The Impact of Social Media Influencer (SMI) Characteristics on Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) of Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) Products in Sri Lanka

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Abstract
Influencer Marketing is a form of social media promotion that incorporates the promotion of products and the placement of influencers' endorsements. These influencers are known for having a high level of expertise and attractiveness. It is common for people to misunderstand this and confuse Influencer Marketing with celebrity marketing. There may be some overlap, but a person's perceived popularity alone is insufficient to create successful influencer marketing. Many influencers have built huge communities to whom they promote an agreed product or activity. Different SMIs' characteristics lead consumers to have positive purchase intentions towards the products in which they are promoting. However, such effects of influencer characteristics on purchase intention of various products in the Sri Lankan market have not been adequately researched. Moreover, it appears that the BPC product market has not been investigated as well. The purpose of this study is to bridge this research gap by examining the impact of SMIs' characteristics on the purchase intention BPC products among Sri Lankan consumers, with an emphasis on identifying if there are significant impact on the consumers' attitudes towards the influencers as well. The data was obtained using a self-administered structured questionnaire from 202 consumers who uses social media in Sri Lanka.

It was later analyzed using various statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis, simple linear regression, multiple linear regression, and mediation analysis. The findings demonstrated that credibility is having a more impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by SMIs than the attractiveness of them. The findings also revealed that consumers' attitude towards the SMIs is having a major impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMIs through the significant complete mediation.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers (SMIs), SMI Characteristics, Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI), Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) Products, Consumer Attitude, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction
Social media has changed the way people do marketing and products are now looking to trendy social publishing platforms and networks like Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat to achieve competitive marketing advantage by reaching millions of new consumers [1]. With the COVID-19 outbreak people started to shift into online modes to satisfy their needs and to do day today activities. The size of the influencer marketing industry reached $9.7 billion in 2020 and is expected to grow to $15 billion by 2022 (Statistica, 2021). This industry is also witnessed a rapid growth of more than 50% during a single year from 2015 onwards. Social media influencers can be defined as non-dependable third-party people in various social media and have ability to influence the decisions taken by the consumers or their followers through the content they share [2]. Not every person is suitable as an endorser to create influence on consumers'

purchase decisions. People who are considered as trustworthy and attractive are seen as suitable spokespersons [3,4]. Influencer Marketing is a type of marketing that uses influencer product recommendations to boost sales. Its goals are to capture potential customers' attention, produce word-of-mouth effects, and establish customer connection with a brand or a product. The importance of partnering with the appropriate SMI is critical to the success of influencer marketing (Radey, 2015). Interview based preliminary study conducted using five respondents who are undergraduates and working people within age 20 to 25 years (Refer Appendix A). Found that if the SMI is providing convenient information, looking sexy and attractive, whether friends have bought products after their recommendations, trustworthy, knowledgeable, assurance given on brand name by the influencer is high that made them to purchase products promoted by the respective SMI.

2. Problem Statement and Research Question

Recent studies have conducted using various social media platforms specifically and impact of influencer characteristics and attitude on celebrity endorsements done on them [5,6]. Also, many articles were found which highlights the differences among SMIs and celebrities and differences between them [7,8]. Moreover, impact on social media on consumer behavior, consumer attitudes brand images were discussed in many articles in empirical contexts [9,10]. Research have also found that there is a clear relationship between various influencer characteristics and purchase intention of various products through many studies [11]. The importance on identifying the impact that the SMI characteristics are generating on consumers' minds and also on purchase intentions mainly in relation to Sri Lankan BPC products need to be discussed in a comprehensive manner. This paves the way to the following research problem.

3. Research Question and Objectives

Accordingly, the research question of the study is;
Do characteristics of a Social Media Influencer (SMI) impact on Sri Lankan consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI? Therefore, objectives are as follows:
• To identify whether credibility and attractiveness of SMI has an impact on consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI.
• To identify whether consumers' attitude towards the SMIs mediates the relationships between credibility and attractiveness, and consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMIs.

4. Literature Review

Whether the characteristics of those social media influencers affect purchase intention and attitude of consumers have become a main discussion point. This chapter will provide the review of literature for the research problem of "Do characteristics of a Social Media Influencer impact on Sri Lankan consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI?"

