

**2nd UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM ON MARKETING
MARKETING (URSM) - 2026**

Theme

**“Navigating Future Marketing: A Digital Journey through Innovation and
Sustainability”**

7th July 2026

ABSTRACT PROCEEDINGS

Department of Marketing Management

Faculty of Business Studies

University of Vavuniya

Pambaimadu

Vavuniya

Sri Lanka

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Message from the Vice Chancellor

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the guests, researchers, academic staff, professional and industry partners, and all participants of the 2nd Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM) - 2026, organized



by the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya. I am delighted that this symposium is being held in collaboration with the Department's professional and industrial Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) partners, reflecting our shared commitment to promoting research, innovation, and meaningful university-industry collaboration.

Undergraduate research symposium provides valuable opportunities for students to present their findings, exchange ideas, and develop the knowledge and skills required to address contemporary business and societal challenges. The theme of this year's symposium, "Navigating Future Marketing: A Digital Journey through Innovation and Sustainability," is both timely and relevant. As digital transformation and sustainability continue to shape the future of business, it is encouraging to see our undergraduate researchers exploring innovative solutions to these emerging opportunities and challenges.

This Abstract Proceedings reflects the dedication, creativity, and academic excellence of our undergraduate researchers, as well as the valuable guidance of academic supervisors, the contributions of reviewers, and the commitment of the organizing committee in ensuring the success of this event. I am confident that URSM - 2026 will provide a vibrant platform for intellectual exchange, strengthen university–industry collaboration, and inspire our young researchers to pursue excellence in research, innovation, and sustainable development. I wish the symposium every success.

Snr. Prof. A. Atputharajah

Vice Chancellor

University of Vavuniya.

Message from the Dean

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all participants to the 2nd Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM) - 2026, organized by the Department of Marketing Management.

The faculty acknowledges and appreciates the collaborative support of professional bodies and industry partners, whose contributions reinforce the relevance and impact of this academic initiative. I also recognize the dedication of the organizing committee of the Department of Marketing Management, whose efforts have been instrumental in bringing this event to fruition.



Under the timely and thought-provoking theme, “Navigating Future Marketing: A Digital Journey through Innovation and Sustainability,” this symposium reflects our commitment to fostering a vibrant academic culture that bridges theory, empirical inquiry, and contemporary industry practice. This symposium provides a critical platform for undergraduate researchers to engage with these emerging dynamics and contribute meaningfully to scholarly and professional discourse.

As Dean, I strongly encourage undergraduate students to take full advantage of this opportunity to present their research, receive constructive feedback, and engage in meaningful academic dialogue. On behalf of the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, I wish all participants a productive, insightful, and inspiring symposium. May URSM - 2026 serve as a milestone in advancing undergraduate research excellence in marketing and contribute to shaping innovative, and socially responsible marketing practices in future.

Mrs. Janaki Samuel Thevaruban

Dean

Faculty of Business Studies

University of Vavuniya.

Message from the Symposium Chair and Head of the Department

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 2nd Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM) - 2026, organized by the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya. The URSM is a significant academic initiative that provides a platform for undergraduate students to disseminate their research findings, exchange ideas, and engage in scholarly discussions on contemporary marketing issues.



This abstract proceedings represent the culmination of rigorous academic inquiry, critical analysis, and the dedicated efforts of both students and their supervisors. I am confident that the studies presented herein will contribute to the advancement of marketing knowledge and provide valuable insights for academics, practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders. I extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the organizing committee, reviewers, supervisors, and all academic and administrative staff for their dedication and commitment to the successful organization of this symposium.

I congratulate all student researchers whose abstracts have been accepted for presentation and publication. I encourage you to continue pursuing research with intellectual curiosity, academic integrity, and a commitment to addressing real-world marketing challenges through evidence-based inquiry. I wish the 2nd URSM - 2026 every success and trust that it will continue to inspire scholarly excellence, innovation, and meaningful collaboration in the field of marketing.

