



**IMPACT INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS' SOURCE
CREDIBILITY ON CONSUMERS' BUYING INTENTION:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FASHION INDUSTRY
IN SRI LANKA**

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Abstract

The objective of this research study is that examine the impact of Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumer buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry. Businesses use different techniques to engage with their valuable customers and in now a days social media has become one of the famous and convenient promotional platforms. Currently, Instagram is 3rd growing platform in social media because of the attractive features included in Instagram. Then according to these research studies, the researcher has examined how influencer marketing impacts consumer buying intention. That means how Instagram influencers provide influence through the 3rd growing social media platform of Instagram. Furthermore, the Researcher has used the Source credibility model to conduct the research, and Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, and Expertise have been used as independent variables and buying intention as the dependent variable. The researcher also has used the quantitative method and through Google form researcher has collected the data. These



research results can be used for further researchers to a better understanding of influencer marketing.

Keywords: Buying intention, Fashion, Influencer marketing, Instagram.

1. INTRODUCTION

Most companies have used different kinds of techniques to engage with their customers. Marketing strategies are used by companies to promote their products and services to their consumers. The proper marketing strategies support acquiring competitive advantages in the marketplace. There are different types of marketing strategies such as Paid advertising, Cause marketing, Relationship marketing, Undercover marketing (Stealth marketing), Word of mouth (WOM), Internet marketing, Transactional marketing, and Diversity marketing are available in the practical world (Team, 2016). Internet marketing acquires a significant place among these marketing strategies.

The process of creating and maintaining customer relationships through online activities can be defined as Internet marketing (Authors, 2006). Email marketing, Search engine optimization (SEO), and Social media marketing are several kinds of examples of Internet marketing. Social media marketing has become a famous marketing method nowadays. Among them, Instagram is a heavily used medium by modern consumers (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-sánchez, 2018).

Then social media influencers is a third parties who influence consumers' attitudes through their social media (Lin, Jan, & Chuang, 2019). Influencers create useful and creative content such as blogs, tweets, and posts likewise things by showing their Lifestyle, Attitudes, Experience... etc. and publish those things on their accounts to enhance the attention of the customer (Lee & Ha 2020). They influence consumers through social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and etc. (Abdullah et al., 2020). Which are quick, fastest, and easy platforms that influencers can be engaged with their consumers (Wansi et al., 2020).



According to the past literature, the most of the studies on social media has been conducted as communication media and social media has also developed its process of communication by targeting social media (Chatzithomas, Boutsouki, Hatzithomas, & Zotos, 2004). Therefore, there is a gap in knowledge with application of the social media as a factor of influence to consumer behavior. As well as there is limited attention has gained when we consider social media it impacts for buying intention of the consumers. There are a limited number of researchers are carried out to find how Instagram impact in buying intention of consumers. And research such as the impact of social media influencers on Instagram user purchase intention towards fashion products is one of them (Abdullah et al., 2020). Therefore, it can recognize a gap between the Instagram impacts on consumer's buying intention.

And most cases previous researchers have focused on how social media marketing impact purchase intention (Kim & Ko, 2010; Priyankara, Weerasiri, Dissanayaka, & Jinadasa, 2017). The researcher has found that, there is a limited number of researches are carried out to find the impact of social media influencers on purchase intention (Abdullah et al., 2020). Therefore, researcher has recognized that there is a gap between Instagram influencer on consumer buying intention.

The most of the studies in phenomenon of social media influencers on Instagram purchase intention have conducted in western context and in few selected Asian countries such as Malaysia and Kantienberg, Belgium (Abdullah et al., 2020; Wansi, n.d.). so, there is a limited number of researchers are carried out to find the impact of Instagram Influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention towards the fashion industry in Sri Lanka. Therefore, researcher has recognized that there is a limited number of researchers have conducted to find out the impact of Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention towards the fashion industry in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, the findings of the current study that, impact of Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry in Sri Lanka will contribute to enhance the theoretical knowledge with filling the knowledge gaps and as well as to fill the conceptual gaps. This study aims to investigate the impact of Instagram influencers on consumer buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry in Sri Lanka.



1.1 Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of trustworthiness of the Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention in fashion industry.
2. To examine the impact of attractiveness of the Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention in fashion industry.
3. To examine the impact of expertise of the Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumer's buying intention in fashion industry.
4. To explore the gender differences in relationship between Instagram influencers' source credibility and purchase intention of fashion apparels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Instagram influencers and purchase intention

The researcher has found that the people who have well-established credibility in Instagram and unique ability to influence the audience to purchase certain products or services in Instagram are called Instagram influencers(Kolarova, 2018). The researcher has found that 93% of marketers also use these influencer marketing and 9 out of 10 customers believe that influencer marketing is very effective(Kolarova, 2018). Social media influencers (SMI) also play a major role in the marketing industry because the customer believes the influencer rather than the brand(Kolarova, 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). They use Instagram regularly. Usually, Instagram influencers have a large number of followers and a high engagement rate(Kolarova, 2018).

