

An analysis of popularity of Consumer to Consumer websites

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Abstract

Websites on the net are making the world business very effective, challenging and dynamic. Business running with the use of websites in the form of buying and selling is called E-commerce. Among the various types of E-commerce business model Consumer to Consumer (C2C) is spreading in Bangladesh rapidly and getting familiarity among the customers. However, no such recognized study has been done to investigate consumer to consumer E-commerce business model in our country. The main purpose of this study was to find out popularity and strength of the websites, and customers satisfaction of overall buying and selling using the C2C websites. Data were collected from ten C2C websites, and 75 users of the C2C websites. The Age groups of the customers were also analyzed to discern which groups are involved in doing business online. The results revealed that out of ten websites four websites are more popular in terms of Bangladesh ranking and these websites have strengths which are commonly the demands of the users. It is found that the young generation of Bangladesh is more active on these websites for buying and selling their products. However, buyers suggested introducing mechanism for authentication of the sellers for avoiding fraud.

Keywords

E-business, E-commerce, Consumer to Consumer, Popularity.

1. Introduction

A silent revolution is taking place in the area of E-commerce in Bangladesh. Despite several limitations, such as, lack of computer and internet literacy, access to the internet and high cost of internet etc.

E-commerce websites are getting familiarity day by day. A moderate percentage of Bangladeshis are satisfied with online shopping, only less than half of them stay loyal to their online sellers [18]. However, in the long run, these customers will be loyal and can be retained only when online businesses constantly satisfy them by providing detailed product information on websites, better customer service, quality and timely delivery of goods and importantly effective webs [7]. C2C e-commerce has a unique feature that the consumers have the opportunity to interact directly with the seller for buying the products [8].

The registered users of C2C websites can sell new as well as old goods and sometimes fewer middlemen may be involved in the transactions [5]. In Bangladesh context, the buyer can negotiate with the seller regarding price, payment, and delivery appropriate for them. At present, C2C E-commerce is the most popular and successful online auction worldwide for example, ebay [3], [4] classified the four consumer online reselling types. These are (i) resale of extra purchase, (ii) resale after temporary ownership, (iii) unintentional resale, and (iv) disposition.

In the recent years, C2C websites where customers themselves engage in buying and selling activities are getting popular to the general people of Bangladesh, especially, to the new generation. There are more than a dozen of Consumer to Consumer (C2C) websites active in Bangladesh. The popularity of these websites may be turning point of Bangladesh, which can be a positive move widely accepted by the young generation. Most important aspect of this website is, the cost of the products remains within the purchasing ability of the customers and moreover, bargaining can be done with the seller. On the other hand, the seller can sell their products without facing any kind of hassle.

The C2C websites are getting more popularity as mobile operators are providing internet services and offering 3G service which has resulted access to the E-commerce sites [13]. Consequently, this kind of businesses are increasing at a tremendous rate as more consumers are getting access to the Internet

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directly via their smart phones or other mobile devices [9]. Additionally, Participation in online auctions using C2C websites may influence the amount of time the consumers spend online [6]. No study has been found to analyze popularity of C2C websites in Bangladesh context. This study investigates the popularity of the C2C websites depending on the visitors for a certain period of time and perceptions of the users (buyers and sellers) about this promising business model.

2. Related Work

In electronic commerce both human intentions and system reliability can affect consumer trust [19]. When users start navigating a website, they start to develop some confidence that the system will perform as predicted [10]. Through this confidence, the user will build trust in the system, learning more about its behavior, its reliability and the risks involved in using it [10].

Past research showed that E-commerce is changing considerably. However, managing an online business is rewarding as well as challenging. With the growing popularity of online shopping worldwide, web sales will definitely affect the overall success of a business. In the recent years, e-commerce has transformed selling and buying behaviour of the people. The Internet provides a fast and easy way for people to purchase things without having to visit a physical store. In fact, selling products online has become so popular that many retailers sell only online with no physical location [12].