5. Social Media

With the globalization it can be seen that technology has a significant part in almost every area of modern society and due to that people's lifestyles has changed a lot. Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks [12]. Products are looking to trendy social networking platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat to achieve competitive marketing advantage [13]. 73 percent of marketers believe that social media platforms could assist them in performing their marketing campaigns effectively [11]. The worldwide trend in posting on Instagram is primarily focused on clothing, cosmetics, catering, travel, culture, and sports [3].

6. Social Media Influencers (SMIs)

Influencer marketing is a rapid growing concept as it attempts to promote products/services and increase brand awareness through content spread by SMIs [14]. Around 49% of customers take social media influencer suggestions into considerations when making a purchase choice [11]. There are numerous SMIs which promotes their lifestyles using various platforms. YouTube and Instagram are proved to be the two most popular platforms for this purpose [15].

7. Celebrities Vs SMIs

SMIs are ordinary people who became influencers due to a growth in their social media platforms' follower base [16]. SMIs are viewed as more relatable and approachable than celebrities which is considered similar to having a long-distance companion [17]. This happens due to the fact that SMIs frequently address their followers directly in their messages, conveying a feeling of closeness and causing followers to regard them as peers [18].

8. Success of Influencer Marketing

Many SMIs cultivate their own reputation in order to achieve opinion leader status, they are viewed as more approachable and homophile types of individuals by customers [19]. Through influencer marketing and attracting their target audience, marketers can engage with customers more naturally at large by enhancing their message [20]. There is a high possibility for them to succeed in partnership goals with marketers and products while prompting or influencing customers to purchase what they are promoting [5].

9. Source Credibility

Credibility is the degree to which a target audience evaluates an advertising message source, in order to determine the expertise and knowledge of the source who recommends a product or service [20]. There is considerable amount of SMIs on Instagram who became influencers by merely buying fake followers and engagements through third party online tools (Amarasinghe, 2019). Through credibility, advertising effectiveness and conversion rates can be boosted. Different studies have identified different dimensions for credibility like Almeida, Pereira and Rebelo as attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise as dimensions of credibility while more recent studies elaborate that Source credibility has primarily two dimensions namely speaker expertise and speaker intent ((Eisend, (2004); Ladhari et al., (2020)) whereas according to Eisend, (2006) intention has also been mentioned as trustworthiness and sincerity [1,6,5,22-25]. Additionally, Kim & Kim study specifically suggests that influencers' intentions can be operationalized as authenticity too. Accordingly, this study is mainly focusing on the recent dimensions of expertise and authenticity under source credibility.

10. Expertise

For an endorser, being expertise on what they are posting and having a clear knowledge on them will lead to prompt customers and ultimately drive the purchase intention of consumers [26]. Expertise can be defined as "the degree to which the endorser is perceived to have the adequate knowledge, experience or skills to promote the product" [27]. So, for a SMI, when posting sponsored posts on their accounts, influencers with high expertise tends to gain more effective consumer while changing purchase intentions in a positive manner [11].

11. Authenticity

In social media marketing, authenticity is defined as an influencer's genuineness and relatability with their followers [15]. Many influencers take different routes of maintaining authenticity while selling products by either not having the sponsored content stand out, or being transparent about products they work with. Whichever they choose, as long as they "maintain consistency in presentation of their selves, they can also maintain their authenticity" [28].

12. Source Attractiveness

The physical beauty of social media influencers is thought to have a strong influence on the rate of acceptance of advertising [29]. "Fitness influencers" can also market beauty products, and it may not be a poor fit because they are already seen as attractive endorsers by the followers. When a communicator is attractive, the audience may be willing to like and accept the communicator's message. Although there are various classifications under attractiveness in the context of SMIs, physical attractiveness and homophily are the often-used dimensions [8,5].

13. Physical Attractiveness

Advertisers frequently consider physically attractive influencers when planning and executing promotional campaigns because they have a greater impact on customers' attitude about the products they are promoting [30]. The physical attractiveness of social media influencers is thought to have a significant impact on the rate of advertising acceptanceand people will attribute a variety of personality traits to that person, including social intelligence, inspiring people, concern for others, and integrity [31,32].

