

# Enhancing Retail Sector Customer Engagement Through the Application of Modern and Intelligent AI-Driven Analytical Techniques

Muzaffer Hussain Syed<sup>1\*</sup>, Uday Kumar Ragireddy<sup>2</sup>, Prasanth Varma Addepalli<sup>3</sup>, Sridhar Reddy Bandaru<sup>4</sup>, Dhuli Shyam<sup>5</sup>, Prabu Manoharan<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Director of IT Projects & Programs, Powersys Inc

<sup>2</sup>Sr Technical Program Manager, Vdrive IT Solutions Inc, Richardson, Texas, USA

<sup>3</sup>Lead Data Architect/Engineer, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

<sup>4</sup>Application Architect (AI/ML Platforms), Discover Financial Services

<sup>5</sup>Manager (Application & Software Development), Nagase Holdings America Corp, NYC, NY, USA

<sup>6</sup>HRIS Manager, Bourns Inc, California, USA

## ABSTRACT

The modern digital ecosystem, retail organizations collect huge amounts of data on customer interaction on the internet, and it is possible to gain further insights into customer behaviors and make strategic choices. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine learning (ML) has changed this situation, offering the ability to spot patterns, make recommendations customized to the customer, profile the customer, and engage in proactive strategies. This paper describes an end-to-end predictive model of the analysis of the customer behavior based on the e-commerce dataset with real transactional records. The approach involves data collection, preprocessing, features transformation, normalization, and selection after which model training, validation and test are carried out. Sequential relationships in customer and transactional patterns are modelled using a bidirectional long-short term memory (Bi-LSTM) model. Use the Mean Squared Error (MSE), the Mean Absolute Error (MAE), and the coefficient of determination (R2) to evaluate the model's performance. The Bi-LSTM demonstrated strong learning and prediction capabilities with an R2 value of 95, an MSE of 0.93, and an MAE of 0.97. These findings prove the possibility of deep learning as a behavior modelling in retail. The results also indicate that the Bi-LSTM can be used to learn to predict temporal patterns much better than traditional machine learning methods, thus retailers can enhance engagement planning, customer retention, and the decision support.

**Keywords:** Customer Engagement, Retail Sector, Analytical Techniques, Bi-LSTM, E-commerce Dataset, Machine Learning.  
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## INTRODUCTION

The fast increase in customer and organizational generated data during the digital era has posed a pressing requirement on businesses to be able to analyse this data effectively so as to aid in making informed and strategic decisions. The growing importance of digital platforms in retail is largely attributable to the high volume, rapidity, and variety of consumer interactions that take place on these platforms. These platforms include e-commerce websites, mobile apps, social media, and loyalty programs [1]. This data volcano gives retailers more chances than ever to know customer journeys in a more in-depth way [2]. But it also has its own pitfalls in the form of data integration and real-time processing and actionable insight extraction. Consequently, contemporary retail organizations are also vigorously deploying smart analytical frameworks to transform raw buyer records into

valuable feedback cycles to enhance interaction and trigger enduring financial achievement.

ML and AI have transformed the world of retail marketing by attempting to provide advanced solutions to the analysis of big amounts of customer information, the necessity to determine intricate behavioral patterns, and the improvement of strategic choices [3][4]. Such technologies can help not only retailers to identify trends in purchases but also to comprehend emotional stimulations, attitude, and hidden preferences that drive customer behavior [5]. Recommendation engines, dynamic pricing models, and automated content personalization platforms represent AI-based systems that enhance customer relationships greatly by providing personalized suggestions of products and timely promotional messages [6]. Furthermore, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants offer 24/7

personalized customer support, reducing response times and optimizing enjoyment. These smart systems enable retail marketers to drive more interaction by establishing smooth, topical, and value-based customer experiences.

