

Impact of Word-of-mouth Source Credibility on Consumer's Purchase Intention in Sri Lanka with Special Reference to the Smartphone Industry: Examine the Mediating Effect of Brand Image

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Word-of-mouth plays a significant role in the decision-making process when purchasing a new smartphone. The smartphone industry in Sri Lanka, as well as globally, is highly competitive. This study aimed to investigate the impact of word-of-mouth source credibility on consumer purchase intention in Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on the smartphone industry, and to examine the mediating effect of brand image. Data was collected from 380 respondents in the Western Province using a questionnaire, and the analysis was performed using SPSS Software. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine the frequency and percentage of personal profiles. The survey results indicated a positive and significant impact of word-of-mouth source credibility on consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, it was confirmed that brand image positively and significantly mediates the relationship between word-of-mouth and consumer purchase intention. The findings provide valuable insights for smartphone retailers regarding the influence of each dimension of word-of-mouth source credibility on consumer purchase intention. Additionally, the results offer benefits to potential customers contemplating smartphone purchases and to other stakeholders interested in the industry.

Keywords: *Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Smartphones, Word of Mouth*