

An Investigation into The Influence of Social Media on Fashion Industry Market Dynamics in Sri Lanka: A Study on The Impact of Facebook and Instagram on the Apparel Industry

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The rapid adoption of social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, in Sri Lanka has significantly transformed the fashion market. Traditional marketing strategies are increasingly insufficient, necessitating a deeper understanding of how these platforms influence consumer behavior, brand loyalty, and market trends. This study explored the impact of Facebook and Instagram on traditional marketing channels, sales channels, customer engagement, and brand reputation in the Sri Lankan clothing industry. Utilizing the social influence theory and consumer behavior theories, the study examined how fashion influencers, trends, and peer opinions on social media shape consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchase decisions. A quantitative approach was employed to collect data, with social media influence considered as the independent variable and market dynamics in the fashion industry as the dependent variable. Two Google forms, containing structured questionnaires in both English and Sinhala, were used to gather primary data from a diverse sample of consumers and fashion industry professionals engaged in social media for fashion-related behaviours and decisions. The study aimed for a minimum sample size of 40, including 20 consumers and 25-30 industry professionals, but ultimately received over 80 responses, with more than 50 from consumers. The collected data were analyzed using Google Forms analytics. The study concludes that social media is a valuable market strategy for clothing businesses in Sri Lanka, facilitating business growth and significantly influencing consumer preferences. It recommends that entrepreneurs in the clothing industry need to harness the potentials of social media to enhance their enterprises and meet the evolving demands of the market. The insights provided can guide businesses in effectively navigating the social media landscape, contributing to the industry's growth and relevance.

Keywords: *social media, fashion industry, market dynamics, online marketing strategies, customer engagement*