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Aims and Scope

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Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Purchase Intention of Fashion Retail Industry in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Internet usage worldwide has grown up drastically due to the advancement of technology and internet penetration. Due to this instant, the boost of internet access and adaptation, the number of digital buyers keeps climbing worldwide. This phenomenon has also been happening in Sri Lanka since social media platforms have operated. Therefore, this study was designed to analyze the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka, although there are many studies regarding the factors affecting consumer purchasing intention of the fashion retail industry, it is unclear what factors affect the consumer purchase intention of fashion retail industry in Sri Lankan market. Most manufacturers and marketers are expecting new ideas to capture the growing market. The present study uses six main dimensions social media influence, trustworthiness, expertise, Similarity, familiarity, and likeability to measure the independent variable. The study population was social media users over 18 years old in Sri Lanka, and the sample was picked up from the convenient sampling method 384. Primary data was collected through a self-structured questionnaire with a 7-point Likert Scale. Data were analyzed using SPSS and the regression model was used to measure the hypothesis The conclusion derived was that all five variables positively impact consumer purchasing intention. However, the results will be impactful for businessmen and e-retailers the in the fashion industry to understand the key factors to boost their online sales.

Keywords: *Consumer Purchasing Intention, Fashion Retail Industry, Social Media Influencers, Sri Lanka*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the world has become a global village. Therefore, there is more interconnectivity with the world Krause et al. 2014). The organization moved to boost sales by using social media marketing. Over the last decade, researchers have realized that people tend to follow social media (Barysevich, 2021). Social media also rapidly developed during this period as the number of social media users in Sri Lanka increased by 1.5 million (+23%) between 2020 and 2021 (Digital Sri Lanka, 2021). The function of social media is conversation, sharing, relationships & profiles (Jan & Kietzmann, 2011). Consumers get affected by television, magazines, and celebrities (Silverman, 2001). Sri Lanka records have a 6.7 million active social media user base from a total population of 21 million,

and among this portion, the majority belongs to the western province of Sri Lanka (social media Stats Sri Lanka, 2020). The number of social media users in Sri Lanka increased by 1.5 million (+23%) between 2020 and 2021(social media Stats Sri Lanka, 2021). Thus, social media influence is highly effective in any industry.

The fashion retail industry has become a competitive market. It is very dynamic & uncertain. Most of the young generation has trended to update with fashion. Today fashion retail industry has a relationship with the digital world. Companies are used to engaging with consumers through a digital platform. In recent years, they invest money in digital technology which can expand the market. This industry can recognize as a designer, Product developer, merchandiser, or marketer (Ranaweera & Halwatura, 2014). Sri Lankan fashion retail has become a rapidly booming sector.

Influencer marketing is becoming increasingly popular around the world, prompting marketers to consider it an essential component of their marketing strategy. Ahmad & Irfan, (2018) highlighted that influencer marketing is a form of marketing that builds a sustainable relationship with the target audience. Fashion is receiving more attention these days because it has become a constant presence in a person's daily life. Fashion influencers range from fashion bloggers to celebrities on social media. The online world is both a place to sell and a platform for reaching a specific audience. Social media influencers (SMI) are also known as micro-celebrities (Khamis et al., 2016) because they also have many followers. Chun et al., (2018) have explained that social influencers are the most potent force in the fashion marketplace. Marketers can reach specific & relevant target audiences by using SMI.   Therefore, marketers involve influence as a marketing tactic to change customer decisions. Social media influencers are reputed in a specific area. They know to pursue their followers & change consumer purchase intention on social media. Marketers also consider social media influencers because influencer marketing is a new concept & has a huge impact on the market through SMI. Therefore, influence marketing become an important strategy for the fashion retail industry. Thus, marketers moved to new ways to reach the target audience.

The main purpose of the present study is to determine the personal factors of social media influencers that contribute to influencing consumer purchase intention in fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka. Source credibility and source attractiveness models are used to determine this study's conceptual model. The variables constructed used trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, familiarity, and likability on consumer purchase intention for analyzing the model.

1.1 Problem Statement

The fashion industry plays a vital role in the community (Major & Steele, 2018). Nowadays, social media influencers update & discuss the latest trend in fashion in the community. Social media influencers have become the most cost-effective and effective marketing trends (Harrison, 2017). Consumers have used to follow special characters to make their purchase decision relevant to fashion items (Lampou, 2020). Social media influencers may be a positive impact on consumer

decisions as well as maybe a negative impact. This concept is practiced in the Sri Lanka context, but there's a dearth of comprehensive studies on that. The present study addresses the empirical gaps in many ways. Most researchers focus on celebrity endorsement on purchase intention (Priyankara et al., 2017), and little research focused on the relationship between Social Media influencers (SMI) and Purchase intention in the Asian context.

