

1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing – 2025
(URSM) - 2025

Theme

" Transcending Boundaries: Reimagining Marketing for a Transformative Era",

6th of August 2025

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Department of Marketing Management

Faculty of Business Studies

University of Vavuniya

Pambaimadu

Sri Lanka

Disclaimer

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I extend my warm greetings on the occasion of the **1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM) - 2025**, organized by the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya.

The theme of this symposium, **“Transcending Boundaries: Reimagining Marketing for a Transformative Era,”** reflects the evolving nature of marketing in a dynamic global environment. With six thematic tracks, URSM-2025 serves as a vital platform for undergraduate students, academics, researchers, and industry professionals to engage in meaningful dialogue and share innovative research in the field of marketing. This symposium provides a hybrid forum, bringing together a wide spectrum of participants including scholars and practitioners. The presence of distinguished keynote speakers from international academic institutions adds tremendous value to the discourse and further elevates the academic rigor of this event.

URSM-2025 stands as a testament to the commitment, vision, and dedication of the academic staff of the Department of Marketing Management. I am confident that this initiative will foster a culture of research and critical inquiry among our students, empowering them to contribute to the academic and practical realms of marketing.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the symposium committee and the Department of Marketing Management for organizing this significant event. May this be the first of many successful symposiums to come, and may it continue to inspire and strengthen undergraduate research in the years ahead.

I wish the organizers and all participants a successful and enriching symposium.

Senior Professor A. Atputharajah,
Vice Chancellor,
University of Vavuniya.



Message from the Dean

It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Department of Marketing Management on the successful organization of the 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM 2025), under the theme “*Transcending Boundaries: Reimagining Marketing for a Transformative Era.*”

This theme is both timely and relevant, especially as businesses today face the need to adapt rapidly to environmental, technological, and social changes. The conference serves as a vital platform for undergraduate researchers to showcase their scholarly work and to contribute fresh perspectives to the ever-evolving field of marketing.

With forty-five research articles presented across six thematic tracks, this symposium reflects the academic rigour, curiosity, and innovation nurtured within our faculty. It is indeed a proud moment to witness the emergence of young researchers engaging in critical inquiry and addressing contemporary marketing challenges through evidence-based insights.

I offer my sincere congratulations to all contributors, and I wish URSM 2025 every success in achieving its goals and setting a strong foundation for future research endeavours.

Prof. Y. Nanthagopan
Dean
Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Message from the Chair / URSM 2025

It is my great pleasure to offer this message for the Book of Abstracts, which proudly emerges as the first edition born out of the Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM 2025). This publication marks a significant milestone in the history of the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, and stands as a symbol of academic commitment, innovation, and progress.

The theme of this year's symposium, "Transcending Boundaries: Reimagining Marketing for a Transformative Era," insists a sense of values that are essential for industries to navigate challenges and thrive in a dynamic competitive environment.

The publication of this book is a remarkable achievement, reflecting the perseverance and academic spirit of our students and faculty. Research is a powerful catalyst for the creation, growth, and refinement of knowledge, and this collection of abstracts presents timely and relevant studies from diverse areas within the marketing discipline.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to all supporting bodies and contributors whose tireless efforts have brought this initiative to life. I also extend my sincere congratulations to all the presenters and authors for their dedication, passion, and commitment to advancing and sharing knowledge.

May this book inspire continued inquiry, critical thinking, and meaningful contributions to the field of marketing in the years to come.

Mr. S. A. Jude Leon,
Chair / URSM – 2025,
Department of Marketing Management,
Faculty of Business Studies,
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.



Message from the Editor in Chief

It is indeed with great pleasure that I write this message as the Editor-in-Chief of the editorial board for the proceedings of the 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Marketing (URSM 2025), organized by the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. This year's symposium is centered around the timely and thought-provoking theme, *“Transcending Boundaries: Reimagining Marketing for a Transformative Era.”*

The conference proceedings comprise 45 outstanding research abstracts, representing a wide spectrum of marketing topics and approaches. These contributions reflect the intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and scholarly effort of our undergraduate researchers. We firmly believe that the insights presented in this collection will inspire further high-quality research, foster academic inquiry, and encourage collaboration within the global research community.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the authors for their valuable contributions of time, effort, and scholarship that have made this symposium and its publication a reality. I am also deeply grateful to the reviewers of URSM 2025 for their timely, constructive feedback, which played a crucial role in upholding the academic quality of this publication. The unwavering support and dedication of the organizing committee members are also gratefully acknowledged.

As the Editor-in-Chief, I genuinely hope that these proceedings will serve as a platform for meaningful engagement and dialogue, and that readers will continue to interact with the authors—sharing perspectives, offering critiques, and ultimately contributing to the advancement of research that addresses real-world challenges, especially in the context of ongoing global and local crises.

Let this be the beginning of a strong tradition of undergraduate research that informs, inspires, and transforms

Mr. S. Sivanenthira
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The Impact of Destination Brand Authenticity on Tourist Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Destination Brand Engagement With Special Reference to Habarana, Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

In an era of intensifying global tourism competition, the authenticity of destination brands has emerged as a critical factor influencing tourist loyalty. For culturally and ecologically rich locations such as Habarana in Sri Lanka, destination brand authenticity plays a vital role in differentiating the destination and fostering sustainable tourism growth. This study investigates the impact of destination brand authenticity (DBA) on tourist loyalty (TL), with a particular focus on the mediating effect of destination brand engagement (DBE). A quantitative research approach was employed, targeting tourists who have visited Habarana. A total of 384 respondents were selected through simple random sampling, following the Krejcie and Morgan sample size guidelines. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire comprising 24 Likert-scale items measuring dimensions of DBA (continuity, credibility, integrity, symbolism), DBE (cognitive, emotional, behavioral engagement), and TL (revisit and recommendation intentions). Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold ($\alpha > 0.7$). Correlation analysis revealed strong positive associations between DBA, DBE, and TL ($p < 0.001$). Regression results indicated that all four dimensions of DBA significantly influence TL, with symbolism ($B = 0.354$) and continuity ($B = 0.327$) demonstrating the strongest effects. Mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro confirmed that DBE significantly mediates the relationship between DBA and TL, amplifying the overall effect. The findings underscore that authentic destination branding, reinforced through emotional engagement, strengthens tourist loyalty. Destination marketers are encouraged to emphasize authentic experiences and deeper engagement strategies to enhance brand loyalty and competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Destination Brand Authenticity, Destination Brand Engagement, Tourist Loyalty*



Impact of Gamification Strategies on Eco-Tourism Choices in 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, gamification has emerged as a promising approach to encourage responsible tourism behavior. In the context of tourism, gamified strategies, such as points, rewards, and leaderboards, are being increasingly adopted to influence traveler engagement. This study investigates the impact of such gamification strategies on eco-tourism choices among travelers in Sri Lanka. It aims to evaluate how these mechanisms affect tourists' awareness, preferences, and intention to travel sustainably. The study also seeks to identify which specific gamification features exert the strongest influence on eco-conscious decision-making. A quantitative research method was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 103 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 eco-tourism communities. Data were analyzed through Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis, and Multivariate Multiple Regression Analysis using SPSS software. Findings revealed that all three gamification strategic elements, such as points, rewards, and leaderboards, positively influence eco-tourism choices. The results highlight the potential of gamified digital marketing in promoting sustainable travel behaviors in Sri Lanka. This research contributes to bridging the gap in the literature concerning the application of gamification in eco-tourism, offering practical insights for marketers, eco-tourism operators, and policymakers aiming to boost eco-conscious tourism through interactive digital strategies.

