Customer Engagement in the Digital Era: A Case Study of Instagram

[1] Dr. Nagaveni CM and [2] Mrs. Mahalakshmi BA
[1]Faculty Member, Department Of PG studies and Research in Commerce Kuvempu University Shankaragatta
[2]Faculty Member, Department Of PG studies and Research in Commerce Kuvempu University Shankaragatta

Introduction

In today's digital era, customer engagement is not just a marketing strategy; it's a critical pillar of business success. Companies strive to build meaningful relationships with customers by fostering interaction, enhancing user experience, and driving loyalty. With the exponential rise of social media, platforms such as Instagram have become integral channels for these efforts. Instagram, with over 2 billion monthly active users globally, offers businesses a visually rich and interactive environment to connect, engage, and retain customer. In today's digital age, social media platforms have become indispensable tools for businesses seeking to connect with their audience. Among these platforms, Instagram stands out as one of the most influential and visually-driven channels for fostering customer engagement. With over two billion monthly active users, Instagram offers brands an opportunity to reach a global audience in a dynamic and interactive manner. Customer engagement on social media refers to the process of interacting with customers through likes, comments, shares, direct messages and other forms of digital communication that foster loyalty and strengthens the brand-customer relationship. Instagram, launched in 2010, is primarily a photo and video sharing platform that has evolved into a powerful marketing tool. It allows businesses to showcase their products and services creatively while telling their brand story through visual content. Features such as Stories, Reels, IGTV, and Live Sessions provide businesses with multiple avenues to connect with users in real-time and generate meaningful engagement. Instagram emphasis on visuals makes it especially appealing to brands in industries such as fashion, food, beauty, travel, and fitness, where a esthetics play a crucial role in consumer decision-making.

Need of the study

Customer engagement in the digital Era, particularly Instagram, is vital for building relationships, boosting brand awareness, and driving conversions. It allows businesses to connect directly with their audience, fostering trust and loyalty, which ultimately leads to increased sales and a stronger brand reputation. "Engaging customers through social media platforms, particularly Instagram, is essential for building brand loyalty, fostering real-time interaction, and enhancing visibility among target audiences." Customer engagement through digital has become a vital strategy for businesses in the digital age. Instagram, being one of the most popular platforms, plays a significant role in connecting brands with their customers. With over a billion monthly active users, Instagram offers a wide reach to diverse audiences. Customers today expect more than just products; they seek meaningful interactions and relationships with brands. Engaging customers on Instagram helps build brand loyalty and trust.

Statement of problem

In the digital era, businesses are increasingly relying on social media platforms to connect with their target audiences. However, despite its widespread popularity, many brands face challenges in effectively engaging customers through Instagram. The problem lies not in the

availability of the platform, but in how businesses utilize it to foster meaningful interactions and loyalty. Customer expectations on Instagram have evolved. They expect quick responses, personalized content and value-driven interactions. Businesses that do not adapt to these expectations risk losing engagement to more proactive competitors. While influencers and user-generated content can significantly enhance engagement, not all brands know how to effectively leverage these resources.

Review of literature

O Adegbola,S Gearhart (2018), Using Instagram to engage with (potential) consumers: A study of Forbes Most Valuable Brands' use of Instagram : This article represents social media platforms have revolutionized the way brands engage with their audiences, with Instagram emerging as a leading channel due to its visual-centric design and widespread popularity. With over 800 million monthly users, Instagram offers unique opportunities for businesses to build brand awareness and foster customer relationships. Prior research has emphasized the importance of visual content in driving user interaction on social platforms. Guided by interactivity theory, which underscores the role of two-way communication in enhancing user engagement, recent studies have begun to explore how specific types of content influence consumer responses. The current study builds on this body of literature by examining the posting behavior of top global brands on Instagram, aiming to identify content strategies that yield the most engagement.

H Leksono, S Prasetyaningtyas (2021): Influence social media marketing activity on repurchase intention in the E-Commerce industry: The study aims to explore the impact of Social media activity marketing on e-commerce in Indonesia, with a focus on various factors that contribute to consumer behavior and brand dynamics. Social media has become a vital tool for e-commerce businesses, influencing brand equity, customer relationships, and repurchase intentions. Research indicates that active engagement on social media can strengthen brand recognition and customer loyalty. Furthermore, social media marketing fosters deeper customer relationships, making them feel more connected to brands, which increases customer retention. Studies show that positive customer relationships, cultivated through online interactions, lead to higher repurchase intentions. Additionally, strong brand equity influences customers' willingness to repurchase from e-commerce platforms. Social media platforms also allow brands to engage in personalized marketing, which strengthens emotional bonds with consumers, resulting in increased customer loyalty and long- term retention.