Most of the research that was done on this concept related to other industries such as the cosmetic industry & beauty care industry (Isyanto, et al.,2020; Almeida & De, 2019) and recommended further investigation needs for this concept with context to examine in different demographics and for different industries (Tsarashafa & Qastharin, 2021). Sometimes social media influencers are selected based on the number of followers. Some influencers have more followers, but their insights do not match with the target group as well as the fashion industry. Thus, some researchers have mentioned that further investigation is essential to identify the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention in different demographics (Tsarashafa & Qastharin, 2021).

Relevant social media influencers for fashion brands are a very important factor to build awareness & engagement with followers (Radey, 2015). Sometimes social media influencers are selected based on the number of followers. Recently, many organizations collaborated with social media influencers who have more than 100 million followers (Hanson, 2018). Some influencers have more followers, but their insights do not match with the target group as well as the fashion industry. It will happen a waste for the fashion retail industry. Fashion marketers have no clear picture of the effect.

Social influencers may be a positive impact on the consumer decision as well as maybe a negative impact. According to (Sudha & Sheena, K, 2017) there is an effect of influencers on consumer purchasing decisions in Asia. This study was investigated by using credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, and physical attraction as independent variables which also explained the impact of social media influencers in Ghana (Lampou, 2020). This, the discrepancies with empirical findings have created a knowledge gap in the selected scope. Based on the above empirical and practice justification, further investigation wants to examine this concept relevant to the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the research problem of this study is, "What is the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchasing intention in the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka?"

1.2 Research objectives

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention in the Retail fashion industry in Sri Lanka. In terms of that, this study examines how the social media influencer dimensions (Trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, familiarity & likeability) affect consumer purchase intention.

1.3 Limitations of the study

This research makes an important theoretical contribution to connect social media influencers to consumer purchase intention with special reference to the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka. Those are the limitations of the study.

- Findings of the research determined by the responses received from the respondents in the sample. Therefore, no hundred percent assurance with the given answers by the respondent.

- The convenience sampling technique used in the research will not indicate a fully representative profile of the population in Sri Lanka. The size and composition of the sample are too narrow to represent the whole population because the researcher has administrated only 200 social media users using convenience sampling techniques for the survey.

- Lack of research evidence for the selected research area of this study is a limitation. Because the research model was developed based on the available empirical evidence for this study. The limited availability of previous studies' literature and figures was another constraint, especially in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this research is limited to less background knowledge about study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature has been explored to gain an understanding and knowledge about the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention through the published literature. It has been comprised of the social media influencers, social media inf characteristics, and the relationship between the social media influencers and purchase intention. Ultimately, this chapter provides literature support to develop the conceptual model and hypotheses for the study.

2.1 Social media

The number of social media users is growing as well as social media platforms are added (Hoffman & Novak, 2012). Based on social media has become part of the life of communication. Companies interact with consumers through social media. Social media and social networks have become one of keyluencers contexts for learning about products, organizations, and world events (Soares & Pinho, 2014). According to Statista (2019), 77% of Americans have a social media profile. (Ruane & Wallace, 2013) said that social media is a very popular tool for communication and maintaining customer relationships and also a force to make consumer buying behavior decisions.

Before the social media era, companies maintain control regarding their brand message (Kaplan & Haenlein, Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media, 2010). Satisfy customers express positive word of mouth online. But unsatisfied customers mention negative experiences. According to (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014), positive word of mouth is more common and has a greater impact than negative word of mouth. Therefore, companies need to pay attention to consumer responses (Gensler, 2013)

(Kim & Ko, 2012) said that many organizations (Private & Government) maintain social media platforms as a communication channel. Based on a study by (Muntinga, Moorman, & Edith, 2011), social media is referred to as a sharing information channel. And also (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2014). Social media and social networks have become one of key contexts for learning about products, organizations, and world events (Soares & Pinho, 2014). According to Statista (2019), 77% of Americans have a social media profile. Ruane & Wallace, (2013) said that social media is a very popular tool for communication and maintaining customer relationships and also a force to make consumer buying behavior decisions. According to the study (Lariviere, 2013), social media creates value in all practices such as both consumer and company. According to Mcquarrie et al, (2012), the blog is the best tool to be used by fashion companies to achieve new or additional customers than previous. In other words, social media is not only a marketing strategy, thus it is a tool to observe the behavior of customers towards the fashion retail industry.

