

Examining Effects of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Coca-Cola Purchasing Behaviour in Galle, Sri Lanka

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A B S T R A C T

Social media influencers are now important opinion leaders that affect consumer trust and purchasing decisions as digital marketing develops, but there is still limited data on their efficacy in Sri Lanka's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) beverage industry. This study examines how consumer social media engagement and exposure to influencer-generated content affect Coca-Cola purchasing behavior among social media users in Sri Lanka's Galle District. Convenience sampling was used to select 384 respondents for a quantitative cross-sectional survey guided by source credibility and social proof perspectives within a positivist, deductive framework. Data were analyzed in SPSS using reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha), Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. All constructs showed satisfactory to good reliability ($\alpha = 0.601-0.788$). Correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships among consumer social media engagement, exposure to influencer-generated content, and purchasing behavior ($p < 0.01$). Regression results show that the two predictors together explain 48.7% of the variance in Coca-Cola purchasing behavior ($R^2 = 0.487, p < 0.001$), with exposure to influencer content a stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.344$) than social media engagement ($\beta = 0.148$). Generalizability and causal inference are limited by the cross-sectional design, single-district convenience sample, and focus on one brand. Future research should use experimental or longitudinal designs, expand to multiple districts and beverage brands, and incorporate constructs such as perceived authenticity, attitude toward the advertisement, and influencer credibility to better understand psychological mechanisms underlying influencer effects in Sri Lankan FMCG markets.

Keywords: Exposure to Influencer, Consumer Purchasing Behaviour, Consumer Social Media Engagement

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technologies and social networking platforms has transformed the way organisations communicate with consumers. Platforms such as Facebook,

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Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X enable brands to provide product information, interact with users, and distribute promotional content quickly and directly (Appel et al., 2020; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As smartphone ownership and internet access have expanded, consumers increasingly use social media to search for product information, compare alternatives, read reviews, and obtain recommendations before making purchasing decisions (Yang, 2024).

One important development within digital marketing is social media influencer marketing. Influencer marketing involves collaborations between brands and social media content creators who can reach and engage audiences through reviews, recommendations, demonstrations, sponsored posts, and lifestyle content (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Influencers may affect consumer decisions because followers can perceive them as relatable, knowledgeable, credible, and trustworthy. Unlike conventional advertising, influencer content is often integrated into personal stories and everyday experiences, which may make brand messages appear more authentic (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

The present study focuses on Coca-Cola soft drinks because soft drinks are widely consumed FMCG products, commonly purchased in routine and low-involvement buying situations. In such situations, repeated social media exposure, familiarity, and influencer recommendations may affect brand preference and purchasing behaviour. The Galle District provides a relevant setting because it includes urban, educational, commercial, and tourism-related communities in which social media use is widespread. Consumers in Galle may encounter influencer-generated content related to beverages through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

1.1 Research Problem and Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined influencer marketing and consumer behaviour, much of the available evidence has been generated in developed-country settings and in product categories such as fashion, beauty, technology, and luxury goods (Vrontis et al., 2021; Bhardwaj et al., 2024). There is limited empirical research examining influencer marketing in the Sri Lankan FMCG beverage sector, particularly in relation to Coca-Cola soft drinks and consumers in the Galle District. Therefore, it remains unclear whether social media engagement and exposure to influencer-generated content are significantly related to Coca-Cola purchasing behaviour in this local context.

The study addresses an empirical gap by examining these relationships among social media users in Galle. It also addresses a theoretical gap by applying two relevant perspectives to the Sri Lankan beverage context. First, the source credibility perspective suggests that messages are more persuasive when the communicator is perceived to be credible, trustworthy, and knowledgeable (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Second, the social proof perspective suggests that consumers may use the actions, recommendations, and preferences of influential others as cues when making purchase decisions, particularly when they have limited information or perceive uncertainty. In this study, exposure to influencer-generated content represents consumers' repeated contact with influencer endorsements, while consumer social media engagement represents consumers' active interaction with social media content. Consumer purchasing behaviour is the behavioural outcome.

Accordingly, this study investigates whether consumer social media engagement and exposure to influencer-generated content influence consumer purchasing behaviour towards Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka.