Key words: *Digital Marketing, Eco-Tourism, Gamification Technology*



Conceptual Paper on the Impact of Perceived Risk Factors on Online Purchase Intention in E-Commerce Platforms: A Study Among University Students in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Electronic commerce has grown rapidly throughout the past twenty years to be one of the most dynamic channels of international trade, which essentially redefined conventional business strategies. However, beyond those development, perceived risk continues to present a severe challenge to a large proportion of students in Sri Lanka and stress the necessity of further actions in order to strengthen consumer confidence. This study aims to examine how five key dimensions of perceived risk such as financial risk, product risk, privacy risk, delivery risk and social risk affects the online purchase intention of Sri Lankan university students. The study will specifically investigate how this risk perceptions influence student's likelihood to make purchases, their intent to repurchase and their recommendation behavior. The population of this study will be university students from 17 government in Sri Lanka and the sample will be 220 students. Convenience sampling will be used to ensure practical access to a wide demographic of students. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, correlation and multiple regression analysis. The study will contribute to the literature gap in a significant manner contextualizing relative risk in the context of online purchasing behavior of the university students in Sri Lanka. Practically, the findings will provide effective suggestions to policy formulators and e-commerce-based firms to reduce the fear among students in order to establish a stronger penetration of e-commerce within the population.

Keywords: *Perceived risk, online purchase intention, e-commerce platforms, Sri Lankan university students.*



A Conceptual Paper on The Impact of Personalized Social Media Advertisements on Consumer Buying Decisions in the Fashion Industry of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Personalized advertising is a significant factor influencing consumer buying decisions, especially in social media marketing. Even though a lot of international studies conducted on this issue to observe the effects of personalized social media advertisement on online consumer buying decisions, there is still room to fill within the literature as far as the local studies in this context are concerned in Sri Lanka, in the industry of fashion. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate how personalized social media advertisements influence the consumer buying decisions in the context of the Sri Lankan fashion industry. Particularly, the research examines five major dimensions of personalized advertisement such as: advertisement relevance, advertisement frequency and timing, advertisement design and content, emotional appeal, social media platforms, and privacy concern and trust. Based on a quantitative approach, a convenience sample consisting of 200 respondents will be used to collect data using a self-administered questionnaire among fashion consumers in Sri Lanka. This research will help to add to the current body of knowledge by filling the gap in the Sri Lankan fashion industry's knowledge of digital consumer behavior. Practically, the findings will suggest viable information that marketers and fashion brands can use in maximizing their use of digitalization by the creation of personal, emotionally appealing, and credible advertisements to induce the buying decisions in the current digital market.

Keywords: *Personalized social media advertisements, consumer buying decisions, social media marketing, fashion industry in Sri Lanka.*



Impact Of Social Media Influencers' Credibility On Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Green Cosmetics Among Sri Lankan Females: Evidence From Matara District, Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

The rapid evolution of digital marketing has led to the emergence of social media influencers as a transformative advertising tool. Social media stands as one of the strongest forces shaping consumer Intention today. Social media influencers have become an important piece of modern marketing, serving as trusted third parties bridging the gap between brands and consumers. The worldwide cosmetics industry has shifted toward sustainability, with an increasing number of consumers preferring eco-friendly and ethical products. The beauty and personal care market in Sri Lanka is expanding, and more consumers, especially females, are taking an interest in green cosmetics. This study examines the Credibility of social media influencers on Sri Lankan females' purchasing intentions for green cosmetics. By examining how social media influencers can effectively engage customers and promote sustainable values, the research also aims to provide actionable insights for marketers. The findings are expected to contribute to both academic understanding and practical applications in the fields of digital marketing and sustainable consumer purchase intention. A quantitative research design was adopted, collecting data through a structured questionnaire from a sample of 154 respondents, selected by the researcher by using a convenience sampling method, which is divided into female university students, working, and non-working categories in the Matara District. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, correlation analysis, and one-way ANOVA. To achieve the main objective of this study, the results revealed that attractiveness, expertise, and novelty had a statistically significant impact on female purchase intention, while trustworthiness and transparency had a statistically insignificant effect. However, this study aims to identify the influence of social media influencers' credibility on the purchase intention of Sri Lankan females about green cosmetics. By understanding the interrelationships between all these, this research will provide useful implications for green cosmetic brands, marketers, and policymakers, intending to build better advertising policy strategies as expected by consumers while pursuing sustainability aims.

Keywords: *Advertising, Female Consumers, Green Cosmetics, Purchase Intention, Social Media Influencers Credibility*



Conceptual Paper on the Impact of Privacy Concerns on Online Purchase Intention in the Food Delivery Industry Among University Students in Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

In the current digital economy, privacy concerns are becoming increasingly significant, especially in the online food delivery industry. Existing studies at global level have investigated the relationship between online behaviour and privacy concerns, but there is still disagreement about how this impacts the purchasing decisions of specific groups such as Sri Lankan university students who may differ from others due to unique social, cultural, and technological factors. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine how different aspects of privacy concerns affect Sri Lankan university students' online purchase intentions in food delivery industry. The independent variable of the study is privacy concerns which measured through three dimensions such as: the gathering of personal information, ignorance of service providers' data handling practices, and users' control over their personal data. The dependent variable of this study is online purchase intention which measured through three dimensions such as: product information, fun and enjoyment, and consumer belief. Based on a quantitate approached a structured questionnaire will be issued using snowball sampling technique to gather data from 208 university students throughout Sri Lanka. The findings of the study will demonstrate how privacy concerns are significantly influences on online purchase intention. This study seeks to fill a contextual research gap in the existing literature by examining the role of privacy concerns in influencing consumer behavior in the context of Sri Lanka. In practical terms, the study will highlight the necessity of user empowerment and transparent data practices to foster trust and encourage long-term participation in the digital economy.

Keywords: *Privacy concerns, online purchase intention, online food delivery industry, Sri Lankan university students.*



Conceptual Paper on The Impact of TikTok User – Generated Contents on Generation Z’s Impulsive Buying Behavior with the Mediating Role of Perceived Credibility in Sri Lankan Cosmetic Industry

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ABSTRACT

Social media growth has accelerated and increased significantly over years and billions of people worldwide use internet on daily basis for variety of purposes. TikTok is the most popular social media platform with a video content component. This study attempts to explore how user-generated content on TikTok influence impulsive buying behavior of generation Z consumers in the Sri Lankan cosmetic industry. The study evaluates five key dimensions of TikTok user- generated content such as: informativeness, entertainment, authenticity, interestingness and usefulness to determine their impact on the dependent variable, impulsive buying behavior. Based on a quantitative approach, the data will be gathered by employing a structured questionnaire among 200 generation Z TikTok users of Sri Lanka based on convenience sample method. SPSS will be used for statistical analysis to examine correlations, regression among the study constructs. The findings of this study will contribute to filling the research gap in Sri Lankan context by addressing behavioral responses of digitally active generation Z consumers toward user-generated content in the cosmetic industry. Practically, these results will provide valuable insights for beauty brands, marketers, and content creators who seek to effectively engage with generation Z consumers and drive impulsive purchases in a dynamic digital marketplace.

Keywords: *TikTok user- generated content, impulsive buying behavior, perceived credibility, Sri Lankan generation Z consumers, cosmetic industry*



The Study on Behavioral Differences Between Online and in-Store Consumers

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the behavioral differences between online and in-store customers, with an emphasis on current trends and consumer tastes in markets all over the world. It emphasizes the appeal of online shopping due to its convenience, personalization, and competitive pricing, particularly among younger, urban, and digitally literate demographics. On the other hand, in-store purchasing is still preferred, particularly by older and rural customers, for the sensory experience, quick access, and confidence in the product. Factors including digital trust, generational effects, and hybrid purchasing patterns that were made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic are all covered by the study. The persistent relevance of physical retail is demonstrated by the rapid expansion of e-commerce, according to statistical analyses of official reports. The results point to the necessity for omnichannel approaches to efficiently address the wide range of consumer wants. By highlighting the necessity of focused strategies that combine technological breakthroughs with individualized customer interaction, this research adds to the retail marketing literature.

