



Determinants of Consumers' Attitude towards Viral Marketing Practices in Private Higher Education Sector in Sri Lanka

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The rapid advancement of information technology has opened many cost-effective avenues for marketers to communicate their messages to customers. One of the emerging techniques of marketing communications through the use of information technology is viral marketing, which is widely recognized as a prolific direct marketing tool for marketers across the world. Despite the extant literature postulates that individuals who pass along messages play a vital role in viral marketing practices, factors that result in increased acceptance of viral marketing practices by consumers remain largely unknown. This paper addresses voids in extant literature by examining factors influencing consumers' attitude towards viral marketing practices in private higher education sector in Sri Lanka. The data was gathered through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire from 236 respondents across Sri Lanka. Correlation and regression analysis were used as the major analytical techniques. Findings indicate that informativeness and source credibility have a positive, statistically significant impact on consumers' attitude towards viral marketing practices whereas irritation has a negative, statistically significant impact. However, entertainment did not emerge as a determinant of consumers' attitude towards viral marketing practices. Implications for the marketing managers are to design and deliver viral marketing practices through a credible source that provides informative messages to consumers. Moreover, the adoption of permission-based viral marketing practices may lead to a more positive consumers' attitude towards viral marketing practices in Sri Lanka.

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