Mr. S.Sivanenthira

Symposium Chair and Head of the Department
Department of Marketing Management
Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya.

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

It is a privilege to present the Abstract Proceedings of the 2nd Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM) - 2026, organized by the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya. This publication represents the collective intellectual efforts of undergraduate researchers who have contributed original ideas, analytical perspectives, and emerging insights into the evolving field of marketing.



The preparation of this Abstract Proceedings involved a rigorous academic process to ensure clarity, coherence, and scholarly quality of the submitted abstracts. The symposium theme, “Navigating Future Marketing: A Digital Journey through Innovation and Sustainability,” highlights the dynamic intersection of technology, creativity, and responsible business practice. The contributions included in this volume demonstrate how emerging researchers are engaging with contemporary marketing challenges and offering fresh perspectives that are relevant to both academia and industry.

As Editor-in-Chief, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the organizing committee, editorial team, academic supervisors, and reviewers who worked collaboratively to ensure the successful compilation of this Abstract Proceedings. Their commitment to maintaining academic standards and meeting publication timelines has been instrumental in bringing this volume to completion. I also extend my appreciation to all student contributors whose work forms the foundation of this publication. Their enthusiasm for research and willingness to explore new ideas reflect the growing research culture within the University. It is my sincere hope that this Abstract Proceedings will serve as a useful academic resource and inspire further inquiry, discussion, and collaboration in the field of marketing.

Mr. S. A. Jude Leon

Editor-in-Chief / URSM 2026

University of Vavuniya.

Keynote Address

Campus to Career

Improving the Employability of Sri Lankan Marketing Graduates



Context and Purpose

Moving from university to work can be difficult for many recent graduates in Sri Lanka. This is especially true for business and marketing graduates, because employers expect more than academic knowledge. A degree is important, but it does not always show that a graduate is ready for the workplace. Employers look for people who can understand customers, communicate well, work with others, solve problems and adapt to new tools and market changes.

This keynote, “Campus to Career: Bridging the Gap Between Education and Employment,” focuses on how recent Sri Lankan marketing graduates can become more employable. Employability is not only about getting a first job. It is also about building skills, showing what you can do and improving your career value over time. The session also recognises that not all graduates have the same access to internships, professional networks, English-language confidence, money or career guidance. However, it highlights practical steps that graduates can take before and after graduation.

What the Keynote Covers

The keynote explains why good academic results do not always lead directly to a suitable job. At university, students are often assessed through exams, assignments and theory. At work, employers also look for practical skills, good judgement, reliability, communication and the ability to deliver results. The main message is simple: a degree opens the door, but employability is built through skills, experience, networks, professional behaviour and proof of what you can contribute.

For marketing graduates, a list of subjects studied is not enough. Employers need to see that a graduate can understand customers and markets, then turn that understanding into action. The keynote discusses career paths such as brand management, digital marketing, growth marketing, advertising and agency work, market research, consumer insight, sales and trade marketing, e-commerce, customer experience and start-up growth. This helps graduates see that a marketing degree can lead to many different roles, not just one job title.

The Marketing Graduate Skill Set

The keynote introduces four areas that can help marketing graduates become more career-ready. First, they need marketing skills such as consumer insight, segmentation, positioning, campaign planning, content, customer experience, sales awareness and basic performance measurement. Second, they need digital skills, including spreadsheets, presentations, data interpretation, teamwork platforms and responsible use of artificial intelligence. Third, they need career support through work exposure, professional networks, references, mentors and a clear idea of the type of marketer they want to become. Finally, they need professional habits such as punctuality, responsibility, teamwork, flexibility and the ability to learn from feedback.

Turning University Work into Career Proof

A key part of the keynote is helping graduates turn their university work into proof of their ability. Research projects, presentations, group work, case studies and university events should not stay hidden in assignment folders. A marketing graduate can use these activities to show skills in defining a problem, collecting data, analysing information, writing clearly, presenting ideas and making recommendations. The important point is to explain not only what was studied, but also what the findings mean for a customer, brand, business or market.

