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Research Article

Social Media, New Cultures, and New Threats: Impact on University Students in Bangladesh

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In addition to its use as an effective means of communication, the versatility of social media—probably the most salient technological development of recent times—has gradually increased its popularity over the years. But while it has been instrumental in the emergence of numerous new cultures, the use of social media has also posed a number of threats to individuals, societies, countries, and the world as a whole. It has been revealed through various literature reviews that no specific research has been done before on social media regarding its ability to simultaneously create new cultures and new threats. Therefore, the current research was conducted among university-level students in Bangladesh keeping this issue in mind. The study was designed in light of an appropriate theoretical framework, and as part of the quantitative method, an online survey was carried out to collect data from 217 university students who are studying at different public and private universities in the country. Besides, case studies were administered to 20 students for in-depth understanding. Findings uncovered that most romantic relationships formed through social media are problematic and many people have had bad experiences with such relationships. Most participants are victims of cyberstalking and varied forms of harassment and social stigma. In spite of being an epoch-making medium for education, its use is also responsible for the poor academic performance of many students, and despite its emergence as a new platform for journalism, social media has boosted yellow journalism as well. While its use in product marketing has grown exponentially and shown considerable positive impact, consumer fraud has also become common. Furthermore, although the number of social media entrepreneurs is constantly increasing and many are succeeding, the number of failures is not insignificant. It is evident from the research that the negative impact of social media use is expanding day by day in new directions, and it is urgent to ensure its proper use for the greater good.

1. Introduction

Social media is a web-based service that allows users to build either public or semipublic profiles within a controlled environment [1]. It has captivated the public's attention and opened a new channel of communication for them since its inception. As the years have passed, the use of social media has spread to a wider range of audiences. In the current context, literally every person in every corner of the globe uses social media. The number of users of some of the popular social media platforms, such as Facebook, You-Tube, WhatsApp, and Instagram, is increasing at an extraordinary rate every day.

Of course, it has a number of features for which it is becoming increasingly popular around the world, for example, its use as an effective means of communication. With the advent of the Internet, human communication process experienced an unprecedented and revolutionary pace [2]. One can find in history that there were many different ways of communicating, but none of them were as fast and functional as social media. People on one end of the world can now communicate with someone on the other in the blink of an eye.

In addition, over time, different social media sites have come up with different features that are able to provide versatile services to their users. Its groundbreaking role in forming relationships can be cited as an example. Statistics show

that the rate of romantic relationship formation is increasing at a significant rate, among other things, through the use of social media. Interestingly, this process has also given rise to long-distance relationships as it is a medium of easy communication. People are now able to maintain their relationships with more comfort.

Over the last decade, social media has also become a strong platform in academia due to the affordability and easy access to shared information (Lau, 2017 as cited in [3]). It has made the learning process easier for the students. Today, students from one part of the world are able to acquire knowledge imparted in other parts only because of the widespread use of it. Besides, because people now read the news on social media, the media and journalists have taken it seriously as an effective means of practicing journalism. In this way, the origin of a new path in journalism has also been made possible.

Moreover, social media has assumed a fundamental part in changing business and correspondence (Haque et al., 2013 as cited in [4]). Since most people are spending most of their time on social media, it has become a powerful medium for marketing products and services. It is now unequivocally proven from various studies that product marketing, buying and selling, and delivery services through social media are growing at a huge rate. Furthermore, a significant rise in the number of entrepreneurs on social media has been observed, many of whom are becoming successful, and in this way, it has emerged as a terrific medium for entrepreneurship as well.

Like the ones discussed, a seemingly endless number of its uses can be mentioned because social media has been able to create an appeal to people around the world by providing a variety of timely services. But the problem is being created due to the negative effects associated with it. As social media gives birth to new cultures, it also carries different risks. The terrifying thing is that the level of such risks is increasing slowly but surely and is having many destructive effects on individuals and society. In some cases, social media use actually brings more negativity than positivity. In this context, this study takes into account the potential of social media to create new cultures as well as new threats and seeks to understand their overall impact on university-level students in Bangladesh.

This research is designed with several objectives in mind. The major ones among them are the following: to analyze detailed information about participants' use of social media, to assess different aspects of dysfunctional romantic relationships through social media use, to understand the experience of being a victim of cyberstalking and its overall impact, to evaluate the use of social media in education and its potential negatives, to explore the nature of journalism and yellow journalism practice on social media, to examine social media use in product marketing as well as its positives and negatives, and to investigate the entrepreneurial experience on social media and its current status as a potential medium.

2. Review of Literature

Numerous studies on various facets of social media have already been conducted. Here is a review of a few of those

from which it appears that technology has numerous advantages but may also be perilous if it falls into the wrong hands. The younger generation likes to consider technology use as a kind of experiment to do what they think is fun or interesting for them and their friends while avoiding adult supervision. Technology has given us social media, which is a useful tool. It is, however, often misused by today's youth. Cell phones and the Internet are the two most common ways for young people to access social media. These have resulted in significant lifestyle modifications among them. They get tremendous exposure and easy access to these mediums.

Obaidullah and Rahman [5] attempted to determine the impact of the Internet and social media on students' habit of reading printed books. Findings uncovered that the majority of students prefer social media to reading books. It was also revealed that though they buy books every year, few of them spend time reading them, which is why many students agree with the notion that buying books nowadays is all about decorating the drawing room. Besides, there has been a recent surge in studies into social media addiction. Al Mamun and Griffiths [6] tried to identify the link between one specific form of social media addiction (i.e., Facebook addiction) and its associated predictors. Consequently, being single, having less involvement in physical activities, sleep disturbance, time spent on Facebook, and depression symptoms were all found to increase the likelihood of being addicted to Facebook.

Alam and Aktar [7], conducting a study at a public university in Bangladesh, uncovered that practically all students at the university have access to the Internet, and the majority of them use different social media platforms. While many use them as a useful tool for communication and a source of information, it was noticed that many of them use them for fun and enjoyment. While the former make good use of their time without jeopardizing their academics, the latter waste a significant amount of time, which often impacts negatively on their studies. Rahman and Mithun [8] also identified a negative correlation between academic performance and time spent on social media.

Naher and Minar [9] in their research looked at certain case studies in Bangladesh where real-life violence was sparked by Facebook activities. Facebook was mostly used to incite hatred and violence in those situations, whether purposefully or unintentionally. Ali [10] discovered how Facebook users use the platform to increase violence in society. It was found that most of the time, people react without even checking the facts of the post in the first place.

Fake news has been a significant concern for the last few years in Bangladesh. It continues to dominate different social media platforms and cyberspace as a whole. Karim [11] explored the weaponization of information on an unprecedented scale, as well as the capacity of new technologies to manipulate and fabricate content peddled by Facebook users. Fahad [2] attempted to examine whether the information, pictures, and videos presented on various social media influence Bangladeshi news media. It was found that information dissemination via social media is questionable, and questions of ethics and professionalism may not always be sufficient to guide journalists in the changed reality of the Internet era.

