Effect of Social Media Influencers' Attributes on Customer Purchasing Behavior in Sri Lankan Context (Special References to Facebook and Instagram)

Gayan Bandara[1], Nisha Jayasuriya[2], Malaka Nimnajith[3], Nethmi Withanage[3], Kushani Fernando[3], Sandali Jayawardana[3]

Abstract: This study aims to identify how social media influencer's attributes can be useful to tune the customer purchasing behavior. Since social media influencer highly affects the day-to-day life of people, he/she highly impacts on decision making of customers to purchase products in the market. Therefore, it is essential to identify how these significant attributes support him/her to influence on customer purchasing behavior. Through the literature, attractiveness, expertise, prestige, follower base, and trustworthiness are identified as major attributes and are considered as independent variables, while customer attitude and customer mimicry desire act as the mediating factors of the relationship between these attributes and customer purchasing behavior. The research is designed as a quantitative study and primary data were collected from a sample of 405 participants through questionnaire. All the Facebook and Instagram users in the country are considered as the population. Reliability and validity of data are ensured through pilot test and data were analyzed through factor analysis, correlation analysis developing multiple regression models and hypothesis testing. Considering the findings, all the attributes show positive correlation, and all the correlations are significant at the point of $P = 0.001$. The conceptual framework is acceptable since all the hypotheses are supported. The conclusion is that there is a positive and significant impact of social media influencer's attractiveness, expertise, prestige, follower base, and trustworthiness on customer purchasing behaviour while customer attitude and customer mimicry desire act as mediators. Policy implication of the study is to identify the suitable social media influencer and determine the criteria for selecting the social media influencer for social media marketing. The selected influencer will highly support the company by marketing its products and ensuring the customer attraction. He can apply these results and improve his follower base earning more through effective marketing campaigns. Hence, he can ensure high demand for the product, maintain competitiveness, and contribute to profit maximization. Novelty of the study is that it shows the significance of social media influencer's attributes on social media marketing. By utilizing these attributes, he can attract new customers, retain existing customers, change customer perception towards the brand. Eventually, he will cause the brand to become the market leader.

Keywords*: Facebook, Instagram, Social media influencer, Social media marketing

[1] Instructor, SLIIT Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka. gayan.b@sliit.lk

[2] Assistant Professor, SLIIT Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka.

[3] SLIIT Business School Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka.