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Conceptual Review of Social Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention; Dynamics in Fashion Retail Industry

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ABSTRACT

The competition in the fashion retail industry is reaching new heights due to various demands of the fashion consumers. As per the significant growth in the fashion retailing sector, the marketers need to define the strategies to address their customer intentions. With the increase of ad blocking, shift from traditional media to online platforms and especially the rapid growth of the social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter), fashion retailers have to align their social media strategies with the online and offline behavior of the consumers. This researcher study mainly focuses upon understanding the impact of social media influencers and the purchase intention among the consumers. Objectives of this study were to understand the effectiveness of social influence on consumer purchase intention for fashion related products, therefore this study has investigated main construct of Influencer Credibility and Information Quality of the content shared by these social influencers and their relationship with both Attitude towards reviews and Purchase Intention respectively. Finally, the researcher further investigates whether there is a mediating effect of Attitude towards reviews on the relationship between effectiveness of social influence and Purchase Intention. The study commences with a general overview into the subject of focus, followed by an in depth review of the literature on the main concepts Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intention and Attitude towards reviews. Based on the understanding of the literature and concepts with regard to the area of study, the conceptual frame work was derived.

Keywords: *Attitude towards Reviews, Purchase intention, Social Influence Marketing*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Marketing today is very different than marketing of the past. In the past and today, are exposed to a wide range of advertisements fighting to gain the customer attention whilst losing their effectiveness as customers become less responsive and consider them as noise. According to Infolinks, a global leader in Digital Advertising, conducted a study in 2012 with regard to the industry challenge of "Banner Blindness", where the results indicated that 14 percent of the respondents were unable to recall the last display ad they saw and the company or the product they promoted (infolinks, 2013). Ad Blockers are gaining popularity as it has also been found that 20 percent of the internet users aged between 16 and 34 used adblockers to keep themselves from having to view these advertisements (Statista, 2016). In traditional marketing, we were able to buy more leads and potential customers won the business. However, with the rising online platforms what is relevant is the time and effort brought forward in forming and maintaining relationships that are solely built on trust as a foundation and mutual respect.

As people tend to watch from more screens, the smart phone is becoming is becoming a larger part of the viewing experience. This trend towards mobility has got people to watch more content away from the TV to consuming it from other connected devices. The rise of this mobility movement, gives rise to the concept of "TV anywhere" reshaping the broadcast industry as well. The Smart phone does not displace larger screens used to watch content all the time, but plays an important role in how people consume the video content (Streaming Video Alliance, 2016). The fixed line market in Sri Lanka seems to remain underdeveloped as the mobile segment seems to be dominating while the fixed telephone lines slowly decline giving rise to the mobile segment. The overall penetration for fixed lines dropped from 16.3 percent to 11.3 percent in 2017 while it is to further decline over the next five years. On the other hand, the mobile market has experienced a strong growth with 96 percent in 2012 rising to 126 percent in 2017. A slow moderate growth will be predicted as there is very strong local competition and a saturated mobile market (Reportlinker, 2017).

In Sri Lanka which maintains an internet penetration growth rate of 7% annually, we are socializing virtually with 6 million active users in Sri Lanka which is 32% of the population. According to Statcounter, we have 5.4 million Facebook users while Instagram accounts for 0.7 Million users actively engage on Instagram. With the emergence of Social media also known as consumer generated media, the means by which we communicate to our customers have changed significantly (Bhavya, 2018). It has been found that social networks are known

to be in the highest ranking as a source of inspiration for purchases (PwC's Global Consumer Insights Survey 2018, 2018). Although we tend to trust certain brand when shopping, we rely heavily on other people's opinions when making purchase decisions. "Today's consumers trust the wisdom of the crowd, what somebody in their network says about something," says Rick Kauffeld, a PwC US principal. Through the survey conducted majority find inspiration for their purchases through Social networks followed by individual retailer websites.