The remarkable explosion of social media has caused international corporations to recognize social media promotion as a feasible promotion strategy by augmenting their marketing through it. Sajid [12] examined the concepts of social media and social media promotion as well as other topics such as development and benefits, the role of social media in promotion, and the promotion approaches. In a quantitative study by Sultana [13], attempts were made to learn how social media influences different phases of customers' purchasing decisions and how it differs from traditional media. The study discovered that the influence of Facebook is statistically significant. In terms of several criteria, social media has been determined to be more impactful than traditional mass media.

Momen and Sultana [4] determined the association between social networking sites and business enterprises. It also identified the key components of social media, such as easy access to the Internet, effectiveness as a promotional tool, and purchasing behaviors that influence entrepreneurship or visionaries. To gain a deeper understanding of women entrepreneurs' behavioral intentions when it comes to using Facebook Live for entrepreneurship marketing, Sultan and Sharmin [14] examined and showed how compatibility, brand awareness, customer relationships, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention impact positively.

There is a multitude of literature available about social media and its impact on different spheres of human life. Such literature covers various topics. Many of them present positive influences, while many others present the negative consequences of social media. Besides, there are many studies that overlap with others in one way or another. But it is clear that there is a lack of studies that incorporate the influences of social media and show how they are simultaneously giving birth to new cultures and various new threats associated with them. In light of the literature reviewed here, the researchers attempted in this study to examine whether social media is in effect responsible for breeding both new cultures and new threats or not, and if so, what the current state and intensity of it is.

3. Theoretical Framework

The search for a theoretical framework about social media use and the cultures or threats that result has given rise to a number of approaches.

3.1. *Functionalist View.* In this view, social media acts as a platform for presenting oneself to others. It enables people to maintain connections with family and friends, allows them to share photos and videos, facilitates acquaintances with like-minded people, and assists users in planning face-to-face encounters. However, there are certain manifest dysfunctions too. For example, there is no way to tell whether people are presenting real or fabricated self-profiles [15]. In addition, many people create social media profiles to meet new people or remain in touch with old ones, not realizing that potential employers may look at their posts for hints about their character in addition to the CV

and interview. The fact that once anything is posted for others to see, there is no way to regulate how it is utilized is a latent dysfunction of social media sites.

3.2. *Conflict Approach.* In an attempt to distinguish between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, conflict theorists identify the unequal access of the disadvantaged to limited and valuable resources and illustrate how the advantaged groups promote and safeguard their interests. They raise questions about who controls social media sites, who benefits from them, and at whose expense. Conflict theorists argue that the owners of such platforms, advertisers, potential employers, and parties interested in selling their products are among the advantaged groups. Users constitute the disadvantaged group in the end, regardless of how much they believe they benefit from social media. This is especially true if they believe they have control over the information they post. But it has already been proven that the platforms have absolute control.

3.3. *Symbolic Interactionism.* Symbolic interactionists are more interested in viewing social media as a mirror that allows its users, particularly teens, to be seen and heard. They engage themselves in understanding different kinds of terminology and symbols individuals use to indicate intent and mood on Facebook and other social media sites, for example, block (to take action to prevent someone from making any contact or viewing your profile) and add (to make a new friend). They also emphasize how order is dealt with while presenting themselves and seeking reactions to it.

3.4. *Network Society.* Castells first mentioned the term "network society" in his book *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, which was the first part of his *The Information Age* trilogy [16]. In simple terms, a network society is one in which the social structure is built up of networks that are powered by microelectronic-based information and communication technology. Castells believes that technology has created some forms of disconnectedness in modern society, which has resulted in a greater sense of autonomy. He writes that we are transitioning from the industrial to the information age. He discusses how new information technologies ushered in this historical shift. He mentioned how space and time in social practices are being transcended due to people's ability to do anything from anywhere as a result of using communication technology.

3.5. *Risk Society.* The risk society, developed by two sociologists, Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, is one of the most ambitious, expansive, and debated of the social theories of risk. It is a grand theory of society itself, concerned with the transition from modern industrial society to a new era distinguished much more by technological hazards [17]. In such societies, the distribution of "bads" is more important than the distribution of "goods." Pollution, contamination, and other byproducts of production are examples of negatives. But these are familiarly termed "technological hazards" due to the fact that, unlike "natural" hazards, they are considered preventable because they are created by society. In

this high-risk society, the magnitude and possibility of hazards are growing on a daily basis. People are gradually losing faith in experts and science. They are becoming doubtful about whether they are actually able to predict and protect them from technological hazards.

3.6. Conceptual Framework. Individuals use social media to communicate and stay in touch with friends and to meet new people. Students use social media for educational purposes. Using such platforms helps them improve their technological skills. It contributes to developing communication skills and allows users from all around the world to learn about different cultures. Social media provides a good platform for journalism as well. It is more convenient for readers compared to reading newspapers. It also plays a leading role in increasing the number of readers and meeting their demands. Social media is also beneficial to businesses. Businesses can use these sites to advertise and market their products and services to an even larger audience. Moreover, social media has already been proven to be a good platform for entrepreneurship. Ventures of different kinds are being run on such platforms.

Through its multidimensional use among users, social media has emerged as an originator of many new cultures. Effective communication, relationship formation, online education, journalism practice, product marketing, and entrepreneurship are some of the prominent ones. On the contrary, social media serves as an agent in the transformation of today's network society into a risk society. In such a society, social media is equally responsible for giving birth to several new threats, for example, troubled relationships, wasting study time, cyberstalking, yellow journalism, and business malpractice (Figure 1).

4. Research Methodology

Though the study area was supposed to be various public and private universities located in different districts of Bangladesh, mainly students from seven universities, such as the University of Dhaka, the University of Rajshahi, the University of Chittagong, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, North South University, and BRAC University, which are located in Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Chattogram districts, participated in the study. Those universities are therefore the study area.

Since this study was conducted among university students on two aspects of a particular subject, it was expected to be populated by students studying in all the universities in the country. But due to certain limitations, the study was limited to the students of a few universities in the country, so the students of those universities are the main population of this study.

Because the study is largely based on an online survey, the primary data collection instrument—a questionnaire—-was made available online for participation. Students from any university could participate in it. This kind of sampling procedure is often called "convenience sampling," a type of nonprobability sampling. Through this, a total of 217 participants were included in this study. Besides, a nonprobability

sampling method was employed in choosing 20 participants for case studies, all of whom were selected on the basis of availability.

Questionnaire and checklists were the main data collection instruments for this study. For collecting the necessary information, a structured questionnaire with a series of close-ended and open-ended questions and six checklists with different series of open-ended questions were used. The language in the questionnaire and checklists was both Bengali and English and was made as simple as possible, though the researcher had to give explanations for some questions on occasion. While constructing them, due care was given so that response categories were accurate, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and one-dimensional.

The questions in the questionnaire and checklists included sociodemographic profile of the participants; information on participants' use of different social media sites; relationships through social media, their problems, and underlying factors; participants' experience of facing cyberstalking; social media use for educational activities by participants; journalism, news reading, and yellow journalism on social media; use of social media as a marketing and sales channel for goods and services; and the emergence of social media as a platform for entrepreneurship.

