

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISIONS: THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH AS A MODERATOR IN THE FAST FASHION SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Given the current circumstances, social media advertising has emerged and is considered as a vital element of successful marketing strategies for top fashion brands. With the proliferation of social media platforms, most of the fashion marketers have recognized the potential to leverage these networks to impress potential customers. This study attempts to investigate the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchasing behaviour with the moderating role of electronic word of mouth in the context of fast fashion. Additionally, it assesses the broader influence of social media advertising on decision-arriving processes of customers within the fast fashion industry. This study employs a descriptive quantitative research design, collecting data through self-administered questionnaires. The study's population consists of active social media users in Sri Lanka, and a sample of 400 consumers was chosen using the convenience sampling method. However, the data collected from only 262 were analyzed due to the suitability for analysis. Hypotheses were tested using Correlation and Regression analyses since the study seeks to gauge the effects of each and every independent variable on the selected dependent variable. The findings of this study reveal that social media advertising has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior in the fast fashion industry. Among the five independent variables examined, namely familiarity, social imaging, entertainment and perceived usefulness significantly influence consumer behavior. However, the remaining variable of advertising expenditure does not exert a statistically significant influence. More importantly, this research study further found that electronic word of mouth weakens the association between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior, yet it works as a moderator. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insights for the fast fashion industry, enabling marketers to better understand their consumers' actual purchasing behavior in the digital landscape and make informed decisions accordingly.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Buying Behavior, Fashion Retailers, Fast Fashion, Social Media Advertising

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the use of social media promotion is increasingly developed, the majority of the companies have turned to these sites to market their brands (Dolega et al., 2021). To begin with, fashion retail businesses have increasingly utilized social media to enhance brand awareness. Entrepreneurs are fully aware of the pivotal position occupied by social media in reaching out to target groups. Current studies indicate that marketing efforts through social media have increased manifold, which is in accordance with trends observed in the fashion industry (Hussain et al., 2025). "Fashion" is used to denote bodily and intangible aspects of consumer attitude, with an emphasis on social diffusion and influence. "Fast fashion" is affordable, trendy clothing conceived on catwalk style or celebrity culture, rapidly reinterpreted as mass-market products. The industry appeals to a youth market since it is an instrument of the transfer of social identity, taste, and cultural capital (Joy et al., 2012). Fashion consumers, as studies indicate, are primed ahead of other people (McQuarrie & Munoz, 2014). In addition, social media advertising has replaced traditional media like TV and radio and is currently a critical element in marketing plans. Fashion companies like Adidas, Nike and Kering also employed social media to advance brand consciousness and build sales, portraying the power of digital advertising within the fashion industry (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Moving on to Sri Lankan fast fashion sector, it has also gained massive global recognition. It is due to producing of top-class quality clothing following ethics. Brands like Blutex, Avirate and Ebony have implemented distinct strategies wherein they have presented their products as high-quality products. In the competitive Sri Lankan fashion industry, social media engagement following advertisements has become crucial, as marketers increasingly rely on these platforms to promote their brands and attract consumers.

In the recent times, there has been significant focus placed on how the consumption patterns of the consumers in Sri Lanka are influenced by social media. For instance, figures indicate that there is

evidence to show that 71% of social media users are likely to buy more products based on what they get from social media platforms because millennials spend hours online searching and 47% of their online activities are determined by social media (Bandara, 2021). Furthermore, empirical data have confirmed that there is a significant positive correlation between social media marketing and brand capital, such that social advertising explains 76.6% of the variability in brand capital (Perera, 2025).