Building a Small Career Portfolio

Graduates are encouraged to build a small and honest portfolio before applying for jobs. This can include a customer-insight report, a campaign plan, a simple marketing dashboard, a social-media or customer-experience review, or a growth idea for a local small business. Every project should clearly state whether it is real work, academic work, a simulation or volunteer work. The aim is not to pretend to have experience. The aim is to make real skills visible. A well-explained project is more useful than broad claims such as “I am hardworking” or “I am creative.”

The Employer View: Can, Will and Fit

The presentation uses a simple way to prepare for applications and interviews: Can, Will and Fit. “Can” means whether the graduate has the basic skills to do the work. This can be shown through projects, internships, knowledge of tools and clear communication. “Will” means whether the person is willing to learn, take responsibility, meet deadlines and accept feedback. “Fit” means whether the person can work honestly and respectfully with colleagues, customers and clients. This approach helps graduates give clear examples instead of making vague claims about themselves.

The keynote also discusses artificial intelligence and employability. AI can help with research, planning, drafting, spreadsheet work, interview practice and productivity. However, it cannot replace good judgement, fact-checking, original thinking, confidentiality, responsibility or a real understanding of one’s own work. Marketing graduates should use AI to improve the speed and quality of their work, but they must remain responsible for their decisions and the accuracy of what they submit.

Action Plan for Graduates and Universities

The session ends with a practical 90-day action plan for graduates. They should choose a target career path, improve their one-page CV and LinkedIn profile, learn one useful skill, build three marketing projects, speak to alumni or professionals

and prepare interview examples about teamwork, leadership, challenges, learning and results. These actions are small and practical, but they build confidence and career evidence over time. Employability grows through steady action, not only through last-minute job applications after graduation.

The keynote also highlights the role of universities and industry partners. Career preparation should be part of the full student journey. Universities can support this through practical assignments, internships, employer projects, alumni talks, mentoring, career guidance, entrepreneurship opportunities and assessments that reward real-world application as well as theory. Universities may not be able to remove every challenge graduates face, but they can make the move from learning to work clearer, fairer and more connected to Sri Lanka's labour market.

“A degree teaches graduates the language of marketing. Clear evidence of their skills gives employers a reason to trust them with the work.”

Indicative evidence base: Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey; SLASSCOM Employability Skills Report; and relevant local studies on graduate employability, marketing education and university-industry collaboration.

S. Muhunthan

Learning Development Specialist,
Lead Trainer,
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Technical Session - I

Impact of Instagram Reels Advertisements on the Impulsive Buying Behaviour of Generation Z Consumers Towards Fashion Accessories in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

Fernando, M. N. N., and Jude Leon, S. A.

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Abstract

In the present world where everything seems to happen digitally, the role of social media cannot be underestimated since it is now an inseparable part of consumers' lives. The use of social media by Generation Z consumers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka can definitely be called extensive, and Instagram is one of the social media that is gaining more popularity. With time, Instagram has become not only another tool for socializing but a good means of digital marketing communication since it enables companies to communicate directly with their consumers. One of such methods implemented on Instagram is its Reels advertisements, which can be viewed as short video clips accompanied by music and interesting stories. Consequently, these advertisements significantly influence consumers' attitudes and decisions about purchasing. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of Instagram Reels advertisements on the impulsive buying behaviour of Generation Z consumers towards fashion accessories in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. A quantitative research approach was adopted and data were collected from a sample of 250 Generation Z respondents through a structured questionnaire using a convenient sampling technique. Four independent variables are investigated within this study, which include entertainment, informativeness, credibility and personalization, with impulsive buying behavior being considered as the dependent variable. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and an independent-samples *t*-test in SPSS. It was found that informativeness and personalization are the two factors which significantly impact impulsive buying behavior, with informativeness being established as the most powerful factor. Entertainment and credibility also show positive but comparatively weaker effects. In addition to this, no significant difference was found in impulsive buying behavior between men and women. This study helps businesses identify which feature of Instagram Reels advertisements should be focused on when targeting Generation Z consumers toward fashion accessories in the western province of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Impulsive Buying Behaviour, Instagram Reels Advertisement, Generation Z, Fashion Accessories.*

