

Research Article

Customer response towards Facebook Marketing Communications for purchasing raw milk in Chattogram Metropolitan Area

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an important element of communication mix in business in global context and it will continue to expand in the future. Bangladesh is no exception to this fact. This paper aims to find out the rate of consumer responses towards Facebook Marketing Communications regarding raw milk purchase in Chattogram. It also finds out the factors which convince them to take decision to buy raw milk from such communications. Primary data were collected from 340 respondents by mixed-mode survey method using online media. An online structured questionnaire was developed using Google Form for the purpose. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square test were performed for data analysis using MS Excel 2013 and SPSS 16.0. The study reveals that 40.0% male and 44.8% female showed positive responses towards facebook marketing communications for buying raw milk under the condition of home delivery and purity of the raw milk. Interestingly, 52.3% decision makers are prone to buy raw milk from the ads/posts given on facebook whereas 47.7% decision makers are not interested to do so ($p<0.05$). The top convincing factors for buying raw milk from Facebook Marketing Communications are ensuring authenticity, safety & quality of the products (57.3%), reasonable price setting (6.8%), and non-disturbing ads showcasing (6.8%). These findings not only contribute to existing literature by conducting an empirical survey on the responses of the people towards Facebook Marketing Communications but also show the new marketing communication avenues for the dairy marketers in Chattogram Metro Area.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is becoming a new era in agricultural marketing that has blogs, microblogs, pages, groups etc. and it is found that social media is very advantageous tool in agricultural marketing. Among many social media and networking sites, Facebook is the most likely social media for pages and profiles (Bite, Balkrishna, and Deshmukh 2017). Social media

is considered a great way for small and large businesses including farm businesses as it helps to share information easily and directly about products and services, network with new people to build a loyal consumer base, and stimulate market traffic. The best part of such communication is that it is very direct, personalized and targeted (Emily Post, 2012). Such type of communications between the producers and the

consumers stimulate market traffic. Consequently, social media has become an important element of communication mix in business in global context and it will continue to expand in the future. Bangladesh is no exception to this fact. In social media communication Facebook stands first position in Bangladesh (CNN 2015). Bangladesh has a wide range of opportunities for social media because this country had more than 60% adult population in 2014 (National Institute of Population Research and Training, ICF International, and Mitra and Associates, 2014) and with adoption capacity. Among the internet users of Bangladesh, 80% are on social networking website Facebook (FB) according to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC 2017). The number of mobile internet subscribers is 63.07 million and the total number of the country's internet subscribers reached 66.965 million at the end of October, 2016. Compared to October, 2015 the number of mobile internet subscriber increased by 20.52% and total number of internet subscriber increased by 22.52% (BTRC 2017). People of 18-24 years of age of Bangladesh are the major FB users and among the FB members, 78 per cent are male and 22 per cent are female. It has also been found that Facebook penetration in Bangladesh is 1.77% (Business Habit 2015). There were 7,500 active Facebook pages which were doing business in the country using this social media platform (Islam, 2015). All these facts are demonstrating a vast opportunity for the marketers to use facebook for marketing communication purpose in Bangladesh. The field survey demonstrates that most of the facebook buyers usually purchase personal products, home appliance and stationery items. A staggering 74.8% respondents buy personal products. Home appliances are bought by 9.4% respondents and baby products, stationery and personal products & home appliances products are bought by the same percentage of the respondents (1.6%). However, White & Irlbeck (2014), Baumgarten (2012), Nadeau (2010) supported that use of social media in agriculture is significant and it will continue to expand in the future. A common strategy among social media marketing experts is to determine a few goals to focus on: stimulating market traffic, generating awareness, building consumer relationships, or promoting events (Emily Post, 2012).

