

**Rana Chowdhury**

**BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL  
MEDIA ON BRAND IMAGE**

**Comparison between Bangladesh and Finland**

**Master's Thesis**

**CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

**International Business Management**

**June 2020**

**ABSTRACT**

<b>Centria University of Applied Sciences</b>	<b>Date</b> June 2020	<b>Author</b> Rana Chowdhury
<b>Degree programme</b> International Business Management		
<b>Name of thesis</b> BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND IMAGE Comparison between Bangladesh and Finland		
<b>Instructor</b> Sandor Kovács	<b>Pages</b> 43 + 5	
<b>Supervisor</b> Katarina Broman		
<p>The thesis aims to analyze and evaluate branding in social media and the impact of social media on brand image and creating a comparison of branding in social media in Bangladesh and Finland. The thesis utilized secondary data from various sources, which included the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics for Bangladesh and Statistics Finland for Finland to conduct the study and determine the implications of social media in branding in Bangladesh and Finland.</p> <p>The research showed that social media plays a crucial role in brand promotion and creating awareness. However, there are essential differences in the state, prevalence, and impact of social media on businesses in Bangladesh and Finland. The descriptive study depended on past research sourced from international economic journals, business practices journals, and websites on social media branding to present the differences between Bangladesh and Finland. The research discussed significant similarities and differences regarding social media branding in both countries.</p> <p>The outcomes demonstrated that social media branding has boosted trade and sales of small businesses in Bangladesh, which do not have adequate capital to finance marketing in TV, newspapers, and magazines. Finland's internet connectivity prowess has bolstered how companies are utilizing social media to build brands and market their products and services. This research also showed that, the presence of Finnish companies in the social network is mainly under third-party social media agencies. The research also indicated that, there is a significant relationship between brand image and social media.</p>		
<b>Key words</b> brand, brand exposure, brand image, social media		

## **CONCEPT DEFINITIONS**

**SME** = Small and medium enterprises

**BTRC** = Bangladesh telecommunication regulatory commission

**BDT** = Bangladeshi taka currency

**B2C** = Business to consumer

**ABSTRACT**  
**CONCEPT DEFINITIONS**  
**CONTENTS**

<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND IMAGE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING IN BANGLADESH AND FINLAND .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.1 Social Media Branding in Bangladesh .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.1.1 The Scope of Social Media in Bangladesh.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1.2 Top Brands of Bangladesh by Social Media Sites .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.1.3 Social Media Brand Communication in the Context of Bangladesh.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.1.4 Challenges of Brand Communication through Social Networking Sites in Bangladesh</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3.2 Social Media Branding and the Impact on Brand Image in Finland .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3.2.1 The Spectrum of Social Media in Finland and Its Prevalence on the Context of Business.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3.2.2 Determinants of Growth of Social Media Brand Communication in Finland .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3.2.3 Top Brands of Finland by Social Media Sites .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3.3 Economic benefits of social media brand communication in both countries .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4.1 The Methods of Research Used.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4.2 Approach and Strategy.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4.3 Data Collection .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4.4 Data Processing and Analysis .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5 RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND DATA INTERPRETATION .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>37</b>

**APPENDICES**

**FIGURES**

FIGURE 1. Information sources .....	5
FIGURE 2. Reason for sharing information through social media.....	6
FIGURE 3. Share of Finnish households with internet access .....	15
FIGURE 4. Gender distribution among the respondents .....	25
FIGURE 5. Impact of age on social media usage in Bangladesh .....	26
FIGURE 6. Impact of age on social media usage in Bangladesh .....	26
FIGURE 7. What is the best time for you to access Facebook? .....	27
FIGURE 8. Do you share any brand information or materials on Facebook (click/ like/ comment)? ...	28
FIGURE 9. What form of brand communication appeals to you most on Facebook? .....	29
FIGURE 10. What attributes of a brand catches your attention on Facebook? .....	29
FIGURE 11. Does Facebook have the ability to transform your view about a brand or product? .....	30
FIGURE 12. Social media has made me more informed about brands and purchasing products .....	30
FIGURE 13. Social media has elevated interpersonal engagement between me and brand owners .....	31

**TABLES**

TABLE 1. Most visited sites in Bangladesh .....9

TABLE 2. Popular Facebook fan pages of various brands in Bangladesh ..... 11

TABLE 3. Popular Twitter accounts of various brands in Bangladesh.....12

TABLE 4. Popular YouTube channels of various brands in Bangladesh.....12

TABLE 5. Top brands on Facebook in Finland..... 19

TABLE 6. Top business brands on Twitter in Finland ..... 19

TABLE 7. Top brands on YouTube in Finland .....20

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is becoming a significant communication system all over the world. No other traditional channel has comparative visitors than Facebook, it has more than 1.86 billion users (Zephoria 2017). Statista (2017) predicted, that social media users in 2019 would be about 2.67 billion. Many young people, 35 years and below, are using social media. So, social media could be a great channel to launch products or services.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate branding in social media and the impact of social media on brand images by creating a comparison between Bangladesh and Finland. Branding involves all the marketing practices of a company to build a name, logo, or design that uniquely distinguishes the company from other business ventures. Particularly for similar products, branding is useful in identifying a product or service from other products and services. The company's brands have the role of creating a memorable impression in the minds of the consumers and allow the client to perceive what they should expect from the business. Brands distinguish competitors and give products an upper hand as the best choice for the consumers. Branding is vital to every business as it can manipulate how people see your business and also increase product and service awareness. Brands give businesses recognition and act as the face of the company (American Marketing Association 2014). Additionally, branding enhances the value of the business, attracts new customers, empowers employees by giving them pride and satisfaction, supports advertising, and creates trust within the market (Lake 2020).

However, branding is not easy, and businesses need careful planning to build strategies that would significantly elevate the brand image. Currently, social media is becoming one of the most vital tools to market business brands and be unique in the crowd. More than 70% of the world's population is spending their time on social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. Therefore, there is more presence of consumers in these platforms than ever before (Broadbent, Bridson, Ferkins & Rentschler 2010). Companies are increasingly gaining interest in building and fortifying their brands through social media. According to NM Incite (2012), a Nielsen/McKinsey company, social media plays a crucial role in how clients research, discover, and share details about business brands and their products and services. Surprisingly, more than 60% of consumers are searching for specific products online and find these products through multiple social networking sites. More users of social media are likely to read reviews of products and services online, and more than half of them would also review products and services on these platforms. Demographics reveal that women, unlike men, spend the most time

online, and are likely to tell other people about the goods they purchased. Generally, sources of product information, description, and perceptions are come from social media users (NM Incite 2012).

Social media is growing as a platform that most customers would prefer to express themselves, showing loyalty or dissatisfaction with various products and services. By this statement, companies need to be careful of what they post and how they handle their advertising through social media branding. Brand building is an essential aspect of marketing as it is an honest representation of a business and its activities. Therefore, strong brands should match quality services. In most cases, companies would have quality brands of what they expect people to perceive of their products, but the services do not match customers' expectations. Social media has the power to protect a brand or destroy a business image. Customers are expected to share the company's experiences, and many people would base on this information to decide whether they go for particular products/services or not (Sri, Neelamalar & Shakthi 2011, 234-242). Before embarking on social media brand building, businesses need to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on brand image. According to Baird and Parasnis (2011), conducting risk analysis, assessment of other related brands, examining what customers expect, and creating customer-centric brands are important aspects of brand building in social media.

Finland is an industrialized economy comparable to Germany, France, U.S., United Kingdom and Australia. Most industry-based companies in Finland have established an environment where most of the branding is performed through traditional means. However, by 2010, an SME survey from a consultancy company in Finland reveals that 90% of the Finnish companies were integrating social media into their branding activities (Nielsen Global Connect 2011). The thesis would develop a comparison of social media brand building in Finland and Bangladesh and assess the impact these platforms have on brand images by answering the following questions.

1. How does social media branding prosper in developing countries (Bangladesh), and developed countries (Finland), and what is the impact of social media on the success of businesses in both nations?
2. By investigating social media branding and its impacts on the companies in developed countries, like Finland, how can developing countries, like Bangladesh, embrace the full prospects of social media in brand communication?

The comparative analysis looks at Bangladesh and Finland, with Bangladesh as a developing country and Finland as a developed economy. Many businesses in both countries are growing and expanding

their presence in social media platforms. Businesses in these countries are conducting their marketing and advertising through social media platforms, which comprises most of their consumers (Smith 2012, 102-113).

The current business world is very competitive, and no business can succeed without appropriate branding. The Bangladeshi economy much depends on small business ventures with minimal capacity to conduct social branding using the traditional marketing practices that include emails, text and banner advertisements, radio, and televisions. The high cost of alternative modes of advertising has resulted in most of these businesses to use social media (Wright, Khanfar, Harrington, & Kizer 2010, 73-80). Social media has evolved to become the most affordable means of brand communication and engaging consumers, making them vital stakeholders in the process of value creation. Companies in Bangladesh are supporting the implications of social media and its ability to create opportunities and actively engage the customers.



## **2 BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND IMAGE**

The chapter examines social media branding in Bangladesh and Finland. The main aim of this chapter is to investigate the contribution of social media branding on the development of businesses in both countries and the impact of social media on brand images. Throughout this chapter, we will gain insights on the development of social media in both countries and some of the factors affecting the use of social media. This section will also include a discussion of some of the crucial aspects to consider before a business decides to use social media for brand communication.

Branding and marketing are undergoing tremendous developments in an environment where communication is more multidirectional and more consumer centric. Understanding branding is critical for every business that seeks to build a sharp brand image (Management study guide 2016). A brand is an intangible aspect of the business that displays what the company represents. Brands include unique names, logos, symbols, signs, designs, and images. Branding involves a company making itself unique from its competitors in the market. Brand positioning is the act of differentiating a brand from its competitors by defining the distinct values of the brand and narrating goals and qualities. Brand equity is the monetary value a company is expected to gain from possessing branded products and services as compared to unbranded products and services. According to Mohsin (2009, 8-21), brand equity can be either positive or negative. Brand identity is the perception of the products and services the company is trying to generate in the minds of their customers. This kind of brand association relates to the value of the brand and the promise to the consumers. The brand image is from the perspective of the consumers and what they expect the brand to be. Brand identity plays a vital role in strengthening the brand image by emphasizing the attributes, benefits, and the attitudes of the consumers. Brand awareness has significant input into brand equity, and it involves the customers' ability to remember a brand. It also entails the customer's brand recognition capability when presented with a particular attribute of the brand (Keller 1993, 1-22).

According to Nielsen Global Connect (2011), most people find information about products and services on social media sites. Interestingly, a considerable amount of customers are sharing information about the brand in social media to gain incentives from the businesses for helping promote their products and services. Among those sharing information, about 41% have revealed they do so to earn discounts. When researching products and services, many people would prefer using the recommendation from family,

friends, and other people with experience of similar products, and two out of three say that they were highly influenced by information from a social context (Nielsen Global Connect 2011).