1.1. Rationale of the Research Gap and Intention of the Study:

It is a natural behavior of consumers to stick to a product or service which is familiar to them rather than purchasing a new product/service which could be riskier. In order to mitigate the risk, prior to purchasing consumers collect and compare information while seeking for opinions from trusted sources. Consumers themselves become influencers where they could give advice and verbal direction for search, purchase and usage (Flynn, Eastman, & Goldsmith, 1996). Opinions of the others seems to be more trustworthy than marketing sources of marketing information (Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). With Social Media gaining increased popularity over time, it could be used as the ideal platform to share opinions and experiences with each other through social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram. Social Media Influencers who have established their credibility, having access to a large audience could be a persuasive force due to their authenticity and reach. They represent real customers which is the closest to word of mouth marketing, known to be the trusted figures within a niche community retaining a loyal following. They tend to stimulate and develop their relationship with their followers, showing their personal and everyday lives while sharing their opinions. As a result, it reinforces the unbiased filter of "people like me" (Allsop, Bassett, & Hoskins, 2007).

According to the research conducted by Berger and the Keller Fay Group (2016), influencers were perceived as more credible, believable and knowledgeable, and that 82 percent are highly likely to follow an influencer's advice. Keeping in mind that Influencer Marketing is a relatively new marketing strategy which creates a vast amount of opportunities for marketers, in 2016 Tapinfluence together with Nielsen, found out that influencer marketing gives a "Return on investments" (ROI) 11 times higher than traditional forms of digital marketing. In addition to that influencers tend to believe that it is an honest and authentic voice that will help them to keep their audience engaged to them. Nielsen, the consumer market research company

found in 2012 that 92% trust recommendations from individuals rather than brands (Nielsen, 2012).

As identified with the increase in ad blocking software and the advance forward to skip commercials it is crucial for marketers to sort into ways of overcoming the resistance to the brand message. A recent survey showed that 84% of marketers were planning on executing at least one influencer campaign during 2017 (Agrawal, 2016). Influencer marketing can be used to avoid this situation while avoiding being a "product pusher" since consumers would tend to prefer personal content over corporate online presence (Agrawal, 2016). For businesses who solely depend on ad revenue, Ad blocking is becoming a huge detriment to their entire advertising eco system which affects most of the publishers, marketers as well agencies. That is why it is crucial to deliver compelling content and experiences to mitigate this problem to make sure customers would not want to block such content. Sometimes people might find these advertisements intrusive while some might want to spend their online time in an ad free environment. As users tend to adopt more to the use of ad blockers, the industry has been slow to react. There are also subscription services like YouTube Rad as well as premium/freemium models like Spotify which are willing to respond to the user needs of an ad-free experience while having to make sure they provide a better UX than ad blockers, which are free of charge. This is currently one of the most significant challenges faced by marketers, convincing their customers to pay to enjoy an ad free environment (Morrison, 2016). Ad blocking is forcing publishers to improve the quality of their advertisements to provide better user experience (Shukla S. , 2017).

In the marketing context there could be many ways in which influencer marketing can affect or create value of the marketing strategy. Godey, et al., (2016) founded that social media marketing and brand equity has a positive relationship on the two dimensions of brand awareness and brand image. Since the Brand Equity has been covered the researcher aim to cover the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior. In the current context it is often seen that due to the increased engagement, social media channels, web traffic and sales influencers are being used to promote new products. The posts shared by the influencers on their respective platforms tend to communicate the use, benefits, uniqueness portrayed through the product. As a tool to measure effective marketing purchase intention could be a key indicator used forecast future sales and market share.

In the current context with regard to fashion brands it has been understood that with the increase use of social media apps, declining rate of TV viewership and ad blocking taking place brands need to resort to alternative ways of approaching their target audiences. Thus, our goal is to interpret how social media influencer marketing affects consumer's purchase in order for marketers to make better and effective decisions. By stating the above-mentioned facts, the researcher tries to address the following question through the study.

"What impact does social influence marketing have on consumers' purchase intention and how is the purchase intention being affected?"