2.1.1 Influencer Marketing

People were able to express their thoughts and suggestions with the improvement of the digital world. It becomes an interesting thing and followers add to their content. It becomes viral (Alic, Pestek, & Sadinlija, 2017). Influencer marketing is a process of identifying and activating individuals who influence a specific target audience or medium, to be part of a brand's campaign toward increased reach, sales, or engagement (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). According to Veroline & Liselot, (2017) brands aim to stimulate influencers to endorse their products and this way build up their image among influencers often the huge base of followers, a practice that is called influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is a type of social media marketing. It represents a third-party emborder that connects with consumers and recommends a brand to consumers. Influencer marketing includes a form of word-of-mouth marketing. Veiomen, Cauberghe, & Hudders, (2017), said that influencer marketing is similar to electronic word of mouth.

It is a marketing strategy that selects identified influencers to promote their brand among the followers. It becomes a popular marketing strategy (Lou & Yuan, 2018). According to Phua & KIm, (2016), a brand manager's attention goes to influencer marketing strategies. Companies decided to move social media-related advertising from traditional mass media advertising channels. It helps to reach more targeted and specific market segments. Therefore, it becomes a cost-effective strategy. Companies invest their money to promote their products and service through the involvement of social media influencers through influencer marketing (Hall, 2015).

2.1.2 Social Media Influencers

According to Uzunoglu & Kip, (2014) bloggers, as content creators, have become digital influencers who are skilled at connecting with users through social media networks. Social media influencers are also known as micro-celebrities (Khamis et al, 2016), because they also have many followers. Social media influencers maintain their human brand to continue their identities in the

online presence & it is used as a communication tool (Thomson, 2006). The popularity of social media influencers determines based on the engagement of the followers like the number of comments, like & share of the post (Frebery, 2011). Jin & Phua, (2014) mentioned that more followers on social media are very beneficial for celebrities. According to Dizon, (2015) there are four categories of social media influencers. And they are celebrity influencers, micro-celebrity, industry experts, bloggers, and content creators. And brand endorsers (Bergkvisit & Zhou, 2016).

Marketers are very supportive of suitable spokesperson characteristics for selecting social media influencers. Choy & Lee, (2012) express those social media influencers as opinion leaders. Because they perceive themselves as mentors & the ability to influence other members due to their expertise on the relevant topic. The study of (Hamann, Williams, & Omar, 2007) views social media influencers are social leaders.

2.2 Purchase Intention
As said by Cassidy, (2014), purchase intention is the ability to purchase a product or service. According to Chi et al., 2011) it is a process like information gathering, preference & suggestions from others, alternative evaluation & lastly purchase. Consumer purchase intention is shaped by a consumer's attitude, appraisal, and external circumstances, and it is a key factor in predicting consumer behavior. Another definition is that purchase intention is a plan to purchase (Shah, 2012). The likelihood that a consumer is inclined or willing to acquire a certain brand in the future is referred to as purchase intention (Huang, Jim Wu, Wang, & Boulanger, 2011). The stronger the purchase intention, the more likely the buyer is to buy the goods (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2000). According to Sudha & Sheena (2017), fashion shopping is a unique process that necessitates a higher level of customer involvement in the specifics. Consumers thought that trustworthy influencers might persuade them to adopt their advice and alter their minds about buying something (Konstantopoulou et al, 2019).

2.3 Models Related to Influencer Marketing

2.3.1   Sources Credibility Model and Source Attractiveness Model
An endorser's effectiveness can be determined because of a source credibility model (Taghipoorreyneh & Run, 2016). The source credibility model explains about two parts as expertise and trustworthiness (Ratneshwar & Chaiken, 1991). According to Djafarova & Rushworth, (2016) positive communication from endorsers is distinct in that they have the intrinsic ability to persuade their audience to accept the message they are communicating. The information provided can help the receiver have a better understanding of the product by expanding their knowledge and experience with it. Fashion influencers have long been seen as crucial to the spread of new fashion trends in the fashion business since they have great influence over their audience owing to their knowledge, experience, and reputation as reliable sources of information. Angriawan (2011) mentioned that recommendations and reviews from credible influencers increase purchase intention. On the other hand, Source attractiveness

model built up because of source valence model. This model explains about three parts Similarity, familiarity, and likeability (McGuire, 1985).