Predictive analytics also enhances customer interaction in the retail business in that it lets a company predict upcoming customer behaviors, future demand trends, and market forces. Using historical data and AI-based prediction models can help retailers predict customer churn, recognize potential high-value customers, plan inventory optimally, and build target engagement strategies [7][8]. This is a progressive strategy that leads to more accurate marketing, increased efficiency in operations and facilitation of proactive decision-making. Combining real-time data streams, sentiment analysis and behavioral modelling enable retailers to intervene at an earlier stage, communicate individually and modify their products to meet changing consumer expectations.

### Motivation and Contributions

The increased complexity of digital retail ecosystems has heightened the necessity of more intelligent methods of analysis of customer behaviour. Since organisations are increasing in size, and accumulating massive amounts of interaction data, the traditional models cannot deliver timely and actionable insights. This study fills this gap by discussing AI and predictive analytics solutions at the next level that can identify the patterns of behaviour that are not immediately apparent and can predict further actions and aid in the process of strategic decision-making. Through the use of smart models, the research benefit by increasing customer interaction, personalisation and boosting the performance of the business in very competitive e-commerce conditions. The key contributions of the research are as follows:

- Developed a Bi-LSTM model to successfully address sequential patterns of customer behaviour to predict it correctly.
- Took advantage of efficient pre-processing techniques to boost model dependability, including encoding, normalisation, missing value treatment, and feature selection.
- The results demonstrated that when compared to conventional ML techniques, the Bi-LSTM model performed better when it came to representing complex consumer behaviour.
- Delivered useful information to assist in data-driven decision-making and improved customer engagement measures in the retail sphere.

### Outline of the Paper

Here is the structure of the paper: In Section II, examine relevant literature and pinpoint areas where further research is needed, In Section III, outline the methodology and model framework, Section IV present the results and analysis, Finally, Section V conclude the research and offer suggestions for future studies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, previous research of the customer behavior and the gaps in prediction of e-commerce analytics are addressed. The most important literature, methods, findings and data are summarized in Table I.

Yin et al. (2019) The results showed that in social commerce, trust and intimacy would mitigate the impact of perceived risk on later purchase intention. Additionally, user familiarity leads to trust, and the favourable impacts of both on purchase intention would vary between cultures. In addition to this, it has been established that culture dimensions play a major role in influencing social interaction among users. There may be perceived risk in high uncertainty avoidance, but thereafter, it may facilitate trust-building [9].

Adebola, Onyekwelu and Orogun (2019) needs the appropriate technique and method. Building a prediction model and then getting it to respond in a way that tells what to do with a certain customer or set of customers is no easy feat. Most consumer models are really straightforward, even though this formulation is complicated. In order to meet this demand, most customer behaviour models fail to take into account important factors, leading to very inaccurate forecasts. The declared purpose of this work is to construct a model for association rule mining that can predict customer behaviour based on data collected from an existing online business. The model make use of trend analysis and consumer behaviour data [10].

Wu, Patil and Gunaseelan (2018) is narrowed down to prediction models as it work to come up with an efficient and accurate algorithm to determine the customer spending in the past and produce the future spending of the customers with the same features. The various machine learning methods like regression and the use of NN to form a prediction model are applied in this research and compared in terms of their performance as also in terms of predicting the outcome with accuracy. These methods are applied with the help of various algorithms and on various platforms in order to discover the most appropriate prediction. They used seven algorithms in ML [11].

According to Ou, Verhoff, and Wiesel (2017) there are a few factors that can influence a company's loyalty strategies. One of these factors is the amount of money a firm spends on advertising. This aspect greatly affects value equity, brand equity, and relationship equity. On the other hand, two of the three loyalty methods are affected by three industrial contexts: innovative markets, visibility to others, and difficulty of buying decisions. According to findings, it is evident that the effectiveness of certain strategies used to establish loyalty depends on certain industry/firm characteristics[12].