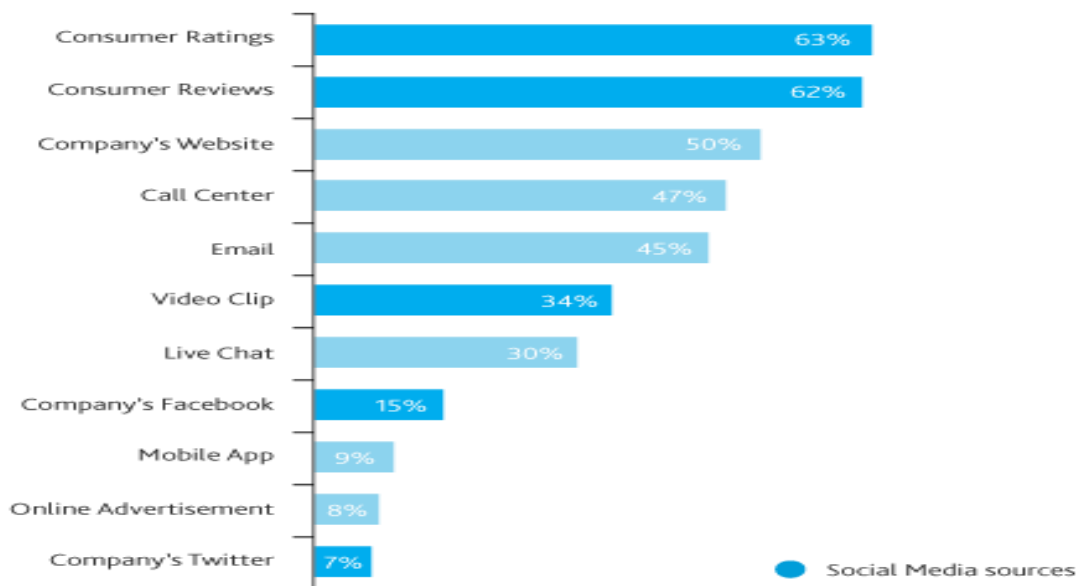


FIGURE 1. Consumer preferences for sources of brand information (adapted from Nielsen Global Connect 2011)

This figure shows that social media is a consumer preference for sources of brand information. Many social media users get information from consumer ratings, consumer reviews, company's website, call centers, email, video clips, live chats, company's Facebook page, mobile app, online advertisement and company's Twitter. From this information, it is clear that social media brand communication is growing in popularity and many people use consumer rating and reviews to judge specific products and services. Consumer ratings and reviews offer information of whether products serve the purpose they were designed for or not.

Additionally, brand promotion contributes to brand protection. Users of social media say that they write their reviews to protect other users from lousy experience or to encourage others in case of the desired experience. The power of the customers in the marketplace is growing, thanks to social media, since most people would write negative reviews to express their dissatisfaction and discourage others about using particular brands. The reputation of a company can suffer adversely in such cases especially due to late or uncordial responses to the customers. Studies point out that 42% of these customers expect support within 12 hours after presenting a complaint (Nielsen Global Connect 2011). Companies nowadays also tend to engage customers and make them brand ambassadors and advocates. About 53% of social networkers follow company brands, and most companies have built fan bases and followers to

communicate recommendations regarding their products and services. Different customers have varying reasons for why they express their experiences through social media (Nielsen Global Connect 2011).

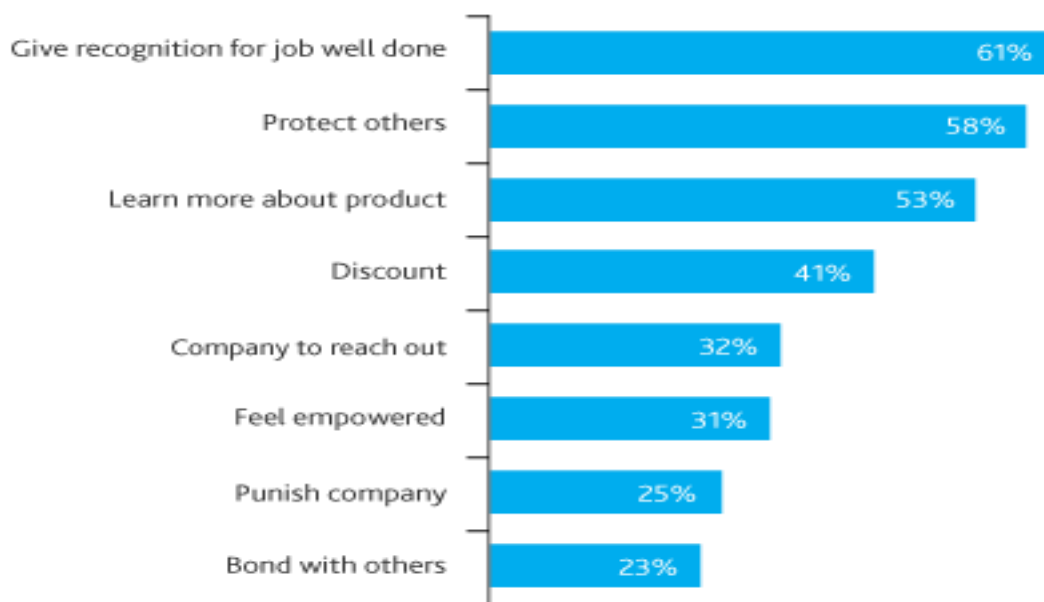


FIGURE 2. Reason for sharing information through social media (adapted from Nielsen Global Connect 2011)

This figure shows the reasons for sharing information through social media. These reasons include recognition for job well done, to protect others, to learn about products, to get discounts, or to reach out the company, to feel empowered, to punish the company, and to bond with others. The reasons are diverse and unique for various users, but the main purpose for sharing is allow other people know about degree of satisfaction concerning particular products and services.

### **3 SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING IN BANGLADESH AND FINLAND**

#### **3.1 Social Media Branding in Bangladesh**

As per 2018/2019 financial outlook, Bangladeshi economic growth rate was at eight percent, which is above the Asian average (Rooney 2019, 3). Bangladesh is a country that significantly relies on its people, who are said to be resilient, innovative, entrepreneurial and, most importantly, a young population (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2011). The country has a population of about 163 million people, making it the eighth most populous nation in the world (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2011). The country has recorded the highest internet penetration in the last 15 years, which has contributed to massive digitization within the country. The nation still has a long way to go before it realizes full digitization. Even the positive notions and attitudes of its citizens are helping the country realize significant growth in innovation and technology. The expansion of the internet in the country means that most of its citizens can possess and use internet-capable gadgets such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, and computers. Most of the businesses in Bangladesh are available online, making it easy for consumers to access services. Internet growth has led to the establishment of many e-commerce businesses that are currently employing many people in the country. There is also growth in mobile telephony, which has been a critical aspect of the growth of the economy. The current era of 4G and LTE has enabled for faster internet communication, and the availability of affordable smartphones has increased the amount of online population (The Independent 2017).

The growth of digital media has seen some of the critical media of marketing, TV shows, news, and magazines increase their presence on social media platforms. The reason for increasing digital media in Bangladesh relates to its ability to target a defined group of consumers. Advertising in digital sites is highly selective as businesses can use information about gender, age, locations, hobbies, occupations, and general behavior to enhance advertisements. Many companies in Bangladesh have a small capital base and are not able to afford publicity through TV news and magazines. Therefore, digital media, mainly social media is more appropriate because it is affordable, easily accessible, and available through mobile devices (Wright, Khanfar, Harrington, & Kizer 2010, 73-80).

The Bangladesh telecom industry is experiencing tremendous growth from 2010-2019, and as a result 99% of the country's population has 2G internet access (Islam 2020, 4). Most of the country is still covered by 3G, but by 2021, nearly all of the area of Bangladesh would have 4G internet coverage.

There are more than 60 million internet users in the country. Among the six mobile operators in the country, Grameenphone is the market leader and holds about 42% of total users and other providers include Robi, Airtel, Teletalk, Banglalink, and Citycell own rest of the users. The mobile market is fiercely competitive, that means it has massive sensitivity in prices and quality measures. The growth in mobile network has increased the awareness of the citizens and the comfort of using digital devices. Masses of people can access the internet from their pockets hence expanding the scope of online marketing using mobile gadgets. Given the growth in internet coverage, companies in the country are improving their operations to take advantage of the prevalence of digital media. Expansive urbanization increases internet scalability, and growth in social media usage, with Facebook having more than 21 million users, consumers have shifted their presence towards business models in the digital space (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2011).

### **3.1.1 The Scope of Social Media in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh flourishes with numerous business opportunities that utilize social media because more than 60% of the adult population can migrate to digital usage. Evidence from Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) shows that 80% of internet users are available on Facebook. This means that more than 26% of the total population are Facebook users, and the community possesses a penetration rate of 16%. The prevalence of digital media in the country does not eliminate the existence of traditional media, which is still popular with older demographics. Research reveals that 76% of Facebook users are aged 18 to 34 years. The capital of Bangladesh (Dhaka) is ranked the second highest in the number of active Facebook users in the world (Bdnews24 2017).

Facebook is ranked the first of all the interpersonal social networking sites in Bangladesh. Many digital devices can install the Facebook application, and the designers continue to work every day to offer clients with all the necessary capabilities. Most Facebook users in this nation have more than 300 hundred friends (Alexa 2014).

Twitter is the second most popular among the social networking sites in the country. Considering that Twitter allows users to follow those people they desire, ranging from celebrities, leaders, models, performers, and business models. Users in this site share their emotions through tweets, posts made on Twitter (Kristi 2020).

LinkedIn is ranked as the third most popular social networking site, and it is quite popular among businesspersons and job seekers. It hosts top executives, company presidents, and many local and international organizations by allowing them to create their profiles and brand themselves. This site is the most preferred interpersonal platform for individual job seekers as well, since the profiles act as CVs, and businesses can provide jobs using informal forms of communication. Pinterest has not been popular among the Bangladesh population, but the popularity is growing with increasing number of Android mobile devices. The clients make use of pinboards, on which they can stick life experiences and photographs (Small business trends 2015).

A survey conducted through online voting revealed that 70% of internet users are available on social networking sites for at least one hour every day. 23% percent of the users spend at least five hours on these sites in a single day. Most citizens, about 75.6%, recommend social media to be appropriate for everyday activities. By October 2013, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) reported more than 36.64 million internet subscribers in Bangladesh. The commission also found out that 97% of internet users access the internet from their mobile phones. In comparison, the rest 3% have access to broadband internet from various internet providers in the country such as WiMAX providers. According to Alexa (2014), the most visited sites in Bangladesh include the following list arranged of top ten platforms.

TABLE 1. Most visited sites in Bangladesh according to ranking tool Alexa (adapted from Alexa 2014)

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Sites</b>
1	Facebook.com
2	google.com.bd
3	google.com
4	youtube.com,
5	prothom-alo.com
6	banglanews24.com
7	yahoo.com
8	blogspot.com
9	bdnews24.com
10	ask.com

Due to the growing social media usage in the country, more businesses are increasing their presence on social networking sites. The power of enhancing brands is growing and can no longer be treated as experimental. In most prominent companies, the recruiting of social media managers is becoming increasingly common due to the need for managing and monitoring social media pages and engaging with the clients. To build strong brands, businesses in this country have created strategies that they employ to attract more followers. Many ventures have created pages and profiles in every social media network available in the country to reach most users of multiple sites. However, maintaining a presence in many sites raises concerns due to the unique set of users in every site. Therefore, companies are advised to tread carefully and offer different attributes to suit users of a particular site. This concept proves useful since different brands have varying degrees of popularity in various social networking sites. If a brand is popular in a specific site, it is not necessarily popular in another site (Garvin 2019).