1.2 Research Questions

What is the effect of consumer social media engagement on consumer purchasing behaviour toward Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka?

What is the effect of exposure to influencer-generated content on consumer purchasing behaviour toward Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka?

To what extent do consumer social media engagement and exposure to influencer-generated content collectively influence consumer purchasing behaviour toward Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka?

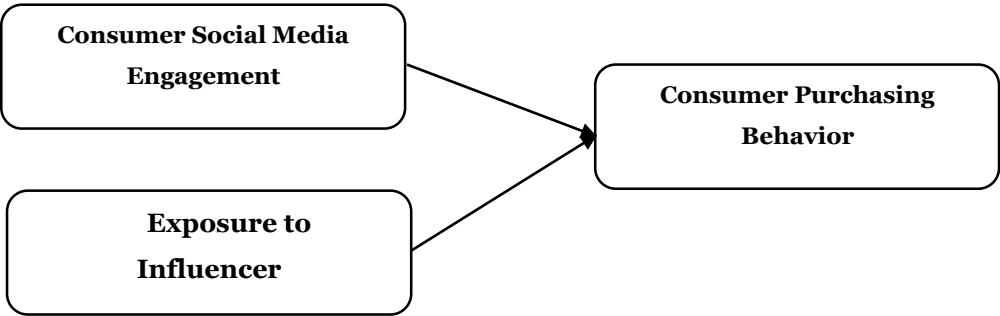


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H₁: Consumer social media engagement has a significant positive effect on consumer purchasing behaviour toward Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka.

H₂: Exposure to influencer has a significant positive effect on consumer purchasing behaviour toward Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka.

H₃: Consumer social media engagement and exposure to influencer collectively have a significant positive effect on consumer purchasing behaviour toward Coca-Cola soft drinks in the Galle District of Sri Lanka.

2. Review of the Relevant Literature

The enhanced use of social media has revolutionised the way companies interact with consumers and market products. Digital marketing is a helpful tool that allows organizations to connect with customers, grow brand recognition, and have an impact on buying decisions via social media platforms (Khanom, 2023). One of these tactics is social media influencer marketing which has become an effective way to influence consumers' attitudes and behaviour. A literature review is conducted on consumers' social media engagement, exposure to content created by influencers, and purchasing behaviour. It also outlines and shows research gaps and gives a theoretical background to the study.

2.1 Consumer Social Media Engagement

Consumer social media engagement is the level of interaction between consumers and social media content, including likes, comments, shares and following social networking posts (Kikelomo et al., 2024). Engagement is a measure of how consumers interact with online content and desire to be involved in online interactions. Levels of engagement can be correlated with brand and product interest.

Consumer engagement on social media can help boost brand awareness and purchase intention as consumer engagement can foster emotional connections with brands (Ao et al., 2023). Likewise, Sury et al. (2024) concluded that active engagement with marketing content signals greater levels of consumer trust, and their likelihood of buying promoted products. Social media engagement offers businesses a chance to build better relationships with customers and provides opportunities for communication to flow both ways.

Additionally, research indicates that consumer involvement can impact decision-making by enhancing their familiarity with products and fostering favorable brand perceptions (Khanom, 2023). Within the context of influencer marketing, consumers who regularly consume influencer content are more likely to be influenced by product suggestions and recommendations. Hence, consumer social media involvement is deemed as an important forerunner of buying behaviour.

2.2 Exposure to Influencer

Influencer generated content is the number of times consumers view content made by a social media influencer. This type of material can include product reviews, sponsored posts, demonstrations, testimonials, promotional videos, and lifestyle content with brands or products (Bhardwaj et al., 2024).

Influencer-produced content is gaining more traction as people tend to believe any information they obtain from influencers. Lou and Yuan (2019) suggest that influencer content is valuable to consumers, as it offers them genuine information about products and improves their trust in the product and purchase intent. In the same way, El-Kady and Tarek (2024) indicated that consumers' exposure to influencers' content has a positive influence on their product awareness and attitudes towards brands when content is presented repeatedly.