Verhoff et al. (2017) present the POP-framework and outline the interdependence of entities in the real world; analyse the consequences of this trend towards massive data sets; and present a synopsis of the current state of knowledge on these connections, while simultaneously outlining our intentions for future research into the potential effects of



**Table 1:** Comparative summary of literature reviewed

<i>Author &amp; Year</i>	<i>Focus Area / Objective</i>	<i>Dataset Used</i>	<i>Method / Approach Used</i>	<i>Key Findings / Contribution</i>	<i>Limitation / Gap Identified</i>
Yin et al. (2019)	Social commerce purchase behaviour	Social commerce user behaviour dataset	Trust–intimacy relationship modelling across cultures	Trust and intimacy influence purchase intention; cultural effects shape behaviour	No transactional modelling or predictive analytics
Adebola, Onyekwelu & Orogun (2019)	Customer behaviour prediction	Online retail transaction database	Association rule mining	Extracts hidden trends and customer patterns	Oversimplified models reduce prediction accuracy
Wu, Patil & Gunaseelan (2018)	Predicting future customer spending	Historical customer spending records	Regression and neural networks comparison	Neural networks outperform basic ML models	Limited deep learning focus; model generalisation issues
Ou, Verhoef & Wiesel (2017)	Loyalty strategy effectiveness	Firm and industry-level consumer data	Moderation modelling and strategic analysis	Advertising has a major moderating influence; industry settings affect loyalty	Conceptual and strategic focus rather than predictive modelling
Verhoef et al. (2017)	IoT-driven behaviour transformation	IoT-enabled smart product interaction data	POP Framework (People–Objects–Physical world integration)	Connected ecosystems reshape consumer behaviour	Framework-oriented, lacks algorithmic behavioural prediction
Seetharaman et al. (2016)	Big data-driven retail impact assessment	Survey dataset from retail organisations	Survey-based statistical analysis	Financial outcomes strongly correlate with analytics capability	Does not apply machine learning or deep predictive models

the Internet of Things (IoT) and smart gadgets on company strategies and consumer behaviours [13].

Seetharaman et al. (2016) This research has established and analysed four characteristics to measure the influence of Big Data on the retail sector: data security and privacy, data analysis tools, financial and economic results, and data sources. This study investigates how a retail company that uses a data-driven decision-making (DDD) approach—that is, one that bases choices on data and business analytics—is impacted by big data analysis. Positive monetary and economic results are strongly associated with data analysis technologies used by the retail sector. The study’s findings came from a survey that asked retail organisations about their IT practices and investments [14].

Although there is an improvement in the examination of customer behavior, it has significant gaps. The literature discusses cultural influences, association rule mining, and predictive modeling by ML, but most of the models are simple in dealing with dynamics of behavior and ignore temporal factors and changing interactions. Conventional methods of analysis are also not flexible, which inhibits practical decision making at the real retail setting. Despite the connection of data insights with loyalty strategies and consumer behavior that can be predicted and driven by IoT, there is little empirical validation based on actual transactional data and sophisticated DL. Thus, more detailed predictive frameworks, that would comprehend the hitherto concealed behavioral patterns and enhance the accuracy of their customer engagement in the contemporary e-commerce frameworks, are required. The summary of the literature reviewed is discussed in Table I and indicates the following weaknesses and gaps in research.

## METHODOLOGY

This methodology aims at establishing a complete e-commerce customer behavior forecasting framework. This is the process of gathering and pre-process transactional information. Additional sets of processed data are created for training, validation, and testing. Uncovering sequential patterns of past and future data points is the task of Bi-LSTM. Lastly, the model performance is strictly assessed on the basis of MAE, MSE, and R2 to make sure that accurate, reliable, and actionable insights are obtained to predict customers behavior. Figure 1 is a flowchart of the preprocessing.

Each step of the methodology demonstrated in the flowchart is outlined in the following sections.

