



# The Perception and Approach of Bangladeshi Ready-made Garment Factory in the Current Context of Digital Marketing

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## Abstract

As a catalyst, digital marketing promotes consumer interaction, recognition of the brand, and broadening company growth. Since the Bangladesh Ready-made garment sector makes a significant contribution to the economy of the country and engagement in the international market, the primary purposes of the study—the current scenario and perception of textile factories regarding digital marketing were analyzed using convenience sampling in a mixed-method approach and a self-made questionnaire, data from 29 factories. Descriptive statistics explored the factory's full consciousness of the effectiveness of digital marketing, but implementation and updates were slow and had limited benefits. It also attempts to develop hypotheses to observe which variables have a relationship with the factory's initiative in digital marketing, and the Fisher exact test was applied. The odds ratio had helped for better interpretation, and most of the factories accepted that investment in digital marketing was worthy due to its cost effectiveness. Now the capabilities of digitalization are a matter of consideration, though sometimes factories are offered digital marketing from their suppliers, and then it's easy to apply it to their buyers. Ultimately, building partnerships with technically sound companies and developing diversified items can help managers, owners, and stakeholders prosper in their worldwide business growth.

**Keywords:** B2B marketing, Digital marketing, Fisher exact test, Odds ratio, Ready-made garment factory.

**JEL Classification:** M31; C12.

## 1. Introduction

Developing, conveying, and providing value to customers as well as nurturing interactions with clients in a way that upsides the business and its stakeholders are the operations of marketing, which is an institutional activity. Now from traditional to digital, digital marketing is a relatively new idea that benefits both buyers and sellers, (Keefe, 2004) and the advertising of goods and services through digital means of distribution that reach clients in an opportune, pertinent, customized, and economical way is known as digital marketing (Al- Masud, 2017). Straightforwardly, doing business via an internet or web-based platform is digital marketing (Chaffey, 2013), which is less expensive compared to traditional marketing (Shaikat, 2022).

The recent significant expansion of RMG sectors can be attributed to these technological developments along with globalization. As a consequence, numerous nations, such as China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, and Turkey have become prominent participants in the worldwide garment export industry (Eximpedia, 2024). Bangladesh, in the worldwide apparel export rankings, holds the second-largest position, with an estimated export value of USD 45 billion in 2022, representing 7.9% of the total market and first position in South-Asia region (World Trade Organization, 2023). The USA and Europe are currently the main importers of RMG products from Bangladesh and followed by some other countries (Chowdhury, 2023). Between April and June of FY23, 70.95% of all RMG exports were from the US, Germany, the UK, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, and Belgium (Research Department, 2023).

Since Bangladesh is one of the world's top five fastest-growing economies (Ministry of Finance, 2020) and RMG ranked one of the export products of Bangladesh (Research Department, 2023), in FY 23 alone, RMG alone made a noteworthy contribution of 10.35% to the country's GDP (Research Department, 2023). In addition to bringing in foreign revenue for the nation, this industry employed the greatest number of people both in terms of employment and the economy overall, second only to agriculture (Haque & Bari, 2015).

Since most textile trade in Bangladesh is B2B and most of the buyers are from abroad (Choudhury, 2019), B2B e-commerce among RMG firms plays a vital role in helping least-developed countries (LDCs) like Bangladesh improve their local and international trade (Hoque & Boateng, 2017). Bangladesh's manufacturers are adopting digital transformation at an accelerating rate, from digital design and production processes to online sales channels (Uddin, 2024), as a result of the rapid growth of internet, mobile, and online banking usage and changes in people's ways of living (Al- Masud, 2017). In order to communicate with foreign buyers, the usage of the internet makes it

easier, faster, and clearer for clothing manufacturing companies, and factors that influenced the adoption of the internet were government support, management's information-sharing culture, organizational capabilities, competitive intensity, and level of commitment (Riyadh et al., 2014). The online presence of Bangladesh's apparel industry improves its branding and visibility around the world (Uddin, 2024). Social media utilization benefits employees during the manufacturing and merchandising of apparel, as well as providing an array of assistance for buyers (Sarbabidya, 2020); brand recognition for RMG is ensured by SEO; the transmission of personalized payoffs and changes through email fosters customer relationships, etc. (Ali et al., 2021). Moreover, RMG factories can grab the chance to create mobile-based ubiquitous system (MbUS) due to the widespread use of mobile phones (Ahad & Busch, 2023). In spite of the worldwide spread of digital marketing, digital marketing is still not considered a very good tool in B2B rather than B2C (Sayem, 2021). However, the trend for B2B e-commerce has increased over the last decade. The supplier searches online in the post-pandemic era have increased by 87% (Statista, 2023). Global B2B e-commerce market is expected to be reach 20.9 trillion dollars by 2024 (N, 2024).

Though Bangladesh RMG has been doing well, this industry is still in the early phase of digitalization (Sayem, 2021). Moreover, most of the Bangladeshi textile enterprises offer finished clothing to overseas buyers (BGMEA Report, January, 2024) and sells very limited garment products and its export basket is filled with very limited items. 73% of the total exports of \$34 billion come from selling only five items: T-shirts, sweaters, trousers, Jackets and shirts (Sayem, 2021). In addition, the backward linkage is mostly import-dependent, except for the accessories, where 99% of the accessories are sourced locally (BGMEA Report, January, 2024). Even, 48.9% RMG factories in Bangladesh are small scale (Moazzem & Ahmad, 2018 (11)). But attain long-term prosperity and thrive in the global market, regardless of the size of the company, establishing connections with businesses at the frontier of technology is essential (Chowdhury, 2023), and in this purpose digital marketing provides an opportunity to advertise the items online (Aydin, 2022).

