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EVOLUTION OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TRENDS AND CONSUMPTION ATTITUDES IN SRI LANKA OVER THE LAST DECADE – A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the consumer behavior in Sri Lanka has undergone a significant shift due to some macro-level disruptions such as the impact of political instability, COVID – 19 pandemic, economic crises and vast digitalization. These modifications have significant implications for marketers, policymakers and broader socio-economic development in emerging economies. Despite the significance of this shift, there is inconsistencies of available knowledge regarding the cultural, socioeconomic, segmental (rural vs. urban) and generational aspects of this consumer behavior trends and attitudes in Sri Lanka. This study contributes to the current body of knowledge by critically analysing the recent trends in consumption patterns of Sri Lankan consumers over the last decade and by presenting a thematic synthesis by integrating cultural shifts, socioeconomic changes and digital transformation. The methodology used in this paper is systematic literature review using a sample of 60 publications published in the period of 2015 – 2025 in this context. The findings illustrate a dynamic consumer landscape, with rural customers remaining to be influenced by price sensitivity, informal markets and traditional beliefs while urban consumers are becoming more involved with digital platforms and global purchasing trends. Moreover, brand loyalty has declined in favour of practical, value-driven purchasing and, though ethical and sustainable consumption is increasing, price and accessibility limitations continue to take prominence. The study concludes with tailored recommendations for businesses, marketers, policymakers, and academics, highlighting the importance of rural-targeted marketing strategies, culturally sensitive communication, enhanced digital infrastructure, and specific initiatives to encourage ethical consumption.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Consumption attitudes, Digital transformation, Online consumerism, Sri Lanka

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1. Introduction

Consumer behavior is the exploration of how individuals and organizations choose which products and services to purchase, consume and discard. It covers the habits and reasons behind the decisions including societal, cultural and psychological aspects (Karmarkar and Yoon, 2016). It also encompasses dynamic

aspects of economical and technological forces too. Sri Lanka has gone through remarkable shifts in the past decade which have made significant impact on the spending patterns of its citizens (Lanka, 2022). Consumer attitudes and behaviors have evolved as a result of a variety of elements including urbanization, rapid advancements in technology, political instability, emergence of digital economy and global crises like the COVID – 19 pandemic (Li et al., 2024). Furthermore, there is an apparent shift in middle–class and young generation consumption tastes and decision–making process due to the extending use of smart phones, capabilities of e–commerce to access international markets, rising awareness of sustainability issues and evolving lifestyles.

In the modern society, traditional consumer behavior models with a strong emphasis on brand loyalty, cost awareness and family influence have been challenged by new forces such as online reviews, social media influencers and sustainability considerations (Reina Paz and Rodríguez Vargas, 2023). At the same time, the division between rural and urban consumer behavior patterns has simultaneously decreased and transformed into new unique patterns. The analysis of these consumer trends becomes necessary because it supports businesses and policymakers in following Sri Lankan consumer needs and expectations.

Despite of this evident shift in Sri Lankan consumer behavior over the past ten years, little is known about the overall trends and the specific factors underlying these changes. Previous literature has usually concentrated on separate aspects such as online shopping habits, post–pandemic spendings and environmental attitudes rather than offering a thorough and critical synthesis of the broader evolution in consumer behavior trends and consumption attitudes across various categories and time frames. Numerous studies show inconsistencies in the systematic analysis of findings which creates knowledge gaps in how different socioeconomic and cultural along with technological factors impact on consumption patterns in Sri Lanka.

The existing research typically focuses on particular issues such as brand loyalty or the adoption of e–commerce without relating these concepts to broader behavioral tendencies (Iqbal et al., 2024). Additionally, there is inadequate of literature that critically examine the ways in which global trends, digital disruption and financial uncertainty to influence on local consumer behavior. Moreover, there is lack of research that examines the rural and semi – urban consumption dynamics, generational differences and impact of cultural evolutions on consumption behavior in Sri Lankan citizens.