Bangladesh comprises mostly small businesses, and the market is uniquely competitive. Due to the dire need to share information and advertise products and services most affordably, these businesses have heightened their presence in social media sites where they can obtain vast amounts of traffic and information about consumers. Many people are posting and sharing information about business brands, and a brand can go viral and gain popularity overnight. Brand building in social media has proven to be comfortable and effective; however, businesses need to be cautious since in such a competitive environment, mistakes can destroy a brand's image making customer shift to alternative brands. Customers also prefer to search for brands on social networking sites since little time and effort are required. With growing technology in Bangladesh, a business can create awareness of their products by posting them directly to be visible to customers. Most companies and small businesses in the country can easily share information, photos, videos, manuals, and other product descriptions in real-time with interested customers. Nowadays, customers search for brands in the sites; if interested, they can obtain additional information by engaging directly with business owners (Garvin 2019).

### **3.1.2 Top Brands of Bangladesh by Social Media Sites**

Facebook has more than 1 billion users in the world, making it the largest social networking site. Bangladesh has more than 26 million Facebook users making it the third largest in the globe. Alexa (2014) places Facebook among the top sites in Bangladesh. Facebook allows interpersonal communication with friends and family, and businesses can create their pages from which they can communicate their brands and engage directly with the customers. Most traditional media do not allow direct engagement with the business, the reason why most users in Bangladesh prefer Facebook

interactions. Companies can use their Facebook pages to enhance products, services, brand awareness and recognition impacting more sales and increased customer loyalty. The table below presents the ten most popular brands on Facebook within the country (Socialbakers 2017)

TABLE 2. Popular Facebook fan pages of various brands in Bangladesh (adapted from Socialbakers 2017)

Rank	Page Title	Brand	Industry	Fans	Fan posts
1.	Airtel Buzz	Airtel	Telecommunication	1,209,371	32,609
2.	Banglalink mela	Banglalink	Telecommunication	984,421	38623
3.	Robi Axiata LTD	Robi	Telecommunication	997,716	76,022
4.	Grameenphone	Grameenphone	Telecommunication	852,443	69,667
5.	Bikroy.com	Bikroy.com	E-commerce	727,743	42,900
6.	Cellbazaar	Cellbazaar	E-commerce	646,580	32,398
7.	Prothom-alojobs	Prothom-alo	Job portal	635,381	96,965
8.	Rokumari.com	Rokumari.com	E-commerce	444,353	22,171
9.	Aarong	Aarong	Fashion house	383,706	4,300
10.	Yellow	Yellow	Fashion house	385,291	2,511

According to Socialbakers (2017), telecommunication companies have managed to secure top brands in Facebook due to their strength in the amount of information they have about customers. One aspect of social media branding involves collecting as much information as possible about clients. E-commerce businesses are also growing and building strong brands in the Bangladesh social networking sites (Hype 2019).

Twitter is the second most popular site in Bangladesh and top brands have increased presence on Twitter. Twitter allows millions of people in the world to discuss nearly everything from sharing personal information, news, and business brands. According to a Twitter publication (2020), the 230 million Twitter users in the world post more than 500 million tweets every single day. Twitter is not very popular for communication with friends in Bangladesh, but it is accessible for business news and information about products and services of many companies. Businesses can engage with interested clients directly using Twitter and communicate real-time, enhancing brand identity and awareness among the customers. The table below shows the five most popular brands on Twitter (Socialbakers 2017).



TABLE 3. Top Twitter accounts of various brands in Bangladesh (adapted from (Socialbakers 2017))

Rank	Name	Brand	Industry	Followers	Tweets
1.	@BanglaSong	Music.com.bd	Online music portal	12133	257
2.	@Grameenphone	Grameenphone	Telecommunication	10452	638
3.	@airtel_bd	Airtel	Telecommunication	4033	2485
4.	@TweetRobi	Robi	Telecommunication	3781	1759
5.	@themeexpert	ThemeXpert	Template design	654	2071

The above table shows that telecommunication industry is still popular on Twitter. This evidence shows that businesses can generate enough information about potential clients in social networks.

YouTube is the third most popular site in Bangladesh. Billions of individuals in the world can identify, watch, and share original videos with other viewers. People can connect with others to inform, inspire, and advertise by creating original content (YouTube 2014). The telecommunication industry still proves dominant in YouTube with the most views on their videos. Another aspect of such dominance is the great competitiveness depicted among mobile providers in Bangladesh. The following table displays five most popular brands on YouTube within Bangladesh (Socialbakers 2017).

TABLE 4. Popular YouTube channels of various brands in Bangladesh (adapted from Socialbakers 2017)

Rank	Channel Title	Brand	Industry	Subscribers	Videos	Total views
1.	Grameenphone Ltd	Grameenphone	Telecommunication	3,469	174	534,362
2.	Banglalinkmela	Banglalink	Telecommunication	1,132	58	378,659
3.	Robi Axiata Ltd	Robi	Telecommunication	2,669	444	286,765
4.	AirtelBuzz videos	Airtel	Telecommunication	798	44	37,795
5.	Pond's Bangladesh	Pond's	Beauty and health care products	12	2	5,687

### **3.1.3 Social Media Brand Communication in the Context of Bangladesh**

Many people in Bangladesh say that social media is part of their daily lives. Many people communicate through social media creating community pages where they can share information about politics, business, fundraising, and invitations. The widening number of social media active users creates numerous opportunities for businesses that reward loyal customers to be their brand ambassadors (Smith 2012, 102-113).

According to Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (2013), a national news agency, the government is working hard to make the internet available to everyone by reducing the cost of internet bandwidth. In 2007 internet bandwidth cost per Mbps was about 75,000 BDT, and by 2013, the cost reduced to BDT 6,000. This situation allows many users to increase usage every day, especially on social media platforms. Zafrullah (2013) reveals that 42% of these internet users have Facebook accounts.

The whole of Bangladesh was covered with 2G internet by 2013, and most areas in Bangladesh can access 3G internet as of 2016 (Siddiquee 2016). The government is implementing high-tech equipment to support the installation of broadband internet connectivity in significant areas of the country. According to BTRC data, there were 5.735 million broadband connections in November 2018. The BTRC has modified bandwidth definition by using terms such as broadband for 1.0 and above Mbps and narrowband for speeds lower than 1.0 Mbps. As of March 2020, BRTC reported the number of Internet Subscribers has reached 103.253 Million with 95 million being on mobile internet, 8 million on ISP and PTSN and 20,000 on WiMax. According to The Financial Express (2018), the increase in internet speed in the country is widening the internet community and expanding social media as a tool of brand communication in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, affordable smartphones have increased the number of social media users. The markets are very competitive, reducing digital devices' prices. With such tools, citizens can join social networks anywhere, anytime. The Bangladesh's community is working hard towards achieving Digital Bangladesh. Digital Bangladesh comprises of increased use of computers and other digital devices utilizing current information and communication technology. The main prospects of this project are to empower people and build better education and health infrastructure and bolster human rights, accountability, and communication transparency to minimize poverty levels (Bangladesh Enterprise Institute 2010). The country is installing a submarine cable, which by 2021 will be the backbone of

telecommunication in the country. The installation of the optic cable will connect the country to fast internet.

Most people in the country are moving from rural areas to urban areas. The number of educated individuals is also increasing, and more people are now shopping online. Many people are interacting with family, friends, and businesses through social networks (BSCCL 2014). Therefore, the government needs to increase effort to provide fast internet coverage in cities and other commercial areas in Bangladesh. This situation also means that rural areas have inadequate infrastructure to support people there.

### **3.1.4 Challenges of Brand Communication through Social Networking Sites in Bangladesh**

Despite the efforts of the country to increase internet access among its citizens, many people are still struggling to connect to fast and dependable networks. The country was depended on the internet from South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe-4, which is the only optic fiber cable that connects the state to other parts of the world (BBC 2012). Other international companies operate torrential cables that offer connectivity through India. Cable cuts lead to internet downtime several times a year in Bangladesh. This problem affects businesses in the country since during the internet downtime, business-client communications are cut short. According to Islam (2014), the country was installing an optical cable known as SEA-ME-ME-WE-5. As of March 2020, the cable is complete and in use. Traditionally, internet speed in Bangladesh was among the slowest, but after the installation of the fiber optic cable, people can now enjoy fast internet, especially in urban areas.

In 2013 and years before, Bangladesh had no online payment gateways such as PayPal, which made it difficult for many companies to support online paid ads that promote their brands. The available payment platforms were expensive to transact, and each year the country lost around 2.5 billion dollars in foreign currency earnings due to lack of convenient money transfer channels (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission 2013). In 2014, the government began the installation of a fiber optical cable that would support online communication and business transactions (Islam 2014). Currently, the cable is in use and by 2021, Bangladesh will be one of the countries offering fast internet connectivity to support and increase the convenience of online transactions.

On regulation, the Bangladesh government has in the past intervened on social media usage, especially on Facebook and YouTube. In 2013, the government requested Facebook to provide a report containing

information about several Facebook users, and blocked YouTube. Besides, recent reports by BTRC call for more innovation and professionalism on the side of business owners while sharing and engaging with their clients. Families and businesses also restrict social media usage among teenagers and workers. According to the citizens, social media erodes cultural values. These interventions and restrictions affect the number of active social media users and social media brand communication since businesses depend on active users (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission 2013).

### 3.2 Social Media Branding and the Impact on Brand Image in Finland

Finland is a developed country and an industrialized economy. The country is well developed, and internet infrastructure and equipment are well advanced. Commercial broadband connections began as early as 2000, and as of 2008, connections in Finland entailed 1024/512 kbit/s and 2048/512 kbit/s. There is even exists faster speeds such as 8/1 Mbits/s, 24/1 Mbits/s. In 2009, the Finland government and the Transport and communication commission were working to ensure every person can access the internet of 1.0 Mbps by the start of 2010. Fiber optic connections in the country are a common phenomenon in major cities, and all homes and offices are connected to fast speeds of 100/10 Mbits (Europa 2020).