2.4 Dimensions of Social Media Influencers

2.4.1 Trustworthiness

Trust is defined as the mutual belief that neither side of a transaction will take advantage of the other's weaknesses (Sabel, 1993). Trust is the confidence that supports the communication of the validated message**.** According to Ohanian (1990), mentioned that reliable influencer was more compelling. And also, the level of trust that customers have in influencers' ability to deliver the most credible claims. Trust is a key factor that changes decisions. Therefore, without trust, people will reject online business (Beldad & Steehouder, 2010). Trustworthiness is a key factor that decides consumer buying behavior. Followers buy a product or service repeatedly recommended by reliable SMI. Therefore, the Trustworthiness of influencers is positively impacted future purchase intention too (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016). Liat & Wuan, (2014) said that online influencers can build long term relationships with their followers. The consumer can follow interesting fashion influencers. The power of SIM determines by the number of followers on social networks (Mcluckie, 2016).

2.4.2 Expertise

Expertise is endorser's skills, knowledge & practice (Teng, Khong, Goh, & Chong, 2014). According to Ohanian, (1990), expertise is known as the authority, competence & qualification a communication possesses. Endorsers should have adequate knowledge, experience, or skills to talk about products and influencers may have more expertise to promote products comparison between spokespersons and influencers. SMI should maintain current & believable information from beginning to end to maintain a strong relationship with them (Nejad, Sherrel, & Babakus, 2014). Study to Brain et al. (1998), Consumers give more attention to expertise than the attractiveness of endorsers. Lynch et al. (1994), said that expertise should be relevant to the specific field. Later studies also mentioned that the expertise of the endorser is closer to consumer purchase intention than attraction. A study by the holt, (2002), when endorser is knowledgeable, consumers react more positively. Supportively SMIs behave with experiences and knowledge (Kapitan, 2015). SMI can strengthen consumer bonds by presenting believable information on social media sites and communicating with them, which is referred to as expertise (Chun et al., 2018).

2.4.3 Similarity

The Source of the receiver is similar to the endorser's ideas (Muda et al., 2014) This study shows their daily lifestyle. Similar interests, opinions, and attitudes help to persuade consumer decisions. A similar consumer's attitude directly changes the consumer's decisions. In addition, Nejad, Sherrel & Babakus, 2014, indicated that consumers pay attention and interpret the information depending on their current motivations, attitude, and interests. It helps to personalize their content (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014).

2.4.4 Familiarity

Based on McGuire (1985) states that familiarity is the knowledge of the endorser. It is known as presumed resemblance as the knowledge that an endorser possesses and it can be gained through exposure (Carvalho, 2012). Supportively, information sources and recipients should know about each other (Kiecker & Cowles, D, 2002). Based on (Lee & Yurchisin, 2011), endorsers should have a bond with consumers to continue the relationship. When risk decrease in taking a decision, familiarity influence making buying decisions. It affects to increase purchase intention from the familiar retailer (Fanoberova & Kvczkowska, 2016).

2.4.5 Likability

Likeability is the affection for the source as a result of the source's physical appearance and behavior" (McGuire, 1985). Information receiver considers about source's physical appearance, personal traits & personality. These are seeming to be a likeability of the endorser (Teng, Khong, Goh, & Chong, 2014). According to Fanoberova & Kvczkowska, (2016) state, likeability effects create interesting messages instead of recalling the messages. Furthermore, customers are compelled to follow influencers in the same way they follow a trendy friend; any new interest in new products will have an impact on one's degree of fondness for the specific brand that the influencer wears Colliander & Dahlé, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

A deductive research approach is selected for the present study and used the survey strategy to collect the data using a self-administered questionnaire distributed using electronic platforms in social media. The questions are measured through the five-point Likert scale, which varies from strongly disagree to agree strongly. Target Population was social media users more than 18 years old in Sri Lanka. And as the sample frame is not available for this study, the sample size was calculated using Yamane (1967) formula. And accordingly, the sample size was determined as 384 social media users were selected in Sri Lanka using convenience sampling technique. The effective response rate is 79%. Data were analyzed using multiple regression to assess the impact of the dependent variable.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework representing the relationship among independent and dependent variables can be shown below. This research model is prepared to have an insight into the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention of the fashion retail market. After considering the relationship between independent and dependent variables, the following conceptual framework was developed.