This review study seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge by bridging above gaps by critically examining and integrating recent research in the context of Sri Lankan consumer behavior habits and attitudes towards expenditures. Furthermore, this analysis presents a thematic synthesis that correlates consumption trends to cultural shifts, socioeconomic changes and digital transformation. Additionally, the study illustrates a context-sensitive approach that distinguishes between the consumer habits of generations, urban, and rural areas and a critical perspective on the effect of global disruptions (e.g. pandemics and economic crises) on local consumer patterns in Sri Lanka.

Finally, the paper offers numerous valuable insights for various stakeholders including businesses, policymakers and academics. It assists with more accurate market segmentation and focused approaches by providing marketers, merchants and brand strategists with insights into evolving customer expectations. Moreover, this study provides implications for policymakers by highlighting the shifts in consumption that may direct policy measures related to rural market development, digital integration and the promotion of sustainable consumption. Also, it offers a fundamental synthesis for future empirical research, facilitating the development of contextual theories and models on consumer behavior patterns in developing nations.

Objectives of the research

- To critically analyze the consumer behavior trends and consumption attitudes in Sri Lanka over the last decade.
- To assess the pre – 2019 and post – 2019 consumption trends among Sri Lankan consumers.

- To examine emerging consumer behavior patterns in Sri Lanka.
- To assess the contextual consumption patterns in Sri Lankan markets.

2. Literature Review

The study of consumer behavior investigates at decisions that people make when selecting, acquiring, utilizing and disposing of products and services (Rozenkowska, 2023). Theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) and the model of Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) serve as essential instruments for understanding customer purchasing patterns. According to the studies, these concepts focus on traditional decision – making which are based on internal and external factors (Abrahamse, 2019). In contrast, contemporary research admits that customer behaviors remain dynamic and context-driven since they evolve through technological changes and social economic conditions and cultural developments (Galvano, 2021; Alkhafaji, 2024). However, studies suggest that consumption patterns in emerging nations like Sri Lanka, may not necessarily in line with the western – centric theories due to distinct socioeconomic structures, diverse cultures and institutional dynamics (Gunasinghe, 2023). Understanding these diversifications may help academics and practitioners to understand the context more comprehensively and to tailor marketing and product planning to the nuanced preferences of Sri Lankan communities.

Periodic Evolution: Changes over the Decade (2015 – 2025)

Patterns of consumer behavior in Sri Lanka underwent substantial changes from pre– and post- 2019 because of economic, social-cultural and technological developments which became more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic and 2021 economic crisis (N.D.D. Nawarathne and Galdolage, 2022; Sooriyaarachchi and Jayawardena, 2023). This analysis critically examines on pre- 2019 trends vs. post-2019 trends focusing on key dimensions such as environmental awareness, online purchasing behavior and cultural impacts in consumer decision-making.

Consumption trends: Pre-2019 vs. post-2019

Between the time frame of 2015 – 2019 Sri Lanka economic growth was relatively more stable, which led to increasing disposable income among the people (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2018). Prior to 2019, the consumer patterns among people were more conventional, with dominant in – store shopping. Many consumers relied on offline markets, demonstrating brand loyalty, which was often influenced by cultural and household norms (Siriwardana, Pathirana and Madugalle, 2023). For instance, dietary habits matched cultural norms, with clients preferring traditional food despite nutritional guidelines deeming for healthier alternatives (Gokani, 2024). Conversely, the post-2019 period emphasizes a marked change towards digital and online purchase behaviors, accelerated by major advancements in information and communication technology combined with increased internet accessibility in Sri Lanka (Nandasena and Wickramasinghe, 2024). Furthermore, this online shopping behavior in Sri Lankan consumers took an unmatched surge driven by lockdowns and mobility restrictions during the period of COVID – 19 (De Silva, 2020). Furthermore, as results of these situations, e-commerce has gained increased consumer awareness because of social media marketing that appeals to younger audiences who use the Internet for product recommendations. Studies suggest that this trend has significantly emerged as customers are more convinced to online platforms for their purchasing demands (Karunasingha and Abeysekera, 2022). Economic upheavals present emotional drivers which have substantial effects on how people make their decisions. During post-2019 times consumers abandoned traditional retail because they increasingly embraced e-commerce which gained momentum when COVID-19 lockdowns forced everyone online (Laato *et al.*, 2020).