Though the above literatures suggested the use of social media (facebook and others) and the strategies to be considered in agriculture marketing, very little is known about the use of facebook in marketing

communications for livestock product specifically raw milk marketing and its probable response. Currently, raw milk is sold by Goalas (milk sellers) from door to door or in some cases consumers collect from the dairy farms directly in the study area. There is no marketing communications with the consumers (Field Observation, 2017). However, dairy farmers face marketing problems e.g. inability to sell milk at desired times due to lack of buyers, uncertain prices and low bargaining power (Jabbar, 2014). Marketing communications through facebook might be a way to reduce the communication gap between the consumers and the organized dairy farmers. Hence, the aim of this study is to find out the rate of the consumer responses towards Facebook Marketing Communications regarding raw milk purchase in Chattogram. On the following step, the paper also determines the convincing consumer requirements/ factors that trigger them to take decision to buy raw milk from Facebook Marketing Communications. The research attempted to find out the answers to the following questions: Do the consumers respond positively to buy raw milk from facebook communications in the study area and what is the rate of the responses? What are the requirements that the consumers consider to buy from Facebook Marketing Communication (facebook shopping)?

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research followed an empirical-analytical group approaches where both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used.

Study Area, Sample Size and Data Collection

To answer these questions, primary data were collected from 340 respondents residing in Chattogram Metropolitan Area by mixed-mode survey method using online media during June 2017 to August 2017 (Fricker, 2008). An online structured questionnaire was developed using Google Form which included demographic and behavioral data. Both Bangla and English were used in the questionnaire so that the respondents understand the questions very clearly. In the relevant cases, the questions were further clarified so that all the respondents stay on the same meaning. The questionnaire link was sent to different facebook groups and email addresses during the mentioned period so that the intended respondents can be heard (Michaelidou and Dibb, 2006). Total 430 responses were received out of whom 90 responses were rejected due to non-compliance of the different requirements (e.g. responses from beyond study area).

Data Analysis

The finally selected respondents' data were analyzed by Chi-square test using SPSS 16.0 software to identify the association between Facebook Marketing Communications and consumers' decision making for purchasing raw milk in Chattogram and to mark the significance level of the different factors. Open questions were given to find out the insights regarding the factors affecting the decision of the consumers regarding such purchases. After analyzing all the texts, total 14 categories were identified for the reasons for buying from Facebook ads/posts. Afterwards, a frequency analysis was done to come to the conclusion. Same method was used to identify the reasons for liking to get product information in Facebook, the product categories usually bought from Facebook Ads/Posts and the consumer requirements for facebook shopping as well.

However, before using this research data it should be noted that as the survey was conducted online, there was very little control over the respondents and owing to that fact less responses were received in 'open ended' questions. Most importantly, a particular profession group (students: 67%) was among the majority of the respondents as students are major users of facebook.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The survey was conducted to find the association between Facebook Marketing Communications and the responses for purchasing raw milk in Chattogram. The open ended part of the questionnaire has given several

useful hints regarding facebook marketing communications. To clarify, the discussion flows as: (1) why do the consumers like to get product information in Facebook? (2) why do the consumers buy seeing the marketing communication in facebook? (3) what is the likeliness of buying raw milk from Facebook Ads/Posts under different factors and the relationship between the likeliness and those factors and (4) what are the consumer requirements which can convince them to trigger them for facebook shopping?

Table 1 highlights the reasons for why the facebook users like to get product (raw milk) information in Facebook. The maximum respondents (34.5%) say that they like it because it is easy to check product information and online reviews to compare. In fact, consumers can search on internet and compare different reviews on the product which facilitates them to choose the right product. The second highest reason is it is convenient as it has easy and high accessibility. Among the survey participants 16.8% reported that they get updated/new/exclusive product information through Facebook whereas 14.7% mentioned about the benefits regarding time saving. Consumers do not need spend time for searching the raw milk sellers (Goala/Dairy Farms) physically rather they can search online within minimum time spent for. Only 0.8% of the respondents talk about their unwillingness to roam in the market. Other than these, there are the reasons like easy to find and order; quick and easy communication with the seller and others.