Javed et al. (2022) stated that influencer-generated content is a form of social proof, which decreases uncertainty and aids consumers in making purchasing decisions. Repeated exposure is a way to familiarise consumers with products and brands, which makes them more likely to try a product and purchase it. Moreover, Bhardwaj et al. (2024) found that influencer marketing has a significant influence on consumer behaviour since they believe the recommendations from influencers are more authentic than conventional advertisements.

But other studies have indicated that there is a potential loss of consumer trust when they perceive influencers as being too commercial or inauthentic when presenting sponsored content (Berry, 2024). Thus, the effectiveness of content created by influencers is subject to various elements like credibility, authenticity and trust among the audience.

2.3 Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

Consumer purchasing behaviour is the process by which individuals choose, analyze, buy and use products and/or services to meet their needs and wants (Yang, 2024). Psychological, social, cultural and marketing factors affect the purchasing decision.

Chetioui et al. (2020) state that social media has emerged as one of the most significant influencers on consumer purchases due to consumer's use of digital platforms for product information and recommendations. Social media influencers are a big part of the consumer landscape and are influencing their perceptions, especially younger consumers whose influence relies on trust in the opinions and experiences of social media influencers.

Based on the study conducted by Shah Alom et al. (2023), the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the influencers have a significant impact on the purchase intentions of consumers. Likewise, Herdiani et al. (2025) found that customers are inclined to buy products when

endorsed by influencers who are seen as knowledgeable and genuine. These results suggest that the influence of influencers can have a positive effect on the purchasing behavior of consumers by enhancing their trust in brands and lowering perceived risks.

Consequently, social media marketing by influencers could be an important tool for promoting the consumption of Coca-Cola soft drinks, as it can help increase the visibility of the product and build positive associations with its consumption.

There is a significant relationship between consumer social media engagement and consumer purchasing behaviour. The relationship between consumer social media engagement and consumer purchasing behaviour is significant.

There are numerous studies that have found a positive correlation between consumer activity on social media and their buying actions. In the study, Ao et al. (2023) identified that consumers exposed to social media content tend to have positive attitudes towards brands and display higher purchase intentions. Engagement provides opportunities to allow consumers to engage with messages, leading to familiarity and trust of the brand.

Additionally, Sury et al. (2024) highlighted that active involvement boosts consumer-brand relationships, thereby impacting consumer purchasing. Thus, social media engagement is expected to positively affect consumers' purchasing behaviour towards Coca-Cola soft drinks, as more engagement is likely to lead to more positive purchasing behaviour.

The findings reveal that the exposure to influencer-generated content is related to consumer purchasing behaviour. The results show that the exposure to the content created by influencers is correlated with the behaviour of consumers in the purchasing process.

The available studies indicate that the exposure to influencer's content has a marked impact on the consumer purchase decision. According to El-Kady and Tarek (2024), the people who are exposed to the influencer content have higher intentions to purchase the product than people who have less exposure to the influencers. Likewise, Javed et al. (2022) found that social media influencers' content has a positive effect on the buyer's decision-making process, as it adds more awareness and trust in the product.

Exposed to multiple influencer endorsements, consumers may have a more positive association with the brand and be more inclined to consider buying promoted products. Hence the regular users of the Coca-Cola content related by the influencers are more inclined to buy Coca-Cola soft drinks.

3. Methods

The research methodology used to investigate the impact of social media influencers on the purchasing behaviour of consumers regarding Coca-Cola soft drinks in Galle district is presented in this chapter. It discusses research philosophy, procedures, design, population, sampling method, sample size, data collection method, research instrument, data analysis technique, validity and reliability, ethics and summary of the chapter. The aim of this chapter is to present a well-defined and systematic approach for conducting the research in a scientific way.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a belief and set of assumptions followed in the production of knowledge. This study uses a positivist approach as it is a research approach that is objective, meaning that it will measure and analyze relationships between variables statistically. This study uses positivism because it is used to gather quantitative data and test the hypotheses on

the effect of social media engagement and exposure of influencers on consumer purchasing behavior.

3.2 Research Approach

The approach of the study is deductive. In deductive methods, first existing theories and literature are identified and hypotheses are created that are tested by gathering empirical data and analyzing the data. Since this study aims to examine relationships between independent variables (social media engagement and influencer exposure) and a dependent variable (consumer purchasing behaviour), the deductive approach is considered the most suitable.