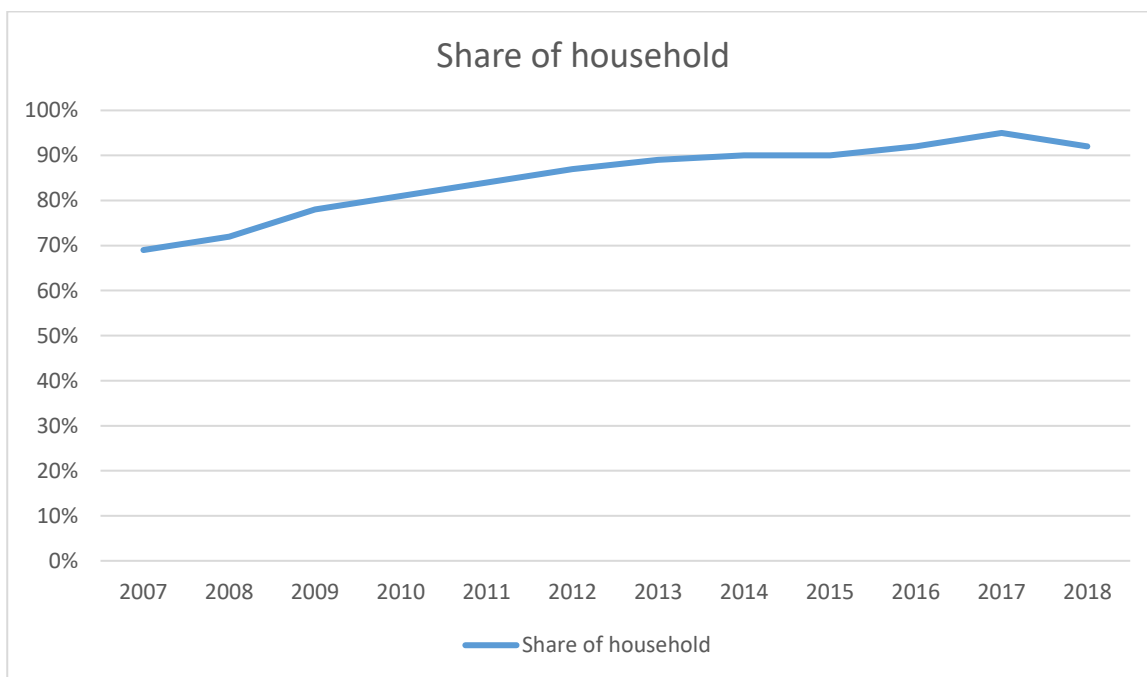


FIGURE 3. Share of Finnish households with internet access from 2007 – 2018 (Percentage Share of households) (adapted from Statista 2019)

The country is characterized as a fiercely competitive market, and fast internet speeds have played a significant role in supporting marketing and advertising through digital media. In 2017, 70% of the country's population aged between 18 and 64 were in social media. Finland has a small population of about 6 million people, and according to Statista's Digital Market Outlook, the number of online users will surpass 3.1 million users with a penetration rate of about 60%. According to a survey regarding the use of digital media, usage grew more than 20% in 2018. Statistics reveal that there are more than 67% social network participation in the country, active social media users comprise 58% of the Finnish population and a 16% increase in the time spent on social media by 2019. Jurgensen (2019) presents the number of shares by the platform of internet usage. YouTube has the highest usage rate, about 92%, Facebook is the second with about 80% usage, and Instagram comes third with around 57% users in Finland in 2019.

### **3.2.1 The Spectrum of Social Media in Finland and Its Prevalence on the Context of Business**

According to an SME survey of 2010, 90% of the companies in Finland were using social networking sites to conduct business activities. Popular and widely used interaction platforms include LinkedIn, Facebook, video conferencing tools such as Zoom, and different Wikis have a relatively high number of users. In Finland, the role of social media is similar to that in Bangladesh, but its impact on small businesses depends on the field of business operation. Social media plays a less significant role in an industry that is interacting and selling products and services to other companies. However, many startup companies and SMEs have embraced social media as a strategy of gaining popularity and brand communication and as a vital part of marketing (Statista 2019).

Most students in the country use Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter for private and personal purposes, while LinkedIn is considered as a professional tool. Established businesses use LinkedIn for business to business interaction, for career development, and enhancing the professionalism of individuals working in SMEs. Facebook is also popular as it majorly allows engagement between companies and their clients. Many companies in the country are using Facebook to build their brand images and fortifying customer loyalty. Statistical results show that there are over 2 million Facebook users in the country, which is more than 40% of the total population. Many Finnish citizens can afford digital devices, which enables them to remain connected with friends on Facebook regardless of time and location. YouTube is also

standard among many businesses where users can log in and watch videos, commercials, and product descriptions. YouTube is particularly popular among the younger generation. Despite the growing popularity of LinkedIn and Twitter, Facebook has remained to be the best site where people can interact with other people and with companies. By March 2012, there were about 0.4 million and 0.3 million LinkedIn and Twitter users in Finland, respectively. These numbers have been rising over the years, and many SMEs have also begun to use Twitter for business updates and engagements (Statista 2019).

The benefits of social media among Finnish companies are not entirely obvious, but the businesses are happy about the impacts social networks have on employee collaboration and efficient transfer of information. Still, many other institutions such as schools, universities, and non-profit agencies are creating and building their brands through social media in the country (Nielsen Global Connect 2011). Through their social network pages, these institutions can communicate their visions, missions, value, and purpose to the citizens elevating people's awareness of their existence. Many learning can now engage with students or clients directly through social media and remain in touch at any time in any place (Statista 2019).

### **3.2.2 Determinants of Growth of Social Media Brand Communication in Finland**

Due to the need for building more influential brands in social media and constantly interacting with clients, many Finnish companies are hiring third-party organizations that are interested in social media projects. Social media agencies are helping individual companies come up with the right words to describe themselves in social networks and develop sustainable brand images. Companies such as Zeeland, Success Story, Spoon, Buena, Unelma Platforms, and WritingBold work towards promoting a company's products and services by coming up with effective strategies. They offer marketing services that help business ventures manage and strengthen a brand's presence in social media platforms by operating to gain desired attention from the prospective audience. The primary responsibility of these agencies is to establish the social network foundation of other companies. Social media agencies have made it easy for companies since businesses can now concentrate on production and manufacturing activities, while other parties undertake their social media activities. However, Finnish companies are advised not to outsource every aspect of their social media elements to third parties. The reason is that the agencies have no better understanding of the customers, products, and brands as they do. The agencies expand the customers' presence on company pages by creating a baseline of luring content in the form of blog posts, videos, articles, testimonials, and white papers. These companies also comment

on the posts and encourage users to follow. The content has to be compelling to attract their clients (Nielsen Global Connect 2011).

The ultimate growth in social media branding has thrived in Finland because of well-established internet connectivity that keeps Finnish citizens connected throughout. Compared to Bangladesh, the government of Finland conducts minimal and necessary censoring that does not threaten the privacy of internet users. The people in this country have freedom of expression and can interact with other people and businesses freely. This kind of support from the government has encouraged many companies and people to engage and communicate consistently. Another contributor to the growth of social media branding is well-distributed demographics of online users. Unlike Bangladesh, where internet users are mostly young people, statistics show a uniform distribution of social network users in Finland, ranging between 20 to 60 years. The only variation is the amount of time spent on social media with the young demographics presenting with more hours a day spent online compared to the older people (Statistics & Facts 2019).

The culture of Bangladesh was also a barrier to successful social branding, but in Finland people have less emphasis on interfering with social media usage. Few restrictions from families and employers allow most of the people to be connected and active almost the entire day. For companies such a situation is encouraging since business news and updates are read almost instantly. The social media audience is well disintegrated in Finland, allowing companies to pick a target population quickly. Businesses can now access smaller, more specific opportunities in the online market space to promote their brands. Target picking is active since less effort is required to elevate consumerism, and it is easy to predict the actions and perceptions of the consumers. Most companies such as those in the apparel sector use influential figures to promote their brands on social networking sites such as Twitter and Instagram. This action attracts masses of followers that increase brand popularity among users (Statistics & Facts 2019).

### **3.2.3 Top Brands of Finland by Social Media Sites**

Facebook is the most popular platform among businesses and consumers and offers a convenient environment for people and companies to interact and share brand information. Facebook is one of the major social networks in Finland with most companies using it to leverage brand communication. The table below shows the top brands on Facebook in Finland.

TABLE 5. Top brands on Facebook in Finland (Total fans) (adapted from Tankovka 2020)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Page Title</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Fans</b>
1.	Jounin Kauppa	Jounin Kauppa	580,949
2.	Gigantti	Gigantti	451,679
3.	Prisma	Prisma	361,444
4.	Fazer	Fazer	329,463
5.	Intersport Suomi	Intersport Suomi	322,773

Twitter gains popularity for its impact on business engagements and the ability to follow and receive daily updates about favorite personally. In the context of business, companies communicate their brands and followers can view the information almost instantly. It is a powerful platform for brand building. The following table presents the top brands on Twitter in Finland.

TABLE 6. Top business brands on Twitter in Finland (Total followers) (adapted from Tankovka 2020)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Followers</b>	<b>Tweets</b>
1.	Finnair	@ Finnair	108,116	20,389
2.	Finland REALTORS	@RealtorFinland	91,816	2,706
3.	Veikkaus	@Veikkaus_fi	47,062	16,917
4.	Samsung Suomi	@SamsungSuomi	32,889	3,612
5.	OP Financial Group	@OP_Ryhma	31,707	11,649

This table shows that the top business brands on Twitter in Finland, Finnair; the flag carrier and largest airline in Finland has most followers (108116) and total number of tweets 20389. Finland REALTORS, one of the largest real estate companies in Finland has 91816 followers and Veikkaus, a government owned betting agency has 47062, Samsung Suomi, the local Samsung product distributor has 32889 and OP Financial Group, one of the largest financial companies in Finland, has 31707 followers.

Many Finnish companies have YouTube channels that they regularly post about their brands to sell out their products and services to the consumers. YouTube videos enable the companies to share a variety of marketing presentations, and viewers can engage in a conversation or express their views about the brands by commenting on the video. The table below represents top brands on YouTube in Finland (Tankovka 2020).



TABLE 7. Top brands on YouTube in Finland (Total views) (adapted from Tankoyka 2020)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Page Title</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Views in millions</b>
1.	Elisa	Elisa	35.95
2.	Finnair	Finnair	35.93
3.	Valio	Valio	32.7
4.	Hesburger Finland	Hesburger Finland	31
5.	Arlasuomi	Arlasuomi	30.1

This table shows that the top brands on YouTube in Finland, Elisa has most views with 35.95 million, Finnair has 35.93 million, Valio has 32.7 million Hesburger Finland has 31 million and Arlasuomi has 30.1 million views.

### **3.3 Economic benefits of social media brand communication in both countries**

Social media is very different in how it operates compared to other traditional forms of media such as newspapers, TVs, billboards, and magazines. Pew Research Center (2013) says that 73% of the adult population uses one or more social media sites. Business Insider (2013) also reveals that 93% of businesses use social networks for marketing and advertising. Many of the companies using social media for brand communication are now getting business benefits through brand equity. Social media plays well with all kinds of businesses, small or large, and online and offline ventures (Business insider 2013).

According to Qualman (2013, 84-94), social media revolves in almost all aspects of our personal lives. Social networking sites can be accessed in virtually any area with internet connectivity. Social networks are easy to use as they do not require unique skills, specialization, training, or knowledge. Most people say that it is to connect with friends and other people. Therefore, any person with a digital gadget can access social media and all the business brands and information. People feel free and empowered to communicate and express themselves in social media (Qualman 2013, 84-94).

Most small businesses admit that traditional media is costly. Social networks are easy and free to use, with internet being the only requirement. Most companies are employing social network managers

whose task is to frequently update profiles, post news daily and interact with all prospective customers answering questions and giving clarifications. Most small enterprise owners do all the updates and communication by themselves hence no additional cost in advertising and brand communication. Many businesses also conduct promotions online, and they can follow up on responses from their clients. Social media use is associated with costless information sharing, engagement, and building strong relations with clients (Qualman 2013, 84-94).