Instead of other methods, a survey was considered more advantageous for this study since all the participants were literate. Another reason for choosing it was to provide them with enough liberty so that they could answer the questions posed to them in their most convenient way, which is very important for any researcher and report writer. Yet the collected data by itself usually does not reveal any significant meaning. The purpose of data processing and analysis is to give meaning to the data and present it to readers in ways that they can understand.

Quantitative data processing in this study involved the following steps: questionnaire registration, editing, and verification; listing of open-ended responses and classification; coding, code transfer, and validation; data entry structure creation, data entry, and authentication; entering data as per the questionnaire structure in Microsoft Excel; verifying the logic and accuracy of the data as per the filled-out questionnaire; keeping and maintaining data backups; developing an analysis plan; and program development, program running, and report generation.

5. Data Analysis

217 students participated in this study. In particular, the number of females is 139, and the rest are males. If categorized, participants fall within the age group of 18–24 years. They study in different disciplines at different universities. Though the survey was made open to any student from any recognized university in Bangladesh, findings make it evident that participants in this study actually belong to seven universities. To be precise, 66.9% of them are students at the University of Dhaka. Participants are mainly from different districts of Bangladesh. But in pursuit of education, they now live in either university halls or in the towns where their respective universities are located.
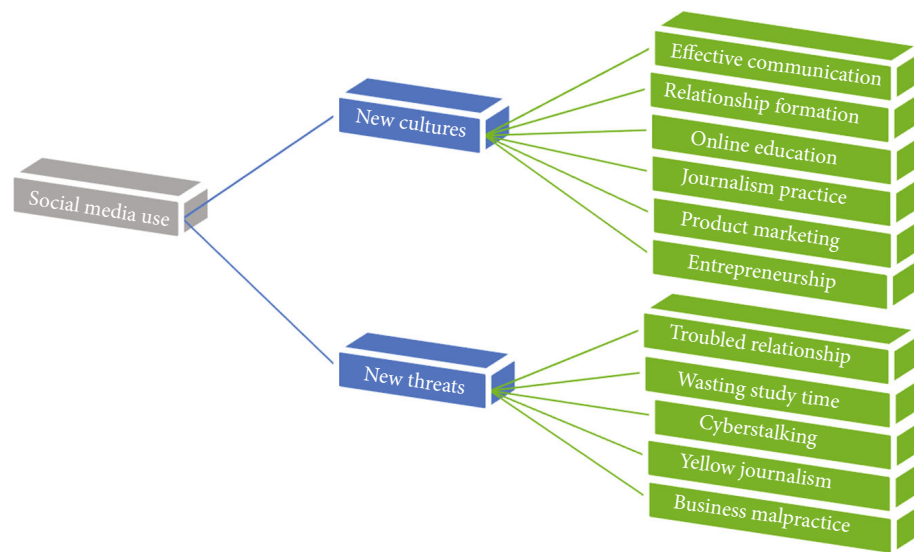
FIGURE 1: Conceptual structure.

5.1. Social Media Use. Participants were asked to indicate the medium through which they learned about social media in the first place. 72 of the females answered that they had learnt from their friends. Besides, the numbers of female participants who learned from parents, relatives, cousins, the Internet, and newspapers are 9, 6, 16, 24, and 12. On the other hand, 32 out of the 78 male participants mentioned "friends" as the source of their learning about social media. Five, 2, 20, 14, and 5 are the numbers of males who chose parents, relatives, cousins, the Internet, and newspapers, respectively.

Various answers were obtained in response to the question about the year in which they first started using social media. Such answers, however, fall within the category of 2012-2018 (including those 2 years). 28 male and 40 female participants started using social media in 2014, which is the most of all years. Participants were also asked what class they were in when they first started using social media. According to their answers, most of them actually started using them when they were in the first year of their intermediate studies (class XI). The number of males and females for this category is 35 and 52. Other classifications include classes IX, X, and XII and the first year of university.

Then, they were asked to mention which social media sites they generally use. From their responses, it is evident that all of them use Facebook and YouTube. The numbers of male and female WhatsApp users are 60 and 126, while 56 and 122 are the numbers for Instagram (Figure 2).

5.2. Relationship. 84 out of all the female participants indicated that they had been in a relationship through social media. Besides, 62 male participants replied that they had been involved in such relationships. Different participants had relationships for different durations. They were then asked about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction before the beginning of the relationship. Though some mentioned dissatisfaction, most of them replied that they had been satisfied with the relationship just before it started. They were

content with their respective partners as well. Other opinions, at the same time, were noticed. Those who noted that they were not satisfied with the relationship before the beginning were given the additional question to answer why they got involved then. It was found that, despite being dissatisfied initially, most of them got involved because they could not control their emotions. They thought that everything would be fine with time. Some others mentioned that they had already fallen in love, so they could not stop themselves.

Participants were instructed to indicate the kinds of problems they faced while staying in the relationship. It becomes clear from the responses that most of their relationships became problematic due to various trust issues. Some feel that the depth of the relationship was superficial. Others mentioned physical distance as a problem. Participants were also questioned about doubtfulness. 89.3% and 61.3% of the total female and male participants who were involved in social media relationships expressed that their respective partners used to doubt them. Moreover, participants were asked whether they had been tortured physically by their respective partners or not. 42.9% of the 84 female participants replied in the affirmative. But no male participants mentioned having been tortured, which explicitly represents the traditional beating practice of women by men in Bangladesh.

Then, there was a question that asked the participants to indicate when they decided to get out of such dysfunctional relationships. The types of responses were different between male and female participants. Most of the male participants who were involved in that kind of relationship answered that they had decided to leave after trying several times. In contrast, among the female participants, it was found that they decided to come out of the relationship only when they could not bear the trauma anymore. It is quite common in Bangladesh that women are generally more cautious about any relationship. No matter what, they give their best to keep the relationship going. Needless to mention, it does not
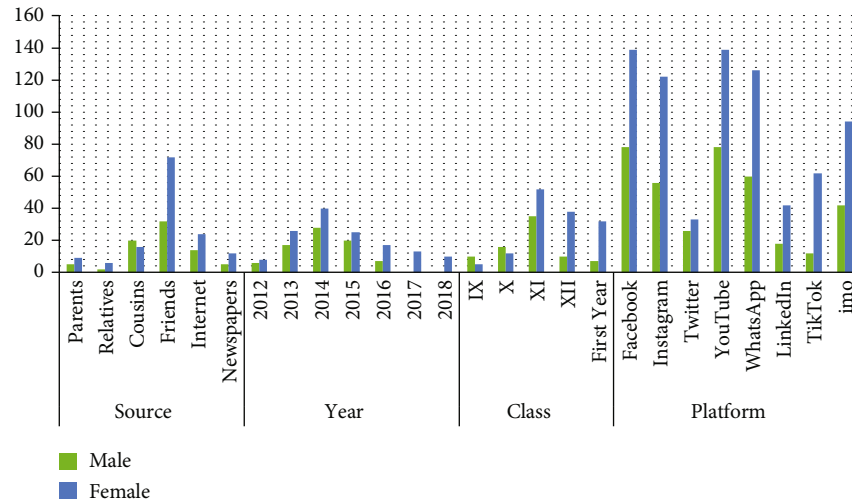
FIGURE 2: Social media use.

mean that men do not care. They certainly do. But women usually put in more effort than men.