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

2.1. Social Influence Marketing:

Influence is broadly defined as the power to affect someone, thing or course of events (Nekatibeb, 2012). According to Brown and Hayes (2015), an Influencer is defined as "a third-party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision, but may ever be accountable for it" (Brown & Hayes, 2015) .Influencers, according to Ping Helsinki, are those who keep a bog or post their opinions on Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram or other social media channels who have their own community in social media and they are willing to create sponsored and professionally produced content for their followers (Biaudet, 2017).

They have the power and ability to affect purchase decisions of others due to their position, knowledge or relationship they are able to maintain with their followers while they have a following in a particular niche (the size of the following depends on the size of the niche), which they actively engage with (Influencer Marketing Hub, n.d.). They are individuals with social relationship assets with which brands can work together with to achieve their marketing objectives rather than considering them to merely marketing tools. Gottbrecht, VP of Marketing at Mavrck states that "Influencers, by definition, inspire and empathize with the same consumers that marketers seek to engage, as they bridge the gap".

"In the learning system, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behaviors of others" states Bandura, social science theorist involved in the understanding of the reaction of people in social situations. Furthermore, consumers develop thoughts based on the informative feedback provided by their influencers they follows resulting as a guide for future action (Bandura, 1971). Forbes, (2016) states, through the observation of influencer behavior on social media people are likely to adopt such behaviors and with that

hope companies are capitalizing on social media influencers with the hope of influencing their consumers.

Influencer marketing is the digital equivalent of word-of-mouth marketing which is known to be the "a type of marketing that focuses on using key leaders to drive a brand's message to the larger market" (Byrne, Kearney, & MacEvilly, 2017). Furthermore, it has also been stated that it is similar to opinion leadership where we consider it to be an influential person with a strong personal brand (Li & Du, 2011). Influencer marketing is associated with two other forms of marketing, namely social-media marketing and content marketing. Most influencer campaigns have some sort of social-media component, whereby influencers are expected to spread the word through their personal social channels. On the other hand, many influencer campaigns also carry a content element in which either you create content for the influencers, or they create the content themselves. Even though social-media and content marketing often fits into influencer campaigns, they are not the same as influencer marketing.

Further on applying these definitions to the online context, we could define the concept as an individual who has built up a follower base on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube or Blogs who is a trustworthy and credible source to be used by brand in order to create the awareness of a particular product or service (Veiman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) Researches have shown that Influencers tend to be more credible than paid advertisements while it is authenticity that leads to lower resistance towards a message that is communicated. Through the influencers they follow, they are allowing those individuals to influence them while their opinion is considered to be relevant in that particular subject (Hsu, Lin, & Chiang, 2013).

Social Media incorporated into Influencer Marketing is the new phenomenon within the rise in the economy as a result of the constantly evolving and changing market. Social Influence Marketing is defined as "a technique that employs social media (content created by everyday people using highly accessible and scalable technologies such as blogs, message boards, podcasts, microblogs, bookmarks, social networks, communities, wikis and vlogs) and social influencers (everyday people who have an outsized influence on their peers by virtue of how much content they share online) to achieve and organization's marketing and business needs" (Singh & Diamond, 2012). Influencer Marketing on Social Media provides new opportunities for brands to engage with their consumers directly as well as organically and at scale to their everyday lives (Adweek, 2015).

According to (Gottbrecht, 2016), the spectrum of influencers on social media platforms can be identified among the following three types.

Mega Influencers, which includes actors, artists, athletes and social media followers accounting for a follower base of 1M+ and drive 3%-6% engagement per post, I which they account for the highest reach, they have the lowest overall resonance when driving actions on behalf of the brand is considered. Macro Influencers, comprise of executives, bloggers, journalists who account for 10,000-1M followers driving 5%-25% engagement per post. Highest topical relevance on the spectrum with category specific influences such as fashion, lifestyle is what they are known for. Micro Influencers are everyday customers and employees who have 500-10,000 followers driving 25%-50% engagement per post. They account for the highest brand relevance and resonance driven by their personal experience with the brands and strength of relationship with their networks.