Social networks relay messages faster than most traditional media avenues. A single post is accessible to millions of active users within a few minutes. Customers can also present their views and perceptions of a particular brand instantly and continuously. Social media enhances participation and customer loyalty to brands. Businesses can obtain many customers on social media and gather user information regarding gender, age, occupation, interests, and other attributes. Using this information companies can target their customers and communicate about particular brands. Social media has transformed the world into a small village in which people can communicate easily with other people around the globe. According to Hill (2010, 1-15) the world has become a market, and most countries engage in this global economy. Time and distance are no longer barriers to communication between businesses and their clients. Social networks operate globally and are reachable 24 hours, seven days a week. Social media allows companies and their consumers to remain connected throughout despite their geographical locations (Qualman 2013, 84-94). Chandler (2013) says that businesses make use of videos and other forms of content to attract followers. When people click to view content, these businesses can invite them for inspiration or suggest them to make purchases or even arrange for a consultation.

## **4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The chapter discusses the methods used to collect data in the research and creates a justification for these methods. This chapter also looks into research design, approach and strategy, data collection, and data processing. The purpose of this discussion is to describe how the research was conducted to obtain meaningful data that can impact branding on social media in both Bangladesh and Finland.

### **4.1 The Methods of Research Used**

Selecting the appropriate method for data collection and analysis is an essential part of any research and reaching the desired targets. The study utilized mixed methods of research that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies. According to Bryman (2017, 57-58), quantitative and qualitative define the quantity and quality of the data collected. The notion of quantitative research lies in the overconfidence of quantifiable numerical data, which shows a lack of qualitative research in that consideration. Many experts and scholars have also attempted to formulate other definitions of qualitative and quantitative methods. One such definition involves Evered's and Louis's (1981, 285-395) terms that describe quantitative as "inquiry from the outside" and qualitative methods as "inquiry from the inside." In that regard, using both ways are desired for increasing the validity and reliability of data collection and overall research findings. Additionally, both methods create more thorough and impression of the situation in the discussion (Bryman 2007, 8-22).

The main sources of qualitative data were secondary sources gathered from previous research materials such as journals, books, and articles, government sources, websites, statistics agencies, and data from assessment of major social media platforms in both countries (Fillis 2006). Primarily to address developments of new theories, qualitative techniques are preferred. These techniques have a long history and tradition in studies that investigate business and management and have a well-developed nation (Cassell 2006). Qualitative research offers to present deep insights about matters of interest to both the researchers and the practitioners that would utilize the research findings. The emphasis of these techniques is to create meaning rather than quantify the data collected. This section of research enabled the construction of a theoretical framework that effectively explores channels of branding in social media in both countries and how businesses can reinforce their brand reputation in social networking sites.

Qualitative data obtained was used to formulate a quantitative online survey that was distributed through social media such as Facebook and Twitter to gain primary data and consumer perspectives about branding in social media and how social media can impact brand images. The survey requires the respondents to provide direct responses containing minimal interpretations. The mixed-method chosen entails a procedural way of collecting quantitative data (Bryman & Bell 2011, 57-95). Still, most of the quantitative data was obtained from statistical websites and companies that describe variables of social media usage in branding and overall marketing.

## **4.2 Approach and Strategy**

In actual research items, there are three strategies of research that include exploration, description, and explanation. These strategies vary in the manner in which data was collected and analyzed, and deriving a research hypothesis (Nicolai 2009, 12). The primary purpose of the research is to assess how effective branding in social media is in Bangladesh and Finland and how these countries can empower more businesses to utilize social media. Branding in social media is a relatively modern concept, and a few research materials analyzing the interaction between a social network and brand image exist. These are recently integrated phenomenal that can no longer be treated as experimental, and individuals must gain comprehensive knowledge about the merge identifying problems and prospects that would help strengthen the relationship (Nicolai 2009, 12). In this study, exploratory research was selected. According to Eisenhardt and Grabner (2007), this method emphasizes on real situations impacting businesses in this world.

## **4.3 Data Collection**

This item utilized various sources of data. According to Heaton (2004), secondary data is an approach that involves the investigation of pre-existing pieces and statistical data. Secondary data aims at digging deep into previous research to develop new inquiries and verify these earlier works of literature. Considering that branding in social media is quite a new approach for many businesses in both countries, the study utilized information from books, journals, articles, magazines, websites, and trade publications to create comprehensive statistical representations. Some materials that offer useful details regarding social media branding were obtained from the internet to achieve the overall goal of the study. These

surveys aimed at securing customer's opinions about brand communication using social media in Bangladesh and Finland. For the period allocated to survey sourcing, the study obtained 150 responses.

#### **4.4 Data Processing and Analysis**

Context and text analysis were utilized for online surveys. This analysis entails assessing codes in words, making sense of the terms and sentences and conceptualizing the various themes identified in these words. Research data included text, images, and figures from multiple sources of information. Ordinarily, social media requires relative considerations of the various sets and groups of subscribers, their relationships, and how they share information. The qualitative research approach is therefore appropriate for such a group of respondents hence the need for quantitative analysis to quantify the collected data. Studying social media context in business can also be challenging due to its ability to incorporate various means of communication and user engagement within a transforming environment (Fuchs 2015). Therefore, obtaining data from social media sites requires caution, since marketers and subscribers will regularly switch to other digital sites. This analysis is different from the content analysis since it involves non-numeric data from market reports, digital pages, and other sources. In such an assessment, the experts are engaged in a trade-off between empirical observations and theories, fortifying the understanding in both speculative and practical context.

The data obtained from online surveys were converted to numeric form using a Likert scale, and the numeric data was examined using the IBM SPSS Statistics v21.0 This software package helps to conduct statistical analysis, both logical and non-logical batches. The software is widely used among health, business, government, and educational researchers. This information was critically assessed to create more educational and exploratory research that is beneficial for the readers. The results of the analysis can help interested readers to understand this developing phenomenon and help businesses with useful insights about brand communication and the power of social media in elevating brand communication in both Bangladesh and Finland.

## 5 RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND DATA INTERPRETATION

Brand communication in social networking platforms is a logical development for most companies since it is affordable, accessible, and enables fast information sharing. Social media brand communication is growing at a high rate and becoming recognizable to many businesses around the world. Increased smartphone usage due to broadened internet coverage acts as a catalyst to social media brand communication. Branding in social media in Bangladesh is booming as one favored information outlet among telecommunication industries, SMEs, and other business ventures. To engage social media in branding, companies always have to apply some strategies. Currently, fund allocation to social media branding in companies ranges between 5-10%, and this is a dynamically growing business.



FIGURE 4. Gender distribution among the respondents

The main aim of the online survey was to determine some of the factors affecting social media branding in Bangladesh and Finland and understand the implications to businesses and their customers. The online study provided 150 responses. After conducting the SPSS analysis, about 63% of the responses were from male participants, and the rest 37% were female responses from both countries. Despite the previous research evidence that women are more likely to share information about the brand in social media sites, men are also more likely to respond to online inquiries about branding in social media. This is the case, especially in Bangladesh, which is male-dominated, and women are still struggling to achieve social equality. The community structure and culture in Bangladesh proves worth of consideration for those companies that need to conduct marketing using demographics (Appendix 1).

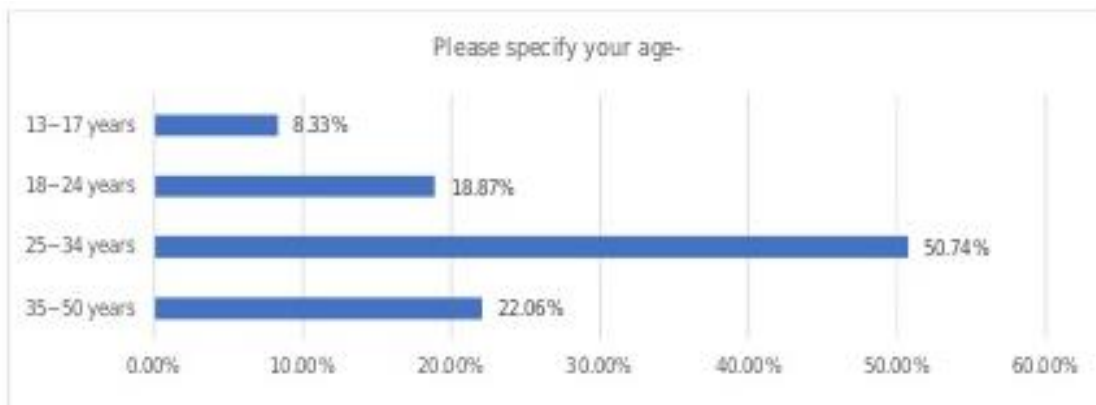


FIGURE 5. Impact of age on social media usage in Bangladesh

From this analysis, it is clear that age is an important consideration for social media branding. In Bangladesh, most of the internet users are aged 25 to 34, forming 50.74 percent of the total participants. Individuals of ages 13- 17 form 8.33 %, 18-24, 18.87%, and 35-50, 22.06%. The results are quite different from findings in other literature since the online survey was conducted through social media platforms without any direct contact with respondents. The usage of social media within the Finnish population is way different from that of Bangladesh. There is an even distribution of internet users throughout the various age brackets in Finland. Eighty-three percent of people aged between 16 to 24 years follow social media daily, 76% for 25 to 34 years, 73% for 35 to 44 years, 56% for 45 to 54 years, 35% for 55 to 64 years, 20% for 65 to 74 years, and 5% for those above 75 years. Generally, people aged 16 to 85 years form 51% of the total Finnish population on social media sites (Appendix 1).

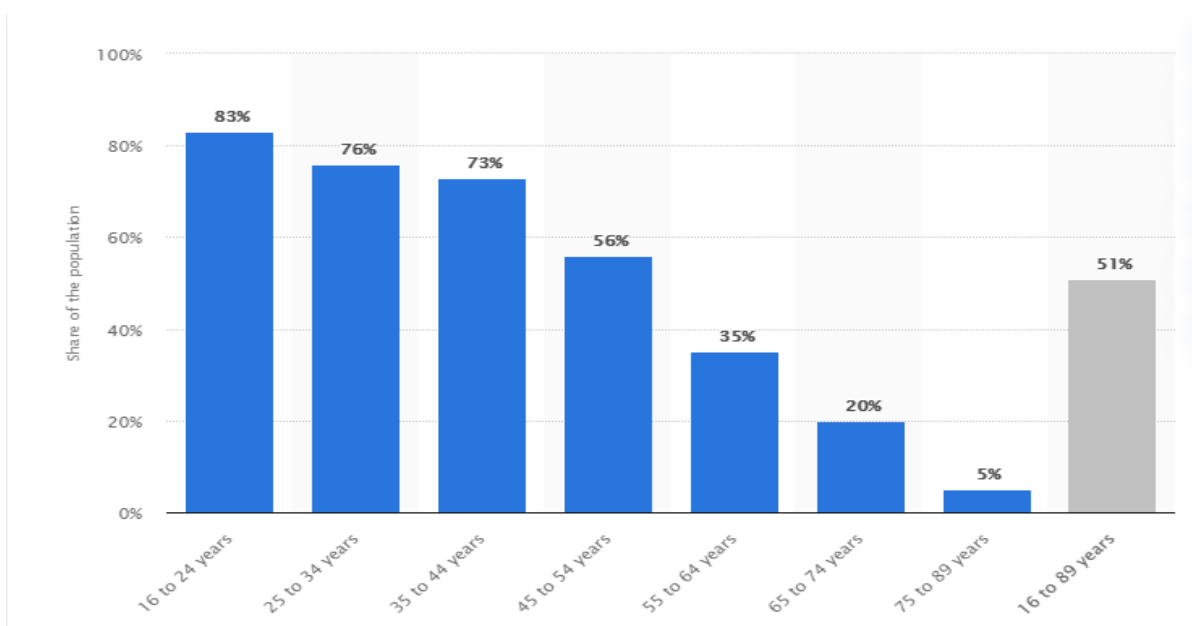


FIGURE 6. Impact of age on social media usage in Finland

Despite the differences in internet coverage and social structure between Bangladesh and Finland, research reveals that the impact of social media on brand images in both countries is quite similar. Bangladesh is a developing country, and the economy depends mostly on small businesses. The market competition is fierce, and many SMEs prefer social media for its ability to offer brand popularity and continuously engage with the consumers quickly. Many small business owners in Bangladesh conduct online sensitization on their own, unlike the large companies that prefer to employ social media managers. It is not quite the case in Finland, but most Finnish companies and SMEs have considerable capital that enable them to outsource to third-party social media agencies. Outsourcing leads to cost leverage, and companies can continue normal operations without having to worry about monitoring the social media presence on social networking platforms.

