

## **Driving Decisions: The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior in Sri Lanka's Automobile Industry**

A.L.M.A. Shameem

*Department of Marketing Management,  
Faculty of Management and Commerce, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka.*

*almashameem@gmail.com*

### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** This study investigates the influence of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior within Sri Lanka's automobile industry. This research also seeks to quantify the extent of social media's influence on purchase behavior in the industry.

**Methodology:** The research adopts a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data was gathered from a survey of 500 automobile consumers in Sri Lanka, with questions focused on social media influence, brand engagement, and purchase decisions. Additionally, qualitative insights were obtained through interviews with 20 marketing professionals from the automobile industry. Statistical analyses, including regression and correlation analysis, were conducted to determine the relationship between social media factors and buying behavior, while thematic analysis was used to identify key consumer motivations and perceptions.

**Findings:** The study reveals that 68% of surveyed consumers reported being influenced by social media when purchasing a vehicle, with 52% indicating that positive reviews and testimonials significantly impacted their trust in a brand. Furthermore, 75% of respondents cited engaging content and visuals as a factor that increased their likelihood of considering a brand. Regression analysis demonstrated that social media engagement and brand presence accounted for 45% of the variance in purchase intentions, highlighting the crucial role of social media marketing in influencing buying behavior.

**Practical implications:** Automobile companies in Sri Lanka can harness social media as a powerful tool to influence consumer behavior. By focusing on creating high-quality, engaging, and trustworthy content, brands can improve customer loyalty and drive sales. Collaborations with influencers and active response to customer feedback were shown to enhance brand perception, making these strategies valuable for increasing consumer purchase intentions.

**Originality value:** This study adds to existing research by providing a quantitative analysis of social media's impact on consumer behavior within Sri Lanka's automobile sector. It underscores the importance of social media platforms not only as a promotional tool but also as a driver of consumer trust and purchase decisions, offering a localized perspective on the topic.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Automobile Industry, Brand Perception, Influencer Marketing, Customer Engagement, Purchase Intention*