Most current research still confirms the steady and growing impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour. Findings provide actionable guidance to fashion retailers to consumers' prevailing inclinations in buying patterns among fast fashion retailers. Fashion retailers selling in a competitive marketplace invest enormous capital in designing advertisements with a goal to incorporate brand appeal as a factor. It is of paramount importance to adhere to these tried and proven tactics in capturing the attention of consumers. The findings are not only useful to fast fashion retailers, brand managers, and marketing managers, but they also contribute to informing the general public by generating new knowledge. However, various scholars have researched the impact of social media on the fashion industry. For instance, a meta-review reported the phenomenal influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior, referring to its influence on purchasing behaviour, brand loyalty, and engagement (Anjorin et al., 2024). Here, the power of user-generated content, coupled with interaction with the brand, has been found to affect the pre-purchase attitude and intentions of consumers through research (Pei, 2024). Apart from that, one study tested social media marketing activities and consumer reactions during the 'new normal' times and discovered that interaction takes on a seminal mediating part between social media marketing activities and consumer reactions (Cil et al., 2023). Though these are useful findings, it must be noted that this area of research remains still untouched, and more research is needed, especially in the Sri Lankan setting. Social media advertising by itself will not suffice to capture the market if third-party endorsers do not recommend it in a competitive market; indeed, social media advertising does require third-party

endorsements. But none of these researches has examined how uncontrollable exogenous variables like electronic word of mouth reinforce or weaken the relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behaviour. Practically when dealing with customers, the researcher himself identified the rational and modern consumers are highly interested in advertising posts which has more users engagements such as recommendations, views, comments and other engagements rather than the attractiveness of the content or the post appears in social media. Accordingly, Therefore, the approach taken toward this matter is crucial for fashion retailers to remain competitive in the industry. This study also aligns with key communication theories, such as Social Proof Theory and Two-Step Flow Theory, which provide a framework for understanding how people are influenced by others' opinions before making purchasing decisions

Sri Lankan fashion retailers are becoming more interested in newer information concerning their consumers and fashion trends to inform business development. This necessitates constant monitoring of consumers' social media use habits and consumers' buying habits in their market. Because the competition in fashion is high in Sri Lanka, these retailers spend huge budgets on social media marketing campaigns (Bandara, 2021). Therefore, digital marketing companies and marketers must be absolutely certain of real purchasing behavior among consumers in the modern digital era to make the right decisions. A necessity to identify what influences buyers' purchasing behavior to a very large degree must be ascertained. With that consideration, this study is set to investigate the influence of social media marketing on the buying behavior of consumers in the fast fashion sector. Besides that, it also aims to investigate the moderating influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in an attempt to develop viable inferences (Prameswari & Kurniawati, 2023; Balyaino & Pradeep, 2023).

The aims of this research can be outlined as follows:

1. To assess the influence of various elements within social media advertising on the purchasing behavior of consumers within the fast fashion sector.

2. To recognize the most effective strategies of social media advertising for impacting consumers within the fast fashion industry.

3. To determine whether Electronic Word of Mouth acts as a moderator in the connection between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When considering the role of social media in influencing fashion, it is evident that social media has spearheaded a revolution over the last ten years. It is best experienced as companies utilize social media as a very effective marketing strategy (Chu & Seock, 2020). In sectors such as fashion, which undergo constant changes and updates, social media is the most accessible and least costly method of communication (Naeem & Ozuem, 2021). Social media has introduced a humongous change in the way the world is operated, and it has made the world more interconnected. Social media is a wide range of activities, conducts, and behaviors where individuals gather online to share information, exchange their experiences, and offer their perspectives on informal digital platforms (Rudniy et al., 2023). These chat or social platforms are primarily web-based programmes that facilitate the creation and dissemination of information in various formats, e.g., text, images, videos, and audio for facilitating the varied fashion designs among target consumers (Cruz et al., 2024).

2.1. Social Media and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer behaviour studies have been the main focus of concern for researchers and scholars who are keen on understanding the determinants of retail consumers to buy. This ultimately leads to customer satisfaction and retail sector performance in general. The evolution of the internet and social media websites has triggered a revolutionary change in consumers' buying behaviour, enabling mass connectivity through sharing information on robust social networks and communication platforms (Guoqiang & Bhaumik, 2024). Existing literature continues to reveal the powerful role played by social media, consumer trust, internet interaction, and search behaviour online in shaping consumer behaviour. Facebook and

Instagram, for example, have been powerful drivers of consumer behaviour through the creation of a platform upon which consumers engage and comment about different products (Jamil et al., 2022). Advertisers need to understand the manner in which this group in particular uses information and, equally as relevant, how they need to build promotional messages in language that will appeal to them (Azizah et al., 2024).