So, according to the prior research and the necessity of Bangladesh RMG sectors to be involved in digital marketing broadly, this study attempts to understand how much RMG factories are making themselves ready to take the leverage of this digital opportunity and what variables have a relationship with the initiative taken by the factory. Because perceptions of RMG factories, usages of digital methods that can drive the necessary traffic to them in order to increase sales, and associations with factors like capability to start, the raw materials supplier's status toward digital marketing, etc. were not considered in a mixed-method approach ever. Therefore, these have all been done in this one investigation. So finally, the objectives of the study are:

1. To realize the current scenario of digital marketing for the selected garment factories.
2. To understand the perception of factories regarding digital marketing.
3. To identify the variables associated with factories' launching digital marketing initiatives.

The literature review contains the conceptual structure for this investigation. The study's precise requirements are specified in the introduction, and literature review furnishes a synopsis of prior research. At the conclusion of the literature review, to specify the association between variables—which are the answer to the study's third query—all hypotheses will be developed with the assistance of corresponding articles. In result section based on primary data, the first two objectives are analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and regarding the testing of the hypotheses, Fisher's exact test is used. Finally, discussion of the results provides sufficient information to draw informative conclusions regarding the perception of digital marketing in RMG sectors, which will be helpful for future research as well.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Marketing and History of Digital Marketing*

Marketing can be defined in many ways. It is traditionally defined as a social process in which people and organizations develop, offer, and freely exchange valuable goods and services with one another in order to fulfill their needs and desires. Again, the management definition of marketing is frequently given as the craft of product sales (Kotler, 2000).

The phrase "digital marketing" was first coined and used in 1990. The Web 1.0 platform was created at that time, and it assisted users in finding the information they needed while being limited to information sharing via the web. Additionally, the internet infrastructure was either not enlarged or difficult for customers to access, and businesspeople and specialists lacked sufficient expertise about digital marketing. Initially, the engine Gopher network protocol was the search name in 1991. Following Yahoo's founding in 1991, businesses began to post content on their websites to a maximum (Smyth, 2007). The year 1993 marks the official start of the digital marketing era, as that is when it all started. This year saw the launch of the first clickable online banner, and hot-wired bought several banner ads to market and promote their products. The first internet-based transaction was done in 1994, the same year that Yahoo was introduced. A year after its debut, Yahoo had one million likes. Yahoo had also modified the meaning of digital marketing and marketing in general. Moreover, businesses have attempted to improve their web pages to obtain a higher ranking through search engines (Shalauddin, 2022).

### *2.2. Digital Marketing Tools*

Internet plays the most vital role in digital marketing and it involves combining the internet facilities with traditional marketing to make marketing more extensive (Bala & Verma, 2018). Digital marketing can be done through various tools. Among these tools, SEO (Search engine optimization), social media marketing, content marketing, e-marketplace, email, websites, banners, sponsored links etc. are prevalent.

SEO: SEO provides a unique way to bring the company's website or page to the first place if anyone searches for the company (Choudhury, 2019). It helps by defining the relevancy of each page to a search and providing an accurate description and classification of the website (Kibria, 2021). SEO-friendly sites also give a positive vibe about the company in the customer's mind (Choudhury, 2019).

Social Media: Social media marketing benefits the business by helping it establish connections with consumers, communities, and stakeholders (Felix et al., 2017), reduce marketing expenses (Edelman, 2007), and promote its brands (Nasir et al., 2021). It includes multiple platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn that can be utilized by the RMG companies. While YouTube is a video-based site for promoting sales, LinkedIn appears to be a more formal venue for buyer-seller interaction. Facebook's significant influence can also be leveraged to increase growth (Choudhury, 2019) by focusing on specific demographics such as age, gender, and

location. Since Instagram is a photo-based platform and merchants can use Twitter to tweet website links, services, products, and pictures (Kibria, 2021). In addition, social media marketing is one of the most effective digital marketing strategies in Bangladesh (Shalauddin, 2022), and it has been shown that having a strong social media presence may improve reputation, trust, and brand awareness (Nizam et al., 2024).

**Content Marketing:** Building and expanding information resources to increase traffic, generate leads, build brand recognition, and attract customers. This through different textile-related magazines, and blogs can reach to buyers. Contents usually include useful information about the manufacturing company, which may attract the buyer. Factory Tale of Textile Today can be mentioned here an example (Choudhury, 2019).

**E-market Places:** This might seem like a platform that connects buyers and vendors. Numerous services have been introduced here over the past ten years. Here, anyone may simply use the web to buy and sell their goods and services. Merchant Bay can be an example of it (Choudhury, 2019).

**Email:** For a long time, marketing through email has been used by sellers to message companies's information (Choudhury, 2019). Companies send emails to consumers informing them of product niceties and grants (Barone, 2020). So, email marketers need to be creative writing professionals as well as have a strong understanding of marketing to succeed in this digital industry (Ryan & Jones, 2022).

**Websites:** To increase website's rating and traffic, the majority of Bangladeshi businesses employ many platforms (Kibria, 2021). A website is actually a collection of electronically generated web pages that contain all the information about a company's background, operations, goods, and services, and are updated periodically. It is an efficient way for smaller businesses to advertise themselves internationally and is a useful tool for buyers and sellers to exchange information, both domestically and internationally. The large companies may potentially be threatened by this (Choudhury, 2019).

**Online Advertising:** This outdated regulation is frequently utilized by IT and telecom firms, as well as other businesses using Google AdWords to connect buyers (Kibria, 2021). Advertisement through digital graphics like banners and sponsored links can also be fruitful if done in a more customized manner (Choudhury, 2019).