It is no wonder that there will be some intrinsic reasons for someone breaking up a relationship. When asked about the main reason behind their decision, three types of responses were received from the participants. Most of them said that they were left with no other options because the relationship was not working at all. Some said that they became unable to live their normal lives at some point. The relationship was actually causing problems in their day-to-day living and overall well-being. Other than that, some stated that they could not stand their respective partners anymore after a certain period (Figure 3).

11 female participants who had been in relationships through social media mentioned that their respective partners, after the breakup, had some sensitive photos or videos of them in their possession. But no such cases were found among the male participants. Nine of those 11 female participants further mentioned that they had been blackmailed with those sensitive photos or videos. They all, however, took legal action against the perpetrators, and they were all promptly brought to justice. Those participants later stated that they had not been bothered by those criminals ever again.

5.3. Cyberstalking. It was found that 95.7% of the total 139 female participants had experienced cyberstalking at least once. Conditions, on the other hand, are better among the male participants. Only 14.1% of them reported having been cyberstalked. When asked to specify the kind of cyberstalking they faced, participants indicated the types of cyberstalking they experienced individually. It is worthwhile that most of the female participants faced monitoring and defamation. Other major forms of cyberstalking they encountered include threatening, solicitation for sex, identity theft, and false accusation. In contrast, all 11 male participants mentioned having faced defamation. Some of them experienced other forms as well (Figure 4).

60.9% of the 133 female participants who were cyberstalked expressed that they had been publicly humiliated.

In fact, it did not end there. They asserted that even their family members had to face humiliation and embarrassment. Similarly, the male participants who were cyberstalked also claimed that they had to face public humiliation. Participants were asked, in case they knew the identity of the perpetrator, whether they confronted and warned them. Most of the participants answered that they had, but the culprits did not correct themselves even after being warned. They continued to do the same activities. In response to the question of whether they had taken legal steps or not, all 11 male participants answered in the affirmative. But only 27.1% of the 133 females informed that they had taken legal action against the criminals.

Because 97 out of 133 female participants replied in the negative, meaning that they had not taken any legal steps against those who cyberstalked them, they were further asked why they did not do so. Responses from them fall into three categories. 44% of them mentioned that they feared more humiliation if they took any legal action. 32% cited the fear of insecurity, while another 24% indicated that the perpetrators were too powerful. They thought making any legal complaints would not ensure the criminals' arrest. On the contrary, victims would have to suffer more. For such reasons, they refrained from filing any complaint.

Those who stated that they had filed complaints were then asked whether or not the perpetrator had been punished. The 11 male participants responded positively and also mentioned that those culprits had not troubled them afterwards. Only 17 of the 36 female participants who took legal action confirmed that the perpetrators were arrested. Complaints from the other 19 were not addressed. Moreover, those who were arrested were released within a few days. They continued to trouble the victims after their release. If truth be told, some of them still trouble those participants.

5.4. Education. Participants were asked if they used social media for educational purposes. 77.7% of the 139 female participants answered that they do. Besides, the percentage among males is 89.7. They were asked to identify the kinds
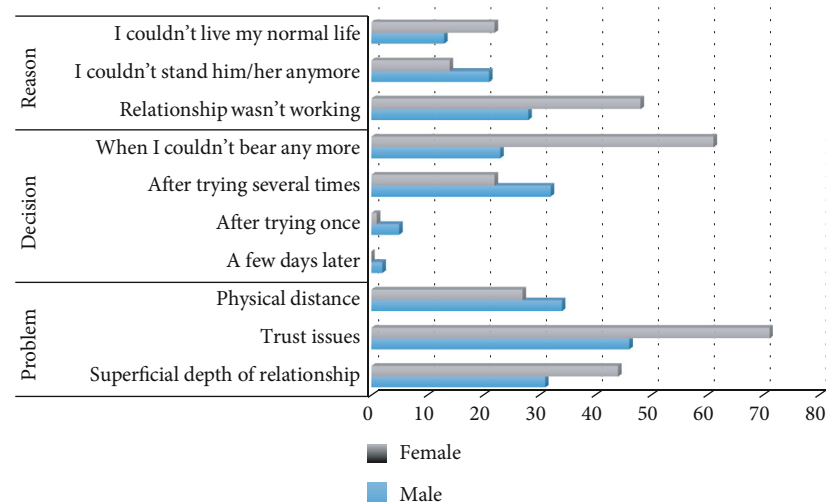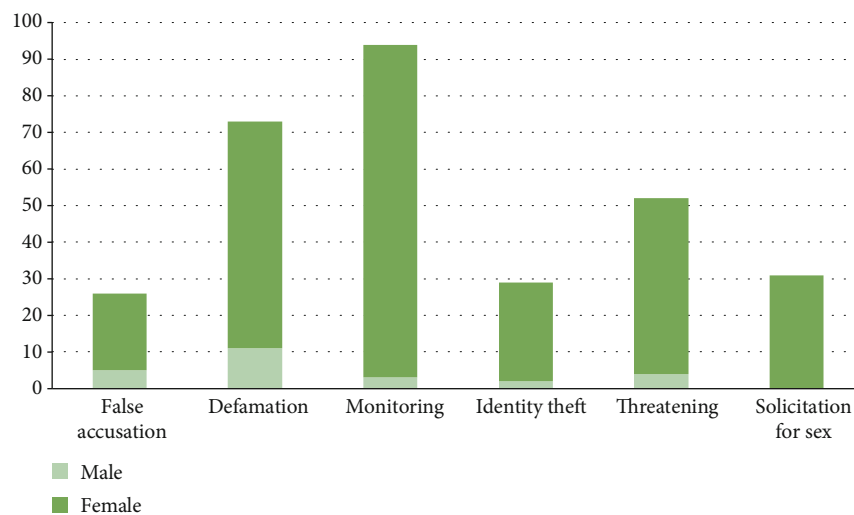
FIGURE 3: Dysfunctional relationship.

FIGURE 4: Cyberstalking.

of educational activities they engage in through the use of social media. It is observed from their responses that most of them use social media for attending online classes or exams and viewing online lectures. Many stated that they use social media to collect reading materials, which helps them prepare for studies. Some others mentioned that social media acts as a handy platform for them to arrange group studies (Figure 5).

When asked if using social media helps them learn effectively, apart from a handful of them, most of the participants replied positively. They were further asked whether they thought using social media wasted their time or not. Surprisingly, 81.4% of the males answered that they think that it wastes time. The percentage is 70.4 among the 108 females. Those who said that social media wastes their time were then asked to indicate the ways in which it does so. Most of them feel that its use creates distraction. Since they feel that it wastes their time, they were asked why they did not quit using it then. In response, most of the female participants

cited the other intriguing features it offers to students as a reason. Some said that they cannot quit it because it is an effective communication tool. Others admitted to becoming addicted to it. Male participants also indicated those reasons.

Those participants were later asked if they tried to use social media less. In response, 84.2% of the females replied in the affirmative. They said that they tried to use it sparingly so that it did not waste their time. They became aware of its harmful effects and tried to get out of this practice as soon as possible. On the contrary, though many male participants were found to have tried, the rate was lower among them compared to women. In terms of numbers, 59.6% of them mentioned that they tried. It is noticeable here that women are more responsive to these issues than men and are generally more prone to breaking out of such habits.

