

Impact of Influencer Marketing on Customer Purchase Intention with Mediation of Brand Trust: Special Reference to Sri Lankan Fast-Food Industry

M.W.H.A. De Silva^{1,*} and A.M.S.I. Adhikari²

*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka^{1,2}*

*Corresponding author: hiranakalankadsilva@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media and influencer marketing have become emerging topics in marketing and consumer behaviour, marking a new era of consumption where influencers increasingly shape everyday purchasing decisions. Although existing literature has paid considerable attention to understanding this phenomenon, there has been limited focus on developing contexts, highlighting an important research gap. Therefore, this study examines how social media influencer marketing affects customer purchase intention in the fast-food industry of Sri Lanka's Western Province, addressing this gap. Social media influencers have become influential marketing agents, shaping consumer behaviour and brand perception. The research investigates how influencer marketing can boost purchase intentions by fostering brand trust, offering strategic guidance for fast-food businesses in competitive markets. Using a quantitative, deductive approach, the study developed a theoretical framework linking influencer marketing, brand trust, and purchase intention. Data were gathered through convenience sampling, from 384 consumers in the Western Province and analysed statistically to test hypotheses. Results reveal that social media influencer marketing has a positive effect on purchase intention, with brand trust significantly mediating this relationship. Key influencer attributes (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) are essential in influencing consumer perceptions and decisions. The findings contribute to academic knowledge by clarifying how social media influencers impact consumer behaviour in the fast-food sector. Additionally, the study provides practical recommendations for marketers aiming to strengthen brand trust and customer engagement through targeted social media strategies. Overall, this study highlights the strategic importance of influencer marketing in Sri Lanka's fast-food industry and underscores the crucial role of brand trust in driving customer purchase intentions. These insights are valuable for businesses seeking to optimise their digital marketing efforts amid a rapidly evolving social media landscape.

Keywords: brand trust, fast food industry, influencer marketing, purchase intention