2.1.1. Advertising Spending

Spending a huge amount of money on advertisements suggests that a firm is dedicated to establishing its brand, denoting a high financial expenditure and thus a higher quality product. Recently in studies, it has been discovered that if a lot of money is spent on advertisements and other publicity methods, it creates more expectations among consumers towards that specific brand, creating the deception of a better-quality product or service. In addition, the advertising market has evolved much differently over the recent past. Projections indicate that the total expenditure on advertisements across the world will be about \$772.4 billion in 2024, an improvement by 6.8% from last year (Denstu, 2023). Others have also established that the spending on advertising influences attitudes toward product or service quality. Its role is indirectly linked with brand loyalty, i.e., it is not necessarily the advertisement content but advertising and its effect on consumers' perception of the company that takes a significant role in their buying behaviour (Ha et al., 2011). Additionally, it has been found through research that if much money is being invested in advertising and other promotional efforts, consumers begin to expect more from the particular brand (Hameed, 2013).

H1: Spending on social media advertising positively impacts the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion industry

2.1.2. Familiarity

. Other studies have also clarified the role of brand familiarity in shaping consumer behaviour and attitudes. For instance, a meta-analysis conducted by Junior Ladeira et al. (2022) determined that brand familiarity significantly affects attitude formation, with even stronger effects in hedonic product and internet advertising contexts (Ladeira et al., 2022).

Similarly, Kim et al. (2022) established that tailored brand responses on company blogs enhance perceived similarity and brand credibility, particularly when customers already know the brand (Kim et al., 2021). Again, Acharya (2021) constructed a positive association between familiarity of a brand and customer brand engagement, which consequently leads to word-of-mouth communication (Acharya, 2020). These findings reinforce the significance of brand awareness in order to impact favourable consumer opinions and bring about action

H2: The level of familiarity featured in social media advertising campaigns positively affects the buying behaviour of consumers for fast fashion items.

2.1.3. Social Imaging

Advertisements tend to trap our worldview, typically relating to the social class, lifestyle, and values of those who use those products (Britton, 2012). Other research conducted by Haider and Shakib (2017) has also established the power that categorization and labelling sexual orientations or groups have on people and how a product's perception in society is able to influence consumer attitudes (Bandara, 2017; Britton, 2012). Now, in the era of the internet, companies trying to connect customers more effectively add social media to the list, utilizing celebrities within the ads themselves, referred to informally as "social media influencers" (Newberry & Zohu, 2019). This is especially relevant in the beauty care industry, where images of emaciated, beautiful women and muscular, gym-toned men dominate all forms of media. As media exposure continues to increase, so does the pressure on individuals to conform to these beauty standards. The third hypothesis is therefore as follows:

H3: The social image portrayed in social media advertising campaigns positively influences the purchasing behaviour of consumers for fast fashion items.

2.1.4 Entertainment

The use of entertainment cues, particularly humor, has been a long-standing technique in ads to grab the customer's attention and aid recall of the message. Humor ads have proven to be more effective at drawing attention than non-humor ads, and their

impact can vary by gender- and race-based demographic segment (Du et al., 2023). Aside from that, humor in advertising is also able to increase purchase intention and product judgment through indirect attitudinal change even for new brands (Thannikkottu et al., 2023). Aside from that, as per studies, advertising humor increases affective arousal and cognitive flexibility and, as such, leads to greater purchase intention on new brands (Du et al., 2023). However, the power of humor is multifaceted and will be contingent upon variables such as the type of humor employed, the advertised brand, as well as the audience (Eisend, 2021). Thus, whereas the employment of entertainment, especially humor, can boost the authority of advertisements, every precaution must be exercised in undertaking that to efficiently maximize people's likes and brand message (Wang et al, 2019). Therefore, the 4th hypothesis is set out as follows:

The 4th hypothesis is developed as follows:

H4: The entertainment value within social media advertising campaigns has a positive impact on the purchasing behavior of consumers for fast fashion items.