Since many think that it also wastes time besides helping them in their studies, every participant was asked to make a choice if they would suggest to others to use social media. Interestingly, 75.6% of the female and 62.6% of the male
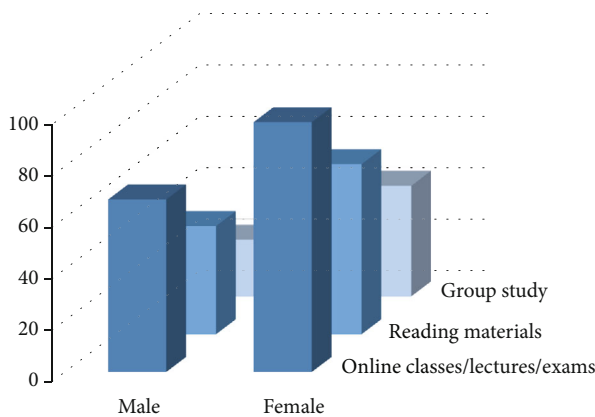
FIGURE 5: Educational activities.

participants answered in a positive manner. Despite the fact that many of them believe it wastes their time in one way or another, they would do so because there are many productive things students can do on social media that can greatly assist them in completing various tasks. They have to simply ensure that they remain careful about using it.

5.5. Journalism. To answer the question if they were familiar with journalism and news publishing on social media, all the participants replied in the affirmative. Then, they were asked whether they read the news on social media or not. In this case, in spite of providing positive remarks to the previous question, 26 females and 3 males replied that they do not. But the rest of the participants said that they read the news on such platforms. Participants who replied positively were then asked to evaluate its usefulness. 97.3% of male and 94.7% of female participants informed that they think it is helpful. Furthermore, those participants were asked to indicate the reason why they thought so. In response, most of them said that its flexibility is the main reason why they consider it helpful. Many of them also expressed that it saves them time. Others opined that it saves on their newspaper-buying costs.

In recent times, it has been noticed that bad journalism practice, in other words, "yellow journalism," is alarmingly increasing. But does it exist on social media too? What do the participants think? When asked such questions, 87.2% of the 78 male participants replied that they think it also exists here. Besides, 73.4% of the 139 females also commented in the same way. But many others were found who do not believe any bad practice on social media exists. Some others refrained from commenting on this issue. Those who claimed that bad journalism practice exists on social media were then asked if they believed the false news that is spread by this practice. Shockingly, 36 males and 86 females replied in the affirmative.

In addition, those who believe such news were further asked why they do so and what causes them to believe fabricated news like that. Many of them commented that they do not usually check the authenticity of news after reading it. As a result, they fail to identify them as false. Some believe false news because many people share it. Hence, they think that it

must be valid. If not, people would not share them. There were some who mentioned that they believe the news because it seems believable. Some others said that they usually consider the news genuine. They do not generally give a second thought to whether the news is authentic or fake. So they believe in the kinds of news that are utterly false and manipulative (Figure 6).

Nine journalists were found among the male participants in this study. They work as campus correspondents for different newspapers or online news media. They were asked if their respective organizations practice or support such bad practices. Only 5 of them confessed. None of those organizations, however, is a leading agency in Bangladesh, and they are unknown to most of the people. Those 5 participants were further asked whether they had ever reported any false news or not. They replied that they had once or twice. When asked why they did so, 3 of them said that they were forced to do so. Two others said that they did it deliberately.

Those who were forced were then asked if they protested such forceful acts. They replied that they did not. When asked to state the reasons, fear of losing the job was mentioned by them all. Two of them also said that they did not realize its negative impact. One of them added that he was not fully aware of journalism ethics at that time. It is worth mentioning that none of them are involved in this practice anymore.

5.6. Product Marketing and Sales. 90.6% of the female and 70.5% of the male participants conveyed that they consider social media a good platform for product marketing. Besides, those who consider it as such find this practice very useful for them. They were also asked if they had ever shopped after seeing any advertisements on social media. 74.6% of females and 54.5% of males mentioned that they had. It is no wonder that women are larger in number because they are usually more prone to online shopping than men. Furthermore, those who shopped at least once after seeing ads on social media were asked to share their individual experience. 19 of the males and 68 of the females expressed their satisfaction; others expressed disappointment over their bad experience.

Participants who had a bad experience due to shopping on social media sites were then asked to indicate the problem they thought was responsible for their misfortune. In reply, most of them blamed the product quality. Some opined that there might have been problems in the manufacturing process. A handful of them commented that the problem lies in the package delivery system (Figure 7). Moreover, they were asked if they thought there was any fraudulent activity going on. 90.9% of men and 65.4% of women who had unpleasant experiences from shopping on social media replied that they think that those businesses involve fraudulent activities. Others, despite being dissatisfied, did not complain about the presence of such.

Those who were dissatisfied with shopping were additionally asked if they had filed any formal complaints. Most of them answered that they did. But when asked if those complaints were addressed, many of them said that they
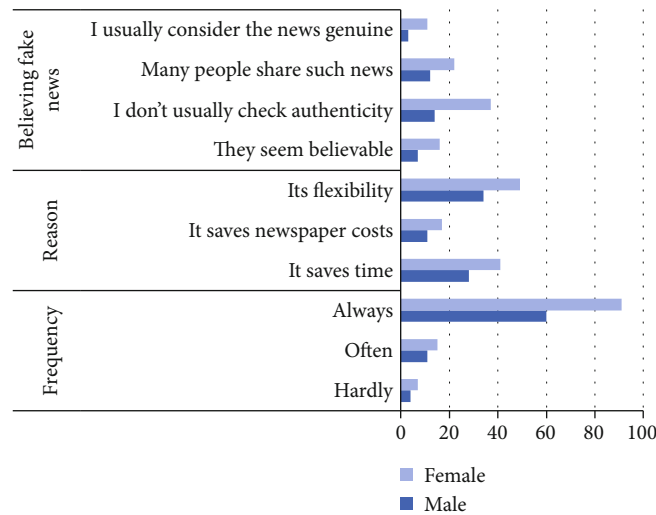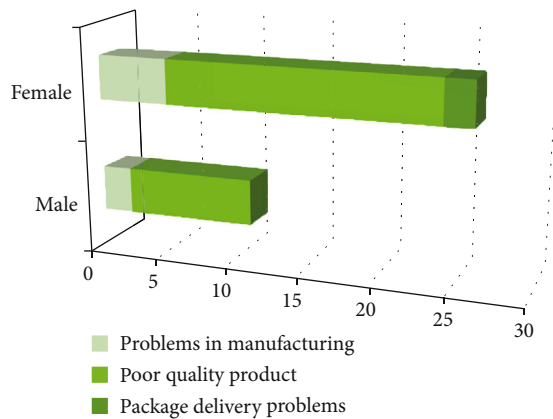
FIGURE 6: News on social media.