14. Homophily

Homophily refers to the perceived similarity in beliefs, values, experiences, and lifestyles of the communicator by the receiver [33,34]. This concept is aiding followers in developing greater trust in the SMI [5]. Homophily plays an important role in the study of vloggers and bloggers and high homophily also leads to favorable eWoM, pleasant social interactions, and positive attitudes, all of which influence product purchase intent ultimately [6,35,36]. Most studies have examined at it as a unidimensional concept. Hence, this research is also conducted by taking homophily as a unidimensional concept under source attractiveness.

15. BPC Industry and SMI Characteristics

With rising consumer wealth and contemporary lifestyles of people, it is evident that the beauty and personal care business is set to develop significantly [37]. According to Statistica (2021) BPC market amounts to grow annually by 4.76% from 2021 to 2026. 23.6% of the total revenue of the BPC industry will be generated through online sales by 2021 which has direct implications for SMIs. Moreover, BPC industry influencers are not engaging with the followers through face-to-face interactions he/she is being attractive and credible is considered to be vital. Examining whether influencer characteristics has an impact on the purchase intention of BPC products and consumers' attitude is in need massively as no research paper could be found in this regard. This could provide useful insights to marketers, allowing them to create promotional strategies to influence customers' decisions in a better and effective way [38]. With globalization and technological advancement, digital marketing has become the most effective mode of marketing at present. With that, influencer marketing can be seen as a new marketing method which leads to successful conversion rates. This research is conducted primarily to investigate "Impact of characteristics of SMIs on consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI".

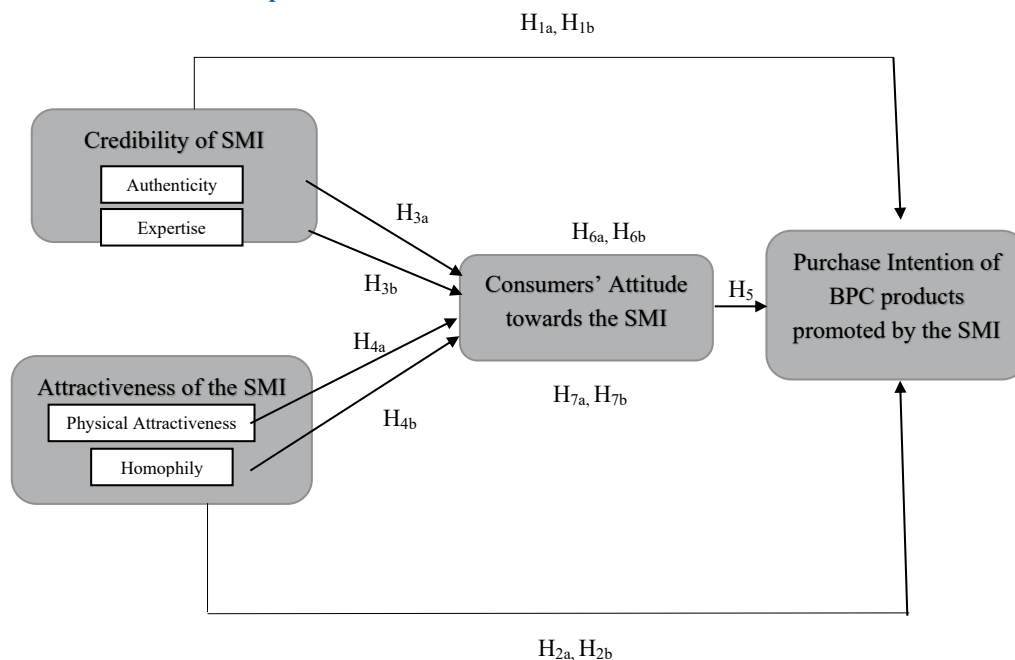## 16. Theoretical Framework and Conceptualization

