

Impact of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Buying Behaviour: Evidence from Fashion Industry in Colombo District of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In today's digital era, social media has become a powerful marketing tool, reshaping consumer behavior and brand visibility. The fashion industry, particularly has been significantly influenced by platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, which drive trends, shape preferences, and influence purchasing decisions. While global studies highlight this impact, limited empirical research exists within the Sri Lankan context. Recent studies emphasize the growing reliance on digital platforms by fashion retailers, yet there is still a lack of evidence on which social media factors most affect Sri Lankan consumers. This study aims to examine how social media advertising affects consumer buying decisions in the fashion industry, focusing on the Colombo District. The research investigates the influence of entertainment, familiarity, social image, advertising spending, and social media usage on consumer behavior. A quantitative methodology was adopted, using questionnaires distributed among social media users engaged with the fast-fashion industry. Data were analyzed through correlation and regression using SPSS. Results indicated high internal consistency among variables, with strong positive correlations (0.657, 0.746, 0.703, 0.798, 0.808). The model explained 67.8% (R^2) of the variance in consumer buying behavior, and regression analysis confirmed all hypotheses with significance at $p < 0.05$. Findings reveal that social media advertising strongly influences consumer behavior, with entertainment and social image emerging as the most impactful factors. This highlights the dynamic role of fast fashion and the necessity for brands to design campaigns that are both engaging and socially appealing. For marketers and policymakers, these results emphasize the importance of aligning digital strategies with consumer expectations in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing market. By focusing on localized insights, this study fills a knowledge gap in Sri Lanka's fashion industry and contributes to the broader understanding of digital advertising effectiveness.

Keywords: advertisement spending, consumer buying behavior, entertainment, familiarity, social image