The Role of Green Promises in Influencing Tourists' Choices in the Post Pandemic Era: Evidence from the Hotel Industry in Anuradhapura District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of green promises in influencing tourists' accommodation choices in the hotel industry of the Anuradhapura District in the post-pandemic era. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry has experienced a significant shift in customer expectations, with increasing emphasis on sustainability, environmental responsibility, and health-conscious travel decisions. In this context, hotels have begun to communicate “green promises” such as eco-friendly operations, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainable service practices to attract environmentally conscious tourists. The main objective of this research is to examine the extent to which green promises influence tourists' decision-making behavior when selecting accommodation. The study also explores the impact of green practices, environmental consciousness, and tourist awareness on tourist choice. A quantitative research approach was adopted, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 263 tourists visiting the Anuradhapura District. The data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that green practices, environmental consciousness, and tourist awareness have a significant positive impact on tourist choice. However, green promises alone do not show a statistically significant influence on tourists' decisions, indicating that tourists prioritize actual environmental actions over promotional claims. Among all variables, tourist awareness emerged as the strongest predictor of accommodation choice. The study concludes that in the post-pandemic tourism context, authenticity and real sustainability practices are more influential than mere marketing claims. It highlights the importance for hotels to implement genuine green initiatives rather than relying solely on promotional strategies. The research provides valuable insights for hospitality managers, policymakers, and future researchers in promoting sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Green Promises, Tourists' Choices, Post Pandemic Era, Hotel Industry.*

The Impact of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Consumer Buying Decisions: With Special Reference to the Apparel Industry in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka

Jeevananthavel, A., and Jude Leon, S. A.

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to examine how different social media marketing strategies impact on customer buying behaviour of apparel in Jaffna District Sri Lanka. Because of the fast pace of technological changes, and how deeply married to social media, all the businesses have become very dependent upon digital marketing strategies to connect with consumers. Hence, this study aims to examine the influence of social media marketing strategies on consumer buying decisions. This study is quantitative research and descriptive in nature. The data were collected through structured questionnaires from the sample of 200 consumers using convenient sampling. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, reliability, and multiple regression analyses using SPSS. The results show that all three types of social media marketing strategies (social media content, influencer marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth) have a significant positive influence on consumer buying decisions at 99% confidence level. It shows that social media content has the highest impact while influencer marketing has the least important but significant. It further states that consumers generally use social media sites, and young consumers enjoys the privilege of using these sites for product information, discussion comparison, and other purposes. This means that brands should be working on deliverables with exciting, quality content, all the while building out positive user accounts and reviews online. The results have important implications in terms of enabling apparel businesses to optimize their social media marketing, improve the quality of customer engagement and enhance sales performance.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing Strategies, Consumer Buying Decisions, Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth.*

The Impact of Social Media Influencer Credibility on Consumers' Buying Behavior for Tech Gadget Products: With Special Reference to Nuwara Eliya District of Sri Lanka

Fernando N.G.D.A., and Sivanenthira, S.

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of social media influencer credibility on consumer buying behavior for tech gadget products in the Nuwara Eliya District of Sri Lanka. With the rapid growth of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, influencers have become an important source of information for consumers when making purchasing decisions. The main objective of this study is to identify how different factors of influencer credibility namely expertise, attractiveness, authenticity, and trustworthiness affect consumer buying behavior. The study focuses on young consumers aged 18-35 who actively follow social media influencers and purchase tech gadget products. A quantitative research method was used, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 200 respondents in the Nuwara Eliya District. The data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study show that influencer expertise and authenticity have a strong positive impact on consumer buying behavior, while attractiveness has a weaker effect. Trustworthiness shows a mixed or less significant influence. Overall, the results indicate that consumers are more likely to impulsive buying behaviour tech products when influencers are knowledgeable and provide genuine and honest content.