2.2. Consumer Purchase Intention:

Purchase intention is known to be the cognitive behavior regarding the intention to buy a particular brand (Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Wari, & Ejaz, 2012). Purchase intention is a part of the complex consumers' purchase decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). While Spears & Singh, (2004) explains purchase intention as "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand", Ghosh states it is important to understand the consumer purchase intention as it relates to consumer behavior which could be used to predict the buying process. The consumer decision process consists of need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

After discovering the need for a particular product or service they search for information from both internal and external sources. Once the alternatives are evaluated, they tend to form attitudes depending on the individual consumer and the specific buying situation. Out of which when forming these attitudes turning into their family, friends, opinion leaders, online reviews, blogs, opinions will play a major role when ranking these brand and forming the purchase intention. Favorable attitude towards a specific product could lead to a consumers' purchase intention. Likewise, a favorable attitude towards products which are endorsed by social media influencers have a higher chance of impacting the purchase decision (Chen, 2007).

Purchase intentions are indicators of to what degree people are willing to approach a certain behavior and how many attempts do they try in order to perform the certain behavior. Vineyard,

(2014) describes purchasing intention as the likelihood of the customer to buy a specific product or service. It is also the tendency towards the plan of making purchase decisions in the future as well as one of the components of consumer cognitive behavior on how he/she intends to buy a specific brand (Hosein, 2012). Research shows that consumer's intention to purchase does have a considerable effect on their actual purchase decision which could be an important factor for companies to consider as it increases the likelihood of higher sales and maximization of profits (Hosein, 2012).

Purchase intention can be liked to both goal-oriented and exploration-oriented browsing behavior (Moe, 2003). Goal-oriented consumers look for information before they make their purchase decision whilst exploration-oriented consumers are those who act freely and openly, not making any pre plans before the purchase of a product or service. These two types of behaviors can be seen in both regular and online consumers. A purchase intention arises as an outcome of the information search and alternative evaluation stages once consumers are satisfied with their comparison with the competitor brands that are available to choose from (Belch & Belch, 2003).

2.3. Attitude towards Reviews:

Attitude is defined as "a learned, global evaluation of an object (person, place, or issue) that influences thought and action" (R.M.Perloff, 2003). He mostly emphasizes on the social nature of attitudes as they are formed through interaction with others and points out that attitude is first of any evaluation, when a people tend to make judgements regarding issues or people. It is particularly important marketers since if a change in consumer behavior is needed, they try to do so by influencing attitudes (R.M.Perloff, 2003). Even though attitude could be in the form of affect, cognition and conation, as stated by many social psychologists it is mostly related to affect: positive or negative feelings (Cacioppo, Harkins, & Petty, 1981) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Information processing models have been developed to predict consumers' attitudinal responses to exposure of information (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980; Maclnnis & Jaworski, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Previous researches have shown that when considering effectiveness towards advertising, attitudes towards the advertisements lead to the attitudes toward the product or brand, emphasizing the mediating role of attitude toward the ad (Brown & Stayman, 1992; Haley & Baldinger, 2000; Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Similar to liking an information source or a persuasive message enhances a favorable attitude towards the product/ brand in the

message or websites the research study suggests that consumers' attitudes toward information in online consumer reviews influence their attitudes toward the reviewed product and the influencer that provides the reviews.

2.4. Theory of Reasoned Action:

The researcher looks into an expectancy-value model that explains how consumers form and change attitudes based on the beliefs/knowledge they have about an object or action, and their evaluation of these particular beliefs (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, Consumer Behavior 6th Edition, 2013). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of the essential and most influential theories of human behavior, created by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975, and has been used to predict a wide range of behaviors. The TRA is a rational choice model used to examine how consumers justify their behavior. Originally developed in 1967 by Fishbein, and was further developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1980. It is widely used as a basis for marketing decisions (Kassarjian & Robertson, 1991), as the theory helps to understand which factors drives consumers' behavioral intentions and that intention for a specific behavior can predict, explain or influence the actual use (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, Consumer Behavior 6th Edition, 2013). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of the essential and most influential theories of human behavior, created by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975, and has been used to predict a wide range of behaviors.

