

Factors Influencing on Consumers' Fast-Food Consumption Preferences: An Empirical Study on Facebook Users in Dhaka City, Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The growing usage of Facebook and Facebook users in Dhaka city Bangladesh provides an insightful impact on changing fast-food consumption preferences. This research focuses on influential factors of fast-food consumption that consumers keep in mind while purchasing. The social cognitive theory has been applied to get insightful ideas while fast food consumption. The study findings indicate that social factors, personal factors, and service quality factors are the three dominant factors that influence Facebook users' fast-food consumption preferences. To collect the data nonprobability sampling technique convenient sampling was used and 300 respondents considered analyzing purposes. SPSS 20.0 software was used to analyze the data; both descriptive and inferential statistics (reliability test, factor analysis, ANOVA test) applied. The results found significant and supported the proposed hypotheses of this study.

Keywords: Consumption preferences, Fast food, Facebook users, Bangladesh.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, technological advancement has made our life easier to build our connectivity. As we can say specifically, our connections with the nearest corner of this world we easily use different social media as communication tools. The whole world connects through different social media and every single activity has a pivotal effect on changing the behavior of individuals. Social media is a space where everyone can easily connect not just to maintain connectivity but also to exchange their thoughts in different discussion forums or public groups regarding versatile issues and may help before buying a product or services, which offer by different companies like social media marketing policy. Facebook, a well-known social networking site launched in February 2004 in the USA, has become popular around the world in recent years (Tankovska, 2020). The current users of Facebook are almost 2.38 billion has reported on Statista post. The report has also said that people continue to share a ton on Facebook; the overall level of sharing has remained not only strong but also similar to levels in prior years. The availability of more than 70 languages on Facebook indicates its popularity.

Facebook users have become more reluctant to discuss the intimate details of their lives on Facebook, as it grows larger, and their lists of friends' balloons. The online social networks provided facilities for consumers to interact with one another, access to information, comments, reviews, and rates that can help them for purchasing decisions in different ways (Heinrichs et al., 2011). Tankovska (2020) has mentioned in their recent report, 1.69 billion people use Facebook daily. Also mentioned on that post-Bangladeshi social media users' trends and identified out of

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2.80 million Facebook users in Bangladesh, 1.37 million are young (18-24 years of age). Among Facebook users, 78 percent are male, and 22 percent are female. Hence, Facebook not only is a social networking site but also a platform for people to gratify their needs (Lwin et al., 2017).

Consumption and buying patterns of consumers are changing due to a takeover of food choices preferences have received global attention and to satisfy human needs in different situations. In the Bangladesh context, in the present scenario global brands of food chains have already entered the market like Pizza Hut, KFC, Tacobell, Subway, MacDonald's, and others. Like global brands, the local restaurants and food chains have tremendously been changing the food consumption patterns of the consumers. Ward (1974) mentioned in his study that consumer socialization theory predicts that communication among consumers affects their cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes. Besides, advertising on a social media page has built new consumers' behavior. The present scenario has been going too revolutionized in the sense of recommendations from friends and the connection groups of social media. The positive reviews of products or services attract massively to change the behavior of consumers. Besides, a study titled, "Social Networking Sites as Advertisement Environment" conducted by Hacıefendioğlu (2011) revealed that consumers are affected by the views of their friends on social media while deciding to buy, and friends opinions guide consumers to choose a certain product or company (Hacıefendioğlu, 2011).

Mangold & Faulds (2009) also stated that social media has become a significant force in consumer decision making, including such areas as increasing awareness, sharing information, forming opinions and attitudes, purchasing, and evaluating post-purchase experience. Facebook users are mostly searching on restaurants' page or their friends' groups to get information regarding the positive and negative reviews. They influence by the other users' feedback when they have not yet experienced it. Nowadays, traditional word of mouth communication has been replaced by electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Facebook users are constantly rising and before going to restaurants, they usually prefer to attain feedback from the Facebook page regarding the restaurant's previous reviews and perceive it as a credible tool. In particular, when consumers plan a trip or make a hotel or restaurant reservation, they commonly rely on online reviews for information, and many rely on the Internet to choose a restaurant (Bicen, 2015). Regarding this issue, many studies have already been conducted which mainly focuses on different factors that affect consumers' intention to consume fast food (Park, 2004; Sahagun and Vasquez-Parraga, 2014, Song, 2016). Studies have found obesity; cardiovascular problems and many more issues related to consuming fast food. Despite these negative impacts on health issues, consumers' have been trying to adopt new food consumption trends as their daily lifestyle.