Key Words: *e-commerce expansion, generational disparities, customization, retail trends, hybrid shopping, digital trust, omnichannel retailing, consumer behavior, in-store shopping, online shopping*



Customer Experience as a Mediator: How Instagram Influencer Credibility Drives Consumer Engagement in Beauty Industry in Uva Province, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The role of influencer credibility is increasingly becoming a major determinant of consumer engagement, especially in the cosmetic industry which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The present study aims to study, how the source credibility of Instagram influencers, including trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness affects consumer engagement, and how customer experience mediates the relationship between these two constructs in Uva Province, Sri Lanka. Quantitative, cross-sectional study design was used with the self administered questionnaire which was validated with pilot survey. The result of the pilot test confirmed the reliability and normality of data distribution. Data were collected from 384 cosmetic content-driven Instagram users, using convenience sampling method. SPSS 24.0 was used to analyze the data. Correlation, regression and Sobel tests were employed to confirm the hypotheses. The results indicated that trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness substantially influence customer engagement directly. Besides that, the mediation analysis proved that customer experience partially mediates the relationship between customer engagement and influencer credibility. The research is useful to the marketers who need to establish customer engagement with their brands by using Instagram influencers.

Keywords: *Instagram Influencers, Source Credibility, Customer Engagement, Customer Experience, Cosmetic Industry, Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness*



Exploring the Relationship Between Customer Engagement and Brand Loyalty in Online Cosmetics Industry in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Customer engagement has become an important factor affecting brand loyalty, especially for digital marketplaces. This research explores the influence of customer engagement on brand loyalty in the online cosmetics market in Sri Lanka. Three dimensions of customer engagement, cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement were examined. In the competitive and fast-paced online market environment, it is an increasing challenge to maintain consumer-brand relationships. A quantitative cross-sectional study was used, and data were collected from a sample of 384 undergraduate students, selected using convenience sampling technique from 17 public sector universities in Sri Lanka with the structured, self-administered online questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted, that tested and confirmed the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument (all constructs with Cronbach's alpha over 0.70). The data were analyzed using SPSS. The validity and reliability were confirmed using exploratory checks and internal consistency. Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships exist between the three dimensions of customer engagement and brand loyalty. The multiple regression yielded significant results for each dimension cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement as affecting brand loyalty. Thus, supported hypothesized relationships exist between customer engagement and brand loyalty in the online cosmetics market. This study highlighted strategies for cosmetic brands that operate in the digital space, elevating loyalty and developing competitive advantage through meaningful, interactive and personalized engagement.

Keywords: *Customer engagement, brand loyalty, online cosmetics market, Sri Lankan university students.*



**Determinants of Online Impulse Buying in Fashion Industry: A study Focused on Western Province,
Sri Lanka**

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ABSTRACT

Online impulse buying behavior is one of the major phenomena in the fast-emerging e-commerce industry in Sri Lanka and especially in the fashion industry. The factors that lead to online impulse buying in the Western Province, Sri Lanka were explored in this research, pertaining to internal, external, situational and sociocultural factors. The study fills this research gap of local empirical research on this issue and comes up with findings applicable to the Sri Lankan context. It took a quantitative, cross sectional approach, survey design with a conveniently selected sample of 384 online fashion consumers, aged 18 to 60 years in the urban area within the Western Province. The structured questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale was employed to collect the data, and the analysis of such data in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics, correlation, and regression analysis was performed with the help of IBM SPSS 24.0. Pilot survey was conducted to test the questionnaire and the Cronbach's alpha values of all variables were greater than 0.7, ensuring the internal consistency of variables. The result proves that the four variables; external (e.g., sales promotions, quality of the websites), internal (e.g., emotional states, hedonic motivation), situational (e.g., availability of time and money), as well as sociocultural (e.g., peer influence, social acceptance) are significantly and positively associated with online impulse buying behavior. It is peculiar to note that external influences including lower cost and promotion by celebrities as well as internal factors including dispositions in the mood and the need to relax have been very high predictors. These findings provide a good implication to retailers and marketers in the fashion industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Online impulse buying, Consumer behavior, External factors, Internal factors, Situational factors, Sociocultural factors.*



Reels to Revenue: Leveraging Instagram for Brand Engagement Among Generation Z Fashion Consumers in Uva Province, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, social media platform such as Instagram have changed the way of marketing and one of the best ways of engaging brands is through Instagram Reels, especially among the generation Z consumers. Investigating the influence of Instagram Reels in the brand engagement of the fashion industry within Uva Province, Sri Lanka by surveying how particular Reels attributes (figurative language use, interactivity appeal, audio-visual presence, and time duration of reels) contribute to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement of Generation Z consumers. This research aims to fill the gap in the field of short-form video marketing by quantitative, cross-sectional research method. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaire from 384 respondents, who were selected through convenience sampling method. Statistical analysis, such as descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression were done using SPSS to find answers for the research questions and test hypotheses. It was found that figurative language, interactivity appeal and audio-visual presence has a significant impact on brand engagement, whereas shorter-duration Reels are more efficient in terms of attracting attention. The research emphasizes the role played by culturally pertinent and engaging visual content in cultivating closer bonding with Generation Z consumers. Such observations can be translated into several practical suggestions that fashion marketers should consider to ensure the provision of Instagram Reels as a means of brand promotion to achieve higher rates of activation and loyalty in the Sri Lankan digital business environment.

Keywords : *Instagram Reels, Brand Engagement, Generation Z, Fashion Industry, Social Media Marketing*



CO-CREATING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS: EMPOWERING TRADITION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This Participatory Action Research (PAR) project sought to improve the digital presence and customer engagement of Maruthu Dum Biryani, a traditional MSME in Jaffna, by co-creating and implementing low-cost digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Google Maps and WhatsApp Business for customer engagement. Over four months, a team of marketing students and the business owner undertook PAR cycles, including diagnosis (survey and digital readiness assessment), action (setting up and improving digital platforms), observation (engagement metrics) and reflection (owner feedback and audience interactions with content). The collaboration addressed the owner's digital literacy challenges, engaged in content co-creation and trained him in his new role as a social media manager. The business noticed an increase in visibility, the students and owner reported organic customer interactions as a result of implementing planned social media posts and video advertising campaigns. Platforms such as Google Maps and Instagram had a significantly better impact on brand awareness for the owner, as they were given visible actions to strengthen public-facing engagement with these platforms. A notable outcome was that the owner, who was initially hesitant to engage with digital communications, began to feel confident in managing these digital resources. A significant outcome for students, business owners, and MSME employees was improved levels of digital literacy demonstrated in aspects of productivity, content creation, engagement analytics, and customer engagement. The study highlights the power of student-MSME partnerships to foster digital empowerment in low-resource settings, providing a practical, replicable model for other traditional food businesses. It emphasizes a gradual digital transformation approach that starts with one platform and gradually expands. The research recommends that universities establish student-led digital pitch, policymakers encourage mentoring between youth and business owners, and financial institutions provide microloans for essential digital tools. Together, these strategies can preserve local food heritage while helping MSMEs thrive in Sri Lanka's growing digital economy.

Keywords: *Co-creating, Digital Empowerment, Local Business Transformation, Participatory Action Research, Student-led Digital Pitch*



UNDERGRADUATE-LED PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH DRIVING A SMALL RESTAURANT'S DIGITAL TRANSITION

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ABSTRACT

This Participatory Action Research (PAR) study assessed the integrated digital platforms Meta Business Suite, TikTok, and WhatsApp business as tools to support operational efficiency, customer engagement, and youth outreach for Sahana Veg Hotel, a traditional vegetarian restaurant in Jaffna. The study used PAR cycles of planning (digital audits), action (creating accounts on Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp business), observation (analyzing usage with Meta's insights), and reflection (revising ideas and action plans with the owner), which allowed students to track metrics in real time, automate customer engagement, and train students in digital literacy in a scalable model. Over a four-month period, the process was effective and resulted in 6,400 Facebook views, 106 new Facebook followers in a 24-hour period, youth engagement through TikTok user-generated content, improved WhatsApp business communication through automated replies and message replies, and a QR menu as a new service that allows customer access are indicators that participatory methods can help vulnerable micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) overcome the digital divide. The emphasis of this study is to introduce Meta Business Suite in a low-tech environment that facilitates learning through practical experiences, connecting theory with practice. This is the first study to use digital platform ideas initiated by marketing undergraduate students of University of Jaffna targeting vegetarian food experiences. The results show that integrating digital tools can provide a traditional small restaurant with the opportunity to become a customer-responsive business for today's digital marketplace. To replicate this success, the education sector should embed these platforms into their curricula, telecommunications providers should offer affordable business-focused data packages, and local councils should transform community spaces into digital training centers for MSMEs and undergraduates. With additional support from municipal marketing grants, these combined efforts will help traditional restaurants across Sri Lanka thrive in the growing digital economy.

