The Role of Image Sharing and User's Interactions on Social Media to Promote Handloom Fashion Industry

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Abstract. Handloom industry has a rich history in Bangladesh and almost all regular clothes used to make in local handloom manufacture. However, these manufacturers have declined due to its obsolete business model. The development of information technology and the rise of social media is playing an important role to overcome various challenges related to the promotion of the handloom Jamdani business. The case analysis of 'Jamdani Ville' revealed that the main factor to the handloom fashion industry is the emergence of internet and communication technology. 'Jamdani Ville' share the products image with the followers; this is the way how they advertise, promote and understand the customers demand by connecting through social media. Image sharing service on social media helping to connect customers, fulfilling the demands of customers, promoting the traditional handloom Jamdani and empowering the handloom Jamdani weavers. This research explores how the image sharing service and the user's interactions in social media contribute to promoting the handloom fashion industry. We conducted a case study with the owner and online customers of Jamdani Ville. To collect data, the study employed a semi-structured interview and questionnaire survey.

Keywords: Fashion industry · Handloom Jamdani · Social media · Entrepreneurs · Jamdani Ville · Bangladesh

1 Introduction

Social media has transformed the world in every aspect, changing the way of communication, breakdown the traditional way of interaction and become a valuable marketing tool for many companies [1–3]. Facebook provides a way for corporations to directly interact and respond to their consumers. Nowadays, customers can get updated information to introduce different kinds of handloom products. Now everything can be done online starting from choosing desirable product and payment. Much online business emerged in Bangladesh that relates to customers in wide range especially in Facebook with a variety of online pages such as Jamdani world, Jamdani Ville, Jamdani Mela, Dhakai Jamdani, Jamdani Museum and so on. 'Jamdani Ville' is one of them, which allow customers to buy their desired product through social media. Nowadays, social media like Facebook has become the primary source for Jamdani

lovers. However, this is just the beginning of a long journey enabled by disruptive technologies and human-computer interaction. With the introduction of the online business platform, the seeds laid for a new trend in the handloom industry.

The popular platform is Jamdani Ville, founded in 2014. The formation of the company is based on a website and Facebook page where customers can cheek the variety of Jamdani products, communicate with the seller and decide the most appropriate products sitting their home. These kinds of services enabling social interaction between customers and sellers. However, the aim of this research is to investigate how the image sharing service and user's interaction through social media can benefit both entrepreneurs and consumers by reducing the intermediary commissions.

For this purpose, the customer's perception and the reaction have been analyzed. To attain the study objectives, we conducted a case study of the social media-based entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. For the case study, we have selected 'Jamdani Ville' considering the reputation, experiences in working with the handloom fashion industry and many online customers. 'Jamdani Ville' is one of the successful business models supported by technology that enables to connect so many customers globally. So far, Jamdani Ville reached 240,336 followers on Facebook. These statistics show the rapid expansion of handloom Jamdani and hence affect the traditional business model of the handloom industry [4].

This study investigates on how the social media-based entrepreneurs contributing to expanding the handloom fashion industry. We have conducted a qualitative case study that supposed to use an inductive approach rather than the deductive reasoning of testing hypotheses or theories [5]. We have collected data from company owner, 45 Jamdani weavers and 10 online customers. We purposively selected 05 master weavers and randomly selected 40 artisans and helpers. On the other hand, we purposively selected 10 customers who experience online shopping from Jamdani Ville at least two times or more. To conduct the interview, we designed three sets of semi-structured interview questionnaires: one for Jamdani Ville owner, one for the Jamdani weavers and another for Jamdani Ville customers. The result motivated me to develop a model by which we explained how to the handloom fashion industry expanding through social media marketing and benefiting both handloom entrepreneurs and customers.

2   Literature Review

Currently, the handloom industry is facing many problems and barriers to getting raw material, proper marketing facilities, and sales network. Most of the weavers making backdated products because they are not much known about the current market trend [6]. Mostly, the handloom products reach the ultimate customers through three inter-mediary groups namely merchant, wholesaler and retailers. However, the traditional supply chain management of handloom Jamdani is no more effective to reach the customers easily. To expand the handloom Jamdani it is very necessary to minimize the gap between the handloom Jamdani weavers and the customers.

However, electronic commerce, known as e-commerce by which we can perform buying, selling, transferring or exchanging products or services over the internet and

other computer networks. In Bangladesh, the e-commerce industry is growing very rapidly. Many retailers and small-scale entrepreneurs are now creating their personal websites. Some retailers are only operating their business over the Internet, mainly Facebook commerce that is known as F-commerce. The widespread of ICTs moving the global business community towards Business-to-Business e-commerce [7]. The Internet is the potential tool with many features to create a completely new industry. The internet strongly embraces all level such as businesses, individuals, government, and entrepreneurs. Now, every country using the internet in every sector and in most of the company.