2.1.5 Perceived Usefulness

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a key buying behaviour model. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two significant determinants of online purchasing behaviour in TAM. Consumer attitude towards technology adoption is driven by Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU), and that influences the consumer's intention to adopt complex technology. Thus, Perceived Usefulness (PU) of social media marketing has a great influence on consumers' purchasing behaviour (Sharma & Bhatt, 2018). Intention, in earlier research, has always remained a strong predictor of actual consumer behaviour. Social media marketing therefore needs to address the usefulness of the product or brand (Sharma & Bhatt, 2018; Kumaradeepan, 2020). The model has been validated by other researchers, and the results have always been consistent with this correlation. For instance, Lim et al. (2016) found that there existed a positive significant relationship between purchase intention

online and Perceived Usefulness (PU), in which purchase intention serves as an antecedent to real online buying behaviour. Perceived Usefulness (PU) is thus a predominant influence in consumer online buying behaviour. Online shopping behaviour prediction theory of the TAM model has been well supported by earlier researchers (Islam et al., 2023). Online purchase intention has been found to be a significant predictor of customers' buying behaviour. Following the above literature, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H5: The perceived usefulness conveyed in social media advertising campaigns positively affects the buying behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion industry.

2.1.6 Impact of social media on Consumer Buying Behaviour

Throughout the provided literature, it can be found with a very comprehensive study regarding how social media influences fast fashion. Yet little work has been performed on whether marketing on social media affects buying behaviours of the consumers. Kumar and Raju's (2013) research article titled "The Role of Advertising in Consumer Decision Making," in which they tested that advertisements could actually shift the attitude of the consumers towards products. Apart from that, it is found that the primary function of advertising is to stimulate consumption buying behaviour. In most circumstances, how a person reacts to a product being promoted either positively or negatively is found to influence his or her buying level of such a product (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023). It is therefore arguable that consumerism to a product is dominated primarily by advertisement irrespective of the product's nature. Haider and Shakib (2017) elaborated, in 2017, social media advertisement's influence on shopping behaviour among consumers and have theorized four standalone variables of social media advertisement that impact: entertainment, familiarity, social image, and advertisement cost (Haider & Shakib, 2017). The researcher has then integrated this model as the conceptual framework of the research. It therefore follows that the sixth hypothesis has been developed as follows:

H6- Social media advertising has a positive influence on the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion industry.

2.1.7 Moderating effect of electronic Word of Mouth

The fact that there are many fast fashion products and brands available has caused an advanced decision-making process among consumers before making a final buying decision (Putri and Wandebori, 2016). In order to assist them in making the correct decision so that they will not be disappointed by inappropriate products, consumers look for others with the same product categories. When customers experience favourable word of mouth through the vehicle of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) communication, attitudes get a boost in a positive manner. However, more number of negative reviews minimizes the influence of eWOM communication and acts conversely. According to previous literature, it was observed that eWOM strongly impacts consumers' attitudes towards specific products and their purchase behaviours (Akyuz, 2013; Bataineh, 2015). Although a consumer might be positively inclined towards a fashionable product, they might not have the intention to purchase it for themselves. Yet, it has been made clear that other individuals' recommendations are going to drive their purchasing intention towards the product. Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016) also argued that contextual variables may interact with one another, and thus eWOM has been used as a moderator in several consumer behaviour-centered studies, purchase intention research, and repurchase intention research (Samarasinghe & Jayawardhana, 2020; Ulpapar, 2021). Although there is literature available, it is not sufficient to understand eWOM as a moderator between social media advertising and consumer purchase behaviour.

H7: Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) moderates the relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchasing behaviour.

3. METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses Development

The researcher has developed the following hypotheses based on the theoretical model.

- H1: Spending on social media advertising positively impacts the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion industry.
- H2: The level of familiarity featured in social media advertising campaigns positively affects the buying behaviour of consumers for fast fashion items.