Keywords: Social Media Influencer Credibility, Consumers' Buying Behavior, Tech Gadget Products, Nuwara Eliya District.

The Impact of Social Media Advertisement on Purchasing Behaviour towards Automobile Industry: A Study of Young Customers in Kurunagale District, Sri Lanka

Ekanayaka E.M.M.L., and Dushyenthan, T.

Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya.

Abstract

The current study aims at exploring the impact of social media advertisement on purchasing behaviour of young customers (age range of 20-35 years) towards automobile industry in Kurunegala District in Sri Lanka. The current research brings into light some of the most essential features of social media advertising including level of Entertainment, Familiarity, Social Imaging, Attraction, and Availability, the effect of these elements on customers' decision-making process related to buying automobiles. The research objective deals with identifying the dimension of social media advertisement that has a major impact on customers decision making processes. It is notable that social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have gained considerable popularity in Sri Lanka. For this research, convenience sampling was customers, and data were collected from 200 younger customers who live in the Kurunegala District. Data analysis for this study was conducted using Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis via the SPSS tool. The result of this research offers valuable insights into the influence of the number of social media advertisements on the purchasing of vehicles. The regression results revealed that Entertainment and Attraction are the most significant drivers of purchasing behavior, whereas Social Imaging and Availability did not show statistical significance.

Keywords: *Social Media Advertisement, Purchasing Behaviour, Young Customers, Automobile Industry.*

The Influence of Virtual Tour Experience on Domestic Tourists' Decision-Making in the Kandy District, Sri Lanka

Amarasekara G.P.M.P., and Jude Leon, S. A..

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the tourism industry, particularly through the emergence of virtual tours that allow potential tourists to explore destinations remotely. This study examines the impact of virtual tours and virtual experiences on the decision-making processes of domestic tourists in the Kandy district of Sri Lanka. The aim of this research is to identify how factors such as ease of use, perceived realism, information quality, and interactivity of virtual tours influence tourists' intentions to visit physical destinations. A quantitative research approach is used using a structured questionnaire distributed among 200 domestic tourists who have engaged with virtual tourism content related to Kandy District. Sample were chosen using convenient sampling combined with purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, reliability, correlation, and multiple regression analyses. The findings showed that virtual tours significantly affect domestic tourists' decisions. Moreover, interactivity and ease of use have been found as the more significant factors in influencing tourists' decision making. The study highlights the growing importance of virtual tourism as a marketing and decision-making support tool for the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. It provides practical implications for tourism stakeholders in the Kandy district to integrate virtual experiences into their promotional strategies to attract domestic tourists. The research also contributes to a broader understanding of technology-driven consumer behavior in the tourism context.

Keywords: *Virtual Tour Experience, Domestic Tourists, Decision-making, Tourism Industry.*

Impact of Virtual Reality on Hotel Reservations: Evidence from the Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Over the past few years, Virtual Reality technology (VR) has become a promising marketing innovation in the hospitality industry owing to the advantages it provides in enhancing customer experiences as well as reducing uncertainty in making decisions. The use of VR in hotel marketing is slowly becoming common in Sri Lanka, especially the Colombo District since there are many hotels competing with each other. This paper aims at examining the effect of important attributes of VR such as immersive experience, visual attractiveness, informativeness, and trust & credibility on hotel reservations. The research was carried out quantitatively with the help of a structured questionnaire being used as a tool to collect data from 250 respondents. A convenience sample was used in the study with the help of analysis techniques such as descriptive statistics, reliability, correlation, and multiple regression analysis with the aid of SPSS. It emerged that all the four attributes have positive effects on hotel reservation decisions. However, trust & credibility and immersive experience had more effect than visual attractiveness and informativeness. The results point towards the importance of designing immersive and interesting content using the VR technology that will help the company win the customers' trust and increase their intention to reserve. The present research will contribute to the existing knowledge by demonstrating the potential usage of VR technology in marketing for the hotel industry. Furthermore, this research may provide some insights for hotel managers in Sri Lanka on the use of VR technology within the tourism industry.