### *2.3. Contribution in National Economy of Bangladesh RMG Sector*

With its remarkable expansion in the previous 20 years, Bangladesh's RMG industry is now a significant contributor to the nation's GDP, employment, industrialization, foreign exchange profits, and exports (Chowdhury, 2023). Amazingly, RMG exports increased to USD 46991.61 million in FY 2022–2023 from just USD 31.57 million in FY 1983–1984. The RMG industry accounted for only 3.89% of Bangladesh's overall export revenues in FY 1983–84, but now (FY 2022–2023) it accounts for about 84.58% (BGMEA, Export performance). Research indicates that from 2015 to 2019, Bangladesh's RMG exports increased at a rate of 8% (Haque & Bari, December, 2020), and in FY23, they significantly contributed 10.35% to the country's GDP (Research Department, 2023). Right now, in Bangladesh, there are 3648 RMG companies (BGMEA and BKMEA enlisted factories and non-member factories are respectively 2561 and 1087) are found and 2870045 workers are working there (MiB, 2024). Remarkably, a large fraction of Bangladesh's garment labor force—mostly women—comes from rural backgrounds, (Afsar, January 2003) (Zohir, 2001) and in 2015, 65% of total workers were women (Haque & Bari, 2015). Since both large and medium-sized businesses are engaged in the country's textile sector (Choudhury, 2019), ultimately, from 2018 to 2022, the total estimated employment increased from 4.5 to 5.2 million (Chowdhury, 2023).

### *2.4. Mobility of the RMG Sector in Global Exports*

Bangladesh RMG sector benefited greatly once the Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA) quota took hold, evolved and polished eventually (BGMEA, About garment industry of Bangladesh, n.d.). From US\$620 million in 1990 to US\$5.7 billion in 2004, Bangladesh's garment exports increased eightfold (Chowdhury, 2023). Although Bangladesh's garment industry challenges significant obstacles due to the removal of MFA import limits, the country's active participation in various bilateral and regional preferential trade agreements encourages hope for positive trade outcomes. In 2006, RMG sectors exceeded all pre-established projections by around US\$500 million in exports (Chowdhury, 2023). Bangladesh is now recognized worldwide as a reliable source for clothing (BGMEA, Industry strengths, n.d.) and is the world's second-largest exporter of clothing (World Trade Organization, 2023), with over 150 countries importing ready-made clothing from Bangladesh for a variety of purposes (BGMEA, Industry strengths, n.d.). The main importers are the USA and Europe, and from April to June of FY23, this industry brought in USD 8329.16 million from the USA, the UK, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, and Belgium (Research Department, 2023). From January to March 2023, in terms of volume, Bangladesh surpassed China to take the lead in garment shipments to the European Union (Mirdha, 2024). Bangladesh has been the third-largest supplier of clothing goods to the United States, after China and Vietnam (RMG Bangladesh, 2024). Several factors are driving this growth. Such as product diversification within the industry, high-value items are produced including growing market share in some new areas like Korea, Japan, and India. Bangladesh additionally got several orders that were moved from China and Vietnam at the same time (Bhuiyan & Uddin, 2023).

### *2.5. Digital Marketing in RMG (B2B Business) and Development of Hypotheses*

A study outlined that B2C was more effective in digital presence than B2B (businesses interact with each other). It had rationality because the end consumer spent more time online and in B2C there is direct end customer involvement with the company (Silva & Vassiljev, 2011).

The majority of Bangladesh's textile trade is B2B, and in order to increase their share of global economies, as marketing is a crucial component of corporate organizations' existence and expansion, effective marketing activities should be carried out by the RMG sectors (Choudhury, 2019). Individual adoption of IT and e-commerce is the subject of the majority of earlier research based on theories of technology adoption (Lu et al., 2005; Venkatesh, 2006). A small number of studies had addressed a wide range of viewpoints, including company growth (Moreton, 1995), structural setting (Sahay & Robey, 1996), administrative practice (Daniel et al., 2002), and social as well as political context (Cousins & Robey, 2005) to examine the adoption of e-commerce at an organizational scale as of recently. Furthermore, a great deal of work has gone into balancing the managerial, creative, and environmental viewpoints on e-commerce adoption in developing nations like Bangladesh (Molla & Licker, 2005).

The development of local and international trade for least-developed countries (LDCs) like Bangladesh is greatly aided by B2B e-commerce amongst RMG enterprises. But in Bangladesh, B2B e-commerce is not expanding quickly. Adoption of B2B e-commerce is highly dependent on external factors, namely those linked to government, market forces, and supporting industry eReadiness, according to research using the Perceived eReadiness Model (PERM) model. It would be possible for Bangladesh's RMG sectors to institutionalize and initially adopt e-commerce if they focused more on their internal IT staff, management support, current commercial relationships, and technological resources, though adoption and institutionalization were driven by distinct variables (Hoque & Boateng, 2017). Tariqul (2017) discovered three factors—customer focus, inventory control, and negotiation—that have a non-significant relationship to the adoption of B2B e-commerce in Bangladesh's RMG sector, while cost savings, security, sourcing, and spontaneous solutions—have a significant positive relationship (Islam, 2017).

Modern marketing strategies are the outcome of significant internal and technological advancements over the past ten years. The country is becoming more promising for digital marketing due to the swift explosion of internet, mobile, and online banking usage, as well as changes in people's lifestyles and labor migration outside (Al-Masud, 2017). As a means of communication, the internet has made it possible for many apparel manufacturing enterprises to speak with their international buyers more quickly, easily, and unambiguously. The factors that had the biggest effects on internet adoption were government support, management's information-sharing culture, organizational capabilities, competitive intensity, and level of commitment. Organizational readiness is combined with organizational capabilities, information sharing culture, and management commitment level; the remaining components are combined with external pressure. While both will increase the desire to use the internet, organizational readiness—rather than external pressure—has the biggest impact (Riyadh et al., 2014). According to this literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

*H<sub>1</sub>: There has been significant relationship between the capabilities of the factory to digitalize and the initiatives taken by the factory for digital marketing.*