During the period after 2019, the consumers also started to consider sustainability in their purchase decisions which increased the environmental consciousness. Research emphasizes that social influence and environmental knowledge significantly impact on the purchase intentions of Sri Lankan young generation

(Thilinka and Gunawardana, 2021). Meanwhile, the demand for organic food and green technologies raised in parallel with extending ecological awareness, shifting from niche markets to more broader acceptance (Priyanath and Dangalla, 2022). According to previous research, green purchasing was considered as a luxury or niche activity before 2019, however at present customers are willing to spend more on green products, indicating a dramatic change in the way people view sustainability (Ranganath and Nishadi, 2022).

According to recent studies, the economic crisis of 2021 made an immense effect on consumer purchase behavior and resulted in cases of panic buying (Kothalawala et al., 2024). Research shows that during this crisis period, value – based consumption, local brands, deposits, purchasing essential products became increasingly prevalent among consumers (Sooriyaarachchi & Jayawardena, 2023). Furthermore, studies suggest that Sri Lankan households, particularly the low – income families had to cut the educational expenses such as tuition fees in this period of time which may result adversely to the overall literacy of the nation in future (Nethmini, H.R.M.G.C. and Thilakarathna, 2022). Additionally, the data has shown an increase in impulsive buying, especially concerning necessities like food and sanitary products (Kothalawala and Umayangana, 2024b).

Furthermore, social dynamics prior to 2019 often demonstrated a community -centred approach to purchasing, with family influencing playing a major role in decisions. Studies have elaborated how cultural norms and collaborative values affected consumer behavior, especially in sectors such as tourism (Herarh et al., 2024). However, it is evident that following 2019, there has been a shift in consumer behavior towards individualism, with more focus on individual experiences and personal tastes rather than just following family or societal standards (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Since 2019 Sri Lankan consumers have shifted their buying patterns from basic traditional methods to modern technology-based and environmentally friendly behaviors. Thus, to gain competitive advantage and sustainability, businesses and marketers need to adopt perpetual modifications to match the dynamic Sri Lankan consumer landscape as crises and technology and consumer values create this active business ecosystem.

Thematic Synthesis of Emerging Consumer Behavior Trends

Digitalization and Online Consumerism

Across the past decade, Sri Lankan consumers' purchasing behaviors have significantly shifted towards digital channels. Businesses are making adjustments to the digital marketplace through establishing more user – friendly online shops with the rapid advancement of e – commerce (Weerasinghe et al., 2023). Studies suggest that digital literacy has enhanced in customers as a result of this shift, which has given businesses and consumers various opportunities but also presented cybersecurity and privacy issues (El-Ebiary, 2021). The rapid advancement of e -commerce is not without drawbacks as many customers have expressed frustration at inadequate online customer support and delivery delays (Deyalage and Kulathunga, 2019). Thus, studies have emphasized the requirement of ethical consideration in technology usage in online shopping networks as consumers have become more aware about sharing their private information (Kumarasinghe, Peiris and Everett, 2021).

Additionally, mobile payment systems have drastically impacted on the purchasing behaviors in Sri Lanka. Studies suggest that the opportunity to reach unbanked users stands out since they can perform financial operations with mobile banking thereby driving inclusive economics (Jayasekara, 2024). However, infrastructure and technical equity barriers exist, and disparities to access to reliable internet and digital literacy might potentially aggravate economic disparities among various socioeconomic segments in Sri Lanka (Ekanayake and Galdolage, 2024).