FP Simbolon (2022): Social media marketing through Instagram and repurchase intention: The mediating role of customer engagement: This article represents social media has emerged as a powerful tool in marketing, allowing companies to reach large audiences efficiently and build meaningful customer relationships. Among the various platforms, Instagram stands out due to its visual nature, which aligns well with brands looking to engage customers through rich content. Social media marketing, particularly through Instagram, is widely recognized for its ability to influence consumer behavior, including their intention to repurchase. In the context of the coffee industry, where customer loyalty is crucial, brands like Kopi Chuseyo are leveraging Instagram to enhance customer engagement, a key factor that can mediate the relationship between social media marketing and repurchase intention.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the brand awareness by reaching a wider audience on Instagram.
2. To study strong relationships with customers through regular interaction and engagement.
3. To promote products and boost sales using Instagram.

Research Methodology

A suitable research methodology for studying customer engagement on Instagram involves a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative data collection like surveys and qualitative data collection like interviews or focus groups. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of customer interaction with Instagram content, influencer marketing, and the overall brand experience.

Data Collection

The focus of the research is to study the effect of social media use by consumers towards brand choice. Data for study were collected through the primary and secondary sources.

1. Primary Data: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 103 participants who actively use instagram. The interviews will focus on understanding the factors that influence their brand preferences and how Instagram plays a role in their decision-making processes.

2. Secondary Data: Secondary data for the research has been collected from various books, thesis, dissertation, and journals, including e-journals.

Scope of Study

It focuses on understanding and improving customer engagement through social media, particularly on Instagram. It investigate show different content types, posting frequencies and engagement strategies impact user interactions, ultimately aiming to enhance brand visibility, build relationships, and drive customer loyalty. These study analyzed the customer engagement through social media are in Shivamogga district.

Limitations of study

Instagram's visual focus can be challenging, especially for brands selling products or services where text and detailed information are crucial. Moreover, building a large, engaged audience takes time and effort, and platform changes can impact organic reach. Negative feedback, while valuable, can be amplified publicly and damage reputation if not managed effectively. Limited sources available on this study have limited respondents and also these study restricted in Shivamogga district.

Result and discussion

The purpose of conducting the survey is to obtain the operations of the customers. For of questionnaire has been prepared and administered 100 respondents. This section of the survey reveals the demographic of the customers. It includes their age, gender and the employment status. The demographic were taken into consideration to understand the characteristics of the sample under the study so as to derive a suitable relationship in their buying behavior.

Table: no 1 Classification of respondents on the basis of gender factor

	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	48	47
	Female	55	53
	Total	103	100

The table 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of a total of 103 respondents, 48(47%) aremaleand55 (53%) are female. This indicates a fairly balanced sample, with a slight majority of female respondents. The data helps ensure gender representation in the analysis.

Table: no 2 Classification of respondents on the basis of age group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 years	15	15
Between 20-30 years	75	73
Between 30-50 years	11	10
Above 50 years	2	2
Total	103	100

The table 02 shows that the majority of respondents (73%) fall within the 20–30 years age group, indicating that this age group is the most active or engaged demographic. Respondents below 20 years account for 15%, while those aged 30–50 years make up 10%. Only 2% of the respondents are above 50 years, suggesting minimal participation from older age groups. This highlights a predominantly young respondent base.

Table: no 3 Classification of respondents on the basis of Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Below PUC	21	20
Graduate	38	39
Post-Graduate	40	37
others	4	4
Total	103	100

The table no 3 reveals that the majority of respondents have higher education qualifications, with 39% being graduates and 37% post-graduates. Respondents below PUC level make up 20%, while only 4% fall under the "others" category. This indicates that the survey primarily attracted individuals with graduate or post-graduate education backgrounds.

Table no 04 Classification of respondents using frequency of online shopping

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	55	5
Weekly	29	28
Monthly	19	18
Total	103	100

The table no 4 shows that more than half of the respondents (54%) engage in online shopping daily, indicating a high dependency on digital platforms for purchases. About 28%

shop weekly and 18% do so monthly. This reflects a strong trend toward frequent online shopping among the respondents. The data suggests that e-commerce plays a significant role in their purchasing behavior. Marketers can capitalize on this trend by targeting daily and weekly online shoppers with timely promotions and offers.

Table no 05 Classification of respondents on the basis of content usually engage with on Instagram

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Photos	6	7
Stories	7	6
Reels	52	50
Brand Post	38	37
Total	103	100

The table 05 shows that 50% of respondents primarily engage with Reels on Instagram, making it the most popular content format. Brand posts come next with 37%, indicating significant interest in promotional or informational content. Only 7% engage with photos and 6% with stories, suggesting that static and short-lived content is less preferred. This highlights a shift toward dynamic and video-based engagement Marketers.