Moreover, Social media interaction is fundamentally changing communication between brands and customers. Social media is dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration as the collective of online communications channels. Facebook, twitter, google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, and Pinterest are some well-known examples of social media. More recently, Facebook is most popular social networking website that allows the users to create profiles, uploads photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues around the world. Statistics show that comparing any other website internet users spend more time on Facebook than any other website in the United States [8]. Bangladeshi marketers are using Facebook as a powerful medium of business since 2010. Small-scale entrepreneurs and corporate houses are practicing this social media business remarkably. As of 2013, there are over 130 different stores in Bangladesh whose main existence on Facebook. Majority of these businesses belong to online boutiques, music, books, play station games, etc. [9].

3   Case Study of Jamdani Ville

The case analysis of 'Jamdani Ville' revealed that the main factor to expand the handloom apparel industry is the emergence of internet and communication technology. Social media marketing is a powerful way for the business of all sizes that is very helpful for small-scale enterprises to promote the specific brand and reach a good number of customers. Jamdani Ville started social media business to spread the fame of handloom.

Jamdani worldwide. Jamdani Ville is playing an intermediary role between customers and handloom weavers to co-create value as shown in Fig. 1. In order to explain how the handloom Jamdani industry is expanding globally through the user's interaction, this research draws upon the role of image sharing service on social media. This study found that 'Jamdani Ville' investing money to the handloom Jamdani community to produce quality Jamdani sari. On the other hand, 'Jamdani Ville' share the product image with the followers; this is the way to advertise, promote and understand the customers demand by connecting through social media. Image sharing service on social media helping to connect customers, fulfilling the demands of customers, promoting the traditional handloom Jamdani and empowering the handloom Jamdani weavers.
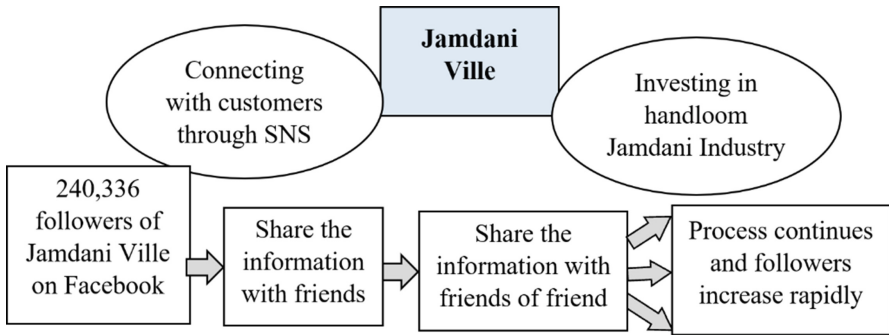
Fig. 1. Value co-creation process of Jamdani Ville

3.1 Facebook Page Analysis of Jamdani Ville

The Facebook page of Jamdani Ville consists of several features that allow customers to find the appropriate products and some other information like business policies, contact information, and products information. See Fig. 2.
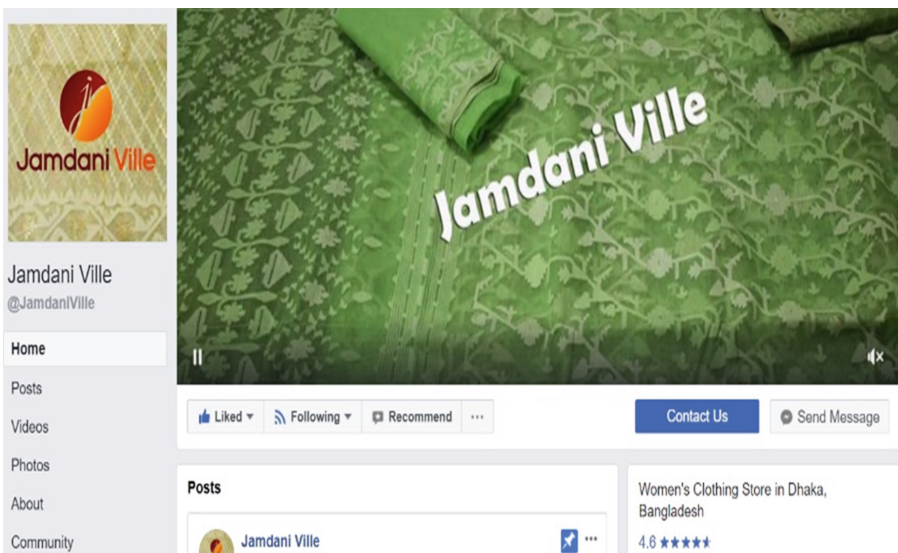