Keywords: *Digital Transition, Marketing Undergraduate Students, Participatory Action Research, Platform Integration, Small Restaurants*



SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT: CO-CREATING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND ONLINE PRESENCE IN A TRADITIONAL SRI LANKAN RESTAURANT

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ABSTRACT

This Participatory Action Research (PAR) article explores how simple steps and actions can lead to a positive customer experience, operational efficiency, and online visibility at Inpa Pillaiyar Veg Restaurant, a traditional-style restaurant in Kondavil, Sri Lanka. The PAR methodology involved planning (identifying customer concern points), acting (installing unwrapped food display shelves, switching to glass cups, introducing digital tools), observing (monitoring sales and feedback), and reflecting (revising staff training). Over two PAR cycles spanning six months, student-researcher and restaurant staff worked together to define customer concern points, implement interventions, and reflect on their actions. Physical interventions included installing unwrapped food display shelves, replacing metal tea cups with glass, improving lighting in the restaurant, and changing printed menus to make the dining environment more welcoming. Digital changes included mapping the restaurant on Google Maps, creating a new Facebook presence, and basic digital accounting to increase discovery and organization. These low-cost innovation, co-created improvements increased customer experience, online presence, and improved employee engagement. Physical improvements were combined with digital improvements to ensure participation and sustainable change. Therefore, the unique contribution of this study is the combination of tangible in-store improvements with accessible digital visibility, creating a dual-focus model that preserves heritage. While undergraduate marketing students often learn theories in lecture halls, this PAR project allowed students to apply marketing concepts in real-world settings and create actionable change. It also highlights how participatory approaches allow owner and employees to own changes, ensuring that interventions, no matter how small, are contextual and sustainable. These results offer potential value for similar small food businesses in low-income communities in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Keywords: Apply Marketing Concepts, Customer Experience, Digital Integration, Low-Cost Innovation, Online Presence, Participatory Action Research.



FROM OVEN TO ONLINE: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH ON ADOPT A BUSINESS SOLUTIONS FOR A BAKERY

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how basic digital branding tools, including Facebook, QR codes, and creative contents, allow small food businesses to increase their visibility and engagement with customers. Using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, the project developed basic low-cost digital solutions in collaboration with Ingaran Bakery, a local Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) in Jaffna. Over a four-month period, a team of undergraduate students of department of marketing and the bakery owner collaborated to assess the bakery's digital readiness and created Facebook presence, contents, and QR code-based advertisements. Through the PAR cycles, students identified, implemented (Facebook page, QR code, logo design, contents creation), monitored (reach, engagement rates), and refined (content strategies via owner input). The project emphasized co-ownership, achieving measurable online growth and owner autonomy in the bakery's digital marketing. The introduction of digital platforms such as Facebook significantly increased Ingaran Bakery's visibility in the local online community. Within a few weeks, the Facebook page gained followers and engagement through attractive post designs and promotions, while customer inquiries and comments began coming in via Facebook Messenger, improving overall communication. The owner, who was initially unfamiliar with social media tools, gradually became confident in managing basic posts and interacting with customers, and as a result, the bakery experienced a significant increase in both walk-in customers and brand recall. The project helped empower the bakery owner to manage their own digital marketing, and the study shows that a small number of digital tools can deliver significant branding effects, especially when combined with substantial and consistent content and visual storytelling. The study proves how students can effectively serve as digital change agents for small businesses, while maintaining the identity of relevant MSME. The project recommends using the student-led branding model more widely by creating easy-to-use design toolkits supported by businesses and launching "Adopt a Business" programs where university students help local businesses. These low-cost ideas could also get a boost from micro-influencers who promote online.

Keywords: *Adopt a Business, Digital Change Agents, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Social Media Marketing*



Impact of AI-Powered Chatbots on Customer Engagement in the Sri Lankan E-Commerce Sector in the Urban Areas of Jaffna District

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how AI-powered chatbots influence customer engagement in the e-commerce industry of Jaffna city, Sri Lanka. While such technologies are widely implemented to enhance digital customer service, there is a lack of insight into their impact in culturally unique and technologically developing areas like Jaffna. The study aims to fill this gap by examining the effect of key chatbot features such as speed of response and personalization on customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Using a quantitative approach, data were gathered from 49 respondents through an online questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and correlation tests were applied to analyze the link between chatbot features and user interaction. Results showed that young adults aged 18–25 are the primary users of chatbots in this region. However, neither responsiveness nor personalization had a strong influence on how frequently users engaged with chatbots. Slight gender differences were observed, with male participants showing higher satisfaction. Overall, users viewed chatbots as practical tools rather than emotionally engaging agents. The study recommends improvements in local language support, better natural language processing, and integration of human agents for complex queries. These insights are valuable for developing region-specific strategies that can enhance chatbot effectiveness and digital customer experience in Sri Lanka's evolving e-commerce sector.



Tourism and Services Marketing: Smart Tourism, Artificial Intelligence, and Technological trends in Tourism.

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ABSTRACT

AI plays a crucial role in personalizing travel experiences through chatbots, recommendation systems, and dynamic pricing algorithms. Virtual assistants like ChatGPT and AI-powered platforms provide real-time travel assistance, language translation, and itinerary planning. Additionally, AI-driven data analytics help tourism businesses understand customer preferences, predict demand, and improve marketing strategies. The Internet of Things (IoT) contributes to smart tourism by enabling seamless connectivity between devices, such as smart hotel rooms, wearable gadgets, and beacon technology for location-based services. IoT enhances visitor experiences through automated check-ins, smart luggage tracking, and real-time navigation in smart cities. Big data analytics allows tourism stakeholders to process vast amounts of information from social media, booking platforms, and sensors to optimize resource management, reduce overtourism, and enhance destination marketing. Predictive analytics helps in forecasting tourist flows and adjusting services accordingly. The tourism industry is undergoing a significant transformation due to the integration of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, and augmented reality (AR). Smart tourism, which leverages these innovations, is enhancing tourist experiences, optimizing operational efficiency, and promoting sustainable tourism practices. This research paper explores the impact of AI and emerging technological trends on the tourism sector, analyzing their benefits, challenges, and future prospects. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are revolutionizing tourism by offering immersive experiences. AR applications enable virtual tours of historical sites, while VR allows potential travelers to explore destinations before booking. These technologies are particularly useful in post-pandemic recovery, offering contactless and engaging experiences. Blockchain technology is gaining traction in tourism for secure transactions, smart contracts for bookings, and transparent loyalty programs. It reduces fraud and ensures data integrity in travel transactions. Despite these developments, issues including the digital divide between developed and developing tourist locations, high implementation costs, and data privacy concerns still exist. It's also necessary to address ethical concerns about AI bias and employment displacement in the travel industry. Adoption of inclusive and sustainable technologies is key to the future of smart tourism. To build infrastructure, guarantee cybersecurity, and encourage digital literacy among travellers and service providers, governments and business parties must work together. Travel will continue to be redefined by AI and smart technologies as they develop, becoming more eco-friendly, individualised, and efficient. this paper concludes that the integration of AI and smart technologies is not just a trend but a necessity for the modern tourism industry. By embracing these innovations, tourism businesses can enhance competitiveness, improve customer satisfaction, and contribute to sustainable tourism development.



A Study on The Influence of Bundling Strategies on Consumer Buying Behaviour.

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the influence of bundling strategies on consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly the psychological and economic determinants of buying behaviour. Using a mix of primary data collection and secondary data analysis, the study examines how three types of bundling—pure bundling, mixed bundling, and customized bundling— influence consumers' value perceptions, convenience, and satisfaction. The research also analyse demographic differences in bundling response and finds important motivators like savings perception, product utility, and brand loyalty. The results indicate that successful bundling can greatly enhance purchase intentions among consumers, particularly when addressed to individual consumer inclination and shopping behavior. The research offers useful lessons to marketers and retailers looking to maximize bundling strategies for maximum consumer attractiveness.

Keywords: *Bundling Strategies, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Perceived Value, Mixed Bundling, Customized Bundling*



Brand Management Strategies for Startups and Emerging Brands

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ABSTRACT:

In today's fast-paced digital economy, brand management is no longer a luxury reserved for large corporations—it is a necessity for startups and emerging brands striving to stand out in crowded markets. For these young businesses, building a brand from the ground up involves more than designing a logo or creating a catchy tagline; it requires developing a compelling brand identity that resonates emotionally with the target audience, fosters trust, and drives long-term loyalty. Unlike established companies with abundant resources, startups often operate under budgetary and operational constraints. Therefore, their brand management strategies must be agile, authentic, and customer-focused. Storytelling becomes a powerful tool, enabling brands to share their journey, values, and purpose in a way that builds emotional connections. Personalization, consistency across touchpoints, and leveraging digital platforms—especially social media—are crucial for establishing visibility and engagement. Another core strategy involves building a community around the brand. Engaging early adopters, influencers, and loyal customers not only spreads brand awareness but also creates user-generated content and word-of-mouth promotion—both of which are vital for emerging businesses. Furthermore, startups must continually monitor brand perception and be flexible enough to evolve based on feedback and market trends. This paper explores the essential elements of successful brand management for startups, including brand positioning, digital branding, customer experience, and brand equity development. It emphasizes the role of authenticity, innovation, and emotional branding in shaping a distinctive market presence. By adopting adaptive and customer-centric strategies, emerging brands can not only compete but also thrive in a dynamic business landscape.

Keywords: *Brand Identity, Brand Positioning, Customer Engagement, Startups, Brand Equity, Emotional Branding, Digital Marketing, Storytelling, Brand Loyalty, Social Media Strategy, User-Generated Content, Brand Perception.*



Sustainable Marketing Strategies: A Pathway to Consumer Loyalty and Brand Equity in the Green Economy

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ABSTRACT

In the evolving landscape of global business, sustainability has emerged as a key differentiator influencing consumer behavior and brand loyalty. This study explores the role of sustainable marketing strategies in shaping consumer loyalty and enhancing brand equity within the context of the green economy. The paper investigates the effectiveness of eco- friendly practices—such as green product innovation, ethical pricing, sustainable distribution, and responsible promotion—in fostering trust and long-term consumer engagement. Using primary data collected from 100 respondents, statistical analyses including Chi-square and ANOVA were employed to identify relationships between demographic variables and perceptions of green marketing. The findings reveal that consumers, especially younger generations, are more inclined to support brands that actively embrace sustainability and transparency. The study further highlights the impact of CSR initiatives, digital campaigns, and social influence on purchasing decisions. It concludes with strategic recommendations for businesses aiming to align profitability with environmental responsibility, emphasizing that sustainable marketing is no longer optional but essential for long-term success.

Key words: *Sustainable Marketing, Green Economy, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity, Consumer Perception, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and Eco-friendly Products*



THE STUDY ON CHILDREN ATTITUDE TOWARDS JUNK FOOD

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ABSTRACT

The increasing consumption of junk food among children has become a serious public health issue. High in calories, sugars, and fats, junk foods have gained popularity due to their taste, convenience, and wide availability. This study assesses children's attitudes, preferences, and awareness regarding junk food, examining the influence of peer pressure, advertising, media, and parental habits. Using a descriptive research design, primary data was collected from 103 respondents through structured questionnaires. Statistical tools like Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, and Chi-square Test were applied for analysis. The findings reveal that despite awareness of health risks, consumption rates remain high due to social and media influences. The study recommends health education programs, stricter advertising controls, and active parental guidance to promote healthier eating habits.

KEYWORDS: Junk Food, Children's Attitude, Peer Influence, Health Awareness, Advertising, India.



How Social Media Influencers Shape the Buying Decisions of Gen Z: A Real-World Exploration

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Abstract:

Influencers have a big say in how younger generations view products and make decisions in the social media era. This study examines the relationship between Generation Z's purchasing behaviors and social media influencers, with a focus on YouTube and Instagram. We investigated how customers' perceptions of a brand and likelihood of making a purchase are influenced by their trust in influencers and the perceived legitimacy of their material through a survey of 387 Gen Z participants. The results showed that customer trust and influencer credibility are strongly correlated (correlation = 0.71), which in turn promotes favorable brand impression and purchase intent (correlation = 0.74). Interestingly, the credibility of an influencer accounted for 61% of a person's decision to buy a product. These insights offer valuable guidance for brands seeking to establish genuine connections with younger audiences.

Keywords: *Influencer marketing, Generation Z, purchase intention, social media, YouTube, Instagram, trust, credibility, brand perception*



A Comparative Study on Emotional and Incentive Based Loyalty: Unpacking The True Drivers of Customer Retention

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ABSTRACT

The comparative effects of incentive-based and emotional loyalty on customer retention in the cutthroat market of today are examined in this study. Discounts and reward points are examples of incentives that draw short-term engagement, but emotional loyalty—which is based on trust, a personal connection, and brand affinity—promotes longer-lasting and more meaningful connections. Convenience sampling was used to gather data from 200 respondents as part of a descriptive study design. For analysis, important statistical methods such the weighted average mean, Spearman's correlation, and the chi-square test were used. Research indicates that emotional loyalty outperforms incentive-based loyalty in terms of trust and retention. Customer retention and emotional connection were found to be significantly positively correlated. Emotional loyalty turned out to be the more powerful driver of overall impact, even though the Chi-square test showed no direct correlation between loyalty type and retention. The study concludes that a balanced approach—merging emotional and incentive strategies—can help businesses enhance customer loyalty and long-term profitability. The insights can assist marketers in shaping more effective CRM strategies.

Keywords: Customer Retention, Emotional Loyalty, Incentive-Based Loyalty, Brand Trust, Loyalty Programs.



A Study on The Influence of Globalization on the Consumer Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of globalization on consumer behavior, examining how increased interconnectedness and cultural exchange have transformed purchasing patterns, preferences, and decision-making processes across different markets. Globalization has led to greater exposure to international brands, diverse product choices, and new consumption trends, influencing consumers' attitudes and expectations. The research analyzes the shift from traditional, local consumption habits to more globalized buying behavior, highlighting factors such as cultural assimilation, technology adoption, and the rise of digital marketing. The study also addresses challenges faced by businesses in adapting to these changes and the implications for marketing strategies in a global economy. Overall, this research provides insights into the dynamic relationship between globalization and consumer behavior, offering valuable perspectives for marketers, policymakers, and scholars.



A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON PURCHASING THE FMCG GOODS IN CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector plays a pivotal role in the daily lives of consumers, especially in urban markets like Chennai. This study explores the various factors influencing customer satisfaction during the purchase of FMCG products in the city. The research aims to understand consumer behaviour, preferences, and perceptions regarding product quality, pricing, brand loyalty, and service experience. Data was collected through structured questionnaires from a diverse demographic sample in Chennai. Statistical tools were used to analyse the responses and identify key satisfaction drivers. Findings reveal that product quality and availability are the most significant contributors to satisfaction, followed closely by price and promotional offers. Brand trust also emerged as a strong influence in repeat purchases. The study further highlights the impact of modern retail formats and digital platforms on shopping experiences. Insights from this research can assist FMCG companies in tailoring their strategies to meet urban consumer needs. The study also identifies gaps in service delivery and areas for improvement. Recommendations are provided to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge in consumer behaviour studies specific to the FMCG industry in metropolitan settings. The results underscore the dynamic nature of consumer expectations in a competitive market.