Sustainability and Ethical Consumption

Sri Lankan consumer behavior has experienced a radical change in sustainability since environmental issues captured national attention in recent times. Studies illustrate that consumer behavior now integrates sustainability principles as people understand the worldwide environmental threats and seek environmentally friendly products and services (Dissanayake, Withanawasam and Sarjoon, 2021). For example, there is a coordinated effort by Sri Lankan apparel industry to embrace sustainable production methods while catering to a base of ethical concerned customers. (Thiwanka Sandaruwan De Fonseka and Mohideen Bawa Mohamed Ismail, 2023). This growing environmental awareness and ethical practices provides extensive market opportunities to companies which link their products to sustainable practices.

However, existing literature presents that this growing trend also possesses challenges including notable mismatch between customer intentions and actual purchasing behavior for eco – friendly products and services (Gayathree and Samarasinghe, 2019). Most of the consumers are still preferring immediate affordability and availability over sustainable considerations while making purchases, even in the face of a growing desire to adopt ethical consumption behaviors (Silva *et al.*, 2021). This suggests that consumer brands that introduce sustainable offerings have significant opportunities for market success, yet the effectiveness of their approaches depends on how well they match consumer financial constraints.

Brand Loyalty vs. Price Sensitivity

The discourse surrounding brand loyalty in Sri Lanka undergone enormous shifts owing to market fluctuations and economic uncertainties. Traditionally, consumer behavior has always been influenced by brand loyalty, where consumers like to purchase reputable brands due to their high reliability and quality (Mostafa, 2020). Economic hardships marked by inflation and unstable income have resulted prices to become more sensitive among consumers thus transforming their loyalty patterns (Asia Pacific Institute of Digital Marketing (Pvt) Ltd, 2020). Additionally, research indicate that when financial constraints increase, consumers are more prone to move for low – priced alternatives (Hamilton *et al.*, 2019).

Businesses in Sri Lanka experience both opportunities and challenges as a result of this move towards price sensitivity. On the other hand, enterprises must reconsider their value proposition and pricing strategy in order to keep their existing customer base (Silva *et al.*, 2021). In contrast, organizations who can provide affordable prices exhibits expertise and reliability offer a greater likelihood of gaining shares of the marketplace from less flexibility rivals (Abidin *et al.*, 2023).

Studies suggest that, there remains possibilities to utilize brand narratives that link with customers on an ethical and emotional level beyond price, even when the inflation pressures have made consumers more price sensitive (Kelly *et al.*, 2020). Successful brands succeeding in these dual obligations between customer loyalty and attractive pricing approaches will create an advantageous position within the consumer market shift.

Sri Lankan consumer behavior patterns during emerging times consist of three main forces which include digital progress alongside sustainability initiatives along with shifting price and brand preferences. Consumers who excel at buying online now provide companies with chances to develop new business models that match the rising market need for sustainable practices. To foster loyalty in a competitive marketplace, business need to be conscious about economic constraints that consumers face, which demand for flexible pricing methods. Organizations seeking to thrive in challenging yet advantageous economic climate in Sri Lanka must clearly understand these dynamic relationships.

Contextual Analysis: Urban vs. Rural Dynamics

Consumer behavior in Sri Lanka presents a notable shift in urban and rural areas due to the influence of increased access to advanced technologies, socioeconomic dynamics and cultural impacts. Past research

has demonstrated unique trends for urban and rural contexts and few similarities in the consumer behavior in Sri Lanka.