FIGURE 7: Causes of bad experiences.

got some sort of reply or feedback. But the problem is that they did not receive any replacement or refund. Participants were then asked to express their individual opinions about the fact that such unscrupulous acts and the people associated with them are causing harm to the potential of social media as a platform for product marketing and sales. 93.6% of the male and 91.4% of the female participants mentioned that they also think so.

5.7. Entrepreneurship. 85.9% of the male and 76.3% of the female participants were found to consider social media as a potential platform for entrepreneurship. They were asked if they had seen any such initiatives on social media. In response, 125 out of 139 female and 74 out of 78 male participants informed that they had. Participants were then asked to mention whether they had been consumers of any of those initiatives. 32 men and 61 women replied in the affirmative. Later, attempts were made to incorporate some understanding from those who have their own ventures. 13 female and 9 male participants in this study are entrepreneurs. They have different kinds of ventures, such as manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, and services. But 9

females and 7 males among them are in different retail businesses.

Speaking of the source of investment, some said that their family backed them in venturing. But most others said that they got into the business as a group of friends or acquaintances. They contributed as much as they could to give it a start. When it got a bit of success, they somehow managed to get bank loans. All of them stated that they did prior market research and gained adequate knowledge about the field before diving in. Despite the fact that none of them have achieved success by a wide margin yet, the majority of them indicated that they have seen at least some silver linings that have kept their hopes alive. They cited their determination, dedication, integrity, efforts, and hard work as the factors behind their sustenance in business.

When asked to indicate the reasons they think are responsible for others' failure in such ventures, they mentioned a number of reasons. Most of them think it is due to the overlooking of constant customer dissatisfaction. Some others commented that instead of giving importance to the main components of a business, thinking of profit only is another reason why a venture can fail. Other notable reasons cited by them are lack of adequate knowledge, lack of management skills, and lack of prior market research (Figure 8). Finally, they were asked if they believed such failures discouraged others and cultivated a negative culture. All of them agreed and also opined that it damages the potential of social media sites to become a better platform for entrepreneurship.

5.8. Case Studies. The 20 case studies conducted were subjected to thematic analysis to better understand each objective of this study. The six themes are dysfunctional relationships, cyber harassment, for education: pros and cons, state of journalism, marketing vs. shopping, and entrepreneurial experience. Five of the case studies are centered on the nature of flawed relationships started through social media, 5 on the horrors of being a victim of cyber harassment on social media, 3 on the positives and negatives of
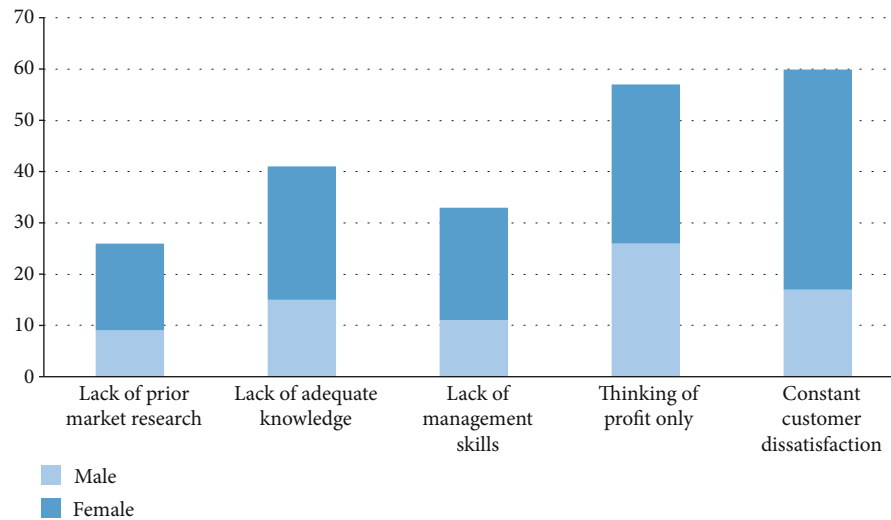
FIGURE 8: Failure in ventures.

using social media for education, 3 on the impact of journalism practice on social media sites, 2 on social media's role in business promotion and sales, and the remaining 2 on the efficacy of social media platforms for entrepreneurs. However, it should be noted that the information and experience obtained from these case studies can actually be interpreted as an extension of the quantitative analysis presented above.

6. Discussion

Based on the analysis of quantitative data and case studies, the researchers were able to underscore the following points:

6.1. Social Media and Relationships. Since university students in Bangladesh are young and at the highest stage of academic studies, they are generally more familiar with different social media sites. It was found in this study that they often engage in romantic relationships through social media use. And these relationships have different end products. Some work out, while some do not. Those that do not work, of course, have a variety of problems. In fact, those that work have various inherent and internal problems too.

The most pronounced problem is that the depth of the relationship is superficial. Partners in relationships often feel that their relationship is hollow. They feel the absence of a strong bond between them. They think that the relationship may end for a small reason, and since their relationship has a weak bond, they usually fail to hold on to that relationship. In addition, if one partner feels the relationship is unnecessary and does not want to continue it anymore, there is practically no way the other partner can work it out. It happens every now and then because those relationships are based on fragile bonds.

Trust issues are very important in these relationships. Partners frequently question whether or not the other is committed to the relationship. One of the shocking traits of this is the use of social media itself. Many of the participants in this study expressed that they cannot be sure if their partners are doing the same thing with others (the way they

met and got into the relationship). They often fear that their partner may be in a relationship with someone else. Therefore, it was revealed that most of them know the password to log in to their respective partners' profiles so that they can check their activities. No wonder that it is due to the sheer lack of trust between them. Doubt has taken a leap over trust to the extent that they want concrete proof. They have become some kind of surveillance device for one another.

Besides, relationships that are only confined to social media conversations and have rare physical meetings with each other are more problematic compared to others. Due to not meeting someone physically, one may get many ideas that are not true for that particular person. The study found that the probability of matching the physical and virtual personality of an individual is very low. In fact, even in the most optimal case, very few matches are found. Rather, discrepancies are noticed even more. It is clear that the person they were with seemed to have a different personality before the relationship, but then, things changed between them. In such cases, it becomes very difficult to cope with someone whom they conceived as otherwise. As a matter of fact, this kind of relationship is more fragile than others. Moreover, there are trust issues, emotional gaps, shattered expectations, etc.

One of the alarming developments in relationships through social media is the exchange of nudes between partners. It is more common among girls. Boys used to blackmail girls emotionally to send nudes. Under the illusion that everything would work out fine and they would marry, most girls send such obscene images. On top of that, girls usually feel that if they refuse to send, the partner might end the relationship. In such circumstances, they actually feel forced to send these pictures. Anyhow, everything goes well as long as the relationship remains. But these photos cause huge problems for the girls when the relationship ends on bad terms.

Needless to mention, every boy does not take advantage of it. But there are many who do so by using the photos.

They often blackmail the girls to fulfill their physical needs. Since girls fear that boys may expose those photos, they give in to their demands. In this way, many boys keep having sexual relationships with girls. There are some cases in which girls resort to suicide in the fear that they and their families will be humiliated. Since our society is not welcoming to the victims (especially women) of crimes, girls do not generally seek help from the police, scared that it would bring disgrace to them and their families.