The users of social media especially Facebook are playing a significant role in changing consumers' fast-food habit consumption. Over Facebook, food bloggers are active to post about varieties of food reviews. Sometimes posts are categorized as paid posts another one is consumers who have experienced the food tastes. Before going to visit restaurants, food lovers check the updated posts of food reviews and then follow the tradition. From a broader perspective, the purpose of this research is to analyze the fast- food consumption preferences of Facebook users in Dhaka city in Bangladesh. The specific objectives are defined as the impact of social factors, personal factors, and service quality factors in the fast-food consumption behavior of consumers. The researcher tried to explain the proposed theoretical model from the social cognitive theory aspect. The study divides into sections; in the second part, the researcher explained previous studies on the literature review part. The third part addressed theoretical justification and research framework; the fourth part explained the research methodology of the study, and the fifth part explained the data analysis and findings. In concluding remarks, the researcher addressed limitations of the study and gave ideas about the further work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rongen et al., (2020) mentioned in their study that the fast-food environment has gained popularity among young consumers, and the social norms of the neighborhood consider as the mediated role of fast-food consumption preferences. The researchers found a positive association between fast-food consumption and social norms (Rongen et al., 2020; Lwin et al. (2017) addressed in their study that fast-food consumption is positively associated with the exposure of social media, Facebook. Young consumers are more influenced by their social forces especially friends and peer-groups on changing their food habit consumption styles. Another study conducted by Hansstein et al. (2017) mentioned on their study Chinese consumers are facing exponential growth in fast-food restaurants and the food consumption habit is gradually changing because of internet usage. In addition to the urban and suburban young consumers' have faced social pressure to take new fast-food dishes. The researchers also identified the internet and social media usage give the boost-up on eating fast food. Solomon et al. (2016) found out in their research that social media such as groups or individuals who own power over consumers could affect consumers' purchase decisions. In different studies, researchers claimed that WOM considers as having high trustworthiness and it is an independent source of information coming from friends' and has a tremendous impact in leading to behavior or attitude change (Lwin et al., 2017; Prendergast et al. 2010). Besides, on the internet WOM is generally being referred electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) and people can share their views regarding brands and products to a large number of people using these online platforms (Hansstein et al., 2017). Pantelidis (2010) used a content analysis approach to analyze about 2,500 online reviews of 300 restaurants in London. On balance, the comments were fair and favorable, with comments on food, service, ambiance, price, decoration, and menu. At present many research studies also conducted focusing on social media's word of mouth (WOM) effect, in particular, online reviews, and travel blogs. Indeed, consumers tend to believe information share the same values and preferences and feel like members of the same communities described the level of trust as being higher (VanRongen et al., 2020; Hansstein et al., 2017). Consumers consider electronic word-of-mouth as the 'primary factor behind 20 to 50 percent of all purchasing decisions' (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010 p.389).

Neely et al. (2014) stated in their study that food consumption derived socially, culturally, and historically submerged in daily life and the involvement of mere nutrient intake. This study also found out, food consumption experiences were identified entwined with impulsive eating behaviors and external eating cravings. Another study conducted by Bicen (2015) mentioned that people make it a trend to view and share pictures on social media specifically on Facebook. McHale et al. (2009) found in their study that the impact of social media has become a trend in our everyday life and the influence of cultural social practices like those that eating habits have now rigorously changed to address the issue. Besides, Hu (2002) stated in his study that people use hashtag signs to express their experiences and found out more than 10% of the pictures are food-related. Researchers addressed in different studies that sharing and viewing pictures on Facebook have an association with various ways of food consumption patterns, as a result, it expressed as eating disorders and related variables (Pater et al., 2016; Santarossa, 2015; Vaterlaus et al., 2015; Elfhag & Morey, 2008). Apart from that, Perloff (2014) identified a direct relationship between consumption patterns and social media usage.

In another study, Mangold & Smith (2012) found out that Facebook is playing a significant role in receiving and sharing information that influences the decision-making process. They also mentioned that positive and negative reviews are crucial for the consumers at the beginning stage of review. They also suggested that marketers could carefully monitor both reviews for their services' betterment purposes. According to Mangold & Faulds (2009) findings, consumers like to communicate in both platform WOM and social media when it comes to product, service, or idea. Another study conducted by Foux (2006) also stated that consumers perceive social media

as a trustworthy source of information regarding products and services rather than corporate-sponsored communication.