Urban Consumer Behavior Trends

In recent years, urban regions in Sri Lanka have exhibited a major shift towards digitalization, vast number of people are engaging in online shopping platforms and using online payment methods. Research suggests that, urban consumers are more open to digital financial services as they have a better access to infrastructure and technology (Mano *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, studies elaborate that consumers in urban areas show a primary preference for convenient features because they choose online shopping due to its accessibility and time-efficient nature (Karunasingha and Abeysekera, 2022). However, research have illustrated that, due to this increased usage of digital financial services by urban consumers, they are more likely being subjected to potential data privacy concerns such as data theft and misuse of private data (Malady, 2016). Additionally, urban consumers may have to face information overload which may result in confusion and exhaustion in decision making, particularly when marketing messages become highly diversified and digital (Appiah Kusi *et al.*, 2022).

Moreover, urban consumers are more aware of environmental and health concerns, particularly when they make decisions on food consumptions. According to research urban citizen are becoming increasingly engage in organic and sustainably sourced products due to availability of greater knowledge and exposure to global trends (Wijesinghe and Aththanayaka, 2021). This trend is also linked to increasing tendency for ethical consumption among young customers, which is highly influenced by social media marketing strategies (Noufa, Alexander and Shanmuganathan, 2022). Despite of this positive trend, some studies present contradictory ideas that, urban residents encounter nutritional challenges such as undernutrition and obesity issues alongside food security concerns that result from their unsteady food choices due to their busy lifestyles and cultural influence (Sirasa, Mitchell and Harris, 2020; Bandara *et al.*, 2021).

Rural Consumer Behavior Trends

In contrast, the consumption patterns of rural consumers in Sri Lanka are strongly impacted by their cultural roots together with their unique local economic environment. Rural food consumption in local areas continues to follow traditional agricultural methods since most households depend on their own farming alongside local market supplies for their food needs (Bandara *et al.*, 2021). According to a study by Pallegedara, rural diets are still dominated by local food which traditionally include fresh vegetables and cereals, yet modern food items are being gradually added the diets as availability grows (Pallegedara, 2019). This indicates a growing awareness of nutritional diversity even though traditional opinions are still widely held.

Studies present the adoption gap in technology as a noticeable feature in rural areas in Sri Lanka where e-commerce and digital payment systems have been implemented at a significantly slower rate than in urban areas (Gunawardana, 2017). This lag presents numerous consequences for rural consumers which result in limited-service availability, lost economic advantages and potential social exclusion. Furthermore, the inability to access advanced digital services creates challenges for users when they attempt to use healthcare facilities and educational institutions and financial institutions while hindering their full participation in digital markets and information exchange (Gunawardene, 2017; Morris, Morris and Bowen, 2022).

In addition, due to the perceived credibility and quality of local products, rural consumers often exhibit great brand loyalty (Akarawita, 2022). However, in the past decade, these loyalties have been threatened by economic pressures of price sensitivity as international brands penetrate rural markets with less expensive options (Jayasinghe, 2021). Moreover, studies suggest that brand loyalty and sensitivity to price present a crucial relationship where rural consumers show willingness to change brands based on price changes yet prefer supporting local businesses because of their perceived social and economic advantages for the community (Renzella *et al.*, 2020; Murray and Little, 2022).

While urban and rural consumer behavior patterns and attitudes exhibit distinct characteristics and shift during the last decade, both contexts present unique opportunities and challenges. Stakeholders need to be aware and address these elements when developing marketing strategies, ensuring alignment with the complex landscape of consumer attitudes and practices peculiar to Sri Lankan consumers.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The methodology of this study is systematic literature review that uses a sample of 60 most pertinent publications published from 2015 - 2025 in the context of consumer behavior trends and consumption attitudes of Sri Lankan consumers over the past decade. The sample of publications are critically appraised and synthesized quantitative findings. The systematic approach guarantees accurate literature coverage meeting with rigorous guidelines and reduction of bias. The review protocol was developed using the PEO framework (Population–Exposure–Outcome).

Search Strategy

A structured literature search was conducted using databases like Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Emerald Insight, to identify relevant peer-reviewed journal articles.

