

The Influence of Online Marketing Content on Secondhand Clothing Purchasing Intention among State University Students in Sri Lanka with the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

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Second-hand clothing is increasingly recognized as a sustainable and economical alternative to fast fashion. This trend, fuelled by environmental awareness and financial limitations, particularly resonates with young consumers, including university students. In Sri Lanka, this demographic is uniquely positioned to drive the second-hand clothing market due to their digital proficiency, budget-conscious lifestyles, and growing interest in sustainability. However, limited empirical studies have explored the factors influencing their purchasing behaviour, particularly in the context of online marketing and its interplay with customer satisfaction. This research addresses this gap by investigating the role of online marketing content in shaping the purchasing intentions of state university students in Sri Lanka, emphasizing the mediating impact of customer satisfaction.

The study adopts a positivist research philosophy and a deductive approach, utilizing a quantitative research design to explore the hypothesized relationships. A cross-sectional survey strategy was employed, with data collected from a sample of 300 students representing multiple public universities across Sri Lanka. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique, ensuring representation across different universities and demographic factors. Self-administered questionnaires, distributed through digital platforms, captured insights into students' perceptions of online marketing content, levels of satisfaction, and purchasing intentions. Statistical analysis, including correlation and regression methods conducted via SPSS software, provided a robust framework for testing the study's hypotheses.

Results demonstrate a significant impact of online marketing content on both customer satisfaction and purchasing intentions. Specifically, the quality, credibility, and relevance of marketing content emerge as key drivers of consumer engagement. Content that is visually appealing, informative, and interactive significantly enhances satisfaction, which in turn mediates the relationship between marketing content and purchasing intention. Students who experience higher satisfaction with their online shopping experience are more likely to trust the platform, recommend it to others, and make repeat purchases.

The study underscores the significance of understanding the preferences and expectations of a digitally active and sustainability-conscious demographic. Students prioritize transparency, authenticity, and personalized experiences in online marketing content, and marketing strategies that effectively incorporate these elements can influence their purchasing decisions while fostering long-term brand loyalty. However, the study also acknowledges certain limitations. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, and the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences. Additionally, the focus on a specific demographic—state university students in Sri Lanka—limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should address these limitations by employing longitudinal study designs, examining more diverse populations, and exploring the cultural influences on second-hand clothing consumption.

The implications of this research are multifaceted. From a theoretical perspective, the study advances the understanding of how online marketing content shapes consumer behaviour in the second-hand clothing market, particularly in a developing country context. Practically, it offers actionable insights for marketers, policymakers, and educators. Businesses can leverage these findings to design targeted online campaigns that align with consumer values of affordability, environmental consciousness, and digital convenience. For policymakers, the study underscores the need for initiatives that promote sustainable consumption and support the growth of the second-hand clothing market as a viable alternative to fast fashion.

In conclusion, this research underscores the transformative potential of online marketing content in influencing the purchasing behaviour of university students in Sri Lanka. By emphasizing customer satisfaction as a mediating factor, it highlights the importance of creating positive consumer

experiences that resonate with the values of young, budget-conscious, and environmentally aware individuals. These insights pave the way for strategies that not only drive business growth but also contribute to broader sustainability objectives in the fashion industry.

Keywords: *Customer satisfaction, Online marketing content, Purchase intention, Second-hand clothing, Sustainable fashion*