Table no 06 Classification of respondents to assess Instagram contributes to customer engagement and awareness by reaching a wider audience

SI No	Statements		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Total
1	I am more likely to trust a brand I follow on Instagram	Respondents	40	30	20	7	6	103
		Percentage	39	29	19	7	6	100
2	Posts with high quality visuals on Instagram catch my attention	Respondents	60	20	19	3	1	103
		Percentage	59	19	18	3	1	100
3	Instagram stories and reels help me learn More about a brand.	Respondents	51	28	14	4	6	103
		Percentage	50	27	13	4	6	100
4	I prefer to interact with businesses that respond to comments/messages	Respondents	53	23	16	8	3	103
		Percentage	51	22	16	8	3	100

| 5 | Instagram contents or giveaways encourage me to engage more | Respondents | 57 | 27 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 103 |
| | | Percentage | 55 | 26 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 100 |

The table no 06 indicates that Reels are the most engaging content type on Instagram, with 50% of respondents interacting with them, showing a clear preference for short-form video content. Brand posts follow at 37%, highlighting users' interest in promotional or informative content from businesses. Only 7% engage with photos and 6% with stories, suggesting that traditional and temporary content types are less appealing. This trend reflects a growing demand for dynamic and entertaining content. Marketers should prioritize Reels and brand posts to maximize reach and engagement on Instagram.

Table no 07 Classification the regular interaction and engagement help strong customer relationships

SI No	Statement		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Total
1	Brand that use Instagram to educate Me gain my trust	Respondent	43	21	25	8	6	103
		Percentage	42	20	24	8	6	100
2	Regular interaction increase my trust in a brand's intensions	Respondents	33	27	31	7	5	103
		Percentage	32	26	30	7	5	100
3	Regular engagement improves my perception of the brand's credibility	Respondents	20	17	49	10	7	103
		Percentage	19	16	48	10	7	100
4	Brand that share their values regularly build my trust	Respondents	55	20	15	9	4	103
		Percentage	54	19	14	9	4	100
5	Instagram polls help me feel involved in The brand's decisions	Respondents	19	25	45	8	6	103
		Percentage	18	24	44	8	6	100

The table 07 highlights how regular interaction and engagement on Instagram contribute to building strong customer relationships. A majority (54%) of respondents trust brands that regularly share their values. Similarly, 48% say regular engagement improves their perception of a brand's credibility, and 44% feel Instagram polls make them feel involved in brand decisions. Additionally, 42% gain trust when brands use

Instagram

Findings of the study

1. In terms of gender participation, out of 103 respondents the 53% female, 47% male that indicating more women participated in the survey

2. In terms of Age group, out of 103 respondents are Majority 73% of respondentsareagedbetween20–30years suggesting young adult are the primary respondents.

3. In terms of Education Background, out of 103 respondents most respondents are graduates 39% and fewer respondents are others.

4. In terms of basis of content usually engage on instagram, out of 103 respondents the 50% are use in Reels and 37% are use in brand posts are the most engaging content on Instagram.

5. In terms of, 103 respondents the 59% High-quality visuals strongly capture attention.

6. In terms of 103 respondents branding element to increases trust in marker products is more 37% trust branding based on color schemes and less is 13% of celebrity endorsement

Suggestions

1. Maintain regular interaction (DM replies, story Q&A) to build trust.

2. Focus marketing on the 20–30age groups as the most active demographic.

3. Introduce more affordable products, considering low-income representation.

4. Encourage users to follow by offering follower-exclusive benefits and transparent, authentic content.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that Instagram significantly enhances customer engagement through its visual and interactive features. Users are more likely to connect with brands that post appealing content, utilize stories, reels, and influencer collaborations. The platform's ability to foster two-way communication builds trust and brand loyalty. Respondents frequently engage with product promotions, customer feedback posts, and behind-the- scenes content. Instagram also plays a key role in increasing brand awareness and influencing purchasing decisions. Overall, Instagram proves to be a powerful tool for marketers to drive engagement and build lasting relationships with their audience

Reference

1.Adegbola, O., & Gearhart, S. (2018), Using Instagram to engage with (potential) consumers: A study of Forbes Most Valuable Brands' use of Instagram, Public Relations Review, 44(2), 194–204.

2. Simbolon, F. P. (2022), Social media marketing through Instagram and repurchase intention: The mediating role of customer engagement, International Journal of Marketing Studies, 14(1), 45–58.

3. Widodo, Y. (2018), Marketing communication strategy using Instagram to increase the selling achievement, Journal Ilmu K