Relationships through social media are not good—we may not generalize in this way, but it must be acknowledged that the majority of such relationships are problematic and often result in negative consequences. They are causing harm to both day-to-day life and the well-being of individuals. But we cannot blame social media for everything, because how it is used depends on the people, and the people have to decide their course of action. They should get to know the partner well before getting involved and handle all aspects of the relationship with proper care and enough maturity.

6.2. Cyberstalking and Cybercrimes. There are different forms of cyberstalking one may use to make someone's life horrible. Making false accusations is one such form. In this study, many cases were noticed in which false accusations were made against university students. Though male students are often the targets of such accusations, female students were found to have faced these a few times more often than males. They frequently become the victims of it. Moreover, since universities in Bangladesh are congested places with thousands of students, those accusations do not take long to spread among other students. Thus, they get humiliated for no reason. The notion of making false accusations in Bangladesh and particularly among university students has become so recurrent that students live in continuous fear of becoming the next victim.

Though false accusations also cause defamation, defamation is a distinct type of cyberstalking. It can be done both in written and oral forms. Spoken defamation is called slander, whereas defamation in other media is called libel. Libel is generally done through printed words and images. Monitoring is another form of cyberstalking prevalent in Bangladesh, the impact of which on someone is dreadful. It makes the victims' lives kind of hell. They are usually left with no privacy since all their movements are monitored by the perpetrators. There are some cases in which the victims do not even know that they are being monitored. But in most cases, though the victims realize that they are constantly under the surveillance of others, they do not protest or file a legal complaint, fearing that the culprits will cause harm to them.

Identity theft is nowadays a common act in Bangladesh. This study found that university students often assume other people's identities to accomplish a certain goal. Through such activities, crimes are being committed in the names of people who do not even know about the incident. Therefore, innocent people are being criminalized and becoming victims without doing anything at all. Threatening someone by using social media is also called cyberstalking. One may take up the identity of another and threaten others. But those who get threatened start living in constant fear, and their normal day-to-day lives are greatly disturbed.

One of the most dangerous forms of cyberstalking and cybercrime is solicitation for sex. Perpetrators, mostly males, solicit for sex using various social media sites. They forcefully do so, and if the females do not comply, they start blackmailing them in different ways. Young girls are the frequent victims of such crimes. In this study, most of the female participants indicated that they had gone through such horrific experiences at least once in their lives. Some mentioned that they face it constantly.

It cannot be denied that the widespread use of social media among people in general has enabled them to surf through the huge cyberspace. It has created opportunities, or in other words, a culture of connecting people, if not physically, at least in cyberspace. But it is also true that it has simultaneously caused increasing cyberstalking, which is getting worse day by day. Cyberstalking itself is an enormous threat to social media users, and what is more alarming is that it is giving birth to other new threats and crimes as time passes.

6.3. Educational Activities. Many online platforms, like Zoom and Google Classroom, are widely used for taking classes all around the world. Teachers and administrators find them easier to use and so do the students. Since these platforms are very user-friendly, students can cope with them quickly. They also provide messaging options and some similar functions to mainstream social media sites. In this way, in addition to classes, students can communicate among themselves personally or as a group. The use of mainstream social media sites in education and learning is also impressive. Students can find live classes on Facebook, recorded classes on YouTube, and shared lectures on WhatsApp, to name a few. In addition, its use among university students often develops their inherent creative qualities.

Though social media use has helped create an effective culture of providing education, it has opened doors for some threats too. In spite of the fact that its use makes education interesting to many, we must not forget that social media is a place where people visit to spend time, not to learn. So, while classes are taken online or through social media, there are always some students who get distracted and do other things when they are supposed to be attentive. They fail to keep pace with the continued progress of the classes. Instead of enjoying the whole process, they eventually get trapped in an endless loop of distraction. In the long run, it affects them in their studies and they cut a sorry figure in the exams.

University students are young adults who must take good care of their health so that they do not fall sick and lag behind in their studies. To maintain good health, they require having their meals and getting adequate sleep on time. But due to the increasing amount of time they waste on social media—other than learning or doing something productive—they neglect those activities. In effect, it does not just affect them physically but also mentally. Moreover, they use several electronic devices like smartphones, desktops, and laptops to access social media, which are usually

harmful to human beings when used for more than a certain period of time. In this way, their health and well-being are affected and so is their academic performance.

Students are becoming more and more dependent on social media day by day for gaining information and knowledge. Earlier, they used to read books, journals, notes, etc. But now, as the years pass by, their reliance on social media and other online platforms for educational and learning purposes is increasing. As a result, their reading habits are declining. Furthermore, as university students nowadays tend to acquire information online because it takes less time and is easier to do, their ability to learn and research is also declining.

6.4. Journalism and Social Media. The introduction of social media has changed the form of journalism yet another fold. Social media sites are extensively used for news circulation. But its use as a means of disseminating fake news on a large scale is increasingly questioning the effectiveness of such platforms. The main reason for the rapid spread of fake news is the lack of fact-checking. Some news outlets publish fake news, but some of them do so inadvertently. Whenever they get such news, they also publish it without checking the facts. If they make the slightest effort to verify that news, they will know that it is nothing but a lie. The same goes for readers and viewers of the news. Moreover, if they find a news item interesting, they immediately forward it to others and promote it personally. Thus, false news usually gets more reach than true news.

The study found that many university students who are not expected to believe false news also accept such news as true. Since they are at the highest level of formal education, the country expects them to be responsible. But the research found many students who blindly believe this fake news. In addition, many students at the university are engaged in the profession of journalism. Although many of them work in established media agencies in Bangladesh, there are a number of students who work in agencies whose credibility is questionable.

Those who work at established outlets are usually discreet in their writing. But those who work in questionable outlets seem to be manipulated. If you read their writings, you will come under the impression that they are different ideologues. Many of their remarks do not even make sense. In this study, the researcher identified a number of fake news items and presented them to those university students who reported them. When asked why they did so, some tried to justify their report by saying that they had done the right thing. Evidence was shown to them, but they were adamant in their stance. A few students were found who admitted that they knew the news was false before it was published but still reported it because their superiors wanted it that way, and they reported it without protest due to the fear of losing their jobs.

There are many university students who are prudent in both the role of journalist and reader. But there are also some students whose speech is incoherent, and some of them are actually involved in yellow journalism. Besides, there are many students who responsibly verify the authen-ticity of various misleading news items. But there are also students who believe such news at first sight. The problem is that fake news circulation has become so widespread that the thin line between true and false news is blurred. People now get hesitant while reading any news on social media. There is no denying that social media has elevated news coverage and journalism to new heights, but it has also introduced the threat of fake news and yellow journalism.

6.5. Marketing of Products and Services. All types, such as manufacturers, promoters, sellers, and consumers, are found among university students. However, in terms of numbers, most of them are consumers of various products that are promoted and sold through social media. It was found that the use of social media for product marketing is especially helpful for university-level students. Since they are no longer accustomed to watching TV these days, they may not learn about new products. In addition, for various reasons, they do not go to the market. Therefore, they generally feel comfortable shopping online. But it is also important to know the details of the products they want to buy when shopping online. This is where marketing of products through social media helps.