### Dataset Collection

E-Commerce data refers to a collection of transactions pertaining to an online store operating out of the United Kingdom. From 2010 to 2011, the numbers represent more than half a million transactions. The transaction records should include the following details: the time and date of the transaction, the product description, the amount purchased, the price per unit, and the unique identity of the consumer. The customer’s country of origin is also included in the dataset. This information is applied widely in e-commerce to segment the customers and to analyze their market basket. The dataset is in the form of each row which is a transaction and it has eight columns describing the transaction, as shown in Table II. The plots of the data set are presented below: The heatmap shown in Figure 2 is an improved version of the initial heatmap, which shows the connection between three variables, namely: Quantity, Unit Price, and Customer.

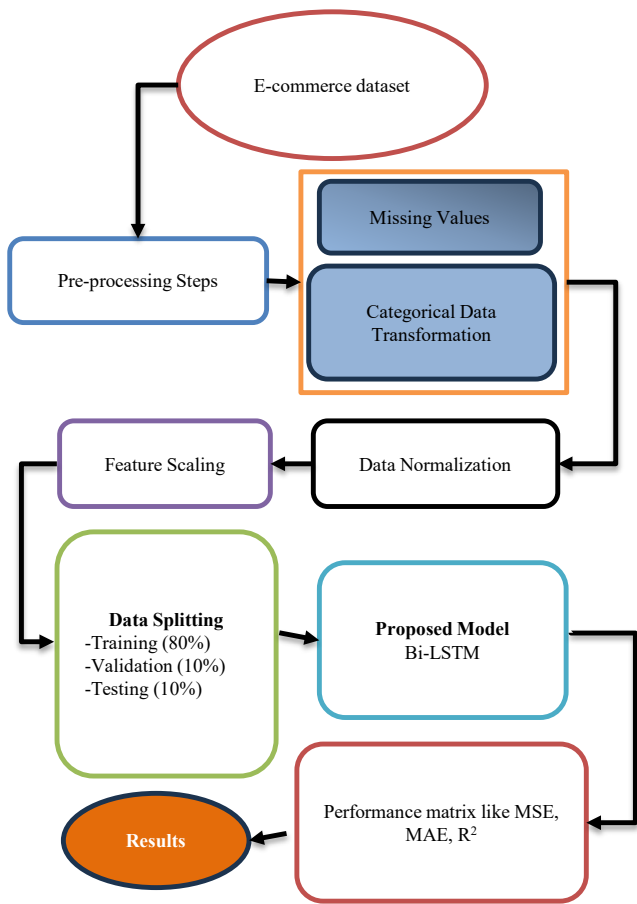


Figure 1: Customer Engagement Data e-Commerce Flowchart

The correlation coefficient is indicated in each cell, with the diagonal values indicating an individual cell as having a perfect correlation of 1, and the off-diagonal values indicating a very weak negative correlation, which is approaching zero. The color gradient is dark purple to bright yellow with yellow denoting stronger correlation value and purple denoting less strong correlation value. This visual shows that the chosen variables can hardly have any meaningful linear relationship between themselves, and the dependency between Quantity, Unit price, and Customer is low.

### Preprocessing Steps

The preprocessing stage is very important in data quality assurance and data preparation to be segmented into customers. This step entails an orderly series of procedures that would improve model quality and stability. The preprocessing stages that are important in the Bi-LSTM framework would be the following:

- **Missing Value Handling:** The analysis of the data is first performed to identify missing or incomplete records. Depending on the type and percentage of the missing data, appropriate strategies are implemented which

Table 2: Features of the E-Commerce dataset

Feature	Description
InvoiceNo	Each transaction is assigned a unique identification number.
StockCode	An item's distinct identifier in the stock.
Description	The product's brief description.
Quantity	The total quantity of goods bought.
InvoiceDate	The timing and date of the deal.
UnitPrice	All products' pound-based prices.
CustomerID	The person's distinct identity that the buyer provided when making the transaction.
Country	The client's residential nation.

include imputation, deletion or replacement with minimal bias and better model integrity.

- **Categorical Data Transformation:** Since ML algorithms are only compatible with numerical data formats, the classified attributes are transformed into numerical ones. Binary encoding, one-hot encoding, or label encoding are all employed based on the data and dimensionality.