One of the first things that an ecommerce website should consider is its sources of targeted traffic [12]. Targeted traffic [12] is important for any website, and the more targeted traffic that an ecommerce website receives, the more sales it is likely to make. Top10 E-commerce Site Builders states that a comprehensive analysis of targeted traffic from the World Wide Web can show the E-commerce website owner many important things including where the website is receiving the most traffic from, the websites that most people are visiting after the ecommerce website and which traffic sources could be improved. However, the conversion rate for an e-commerce business is the number of visitors making a purchase directly from the website expressed as a percentage of the total number of visitors [10]. In other words, the conversion rate is simply the percentage of customers who do what you want them to do as a

result of using your site: this might be purchasing a product, but it could also be joining a mailing list or visiting one of the physical stores with a voucher obtained on-line [11].

The length of time spent by a visitor on an ecommerce website is also important. By spending more time on the website, a person is more likely to buy certain products [20] and services that the ecommerce website offers. The ecommerce website can use web analytics to determine which pages are attracting the most visitors, and it can determine which pages are keeping people on the website for a long time [12]. Once the statistics have been studied and analyzed, the ecommerce website can work to improve certain pages that aren't holding people's attention, and they use linking, content and design techniques to send people from certain high-performing pages to sales pages. Web analytics and statistics will show the website owner which countries, languages and areas are providing the most visitors and the most sales. This can help the website owner more accurately determine which marketing strategies have been the most effective in certain countries, and it can help them improve marketing strategies in other countries from which they are receiving little traffic [12].

Based on a web search and a questionnaire survey [17] analyzed the distribution and classifications of tourism websites, explored the functionality of these websites, and assessed user satisfaction. The results showed that the majority of tourism website providers are regional tourism destination organizations that mainly provide comprehensive local tourism information and services. The results also show the level of regional economic development has a significant impact on the construction of these local tourism websites, obtaining information is still the main aim of web users, however, the difficulties are slow Internet access.

Several studies discussed the website ranking systems. [10] Investigated the factors that affect e-commerce website usability and analyzed the role of those factors in increasing the effectiveness of e-commerce web sites. The researchers presented the application of a Multicriteria Satisfaction Analysis (MUSA) method to rank usability attributes in websites based on their competitiveness importance. The results suggested that for each e-commerce website has certain usability attributes are likely to be

more crucial to the success of the e-commerce website than others. Therefore, identifying the relevant usability attributes in advance through customers' feedback can be a great advantage to website developers if they want to have an edge over other competitors. [16] used the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to determine the weights of different components of the index, and the Fuzzy Synthetic Evaluation (FSE) method to evaluate the websites incorporating factors relating to website design, contents, and effectiveness. [15] proposed an evaluation model based on analytic hierarchy process (AHP), fuzzy sets and technique for order performance by similarity to ideal solution (TOPSIS), to tackle the issue in fuzzy environment. The AHP is applied to analyze the structure of ranking problem and to determine weights of the criteria, fuzzy sets is utilized to present ambiguity and subjectivity with linguistic values parameterized by triangular fuzzy numbers, and TOPSIS method is used to obtain final ranking [15].

Different organizations are doing ranking of E-commerce websites. Alexa.com is one of them. However, BrainSins, [2] declined to accept the ranking done by Alexa. BrainSins claimed that Amazon's levels and overthrowing Amazon from its dominant position in the market is something that still seems impossible. Amazon has various types E-commerce including C2C. BrainSins, analyzed the results of ranking and found three trends. These are Vertical markets appear, such as Etsy (handmade products), ThemeForest (website templates and designs) and Booking (hotel reservations). BrainSins claimed that these products, for the time being, are not included in giants like Amazon.com, and the lack of competition and focus of these websites have possible enabled their significant growth, placing them among the top eCommerce websites (in terms of traffic).