Belch & Belch (2021) explained that at some point in consumers' buying behavior process they stop searching and evaluating information and move to the next stage of the purchase decision. Parker (2011) addressed that consumers compare a wide range of reviews and opinions on Facebook and get a chance of unbiased advice. Hoyer et al., (2010) mentioned in their study that the first stage of consumer buying behavior, need recognition; occurred when they feel their unfulfilled desire, and search for information. Their friends are one of the reliable sources in social media apart from that they can expose information through their liked page on Facebook. On the other hand, researcher Jaffe (2010) mentioned that in today's era consumers share their good and bad experiences in social media and give feedback to their peers. Brown & Hayes (2008) found out in their study that trusted friends who share their experiences on Facebook, considers the highly influential factor of decision-making. Another study conducted by Foxall (2005) addressed the post-purchase buying behavior stage is crucial for consumers that helps them to purchase in the future as well as influence the peer groups.

3. THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This study aims to explore the relationship between consumers' fast-food consumption preferences and the influence of Facebook whether they correlate or not. Few established theories are explained to describe the underlying mechanisms. According to social learning theory explained by researchers that individuals learn from observing others' behavior and experiences (Bandura, 1969; Rosenstock et al., 1988). Another, well-established cognitive theory that identifies the relationship between shared food images and fast-food consumption patterns is the Priming theory (Valkenburg et al., 2016). This theory suggests that the different food content presented via social media has an impact on food consumption patterns, which can occur consumers' intention to have, or has vast potential (Harris et al., 2009). Priming drives the effect of an external stimulus and consequently, consumers react to subsequent stimuli. Harris et al. (2009) also found out that media priming research acts as a demonstration to explain the adverse effect of primes on social and physical behaviors. Researchers who use social learning theory to understand the relationship between the fast-food consumption preferences and use Facebook as a social media tool; here suggested that how much our food habit has influenced by socially and culturally via social media (Rongen et al., 2009). Facebook check-in posts, food images, e-WOM, online reviews, and so on act like external behavioral cues to reinforce fast food consumption patterns.

Bandura (1969) proposed a social cognitive theory to understand how people behave in certain situations where personal, environment, and behavior have reciprocal dimensions. Considering this theory, researchers have tried to combine those three dimensions as social factors, personal factors, and the environment in fast-food consumption preferences. To conduct this study, the researcher proposed a research framework to explore the proposed hypotheses as follows:

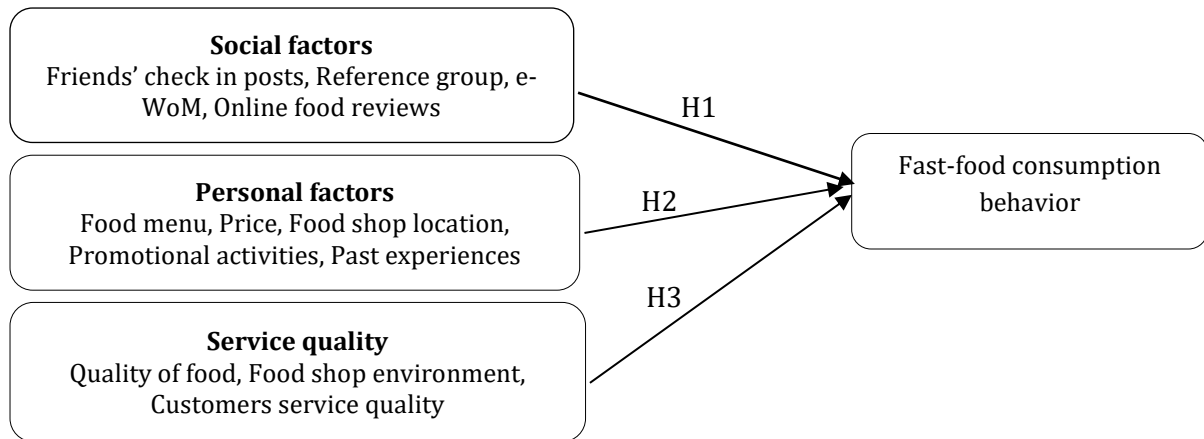


Figure 1. A proposed research framework

Based on research objectives the developed research hypotheses are as follows-

H1: Social factors are positively associated with the fast-food consumption behavior of consumers.