Behavioral intention indicates how hard people are willing to try and of how much effort they are planning to exert in order to perform the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior, 1980). Since behavior (B) is a function of a person's behavioral intention (BI), this theory could be summarized as a function of two components; individual's attitude towards the behavior (AB) and the subjective norms (SN).

BI = (AB) W1 + (SN) W2
(W stands for how important the component is to the individual)

Attitude is the degree to which the person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question, and attitude is learned and tend to persist over time (Schwartz, 2007). Attitude towards the behaviors is influenced by the consumers' beliefs about the consequences of engaging in a certain behavior and an evaluation of the significance of those consequences (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). If the positive consequences of performing the behavior outweigh the negative ones it is likely that the customer will form a positive attitude towards the specific

behavior which will in turn strengthen the likelihood of the behavioral intention and the likelihood of the behavior being performed.

Subjective Norms are normative beliefs that result from social pressure influenced by the consumers' normative beliefs and what others feel about the behavior (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters 2013). Whether or not these normative beliefs are to be strengthened or weakened are based on consumers' motivation to comply with others (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In concern to this theory, the behavior is affected by both personal attitudes as well as social pressure arising from significant others opinions towards the behavior.

2.5. Information Adoption Model:

The theoretical foundation of Information Adoption Model lies in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980) and its derivative theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). Individual intention to adopt or reject a specific behavior or technology is dependent on individual's beliefs and assessments of the consequences of adoption (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

According to IAM, there are two propositions considered (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008). Information quality known to be an important central cue is able to influence the information process (Zhu, Chang, & Luo, 2016) while source credibility as a peripheral cue has a critical role in the persuasive information process (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). When considering the online platform, information quality refers to the product information and shopping advices provided by fellow consumers, which constitute to be a crucial content cue in decision making process (Zhu, Chang, & Luo, 2016). Source credibility can be referred to as consumers that have experienced the product and provide their opinions online. It is quite evident that when individuals who review products differ in product knowledge level, their credibility is a crucial non-content related cue for potential customers during decision making process (Zhu, Chang, & Luo, 2016). So when aligning with the IAM model it uses source credibility as an important peripheral cue.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

As identified through the research problem, social influence marketing will be considered to be the independent variable whilst purchase intention will be the dependent variable. Indicators of social influence marketing will be changed and controlled in the study in order to test the effects on the dependent variable, which is purchase intention.

Information Adoption Model intends to explain how people are affected by the information on computer mediated communication platforms (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Accordingly, information quality and source credibility has significant impact on information usefulness, which in turn influences information adoption (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Further, to investigate the influence of information on purchase intention, TRA and IAM is combined to one model, which was proposed by previous studies (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015; Erkan & Evans, 2016).

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, attitude towards the behavior serves as a determinant of behavioral intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) helps to understand which factors drives consumers' behavioral intentions and that intention for a specific behavior can predict, explain or influence the actual use (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2013). Attitude will influence consumers' purchase intentions (Spears & Singh, 2004).

3.1. Attitude towards Reviews:

Attitude is defined as "a learned, global evaluation of an object (person, place, or issue) that influences thought and action" (Perloff, 2003). He mostly emphasizes on the social nature of attitudes as they are formed through interaction with others and points out that attitude is first of any evaluation, when a people tend to make judgements regarding issues or people. It is particularly important marketers since if a change in consumer behavior is needed, they try to do so by influencing attitudes (Perloff, 2003). Even though attitude could be in the form of affect, cognition and conation, as stated by many social psychologists it is mostly related to affect: positive or negative feelings (Cacioppo, Harkins, & Petty, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Information processing models have been developed to predict consumers' attitudinal responses to exposure of information (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Previous researches have shown that when considering effectiveness towards advertising, attitudes towards the advertisements lead to the attitudes toward the product or brand, emphasizing the mediating role of attitude toward the ad (Brown & Stayman, 1992; Haley & Baldinger, 2000; Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Similar to liking an information source or a persuasive message enhances a favorable attitude towards the product/ brand in the message or websites the research study suggests that consumers' attitudes toward information

in online consumer reviews influence their attitudes toward the reviewed product and the influencer that provides the reviews.