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

17. Hypotheses Development

Credibility and attractiveness of SMI were the independent variables of the conceptual model. The study focused on the impact of SMIs on purchase intention of BPC products. Although many studies have conducted on SMI characteristics, only limited studies are there focusing on BPC brand specifically. Kim & Kim argues that SMIs with a high level of attractiveness are more likely to give rise to their followers' buying intent [5]. According to Baker & Churchill Jr it can be argued that attractive models do have a positive impact on purchase intentions too [39]. Consumers' viewpoint on SMIs' trustworthiness, attractiveness and idea of similarity to themselves which is the homophily is having a favorable effect on consumer trust in relation to influencer's content (Lin & Xu, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Therefore, by considering the above arguments in the previous literature this paper suggests,

H_1: (a) Authenticity and (b) Expertise of the SMI have a positive impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI.

H_2: (a) Physical attractiveness and (b) Homophily of the SMI have a positive impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI.

A study by Wang et al., (2017) suggests that information presented by a credible source can affect consumers' beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviors. Chu & Kamal (2008) investigated how the credibility of bloggers and blogs impact on consumers' attitude towards the brand mentioned in the blog. Their findings revealed that when consumers exposed to a high-quality content posted by a trustworthy blogger, they were more likely to have a strong attitude towards them.

Next, attractiveness of the SMI is also a main determinant which is essential in influencing consumers' attitude towards an influencer. Usually, many articles give out the idea that physically attractive influencers are having positive feelings more than unattractive influencers [40]. In addition, a pleasing endorser plays a significant role as a brand spokesperson who can revive consumers' positive beliefs [41,42]. Moreover, Social media influencers with pretty good appearance are more likely to get the attention from their followers [29]. And hence this research suggests,

H_3: (a) Authenticity and (b) Expertise of the SMI positively influences consumers' attitude towards the SMI

H_4: (a) Physical attractiveness and (b) Homophily of the SMI positively influences consumers' attitude towards the SMI

18. Mediating Role of Consumers' Attitude Towards the SMIs

Consumer attitude towards the SMI has been identified as a dependent variable and most commonly as a mediator variable in many studies [4,43,44,45].There is a positive interrelationship between credible endorsers with purchase intention followed by the attitude towards them [46]. Consumer attitude towards an endorsement can be boosted by the attractiveness of the endorser [42,47]. Additionally, Freiden state that a well-liked endorser act as a leading role as a brand spokesperson and they also have the ability to inspire consumers' positive attitude or viewpoint which sequentially affect their purchase decision. According to above

arguments the present study proposes that, H6: Consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between (a) Authenticity and (b) Expertise of the SMI and purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI H7: Consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between (a) Physical attractiveness and (b) Homophily of the SMI and purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI

19. Operationalization

In this study, variables of the conceptual framework were operationalized by using well stablished measurement instruments stated in the previous literatures in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurements. Credibility of the SMIs is having two sub variables of authenticity and expertise as mentioned previously. Authenticity will be measuring using characteristics of "Dependability, Honesty, Reliability, Sincerity, and Trustworthiness" and seven-point semantic differential scale is used [5]. Then to measure Expertise of the SMI, "Expertise, Knowledgeability, Qualification to offer and Skill will be using with the seven-point semantic differential scale. Next, attractiveness of the SMI is having physical attractiveness and homophily as sub variables [5]. To measure physical attractiveness, "Attractiveness, Beauty, Sexiness, Elegance" with the seven-point semantic differential scale and to measure homophily items of "Have similar interests, have similar enthusiasm and Have similar values" are used. For this seven-point Likert scale with "1" being strongly disagree and "7" being strongly agree is used [5,48].

Furthermore, consumers' attitude towards the social media influencers is measured using five items related to "good, interesting, informative, believable, trustworthy" (Jatto, 2014) nature of the influencer endorsements using five-point semantic differential scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Finally, as the scale of purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI three items of "I will probably purchase BPC products promoted by the SMI"", "I intend to purchase BPC products promoted by the SMI in the future" and "It is possible that I will purchase BPC products promoted by the SMI in the future" is used [43,49]. For this seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree) will be using. This study was conceptualized by analyzing the existing literature. Four main variables and four sub variables under them are included in the conceptual model. Hypotheses were developed to identify different correlations between those variables. The variables were operationalized using appropriate and valid indicators from previous research in order to test the hypotheses.

20. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify whether the credibility and attractiveness of a Social Media Influencer (SMI) impact on consumers' purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI. This study assumes that this relationship is affected to the consumers who purchase products through influencer promotions. The knowledge was produced through objective collection of facts without considering subjective opinions. Therefore, this study was based on the positivistic philosophy [50].

21. Research Strategy

To identify consumers' attitude towards the social media influencer while observing variables like credibility and attractiveness of the SMIs along with purchase intention of BPC products require considerable amount of data from a sample of different age groups, genders and locations or provinces. A Google form was used to create the self-administered questionnaire, which was then sent out to the potential respondents. Moreover, the survey strategy also enabled the researcher to collect data for quantitative analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics, which makes it suitable for the current study to test the hypotheses which were presented in the conceptual framework.

22. Methods

22.1. Unit of analysis and population

The population refers to the entire group of people, things or events that the researchers investigated (Investopedia, 2021). For this study, the research population was the individuals who uses any type of social media platform in which the SMIs are engaged in. The unit of analysis can be mentioned as the individual social media users.

22.2. Sample profile and sampling techniques

The sample of this study was 202 individual social media users who uses social media platforms where SMIs are engaged in. This study was conducted using people from any social class who live in any province, district, city or town in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the sample consisted of people of both genders who are in between age group of 18 to 45 years who consumes social media's content. As the sampling technique for selecting the sample of social media users, convenience sampling method will be used. Convenience sampling method is simpler to implement and enables for the collection of basic data regarding the research without the hassles that come with using a randomized sample [19,23].

23. Quality Assurance Methods and Ethical Consideration

Data collected via questionnaires were analyzed, employing various statistical techniques, using the statistical computer package SPSS 22. The study utilized regression and mediation analysis to study the impact and relationship between the predictor, dependent and mediator variables. Since this research is a positivistic research, ensuring validity and reliability is a main concern. Further, Cronbach's Alpha, a statistical technique, was used to assess the internal consistency of the summed-up scales that would be applied in this study [51]. Data was collected strictly for the research/ academic purpose, and data was collected in such a way that no one responder was affected by another. To ensure ethics, anonymous questionnaires were distributed in in order to ensure the privacy of the respondents. Respondents were given the voluntary participation for the questionnaire too. This study examines whether credibility and attractiveness of SMI has an impact on consumers' purchase intention of BPC products. Data was obtained in an ethical way utilizing an online questionnaire. The data was analyzed through using regression and mediation analysis to derive conclusions, which will be explained in the following chapters.

24. Data Analysis and Presentation

24.1. Sample Profile

For the data collection purpose, 220 online questionnaires were distributed among various groups in the society. Only the questionnaires who answered as 'yes' for the filtering question of "Have you seen one or more of the above social media influencers or any other influencers on social media?" were taken into consideration.

Age	Number	Percentage
Below 18	10	5.0
18 – 24	109	54.0
25 – 30	33	16.3
31 – 45	42	20.7
Above 45	8	4.0

Table 1: Demographic composition - Age composition of the sample

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	154	76.2
Male	48	23.8

Table 2: Gender composition of the sample

Education level	Number	Percentage
Advanced Level (A/L)	74	36.6
Graduate	79	39.1
Masters	15	7.4
Ordinary Level (O/L)	11	5.4
PhD	3	1.5
Professional qualification	19	9.4

Table 3: Highest level of education of the sample

District	Number	Percentage
Western Province	152	75.2
Southern Province	20	9.9
Central Province	13	6.4
Eastern Province	11	5.4
Other	6	3.1

Table 4: Province composition of the sample

Income level	Number	Percentage
Below 20,000	74	36.6
20,000 – 50,000	33	16.3
50,000 – 100,000	59	29.2
100,000 – 250,000	25	12.4
Above 250,000	4	2.0

Table 5: Monthly income level composition of the sample

Platform	Number	Percentage
Instagram	173	85.6
YouTube	108	53.5
Facebook	101	50.0
TikTok	82	40.6
Twitter	22	10.9

Table 6: Representation of the platforms where SMIs can be seen - Platforms Table: 6where SMIs can be seen

25. Data Analysis

All the relationships between variables will be tested and discussed in relation to hypotheses given on Hypotheses development section (3.1.1) of the study. Regression and Mediation analysis have been used in this study. All the below stated tests were conducted based on assuming the significance level of 0.05 ($\alpha=0.05$).