### Normalization and Scaling:

Normalization is a critical preprocessing operation that is utilized to normalize the numerical features in a uniform range within a normal range, usually in the range of 0 to 1. The Equation (1) is used to determine the min-max normalization in this customer behavior study:

$$normalize(X) = \frac{X - X_{min}}{X_{max} - X_{min}} \tag{1}$$

This makes sure that no behavioral attribute has more significant impact in model training to cause features with high values to take over the model, and it helps in increasing the convergence speed and prediction accuracy.

### Feature Selection

Relevant features and informative features are located to increase model performance and implement complexity reduction. Statistical tests and dimensionality reduction approaches, including as PCA, mutual information, and correlation analysis, are used to pick the most influential variables.

### Dataset Splitting

The 80:10:10 splits the generated data into three sets: training, validation, and testing. A model is trained with the help of training data, fine-tuned and monitored for performance with validation data, and then tested with the help of test data to provide an objective evaluation of the segmentation accuracy.



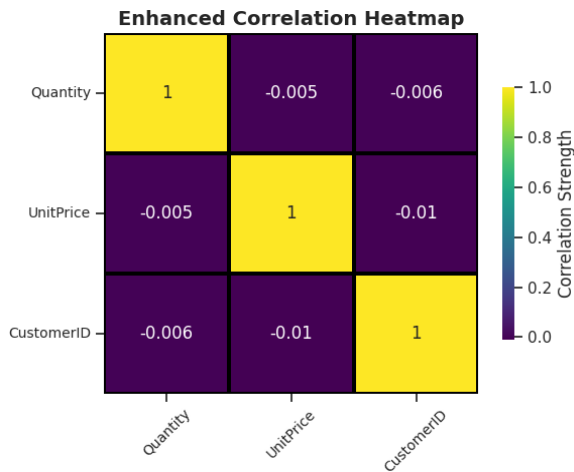


Figure 2: E-Commerce dataset visualization.

### Regression Technique using Bi-LSTM Model

The BiLSTM requires simultaneous feeding of the same sequence in both directions because it accepts inputs in both directions. The exploding gradient problem can be addressed using the BiLSTM model, which combines a forward and backward LSTM. The forward line processes data from the past, whereas the reverse backward line, often known as the reverse LSTM [15], processes data from the future. Both lines are used to combine and transmit information forward. Owing to this, the performance of the BiLSTM is superior to that of the simple RNN and the LSTM networks in data processing. One can determine the hidden and the output layer at time  $t$  by the following Equations (2) through (4):

$$h \rightarrow t = \sigma(W \rightarrow ixt + V \rightarrow ih \rightarrow t - 1 + b \rightarrow) \quad (2)$$

$$h \leftarrow t = \sigma(W \leftarrow ixt + V \leftarrow iht + 1 + b \leftarrow) \quad (3)$$

$$yt = \sigma(U[h \rightarrow t; h \leftarrow t] + c) \quad (4)$$

Figure 3 shows the structure of Bi-LSTM.

### Performance Metrics

The three traditional ML metrics, *MAE*, *MSE*, and coefficient of determination, which can be calculated using Equations (5-7), were utilised for the purpose of comparing the techniques' overall performance.

### Mean Absolute Error (MAE)

The MAE measures the typical discrepancy between actual and planned expenditures. It is possible to estimate MAE as in Equation (5):

$$MAE = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (|y_i - f(x_i)|) \quad (5)$$

### Mean Squared Error (MSE)

The MSE is a kind of forecasting error that is often calculated by squaring the difference between the actual and anticipated numbers and then averaging them, as shown in Equation (6):

$$MSE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (\hat{y}_i - y_i)^2 \quad (6)$$

### R-square(R<sup>2</sup>)

The data-matching capabilities of the model and the degree to which the stock price volatility was explained by the predictor variables were assessed using R2. As computed in Equation (7):

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{SSE}{SST} \quad (7)$$

The model's dependability was assessed by putting its prediction to the test with test data and these performance metrics were utilised for that purpose.

## RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Bi-LSTM model was utilized in the experiment of predicting customer behavior by applying it to the e-commerce churn dataset to determine its potential in the learning of meaningful behavioral patterns. An Intel Core i7 processor, 16 GB of RAM, and a Jupyter notebook environment were used to do the analysis. Table III shows that BiLSTM was highly efficient as a modeler, with an MSE of 0.93, MAE of 0.97, and a value of R2 of 95. These findings show that the model has low errors in prediction, at the same time having a high degree of explanatory power. The high R2 value, specifically, indicates the capability of the model to represent the underlying structure of customer behavior and provide credible predictive results.

Table 3: Assessment of Customer Engagement on the basis of e-commerce Data set

Measures	Bi-LSTM
MSE	0.93
MAE	0.97
R2	95

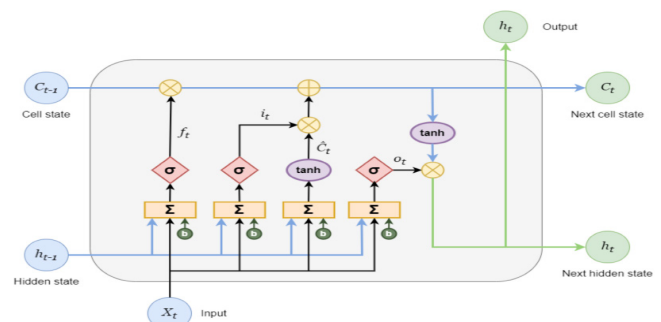


Figure 3: BiLSTM Structure

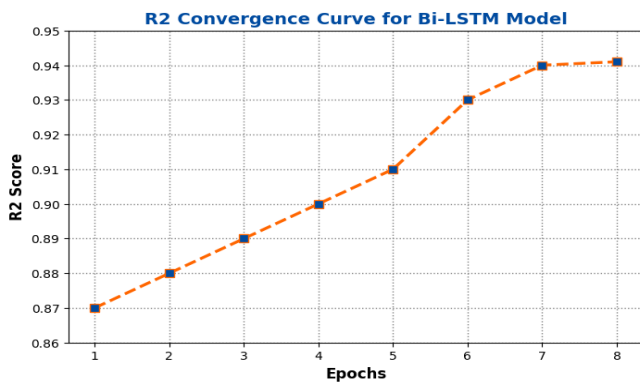


Figure 4: Convergence Curve for Bi-LSTM Model

The Convergence curve of the Bi-LSTM model on eight training epochs is shown in Figure 4. It indicates a steady increase in performance with an initial R2 value of around 0.87 in the initial epoch and gradually increasing in the following iterations. The improvement is even more significant towards epochs 5-6 when the curve takes a steep increase, slightly reaching its maximum of about 0.94 in the seventh epoch and stabilizing in the eighth epoch to about 0.95. This represents a steady learning and model optimization with time.

Two error rates, MAE and MSE, are shown as percentages in Figure 5 to illustrate the Bi-LSTM model’s performance. It is clear from the bar chart that the model achieved a low prediction error rate (MSE=0.93%) and a high MAE= 0.97%. The graphic comparison indicates that the MAE is slightly greater than the MSE, which indicates that the model has slightly greater average absolute deviation of actual values as opposed to squared differences.

The R2 performance representation of the Bi-LSTM model as a single bar chart is provided in Figure 6, and this is used to indicate the predictive accuracy of the model. The bar shows that the R2 value is equal to 95, which represents a high association between the forecasted and the actual output. This high number shows that the model has a strong predictive capacity and a high dependability, since it can account for 95% of the variation in the target data.