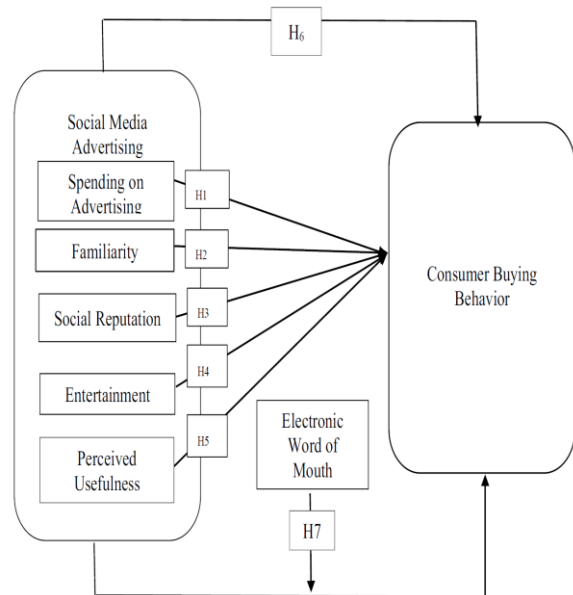


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

- H3: The social image portrayed in social media advertising campaigns positively influences the purchasing behaviour of consumers for fast fashion items.
- H4: The entertainment value within social media advertising campaigns has a positive impact on the purchasing behaviour of consumers for fast fashion items.
- H5: The perceived usefulness conveyed in social media advertising campaigns positively affects the buying behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion industry.
- H6: Social media advertising has a positive influence on the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion industry.
- H7: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) moderates the relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchasing behaviour.

The current research was focused on identifying the key factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviour in the context of fast fashion items. This investigation aimed to pinpoint specific associations, enabling the researcher to formulate research hypotheses with clear directions. The chosen research philosophies for this study were positivism and the deductive approach due to the nature of its objectives. To assess reality, quantitative methods were employed, utilizing established instruments used by previous researchers. Convenience sampling was used to select samples, given that consumers may be scattered across the country, making it challenging to obtain a comprehensive consumer list. The study gathered firsthand information from customers through a structured questionnaire. Sample sizes were determined using the formula developed by Kerjic & Morgan (1970). Accordingly, an online questionnaire was distributed through social media platforms, with a sample size of 400 respondents. However, only 262 data were analyzed due to concerning the suitability of the data. The time horizon of this study was cross sectional though it aligns with the set objectives of the study.

The central focus of this study was to examine how social media advertising influences consumer buying behaviour and whether electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behaviour within the fast fashion context in Sri Lanka. The research population consisted of individual consumers with internet access who made online purchases. This population was chosen because the study sought to investigate whether social media advertising impacts consumer buying behaviour among online shoppers. The questionnaire comprised four parts: Part A included demographic characteristics, Part B encompassed five dimensions of social media advertising, each measured by three indicators, Part C comprised four indicators to assess electronic word of mouth, and Part D featured four indicators to gauge consumer buying behaviour. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, with 276 responses received. However, 262 questionnaires were deemed suitable for analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Test of Validity

Validity demonstrates the accuracy of the concepts and elements employed to gauge a variable. The fundamental component determining the quality of test can be referred to as validity. Consequently, it is imperative and essential to evaluate validity prior to conducting subsequent analytical assessments. The sample adequately fulfilled the requirements for all variables, with coefficients exceeding zero ($P > 0.05$), and validity was assessed using convergent validity.

Since ($CR > AVE$) and the shared variance values were less than the average variance extracted (AVE), we also ensured discriminant validity. We employed the Fornell-Larcker criteria as our criteria, following Hair et al.'s (2014) recommendation that the square root of AVE should surpass the correlation value between variables. The table below displays the outcomes of our discriminant validity analysis.

4.2 Reliability Test

Table 1: Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Comment
Cost of Advertising	0.766	Accepted.
Familiarity	0.769	Accepted.
Social Reputation	0.815	Accepted.
Entertainment	0.849	Accepted.
Perceived Usefulness	0.754	Accepted.
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.715	Accepted.
Consumer Buying behavior	0.816	Accepted.

Test of Validity

The reliability was ensured since the Cronbach Alpha (α) value of each and every variable was higher than 0.7. Thus, it fulfilled the need of having the internal consistency of the measurement.