The following questions were included in the online survey to determine social media brand communication in both countries. The test integrated responses from participants about the far-reaching impact of social media on businesses and their brands, and since Facebook is the most widely used platform, the analysis involved responses regarding Facebook users.

- **What is the best time to access Facebook?**

The analysis of these responses revealed that 56.86% of users log in to Facebook during evening hours and at night. Also, 20.34 percent log in between 16.00 and 20.00, 14.71% between 12.00 and 16.00, and 8.09 percent between 08.00 and 12.00. This evidence shows that most people login Facebook after coming home from work, and in that relaxing moment, they can engage with family and friends in the online (Appendix 1).

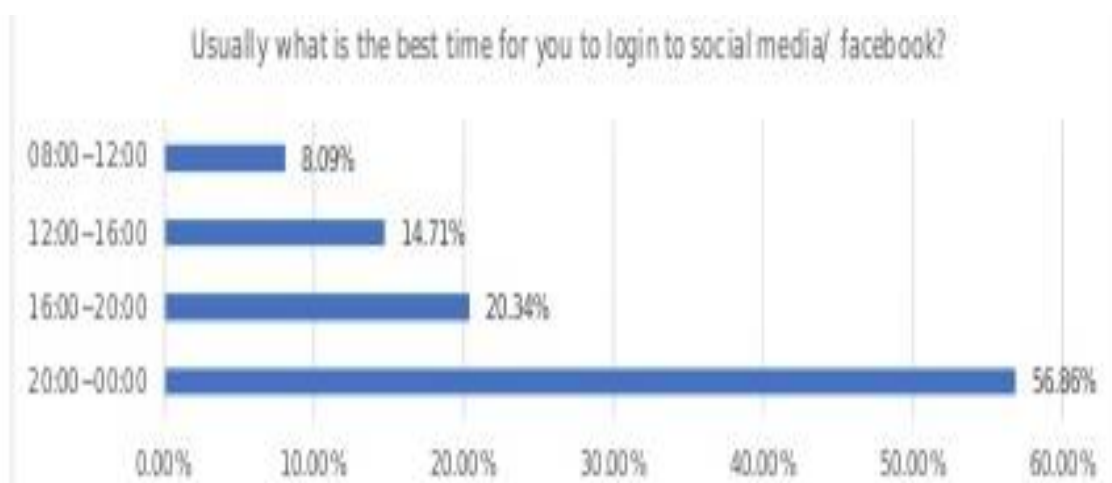




FIGURE 7. The best time to access Facebook

- **Do you share any brand information or materials on Facebook (click/ like/ comment)?**

Responses to this question show that 85.78% of Facebook users express their interest in a specific brand by clicking, liking, or commenting on posts and ads. Around 9.31% of the respondents showed no benefit to say about a brand, and 4.90% did not care at all (Appendix 1).

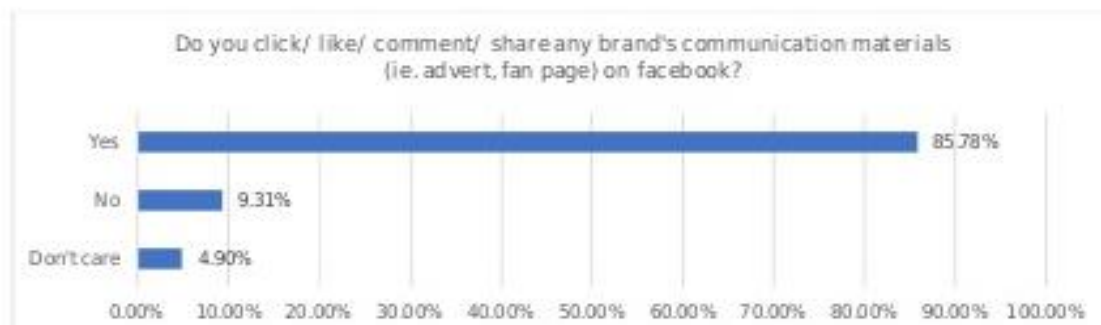


FIGURE 8. Share of brand information or materials on Facebook (click/ like/ comment)

- **What form of brand communication appeals to you most on Facebook?**

Based on the survey, text information is the most attractive for many people who want to obtain information about a product or service. Around 42.65% agreed that texts provide detailed descriptions of brands. Static images and graphics attracted 39.71% of the respondents, and 17.65% of the users prefer pictures and videos about their favorite brand in social networking sites. Videos offer less projection since they require high bandwidth, and the cost of production can be high for most small businesses. The results also revealed a significant difference between Bangladesh and Finland. Although the reasons are similar for both countries, internet costs and coverage remains a problem in Bangladesh, unlike Finland, where the government works to ensure internet access for every household (Appendix 1).

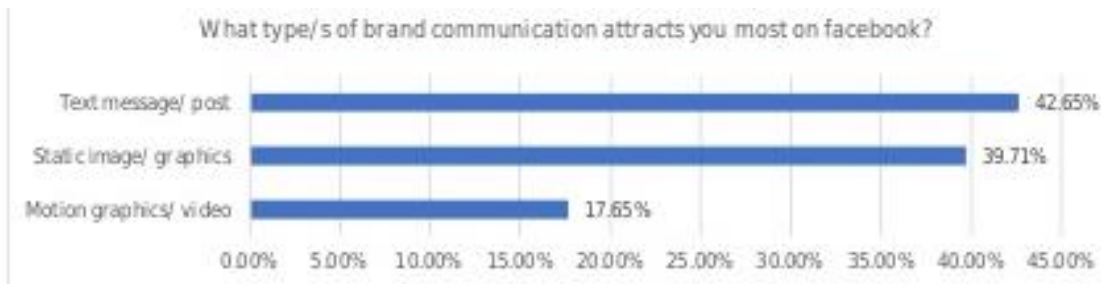


FIGURE 9. The form of brand communication appeals most on Facebook

- **What attributes of a brand catches your attention on Facebook?**

From the data analysis, many people, 50.74%, check on general information about a brand or service. Advertisements and offers such as; promotions and discounts 39.22% of the population, event ads, 7.35%, and domain ads, 2.70% attract on Facebook ads. In most cases, marketers utilize event ads to attract more people, especially when launching a new product (Appendix 1).

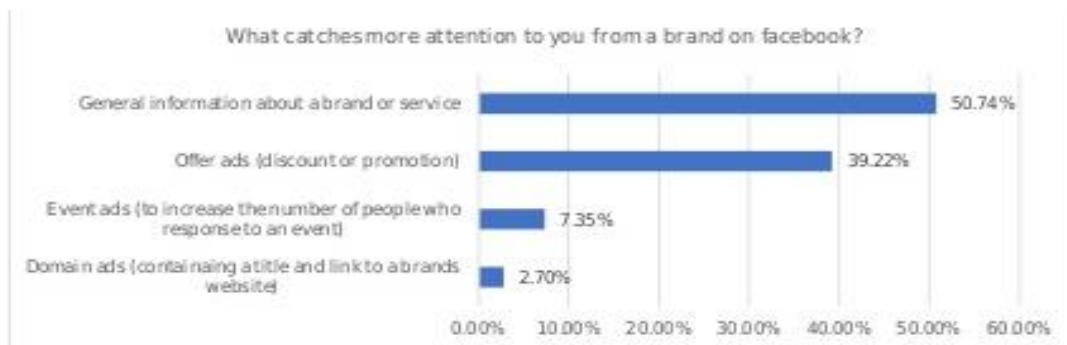


FIGURE 10. The attributes of a brand that attract on Facebook

- **Does Facebook have the ability to transform your view about a brand or product?**

This question ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. More than 80% of the respondents admitted that Facebook is capable of changing their views towards a product or service. About 23.53% of the users strongly agree with the statement, 59.07% agree, 4.90% are uncertain, 5.39% do not agree, while 7.11% of the participants strongly disagree (Appendix 1).

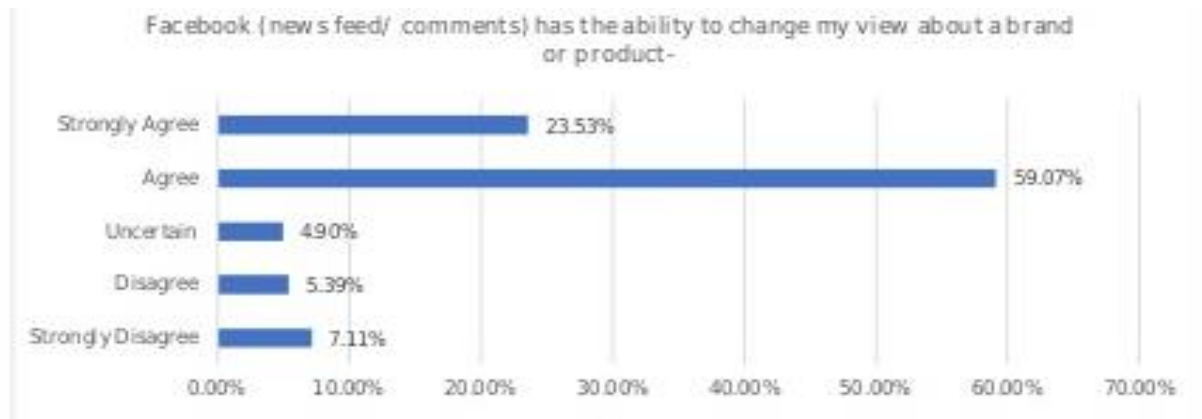


FIGURE 11. Facebook has the ability to transform view about a brand or product

- **Social media has made me more informed about brands and purchasing products**

This question aims at gaining users' experience of social media branding information they currently have about various products. People who strongly agree that Facebook has made them more informed was 28.68% of the population while 49.02% of the people also agreed to this statement. Those uncertain were about 12.50%, 2.70% disagreed, while 7.11% strongly disagreed (Appendix 1).

