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## Consumers’ attitudes towards social e-commerce for rice and shrimps with emphasise on female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

Worldwide, online markets are becoming a more popular shopping place day by day with the development of digital technologies. Among the various types of e-commerce, social e-commerce has gained popularity in developing countries. In Bangladesh, Facebook-based social e-commerce (f-commerce) is the most popular one, which is becoming an opportunity also for female entrepreneurs. Many women are starting to sell products through f-commerce, including agricultural food products. Since females are not so common in the traditional food market in Bangladesh, f-commerce could be a new opportunity for them. Very little is known about consumers’ perceptions of f-commerce for food products, with an emphasise on female entrepreneurs. To address this gap, this research aims to gain insights into consumer attitudes toward f-commerce, focusing on female entrepreneurs selling rice and shrimps. Five online audiovisual focus group discussions were conducted with 41 consumers from Dhaka, Bangladesh, in June 2022. Our findings indicate that convenience and service are the main general reasons for consumers to purchase online via f-commerce platforms. In the case of rice and shrimps, consumers shop from f-commerce because of availability of specific products from some certain growing areas. When it comes to the decision for a specific f-commerce shop, price transparency, reasonable price and low delivery charge are purchase criteria. Reviews and recommendations influence consumers’ purchase decisions on this social e-commerce platform. Trust in the authenticity of entrepreneurs on a f-commerce platform is an important issue for consumers.. All participants appreciate that f-commerce platforms provide economic opportunities for women, but product quality and service are more important than the gender of the seller in their decision from whom to buy. Our study suggests that to have a sustainable position in the f-commerce food market, female entrepreneurs need to meet the expectations of consumers as the consumers do not buy from them just out of good will. The research findings provide valuable suggestions for female entrepreneurs which is of great importance to adapt to consumers’ demand as well as to enter the f-commerce market and prove the sales of food products.

**Keywords:** Consumers’ perception, Facebook, female entrepreneurs