Keywords: *Fast-Moving Consumer Goods, FMCG Sector, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Behaviour, Urban Market*



A Study on Brand Authenticity in Consumer Purchase Intentions in Amul

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of brand authenticity in shaping consumer purchase intentions, using Amul as a focal brand. In today's competitive marketplace, consumers increasingly seek brands that are perceived as genuine, trustworthy, and value-driven. Amul, a leading Indian dairy cooperative, has established a strong brand identity rooted in quality, tradition, and social responsibility. This research aims to analyze how the perceived authenticity of Amul influences consumer trust, emotional connection, and ultimately, their intention to purchase. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a diverse sample of consumers. The findings suggest a significant positive relationship between brand authenticity and purchase intention, highlighting the importance of maintaining consistent brand values and transparent communication. This study contributes to existing literature by emphasizing the strategic value of authenticity in brand management and offers insights for marketers seeking to strengthen consumer-brand relationships in the FMCG sector.



CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MARKETING PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON PATIENT SATISFACTION IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) has emerged as a critical strategy in healthcare, shifting the focus from episodic treatment to long-term patient engagement. This study examines how CRM practices—such as personalized communication, empathetic staff interactions, and feedback systems—influence patient satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. A survey of 150 patients across selected hospitals in Chennai was conducted, and data were analyzed using percentage distributions. Findings reveal high overall satisfaction (80% rated care 8–10) but identify operational challenges like waiting times (45%) and inconsistent communication (35%). Only 38% of respondents felt personally recognized by staff, highlighting a gap in relational care. Recommendations include enhancing multi-channel communication, reducing delays through queue-management systems, and training staff in empathetic service delivery. Implementing robust CRM frameworks can transform healthcare experiences, building trust and fostering sustainable provider-patient relationships.



THE RISE OF AI INFLUENCERS: REDEFINING TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of influencer marketing has entered a transformative phase with the emergence of AI-generated influencers- digital personas designed to replicate human interaction and emotion. This research investigates how AI influencers are reshaping consumer trust, engagement levels, and purchase intentions in comparison to human influencers. Drawing on secondary data from academic studies, marketing reports, and consumer perception surveys, the study explores psychological responses, credibility concerns, and strategic implications in digital marketing. The conceptual and descriptive analysis reveals that while AI influencers offer novelty and consistency, human influencers continue to outperform them in emotional engagement and trustworthiness. The findings provide valuable insights for marketers aiming to balance innovation with authenticity and offer strategic recommendations for effectively integrating AI personas into brand campaigns without compromising consumer trust.



A STUDY ON HOW COLLEGE STARTUP CAN USE AI FREE ZERO COST DIGITAL MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

In the digital-first society, college startups have a massive potential and a stiff competition in terms of customer reach and brand visibility. The professional marketing can be quite expensive, and most young entrepreneurs do not have sufficient funds. This study examines the strategic benefits based on which free Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can help college startups build, handle, and expand their online presence, without having to pay a single rupee. The paper proposes and reviews the most popular free AI tools, namely Canva Magic Write, ChatGPT, Copy.ai, Looka, and Pictory AI, and explains how they can be used in the process of content creation, brand design, social media marketing, and customer communication. A simulated startup model was created using case-study approach to apply and put these tools to the test of numerous marketing activities. The results indicated considerable savings of time and professional output quality as well as online engagement with zero costs. This study establishes that free AI tools do not only democratize digital marketing among college startups but also increase creativity, speed, and confidence. The paper offers a step-by-step marketing model which students can reproduce and multiply through the use of AI powered platforms alone. The right attitude and digital literacy will enable any college startup to introduce its brand, compete with larger players, and expand online, at zero expense.



Tourism in service marketing: A Strategic Path to Destination Success

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism, as a critical component of the service sector, contributes significantly to economic development, cultural exchange, and global connectivity. Tourism, unlike tangible things, provides intangible experiences that are absorbed at the point of delivery, hence service marketing is critical to its success. This article investigates the role of service marketing in the tourist industry, highlighting the particular characteristics of tourism services and the application of the 7 Ps marketing mix—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process. Furthermore, there is physical evidence. It also covers current trends such as digital marketing, influencer partnerships, and sustainable tourism, as well as major difficulties such as seasonality and competitiveness. The article provides insights and solutions to boost tourism marketing efficacy in a dynamic and highly competitive global market, using case studies and real-world examples..

Keywords: *Tourism, Service Marketing, the 7 Ps of Marketing, intangibility, customer experience, digital tourism, sustainable tourism, tourism promotion, travel services, marketing strategie*



A STUDY ON THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT.

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ABSTRACT

Consumer Relationship Marketing (CRM) is a key component of modern marketing that emphasizes building long-term relationships with customers rather than focusing solely on transactional exchanges. This research paper examines how CRM strategies—such as loyalty programs, personalized communication, and after-sales service—enhance customer satisfaction, trust, retention, and loyalty. The study analyzes CRM practices in [mention industry or area, e.g., retail/FMCG/e-commerce in Chennai], using both qualitative and quantitative data from consumers and marketing professionals. The findings suggest that effective CRM significantly improves customer retention, increases lifetime value, and provides a competitive advantage to businesses.



Conceptual Paper on the Green Promises and Traveler Choices: Analyzing how Sri Lankan Hospitality Brands Utilize Green Promises to Attract Post – Pandemic Tourists with Special Referral to Badulla District

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ABSTRACT

One of the most trending developments within the tourism industry is the focus on green promises which refers to strategic assurances given by any hospitality brand to minimize its environmental impact and lead to sustainable tourism trend. In the case of developing countries such as Sri Lanka where tourism is a major source of the GDP and employment, being aligned with green tourism can transform the tourism industry after COVID-19 and support the process of greening the operations as well. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the influence of green promises in determining post-pandemic tourist booking habits in Badulla district. Rooted in the positivist philosophy, a deductive approach will be employed to test hypotheses developed from established theories and a quantitative research strategy will be used employing a structured questionnaire. This study will collect data from 384 domestic and international tourists who will be selected through the convenience sampling method. Findings of the study will be highly academically significant as it increments the literature of green marketing in the context of developing countries and especially South Asia. Practically, the findings matter more particularly to tourism operators in emerging destinations whose potential of eco-tourism is increasing. The research also sustains the wider Sri Lankan policy of creating a more robust and sustainable tourism sector in the post-pandemic world.

Keywords: Green promises, green marketing, tourist booking decision, sustainable tourism, eco-certification, post-COVID travel, Sri Lanka, Badulla District



A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF AI IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

The research examines how Artificial Intelligence (AI) functions as a strategic component in social media marketing approaches. Digital platforms have transformed into powerful marketing ecosystems because AI tools including chatbots and predictive analytics and sentiment analysis and personalized content systems now serve essential roles in processing large datasets and enhancing user engagement. The study ascertains how applications of artificial intelligence affect consumer interactions, satisfaction levels, and the success rates of marketing campaigns. Based on data from 134 respondents, the study employed correlation analysis with SPSS to assess the relationships between AI usage and perceived utility, convenience of use, and marketing outcomes. The research demonstrates that AI usage does not strongly correlate with key performance metrics but requires proper implementation and usability and AI literacy for marketing success. The research demonstrates that AI offers beneficial opportunities to digital marketers yet its achievement depends on proper implementation and training and ethical deployment.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Social Media Marketing, Customer Engagement, Predictive Analytics, Chatbots*



