

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR: WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO APPAREL PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF YOUTH IN NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern corporate world, it is essential to analyze and debate how social media as a marketing tool influences customers' lives and prompts reactions related to brands. Numerous articles discuss the need for research that goes beyond studying markets, generations, and products. (Siriwardana & Dissanayake, 2018).

The study offers valuable business insights into leveraging social media for positive brand awareness and product promotion. Managers must factor in information acquisition, electronic word-of-mouth, and perceived quality when integrating social media strategies into their organizations. Although limited research exists on the impact of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior (CBB), a previous study by Kumar and Raju titled "The Role of Advertising in Consumer Decision Making" published in 2013 found that advertisements could influence consumer perceptions of specific products (Prasanna Kumar & Venkateswara, n.d.). Influencing consumer buying behavior can be considered the fundamental goal of advertising. Most of the time, customer buying behavior is determined by how the buyer feels about the product's advertisement (Smit et al., 2006). It can be argued that consumer behavior is solely influenced by advertising and does not take the product's features into account.

2017 saw the discovery of the influence of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior (Kim & Ko, 2012). In their study, they found that four independent social media advertising variables – entertainment, familiarity, social imaging, and advertisement spending – affect consumer buying behavior, which is a dependent variable (Wang et al., 2012; Majeed et al., 2021). This model served as the conceptual foundation for the investigation by the researcher.

The study recognizes limitations and potential bias in the sample, mainly towards youth apparel purchases in the North-Central Province. Additionally, the study's reliance on a small sample size further contributes to its limitations. Data collection will take place (Hossein & Furuzandeh, 2013). It is impossible to collect primary data through systematic questionnaires given the current state of the nation.

Apparel purchasing is the only metric used to measure the effect of social media advertising on consumer purchasing behavior (Ha et al., 2011), hence further research is needed to generalize the findings to other contexts. The researcher Preece discovered significant information about social media platforms and how they function as a tool for advertising (Preece, 2012). Marketers must recognize the actual buying habits of their consumers in a digital setting and take appropriate action (Gaurav & Suraj Ray, 2020). Additionally, no local study has been conducted in this field; hence, additional Sri Lankan-specific investigations are required to fill the vacuum.

The study's justification for the problem lies in the need to understand the relationship between social media advertising and consumer behavior among the youth in Sri Lanka's North-Central

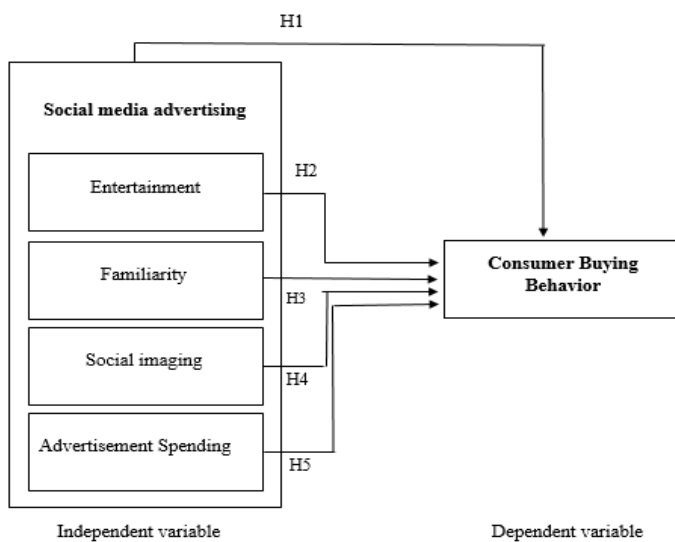
Province. Given the intense competition in the apparel industry, it becomes crucial to uncover the true impact of social media advertising on youth apparel purchasing habits. The absence of local studies in this region further emphasizes the importance of this investigation, providing valuable insights to marketers for formulating effective strategies tailored to the preferences of the youth demographic.