To increase coverage, Boolean operators, truncations and synonyms were used in the development of the search terms. Search strings include,

("consumer behavior" OR "consumer behaviour" OR "buying behavior" OR "purchase behavior") AND ("consumption attitudes" OR "consumer attitudes" OR "spending behavior") AND ("digital consumerism" OR "online shopping" OR "e-commerce" OR "mobile commerce" OR "digital transformation") AND ("sustainable consumption" OR "ethical consumption" OR "green purchasing") AND ("urban consumers" OR "rural consumers" OR "market segmentation") AND ("Sri Lanka")

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Peer-reviewed journal articles or high-quality conceptual papers
- Published between 2015-2025 with the focus on consumer behavior or purchasing patterns.
- Examined the Sri Lankan context or provided strong contextual relevance to Sri Lanka as an emerging economy
- Addressed at least one relevant dimension such as digitalization, sustainability, brand loyalty, price sensitivity, or urban–rural dynamics

Exclusion Criteria

- Conducted on non-Sri Lankan context
- Focused solely on technical or economic modelling without behavioral interpretation
- Focused on non-consumer perspectives
- Duplicates or outdated versions of previous publications and non-English publications

Quality Appraisal

To uphold the quality and credibility of the literature under review, a systematic quality appraisal was conducted. Each selected study was assessed against various criteria, including the clarity of research objectives, suitability of research design, rigor of data collection and analysis, and transparency of findings and conclusions. Moreover, for qualitative and policy-focused studies, Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) checklist (CASP, 2022) was used to evaluate quality; for mixed-methods studies, the Joanna Briggs

Institute (JBI) appraisal tools were utilized. Sensitivity analyses were performed to evaluate the reliability of the synthesis and quality scores were assigned for each article.

4. Results and Discussion

This systematic literature review presents an in – depth examination of the evolving consumer behavior trends and attitudes in Sri Lanka during the past decade. This section synthesizes findings from reviewed literature, critically interpret their implications and relate them to the research gaps.

Temporal Evolution of Consumer Behavior

The study reveals that sociopolitical turmoil and global disruptions generated a distinct periodic division in Sri Lankan consumer behavior trends between 2015 – 2025. According to the findings, prior to 2019, there was a rise in middle class wealth and a developing modernization of spending which was characterized by brand awareness and optimistic purchasing (Godakanda, 2024). In contrast, post 2019 period, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic along with the subsequent economic crisis, the market shifted toward essential goods consumption that adopted cost consciousness and utilized online purchasing channels (Das, Sarkar and Debroy, 2022). This reinforces the idea of context – bound consumption in developing countries by emphasizing the sensitivity of Sri Lankan consumers to external fluctuations.

Digitalization and Rise of E – commerce

The existing literature continuously highlights the increased adoption of digital technologies such as social media platforms, digital finance and mobile commerce as one of the most significant developments in consumer behavior patterns in Sri Lanka for the past decade (Tennakoon, 2024). According to the findings, younger generations, particularly Gen Z and millennials, have established a high preference for influencer – driven marketing, mobile – focused shopping and tailored online experiences (Beregovskaya and Grishaeva, 2020).

However, the review highlights the problem of digital exclusion impacts older people and rural consumers the most due to distrust in e-transactions and lack of suitable infrastructure. Rural consumers together with older generations demonstrate limited faith in online shopping while dealing with poor technological foundations (Tomczyk *et al.*, 2023).

Urban vs. Rural Customer Attitudes and Patterns

According to the findings from previous research, consumer conduct throughout Sri Lanka shows signs of both singularization and diversification between urban and rural demographics. Rural consumers have adopted mobile technology, but their consumption approach stays traditional, focused on local values and emphasizes spending wisely. The urban population uses international trends together with premium brands combined with digital convenience (Mano *et al.*, 2020).

