

The Impact of Characteristics of Instagram Influencers on Customers' Purchase Intention towards Fashionable Clothing in Sri Lanka

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Instagram is a visual-based social media platform and currently people tend to purchase through Instagram. Fashionable clothing is a significant sector in Sri Lanka which is active on Instagram as well. While the global fashionable clothing companies have gained success through the influencer marketing concept and through influencers on Instagram, the performances of the Sri Lankan fashionable clothing sector on Instagram are not up to the standard with that of traditional promotions. Hence, the purpose of this research is to identify the impact of the characteristics of Instagram influencers on the customers' fashionable clothing purchase intention in Sri Lanka. The study observed the impact of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness on customers' fashionable clothing purchase intention. This is a quantitative study and structured questionnaires were distributed among 384 female Instagram users who are following at least one fashion clothing influencer in Sri Lanka using the snowball sampling method. The findings elaborated that trustworthiness and expertise have a positive impact on the customers' fashionable clothing purchase intention while attractiveness negatively impacts on customers' fashionable clothing purchase intention. Trustworthiness has been identified as the most influential factor in this regard. Due to the lack of effectiveness of the traditional media, the study has identified the impact of Instagram influencers' trustworthiness and expertise on customers' purchase intention to uplift fashionable clothing companies' performances. The study emphasized that it is necessary to identify and engage with the Instagram influencers who have reliable personalities, experience and knowledge in the field of fashionable clothing such as micro-celebrities and fashion designers to increase customers' purchase intention towards fashionable clothing in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Fashionable clothing, Instagram influencers, Purchase intention*