The study's literature review provides a comprehensive overview of critical literature on the impact of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior. It explores various theoretical frameworks, including the Consumer Decision-Making Model, Media Entertainment Theory, Stimulus-Organism-Response Model, Information Adoption Model, and Social Cognitive Theory, all applied to the social media context. The empirical review emphasizes the significance of social media in influencing consumer behavior, particularly factors like entertainment, familiarity, social imaging, and advertisement spending. This review establishes a robust foundation for the proposed model, offering valuable insights to readers.

METHODOLOGY

Figure 1

Conceptual framework



According to Gaurav and (Gaurav & Suraj Ray, 2020), the literature includes numerous studies on the fast fashion industry's link with social media. However, only a few explore the influence of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior. "The Role of Advertising in Consumer Decision Making" (Tang, 2016) reveals that advertisements can sway consumer opinions and impact buying behavior, with consumers' affinity or aversion towards a product playing a significant role (Smith et al., 2006). Tang's study identifies four key independent variables: Entertainment, Familiarity, Social Imaging, and Advertisement Spending, that significantly influence consumer buying behavior, forming the conceptual framework for their research.

The study examines the influence of social media advertising on youth apparel purchases in Sri Lanka's North-Central Province. It uses quantitative data, including questionnaires, to gain insights into consumer behavior.

The researcher has formulated the following hypotheses.

*H*₁: There is a relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior.

*H*₂: There is a relationship between entertainment and consumer buying behavior.

*H*₃: There is a relationship between familiarity and consumer buying behavior.

*H*₄: There is a relationship between social imaging and consumer buying behavior.

*H*₅: There is a relationship between advertisement spending and consumer buying behavior.

Table 1

Operationalization table

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Source
Social media advertising	Entertainment	a) Interesting	(Yang et al., 2020)
		b) fun	
		c) enjoyable	
		d) kill time	
		e) Collecting information on brands	
	Familiarity	a) familiar	(Hyun et al., 2011)
		b) seen	
		c) made a purchase	
		d) stands	
	Social imaging	a) favorable attitude	(Mapesa, n.d.)
		b) trust image	
		c) goodwill	
Advertisement Spending	a) intensively	(Mapesa, n.d.)	
	b) frequently seen		
	c) expensive		
	d) plan to purchase		
Consumer buying behavior	a) will buy	(Gupta & Kumar, 2022)	
	b) desire to buy		
	c) likely to buy		
	d) plan to purchase		

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the reliability analysis, each variable has a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7, deeming the survey questionnaire reliable. Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values (0.514, 0.559, 0.649, 0.685, and 0.000) support the validity of the instrument for entertainment, familiarity, social imaging, advertisement spending, and consumer buying behavior, respectively. Pearson correlation values indicate the relationships between consumer buying behavior and the factors: entertainment (0.169), familiarity (0.228), social imaging (0.457), and advertising spending (0.072). Among these, advertising spending shows the weakest correlation with consumer buying behavior. Regression analysis coefficients suggest substantial impacts of entertainment (0.111), familiarity (0.227), and social imaging (0.507) on consumer behavior, with advertising spending having a relatively lower impact, evident by a coefficient of 0.072.

The study emphasizes the importance of social media advertising on consumer behavior, highlighting entertainment, familiarity, and social imaging as significant factors. However, the impact of advertising spending is negligible in this context. These findings provide valuable insights for marketers targeting the youth apparel market in Sri Lanka's north-central province.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study validates and applies various theoretical foundations, such as the Consumer Decision-Making Model, Media Entertainment Theory, Stimulus-Organism-Response Model, Information Adoption Model, and Social Cognitive Theory, in the context of social media advertising and consumer behavior. It underscores their significance in understanding the dynamic relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior, particularly among the youth in Sri Lanka's north-central province. The study's practical implications assist the apparel industry in creating effective advertising campaigns that influence customer buying behavior by emphasizing entertainment, familiarity, and social imaging, and by leveraging influencers and social class targeting for successful social media marketing in the region.

Keywords: Consumer buying behavior, entertainment, familiarity, social Imaging, social media advertising

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