Furthermore, there are some pros factors of Instagram influencer marketing. Those are, Marketers can gather feedback from customers on particular products and they help to build the brand building process(Abdullah et al., 2020; Kolarova, 2018). Because 93% of marketers are using influence marketing and 9 out of 10 they also think that the concept of influencer marketing is effective(Kolarova, 2018). Marketers can interact with existing and potential customers. Because “82% of consumers say they're very likely to follow the recommendation of an influencer they follow, and 67% say they had no negative reaction to sponsored influencer content whatsoever. 70% of teens trust influencers more than traditional celebrities.” (Kolarova, 2018). Furthermore, the



Instagram influencers business (brand) can reach the new target market, improve search ranks, develop lucrative partnerships, and many more things (Abdullah et al., 2020).

Buying intention means a possibility to purchase a product or services in the future by the consumer (Kim & Ko, 2010; Muditha, 2011). That means it is a conscious decision to purchase a certain product or service (Abdullah et al., 2020; Rebelo, 2017). The past researchers have found that Instagram influencers have a positive relationship with buying intention (Abdullah et al., 2020). Because one of the reasons is that consumers believe in the influencer rather than the brand (Kolarova, 2018). This concept provides more opportunities to businesses through providing some impact for their sales and as well as enhance their profits too (Abdullah et al., 2020; Kim & Ko, 2010a; Kolarova, 2018; Rebelo, 2017).

2.2 Fashion apparel Purchase intention

Fashion industry consider as a multibillion-dollar international firm dedicated to the business of designing, manufacturing and selling clothes to the consumers” (Shan et al., 2018). In simply, fashion is the way to express ourselves to others (Abdullah et al., 2020; Shan et al., 2018). Social media such as Facebook and Instagram are effective platforms for the fashion industry (Abdullah et al., 2020; Shan et al., 2018). Visual content is a very important factor for the fashion industry (Shan et al., 2018).

2.3 Source credibility

“Source credibility is a term, commonly used to imply to communicator’s positive characteristics that affect the receiver’s acceptance of a message”. (Ohanian, 2013) It refers that the influencer’s recommendations being believable, true, accurate, or authentic (Rebelo, 2017). In simply the theory says that consumers are more interested when the source represents it as credible (“Source Credibility- Persuasion Context,” n.d.). Because credibility sources can enhance the consumer’s beliefs, attitudes, and also opinions (Rebelo, 2017). And further, it is also effective when the influencer is attractive, trustworthy an expert or a combination of those three elements (Ohanian, 2013). This is one of the most applied models in for influencers persuasiveness (s (McGuire, 1985).



The receivers' level of acceptance of the message that convey by the influencers called as trustworthiness of them its significantly influence for positive response towards the purchase of fashion apparel (Liu, Jiang, Lin, Ding, Duan, & Xu, 2015). Moreover, the receiver's preference for the influencer's physical appearance, personal traits and personality that causes for the attraction to them. Hence, based on it the message can gain greater attention and high recallability that can be significantly for the purchase of fashion apparels (Fanoberova & Kuczkowska,2016). In building bond with customer and influencer, their perceived level of skills, practice or knowledge is important (Lis & Bettina., 2013). Through this trusty connection in fashion industry significant to establish good relationship, maintain consumer interest with effortless communication that helps to generate high intention (Kapitan & Silvera 2015). Based on the above discussion, current research hypothesis posits,

H1: - There is a positive impact of trustworthiness of the Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry.

H2: - There is a positive impact of the attractiveness of the Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry.

H3: - There is a positive impact of expertise of the Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumer's buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry.

H4: gender of the respondents moderates the relationship Instagram influencers' source credibility and consumer's buying intention fashion apparels.

3. METHODOLOGY

Impact of Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry in Sri Lanka is conducted under as quantitative research study with the survey method. Data were analysis by using the statistical method that in quantitative techniques that data being in quantitative nature.