Independent variable
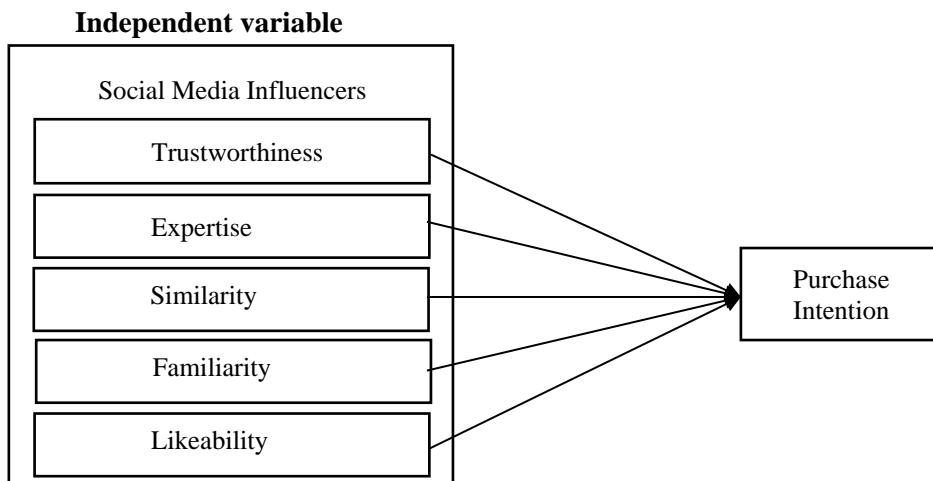
Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

Source: Chun et al. (2018)

3.2 Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework five hypotheses have been developed. Gayathri, (2021) showcase that there is a relationship between trustworthiness and consumer purchase intention. Most consumers like to make a purchase decision recommended by close friends and family. This relationship also showcases reliability. Therefore, Reliable SMIs are effect to take purchase decision (Kim & Johnson, 2015). Accordingly the following hypothesis has been created. Moreover, Wiedmann & and Mettenheim (2020) found that the most important requirement for purchase intention is the trustworthiness of influencers.

H_1: There is a significant positive impact of trustworthiness on the purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka.

When influencers have higher expertise, the Purchase intention of the target group will be high (Silvera & Austad, B., 2004). Expertise is another vital role in consumers'' purchase intention. Consumers like to purchase recommended products from expertise influencers Expertise SMIs can build a bond with customers in social media (Chun, 2018). Based on the facts following hypothesis has been created.

H_2 There is a significant positive impact of expertise on the purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka.

Forbes, (2016) Shows the same characteristics such as demographics, background, interests, attitudes and social status between SMI & consumers. According to the generation, SMIs are different. Consumers & SMIs in the same generation match with each other (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). SMIs post content on social media which directly affect followers' decision. Consumers decide whether SMIs are similar or not. Similarity also affects purchase decisions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Empirical evidence points to the fact that similarity has an influence on the trustworthiness of a given influencer (Naderer

et al., 2021), which in turn is an important predictor of purchase intention (Alyahya, 2021; Koay et al., 2021). Accordingly, third hypothesis has been developed.

H₃ There is a significant positive impact of similarity on the purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka.

Familiarity is collected experience relevant to the products by a consumer (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). It is effective to make a purchase decision because of the stimuli of the consumers (Baker, et al,1986). Moreover, influencers are likely to be more effective than celebrities when the audience is very familiar with the endorser (Gräve, 2020). People believe they have a positive perception of familiar things when purchasing (Žvinytė, 2017). Accordingly, third hypothesis has been developed.

H₄ There is a significant positive impact of familiarity on the purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka.

Regarding digital influencers, likeability has a positive predictive influence on both attitudes toward influencers and brands, word-of-mouth behavior, and purchase intention (Torres, 2019). Similarly, the likeability of a specific brand has a positive influence on the purchase intention of its consumers (Nguyen et al., 2015). Therefore, the researcher argues that:

H₅ There is a significant positive impact of likability on the purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability Test

The reliability test is used to determine the dimensions of the research instrument's reliability. Validity examines the appropriateness of the research study for the intended outcome, whereas reliability indicates the consistency of the questionnaire for the expected findings. Cornbrash's Alpha is used to assess the reliability and validity of the research instrument since the researcher chose a quantitative research approach for the investigation.