### Comparative Analysis & Discussions

A comparative study of the model performance on the basis of R2 shows that predictive capability differs among the techniques tested considerably. The Bi-LSTM model is also more effective with the highest R2 of 95 which shows great learning potential and feature representation. On the other hand, conventional machine learning models, like DT (88.17), LR with native features (56.78) and RF with native features (51.94) exhibit relatively lower levels of performance. These results demonstrate how DL techniques, and Bi-LSTM in particular, outperform classical algorithms in learning complicated data patterns and producing correct predictions. Table IV, representing the comparison between the existing models and the proposed Bi-LSTM framework of customer engagement prediction, is shown.

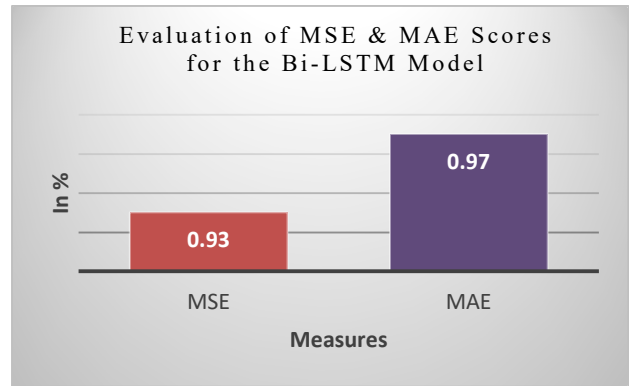


Figure 5: MSE and MAE Scores Analysis of Bi-LSTM Model

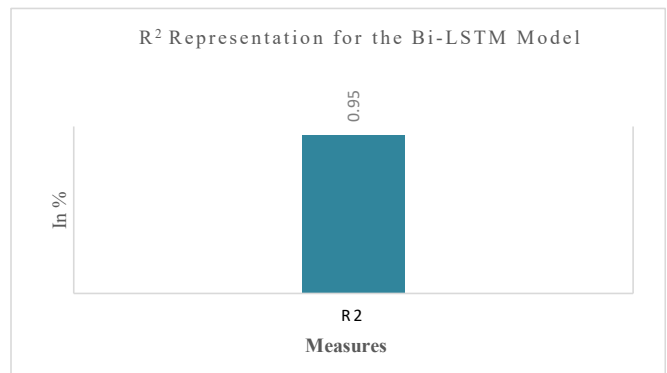


Figure 6: R2 Representation of Bi-LSTM Model

Table 4: Comparison of the existing and proposed model performance on customer engagement

Models	R2
DT[16]	88.17
LR with Native feature[3]	56.78
RF with Native feature[3]	51.94
Bi-LSTM	95

### DISCUSSIONS

The comparison analysis reveals that there is an evident performance difference between the conventional machine learning models and the presented Bi-LSTM framework of customer engagement prediction. Although the traditional models include DT, LR, and RF, all of them show a decent predictive potential, their results are notably lower than Bi-LSTM. The high performance of the Bi-LSTM model highlights the fact that the model can learn sequential interactions, learn deeper feature interactions, and learn behaviors in a better way compared to its classical counterparts. This implies that the DL-based architectures and especially Bi-LSTM provide better generalization, smaller prediction error, and greater explainability efforts in the customer engagement modelling.



## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The customer behavior is vital in enhancing customer interaction, retention, and business decision-making in the fast-rising e-commerce industry. The growing size and happenings of transactional data demand effective analytical systems with the capability of obtaining valuable insights. The most useful of the evaluated models proved to be the Bi-LSTM model, which recorded the highest R2 of 95, and the best model among the traditional machine learning models, including DT, LR, and RF. The ability to capture the past and future dependencies, learn complex behavioral patterns and provide reliable predictions to engage the customer is evidenced by this superior performance. It may be possible to add more data sources, including clickstream records, social media activity, and customer feedback, to the future work to improve the inputs of the model. Moreover, the Bi-LSTM can be enhanced with attention mechanisms, transformer architectures, or ensembles to enhance predictive performance and interpretability. The application of such models in real-time e-commerce settings would provide the possibility of dynamism of recommendations and personalized marketing plans, which would allow companies to be proactive in changing customer preferences, optimizing business operations and reaching sustainable growth.

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