3.3 Research Design

This research uses quantitative research design, as it is used to collect and analyze numerical data. The study takes a cross-sectional survey design since data will be collected from respondents at one time. This design is suitable as it enables the researcher to study the correlation between variables and within a limited period.

3.4 Population

The population of this study is the users of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and YouTube in Galle district in Sri Lanka. The population consists of those who have been exposed to influencers' content and who have consumed or bought soft Coca-Cola drinks. These consumers are chosen as they relate directly to the aims of the study.

3.5 Sampling Technique

This study used non-probability convenience sampling. Convenience sampling involves recruiting respondents who are accessible, willing to participate, and meet predetermined eligibility criteria. It was selected because a complete sampling frame of all social media users in the Galle District who have been exposed to Coca-Cola-related influencer content is not available. Without such a list, it is not possible to select respondents randomly or to assign a known probability of selection to each eligible individual.

The use of convenience sampling was also appropriate for the practical scope of this cross-sectional consumer survey. The study required respondents who actively use social media, have encountered influencer content, and have experience purchasing or consuming Coca-Cola soft drinks. Recruiting such eligible participants through accessible online and physical channels enabled the researcher to obtain relevant responses within the available time, financial, and access constraints. Convenience sampling is commonly used in exploratory consumer and marketing research where the objective is to examine relationships between variables rather than to generate precise population estimates.

However, convenience sampling has an important limitation: the sample may not fully represent every social media user or Coca-Cola consumer in the Galle District. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as evidence from the surveyed respondents and should not be generalised uncritically to the entire population. This limitation is acknowledged in the limitations section.

3.6 Sample Size

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table indicates that at least 384 respondents are needed for a large or unknown population size at 95% confidence level with 5% margin of error. Hence, the 384 consumers of Galle district, Sri Lanka will be selected for this study. The number is sufficient to provide valid and generalizable results in case of regression and correlation analysis.

3.7 Sources of Data

The study is a combination of primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected via a structured questionnaire from the respondents themselves. Secondary data will be collected from books, academic journals, research articles, industry reports, company publications and online databases. These secondary sources give background information and support to the research framework.

3.8 Data Collection Method

The data will be obtained by distributing a structured questionnaire that will be taken by the respondents themselves, both physically and online, through Google Forms. This questionnaire is split into 4 sections: demographic data, consumer social media engagement, consumer social media exposure to content created by influencers, and consumer purchasing behaviour. Responses will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

Then the data obtained from the respondents will be analyzed using SPSS software. Data will be summarised using descriptive statistical tools (frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation). Relationships between variables will be analyzed using inferential statistical techniques such as Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Validity is ensured that the research measures what it is designed to measure. Content validity will be obtained by a comprehensive literature search and by consulting with academic supervisors in this study. Reliability: Research instrument consistency. It will be tested by Cronbach's Alpha and will be considered reliable if the value obtained is greater than 0.70 as suggested by Hair et al. (2019).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. No personally identifying information was collected, and all responses were treated confidentially and used only for academic research purposes.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

Data were analysed using SPSS software techniques namely descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. This study examines two independent variables (Consumer Social Media Engagement, Exposure of Influencer) and one dependent variable (Consumer Purchasing Behaviour). The data reliability test was carried out on the internal consistency of the measurement scales by using Cronbach's Alpha test before conducting the main analysis. The results showed that all constructs were reliable with acceptable to good co-efficient, therefore the data obtained is suitable for further statistical analysis. The descriptive statistics were used to describe the overall trend of the variables, and the correlation analysis was used to describe the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Finally, multiple regression analysis was used to determine how much impact the independent variables have on the consumer's purchasing behaviour. The results of this chapter give empirical evidence to the factors that influence the consumer choice in the context of soft drink consumption, namely the influence of soft drink marketing activities and social media engagement. Below, each analysis is described in detail and its implications are discussed.