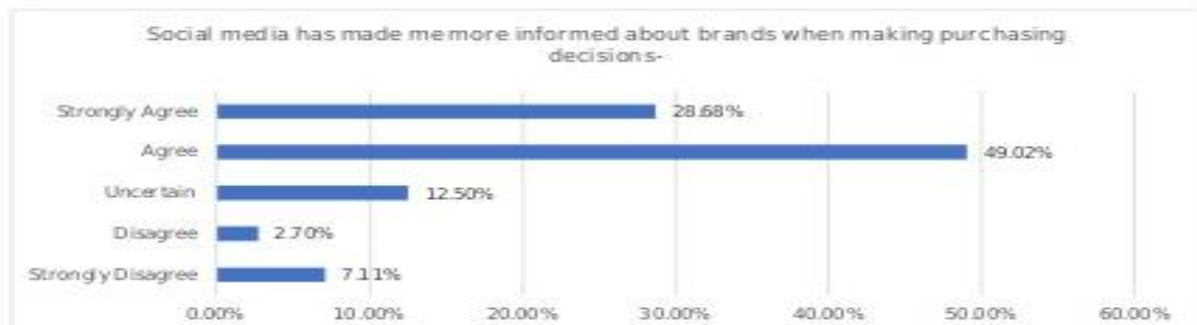


FIGURE 12. Social media has made me more informed about brands and purchasing products

- **Social media has elevated interpersonal engagement between me and brand owners**

Many people have expressed the power of Facebook to enable two-way interactions between businesses and their clients. 32.35% of the participants strongly agreed that Facebook had boosted B2C engagements, while 59.92% of the people only agreed. The uncertain individuals formed 13.73% of the respondents, and no one disagreed nor strongly disagreed. This evidence shows that each person believes that social media has made interactions more effective and efficient (Appendix 1).

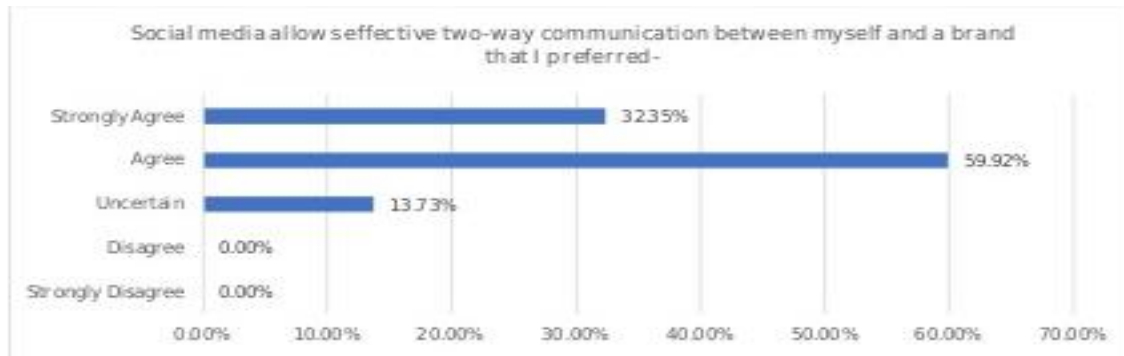


FIGURE 13. Social media has elevated interpersonal engagement between myself and brand owners

The survey results present how social media can impact on brand image and some of the consideration companies should put in place when they decide to engage in social media brand communication in both Bangladesh and Finland.

Additionally, other key findings from various research materials reveal that social media has unique characteristics that make it very distinct from traditional media such as billboards, TVs, newspapers, and magazines. An investigation conducted by the Pew Research Center shows that 74% of people using the internet are on social networking sites, while 71% of them have Facebook pages. Also, in 2012 McKinsey Global Institute show that 90% of the companies communicating their brands through social media obtain some benefits. This research shows that the impact of social media on the brand image does not necessarily depend on whether a business is large or small, online, or offline. Social media has essential benefits for every kind of business in the current market.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on discussion of the research problems, the methods used to investigate the research questions and the results of the study. Here also discusses potential recommendations on how to maximize the opportunities presented by social media. The chapter also provides a discussion about variations and similarities of branding in social media for companies in both countries. Additionally, readers can learn, how social media can positively influence brand communication both in Bangladesh and Finland.

The primary purpose of the thesis was to investigate social media brand communication and the impact of social media on brand image in Bangladesh and Finland. The research problems involved how social media branding has prospered in developing countries such as Bangladesh and developed countries like Finland, and the impact of social media on the success of businesses in both nations. The other problem entailed how the results of the study on social media brand communication in developed and developing countries can prompt improvements and how the developing countries embrace the full prospects of social media in brand communication. The research process involved both qualitative and quantitative methods that would help come up with the most reliable information. Both ways helped assemble concrete theoretical and empirical evidence that can support to improve the current status of social media branding and offer insights for future research. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected using primary and secondary methods to gain firsthand experience of people about branding in social media and also used past literature on the topic. The research also entailed qualitative and quantitative analysis that were used to investigate the usability of previous data and quantify the results of the online survey. The main aim of the inclusion is to ensure that both primary and secondary information are well examined to offer valid, reliable, and measurable evidence to the readers. The findings are evaluated comprehensively to identify problems and opportunities and provide proper recommendations to curb the challenges concerning about branding in social media.

According to the research findings, the impact of social media brand communication on business is relatively similar both in Bangladesh and Finland. Still, there are numerous differences in terms of demographics and internet coverage. Results indicate that the power of social media is depends on the availability and affordability of digital devices, internet bandwidth, and even distribution of demographics. Since 2000 Finland has established widespread internet coverage to ensure access for every household. In such situations, people of all ages can access social networks anyplace anytime.

Businesses also find it easy to incorporate social media into their marketing strategies since many people can instantly and continuously view and use the information from daily posts and updates (Bashar, Ahmad & Wasiq 2012, 88-99). For Bangladesh to achieve maximum prospects of social media brand communication, the government needs to work hard towards widespread fast internet coverage not only in cities, but also in rural areas. More than 90% of Bangladesh can access 2G internet, but it is not fast enough to load pages in social networks. Major cities can access 3G and 4G internet, which is very good for the people who live in city. This can be discouraging for many businesses who post daily for customers to view. However, the government is working to ensure a high-speed internet optic fiber cable that would boost internet distribution in the country.

There is a marked difference in terms of internet share distribution among different age groups in the two nations. Bangladesh is overpopulated, and the social structure consists of the youths. Older people see social media as a bad influence on teenagers limiting social media usage by parents among the general population. People need to prioritize correctly and raise awareness of positive social media usage. Many businesses depend on active users, and it would be desirable if families and the government reduce intervention concerning social network usage (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis 2014). Finland is a digital nation, and people can access digital devices all the time. There are fewer government interventions, as long as no violation of human rights exists. This situation creates a conducive environment where businesses and people can engage freely to share all the needed information about products and services. It is also advisable for Bangladesh to generate business opportunities in the digital world to enable companies to compete with other top brands in the world. There is an initiative to build a digital Bangladesh, which shows that the country is moving in the right direction. Daily life also impacts on the power of social media over brand communication. For Finland, this is not a problem since the internet is well distributed even in marginal areas. This distribution enables everyone to access social networks, whether they are in rural or urban areas.

Marginalization in Bangladesh acts as a barrier to businesses that want to attract and increase the visibility of their brands. Many people in Bangladesh can access fast internet when they are in cities and developed areas, but those in rural places have little information about the internet. However, due to the increasing competition among mobile providers and the growing adoption of technology, many providers are now strategically targeting the rural areas. Many people can now access the internet, and many companies in Bangladesh can currently increase their presence on social network platforms.

From the evidence collected, Bangladesh is regarded as an economy that is fast growing due to growing innovations and the presence of active, youthful people. These are essential factors for any developing country; however, the country has a long way to go before it achieves the digital Bangladesh. It is demand of people that the government should work hard to ensure fast internet access for most of its people who are appreciating digital media. With dependable internet, the SMEs and companies in Bangladesh can fully utilize the opportunities presented by digitalization (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi 2012, 4444-4451). Brand information would be accessible to many people, which is a good thing for business.

The results of the investigation have met all objectives of the study. From this evidence, it is clear that social media has contributed to the expansion of business engagement to clients and to empower the brand identity to potential customers in both countries. Still, the prevalence of social media brand communication among companies is more pronounced in developed countries than developing nations. Generally, internet connectivity is the primary contributor for successful social media brand communication in any given country. According to the findings, any digital communication or interaction involves the internet, and high-speed internet connections. This is why social media branding in Finland has grown in scale compared to Bangladesh.

Additionally, cultural, geographical and demographical diversity, the will to adopt technology and availability of cheap and affordable digital devices as other significant factors that influence branding in social networks in developed and developing countries. By increasing their presence on social networking sites, the research shows that social media has the power of strengthening and expanding the popularity of a brand tremendously. However, B2C interactions require caution since one error or unsatisfied customers can destroy the brand image in a second. Companies therefore need well organized and professional consumer engagement to ensure that they fully meet the expectations of their clients.

The research process also has some limitations and struggles while collecting and compiling data from various sources. First, branding in social media is a developing and new phenomenon, and limited research materials exist regarding the topic. Different sources, such as journals, articles, and books, have various ways of data collection, so need to recheck all methods and data collected according to the current situation. Face-to-face interviews are quite difficult and require a lot of resources and commitment. Hence, the study preferred online surveys that can be circulated quickly in social media sites and reach as many people as possible.

Future research is critical in assessing the progress of social media brand communication. This study has mostly emphasized B2C engagement through social media. It would be compelling to see future researchers publish pieces of literature about how social media can empower business to business engagements. Therefore, engagement can be a significant area of study to give points and insights on how social media's interactions in the context of business. Another topic of research can focus on how cultural diversity can be taken into consideration while engaging with various clients.

The process of research involved various methods of data analyzing and interpreting such as qualitative and content analysis to come up with more concise and conclusive evidence. From a comprehensive examination and testing of the collected data, the study generates significant information that would help to shape the future of social media brand communication in Bangladesh and Finland. The key takeaways from this research is that the scale of brand communication in social networks varies for developed and developing countries. Several factors contributing to this trend include internet coverage, speed, and bandwidth, affordability of digital devices, and distribution of internet users over the demographics, and perception of the community about social media in business.

The findings show widespread utilization of social media in Finland due to affordable, fast, and easily accessible internet throughout the country. In Bangladesh, despite the tremendous improvement in the economy and adoption of technology, internet coverage is still in a problem for many people, especially those who lives in rural areas. This situation affects businesses that want to sell their brands in social media regularly. However, results still show that the impact of social media on brand image is similar for all businesses, large or small, offline or online.

Bangladesh has the opportunity to become one of the best economies since much of the population is youthful with the ability to apply technology and adopt a digital world. Businesses are also growing in number and influence on the economy, and it is important for the government to keep up the pace by providing job opportunities in the digital world. Companies and SMEs communicate through social media to reduce unnecessary government interventions. Creating a comparison between Bangladesh and Finland, offers a comprehensive understanding of some of the aspects of social media brand communication that need improvement and how the government, community, and companies can work together to positively influence the implications of brands that are present on social networking sites. Importantly, for any country, whether developed or developing, social media is a vital tool of empowering business and consumer engagements by allowing both parties to provide and access information real-time and real-time communication is one aspect of a successful business. Companies



can refer to this study about the significant factors and considerations regarding branding in social media and consumer engagement.