Table 2: Validity

Variable	Chi-square Value	Significance 0.05>	KMO Value 0.5<	Composite Reliability 0.7<	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) 0.5<	Discriminant Validity						
						Cost of Advertising	Familiarity	Social Reputation	Entertainment	Perceived usefulness	Electronic Word of Mouth	Consumer Buying Behavior
Cost of Advertising	208.913	.000	0.760	0.702	0.548	0.7502						
Familiarity	323.649	0.000	0.698	0.721	0.592	0.466	0.779					
Social Reputation	287.353	0.000	0.716	0.890	0.729	0.328	0.678	0.863				
Entertainment	692.259	0.000	0.873	0.809	0.675	0.518	0.538	0.337	0.83			
Perceived Usefulness	341.659	0.000	0.728	0.704	0.602	0.579	0.521	0.327	0.570	0.785		
Electronic word of mouth	441.576	0.000	0.741	0.753	0.645	0.511	0.636	0.421	0.532	0.541	0.725	
Consumer Buying Behavior	875.632	0.000	0.755	.843	0.664	0.595	0.553	0.385	0.598	0.599	0.615	0.678

Table 3 Correlation Analysis

		Cost of advertising	Familiarity	Social Reputation	Entertainment	Perceived usefulness	Electronic word of Mouth	Consumer Buying Behavior
Cost of advertising	Pearson Correlation	1	.652**	.539**	.525**	.478**	.846**	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Familiarity	Pearson Correlation	.652**	1	.550**	.489**	.505**	.575**	.366**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Social Reputation	Pearson Correlation	.539**	.550**	1	.463**	.512**	.424**	.161**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.001
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Entertainment	Pearson Correlation	.525**	.489**	.463**	1	.549**	.433**	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Perceived usefulness	Pearson Correlation	.478**	.505**	.512**	.549**	1	.407**	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Electronic word of Mouth	Pearson Correlation	.846**	.575**	.424**	.433**	.407**	1	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Consumer Buying behavior	Pearson Correlation	.790**	.366**	.161**	.215**	.316**	.372**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	
	N	262	262	262	262	262	262	262

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: compiled by the Author

As indicated in Table 3, all independent variables exhibit a favorable association with the consumer purchasing behavior in the context of online retail fast fashion. Among these factors, familiarity demonstrates the strongest positive correlation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of (0.790)

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the research hypothesis.

Table: 4. Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.778 ^a	.772	.774	.36750
Predictors: (Constant), Spending on Advertising, Familiarity, social reputation, Entertainment, Perceived usefulness				
Source: compiled by the Author				

Table (4) provides a synopsis of the regression analysis results. The explanatory power (R²) signifies the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable is clarified by the independent variables. By examining the adjusted R², we can deduce that 77% of the variance in the dependent variable, which is online purchasing intention, is accounted for by the independent variables.

Table 5: Table: 5. ANOVA Table.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	80.386	5	12.077	42.530	.000 ^b
	Residual	136.780	615	.306		
	Total	197.186	620			
a. Dependent Variable: consumer Buying Behavior						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Spending on Advertising, Familiarity, social reputation, Entertainment, Perceived usefulness						

Source: Compiled by the Author

The above ANOVA Table (5) illustrates whether the tested model is significant and it illustrates the above

model is significant since the alpha (α) value is less than 0.05.

Table 6: Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.046	.152		-6.481	.000
	Spending on Advertising	.274	.059	.270	2.957	.515
	Familiarity	.352	.058	.350	2.613	.029
	Social Reputation	.469	.060	.437	4.486	.000
	Entertainment	.516	.050	.541	8.402	.067
	Perceived Usefulness	.316	.050	.341	8.402	.000

Source: compiled by the Author

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine how all these factors collectively influence consumer buying behavior in the fast fashion sector. The multiple regression model can be represented as $Y = 1.046 + (0.350) (X_2) + (0.437) (X_3) + (0.541) (X_4) + (0.341) (X_5)$, revealing that familiarity, social reputation, entertainment, and perceived usefulness have a positive impact on consumer buying behavior in the fast fashion industry. However, spending on advertising was found to be statistically insignificant, as the alpha (P) value for it exceeded 0.05, specifically 0.515. Consequently, H₂, H₃, H₄, and H₅ are supported, while H₁ is not satisfied