Table 1. Reliability of the variables

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Consumer Social Media Engagement	05	0.601	Acceptable
Exposure to Influencer	05	0.770	Good
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	10	0.788	Good

The satisfaction of the reliability of the study variables was conducted by the internal consistency test of the measurement scale according to the Cronbach's Alpha. The results reveal that all three constructs are on an acceptable to good level of reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha computed for Consumer Social Media Engagement (five items) was 0.601, which is in the acceptable range, indicating that the items have a moderate level of measurement of the same construct. The Exposure to Influencer-Generated Content scale, measured with 5 items, had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.770, suggesting good reliability and high internal consistency between the items. Likewise, the value of the Cronbach's Alpha for Consumer Purchasing Behaviour (10 items) was 0.788, indicating good reliability and consistency and reliability of the scale. The overall results indicate that the instruments employed in this study are reliable enough to be used for further statistical analysis such as correlation and regression to test the relationship among the study variables.

Table 2. Correlation analysis

		Consumer Social Media Engagement	Exposure to Influencer	Consumer Purchasing Behaviour
Consumer Social Media Engagement	Pearson	1	.627**	.363**
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
Exposure to Influencer	N	384	384	384
	Pearson	.627**	1	.436**
	Correlation			
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	384	384	384
	Pearson	.363**	.436**	1
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	384	384	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To analyze the relationships between the study variables, a correlation analysis was performed among the variables of Consumer Social Media Engagement, Exposure to Influencer-Generated Content, and Consumer Purchasing Behaviour. The data shows high positive correlations between all the variables at 0.01 level of significance. Consumer Social Media Engagement is positively and strongly related to Exposure to Influencer-Generated Content ($r = 0.627, p < 0.001$), indicating that exposure to influencer content is positively associated with high levels of social media engagement. Moreover, Consumer Social Media Engagement shows moderate positive correlation with Consumer Purchasing Behaviour ($r = 0.363, p < 0.001$), suggesting that there is correlation between the increased engagement and the increased purchasing behaviour. Moreover, Exposure to Influencer-Generated Content is also found to be moderately positively correlated with Consumer Purchasing Behaviour ($r = 0.436, p < 0.001$), indicating that exposure to influencer generated content leads to a positive impact on

consumer purchasing behaviour. Overall, the results demonstrate significant positive correlation between all the variables of the study.

Table 3. Regression Analysis (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.698 ^a	.487	.482	.51914

Predictors: (Constant), Exposure to Influencer, Consumer Social Media Engagement

The regression model summary gives an overview of the overall explanatory power of the independent variables in predicting the Consumer Purchasing Behaviour. The model is found to have an R value of 0.698, which means there is a strong positive relationship between the predictors (Consumer Social Media Engagement and Exposure to Influencer) and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.487 indicates that the two independent variables in the model account for 48.7% of the variation in Consumer Purchasing Behaviour. The adjusted R square value is 0.482 which is very close to R square value suggesting that the model is reliable and is not influenced by overfitting. This also tells us that the predictors can predict the dependent variable meaningfully. The standard error of the estimate is 0.51914, indicating that the prediction error is not too extreme. On a general level, the model explained from the moderate to strong perspective, highlighting the fact that the factors of influencer marketing play a significant role in the purchasing behaviour of consumers in this study.

Table 4. Anova Results

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.269	2	5.634	48.735	.000 ^b
	Residual	44.049	381	.116		
	Total	55.318	383			

Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

Predictors: (Constant), Exposure to Influencer, Consumer Social Media Engagement

Overall significance of the regression model to explain the Consumer Purchasing Behaviour was tested using ANOVA results. The results show that the regression model is statistically significant as the f value is 48.735 at the significance level of $p < 0.001$. Combined effect of Consumer Social Media Engagement and Exposure to Influencer-Generated Content fully predicts Consumer Purchasing Behaviour. The regression sum of squares (11.269) indicates the variation accounted for by the model and the residual sum of squares (44.049) indicates the variation due to other factors. The total variation of the dependent variable is 55.318. The significance value is below 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected, which verifies the validity and meaning of the model. The overall ANOVA result shows that the independent variables taken together have a statistically significant influence on consumer purchasing behaviour, which indicates the efficacy of using influencer marketing to influence consumers.

