

Impact of Experiential Marketing on Brand Loyalty with the Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction: Special Reference to The Hotel and Hospitality Industry in Sri Lanka

M M Jeevantha

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
maduraofficial6@gmail.com

S I Wijenayake

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
shanikaw@kln.ac.lk

The hospitality sector in Sri Lanka stands as a cornerstone of the country's economic landscape, with the hotel sector playing a pivotal role within this dynamic industry. However, the challenge of establishing a loyal customer base persists among many hotels. Despite concerted efforts to provide memorable guest experiences, instances where customer expectations remain unmet have become a critical issue. Thus, this research seeks to unravel this challenge by investigating the impact of experiential marketing strategies on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Employing a quantitative research design, this study gathered data from 410 hotel visitors through a non-probability convenience sampling method, utilising an electronic questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The collected data was analysed using the SPSS software. The findings of the study illuminate a discernible connection between experiential marketing, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Notably, the creation of positive and memorable experiences emerged as a pivotal factor in enhancing customer satisfaction and subsequently fostering brand loyalty. Furthermore, the research reveals the mediating role of customer satisfaction in establishing brand loyalty, underscoring its significance as a critical variable in the dynamic interplay of these factors. This study contributes significantly to the existing literature by addressing empirical gaps in understanding the relationships among experiential marketing, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty, specifically within the hotel sector in Sri Lanka. As a practical implication, the research offers valuable insights to hotel practitioners, providing strategic guidance on harnessing experiential marketing to bolster brand loyalty and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: *Brand Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Experiential Marketing, Hotel and Hospitality Industry*