The literature review shows that there has been sporadic work on ranking of websites. Although different organizations are ranking the websites but there are debates and confusions about the ranking outcomes. The literature also presents the idea of conversion rate for ranking of E-commerce website including the success factors.

3. The Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- (a) Rank the popularity of 10 C2C websites and identify strengths of the top ranked websites
- (b) Compare the number of posting and selling by the users
- (c) Compare the frequency of access and buying
- (d) Find out user's perceptions and satisfaction levels

For this study, data were collected from the selected C2C websites, online sources and the users of the ten selected websites that is, the buyers and the sellers, by administering questionnaire and conducting face to face interviews. Demographic information of the customers such as age, gender, and occupation was also collected.

There are more than a dozen of C2C websites in Bangladesh but ten websites were selected for ranking. These ten websites were ranked on the basis of the number of visitors accessed each of the websites for a particular duration (three months). Comparison of the ten selected websites was done with respect to the total number of visitors for a period of three months. Finally, ranking of all ten websites was done with respect to visitors from Bangladesh and from the rest of the world that is, Bangladesh (BD) ranking and world ranking. Simultaneously, strengths of the four top ranked websites collected through observation from these websites.

The qualitative data were collected from 75 (male 60 and female 15) buyers and sellers by conducting interviews regarding their number of products uploaded and number sold, problems encountered for conducting business using the C2C platform, and their level of satisfaction. The data were analyzed utilizing quantitative and qualitative techniques. The age of the buyers and sellers was grouped as

16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35 and 36 to 36++ to show the percent of the visitors on the websites. Quantitative data on frequency of access by the customers on each of the 10 C2C websites were collected with the help of Alexa.com and analyzed to rank the website. This analysis revealed four top ranked websites that is, more popular website in Bangladesh. Data were also analyzed to find the international ranking of these 10 websites and number of posting of items and number sold. The data received from the customers were analyzed

qualitatively to find out customers' perceptions and their satisfaction levels.

4. Results and Discussion

Popularity and Strength

The ranking of the ten websites was done on the basis of the total visitors for a period of three months. The ranking of these websites for both Bangladesh Ranking (BD Rank) and world ranking are shown in Table 1. This data was collected from [1] on July 28, 2014 which was then modified as per requirements of this study.

Table 1: Ranking of the C2C websites

Website	Bd Rank	Visitors from BD (%)	World Rank
Bikroy	14	91.9	4943
Cellbazaar	42	90.9	13972
Olx	44	93.4	11802
Clickbd	124	77.1	20977
bdplace	8067	56.9	515106
Realestatebazaar	10306	78.5	1444855
Robibazar	Not Found	Not Found	4584133
Discountbangladesh	Not Found	Not Found	1534285
Bdbazar24	10498	80.8	15116557
Bazarsodai	Not Found	Not Found	1805516

Out of ten websites, BD ranking of four websites falls within the range of 23 to 93. These ranking indicates the position of each of the websites with respect to all registered domains in Bangladesh. Table 1 also indicates that most of the visitors are from Bangladesh that is, these websites are very much popular among the internet user of the country. World ranking of these websites are shown in Table 1. A comparison of popularity of these websites is shown in figure 1.

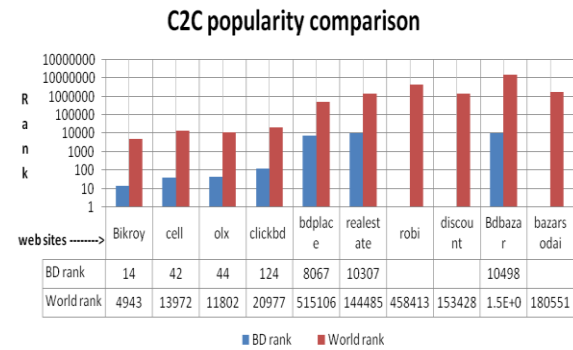


Figure 1: Popularity graph (Data Alexa.com)