H2: Personal factors in choosing restaurants are positively associated with fast-food consumption behavior.

H3: Restaurants service quality is positively associated with consumers' fast-food consumption preferences.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sampling and Data Collection

The study measures the fast-food consumption preferences of Bangladesh consumers' especially those who are more involved in Facebook and influenced by social media. In this aspect, the majority of the consumers are young and their consumption patterns are frequently changing (Akturan et al. 2011). With the large population of Bangladeshi Facebook users, it is difficult to decide how large the sample should be. The researchers have proposed many methodological articles regarding the sample size required for different statistical techniques. The target population for this study has been identified as Facebook users both male and female who usually follow different food bloggers' posts, liked pages of food chains and restaurants. The convenient sampling method has been followed. The rise of the fast-food industry in Bangladesh is becoming popular day by day due to consumers' demand for tasting varieties of cuisines. Secondary data collected from different literature reviews of existing studies, websites, and blogs. To collect the data in the best possible way, the researchers compared different data collection methods as telephone surveys, web-based surveys, personal interviews, mailing surveys, and so on. A random sample from the whole population of Facebook users was used to collect data. Mathwick (2002) mentioned in his study that web-based surveys have been used by many researchers to collect data from internet users and this sampling procedure has a significant limitation. However, to conduct this study a non-probability convenience sampling technique has been applied. For primary data collection purposes, self-administered structured questionnaires were distributed through Google form to Facebook users especially those who are active members of different food review groups, posts food-related reviews in different Facebook pages, and the students from different educational institutions who are actively engaged in different food reviews groups. The researcher found 320 respondents filled the Google form and the usable questionnaire was 300

to analyze data. A study conducted by Rubel & Kee (2014) mentioned that a 53% response rate is significant for data analysis in the context of Bangladesh. For this survey purpose, the response rate was 93.75% that is quite good for analytical purposes.

4.2. Questionnaire Constructs

To justify the proposed hypotheses, the researcher adopts the items from existing literature (Lwin et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2002). The items were rated as a 5-point Likert scale which was categorized 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The frequency of fast-food consumption per month is measured by asking how many times they usually consume. The respondent's frequency was mentioned as once, 1-3 times, 3-5 times, and more than 5 times in a month. The Facebook users follow food bloggers' posts or not to identify the respondents' respond here yes coded as 1 and No coded as 2.

4.3. Questionnaire Design

The data collected through an adopted self-administered structured questionnaire and a web-based survey method has applied. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; demographic questions asked to the respondents to figure out their basic information age, gender, education, monthly fast-food consumption frequencies, and their following tendency of food blogging posts. The second part of the questionnaire consists of respondents' behavioral information; the three constructs social factors, personal factors, and service quality have been considered. The researcher adopted 12 items under those three constructs to measure the fast-food consumption preferences of Facebook users of Bangladeshi consumers.

4.4. Data Analysis Techniques

To conduct this study, the SPSS statistics 20 version has used. Both descriptive and inferential statistics have been analyzed. To analyze the proposed hypotheses researcher used the reliability test to ensure whether the items are acceptable or not to conduct further analysis of the study. After that factor analysis and an ANOVA test were applied to justify the proposed research objectives and hypotheses. The researcher considered a 95% confidence interval to analyze the data.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1. Respondents Characteristics

To conduct this study, the demographic profile of the respondents has considered identifying the basic characteristics. The respondents' gender, age, education, frequency of fast-food purchase (per-month), and food bloggers' posts they follow/ not follow asked to know in detail (Table 1). From the descriptive analysis, the researcher has found out 64.3% of respondents were male; 54.0% of respondents belong to the age group 26-29; the majority of respondents were graduate, and the percentage rate is 39.3. Per month the majority of respondents 44.3% purchase fast food 1-3 times and 66% of respondents follow food bloggers' posts before they purchase fast food.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Particulars	Categories	Number of frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	193	64.3
	Female	107	35.7
Age	18-21	5	1.7
	22-25	119	39.7
	26-29	162	54.0
	30+	14	4.7
Education	HSC	65	21.7
	Undergraduate	117	39.0
	Graduate	118	39.3
Frequency of fast-food purchase (per month)	Once	60	20.1
	1-3 times	133	44.5
	3-5 times	54	18.1
	More than 5 times	53	17.3
Follow food bloggers posts	Yes	198	66.0
	No	102	34.0