Table 1: Reliability Test

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Trustworthiness	5	0.760
Expertise	5	0.792
Likeability	5	0.868
Similarity	5	0.770
Familiarity	5	0.805
Purchase Intention	5	0.863

According to Table 1, we could observe that the Cronbach's Alpha related to all the variables considered are greater than and approximately closer to 0.7. Therefore, the study completes the reliability of the variables identified by the survey for further analysis.

4.2 Model Summary of Regression

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.998[a]	.997	.997	.02722

Source: Survey Data 2022

According to the above table, The R-value implies the co-efficient correlation, and it is a measure of the strength and the direction of the relationship between variables. The amount of variation in the dependent variable that may be attributed to change in the independent variables is known as the adjusted R square coefficient. The value represents the independent variable's explanatory power. R square value indicates that predictor variables for the test can explain 99.7% variation of the dependent variable.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.005	.014		.345	.030		
Likeability	.325	.007	.356	43.470	.000	0.997	1.003
Similarity	.032	.012	.032	2.756	.006	0.631	1.585
Expertise	.472	.022	.467	21.008	.000	0.529	1.891
Familiarity	.163	.023	.163	6.958	.000	0.869	1.150
Trustworthy	.008	.004	.008	2.183	.030	0.406	2.465

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Source: Survey Data 2022

According to the above table, the value of constant (B) was .005 which implies that while the other five dimensions remain zero or constant, on the other hand, all the independent variables state positive Coefficient beta which means there are positive relationships towards the independent variables and dependent variable.

The variance inflation factor (VIF), measures the impact of collinearity among the variables in a regression model. It is always greater than or equal to one. There is no formal VIF value for determining presence of multicollinearity; however, values that exceed 10 are often regarded as indicating multicollinearity. Based on the results in the model it can be concluded, that there is no multicollinearity symptom, as all values are between 1 to 10.

According to the analysis of inferential statistics, it could prove that the researcher's five main hypotheses can be accepted and when identifying the most influential factor of the social media influencers towards purchase intention, familiarity stated the highest mean value of 3.67 with relation to the dependent variable.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Table 4: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Impact	Status	Justification	Empirical support for the findings
H1 There is a significant impact of trustworthiness on purchase intention.	Positive Significant	Accepted	P- Value = 0.030 B Coefficient = 0.008 Pearson Correlation= .475**	(Gayathre & Anwar,2021; Hsiao et al. (2010)
H2 There is a significant impact of expertise on purchase intention.	Positive Significant	Accepted	P-Value =0.000 B Coefficient = 0.467 Pearson Correlation= .986**	(Chun, 2018; Lis & Bettina., 2013)
H3 There is a significant impact of similarity on purchase intention.	Positive Significant	Accepted	P- Value = 0.006 B Coefficient = 0.032 Pearson Correlation= .955**	(Forbes, 2016; Kapitan & Silvera, 2015)
H4 There is a significant impact of familiarity on purchase intention.	Positive Significant	Accepted	P- Value = 0.000 B Coefficient = 0.163 Pearson Correlation= .981**	(Zvinyte, 2017)
H5 There is a significant impact of likability on purchase intention.	Positive Significant	Accepted	P-Value= 0.000 B Coefficient = 0.356 Pearson Correlation= .961**	(Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014; Lim, et al.,2017)

Source: Survey Data (2022)

5. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention with special reference to the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka. Researchers mentioned that recommendations and reviews from social media influencers are perceived to change the decisions of customers (Raita, & Gavrielatou, 2021). Accordingly, Rebelo, (2017), there is a significant impact of personal factors of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention. In conclusion, it was evidenced that trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, familiarity, and likeability on purchase intention have a positive impact and several studies have validated the findings of the present study. This concept is new for Sri Lankan. It is an emerging market, and this concept has a huge contribution to Sri Lanka's economy. More occupation begins relevant to the concept. Marketers can take suitable investment decisions by investigating this study. The findings of the study suggest that previous experience or an influencer's recommendation might impact a customer's purchase intention in the fashion retail business. In future studies, researchers

can concentrate on this issue. It is possible to comprehend how this feature will impact the purchase intention with the independent factors with more research on the strength of the relationship between prior purchasing fashions advised by SMIs.

Previous researchers have investigated the impact of Instagram influencers on consumer purchase intention in the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka. Therefore, further investigation is needed for YouTube and Facebook influencers on consumer purchase intention of the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka. This study is conducted to examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention of fashion retail in Sri Lanka. But the author has not considered all platforms to investigate that impact. Future researchers have an opportunity to examine other platforms On the other hand, this concept can be investigated relevant to the industries such as the technology industry.

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