Fig. 2. Facebook page of Jamdani Ville

The mission of Jamdani Ville is to spread the great heritage Jamdani and its fame all over the world. To order Jamdani Sari, customers are requested to send the code number of the Sari, which they like to purchase. Most of the cases, the price of products is mentioned but in case of exclusive Sari, the price is hidden, and customers are requested to know the price by inbox inquiries. Thus, customer can get detailed

information about every product from the Facebook post. They clearly mention the product materials, color combination and the price most of the cases. Figure 3 shows the Facebook post of the Jamdani Ville with product details.
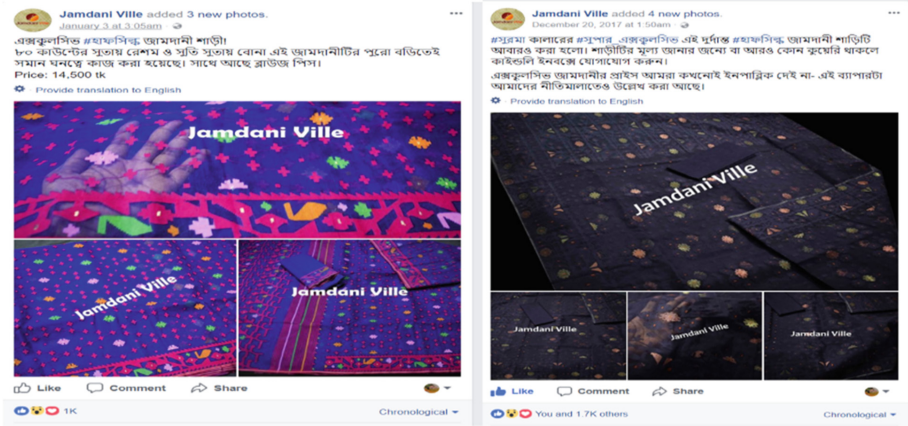

Fig. 3. Facebook post of Jamdani Ville

When customers buy the products, they willingly confess their review on the products and services as well. The reviews from the customers play an important role to validate the quality of Jamdani products, services, promotion of the cultural heritage Jamdani as well as the reputation of Jamdani Ville. These kinds of review help in building trust between customers and entrepreneurs. Here are the examples of customers review:

"The jamdani I bought from the page is very soft. I liked it. **It's of premium quality**. *Thanks. Hope* **to buy more** *in the future".* (Customer A, Female).

"Are there any ways that I can give them 100 on 5? I don't want to rate them by stars. Trust me they are way beyond that! **Excellent collection,** *they do not compromise their* **quality,** *and the owner is an angel. l has never met her, but she is such a sweet* **genuine gentle and an honest lady.** *I ordered a saree for my mom to gift her on Eid festival, the owner was sick, bedridden for some days. But still, she made it sure that I get the saree for my mom on time! And I got the saree as I wanted*. **Incredible! Excellent customer service.** *They are doing a great job. They're producing* **export quality jamdani**. *It shows their* **patriotism** *as well. I'd love to shop from them more and more in the future. My best wishes always"* (Customer B, Female).

"I like the **prompt communications** *from 'Jamdani Ville'. I'm an overseas customer but I'm getting my deliveries at my local contacts* **without any delays**. *Also, I like the cotton Jamdanis of your collection.* **Price may be a little high, but I don't mind if the product satisfies me.** *Look forward to getting the more beautiful product for my cotton Jamdani collection. Thank you Iffat Sharmin, thank you Jamdani Ville".* (Customer C, Female).

3.2   The Strategies of Jamdani Ville to Reach the Customers

'Jamdani Ville' started to introduce the Jamdani sari and the way of weaving Jamdani sari with their customers. They believe that more the people will know about the