3.2. Purchase Intention:

Purchase intention is the cognitive behavior regarding the intention to buy a particular brand (Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Wari, & Ejaz, 2012). Purchase intention is a part of the complex consumers' purchase decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010) while Spears & Singh, (2004) explains purchase intention as "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand" which will be referred further in this research study.

A research conducted by Nielsen in 2015 concluded stating that influencer marketing is the same notion of a word of mouth recommendation extended beyond loved ones inclusive of influencers (Nielsen, 2015). By nature, almost all influencer marketing includes word-of-mouth marketing activities, but not all word-of-mouth marketing is said to be driven by influencer campaigns (Tomar, 2016). Electronic word of mouth seems to have greater effects on consumer decision making than traditional advertising which consumers tend to consider one of the keys to influencer marketing (Veiman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). As social media users are exposed to eWOM information either intentionally or unintentionally, previous studies have found that eWOM information is influential on consumer purchase intention (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). It does not mean all eWOM information posted on social media generates a similar effect on purchase intention, but the impact could vary (Yang, 2012).

In this research study, through linking IAM and TRA, the researcher predicts that the consumers who adopt eWOM information are more likely to have purchase intentions. Further, it is assumed that influencer marketing generates a similar impact as eWOM. The eWOM impact will be bought forward with the concepts of source credibility and information quality (Cheung & Rabjohn, 2008). Thus the following proposition is suggested

P1: There is a significant impact of Effectiveness of Social Influence on Purchase Intention

Source credibility refers to a message recipient's perception of the credibility of a message source, reflecting nothing about the message itself (Chaiken S. , 1980). Information provided by highly credible sources is perceived to be useful and reliable, and thereby facilitates knowledge transfer (Ko, Kirsch, & King, 2005). Source Credibility is defined as the extent to which an information source is perceived to be believable, competent, and trustworthy by its information recipients (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Hovland C., (1951) states that when

considering the role of credibility as an informational influence it is found to significantly alter recipient's opinions in the direction advocated by the communicator when the material is attributed to high credibility source than when it was attributed to a low-credibility source. As dimensions representing source credibility, source's trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness were considered as important factors in influencing consumers' perception (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008).

Trustworthiness is referred to as "the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions" (McCracken, 1989) and relates to the consumer's belief that the information source delivers a message in an objective and honest manner (Ohanian R., 1991). Trustworthiness can be also seen as the perceived motivation of information source to communicate a message without bias.

The perceived ability of the source to make valid assertions is known to be Source Expertise (McCracken, 1989). It is the extent to which the source is able to provide valid information (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), while it can be determined by assessing source's aspects namely knowledge, experience or skills (Erdogan, 1999).

Source attractiveness is one of the dimensions of source credibility defined as the extent to which the recipients of information consider the source appealing (Teng, Khong, Goh, & Chong, 2014; Kiecker & Cowles, 2001). McGuire, (1985) distinguished the dimensions of source attractiveness to be perceived familiarity, likability, and similarity of the source to the message recipient. Hence the following proposition is suggested.

P1a): There is a significant impact of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention

H1b): There is a significant impact of Information Quality on Purchase Intention

It is argued that in the process of information adoption behavioral beliefs are formed by information quality and source credibility. A study was conducted on the viral effects of social media on purchase intentions combining the models of IAM and TRA (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015). Furthermore it was proven that source credibility and argument quality has a positive effect on attitude towards information usefulness (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015).