Source: Researcher own computation

5.2. Factor Analysis

To analyze the first research objective, the Facebook users' fast-food consumption preferences here exploratory factor analysis was performed. Before conducting exploratory factor analysis, the inter item-consistency of reliability test was performed; where respondents were asked twelve questions, and items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The result of Cronbach's Alpha (α) test was 0.852 and no item deletion significantly increased the result (Table 2). Cronbach (1970) mentioned in his study that to ensures the reliability test the coefficient value has to range between 0 to 1; if the value crosses is higher than 0.6 that ensures the satisfactory level of internal consistency. Our tested variables have the reliability to test the constructs' consistency and can use for further analysis. Besides, the test results of KMO (0.844) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (0.000) also indicated that this data set was appropriate to conduct exploratory factor analysis techniques.

Table 2. Reliability statistics test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.852	12

Source: Researcher own computation

Table 3 shows the factor analysis of twelve variables, which indicates the fast-food consumption preferences of Facebook users in the Bangladesh context. This factor analysis extracted three factors from twelve variables and three scale items defined each factor. With principal components analysis and eigenvalue of 1.00 as the deciding criterion, Varimax rotation matrix three factors that explained 57.939% of the matrix variance. Hair et al. (2010) mentioned practical significance criteria, individual item factor loadings have to exceed 0.4, and one factor should include at least two items. These significant criteria were fully met in the exploratory factor analysis. Factor 1 loaded on the first four variables; this factor was referred to as social factors as these variables indicated friends' check-in posts, reference groups, electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), and online reviews. All these variables are considered as the leading predictors of fast-food consumption preferences among Facebook users. This factor has explained 22.118% of the total variation in the factor analysis. Factor 2 correlated with personal factors of choosing

fast-food consumption preferences. This factor has five distinguished variables; food menu, price, food shop location, promotional activities, and past- experiences that lead to consuming fast food. This factor has explained 18.580% of the total variation explained in the factor analysis. These personal factors give a positive boost up to fast-food consumption. Finally, yet an important factor, the service quality factor explains the quality of food, food shop environment, and customer service quality, and the total variation explained by 17.240%. From factor analysis, it can be easily interpreted that a value higher than 0.4 shows the predominant influence on changing fast-food consumption preferences. These are labeled as friends' check-in posts (0.601), reference groups (0.577), electronic word of mouth (0.840), online reviews (0.836), food menu (0.914), price (0.448), food shop location (0.448), past experiences (0.657), food shop environment (0.516), and customer services quality (0.775).

Table 3. Rotated component matrix of perceived factors affecting fast food consumption preferences

Variables	Rotated Component Matrix		
	1	2	3
Friends check-in posts	0.601	0.211	0.333
Reference groups	0.577	0.147	0.392
Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM)	0.840	0.223	0.207
Online reviews	0.836	0.014	0.021
Food menu	0.081	0.914	0.087
Price	0.288	0.448	0.357
Food shop location	0.337	0.191	0.448
Promotional activities	0.491	0.402	0.210
Past experiences	0.104	0.274	0.657
Quality of food	0.210	0.816	0.285
Food shop environment	0.202	0.372	0.516
Customer services quality	0.125	0.023	0.775
Variance explained by each factor	22.118%	18.580%	17.240%
Total variance explained by these factors			57.939%
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy		0.844	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1261.519	
	df	66	
	Sig.	0.000	

Source: Researcher own computation

To examine how consumers perceive fast-food consumption preferences as regards social factors, personal factors, and service quality the mean scores for all factors have been compared. The findings of the fast-food consumption preferences of the three influencing factors are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Fast food consumers' perceptions of three factors

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social factors	Friends check-in posts	3.62
	Reference groups	3.67
	Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM)	3.57
	Online food reviews	2.94
	The overall mean of social factors	3.45
Personal factors	Food menu	4.32
	Price	4.13
	Food shop location	3.68
	Promotional activities	3.77
	Past experiences	3.97
The overall mean of personal factors	3.97	

Services quality factors	Quality of food	3.99	0.680
	Food shop environment	4.22	0.913
	Services quality	3.78	0.941
	The overall mean of services quality factors	3.99	0.845
Overall means of three factors		3.80	

Source: Researcher own computation

Firstly, social factors had as stated in table 4, a lower mean score of 3.45 than the overall mean score of 3.80. Friends check-in posts (3.62), reference groups (3.67), and electronic word of mouth (3.57) had a high mean score of this factor. Online reviews (2.94) turned a comparatively lower mean score; it could be indicated that online reviews are not as trustworthy to consume fast-food consumption preferences. Besides. Friends' check-in posts, reference groups, and electronic word of mouth consider as the predominant role to taste new fast-food varieties.