process of Jamdani weaving and the life of Jamdani weavers, more the people will realize the value of Jamdani products. However, the customers are fully satisfied with the quality of Jamdani sari and now they have knowledge about the creator's hard labor invested to produce appealing Jamdani products and the reason behind the high price of Jamdani sari. Every action of 'Jamdani Ville' started to receive a positive response from the customers and gained an increased demand of Jamdani sari globally. The customer has full trust in 'Jamdani Ville' about product quality and services. Every day, Jamdani Ville receives many orders and consequently, weavers started to get back the work speed instead of passing lazy days. Nowadays, weavers spend a very busy day to deliver a lot of Jamdani sari to the customers. Here, "Jamdani Ville" playing an intermediary role between customers and handloom weavers. 'Jamdani Ville' is a platform to bridge the gap between Jamdani lover and Jamdani weavers. See Fig. 4.
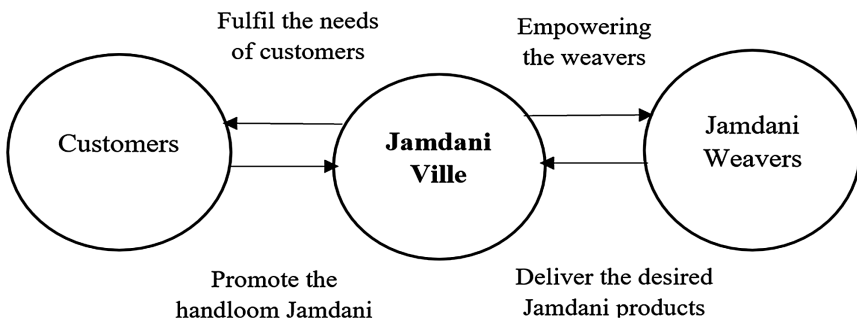

Fig. 4. Bridging the gap between customers and weavers

3.3   The Engagement of Customers with Handloom Jamdani

The case analysis of 'Jamdani Ville' shows that there are 240,336 followers who are getting every update related to new Jamdani products and get to know about the story of handloom Jamdani weavers. Customers are highly satisfied with the quality and price of handloom Jamdani. So far, customers did not complain that the price is high because they are now conscious of the hard labor of the poor weavers. Even, some customers pay more than the actual price and request to the Jamdani Ville to give that extra money to the poor family of Jamdani community. The customers are very happy with the services provided by 'Jamdani Ville' and they have full trust in 'Jamdani Ville'. This is the big achievement of 'Jamdani Ville' to gain the trust of customers where most of the online shops fail to gain trust. To collect data, this study purposively selected 10 customers who experienced online shopping from Jamdani Ville at least two times or more. To conduct the interview, semi-structured interview questionnaires were designed and sent to the selected customers through Facebook messenger. After getting the response from customers, the analysis shows that customers are satisfied with the Jamdani products and services of 'Jamdani Ville'. 60% of respondents are highly satisfied, 40% are satisfied and none of them are dissatisfied.

3.4   Image Sharing and Users Interaction in the Social Media for Handloom Fashion Industry

Social media interaction is literally changing the pattern of communication between brands and customers. Comparing to corporate-sponsored communication through traditional promotional activities, image sharing in social media attracts consumers more to gain trustworthy information. Social media play a key role in the brand's success in the luxury sectors [10]. However, the previous study described luxury brands' social media marketing as combining five dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth (WOM). Our study simply focuses on two dimensions, one is image sharing and another is users interaction to promote the handloom fashion industry. In a broader sense, image sharing and users interaction do not limit to selling and buying but includes entertainment, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth (WOM) [11]. Our study findings reveal that the interaction not only held between the business (Jamdani Ville) to the consumer but also consumer to consumer. For example, 'Jamdani Ville' connecting the consumer through image sharing on Facebook. On the other side, the consumer also connecting with another consumer through sharing their online shopping experience with friends, family and the review section of 'Jamdani Ville's Facebook page which include comments, opinions, sentiments and most importantly branding of the handloom Jamdani. Researchers defined this consumer to consumer interaction as word of mouth (WOM) and suggested to use of this WOM on social media from three perspectives: opinion seeking, opinion giving, and opinion passing [12]. Consumers with a high level of opinion seeking behavior tend to search for information and advice from other consumers when making a purchase decision. Consumers with a high level of opinion-giving behavior also called opinion leaders to have a significant influence on consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, offline interaction is inevitable between 'Jamdani Ville' and handloom Jamdani weavers to promote handloom Jamdani industry. Users interaction helping to understand the market trend and customers preference about the design of handloom Jamdani. Overall, image sharing on Facebook page and different user's interaction playing a major role to promote handloom fashion industry globally.

4   Conclusion

The 'Jamdani Ville' is the main driving force who started a Facebook-based online business in 2014 with the aim to expand handloom Jamdani. Gradually, 'Jamdani Ville' was able to reach almost 3 million customers on the Facebook page. Jamdani Ville has built a strong connection between poor Jamdani weavers and potential customers over the world using social media like Facebook. The review of Jamdani Ville revealed that customers are satisfied with Jamdani products and the need for products increasing day by day. Weavers are working day to night to fulfill the increasing demand of customers. These all become possible because of the incredible role of social media on image sharing and users interactions.

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