang, M. J. (2005). A study on the effect of features of brand community using one person media on consumers. (Master’s Dissertation, Seoul National University).
- Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M. (2020). Rulers of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence. *Business Horizons*, 63 (1), 37–50.
- Kar, A. K., & Kushwaha, A. K. (2021). Facilitators and barriers of artificial intelligence adoption in business—insights from opinions using big data analytics. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 1–24.
- Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65 (10), 1480–1486.
- Kim, J. H. (2017). The influence of mobile marketing features upon consumer attitudes. (Master’s dissertation, Hoseo University).
- Lee, J., & Hong, I. B. (2016). Predicting positive user responses to social media advertising: The roles of emotional appeal, informativeness, and creativity. *International Journal of Information Management*, 36 (3), 360–373.
- Liao, S. H., Chung, Y. C., & Chang, W. J. (2019). Interactivity, engagement, trust, purchase intention and word-of-mouth: A moderated mediation study. *International Journal of Services Technology and Management*, 25 (2), 116–137.
- Liu, H., Jayawardhena, C., Osburg, V. S., Yoganathan, V., & Cartwright, S. (2021). Social sharing of consumption emotion in electronic word of mouth (eWOM): A cross-media perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 132, 208–220.
- Liu, L., Lee, M. K., Liu, R., & Chen, J. (2018). Trust transfer in social media brand communities: The role of consumer engagement. *International Journal of Information Management*, 41, 1–13.

- Mustafi, M. A. A., & Hosain, M. S. (2020). The role of online advertising on purchase intention of smartphones: Mediating effects of flow experience and advertising value. *Journal of Contemporary Marketing Science*, 3 (3), 385–410.
- N., Meher., & A.J. Hure., (2025). Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Purchasing Decision Towards the Restaurant Industry in Bangladesh'', *Journal of Business and Economic Development*, VOL. 11, ISSUE 2, JUNE 2026, PP. 40-58.
- Naeem, M. (2021). Do social media platforms develop consumer panic buying during the fear of Covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, Article 102226.
- Pandey, A., Sahu, R., & Dash, M. K. (2018). Social media marketing impacts on the purchase intention of millennials. *International Journal of Business Information Systems*, 28 (2), 147–162.
- Park, J., Hyun, H., & Thavisay, T. (2021). A study of antecedents and outcomes of social media WOM towards luxury brand purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, Article 102272.
- Park, N., Kee, K. F., & Valenzuela, S. (2009). Being immersed in social networking environment: Facebook groups, uses and gratifications, and social outcomes. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 12 (6), 729–733.
- Sharma, A., Fadahunsi, A., Abbas, H., & Pathak, V. K. (2022). A multi-analytic approach to predict social media marketing influence on consumer purchase intention. *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 14 (2), pp.125–149.
- Sohail, M. S., Hasan, M., & Sohail, A. F. (2020). The impact of social media marketing on brand trust and brand loyalty: An Arab perspective. *International Journal of Online Marketing (IJOM)*, 10 (1), 15–31.
- Zhu, Y. Q., & Chang, J. H. (2016). The key role of relevance in personalized advertise- management: Examining its impact on perceptions of privacy invasion, self-awareness, and continuous use intentions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 65, 442–447.