Secondly, personal factors (3.97) which stated the second highest mean score than the overall mean scores (3.80). Among all personal factors' food menu (4.32), price (4.13), and past experiences (3.97) have had the highest value. From these factors it can be easily understood from consumers' perspective before they going to any fast-food restaurants or order something online; food menu, price, and the foremost factor past experiences are considered crucial ones.

Lastly, service quality factors (3.99) represented the highest mean score than the overall mean scores (3.80). After analyzing service quality factors' quality of food (3.99), the food shop environment (4.22) occupied the highest mean scores among the three factors of this construct. Besides, service quality (3.78) which had a bit lower than the overall mean score. From a consumer point of view, we can easily identify from respondents that the quality of food and food shop environment considered the prime factor to choose fast-food consumption preferences.

The above discussing section has an objective to explore how customers perceive social factors, personal factors, and services quality factors on choosing fast-food consumption preferences. The analyzed results supported the proposed hypotheses H1, H2, and H3; this above-discussed result provided empirical evidence that Facebook users perceive differently among these three factors.

ANOVA analysis of fast-food consumption factors and followers of food bloggers posts from table 5, as stated electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) ($p=0.137$), food menu ($p=0.293$), price ($p=0.801$), past experiences ($p=0.740$), quality of food ($p=0.656$), food shop environment ($p=0.468$), and customer services quality ($p=0.916$). There showed no significant differences; where p value 0.05 and considered at 95% confidence level. Besides, friends' check-in posts ($p=0.000$), reference groups ($p=0.001$), online reviews ($p=0.036$), food shop location ($p=0.006$), and promotional activities (0.005) showed significant differences where p value is 0.05 and considered 95% confidence interval.

Table 5: ANOVA analysis of fast-food consumption factors and followers of food bloggers posts

Variables	F-value	Sig. ($\alpha= 0.05$)
Friends' check-in posts	14.822	0.000
Reference groups	8.032	0.001
Electronic Word of Mouth (e_WoM)	7.088	0.137
Online reviews	1.484	0.036
Food menu	1.295	0.293
Price	2.169	0.801
Food shop location	5.119	0.006
Past experiences	0.850	0.740
Promotional activities	7.283	0.005

Quality of food	2.115	0.656
Food shop environment	1.822	0.468
Customer services quality	0.041	0.916

Source: Researcher own computation

6. CONCLUSION

In the technological advancement and consumers' usage on social media especially Facebook; people are more influenced by social forces, within themselves motivation that is addressed by personal factors, and the restaurant's environment that mentioned as services quality. The study tried to explain social cognitive theory from fast-food consumption preferences perspectives of Facebook users in Dhaka city, Bangladesh. The findings of the study indicated Facebook users had distinctive perceptions of these three factors. The proposed hypotheses supported and showed significant differences between those three factors. Services quality factors had the highest mean score, followed by personal factors and social purchases ranked the third. It is a great challenge for consumers to be convinced of the reliable online food reviews and then purchase that cuisine. To lessen this risk mostly prefer friends' check-in posts and their references to taste new varieties of fast food. The fellow mates have the immense influence to change the fast-food consumption preferences of Facebook friends.

In the Bangladesh context, hardly any research has conducted using social cognitive theory and Facebook users' fast-food consumption aspects. The lack of empirical investigation on Facebook users and their fast-food consumption preferences; could be the set for further research to explore more dimensions of both theoretical aspects and on-ground applied perspectives. The researcher tried to apply the social cognitive theory on an experimental basis to get some insights into how the three major factors influence the Facebook users' consumption preferences on fast food. The study only focused on Dhaka city-based; the future study can conduct in diverse populations across Bangladesh. The limitations of this study addressed firstly, the sample size of the respondents was relatively small; further research might carry out using a larger sample size. Secondly, the non-probability convenient sampling procedure has been applied to analyze the defined objectives of this study. The researcher can apply another sampling method to explore the diversity of this study. The restaurant owners can manage interactive Facebook pages, interactive content, and marketing strategies to attract large consumers' to taste their cuisine.

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