Table 1. Reasons for liking to get product information in Facebook

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Easy to check product information & online reviews to compare	82	34.5%
Convenient due to easy & high accessibility	49	20.6%
Updated/new/exclusive product information	40	16.8%
Time saving	35	14.7%
Others	19	8.0%
Easy to find & order	8	3.4%
Quick & easy communication with the seller	3	1.3%
Unwilling to roam in the market	2	0.8%
Total Responses	238	100%

Note: There are missing values as the respondents didn't answer the open ended questions.

Table 2 demonstrates the reasons why usually the consumers buy from the facebook communications used by the companies. The highest respondents (15.9%) mentioned the first compelling reason is 'Differentiated/Exclusive/Trendy product'. It is because the general or regular products are available in the market and for differentiated or exclusive or trendy products they need to spend extra hours for searching. Oppositely, whenever, facebook ads or posts bring those products right away on their hands, they tend to buy it. There are multiple reasons in second position,

which are desired product; easy to check product information and online reviews to compare; easy to find, order and pay, and time saving. Among the participants 11.9% responded positively to each of these reasons. Only 0.8% participants mentioned about money saving; nice to shop from home and Time & money saving reasons individually. Apart from these, there are other reasons e.g. catchy presentation; reasonable price; differentiated products with reasonable price; catchy presentation with easy to find, order and pay and differentiated product and time saving.

Table 2. Reasons for buying from Facebook ads/posts

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Differentiated/Exclusive/Trendy product	20	15.9%
Desired product	15	11.9%
Easy to check product information & online reviews to compare	15	11.9%
Easy to find, order and pay	15	11.9%
Time saving	15	11.9%
Catchy presentation	12	9.5%
Others	11	8.7%
Differentiated/Exclusive/Trendy product & Reasonable/lower priced	10	7.9%
Reasonable/lower priced	6	4.8%
Catchy presentation & Easy to find, order and pay	2	1.6%
Differentiated/Exclusive/Trendy product & Time saving	2	1.6%
Money saving	1	0.8%
Nice to shop from home (Order/Delivery)	1	0.8%
Time saving & Money saving	1	0.8%
Total Responses	126	100%

Note: There are missing values as the respondents didn't answer the open ended questions.

Table 3 depicts the percentage of likeliness of buying raw milk from Facebook Ads/Posts under different factors and the relationship between the likeliness and those factors. Overall, the greater portion of the respondents prefer not to buy from Facebook Ads/Posts under all factors with two exceptions- 'Decision maker' and 'Number of Children'. Most of the male consumers and those who did not have prior experience of buying from Facebook sites are less likely to buy from Facebook sites.

In terms of 'Decision maker', 52.3% decision makers are prone to buy raw milk from the ads/posts given on

facebook whereas 47.7% decision makers are not interested to do so ($p<0.05$). Interestingly, 52.6% of the parents who have children more than one are likely to buy while 41.7% parents having one or less are not likely to buy raw milk from facebook communications ($p>0.05$). In case of gender, 60% of the males dislike to buy raw milk from the same communications compared to 55.2% of the females showing the same behavior ($p>0.05$). Two hundred fifteen (215) respondents did not have any prior experience to buy from facebook sites and 60% among them are reluctant to buy raw milk from the same source. Surprisingly,

48% of the consumers out of 125 partakers having prior experience are interested for the same ($p>0.05$). In case of the factor 'Facebook use time', 59.4% of the users who are on facebook more than 1 hour daily and 53.8% of the users who are online for less than 1 hour

daily or irregular are less likely to buy from such communications ($p>0.05$). For rest of the factors- age, marital status, occupation and education, 50% to 60% respondents fall to 'not buying' category and each of which p value is greater than 0.05.