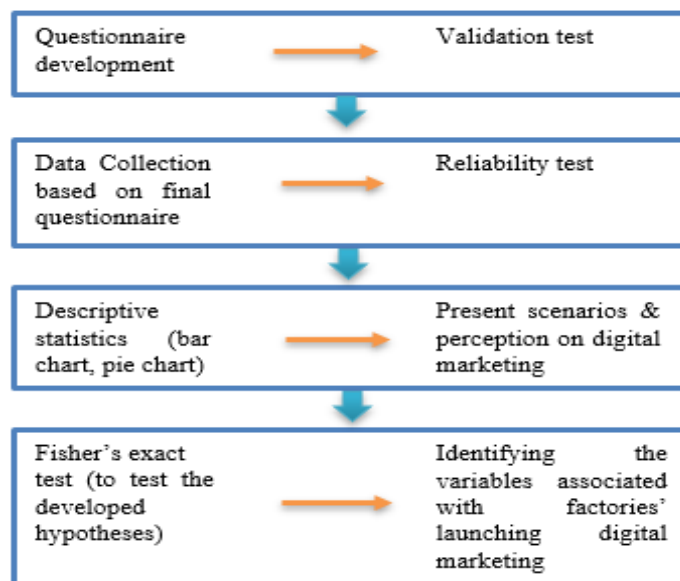
Similarly, technical advancement and internet exploitation are vital for the clothing industry since online purchases and web-based connection with customers are critical to its success. Apparel industries rely on merchandisers and highly skilled salesmen because the mainstream media plays a minor role in this area, making advertisement for product difficult (Hasan & Hafez, 2014). Still, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the examined RMG factories use social media to help staff in the manufacturing and merchandising of clothing, in addition to offering a range of amenities to clients (Sarbabidya, 2020). By improving their web presence and generating organic traffic, SEO makes sure that RMG brands are identifiable. Another aspect of marketing is email marketing, which builds client relationships by sending out customized payoffs and modifications. Combined, these tactics increase the reach of the brand and allow RMG businesses to interact with customers, learn about their preferences, and quickly adjust to shifting market conditions (Ali et al., 2021). To sum up, the proliferation of mobile phones in Bangladesh presents a chance for RMG factories to create mobile-based ubiquitous system (MbUS) (Ahad & Busch, 2023).

The RMG factories must learn how to maintain a balance between using social media to serve customers and maintaining a reliable, trustworthy brand image while operating at a low cost and with proficiency and productivity (Agnihotri et al., 2012). The reason is that RMG firms that engage with social media must understand that a variety of uncontrollable hazards, such as privacy and security concerns, might have an impact on the clients they serve (Jarvinen et al., 2012; Vuori, 2012). Again, the growth of digital marketing is further hampered by factors such as the infrastructure supporting electronic banking (Hossain, 2000), a lack of field experts and human resources (Hoque et al., 2015), security concerns, low per capita income, a lower rate of internet access, and a lack of infrastructure development. Yet, the competitive landscape of company prosperity, economic volatility, and consumer preference is making it harder to start a business in Bangladesh (Al-Masud, 2017). So, the following hypothesis is developed based on the above:

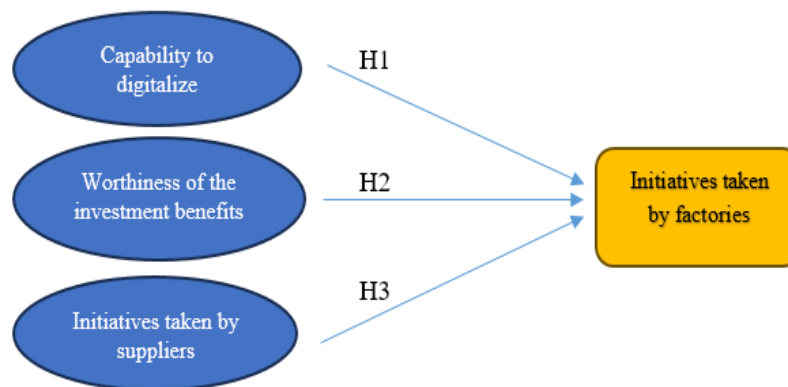
*H<sub>2</sub>: There has been significant relationship between the worthiness of the investment benefits of digital marketing and initiatives taken by the factory in digital marketing.*

Not only RMG factories are embracing digital marketing, but sometimes their suppliers offer different types of digital marketing to them. Here, the garment factory is the buyer for its raw material supplier (Rahman, 2018). Despite these, research during the last decade reported that marketers did not fully explore digital marketing in B2B by relying on traditional B2B interactions (Karjaluo et al., 2015). Another study argued that human face-to-face interaction is essential with digital technology in B2B (Olsson & Uhlin, 2015). Thus, a new and final hypothesis is developed here:

*H<sub>3</sub>: There has been significant relationship between suppliers' digital marketing initiatives and initiatives taken by the factory on digital marketing.*



(a) Flowchart of data analysis



(b) Research model

Figure 1. Flowchart and research model.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

This research was done on the basis of a questionnaire that was filled out by the employees like junior executive, executive, senior executive, assistant manager, manager, and senior manager or more of different factories. The data was collected from 29 factories situated near the Dhaka city.

#### 3.2. Instrument Development, Sampling and Data Collection

A mixed-method approach was taken in this research to meet the study's objectives. Mixed-method approach to research entails obtaining, evaluating, and combining quantitative and qualitative data. This self-made questionnaire included socio-demographic information, three open-ended and seven closed-ended questions was administered to the twenty-nine factories to make an idea on the recent scenario, perception and initiatives has taken by the factory to capture the market on digital marketing. As a result, the final questionnaire was split into the following three sections:

1. There were four questions in the socio-demographic characteristics, covering the following topics: name of company, level of education, current employment status and current working place of respondents.
2. Qualitative data: Three open-ended questions on the digital presence of factories on different platforms (web-based and social media) and the benefits that factories achieve from digital marketing.
3. Quantitative data: Seven closed-ended questions shade on perception of digital marketing, habit to update websites and upload stories; initiatives taken by factories and suppliers; capability to go digital; and worthiness of the investment benefits. The level of measurement was set to ordinal for all these items.