Keywords: *Immersive Experience, Visual Appeal, Informativeness, Trust and Credibility, Virtual Reality, Hotel Reservations.*

Technical Session - II

Effect on Sensory Marketing on Consumer Impulsive Buying Behaviour: A study in Kitchens by Keells in Kalutara District, Sri Lanka

Gunarathna S.R.Y., and Dushyenthan, T.

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Abstract

Sensory marketing has emerged as a key trend in the retail sector to appeal to the consumers' sense of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch to drive their buying decisions. This research was conducted to assess the influence of sensory marketing on impulsive buying behavior of consumers at Kitchens by Keells outlets in the Kalutara District. A quantitative study was conducted and primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire from Kitchens by Keells customers in Kalutara District. Using the convenience sampling method, 200 responses were collected. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) with the aid of descriptive statistics, reliability test, Independent Sample T-Test, One Way ANOVA and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. The results of the reliability analysis above the standard range confirmed the excellent internal consistency of the measuring scale. The multiple regression analysis results indicated that sensory marketing factors significantly influence consumers' impulsive buying behavior. Among the five sensory factors, smell and taste factors are found to be the most significant variables that promote impulsive buying. The study also showed that age and gender of the consumers did not significantly affect impulsive buying. This research concludes that a retail sensory environment has a positive impact on impulsive buying behaviour. Therefore, Kitchens by Keells managers need to emphasize aroma marketing, taste, visual display and comfortable store environment to enhance consumer satisfaction and retail sales. This research adds to the body of knowledge on sensory marketing in the Sri Lankan retail environment and offers insights for retailers.

Keywords: *Sensory Marketing, Impulsive Buying Behavior, Consumer Behavior, Retail Marketing, Kitchens by Keells, Kalutara District.*

Factors influencing the Intention to Use Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) Services for Consumer Electronics in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

Anuththara M.S., and Dushyenthan, T.

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Abstract

Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services have rapidly emerged as a popular financial technology payment option that is spreading worldwide. The increasing use of BNPL services has transformed consumer purchasing behaviour by allowing users to buy goods and services without immediate full payment. BNPL transaction value reached USD 350 billion globally in 2024, yet it remains unmentioned in Sri Lanka's official financial records and largely unexplored in local research. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors influencing the intention to use BNPL services for consumer electronics in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka. Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and an extensive literature review, a conceptual framework was developed. Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, and perceived risk were identified as independent variables, while intention to use BNPL services was considered the dependent variable. Following a positivist research philosophy and a deductive research approach, a sample of 384 respondents was selected through purposive sampling. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the support of SPSS. The findings of the study reveal that perceived usefulness and trust have a significant positive impact on consumers' intention to use BNPL services, while perceived risk has a significant negative impact. However, perceived ease of use does not show a significant impact on intention to use BNPL services. The results highlight that consumers are more concerned with the usefulness, trustworthiness, and risk associated with BNPL services than with ease of use. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for fintech companies, banks, and policymakers to improve BNPL service adoption by focusing on enhancing usefulness, building trust, and reducing perceived risk. This study also contributes to the limited body of knowledge on BNPL services in the Sri Lankan context and offers directions for future research.