The individual effect of all the independent variables on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour is presented in the Coefficients table. The results indicate that both the predictor variables have a positive and statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. Consumer Social Media Engagement is unstandardised (β) 0.146 with a positive sign, meaning that a 1 unit increase in social media engagement by consumers results in a 0.146 increase in consumer purchasing behaviour when other factors are held constant. This effect is statistically significant ($p = 0.002$).

Table 5. Coefficients Results

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.208	.223		9.920	.000
	Consumer Social Media Engagement	.146	.058	.148	2.525	.002
	Exposure to Influencer	.358	.061	.344	5.857	.000

Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

The exposure to Influencer-Generated Content has a more significant impact (coefficient of 0.358) and a 1-unit increase in influencer exposure is associated with a 0.358 increase in purchasing behaviour, which is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). The standardised beta values also reveal that Exposure to Influencer-Generated Content (ExIGC) has a bigger influence than Social Media Engagement (SME) (ExIGC = 0.344, SME = 0.148). Overall, this model shows that the most prominent variable affecting a consumer's purchasing behaviour is the amount of exposure they receive from influencers.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study examined the effects of consumer social media engagement and exposure to influencer-generated content on Coca-Cola purchasing behaviour in the Galle District of Sri Lanka. The findings showed that both variables had positive and statistically significant relationships with consumer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, all three hypotheses were supported.

Consumer social media engagement had a positive but comparatively smaller effect on purchasing behaviour ($r=0.363$, $r = 0.363$, $r=0.363$, $\beta=0.148$, $\beta = 0.148$, $\beta=0.148$, $p=0.002$, $p = 0.002$, $p=0.002$). This indicates that consumers who actively view, like, comment on, share, or follow Coca-Cola-related social media content are more likely to purchase Coca-Cola soft drinks. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that active engagement increases brand familiarity, consumer involvement, and purchase-related responses (Ao et al., 2023; Sury et al., 2024).

Exposure to influencer-generated content had a stronger positive effect on purchasing behaviour ($r=0.436$, $r = 0.436$, $r=0.436$, $\beta=0.344$, $\beta = 0.344$, $\beta=0.344$, $p<0.001$, $p < 0.001$, $p<0.001$). Consumers who frequently encountered influencer posts, reviews, videos, and recommendations related to Coca-Cola were more likely to purchase Coca-Cola soft drinks. This result supports previous studies suggesting that influencer content can increase consumer trust, brand awareness, and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). It also supports source credibility and social proof perspectives, as consumers may be persuaded by influencers they perceive as authentic, trustworthy, and relatable.

The combined regression model was statistically significant and explained 48.7% of the variance in consumer purchasing behaviour ($R^2=0.487$, $R^2 = 0.487$, $R^2=0.487$, $p<0.001$, $p < 0.001$, $p<0.001$). Although both variables were important, exposure to influencer-generated content was the stronger predictor. The findings suggest that Coca-Cola and other FMCG brands should use credible influencers and create authentic, relevant, and repeated social media content rather than relying only on general engagement indicators such as likes, comments, and shares.

5.2 Conclusion

This study found that consumer social media engagement and exposure to influencer-generated content both had positive and significant effects on Coca-Cola purchasing behaviour in the Galle District. Exposure to influencer-generated content was the stronger predictor ($\beta=0.344$, $\beta = 0.344$, $\beta=0.344$) compared with social media engagement ($\beta=0.148$, $\beta = 0.148$, $\beta=0.148$), and the two variables jointly explained 48.7% of the variation in purchasing behaviour. These findings suggest that credible, authentic, and repeated influencer content can influence consumer decisions in the Sri Lankan FMCG beverage market.

Practically, Coca-Cola and similar beverage brands should collaborate with relevant influencers and create authentic content for platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The study is limited by convenience sampling, its focus on one district and one brand, the cross-sectional design, and self-reported data; therefore, the results cannot prove causality or be fully generalised to all Sri Lankan consumers.

Future studies should include several districts and brands, use probability sampling where possible, and apply longitudinal or experimental designs. Researchers may also examine factors such as influencer credibility, authenticity, trust, brand attitude, purchase intention, and brand loyalty to better explain how influencer marketing affects purchasing behaviour.

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