Then the researcher has found that the population of the study was Male and Female Instagram users in Sri Lanka. Sample consisted with generation Y,(25 – 40) Instagram users in Sri Lanka with composition of different genders in generation Z. According to the TRCSL survey, more than 6 million active social media users are in Sri Lanka currently. Further among them more than 1.5 million of users are in age between 10-23ⁱ.The Napoleon cat those are the groups who are highly used in Instagram in Sri Lanka. A cluster sampling is used as the sampling method of these research studies(Malhotra, 2010). It's consisted with 120 respondents and the data collected from Instagram users through the Google form that rated the responses on seven -point Likert-type scale which represents, 1- strongly disagree to 7- strongly agree with the second section of the questionnaire.

3.1 Source of Credibility Model

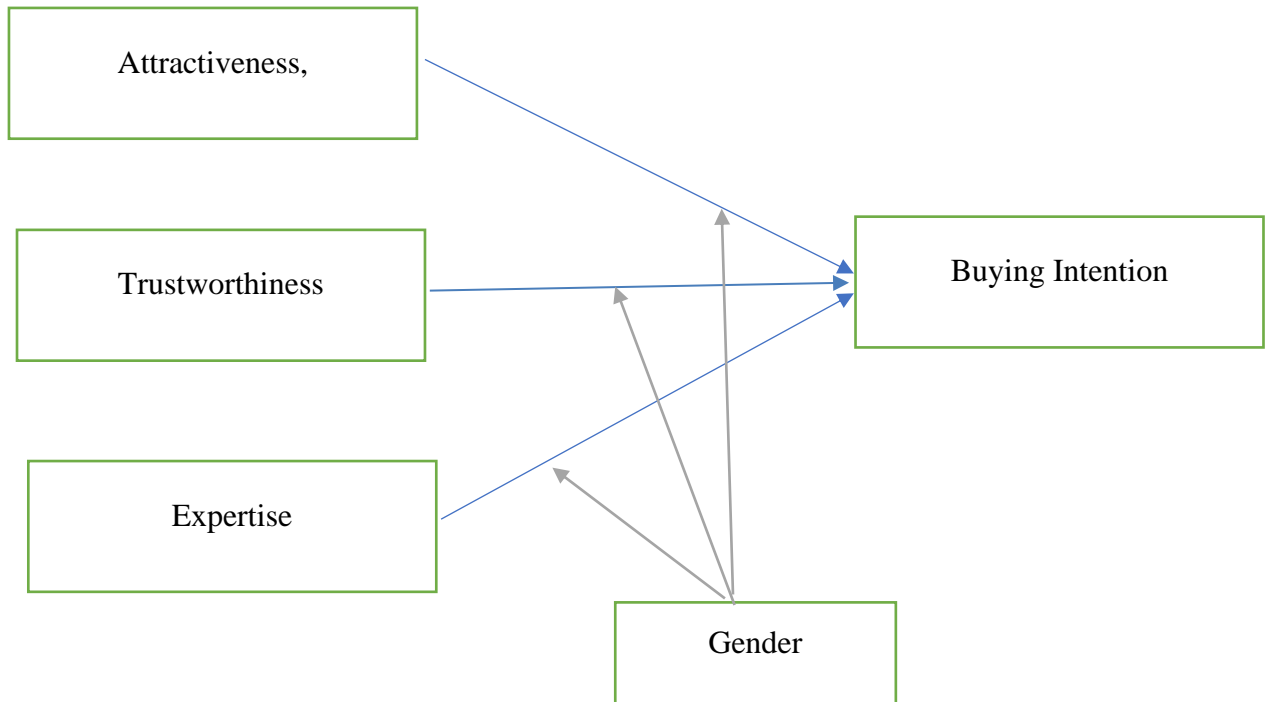
The questioner was built on source of Credibility model that has focused Source Credibility Theory. It's one of the major models that have used in previous research studies to study the different persons endorsement. Accordingly, celebrities or a popular personality can be influence to the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of receivers that endorsing the objects. In there, there are main three variables related to the Instagram influence as, attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise have considered in this research as independent variable that based on the source credibility model(Ohanian, 2013). to check the impact of source credibility to consumer purchase intention. The conceptual model are shown in the figure 01.

Table 01: Measurements of the variables.

Attractiveness	Attractive, classy, handsome/beautiful, elegant, sexy.	(Rebelo, 2017)
Trustworthiness	Dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, trustworthy	(Rebelo, 2017)
Expertise	Expert. Experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, skilled	(Rebelo, 2017)

Source: Study Survey (2022).

Figure 01: Conceptual Framework



4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The frequency statistics indicated that, the sample distributed closely similar between two genders as 47.5 percent (47.5 %) of males and 52.5 percent (52.5 %) of females. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (65 %) represented age group 10-25 while 26-41 group comprises with (32 %) from total. Moreover, largest number of both respondents earns around Rs.25000-35000 and majorly spends around Rs. 10000-20000 as their clothing budget in similarly. Both male and female respondents tend to visit Instagram around 2 times per day in this sample, and significantly larger number of females tend to buy fashion product on Instagram influence compare to males (Males=36. Female=52).