H2: There is a significant impact of effectiveness of social influence on consumer attitude towards reviews

Theory of Reasoned action suggests that attitude influences behavioral intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) while a study was also conducted referring to the attitude towards technology usage influencing the intention to use it (Ayeh, 2015). Furthermore, it has been also studied that eWOM influences on consumers' purchase intention (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

H3: There is a significant impact of Attitude towards reviews on Purchase intention

IAM combined with TRA proved that information usefulness has a positive effect on information adoption, which will in turn influence purchase intentions. It was stated by Gunawan & Huarng, (2015), attitude towards information usefulness has a positive impact on purchase intentions. In this study the researcher proposes that attitude towards the influencer information will influence purchase decision. Individuals who have a positive attitude towards using information provided by influencers intend to follow the information source and use it to make purchase decisions. Therefore;

H4: The impact of Effectiveness of Social Influence on Purchase Intention is affected by attitude towards reviews

The researcher has developed the following model for the purpose of testing the above mentioned hypothesis.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
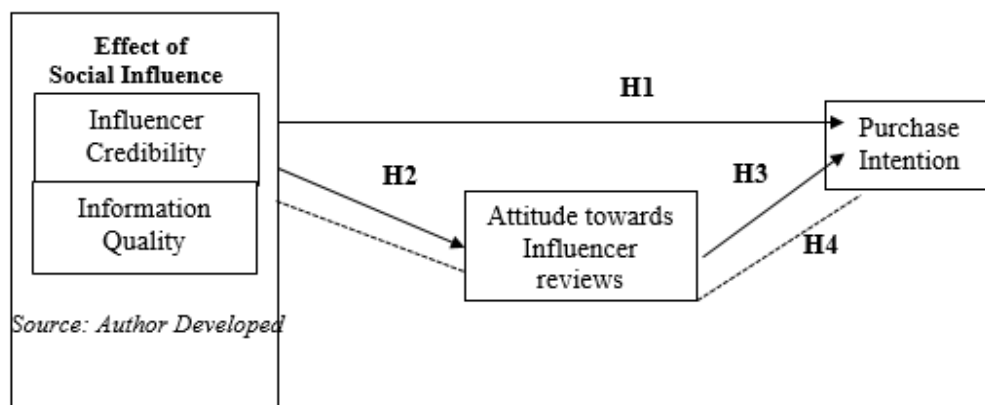
Source: Author Developed

4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS:

In this research study the researcher has used an existing theoretical framework which combines two theories, Theory of Reasoned Action and Information Adoption Model. This framework was developed in order to link information characteristics and consumer behaviour towards information sources (Erkan & Evans, 2016) Previous studies that were carried out used

the attitude towards information usefulness (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015) as a mediating variable or information usefulness and information adoption as two mediators (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Researchers tend to argue that in the context of technology acceptance, attitudinal construct represents the attitude towards the consumer behaviour of using technology (Wixom & Todd, 2005). Moreover, the researcher has used attitude toward using information source as the mediating variable in this particular study. In prior researches, this theoretical framework has not been applied to the context of the fashion industry.

For the evaluation of source credibility and information quality, the researcher has a used a combination of variables that differs from theoretical framework proposed by (Erkan & Evans, 2016). To measure information quality, the researcher proposes dimensions of relevance, comprehensiveness, accuracy and timeliness adopted from (Cheung & Rabjohn, 2008). To assess source credibility, majority of studies which have been carried out up to now, takes into consideration of only two dimensions, which are trustworthiness and expertise. However, the researcher has included a third dimension, which is attractiveness, as some researchers have argued that it could increase persuasiveness of the source (Ohanian R., 1990; Kiecker & Cowles, 2001).

Most of the studies have evaluated source credibility and information quality separately, while the researcher includes both into one study. The approach which is used in this study contributes to the existing knowledge by combining dimensions that were used by previous studies to assess the influence of source credibility and information quality.

Besides the theoretical contribution, this research study yields several practical implications as well. Empirical findings revealed that amongst examined factors, when considering influencer credibility and information quality separately each has a moderate effect on purchase intention. However, if the researcher is to consider both of these factors together, it can be argued that it has a stronger effect on affecting consumers' purchase intention and leading to higher sales. Additionally, considering the influence of social influencers on purchase intentions, fashion brands need to have the more association with these different categories of social influencer for more exposure for their brands. It can be done by providing access to their social media profiles that generate eWOM or provide expert recommendations (Chen et al., 2016).