Keywords: *Buy Now Pay Later, Intention to Use, Consumer Electronics, Colombo District.*

The Investigation of Use of AI-Powered Tools on Marketing Career Choices: Evidence from Marketing Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into marketing is reshaping professional practice and influencing the career aspirations of future marketers. However, empirical evidence on how AI affects marketing undergraduates' career choices in developing economies remains limited. This study explores the influence of AI-powered tools on the career choices, skill perceptions, and professional readiness of marketing undergraduates in Sri Lanka. A qualitative exploratory research design was adopted using purposive sampling to select 20 final-year Marketing Management undergraduates from seven Sri Lankan higher education institutions. Final-year students were chosen because of their proximity to labour market entry and greater exposure to AI technologies. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys until thematic saturation was achieved. The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The findings reveal five key themes: widespread awareness and use of AI tools; basic-to-intermediate AI application primarily for content generation and research support; increasing recognition of AI literacy, prompt engineering, and data analytics as essential marketing competencies; concerns about the decline of entry-level marketing roles alongside optimism for AI-driven career opportunities; and moderate career preparedness constrained by a persistent theory-practice gap. The study identifies a digital pivot phenomenon, whereby students increasingly favour AI- and data-driven marketing careers over traditional marketing roles. The findings highlight the need for AI-integrated curricula, stronger university–industry collaboration, redesigned entry-level roles that emphasise AI competencies, and policies to reduce digital inequalities. These insights provide practical implications for higher education institutions, employers, and policymakers seeking to prepare marketing graduates for an AI-driven economy.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Marketing Career Choice, AI-Powered Tools, Digital Marketing, Theory-Practice Gap.*

The Effectiveness of Social Media Influencers on Promoting Marine and Coastal Tourism in Galle District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In recent years, digital marketing has experienced rapid growth, transforming how tourism experiences are promoted and consumed worldwide. With the global rise in sustainable travel trends and digital marketing innovations, social media engagement has emerged as a promising approach to encourage responsible tourism behavior. In the context of tourism, social media influencer credibility is being increasingly adopted to influence travelers' travel intention. This study investigates the Influence of Social Media Influencers' Credibility on Travel Intention towards Marine and Coastal Tourism in Galle District, Sri Lanka. It aims to evaluate how these mechanisms affect tourists' travel intention. The study also seeks to identify which specific credibility elements exert the strongest influence on travel intention. A quantitative research method was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 170 respondents, consisting of both local and foreign tourists. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale to measure responses related to awareness, engagement, and behavioral intent. Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to reach participants through social media platforms and travel guides. Data were analyzed through Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis, and Multiple Regression Analysis using SPSS software. Findings revealed that all five social media influencer credibility factors, such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, entertainment Value, expertise, and novelty, positively influence travel intention. The results highlight the potential of social media influencers in digital marketing to promote destinations to travel behaviors in Sri Lanka. This research contributes to bridging the gap in the literature concerning the application of social media influencers, offering practical insights for marketers, travel guides, and policymakers aiming to boost tourism through interactive digital strategies like social media influencers.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Social media influencers' credibility, Tourism, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise, Entertainment Value, Novelty, Travel Intention.*

Factors affecting Tourists' Satisfaction in Badulla District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tourists' satisfaction is a complex phenomenon that has been widely researched in the field of tourism. The study results indicate that all five independent variables; accommodation quality, tourist attractions, service quality, safety and security, and infrastructure and accessibility play an important role in determining tourists' satisfaction. Employing a quantitative research design, information was gathered from 267 tourists via a questionnaire, and relationships between variables were examined. The study found that accommodation quality is the most significant factor, suggesting that comfort, cleanliness and the overall accommodation experience are important to tourists. The findings also suggest that tourists perceive all the factors positively, with the mean values hovering around the "agree" category, suggesting a relatively high level of satisfaction among tourists visiting the Badulla District. Yet, differences in service provision and infrastructure indicate that improvements can be made to increase the satisfaction of tourists. In conclusion, the study finds that tourists' satisfaction in the Badulla District is a result of various experiential, service and infrastructural factors. In particular, accommodation quality and tourist attractions are the most influential factors, whereas improvements in service quality, safety and security, and infrastructure and accessibility can further enhance destination satisfaction and competitiveness.