Table 3. Responses towards Facebook Ads/Posts

Factors	If purity and home delivery is ensured, do you like to buy raw milk from Facebook Ads/Posts?		χ^2, p value
	Yes	Yes	
Sex			
	52	78	.743, 0.389
	40.00%	60.00%	
	94	116	
Female	44.80%	55.20%	
Age			
	92	137	2.191, 0.139
	40.20%	59.80%	
	54	57	
25+	48.60%	51.40%	
Marital Status			
	111	154	.545, 0.460
	41.90%	58.10%	
	35	40	
Others	46.70%	53.30%	
Number of Children			
	126	176	1.640, 0.200
	41.70%	58.30%	
	20	18	
>1	52.60%	47.40%	
Occupation			
	93	134	1.084, 0.298
	41.00%	59.00%	
	53	60	
Others	46.90%	53.10%	
Education			
	103	140	0.107, 0.744
	42.40%	57.60%	
	43	54	
Others (Below Undergrad)	44.30%	55.70%	
Decision maker* (in family)			
	57	52	5.727, .017
	52.30%	47.70%	
	89	142	
Yes	38.50%	61.50%	

Time spent in Facebook (Daily)			
Very irregular/less than 1 hour	66	77	1.040, 0.308
	46.20%	53.80%	
More than 1 hour	80	117	2.065, 0.121
	40.60%	59.40%	
Ever bought anything from Facebook sites			
Yes	60	65	2.065, 0.121
	48.00%	52.00%	
No	86	129	2.065, 0.121
	40.00%	60.00%	

Simultaneously, it is to be noted that social media has become a part of information highway. The amount of content generated on single topic is very high and this huge amount of information may complicate inexperienced users and this can be detrimental (Bhattacharjee, 2016). However, Table 2 suggests, Facebook ads/posts facilitate the consumers to buy products by smoothly giving information about the exclusive, desired products with the ease of product comparison, choice of product, and finally putting order and making payment in less time. All these reasons create value for the consumers. Only creation of the value will not suffice to convince the consumers. The values are to be communicated as per their requirements so that they take action upon seeing an

advert on facebook and thus they fulfill their needs. Table 4 shows the consumer requirements which can convince them to direct or trigger them for facebook shopping. Most of the respondents (57.3%) are asking for 'ensuring authenticity, safety & quality' of the products. On the other hand only 0.9% of the participants are looking for home delivery. The same percentage of the people (6.8%) are of the view of reasonable price setting and non-disturbing ads showcasing. Even though 19% of the surveyed people are demanding for different types of requirements under the head 'other', 6.0% of them are asking for 'details information should be included'. They (1.7%) also look for refund policy while buying from facebook ads and posts.

Table 4. Consumer Requirements for Facebook Shopping (Raw Milk)

Consumer Requirements	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Ensuring authenticity, safety & quality	67	57.3%
Reasonable price should be ensured	8	6.8%
Disturbing ads should not be there	8	6.8%
Details Information should be included	7	6.0%
Refund Policy should be there	2	1.7%
Not interested	2	1.7%
Home Delivery should be ensured	1	0.9%
Others	22	18.8%
Total Responses	117	100%

Note: There are missing values as the respondents didn't answer the open ended questions.

4. CONCLUSION

Facebook is a powerful tool for marketing communication. As this study found that 40.0% male and 44.8% female showed positive responses towards facebook marketing communications for buying raw milk, this

tool can be used as an innovation in milk marketing in the study area. However, to make this innovation work positively or desirably, the marketers are expected to ensure the authenticity, safety & quality of the

products, reasonable price, non-disturbing ads showcasing, and detailed product information in the communication. As decision making role has a significant impact on the exposed responses, this factor also can be considered while designing the facebook marketing communication campaign. However, this research could not attempt to assess the cost effectiveness of such campaign and also to develop methodological approach for impact measurement of such campaigns. And the study is conducted only in one metropolitan city of the country. And all these limitations open up opportunities for further research.

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