

## **Impact of Brand Credibility on Purchase Intention towards Women Fast Fashion Brands in Sri Lanka: Examining the Mediating Effect of E-WOM**

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This study investigates the relationship between consumers intentions to purchase from Sri Lankan women's fast fashion brands and brand credibility, with a focus on the mediating effect of electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM). The study assesses the growing significance of E-WOM in shaping consumer behavior by examining the components of brand credibility, namely; consistency, reputation, and experience. The study offers insights into consumer decision-making processes in an emerging market context, and it is based on Source Credibility Theory and Signaling Theory. The study intends to bridge the knowledge gap regarding consumer behaviors unique to fast fashion in developing countries such as Sri Lanka. 71% of respondents lived in Colombo, and the survey was conducted in the Western Province of the nation.

Using data from 355 female respondents, the findings offer significant new insights into the connection between brand credibility and purchase intention. Brand credibility was found to be a strong predictor of purchase intention, with a beta coefficient of 0.681 ( $p < 0.01$ ), highlighting its direct impact on consumer behavior. Additionally, the study demonstrated the significance of E-WOM as a mediating factor, showing that when consumers came across positive online reviews, their purchase intentions increased by 12%. Remarkably, 74% of respondents between the ages of 18 and 30 said they heavily relied on peer reviews and recommendations, indicating a dependence on E-WOM that is unique to this demographic. This dependence emphasizes even more how digital interactions influence consumers' perceptions of brands.

Furthermore, 64% of participants shared positive experiences after receiving outstanding service, highlighting how crucial customer satisfaction is for

building brand reputation and encouraging online advocacy. These results show both localized consumer preferences and behaviors specific to Sri Lanka's fast fashion industry, in addition to global trends.

Although the study offers insightful theoretical and practical information, the findings generalizability is constrained by its cross-sectional design and geographic focus on Sri Lanka's Western Province. Additionally, the research allows for the exploration of other market segments or demographic groups by focusing solely on women's fast fashion brands. However, by validating the mediating function of E-WOM in the relationship between purchase intention and brand credibility, especially in a developing market context, the study makes a substantial theoretical contribution.

From a practical standpoint, it emphasizes how crucial it is to use digital platforms to improve customer engagement and foster trust in cutthroat marketplace. When doing future market research, it can be investigating different industries or using longitudinal study designs to capture changing consumer behavior over time in order to further broaden the scope and applicability of research findings.

**Keywords:** *Brand Credibility, Consumer Purchase Intention, Electronic Word of Mouth, Fast Fashion, Sri Lanka*