Data was collected offline; only from those factories where the researchers had access. Therefore, this study is based on the convenience sampling method of non-probability sampling to collect the primary data while taking into account the study's goals. Since all of the respondents were well educated and could accurately answer every question, the questionnaire was created in English. Additionally, volunteers were available at the respondents' office to clear up any doubt they could have had about any particular topic. In order to complete all responses in a Google form that the researchers had created, volunteers gathered all completed questionnaires. The data was saved by the researchers when the survey was completed, and data analysis immediately followed. The researchers trained the volunteers on the subject, and during the factory survey, they maintained direct communication with the researchers via phone calls, WhatsApp messages, and Facebook.

#### 3.3. Data Analysis

Data was collected offline, and finally, the compiled data was analyzed. Since a semi-structured questionnaire was used to analyze it, descriptive statistics like pie charts and bar diagrams were used to depict the current scenario of digital marketing for the selected garment factories, their perceptions regarding digital marketing and their presence on different social media sites. Moreover, three hypotheses were developed from the structured part of the questionnaire to find out the association between initiatives taken by the factory and a few other factors to capture the market through digital marketing. For testing hypotheses, the Fisher exact test was used (Frey, 2018)

instead of the chi square test due to the smaller sample size and the expected count being less than five in many cases to test the existence of an association between variables (McHugh, 2013). The phi coefficient was also calculated to measure the strength of this association. Along with the results of the Fisher exact test and the phi coefficient, better explanation was done with the help of the odds ratio; and the lambda coefficient was used to estimate the percentage of error reduction to predict one variable in account of another. A high percentage of error reduction indicates a better possibility for prediction. The significance level for all statistical assessment was established at 5% ( $\alpha = .05$ ). All of these analyses were performed using MS Excel (version 2013) and IBM SPSS for Windows (version 25).

### 3.4. Validity and Reliability

In the case that the items in the questionnaire precisely measure the construct, it will be declared content valid. Since the pertinent of the items or tests to assess the behavioral study of the questionnaire is content validation (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018) (Slaney, 2017). In terms of content validation, the four criteria for item evaluation are representativeness, clarity, factor structure, and comprehensiveness (Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee, & Rauch, 2003). Each question in this questionnaire was developed based on the literature review. For the purpose of content validity Table 1, four academicians, one marketing manager and one HR executive ensured their attendance on the panel of experts. Academicians—content or domain experts—joined from renowned Bangladeshi textile-based universities with their expertise in marketing and apparel sectors, and factory experts—lay experts joined from garment factories. Each question was asked to be rated by all experts according to its level of relevance and clarity. Since the questionnaire did not show any specific dimensions, the factor structure of item evaluation was dropped from the questionnaire. The techniques of assessment used here were the item-level content validity index (I-CVI) and the scale-level content validity index averaging (S-CVI/Avg) (Polit, Beck, & Owen, 2007). The allowed minimum CVI (I-CVI and S-CVI/Avg) value was .83, since six experts participated in the evaluation (Polit & Beck, 2006) (Polit, Beck, & Owen, 2007). The questionnaire did not include any items that had an I-CVI score of less than .83. Experts' remarks regarding the understandability and importance of questions were saved for use in the final draft of the questionnaire.

**Table 1.** Content validity assessment using I-CVI and S-CVI/Avg of Relevance and Clarity.

Items	Relevance rating		I-CVI	Clarity rating		I-CVI	Interpretation
	3 or 4	1 or 2		3 or 4	1 or 2		
Q1	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q2	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q3	0	6	0	0	6	0	Revised/ Removed
Q4	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q5	4	2	.67	6	0	1	Revised/ Removed
Q6	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q7	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q8	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q9	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q10	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q11	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
Q12	6	0	1	6	0	1	Appropriate
S-CVI/Ave			0.89			0.92	

**Note:** I-CVI = summation of the relevancy score for each item divided by number of experts.  
S-CVI/Avg = summation of all I-CVI/number of items.

Item in relevance scale of 3 or 4 and clarity scale of 3 or 4 was rated by 1 and item in relevance scale of 1 or 2 and clarity scale of 1 or 2 was rated by 0.

The last stage of content validation is comprehensiveness, where items should be removed or not finally decided. At last, this questionnaire was made up of ten questions, of which three out of five were open-ended questions and seven were closed-ended questions kept unchanged based on the I-CVI scores.

This methodology facilitates the evaluation of the degree of coherence among responses on different items in an instrument. In order to assess how well the survey questions, relate to one another, Cronbach's alpha is used to test the inter-item reliability. An acceptable reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) was found only for closed-ended questions (7 items; Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .764$ ) from final questionnaire. This acceptable value of reliability showed adequacy of survey items in respect of internal consistency. For optimal validity and reliability, just one respondent from each factory was permitted to participate in this survey (Isaacs, 2015).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

In this research, analyses were done using the collected data through a proposed questionnaire, and after this, conclusions were drawn on the present scenario of digital marketing. The survey was conducted in 29 factories. Employees with different employment statuses helped out to fill out the questionnaire, where 38% junior executives, 28% executives, 3% senior executive, 14% assistant managers, 10% managers, and 7% senior managers or more were included. 17% participants have a master's degree, while others (83%) have a minimum bachelor's degree as their educational qualification.