Study's results showed that influencer credibility plays an important role as an informational source. If consumers tend to believe a fashion influencer is credible, trustworthy, has expertise about the field he/she associates herself/himself with, it is then considered to be appealing.

Consequently, social influencers can become more trustworthy and thus, influential if they show their real motivation to write a product review.

Alongside, social influencers could improve their perceived attractiveness by showing similarities to their readers and empathize with them (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). By enhancing their perceived credibility, social influencers could improve the attitude consumers have towards them by using them as a source of information, and consequently influence their purchase decisions.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The current study was subject to several limitations which were unavoidable and avoidable in nature. The current study used a cross sectional study where the one sample has used and the data collected from the selected sample only once because of the time constraints. However, in order to get more realistic approach, the longitudinal study should be done. The selected sample (300 sample units) limited only to Colombo district. However, there will be biasness when inferring to the results to the Sri Lanka because there are differences in different regions in the country when it considered to the consumer switching behaviour. The study has concerned only a limited number of variables which are considered to be the most important factor to identify the switching behaviour. But there will be other factors which are not tested or mentioned which is a limitation of this study. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data and since they are standardized important information that could have been gathered in an exploratory research can be missed. The telecommunication industry in Sri Lanka is drastically changing where the applicability of the selected switching determinants will not enough to properly pictures the switching behaviour

Due to constraints of time and resources, this study has several limitations. First, this study is limited only to the Sri Lankan context. Because of that, the study's findings generalizability is limited due to cultural differences. Future research could expand the research scope used in this research study into other countries and test our proposed conceptual model on consumers with different cultural background. A cross-cultural study examining the perceived credibility of online information sources would enrich the existing knowledge which has been provide through this study and allow to make comparisons among countries. Second, this study has adopted the convenience sampling strategy. Furthermore, the research was conducted by using self-administered questionnaire which was distributed online and through mail. Since the

participation in responding to these questionnaires was on a voluntary basis, there is a risk of self-selection bias.

Third, to the best of the researcher's knowledge this study was the first one to test social media influencer's source credibility and information quality on purchase intention mediated by the attitude towards online reviews. Previous studies often employ attitude toward information usefulness, attitude toward information or use information acceptance as a mediator. Therefore, the findings were impossible to be directly compared to our findings with results of other studies in the same field. The researcher believes testing the proposed conceptual model on different samples would provide comparable results as well as whether it would help to examine whether constructs considered in this study to have insignificant effect on the attitude toward using the source are actually true, are dependent on the sample or are the result of an incorrect measure.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

Next, the conceptual model was developed as a combination of the Theory of Reasoned Action and Information Adoption Model. The researcher considered the two theories to be the most suitable for the conducted study. Likewise, Theory of Planned Behaviour is quite similar to the Theory of Reasoned Action and could be used when the consumer does not have volitional control over his/her behaviour (Chiou, 1998). This theory which contains one more construct, which is Perceived Behavioral Control referred to as the consumer's belief about his/her access to resources and opportunities necessary to conduct a behaviour. It is stated in previous researches that perceived behavioral control is likely to have a significant influence on the purchase intention in online environment, so by adding this component to the conceptual model would have complemented the proposed conceptual model and enrich the existing knowledge. Both TRA as well as TPB model can be extended by examining the actual behaviour that results from the behavioral intention. Thus, future research can examine the proposed conceptual model by adding the above mentioned construct of actual purchase. Therefore, researchers could investigate how source credibility and information quality impacts on the actual purchase intention as well.

Future research could also concern other types of products, such as low- and high- involvement products or even different industries for their study in order to identify the applicability of the developed conceptual model in different contexts. It would be interesting to test the proposed conceptual model in the scope of utilitarian and hedonic products as well. Moreover, further

research can include other dimensions measuring source credibility such as goodness and dynamics as well as add other aspects of information quality such as completeness and consistency. In addition, further studies could also include more on the consumer's personal characteristics such as consumer self-efficacy or susceptibility to informational influence which could also result in and extended version for the existing model developed by the researcher.

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