The study reveals that, urban customers face the challenge of establishing a balance between their desire for high – end, ethical products and pressing financial obligations, particularly when inflation reduces disposable income. As a result, there is a growing tendency of price sensitivity, which makes urban people look for sales and discounts (Nawarathne & Galdolage, 2022). Another key findings is that, despite being restricted by regional economic realities, rural customers have a strong foundation in community – driven purchasing habits that prioritize confidence in local handicrafts and products, even though they are highly vulnerable to price fluctuations due to the entry of international brands (Murray and Little, 2022).

Sustainability and Ethical Consumption

The findings suggest that the growth of sustainability consciousness among the youth and environmentally sensitive consumers is rapidly growing, yet ethical consumption remains underdeveloped in the Sri Lankan

context. Literature indicates that although there is a demand for environmentally and socially conscious products, the accessibility and cost often take the priority over sustainability when making purchases, particularly in the periods of financial downturns (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022). This supports the idea that ethical and sustainable consumption in Sri Lanka is aspirational, yet vulnerable to economic fluctuations.

Brand Loyalty under Pressure

The findings from existing literature suggest a serious shift in the nature of brand loyalty. Prior to the economic crisis, Sri Lankan consumers showed a devotion to established local and international brands, especially in fashion, electronics and fast – moving consumer goods (FMCG) industries. However, there has been a noticeable change in recent years with consumers placing more value on availability, cost and reliability than brand recognition. Consumer trust is being restored around performance rather than the image (Madushika, Dissanayake and Udovita, 2024).

This scenario is in accordance with research that indicates brand equity is being reconstructed in crisis situations, where word – of – mouth, dependability and value for money take primacy over advertising and legacy status. This leads towards risks for businesses that rely on traditional branding tactics as they have not adopted new consumer priorities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study critically examines the evolution of consumer behavior trends and consumption attitudes of Sri Lankan customers over the past decade (2015 – 2025), highlighting the cultural, technological, socio – economic and contextual forces. According to the results, consumer behaviors in Sri Lanka continue to evolve due to external disruptions like pandemic, economic turbulences and digital advancements and also due to the internal socio-cultural changes.

In order to provide a comprehensive picture of consumer transformation within an emerging economy setting, the review combines, historical, contextual and behavioural aspects rather than offering isolated observations. Findings indicate a structural shift from desire-driven and brand-loyal purchasing towards more value-oriented, price-sensitive and digitally oriented decision-making, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, according to the findings, digital adoption and sustainability awareness have risen, particularly among urban and younger consumers; however, these trends vary significantly by region and income level, constrained by issues of affordability, infrastructure, and trust. This underscores the ongoing influence of contextual and socioeconomic factors on consumer behavior.

Recommendations

Ultimately, the study seeks to provide practical implications for marketers, businesses and policymakers and insights for academics to conduct future research. Businesses and marketers are recommended to incorporate behavioral, digital and attitudinal elements into market segmentations to better reflect customer demands. Furthermore, businesses need to develop strategies that convey value, openness and moral behavior which can gain long-term loyalty, particularly from younger generations, while keeping affordability of the products as the key determinant. Also, marketers and business leaders must collaboratively work to provide marketing campaigns and service models to reflect differing levels of digital readiness and cultural expectations of people in both urban and rural segmentations.

Moreover, policymakers need to develop infrastructure and inclusion to make sure rural and low-income consumers possess digital tools and trust that enable their participation in the digital economy. Additionally, they need to introduce incentive systems, subsidies and training programs to enhance the awareness and access to sustainable consumption practices. Moreover, policymakers need to enforce a proper regulatory

system to protect consumers' digital spaces by robust customer protection laws to ensure the trust of consumers towards digital payment approaches and online shopping.

Lastly, the paper provides significant insights for academics to conduct future research. Future research needs to actively integrate underrepresented consumer groups for developing an inclusive knowledge foundation. Additionally, scholars are encouraged to apply hybrid theoretical models which incorporate behavioral economics, digital consumption, and cultural aspects into local consumer behavior frameworks.

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