The Effects of AI-based Personalization on Consumer Trust, Consumer Satisfaction, and Purchase Intention of E-Commerce Platforms.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of AI-based personalization on consumer trust, consumer satisfaction, and purchase intention in e-commerce platforms, with a specific focus on the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka. AI-based personalization refers to technologies such as personalized product recommendations, dynamic content delivery, and adaptive user interfaces that tailor shopping experiences based on consumer behavior and preferences. As the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies grows in developing economies, understanding how consumers perceive and respond to these digital interventions becomes crucial for sustainable e-commerce growth. This research is anchored in a combined theoretical framework incorporating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT). TAM posits that perceived usefulness and ease of use are key predictors of technology acceptance and trust. Meanwhile, ECT explains how satisfaction is influenced by the confirmation or disconfirmation of prior expectations. Together, these frameworks offer a comprehensive understanding of the consumer trust and consumer satisfaction mechanisms that shape consumer purchase intentions in AI-enhanced environments. A simple random sampling method was used, and the questionnaire was distributed via online platforms such as email and social media among online shoppers in the Jaffna District. Out of 380 responses collected, 347 were validated for analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS 25 software to examine the effects of the key constructs. The results revealed that AI-based personalization significantly and positively affects both consumer trust ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and consumer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, consumer trust ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$) and consumer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$) both demonstrated strong, direct effects on purchase intention. These findings support the hypotheses that consumer trust and consumer satisfaction serve as mediators in the relationship between AI-based personalization and consumer purchase intent outcomes. However, the use of simple random sampling and self-reported data may introduce potential biases, limiting the generalizability of the findings beyond the Jaffna District context. This research contributes to existing literature by contextualizing AI-based personalization within a regional Sri Lankan setting. While studies on AI in marketing are growing globally, limited empirical evidence is available for underrepresented areas like Jaffna. Previous Sri Lankan studies have shown that consumer digital adoption is influenced by perceived usefulness and reliability, aligning well with the TAM-based interpretation of this study's findings. The insights gained from this research emphasize the importance of customer-centric AI design in enhancing user experience, fostering brand trust, and encouraging purchase behavior. The study has practical implications for digital marketers and e-commerce platform developers aiming to increase user engagement in regional markets. Ethical implementation of AI personalization, ensuring transparency, user consent, and data privacy combined with a focus on perceived value and satisfaction can lead to greater consumer loyalty and purchasing outcomes in emerging economies. Future research may consider longitudinal approaches and comparative studies across other districts or cultural contexts within Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *AI-based personalization, Consumer satisfaction, Consumer trust, E-commerce, Purchase intention.*



The Role of Religious Values and Ethical Consumption in Sustainable Buying Behavior: A Cultural Analysis in Matale District, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

With respect to rising environmental and ethical concerns, cultural sustainable purchasing behavior drivers have come under more spotlight for researchers as well as practitioners. This study investigates the role of religious values and ethical consumption attitude in shaping sustainable purchasing behavior in the Matale District of Sri Lanka—a multicultural area dominated by Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The theoretical basis is in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory, which propose that consumer behavior is driven by internalized values as well as moral responsibility. Literature on IA suggests heightened attention towards the convergence of religiosity, consumer ethics, and sustainability across emerging markets. Most of the earlier work, however, has been done in the Western setting with minimal learning from South Asian cultural settings. This fills the gap by presenting a culture-specific, localized examination. A quantitative research method was employed using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data. The population was adult consumers in the Matale District, and 281 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling for attaining religious diversity. Measured variables are religious commitment, ethical consumption tendencies, and sustainable purchasing behaviors with 5-point Likert scales. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis via SPSS in order to determine hypothesized relationships on the conceptual framework. Findings showed religious values and sustainable consumption behavior to be positively related, with ethical consumption partially mediating this relationship. Cultural sensitivity measures such as community influence and religious doctrine stressing modesty and stewardship were noted to drive behavior substantially. This research contributes to our understanding of how religion and culture affect ethical and sustainable consumption, and offers valuable information for policy-makers, marketers, and sustainability campaigners operating in multicultural environments.

Keywords: *Consumer Culture, Ethical Consumption, Matale District, Religious Values, Sri Lanka, Sustainable Purchasing Behavior.*



A SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT MODEL FOR ECONOMICALLY CHALLENGED STUDENTS THROUGH AN INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATIVE NEXUS CITY (IEINC)

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ABSTRACT

University students in developing regions, particularly in Northern Sri Lanka, face pressing socioeconomic challenges that threaten their academic success and overall well-being. Many students at the University of Jaffna, particularly those from rural and low-income families, are compelled to take up part-time or full-time jobs that are unrelated to their field of study in order to meet basic living and educational expenses. This misalignment between work and academics often results in poor class attendance, elevated stress, academic delays, and an increased risk of dropout. These issues underscore a critical gap in institutional mechanisms designed to support students in achieving both financial security and academic continuity. To address this challenge, this study proposes a sustainable, student-centered solution through the establishment of a university-affiliated, employment-oriented mall, Inclusive Entrepreneurial Innovative Nexus City (IEINC) adjacent to the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna. This multi-functional facility is designed to offer skill-based, flexible part-time job opportunities that are aligned with students' academic programs and career aspirations. The mall includes an HR-matching unit, student-led entrepreneurial incubators, departmental micro-enterprises, wellness zones, and retail outlets for local producers. Each floor of the city is functionally designed to serve specific purposes, ranging from student businesses and consulting centers to therapeutic services and inclusive infrastructure for vulnerable groups, such as children with autism. The study adopts a mixed approach to understand the need for this IEINC; field survey, focus group discussions, and interviews were conducted with 60 undergraduates, 25 entrepreneurs, and 20 experts, including educators, HR professionals, and social workers. This model for sustainable marketing for entrepreneurs' brands from business sectors. Insights from this analysis help identify targeted interventions, including flexible class scheduling, mentoring, and financial counseling, to further support students in need. Supervised by HR professionals and faculty mentors, the mall aims to create a harmonious balance between academic responsibilities and financial independence. Additionally, it promotes entrepreneurship, supports women-headed families, encourages local economic development, and strengthens university-community collaboration. The proposed model is both scalable and replicable, offering a practical framework that can be implemented in other universities facing similar socioeconomic conditions. This inclusive model empowers students to "earn while they learn" while informing higher education policies and contributing to broader socioeconomic development goals.

Keywords: Autism, Entrepreneurial, Incubators, Northern, Socioeconomic, Student employment



The Impact of Eco-Friendly Practices of Manufacturing on Consumer Loyalty with A Special Reference to Waves Footwear.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, eco-friendly practices have gained increasing attention in global marketing strategies due to growing consumer awareness of environmental sustainability. In Sri Lanka, companies are gradually integrating sustainable initiatives to align with international trends and evolving consumer preferences. Waves Footwear, a prominent brand in Sri Lanka's footwear industry, has adopted several green practices, including the use of recycled PET bottles for yarn production, energy-efficient manufacturing, and waste minimization processes. This study investigates the impact of such eco-friendly manufacturing practices on consumer loyalty toward Waves Footwear. It aims to evaluate which sustainability initiatives most significantly influence customer retention and brand commitment. A quantitative research method was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 252 respondents. Convenience sampling was used to collect data, and responses were analyzed using Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Testing, Correlation Analysis, and Multiple Regression Analysis via SPSS software. The findings revealed that energy-efficient manufacturing and PET recycling had the most significant positive impact on consumer loyalty. Recycled materials and product recycling programs showed moderate influence, while waste minimization efforts were not statistically significant. The results emphasize the importance of visible and consumer-facing sustainability practices in building brand loyalty. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on green marketing and provides practical insights for footwear companies and policymakers in Sri Lanka seeking to promote environmentally responsible consumption through targeted eco-friendly strategies.

Key words: Eco-friendly Practices, Consumer Loyalty, Green Marketing, Waves Footwear



Navigating Digital Deception: The Mediating Power of Brand Experience in Review Driven E-Commerce

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effects of fake reviews, a common tactic on the online shopping behavior of consumers, with special emphasis on the mediating role of brand experience with reference to beauty and skincare industry in Sri Lanka. The study used a quantitative design, surveying 250 participants from the western province. Structured questionnaires validated based on a pilot test with 30 participants were used to collect data, enhancing clarity and construct validity. To minimize selection bias, snowball sampling technique was employed. Internal reliability was also achieved through Cronbach's alpha values of more than 0.8 for all variables, and factor analysis ($KMO > 0.6$) provided construct adequacy. Normality testing yielded p-values > 0.05 , confirming appropriateness of data for parametric analysis. The findings reveal that linguistic hybridity and sociocultural factors increase Sri Lankan consumers' susceptibility to fake reviews. Brand experience was discovered to play a significant mediating role as a buffer against the detrimental influence of deceptive reviews. These findings underscore the need for e-commerce platforms to develop culturally sensitive trust building mechanisms and for brands to foster authentic customer engagement. The study contributes to the increasing body of research on consumer behavior in emerging markets and highlights the nexus between digital marketing and sociocultural dynamics in driving trust in e-commerce.