Simple linear Regression Analysis

H₆-Social Media Advertising has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior

Table 7: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.634 ^a	.378	.356	.78499

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Advertising

Source: compiled by the Author

The model (7) presented above provides a summary of the simple linear regression analysis. The explanatory capacity, represented by R², indicates the extent to which the variance in the dependent variable is clarified by the independent variable. By examining the adjusted R², we can infer that 38% of the variation in the dependent variable, which is consumer buying behavior, is accounted for by the independent variable, Social Media Advertising.

Table 8: Coefficients of the Simple Linear Regression

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.745	.260		14.217	.000
	Social media Advertising	.172	.027	.278	15.343	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior						

Source: Compiled by the author

(β) The coefficient for customer satisfaction is 0.278. It indicates that increasing one unit of customer satisfaction causes to increase in consumer buying behavior in 0.168 units. The p-value is 0.000 at 95% of confidence level. The model can be written as $Y = 1.745 + 0.278(x_1)$

Moderating Role of Electronic Word of Mouth

Table 9: Model summary

R	R-sq	M SE	F	df1	df2	p
.7948	.6540	.1538	264.6562	3.0000	417.0000	.0000

Source: compiled by the Author

The model summary stresses that 65% of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable, social media advertising.

Table 10: coefficient Table e-WOM Model

	Coefficients	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.7652	.1675	4.5515	.0000	.4330	1.0913
Social. Advertising	.1205	.0606	2.1531	.0419	.0114	.2496
e-WOM	.5922	.0776	7.6278	.0000	.439	.7447
Int_1	-.524	.0258	-.2861	.0049	-.0580	.0433

Source: Compiled by the Author

This reveals that the existence of e-WOM communication diminishes the link between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior. Consequently, the study has compelling evidence to reject the null hypothesis and assert that e-WOM moderates the association between social media advertising and consumer buying behaviour, as evidenced by the interaction term having an alpha value of 0.004, well below the threshold of 0.05. Furthermore, e-WOM exhibits negative coefficients, indicating a weakening of the relationship.

5. DISCUSSION

Many research studies in the literature revealed that spending on advertising has a statistically significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior (Haider and Shakib, 2017; Jemal & Melese, 2025) and which is contradictory to our outcomes. However, the first hypothesis of our study is rejected since there is no significant impact of advertising spending on consumer purchasing behavior as the alpha value is higher than 0.05 and which matches the findings of (Bandara, 2017). This implies that spending on advertising is not a phenomenal factor in shaping the behaviour of consumers. The second hypothesis emphasized that familiarity as a factor in advertising campaigns that has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behaviour, and it is justified by the findings of Vrtana & Krizanova, (2023). Moreover, Bnadara (2017) and Haider and Shakib (2017) also

stressed that familiarity has a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.

The third hypothesis, indicating that consumer buying behavior is influenced by social imaging, was also significant since the p value is less than 0.05, and it further concludes that it has a moderate impact ($\beta=0.437$) on consumer buying behavior. Further, the results generated were confirmed by the findings in the literature (Haider and Shakib, 2017; Britton, 2012).

More Precisely, the fourth hypothesis indicating that entertainment influences consumer buying behaviour was also accepted by recording as the salient factor by showing the highest impact ($\beta=0.541$) and it was justified by the past research studies. Moreover, it is vital to stress that social media advertisement should be humorous and must generate some entertainment in order to attract customers. The 5th hypothesis showed that perceived usefulness in advertisements positively influences consumer purchasing behavior, supported by a significant β value of 0.341 and an alpha level below 0.05. The 6th hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression and it concluded that social media advertising positively impacts the consumer purchasing behaviour and it was confirmed by the similar findings of Kumar & Raju, 2013; Haider and Shakib, 2017. Accordingly, except advertising spending, all the independent variables had a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Further, this study proves that the electronic word of mouth works as a moderator between social media advertising and purchasing behaviour of consumers, and it further elaborates that the relationship between the two variables is weakened by the moderator. Its interaction term is -0.474 and it further clarifies that the association between independent and dependent variables is moderated negatively by the moderator, electronic word of mouth. Many research studies related to consumer behaviour and consumer buying behaviour reveals that eWOM is a versatile moderator, and it is similar to our study (Weerasinghe & Jayawardhana, 2020; Ngo et al., 2024). Accordingly, this finding is very important since this research is highly concerned about the online advertising culture.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Managerial Implications