When asked, those involved in either online business or marketing answered that they think social media has added a new dimension to product marketing and is able to reach customers faster than any other available medium. Simply put, the use of social media helps them reach a wider audience. Also, word-of-mouth actually plays a dominant role in increasing the popularity of a product. Many of those who shop through social media also share their positive or negative experiences on these platforms. Thus, good products become known and bad ones are rejected. In addition to being more affordable than any other existing marketing strategy, it allows providers to collect first-hand customer feedback, which often helps improve their quality. Most importantly, it enhances user engagement.

But despite the many positives, there are some shops which do business only to profit by deceiving the shoppers. Their main strategy is to attract purchasers through enticing advertising campaigns. Those who fall into these traps are deceived. Many such incidents have been reported in recent years. In this study, several participants reported that they had been deceived by various online shops and had suffered huge financial losses. They feel that because these crimes are not strictly controlled and the perpetrators are not punished, they are able to continue their business and deceive new customers every day. So, while social media is gradually evolving as an effective platform for product marketing and creating a good consumer culture, it is also becoming a terrifying medium of deception day by day.

6.6. Entrepreneurial Initiatives. It is worth mentioning that in Bangladesh, many businesses that are finding success nowadays are online-based, and many of them are actually entrepreneurial. Truth be told, the widespread use of social media among the people of Bangladesh is influencing entrepreneurs in many ways to take such initiatives. In this study, some university students were found to be involved in some

ventures being run on social media. It was revealed that they have decided to run their businesses on these platforms because they do not require mandatory physical operation or much money like conventional businesses. They can easily handle an online business from home or a small warehouse.

Since everyone is active on social media in this age, they find it more convenient to reach out to their customers through this medium. Promotion or marketing usually costs a lot of money, but they can promote the products almost for free on any social media site. This way, they can reach more shoppers at a minimal cost. Social media use is also a contributing factor to effectively increasing sales of products and services. Moreover, it allows customer feedback to be received quickly. As a result, any customer problem can be resolved as quickly as possible. Another important thing is that if you are a social media influencer, there is a great chance that you may convert your followers to customers.

But despite such bright sides, there is also some risk of loss, because it is not unknown that, at the end of the day, not all initiatives are profitable. It is very important to do groundwork or market research before starting any venture. But it is often noticed that many people take similar initiatives and invest a lot when they see another entrepreneur succeeding. However, they lack the necessary knowledge and information on what they intend to do and where they intend to invest. Simply put, they do not spend much time figuring out what they are diving into. Consequently, they fail miserably in their endeavors and suffer huge financial losses.

Furthermore, any entrepreneurial venture requires a team of dedicated staff and proper management. Since this kind of business is not like other regular businesses, these two things are the basis of what holds the whole thing together. But many times, they start a business and, after a while, they lose interest. They do not care enough about the initiative they have invested in. They even disregard constant customer dissatisfaction. Hence, their ventures fail. Also, there are a number of initiatives that are run solely to deceive people. So it is no exaggeration to say that while social media creates a favorable environment for entrepreneurship, it also poses a threat of failure and deception.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Social media is handy in many ways, but we cannot corroborate that it is being used only for positive purposes. Besides creating a good number of positive and constructive cultures among the masses, it has given birth to several new threats that are detrimental to people, society, and the country as a whole. In addition to aiding people in many ways, it constantly puts them at various risks. In order to ensure people's safety and a satisfactory domain for social media use, immediate steps should be taken. In this regard, the following are some recommendations:

(i) Despite being troublesome, it goes without saying that the formation of relationships through social media will keep going and probably grow in number in the future. We may not stop the culture of start-ing such relationships, but awareness among people must be enhanced so that they remain cautious before getting involved in any relationship using social media. They must take decisions in a mature and responsible way

(ii) The rate of cyberstalking and cybercrimes committed by using social media is gradually increasing. It is becoming one of the most dangerous modern-day threats to people. Young people are subjected to such crimes more often. If not controlled at once, it will eventually grow into a more concerning issue. To ensure the end of this practice, strict rules and regulations need to be introduced, and their implementation must be made sure

(iii) Though social media use benefits many students in their studies, there are many who engage in unfruitful tasks. They waste their time on these sites to the extent that they fall behind bit by bit, which, as a consequence, results in their poor academic performance. Parents, teachers, and superiors have to be mindful of their children's social media use habits and monitor them continuously

(iv) People routinely read the news on different social media sites. But due to the presence of bad journalism practices, every day they are exposed to numerous fake and wrong news items. Such news often creates rumors and negative attitudes among them. If it is not stopped right away, it will trigger more crimes afterwards. Hence, regulatory acts should be enacted in no time, and the proper practice of ethics must be promoted among journalists

(v) Business has reached a new dimension through social media marketing. People are now able to familiarize themselves with various products and services while skimming their newsfeeds. However, there have been reports that many of these businesses deceive people. To secure a favorable ambience for both businesses and consumers, proper guidelines and rules must be put into motion promptly

(vi) Entrepreneurship on social media is gaining more and more popularity day by day. The number of entrepreneurs and ventures is increasing. But owing to its misuse by some people, social media is turning into a risky space for initiatives. Authorities have to take adequate measures as soon as possible to keep its efficacy unharmed. Only then will it be a good platform for entrepreneurs

7.1. Ethical Issues. In order to carry out successful research, researchers should ensure ethical issues are addressed. In this study, ethical standards were maintained at every stage. For example, the questionnaire provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study, in which respondents were asked to read before providing any information. Similarly, each

participant was briefed before the case study. It was ensured that everyone took part voluntarily.

Participants were informed clearly that the information they would provide in the survey and during the interview would be kept strictly confidential. Only the researchers would have access to them. Such specifics would be destroyed upon completion of data analysis and crosstabulation. The names of the participants were not recorded anywhere.

Furthermore, privacy during the interview process was safeguarded. The interview was held under conditions in which the participants felt most comfortable so that they could respond openly. It was totally dependent on their discretion to participate in the interview. The study registered oral consent from all interviewees. Any form of coercion of the study subjects was strictly avoided while obtaining consent or conducting the interview.

7.2. Limitations. It is generally accepted that every researcher is swayed by money, manpower, and time. So, despite all the positive initiatives taken to conduct this study properly, it has a number of limitations. First, a major portion of the data in this study is reliant on participants' self-reports and may not be free from unintentional or intentional response biases or deliberate concealment. Nevertheless, because of the nature of the survey and the extensive techniques taken to ensure confidentiality and privacy, it is unlikely that participants provided socially desirable answers.

Second, survey research requires a handsome amount of money. But the researchers had limited resources that compelled them to curtail many of the plans that could have helped to improve the value of the research. Third, survey research is time-consuming. A good survey requires a number of months. But the researchers had only three months to complete the study. With more time, the accuracy rate of the study could have been enhanced.

Data Availability

217 university students studying at different public and private universities across the country were surveyed online as part of a quantitative way to gather data. In addition, interviews with 20 students produced case studies to develop in-depth comprehension. Participants were made fully aware that the information they provided would be held in strict confidence throughout the survey and interview. Access to them would be restricted to the researchers only.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Acknowledgments

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