Keywords: *Accommodation Quality, Infrastructure and Accessibility, Safety and Security, Service Quality, Tourist Attractions, Tourists' Satisfaction.*

The Factors influencing Tourists' Revisit Intention in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tourism plays a significant role in the economic development of Sri Lanka, with emerging destinations such as Jaffna District gaining increasing attention due to their unique cultural heritage, historical significance, and natural attractions. However, despite the growth in first time visitors, the rate of repeat visitation remains relatively low, highlighting the importance of understanding the factors that influence tourists' revisit intentions. This study aims to examine the key determinants affecting tourists' intention to revisit tourism destinations in Jaffna District. The research focuses on five main independent variables, such as service quality, tourist satisfaction, destination image, cultural and recreational experiences, and value for money and accessibility, while revisit intention is considered the dependent variable. A quantitative research design will be employed, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from tourists who have visited Jaffna. The collected data will be analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis, correlation, and multiple regression to identify relationships and measure the impact of each factor on revisit intention. The study is grounded in established theoretical frameworks, including Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, SERVQUAL Model, and Destination Image Theory, to provide a comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by offering insights into a relatively under-researched region in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the results will provide practical implications for tourism planners, policymakers, and local businesses in enhancing tourist experiences, improving service quality, and developing effective marketing strategies to encourage repeat visits. Overall, this research seeks to support the sustainable development of tourism in Jaffna District by identifying the critical factors that drive tourists' loyalty and revisit behavior.

Keywords: *Tourists' Revisit Intention, Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction, Destination Image, Cultural and Recreational Experiences, Value for Money and Accessibility.*

The Impact of Instagram Travel Influencers' Credibility on Destination Choice among Young Travelers in Kalutara District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Instagram travel influencers' credibility on the destination choice of young travelers in the Kalutara District of Sri Lanka. Grounded in Source Credibility Theory, four dimensions of influencer credibility were examined as independent variables: influencer trustworthiness, visual appeal of content, perceived authenticity, and social proof. The dependent variable was the destination choice of young travelers. A quantitative, descriptive research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to a convenience sample of 200 young Instagram users aged 18–30 in the Kalutara District. Data were analyzed using reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis via SPSS 25.0. The reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency for all scales. Multiple regression analysis revealed that the four credibility dimensions collectively explained 83.8% of the variance in destination choice. Perceived authenticity emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by influencer trustworthiness, social proof, and visual appeal of content. All five hypotheses were supported, confirming that Instagram travel influencer credibility has a significant positive impact on destination choice. The findings offer practical implications for tourism marketers, policymakers, and local businesses in less promoted destinations such as the Kalutara District, highlighting the need to prioritize authentic and trustworthy influencer partnerships in digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: *Instagram Travel Influencers' Credibility, Destination Choice, Young Travelers, Social Media Marketing, Perceived Authenticity, Trustworthiness, Social Proof.*

The Influence of Search Engine Optimization on Consumer Decision-Making in E-Commerce in the Hotel Sector in Matara District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) on consumer decision-making in the e-commerce hotel sector in the Matara District, Sri Lanka. The study concentrates on three important dimensions of SEO, on-page SEO, off-page SEO, and technical SEO, and examines their impact on consumers' hotel booking decisions. A quantitative research design was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 150 respondents and after screening 140 respondents who had prior experience in online hotel booking was selected. Data were analysed using SPSS software, which involved descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results indicate that the three dimensions of SEO have a strong positive influence on consumer decision-making, with technical SEO being the most important predictor, then on-page SEO and off-page SEO. The findings also confirm that consumers value the usability of websites, online reviews and relevance of the content highly when making hotel booking decisions. The research is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) that assist in explaining the influence of digital marketing factors on consumer behaviour in online settings. The study has added to the current literature by offering empirical data in the context of a developing country and has offered practical implications to hotel managers and digital marketers to improve their SEO strategies to increase online presence and customer interaction. In general, this study shows that SEO is a very important factor in the development of contemporary consumer behaviour in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: *Search Engine Optimization, E-Commerce, Hotel Industry, Digital Marketing.*