

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RETAIL CUSTOMERS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the impact of social media on consumer engagement, with special reference to the retail sector in Colombo District. As social media reshapes customers' shopping behavior, retailers face challenges in adapting to new consumer expectations for real-time, customized interactions. This study aims to understand the influence of social media platforms on customer engagement among retail customers in Colombo District, Sri Lanka. This highlights the challenges retailers encounter in adapting to digital interactions and transforming customer behavior. The impacts of various factors, including customer awareness, social media usage, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, and customer experience, on overall customer engagement with retail businesses were examined. Using quantitative methodology, data were collected from 384 respondents through surveys using a cross-sectional approach, and the results were analyzed using SPSS. The findings indicate a strong positive relationship between social media use and customer engagement, providing insights into enhancing brand loyalty and customer experience. This study concludes that social media platforms have a significant impact on customer engagement in the retail sector of Colombo District, with five key factors: customer awareness, social media usage, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, and customer experience. Managers and retail outlet owners can focus on these areas to align better with customer attitudes and perceptions in decision-making. Recommended strategies include enhancing customer trust, providing memorable experiences, and utilizing multiple social media platforms with diverse content formats. Future research can expand this study to other districts in Sri Lanka and to other industries, such as banking, hospitality, and fashion. Additionally, future research could include larger and more diverse samples and consider various moderating variables. Incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods is also recommended to gain deeper insight into customer engagement dynamics.

Keywords: Customer awareness, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, customer experience, customer engagement, social media usage