## REFERENCES

- Alexa. 2014. The top 500 sites in Bangladesh. Available: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/BD>. Accessed 04 April 2020.
- American Marketing Association, 2014. Definition of Brand AMA Dictionary. Available: <http://parmarketingservices.com/Docs/Branding%20White%20Paper.pdf>. Accessed 06 April 2020.
- Baird, C. H., & Parasnis, G. 2011. From social media to social customer relationship management. Strategy & leadership.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2011. Population and Housing Census 2011. Available: [http://www.bbs.gov.bd/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/Census2011/Bangladesh\\_glance.Pdf](http://www.bbs.gov.bd/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/Census2011/Bangladesh_glance.Pdf). Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, 2010. Realizing the Vision of Digital Bangladesh through eGovernment. July 2010.
- Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha 2013. Bandwidth price to be cut further, making the Internet affordable. BSS. April 17. Available: <https://www.bssnews.net/?p=334318>. Accessed 05 April 2020.
- Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission 2013. Internet Subscribers in Bangladesh, October 2013. Available: <http://www.btrc.gov.bd/content/internet-subscribers-bangladesh-october2013>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Bashar, A. Ahmad, I. & Wasiq, M. 2012. Effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool: An empirical study. International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research, 1(11), 88-99.
- BBC 2012. Bangladesh suffers internet disruption after cut cable. June 08, 2012. Available: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-18366007>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Bdnews24 2017. Dhaka ranked second in number of active Facebook users. April 15, 2017. Available: <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2017/04/15/dhaka-ranked-second-in-number-of-active-facebook-users>. Accessed 05 April 2020.
- Bhuyan, M. 2015. Social media as a tool of brand communication in Bangladesh. Available: <http://dspace.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd:8080/bitstream/handle/20.500.11948/1190/05%20Social%20Media%20as%20a%20Tool%20of%20Brand%20Communication%20in%20Bangladesh-%20Problems%20and%20Prospects-1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. 2011. Reliability and validity in qualitative research (pp.57-95).  
Bryman, A. 2007. Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. Journal of mixed methods research, 1(1), 8-22.
- Bryman, A. 2017. Quantitative and qualitative research: further reflections on their integration. In Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research (pp. 57-78). Routledge.

- BSCCL 2014. Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited: Overview. Available: <http://www.bscccl.com/>. Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Business culture 2019. Social media guide for Finland. Available; <https://businessculture.org/northern-europe/finland-businessetiquette/social-media-guide/>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Business Insider, 2013. Strategic Social Media Statistics. Available: <https://www.businessinsider.com/strategic-social-media-statistics-2013-7>. Accessed 11 April 2020.
- Cassell, C. & Fillis, I. 2006. A biographical approach to researching entrepreneurship in the smaller firm. *Management Decision*.
- Chandler, Stephanie, 2013. The Hidden Benefits of Social Media Marketing: Why Your Strategy May Be Working Better Than You Think. *Forbes*. December 03. Available: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2013/03/12/the-hiddenbenefits-of-social-media-marketing-why-your-strategy-may-be-working-better-than-you-think/>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Eisenhardt, K., & Grabner, M. 2007. Theory building from cases: opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 25-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160888>
- Europa 2020. Shaping Europe's digital future- country information-Finland. Available: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/country-information-finland>. Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Evered, R. & Louis, M. R. 1981. Alternative perspectives in the organizational sciences: Inquiry from the inside and inquiry from outside, *Academy of management* 6 No 3, 385-395.
- Fuchs, C. 2015. *Culture and economy in the age of social media*. Routledge.
- Garvin, R. 2019. How social media networks influence 74% of shoppers for their purchasing decisions today. Available: <https://awario.com/blog/how-social-networks-influence-74-of-shoppers-for-their-purchasing-decisions-today/>. Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Gunelius, S. 2013. Building a Customer-Centric Brand with Social Media. Available; <https://www.womenonbusiness.com/building-a-customer-centric-brand-with-social-media/>. Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Heaton, J. 2004. *Reworking qualitative data*. Sage.
- Hill, Charles W. L. 2010. *International Business: Competing in the Global Marketplace (1-15)* 8th Edition. NY: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Hype 2019. Bangladesh landscape- digital in 2019. Available: <https://hypedhaka.com/digital-data-bangladesh-2019/>. Accessed 05 April 2020.
- Islam, Muhammad Zahidul 2014. Bangladesh signs deal to join 2nd submarine cable. *Dhaka Tribune*. March 08, 2014. Available: <http://www.dhakatribune.com/technology/2014/mar/08/bangladesh-signsdeal-join-2nd-submarine-cable>. Accessed 07 April 2020.

- Jurgensen A. L. 2019. Social Media Usage in Finland –Statistics & facts. Available: <https://www.statista.com/topics/4173/social-media-usage-in-finland/>. Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity and Measuring. *Journal of Marketing* (57), 1-22.
- Kristi, K. 2020. The 7 biggest social media sites in 2020. Available: <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Islam, S. 2020. Consumer Brand Equity on Mobile Telecommunication Industry of Bangladesh.
- Lake, L. (2020). Why branding is important in marketing. Available: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/why-is-branding-important-when-it-comes-to-your-marketing-2294845>. Accessed 10 April 2020.
- Management Study Guide 2016. Brand Image - Meaning and Concept of Brand Image. (2016). Web page Available at: <http://www.management-studyguide.com/brand-image.htm/>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Mohsin, M. 2009. Encyclopedia of brand equity management. Mumbai [India]: Himalaya Pub. House, (8-21)
- Nadin, S. & Cassell, C. 2006. The use of a research diary as a tool for reflexive practice. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*.
- Nicolai, T. Kirchhoff, L. Bruns, A. Wilson, J. A. & Saunders, B. J. 2009. The self-Googleing phenomenon: Investigating the performance of personalized information resources. *First Monday*, 14(12).
- Nielsen Global Connect 2011. How Social Media Impacts Brand Marketing. Available: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2011/how-social-media-impacts-brand-marketing/>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- NM Incite (2012). Consumers today actively seek customer service through social media. Available: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-study-reveals-that-todays-consumers-demand-customer-service-via-social-media-175781781.html>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
- Pew Research Centre 2013. Generation Y values and lifestyle segments. *Journal of consumer marketing*.
- Qualman, Erik, 2013. *Socialnomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business* 2nd Edition. NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Rooney, K. 2020. Bangladesh'S Economy Is Soaring - Here's Why. [online] World Economic Forum. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/bangladesh-gdp-economy-asia/>. Accessed 3 June 2020.
- Rubanovitsch, M. D. & Aminoff, J. 2015. *Ostovallankumous*. Oy Imperial Sales AB/Johtajatiimi. Helsinki.

Sandman, A. Isaeus, M. Bergström, U. & Kautsky, H. 2008. Spatial predictions of Baltic phytobenthic communities: Measuring robustness of generalized additive models based on transect data. *Journal of Marine Systems*, 74, S86-S96.

Saravanakumar, M. & SuganthaLakshmi, T. 2012. Social media marketing. *Life Science Journal*, 9(4), 4444-4451.

Small Business Trends 2015. Interesting statistics for the top 10 social media sites. July 26, 2015. Available: <https://smallbiztrends.com/2015/07/social-media-sites-statistics.html>. Accessed 05 April 2020.

Smith, A. N., Fischer, E. & Yongjian, C. 2012. How Does Brand-related User-generated Content Differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26 (2), 102 –113. Direct Marketing Educational Foundation, Inc.

Socialbakers. 2017. Free social media statistics. Available: <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/bangladesh/brands>. Accessed 07 April 2020.

Sri Jothi P., Neelamalar M., Shakthi Prasad R. 2011. Analysis of social networking sites: A study on effective communication strategy in developing brand communication. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 3(7), 234-242.

Statista. (2017a). Global social networks ranked by number of users. Web page. Statista.com. Ref. 17. December 2015. Available at: <http://www.sta-tista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users>. Accessed 10 April 2020.

Siddiquee, Z. A. 2016. Feasibility study of fourth generation (4G/LTE) mobile network in Bangladesh.

Tankovka, H. 2020. The most popular brands on YouTube in Finland 2020, by the number of video views.

The Financial Express 2012. BD loses Tk 2.5b in forex as it lacks a convenient online payment system. February 04, 2012. Available: <http://www.thefinancialexpressbd.com/old/more.php?newsid=97081&date=2012-02-04>. Accessed 09 April 2020.

The Independent 2017. 4G to spur growth of ICT, e-commerce. Available: <http://www.theindependentbd.com/printversion/details/129600>. Accessed 10 April 2020.

Tsimonis, G. & Dimitriadis, S. 2014. Brand strategies in social media. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*.

Twitter 2020. Who's on Twitter? Available: <https://business.twitter.com/whos-twitter>. Accessed 07 April 2020.

Web Finance Inc. (2017d). Business Dictionary. Recall test. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/recall-test.html>. Accessed 7.10.2019

Wright, E., Khanfar, N., Harrington, C., & Kizer, L. 2010. The Lasting Effects of Social Media Trends on Advertising. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, 8(11), 73-80

Yin, R, K (2009). Definition of research design, Case study research. Fourth edition. SAGE Publications, Inc. P.44.

YouTube. 2014. Statistics: Viewership. Available: <http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>. Accessed 09 April 2020.

YouTube 2014. About YouTube. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/about/>. Accessed March 09, 2014.

Zafrullah, Sadiq. 2013. Social media: A blessing or a curse? The Financial Express. December 06, 2013. Available: <http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2013/12/06/7471/print>. Accessed 07 April 2020.

Zephoria, Inc. (2017). The Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics – Updated May 2017. Available: <https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/>. Accessed 08 April 2010.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire focuses on how social media impact on branding and brand image

1. Please specify your gender
  - Female
  - Male
  
2. Please specify your age if you use social media in Bangladesh
  - 13-17 years
  - 18-24 years
  - 25-34 years
  - 35-44 years
  - 45-54 years
  - 55 or older
  
3. Please specify your age if you use social media in Finland
  - 16-24 years
  - 25-34 years
  - 35-44 years
  - 45-54 years
  - 55 or older
  
4. Usually what is the best time for you to login to social media/ Facebook?
  - 08:00-12:00
  - 12:00-16:00
  - 16:00-20:00
  - 20:00-00:00
  
5. Do you click/ like/ comment/ share any brand's communication materials (ie. Advert, fan page) on Facebook?
  - Yes
  - No

- Don't care
6. What type/s of brand communication attracts you most on Facebook?
- Text message/ post
  - Static image/ graphics
  - Motion graphics/ video
7. What attributes of a brand catches your attention on Facebook?
- General information about a brand or service
  - Offer ads (discount or promotion)
  - Event ads (to increase the number of people who response to an event)
  - Domain ads
8. Facebook (news feed/ comments) has the ability to change my view about a brand or product
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Uncertain
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
9. Social media has made me more informed about brands when making purchasing decisions
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Uncertain
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
10. Social media allows effective two-way communication between myself and a brand that I preferred-
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Uncertain
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree

Thank you for participating.