No:	Hypotheses	Final result	P value
Regression analysis			
H$_1$	*(a) Authenticity and (b) Expertise of the SMI have a positive impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI.*	Fully accepted	Authenticity = 0.001, Expertise = 0.000
H$_2$	*(a) Physical attractiveness and (b) Homophily of the SMI have a positive impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI.*	Not fully supported	Physical Attractiveness = 0.130, Homophily = 0.000

H₃	*(a) Authenticity and (b) Expertise of the SMI positively influences consumers' attitude towards the SMI*	Fully accepted	Authenticity = 0.005, Expertise = 0.000
H₄	*(a) Physical attractiveness and (b) Homophily of the SMI positively influences consumers' attitude towards the SMI*	Fully accepted	Physical Attractiveness = 0.000, Homophily = 0.000
H₅	*consumers' attitude towards the SMI has a positive impact on purchase intention of BPC products*	Fully accepted	0.000
Mediation analysis			
H₆ₐ	*Consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between (a) Authenticity of the SMI and purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI*	Significant partial Mediation	
H₆ᵦ	*Consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between (b) Expertise of the SMI and purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI*	Significant complete Mediation	
H₇ₐ	*Consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between (b) physical attractiveness of the SMI and purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI*	Significant complete Mediation	
H₇ᵦ	*Consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between (b) homophily of the SMI and purchase intention of BPC products promoted by the SMI*	Significant partial Mediation	

Table 7

26. Regression Analysis & Mediation Analysis

From the data given, it can be explained that respondents have agreed on the purchase intention towards the BPC products promoted by SMIs. The practical aspect of the results generated in this chapter are expected to be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

27. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings will be discussed in relation to the research objectives and existing literature reviewed in the current study. First objective explained as to identify whether credibility and attractiveness of SMI has an impact on consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMIs.

This objective was attained through testing H1 and H2. As explained in the hypothesis's development section, the literature suggests that there is a positive relationship between credibility and attractiveness of SMI and consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI (Guo et al., 2018; Lin & Xu, 2017). In this study also, it was clear that there is a positive relationship between credibility of the SMI and consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI (H1 was fully accepted)

[27,30,46]. But it was also identified that the relationship between attractiveness of the SMI and consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI is not fully supported (H2 was not fully supported).

For this, previous studies also suggest that source of attractiveness did not have any impact on consumers' purchase intention and also argued that attractiveness is not a powerful dimension to generate purchase behavior due to a substantially weak logical link between an attractive endorser and purchasing intention (Lim Till & Busler, 1998). Accordingly, from the results of this study which is related to the context of Sri Lankan consumers it can be concluded that SMIs' characteristics of authenticity and expertise having a direct impact on consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI while physical attractiveness and homophily is not. The Second objective identified as to identify whether consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between credibility and attractiveness, and consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMIs[26,29].

Investigating whether consumers' attitude towards the SMI mediates the relationships between credibility and attractiveness,

and consumers' purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI is explained in this objective and was connected to H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7. According to previous literature it is evident that influencer characteristics of authenticity, expertise, physical attractiveness and homophily are positively related with the consumers' attitude towards the SMI. According to the findings of this study also it was clearly showed that there is a positive impact between the consumers' attitude towards the SMIs and the credibility and attractiveness of the SMIs (H3 and H4 fully accepted) [29,41,42,52,53]. From the H5 of the study it was identified that the relationship between the mediator variable of consumers' attitude towards the SMI and the dependent variable of purchase intention of BPC products. It was suggested as a direct or positive relationship according to previous studies. Accordingly, the current study also found out that there is a significant positive relationship between the above two variables which shows that it can be applied to the Sri Lankan context as well [10,54-57].