### 4.2. Present Scenarios of Digital Marketing

Digital presence refers to a company's or factory's online appearance (Tortorice, 2022) and having a web presence is the simplest way to make a company more accessible to clients (Moyers, 2020). Even with the use of digital tools like a website, social media accounts, business directory listings, client testimonials, and other internet resources, creating a digital presence is quite simple (Moyers, 2020), and a company's web presence is comprised of

and may be summed up as the online impression of its brand created by content, websites, search engines, and other digital media and platforms (Tortorice, 2022). Since website is the first step in doing digital marketing, factory representatives were asked about their digital presence on different digital platforms. Figure 2 illustrates the condition of the web-based digital presence of the selected factories:

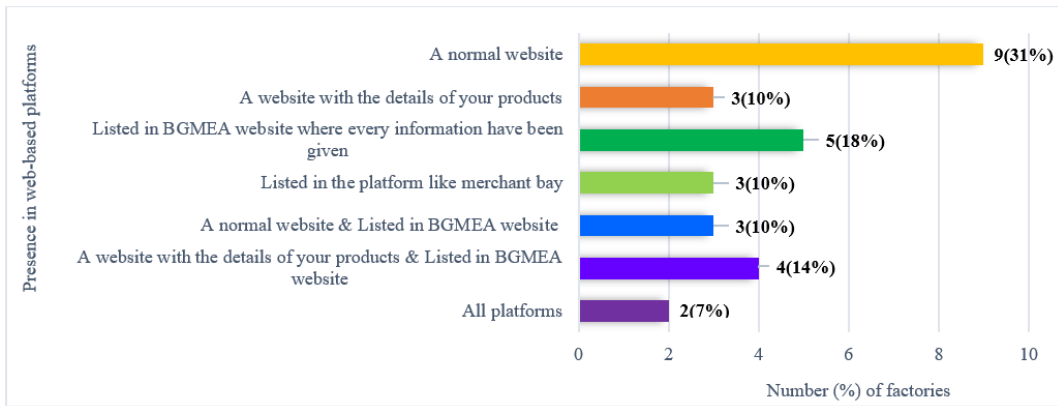


Figure 2. Digital presence of factories on different web-based.

Though a factory's digital presence ensures its visibility on the internet, here, factories' digital presence is not up to par. Only a few factories were noticed on all types of digital platforms, while the majority of the factories separately maintained only a normal website, and being BGMEA-enlisted was the top second choice. Other digital presences were found on a small scale. In Bangladesh's textile industry, it is clear that companies are eager to have at least a personal website that buyers can review and use to establish mutually beneficial business partnerships (Choudhury, 2019).

Moreover, nearly half of the factories ensured their presence on Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn, which all are social media-based digital platforms, and another one-fourth were at least Facebook users with other sites or not. Somehow the huge popularity and the innumerable users of Facebook than any other social media platforms (Shewale, 2024) is the reason of this biggest digital presence in Bangladesh of RMG factories. Figure 3 is the illustration of this all.

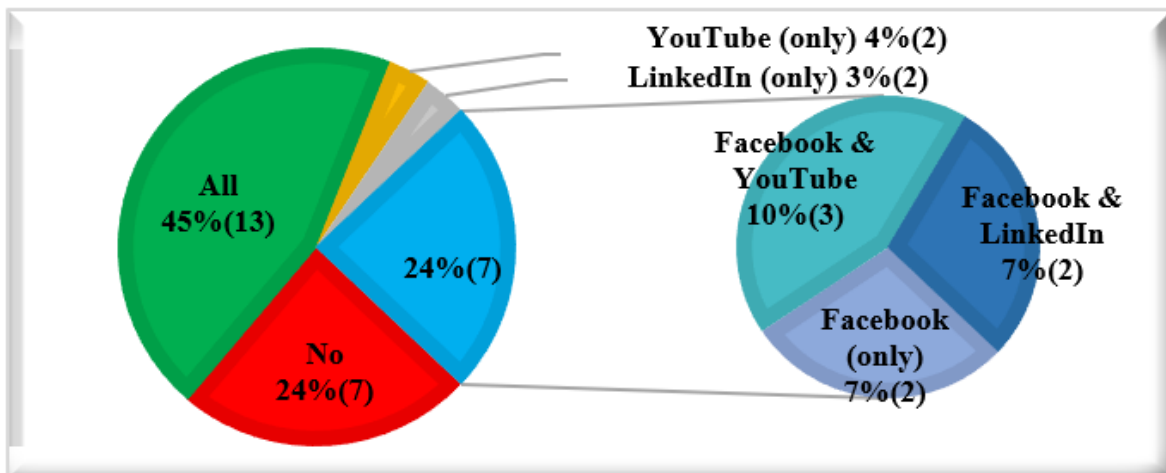


Figure 3. Digital presence of factories on different social media.

Once more, a digital marketing tool aids in the identification of potential customers, new markets, target prices, ideal quality, precise lead times, etc. for manufacturers. Because reaching more customers and persuading them to make purchases is the common goal of businesses seeking to achieve growth, and the benefits factories can make will solve the interaction and marketing problems (Akter & Uddin, 2021). So, in response to the benefits factories can make in Bangladesh, they mainly benefited from getting new markets and new buyers Figure 4.

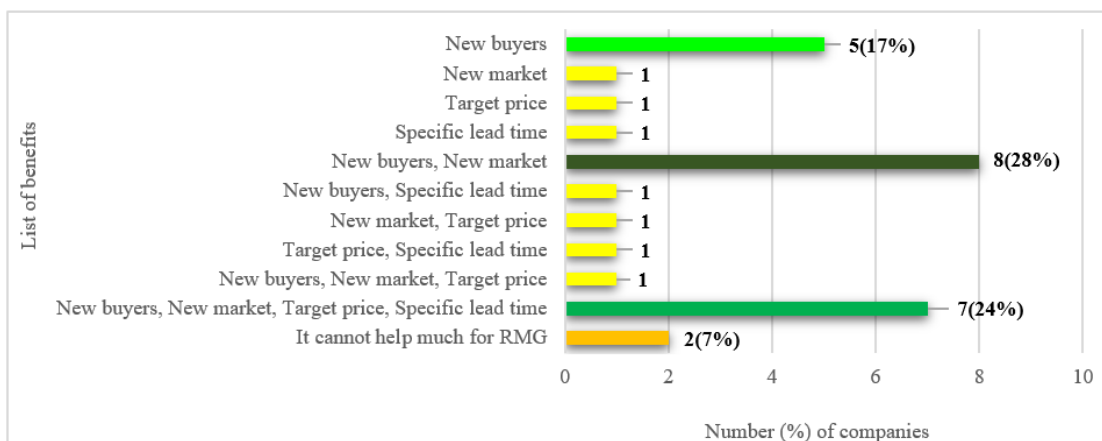


Figure 4. The benefits of factories achieved from digital marketing.