Key Words: Fake Reviews, Dishonest Advertisement, Online Shopping, E-commerce Trust, Consumer Behavior, Sri Lanka



Concept paper on Impact of Sensory Branding on Brand Loyalty: Investigating the Moderating Effect of Brand Resonance in Franchised Fast Food Outlets in Western Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, franchised fast food chains are turning to sensory branding as a strategic tool to cultivate consumer loyalty. Sensory branding, which engages consumers through sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, has been widely recognized for its ability to shape consumer perceptions and experiences. However, the literature reveals a gap in understanding the moderating role of brand resonance how deeply a consumer connects with a brand within the relationship between sensory branding and brand loyalty. This concept paper proposes a theoretical framework to examine how sensory branding experiences influence brand loyalty, with brand resonance serving as a potential moderator. Drawing on existing literature in branding, and sensory marketing, the paper outlines a conceptual model that can be empirically tested in future studies. The context of franchised fast food outlets in Sri Lanka's Western Province is proposed as a case setting due to the sector's rapid growth and brand-driven competition. The findings from such a study could provide valuable insights for academics and practitioners, offering guidance for developing culturally relevant and emotionally resonant branding strategies across similar consumer markets.

Keywords: Sensory Branding Experience, Brand Resonance, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Behavior, Fast Food Chains, Conceptual Framework, Marketing Strategy.



Simplifying Choices: How Brand Loyalty Guides Gen Z Cosmetic Buyers

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ABSTRACT

Choice overload is a significant challenge for Gen Z consumers in Sri Lanka when purchasing cosmetic products in the dynamic online shopping environment, often leading to decision paralysis and dissatisfaction. This study examines how patronage behavior including brand loyalty, buying habits, trust in vendors, and referrals mitigates the negative effects of choice overload on decision-making. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, using structured online surveys with 384 Gen Z respondents selected via convenience sampling. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using SPSS, including regression analysis and Sobel tests to assess variable relationships. The questionnaire was validated through a pilot survey, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7 for all variables. Results revealed that choice overload negatively impacts decision-making, while patronage behavior simplifies choices and boosts consumer confidence. The Sobel test confirmed that patronage partially mediates this relationship. Addressing a gap in literature on emerging markets like Sri Lanka, this study offers actionable insights for marketers to optimize e-commerce platforms, product assortments, and loyalty strategies for Gen Z. By leveraging patronage, brands can enhance decision satisfaction, reduce cart abandonment, and foster long-term consumer relationships in the competitive online cosmetics industry.

Keywords: *Choice overload, Patronage behavior, Gen Z consumers, online shopping, Cosmetic products, Brand loyalty, Decision-making, Consumer behavior.*



The Impact of Data Privacy Concerns on Consumer Attitudes Towards YouTube Among Generation Z in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines how the concern of data privacy affects the attitudes of the Sri Lankan generation Z towards YouTube. Whilst the generation Z are digital natives, they highly engaged in online platforms, especially YouTube which also gathers important personal data to deliver personalized content and advertisements. Nevertheless, the increasing concerns over safety issues, data mis usage, and weak control over personal data provokes questions of how these circumstances affect changes in user attitudes and behaviours. The study intends to focus on how the different aspects of data privacy influence the consumer perceptions of YouTube with respect to consumer trust, the engagement with content, and the readiness to disclose personal information. Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Privacy Calculus Theory, and the Social Exchange Theory, this study presents a conceptual framework with three dimensions such as the privacy concerns, privacy risks, and privacy control. The research design will be descriptive and cross-sectional, and data will be collected through an online survey among the Sri Lankan generation Z. The findings will add to the corpus of knowledge with a specific literature gap related to the Sri Lankan context and will provide practical intelligence that could be utilized by the marketers, policy makers and the developers of digital platforms. The results of the study may inform the development of more privacy-friendly advertising practices and regulatory contingencies that resonate with the preferences and habits of the newer generation of digital citizens.

Keywords: *Data Privacy, Generation Z, YouTube, Consumer Attitudes, Sri Lanka*



The Influence of Personalization Technology on Customer Satisfaction in Online Fashion Retail

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the impact of personalization technology on customer satisfaction in online fashion retail. As e-commerce continues to expand, technologies such as AI-driven product recommendations, augmented reality (AR) virtual trials, dynamic pricing , algorithm and behaviorally targeted promotions have become important for enhancing the user experience. Although these features are widely used, less is known about how exactly they affect customer satisfaction. This study fills this knowledge gap by examining the impact of personalized technology AI recommendations, augmented reality fitting tools, dynamic pricing and customized discounts on critical areas such as perceived convenience, emotional connection, and post purchase loyalty. Data will be collected quantitatively from 250 online fashion customers through structured surveys, and regression analysis will be used to examine the results. The findings will provide businesses with practical advice on how to improve their digital strategies, thereby increasing customer retention and providing a competitive advantage in the expanding online fashion industry. Frome theoretical perspective the study contribute to the evolving body of knowledge about technology mediated customer experiences in online fashion retails platform. This study aims to bridge the gap between technological innovation and consumer psychology in the rapidly evolving world of online fashion retail industry.

Keywords: *Customer satisfaction, e-commerce, personalization technology, digital marketing, Online Fashion Retail , Consumer Behavior*



The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Generation Z's Purchase Intentions: A Study in Jaffna

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the impact caused by influencer marketing to purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, is investigated. The study focuses on the key influencer characteristics like credibility, consumer similarity, and message quality, and their effect on customer behavior. Quantitative research approach was employed and the data were gathered through structured questionnaires from 100 Gen Z respondents. Reliability analysis, Normality test, Multicollinearity test, Regression analysis and descriptive statistics were used in the research to examine the interaction between influencer characteristics and buying intentions. The research indicates that authenticity and trust are strong predictors of buying behaviors while attractiveness and followership are comparatively weaker predictors. The research suggests that brands appealing to Gen Z must be more concerned with working with influencers creating value-added, authentic content over sheer measures of popularity. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on influencer marketing dynamics in the Sri Lankan context and provides managerial implications to organizations that aim to engage young consumers.

Keyword: *Consumer behavior, Generation Z, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intentions, social media*



Conceptual paper on the Relationships among Green Supply Chain Integration, Green Innovation and Green Performance

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ABSTRACT

The preservation of the natural environment has been an important issue for the last few decades. Nearly every industry has embraced environmental protection practices. Nowadays, organizations pay more attention on the green supply chain management practices to increase their positive environmental impact and mitigate their negative environmental impact. In this context, this review aims to examine the relationships among green supply chain integration, green innovation, and green performance. In order to achieve the review objectives, a systematic review of literature was conducted by using the archival method as recommended by Tranfield and others (2003). This review process includes classifying the literature from sources such as journal articles, edited works, and other research papers relating to the review topic, analyzing, reflecting, and reporting the findings of the review. This review has used the archival method for data collection, because it enabled the researcher to structure research and build a reliable knowledge base on existing literature on and related to green supply chain integration, green innovation, and green performance, and also applied reflections. Findings of the review suggest that there is a positive relationship between green supply chain integration and green performance. Similarly, green supply chain integration leads to green innovation. Moreover, findings of the review suggest that green innovation has a positive relationship with green performance. Finally, findings of the review suggest that green innovation mediates the relationship between green supply chain integration and green performance. Based on the above findings, this review proposes a mediation model that is useful to test and understand the relationships among the green supply chain integration, green innovation, and green performance empirically in the future.

Keywords: *green supply chain integration, green innovation, green performance, sustainability*