The mediation effect of the consumers' attitude towards the SMI on relationships between credibility (authenticity and expertise) and attractiveness (physical attractiveness and homophily) of SMIs and purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by the SMI is clearly measured by using H6 and H7 of the current study. According to previous chapters it was clear that there is a mediation effect between those variables [46,47,58]. From the findings of this study also it is clear that consumers' attitude towards the SMI significantly mediates the relationship between above mentioned variables. According to Lim et al., 2017 it is evident that attitude plays a significant role in mediating the fit between a product, the celebrity and purchase intention for an advertised product. Interestingly, it was also found that from the data analysis, consumers' attitude towards the SMIs is having a more powerful impact with the influencer characteristics than with the dependent variable of purchase intention.

28. Conclusion
SMI promotions are a concept that emerged recently to the world while it is newer to Sri Lanka as well. This study was carried out mainly to identify the impact of the characteristics of SMIs on the purchase intention of consumers. The literature review helps to get a clear understanding on how this area of study was discussed by previous recent studies. Credibility is having a more impact on purchase intention of BPC products promoted by SMIs than the attractiveness of them. A structured questionnaire was used in this study, which consist of 202 respondents from Sri Lanka. Results were presented using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation followed by a clear explanation on the sample profile and the questionnaire conducted. Altogether there were seven hypotheses and regression, and mediation analyses were conducted using SPSS 22 statistical software. The findings of this study will be useful to many local marketers and businesses in their promotional campaigns done through social media platforms. It is also beneficial to foreign marketers who conduct promotions through influencers as it is currently a leading concept globally. The study highlights SMI characteristics with purchase intention of BPC products promoted by them and the mediating impact of consumers' attitude towards the SMIs.

29. Implications
The aim of this study has been to produce knowledge on how credibility and attractiveness of SMIs affect the purchase intention of BPC products in Sri Lanka. Previous studies have focused on different characteristics of SMIs with the purchase intention. Current study empirically find out how recently identified SMI characteristics of authenticity, expertise, physical attractiveness and homophily affect the purchase intention of beauty and personal care products promoted by them in the context of Sri Lankan market [5]. Not only that, but the current study also aimed at finding out how attitude towards the SMIs effect on influencer characteristics and the purchase intention of BPC products. Additionally, SMIs is a leading and less discussed area when it comes to Sri Lankan context therefore, this study has a significant implication for gaining more clarity understanding the concept of SMIs while gaining theoretical knowledge on SMI characteristics along with purchase intention of BPC products promoted by them with the consumers'' attitude towards SMIs. There are many practical implications and contributions found in this study. First, this study may be helpful to Sri Lankan businesses looking to use influencer marketing activities more. It is crucial for businesses to be where their customers are, which is on social media, as the number of SMIs and social media platforms is rising and traditional media is gradually vanishing [50,60]. As a result, this study adds to our understanding of how SMIs' impact on social media platforms may alter customers' ability to make purchasing decisions. As indicated by Freberg et al. this study will not only advance our knowledge of the influence that SMIs can have, but it will also help firms that choose to use influencer marketing to better understand how to collaborate with SMIs in the future. This study demonstrates that SMI characteristics have a noticeable impact on consumers' product consumption [2]. As a result, using SMIs in marketing will help create a more economical and environmentally friendly society because businesses would no longer need to waste money, paper, and energy on printing flyers and making billboard advertisements. In addition, the usage of SMIs could help create a greener society in areas other than traditional marketing where people can get their news via social media rather than via printed newspapers.

30. Limitations and Avenues for further research
The responses collected were gathered using convenient sampling technique which led to target Sri Lankans living in highly populated and tech savvy provinces like Western, Central and Southern. Due to that majority of the participants were younger respondents as well. There is a possibility that the findings do not represent the Sri Lanka's entire population. Instagram and YouTube are the most popular platforms for SMI activities (Statistica, 2021). Future research directions could concentrate on broadening the study topics to include different social media platforms. A district-by-district analysis could help determine which areas have the most SMIs and which areas do not. Further research might be done utilizing all sectors together or using different sectors like fashion, food, fitness, etc.

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