Note: Bars are indicated with 1, all carries around 4% of total responses.

While benefited from working on a target price in a given specified lead time holds the top second advantage for them. But the most surprising fact is that a small percentage of factories still thought digital marketing could not provide any benefits for them.

Besides these, regularly updating a website with digital contents like photos, videos, stories, or other contents is a major indicator of digital marketing, where these engagements can determine a factory's interest, activity, and communication level to serve buyers with the widespread use of the internet. Though a small number of factories were reluctant, a huge number of factories were observed frequently or effectively updating their websites, or at least once in a while. Again, regarding upload stories, factories showed their interest on a monthly basis and then weekly or daily. But a huge number of factories amazed by never uploading any stories. In respect of story upload, factories were found busy with website updates, and it was at a moderate rate. Figure 5 demonstrates updates and uploads of websites, stories, etc.

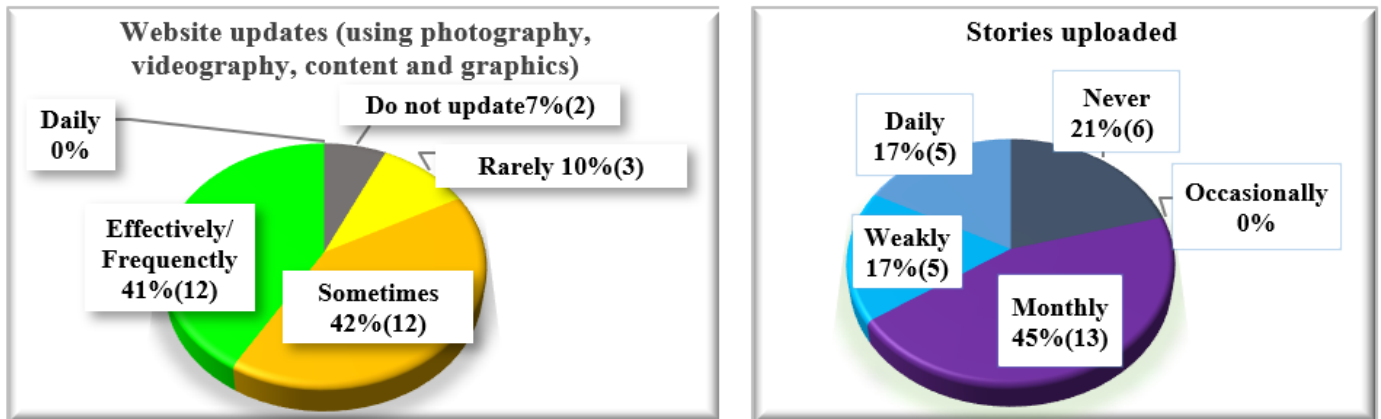


Figure 5. Website updates (Using photography, videography, content, graphics) and stories uploaded (To their website and other communication channels).

4.3. Perception of Factories Regarding Digital Marketing

Almost all factories felt that digital marketing is more effective than traditional marketing Figure 6, even if a small fraction still believed it could not benefit them. No responses were culled against its usefulness, and this high rate of acceptance is enough to summarize the factory's perception. Though factories were concerned about the worth of digital marketing, the benefits they could make were not enough.

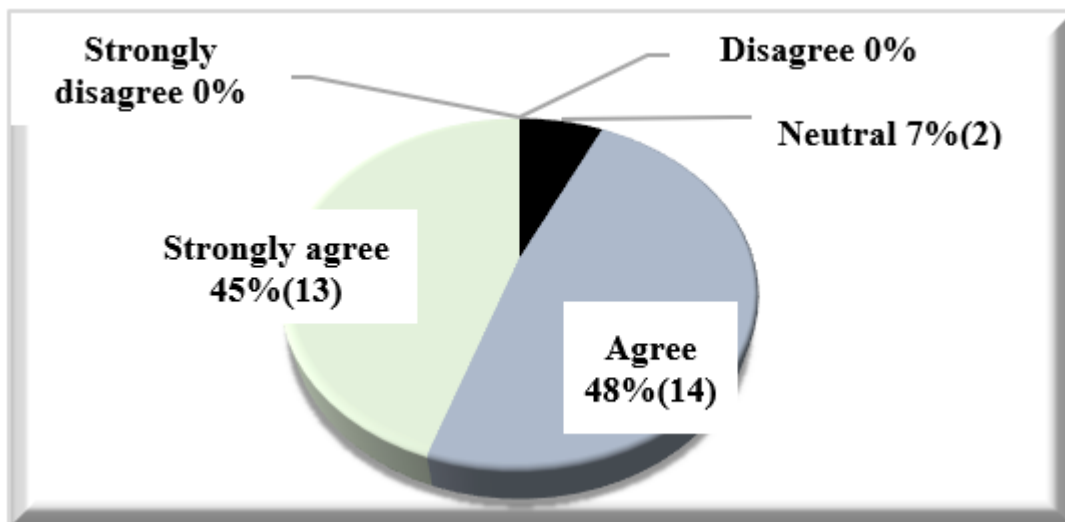


Figure 6. Opinions on the effectiveness of digital marketing over traditional marketing.

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

Now is the time to test the three proposed hypotheses with the help of Fisher's exact test. In this purpose, the number of factories that have already taken initiatives in digital marketing is the first and foremost criteria for identifying the variables associated with factories' launching digital marketing. It was found that 83% factories took digital marketing initiatives, whereas only 17% factories had not taken any. In the same way, 76% factories replied that they were capable to digitalize, and the rest of the responses 24% were recorded as incapable. On the other hand, 86% factories thought the benefits of digitalization were worth the investment to go digital, though 14% factories stood against this opinion. 66% factories received digital marketing initiatives from their suppliers, while 34% factories did not.