Figure 1 presents the BD ranking and world ranking of the ten websites. The position of each of the websites is shown along the Y axis. The question may arise as to what are the aspects that affected the ranking. To identify the reasons of the popularity among the visitors, especially, the Bangladeshi citizens, strength of the four top ranked were observed and summarized. This study did not compare the strength of the four top ranked websites instead summarized the overall strengths of these websites. These are: (i) C2C business model is familiar to the consumers because of user friendly characteristic [10] (ii) delivery of products covers city and district areas (iii) flexible payment system such as, credit card, bank cheque, cash on delivery, and payment through mobile banking service, (iv) huge number of collections of products (v) personal information of the users is securely stored in the server which indicates privacy of the customers [10], (vi) social network support and (vii) reputation of selling of 90% of the products.

Frequency of visit and Customer Satisfaction

A questionnaire was administered to collect the data from 75 users of these websites to know their purpose of visit, upload product, number of product sold, number of products bought, number of visits etc. Face to face interviews were conducted with the users to know the problems encountered during visit to the websites, their satisfaction level and opinion of the websites.

The following table presents the percentage of visitors (users or consumers) as per their age groups. The result shows that most of the users (age group 16 -25) are young generation which is aligned with [9] that the use of E- commerce are increasing at a tremendous rate as the customers especially the young generation are getting access to the E-commerce through mobile or smart phone. However, this finding may not apply to other type of E-commerce such as B2C or B2B.

Table 2: Use of the C2C website as per age of the visitors

Age (years)	Percent
16-20	51.35
21-25	22.97
26-30	12.16
31-35	8.10
36 →	5.40

The users get access to the C2C website for several purposes. These are to (i) collect product information and price [17], (ii) uploading products, (iii) buy products at cheaper rate, and (iv) get rid of sold products.

The data received from the users shows that (i) one in six customers who visit the websites buy a product, (ii) one in three uploaded products is sold successfully via these C2C websites, (iii) most of the users (78%) visit these websites only for collecting information and comparing prices with the traditional market, (iv) average number of visit by a customer is seven times per month. The satisfaction levels of these customers are given in table 3. The customers have mixed reactions but more than 80% of the customers have a very positive attitude about satisfaction with the services of the selected C2C websites.

Table 3: Satisfaction level of the customers

Level of satisfaction	Percent of users
highly satisfied	40.5%
Satisfied	41.9%
moderately satisfied	13.5%
satisfied to some extent	4.1%

Despite satisfactions with the services of the websites, the customers reported some problems attached to this kind of E-commerce, such as,

posting fake ads, duplicate ads, poor quality of images of some ads, lack of product information in some cases, and taking longer time for uploading products. However, the customers provided some suggestion for improvement of the services. These are (i) duplicate ads should be removed by the system administrator, (ii) sold items should be removed immediately, and (iii) authentication of the identity of the ads poster to avoid cheating. The suggestions indicate that the customers gave emphasis on risk of buying products [8] from an add poster who have no authentic identity.[14] also gave emphasis on identity of the seller and developed a mechanism for identifying the seller.

The findings of this study has illustrated that the top ranked websites have strong strength and usability such as user friendly navigation, security and flexibility which may be the reasons for attracting the customers especially the young generation of Bangladesh. These aspects may have increased customer trust and build confidence among the young generation for online buying and selling.

5. Conclusion

This study has revealed the four top ranked C2C websites and their strengths, quantitative information of add posting, successful selling and buying of product while visiting the websites. The strong strengths of these websites may increase trust and confidence of the customers. It is very interesting that young generation of Bangladesh are getting familiar with this kind of technology supported business which might have a positive impact of the country's economic development in the future. Additionally, this E-commerce platform may play an important role for doing business without boundary. However, the system administrator and owner of the websites should pay attention to the security matters, authentication of the ads poster, and technical problems of the websites for making this E- commerce platform more attractive and safe environment for doing business. Further study should focus on the conversion rate of the websites and verify ranking.

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