There are two analysis performed in this research. Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the relationship between the two variables: relationship between Instagram influence as independent variable that get through the Source of Credibility Model: attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise and consumers buying intention in retail setting while they purchase fashion apparels. Moreover, hierarchical regression analysis was employed to measure moderating effect of gender of the respondents on dependent factor.

Items yields a Cronbach Alpha value for these three factors are (attractiveness: 0.918, trustworthiness: 0.906, expertise: 0.910, buying intention: 0.932), and Overall Crobranch's Alpha was 0.894 which indicates adequate internal consistency.

According to the Sekaran (2013) through the validity measurement, the “goodness” was measured and ensure the stability and the consistency of the instrument. The reliability of the sample proved through statistically significant Bartlett's Test results (Chi-Square 2151.947, df: 190, sig .000) by indicating the sufficient correlation among the variables and the advocacy of the sample was strived through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin. (KMO) .934 (> 0.5). Accordingly, Overall Crobranch's Alpha was 0.894.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

4.2.1 Attractiveness on purchase intention

Correlation and regression analysis were applied to test the relationship between the two variables and the hierarchical regression analysis was employed to measure moderating effect of Social cues on purchase intention of consumers.

Examine the relationship between Instagram influence which measures through attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise and consumers buying intention in retail setting with predetermine H1, H2, and H3. In the regression model, above mentioned three variables in Instagram influence were entered to the model as independent variables and consumers purchase intention in retail setting as dependent variable were entered.

As shown in the output of correlation analysis, , main variables, attractiveness (P= .687, Sig=.000), trustworthiness (P= .651 Sig=.000), and expertise (P= .754,



Sig=.000) for respondents. Accordingly, output indicated strong positive significant relationships with dependent variable. Therefore, while customers make purchase decisions, the shared information in Instagram by influencers are significantly influencing to form more intention to buy the product for them.

Moreover, the findings of the regression analysis pointed out, the various inflation factor (VIF) for all variable is should be less than 05 (Rogerson, 2001) (VIF for all variables < 3.0) and all tolerance value well below 1, was indicated that free of multi co linearity of the variables in regression model. Further, Durbin-Watson close to 2.0 is consistent with no serial correlation among the independent variables.

Multiple Regression Analysis

R Square

Table 02: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.787 ^a	0.620	0.610		0.553

(Source: Survey Data 2022)

Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
	coefficient	Std. Error	Beta					
Constant	0.691	0.228			3.031	0.003		
Attractiveness	0.480	0.076	0.518		6.290	0.000	.164	1.048
Trustworthiness	0.211	0.093	0.212		2.273	0.025	.128	2.082
Expertise	0.144	0.092	0.139		1.557	0.122	.293	3.812

(Source: Survey Data 2022)



According to table 03, the Attractiveness and Trustworthiness significance value takes 0.000 and 0.025 respectively. And those significance values are lower than 0.05 and therefore Attractiveness and Trustworthiness have a significant impact on buying intention. But Expertise significance value takes 0.122 and it is higher than 0.05. Therefore, Expertise has no significant impact for buying intention.

According to the findings, the overall model indicated that around seventy-eight percent (78%) of consumer purchase intention can be formed with the influence of independent factors in this group ($R^2 = 0.787$, $F = 63.116$, $sig = 0.000$, $P > 0.001$). Further, the Attractiveness ($P = .687$, $\beta = .518$, $Sig = .000$) and trustworthiness ($P = .651$, $\beta = .212$, $Sig = .025$) make significant positive influence for their purchase intention in this sample. However, the effect of Expertise ($P = .754$, $\beta = .139$, $Sig = .122$) of influencers hasn't been considered as a significant indicator of forming buying intention.

Thus, results were supported to hypothesis 01 (H1), and hypothesis 02 (H2), which examines whether there is a significant positive relationship between Instagram influencers' source credibility (Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness) and consumers' purchase intention of fashion apparels.

