

KEY DETERMINANTS OF FACEBOOK ADVERTISEMENT AVOIDANCE IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY: A STUDY OF WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

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With the radical transformation of the conventional forms of advertising, Facebook has emerged as a powerful network for advertising where it has expanded to the automotive industry as a common practice leading to major increases in sales growth, profitability, and market share. Regardless of this growing trend, individuals' daily social media activity demonstrates a behavioural pattern known as advertisement avoidance. This conduct has been identified as a major impediment to the anticipated effectiveness of social media marketing operations. Thus, it is vital to identify the major factors that cause Facebook users in the automotive industry to avoid social media marketing. The study deployed a positivist research paradigm and deductive research approach following the survey research technique, which optimally expounds the study's broader research approach. 318 usable responses were examined to validate the proposed hypothesis using multiple linear regression. Results show that privacy concerns, negative experiences, and goal impediments on Facebook are significant influencers of advertisement avoidance, while perceived personalization and ad skepticism do not have any impact on Facebook users' advertising avoidance behavior. This study will pave the way for automotive industry practitioners to expand their businesses into virtual platforms by understanding major factors that cause Facebook users' avoidance behavior towards social media marketing as this study will be one of the few studies in Sri Lanka that empirically investigates how to stimulate social media marketing via Facebook.

Keywords: *Automotive industry, Facebook advertisement avoidance, social media marketing*