In delineating the practical implications of this study, it highlights more grounded and pragmatic insights. Consequently, businesses in the fashion industry can leverage this research to shape consumer buying behavior in favor of their brands. Furthermore, the study's findings are directly applicable to the fast fashion sector itself. In practice, fashion retailers should design more captivating advertising campaigns to cultivate their brand identities. Through these advertisements, fashion retailers can sway individuals towards choosing their brand, effectively using advertising as a means to positively influence consumer purchasing behavior. This underscores the need for fashion retailers to innovate their approaches to engage with their customer base.

The present study identifies the most effective types of advertising for impacting consumer buying behavior, which includes entertainment, familiarity, social imaging, and perceived usefulness. Thus, if a fashion retailer incorporates social imaging into their social media campaigns, it implies that they are utilizing influencers such as celebrities, to endorse their brand. When people are exposed to such advertisements, they tend to emulate these personalities, subsequently considering purchasing the advertised products. In this context, indicators of social imaging encompass Customer Image and Superiority. This means that portraying a particular social class in advertisements enhances the customer's perception of the fashion brand and conveys a sense of superiority. When competing with other fashion brands, this supports the conclusion that social imaging has a positive impact on consumer buying behaviour. Likewise, all the other variables in the study have been statistically proven to exert a positive influence on consumer buying behaviour. Consequently, it is advisable to incorporate elements of entertainment, familiarity, social imaging, and perceived usefulness in campaign development. Additionally, advertisers should bear in mind that higher spending on advertising does not always guarantee a positive response from consumers. Instead, they should prioritize the quality of the content they create and focus more on the third part

recommendations to survive their brand. Thus, this study proves and highly aligns with the practicability of social proofs theory and two step flow theory which recommends to gain others' views before making any purchasing decisions.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES

The fashion industry is susceptible to changes influenced by shifts in culture. As a result, future researchers should place their emphasis on examining cross-cultural factors. Additionally, the study's utilization of surveys as the data gathering method may introduce certain limits, as some queries might be perplexing to respondents, leading to refusals to answer. Therefore, it is advisable for future research to adapt questions to delve deeper into emotional influences. In light of the study's primarily quantitative nature, there is merit in adopting a mixed-methods approach, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This approach has the potential to yield more insightful findings. Furthermore, the examination of the effect of social media advertising on consumer purchasing behaviour was restricted solely to the fashion industry. Consequently, generalizing these findings to other contexts requires further investigation.

Moreover, the study's sample size was restricted to just 400 respondents, which might not be sufficient to obtain accurate results when dealing with a larger population. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling raises the possibility of researcher bias., which should be acknowledged as drawbacks of the study.

8. CONCLUSION

This research was undertaken to assess the influence of social media advertising on consumer purchasing behavior, with a specific focus on the fast fashion sector. Data collected were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Consequently, the results of the regression analysis reveal that the independent variables in the study namely, Entertainment, Familiarity, Social Imaging, and Perceived Usefulness exert a significant and positive impact on the dependent variable, which is

consumer buying behaviour. As a result, four of the study's hypotheses were supported, while one was rejected. The study outlines that the cost incurred for advertising will not shape the consumers' buying behaviour. The implications of this study provide valuable insights for fashion retailers and marketers. Moreover, the study, emphasized that e-WOM declines the association between social media advertising and the consumer purchasing behaviour. Likewise, this research contributes to the existing body of literature and serves as a reference for future researchers in the field.

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