4.3 Moderation of gender to relationship between Instagram influencers' source credibility and consumers buying intention

4.3.1 Moderation of gender to relationship between attractiveness of the Instagram influencers' source credibility and consumers buying intention

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	F
1	.173a	.031	.013	1.18007	.031	2.197	1	119	.000	
2	.363b	.148	.128	1.10948	.135	10.617	1	118	.002	
3	.441c	.187	.146	1.08991	.039	3.844	1	117	.050	



a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean value for Attractiveness
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean value for Attractiveness, Gender
c. Predictors: (Constant), Mean value for Attractiveness, Gender, Att x G

To check the moderating effect of the gender for the different factors in in Instagram influencers’ source credibility, the hierarchical regression analysis was performed. There Variables were entered the model in a following order: Attractiveness, Gender and Attractiveness, X Gender. Initially, while the consumer buying intention of fashion apparel is changed in 3.1 percent (3.1 %) from attractiveness of the Instagram influencers’ source credibility ($R^2 .031$, $F(1,119) = 2.197$, $P = .000$ ($P > 0.000$)) which has enhanced into 15.0 percent (15.0 %) due to second variable ($R^2 = .135$, $\Delta F(1, 118) = 10.617$, $P = .002$). moreover, through the interaction effect (Attractiveness, X Gender) the proportion of variance has increased up to 19 percent for males (19%), (Change $R^2 = .0391$, $\Delta F(1, 117) = 3.844$, $P = .050$), Therefore, the effect of based on the attractiveness of the Instagram influencers can be vary based on the receivers’ gender differences.

4.3.1 Moderation of gender to relationship between trustworthiness of the Instagram influencers’ source credibility and consumers buying intention

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	F
1	.356a	.214	.207	1.12293	.314	9.767	1	119	.000	
2	.591b	.363	.331	.99788	.149	20.181	1	118	.002	
3	.640c	.418	.402	1.00328	.055	.357	1	117	.547	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean value for trustworthiness										
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean value for trustworthiness, Gender										
c. Predictors: (Constant), Mean value for trustworthiness, Gender, TRUx G										



In analysis, Variables were entered the model in a following order: trustworthiness, Gender and trustworthiness, X Gender. As presented there. Due to the second variable, R2 value has enhanced to .363 as ($R^2=.149$, $\Delta F(1, 118) = 20.181$, $P=.002$). the trend has further continued with interaction effect that has increased up to around 40 presents (40%), ($R^2=.418$, $\Delta F(1, 118) = .357$, $P=.547$). According to the finding's respondents didn't get significant influence on dependent variable from interaction effect.

Indeed, it conclude that, only attractiveness in Instagram influencers' source credibility make significant influence for consumers' behavior while they make purchase decisions. Thereby, hypothesis H4c is acceptable with Attractive factor.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research study examined the impact of Instagram influencers' source credibility on consumers' buying intention with special reference to the fashion industry in Sri Lanka. Then researcher has taken generations Y as the sample of the research study. And the cluster sampling method has been used as a sampling method. According to the research study, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, and Expertise is the independent variable, and buying intention is the dependent variable.

To address our research questions, the study employed correlation analysis to study the relationship between the two main variables: Instagram influencers' source credibility and consumer buying intention. Secondly, this study implies the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between main variables. As concluded in correlation analysis from main three variables in Instagram influencers' source credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise indicate significant positive relationship between dependent variable. Accordingly, present research findings alien with findings that attractiveness and trustworthiness significantly effect for the consumer buying decision (Shan et al., 2018). Further, the findings of current study alien with findings of the (Weismueller et al., 2020) that all three factors effect significantly for consumer purchase intention. Further, Rebelo (2017) mentioned that, trustworthiness is not supported for buying intention that slightly agree when specifically concern with different gender.



6. CONCLUSION

Thereby, current study illustrated that, even though there are main three factors as, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, and Expertise, but only Attractiveness, Trustworthiness influence significantly from these factors in this group. Further, the result of the moderating effect shows that, based on the gender the relationship of attractiveness and the consumer purchasing is only showed can be significant changed. That means by changing the attractiveness and trustworthiness of the Instagram influencer, marketers can change the buying intention of Instagram users. But according to the findings of the research study expertise have no significant impact on buying intention. That means by changing the expertise of the Instagram influencer, marketers cannot change the buying intention of Instagram users.

Therefore, in order to get the competitive advantage in the market place, promotions on Social media is a more vital further, its more effective to manage Instagram influencer attractiveness and trustworthiness in a effective to manner to gain competitive advantage in fashion market.

Moreover, study was limited to 120 respondents due to the time limitation and cost constraints. Further, if the study was conducted with larger sample to representing various customer groups focused on customer income level, education level, it would be more reliable. Future studies may be extended to focuses. The findings of the current study will be contributed to the academia with filling gap of knowledge gap in Instagram influencer and consumer buying intention hue. Moreover, gender specific effect with phenomenon will be novel findings that will be more useful in both practical and theoretical context.



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