

## **The Impact of Viral Marketing on Impulsive Buying in Online Fashion Retail Industry: Examining the Mediating Effect of Online Trust**

**L Y G I D Rajapaksha**

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
*isurajapaksha99@gmail.com*

**S I Wijenayake**

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
*shanikaw@kln.ac.lk*

In the contemporary commercial landscape, consumers worldwide increasingly purchase a variety of products, including fashion items, through online channels. This trend has led to a rise in impulsive buying, often driven by viral marketing, which facilitates easy purchases with a single click of a mouse or keypad. However, many consumers subsequently regret their online purchases, indicating a prevalent issue of online trust among customers of online businesses, including those in the fashion sector. This study aimed to investigate whether online trust mediates the relationship between viral marketing and online impulsive buying within the retail fashion industry. A quantitative design was employed, adhering to a deductive approach rooted in positivist philosophy. A questionnaire was developed and distributed online to consumers of fashion products from online retail fashion businesses, resulting in 500 complete and accurate responses. Regression analysis was utilized as the primary analytical technique to examine the data. The findings reveal that viral marketing by online fashion retail businesses in Sri Lanka significantly and positively impacts customers' impulsive buying behavior. Additionally, online trust was found to significantly mediate the relationship between viral marketing and impulsive buying behavior. This study is considered pioneering in directly exploring the impact of viral marketing on impulsive buying behavior through the lens of online trust, addressing a gap in the existing literature on the online fashion industry in Sri Lanka. The study's findings are expected to be valuable for managers and advertisers in online fashion businesses.

**Keywords:** *Impulsive Buying Behavior, Online Trust, Online Retail Fashion Businesses, Viral Marketing*