Table 2. Factory responses regarding capability to digitalize, worthiness of the investment benefits, initiatives taken by suppliers and initiatives taken by factories.

Variables	Options	n	Variables	Options	n
Capability to digitalize	Most competent	1	Initiatives taken by suppliers	Made on a large scale	2
	More competent	21		Made on a small scale	19
	Competent	0		Not discussed yet	0
	Less competent	8		Supplier(s) showed interest but did not make digital marketing yet	9
	Least competent	1		Supplier(s) is(are) not interested regarding digital marketing at all	1
Worthiness of the investment	Worthiest	1	Initiatives taken	Factory has taken initiatives on a	2



benefits			by factories	large scale	
	Worthier	25		Factory has taken initiatives on a small scale	23
	Neutral	0		Do not think about it yet	0
	Worthless	4		Factory has not taken any initiatives	5
	Most worthless	1		Factory is not interested to take any initiatives now	1

Actual responses were collected based on 5-point likert item Table 2. But to make the proposed three tests of hypotheses Table 3 easier, convert them into yes and no.

**Table 3.** Results of fisher’s exact test and odds ratio for capabilities to digitalize, worthiness of the investment benefits and suppliers’ digital marketing initiatives with initiatives taken by the factory on digital marketing.

Variables	Initiatives taken by factories		$\phi$	P	OR	95% CI	
	Yes	No				LL	UL
Capability to digitalize <sup>a</sup>							
Yes	19	3	0.17	0.569	2.53	0.33	19.53
No	5	2					
Worthiness of the investment benefits <sup>b</sup>							
Yes	23	2	0.61	0.010*	34.50	2.35	505.75
No	1	3					
Initiatives taken by suppliers <sup>c</sup>							
Yes	17	2	0.25	0.306	3.64	0.50	26.76
No	7	3					

**Note:** a) 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.21.

b) 3 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.69.

c) 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.72.

LL → Lower limit, UL → Upper limit.

Results of Lambda.

a) .00 (symmetric), .00 (factory dependent), and .00 (capability dependent), no variable can help in predicting one another, symmetrically or asymmetrically.

b) .33 (symmetric: approximately 33% of errors can be reduced in predicting one variable on account of another), .40 (factory dependent: approximately 40% of errors can be eliminated in predicting factories’ initiative by taking account of the benefit drawn from investment), and .25 (Benefit dependent: approximately 25% of errors can be eliminated in predicting the benefit drawn from investment by taking account of factories’ initiative) c) .07 (symmetric), .00 (factory dependent) and .10 (supplier dependent). \*p < .05

In Table 2, Fisher’s exact test stated an unrelated (non-significant) relationship between capabilities to digitalize and factory’s initiatives. Even the phi coefficient,  $\phi$  indicated no more than a trivial relationship (Fleiss, 1981) with the initiative taken by the factory regarding digital marketing, and the odds ratio (OR) explained this scenario: factories that took initiatives were around three times more likely to have the capability of going digital than those that did not. One important aspect of digital marketing is its low investment cost. With the passage of time, this cost will increase, but it is still lower in comparison to traditional marketing (Choudhury, 2019). Under the second hypothesis, Fisher’s exact test revealed an association (significant relationship), actually a weak positive association (phi coefficient) of the worthiness of the investment benefits while the initiatives on digital marketing were taken by the factory. Purposefully, the factories that took initiatives were around 35 times more likely to benefit from their investment than those that did not.

In this entire value chain, every factory has its own supplier (raw materials), and the factory is the buyer for the suppliers. These suppliers often try digital marketing to attract factories. But supplier's initiatives showed another unconnected (non-significant) and negligible association here with the initiative taken by the factory, and when suppliers offered digital marketing to their buyers (factories), it incited factories to start (around four times more) digital marketing with their buyers (foreign buyers). However, each time, the confidence interval could not provide precise (low) results.

### 5. Recommendations for Practical Implications

To compete in the global market and achieve sustainable growth, textile factories must therefore expand its ways of product offerings and include high-value, non-traditional products (Chowdhury, 2023). In this purpose online marketing and transactions can be helpful. Through it, a lot of data is generated. By analyzing this data, Bangladesh's apparel sector can figure out market trends, consumer behavior, and choice to better match their marketing strategy, product offerings, target audience wants and desires, and make data-driven decisions (Uddin, 2024). In the day of the end, strategic partnerships with companies that are at the forefront of technology and look for foreign direct investment (FDI) are crucial to achieving this (Chowdhury, 2023).

### 6. Limitation and Further Research

The collection of data from any type of factories depends largely on their permission. So, this research could not add huge amounts of information from a large number of factories through sampling. Already, the questionnaire that was provided to the factories was attached with a lot of queries, so any question regarding the barriers could not be added. But toward digitalization, it is important to know about the barriers factories are facing.

Future research can be made on a large number of samples sizes, if possible, by covering all aspects of this paper and adding the barriers to starting and continuing digital marketing in Bangladesh RMG sectors. Then some more recommendations can also be made based on prescriptive analytics, knowing ‘in the future how to get more engagement and remove barriers in digital marketing’, since the whole world is digitalized rapidly.

### 7. Conclusion

In the world of digital marketing, everything is going digital, and marketing is not an exception. While B2C businesses have made great progress here, the B2B market should leverage this. This study was intended to examine the perceptions of textile factories in the present scenario and their approach towards digital marketing for their buyers. Maintaining a normal website and mostly Facebook as social media with others, the resulted charts clearly showed the factories' attention was directed towards digital marketing, though they were updating their content and stories at a moderate rate, and the results they could achieve were insufficient aside from engagement with new markets and new buyers. This study also highlighted that only the benefits factories could draw from their investment in digital marketing were related to the factory's digital marketing initiatives. Despite the almost agreement with the effectiveness of digital marketing and the size of the sample taken here, this exploration can pave the way for future experiments on this theme if it can be done with a large sample size and includes the barriers to starting and continuing digital marketing.

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