DOI: <u>https://doi.org/10.62823/EXRE/2024/01/01.3</u> Exploresearch (3048-815X) Vol. 01, No. 01, April-June, 2024, 01-13



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Peer Reviewed

8 Open Access

Impact of Augmented Reality on Enhanced Customer Experience in Retailing

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Article History:

Received: 06th April, 2024 Accepted: 02nd May, 2024 Published: 30th June, 2024

Keywords:

Augmented Reality (AR), Customer Experience, Retailing, 3D Product, ROI

DOI: <u>https://doi.org/10.62823/EXRE/2024/01/01.3</u>

Abstract: Augmented Reality (AR) is reshaping the retail landscape by bridging the gap between physical and digital shopping experiences. This study explores the transformative effects of AR technology on enhancing customer experiences and driving engagement in the retail sector. AR overlays digital content onto the real world, allowing consumers to interact with virtual product models and immersive environments, thereby enriching both in-store and online shopping experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic hastened the adoption of augmented reality (AR) as businesses look for new and creative methods to interact with customers in the face of growing online purchasing trends and physical distance policies. Virtual try-ons, 3D product visualizations, virtual showrooms, AR-guided navigation, and interactive marketing techniques are some of the key uses of augmented reality in retail. AR has the potential to increase customer satisfaction, decrease product returns, and boost customer engagement, as seen by notable implementations by businesses like Wayfair, IKEA, and Sephora. This research attempts to examine how well different forms of augmented reality content, like gamification and virtual try-ons, work to influence consumer behavior and purchase choices. In particular, it looks at how AR will be integrated with conventional retail methods using technologies like QR codes, and how this will impact the future of retail. Findings indicate that augmented reality (AR) increases consumer trust and decision-making, encourages greater conversion rates, and enhances merchants' return on investment (ROI). The conclusion suggest, augmented reality (AR) is a crucial tool for contemporary retail, providing individualized, engaging, and interactive shopping experiences. AR shines as a major force behind innovation and client loyalty as retailers continue to adjust to changing consumer expectations and technology breakthroughs. In order to establish augmented reality (AR) as a cornerstone of the digital retail revolution, more study and strategic application of AR can improve retail operations and customer happiness.

Introduction Meaning of AR

Augmented reality (AR) is a technology that improves real-world experiences by incorporating computer-generated sensory inputs. It uses software, programs, and devices like AR glasses to superimpose digital content onto physical environments and objects, resulting in an interactive experience. AR marketing is largely intended to create enthusiasm. This technique can effectively highlight your company, products, or services, assisting in the acquisition of new clients and the successful introduction of new items. Furthermore, AR frequently improves campaign experiences, making them more appealing and engaging to audiences.

Augmented Reality (AR) is the process of overlaying computer-generated content onto our physical surroundings in order to augment reality with digital features such as text, images, and animation. This technology can be accessible via AR glasses, smartphones, and tablets. Unlike completely immersive experiences, augmented reality keeps users aware of their surroundings, allowing them to interact with both digital information and reality at the same time.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, consumer behavior has changed dramatically, leading to an increase in the preference for internet buying over traditional in-store encounters. Retailers now have to quickly adapt to this change and adopt new technologies in order to increase customer interaction. Augmented reality (AR) stands out as one of these advancements that is especially effective. AR essentially makes it possible to see digital items in three dimensions inside of actual situations. When applied to retail, augmented reality technology allows customers to virtually interact with products. This feature allows customers to personalize and customize items before deciding to make a purchase, which greatly enhances the shopping experience by providing a more engaging and interactive approach. not only allows consumers to investigate products but also tackles the difficulties brought up by physical barriers and limitations on in-person purchasing. Augmented reality (AR) presents a disruptive solution that not only fits current expectations but also has the potential to redefine the future of retail engagement as merchants negotiate the ever-evolving terrain of consumer preferences and technological integration.

Augmented reality, or AR, is positioned to survive and even grow in the retail sector in the postpandemic period. Customers' inability to acquire the kind of precise sensory information that is usually acquired when physically experiencing things has proven to be a major obstacle in online commerce. Brands are under increasing pressure to digitally replicate showroom-like experiences as consumers adopt more indoor-focused lifestyles. A well-known online retailer of furniture and home products, Wayfair, saw the need and creatively incorporated augmented reality technology into their website. One of its best features is "View in Room 3D," which you can access using its app. It lets users upload pictures of their rooms and realistically arrange new furniture in them. It allows customers to see prospective purchases as well as how they would fit and appear in their homes before making a selection. To further enhance personalization choices and guarantee a customized purchasing experience, Wayfair's Room Planner 3D function lets users experiment with different furniture configurations. Incorporating augmented reality into its business strategy allows Wayfair to improve customer engagement by bridging the gap between virtual exploration and real-world expectations, while also addressing the shortcomings of traditional online shopping.



Picture Showing use of AR

Customer Experience

The customer experience (CX) refers to the entire customer journey, which includes all of a consumer's interactions with the company's products or services. Every interaction with the product or services, no matter how minor, influences a customer's perception towards a company, whether they are communicating with customer service, watching an advertisement, or simply paying a bill.

Retailing

Retailing is the business of selling goods and services directly to customers for personal use. It involves selling of goods in small quantity. It includes a variety of responsibilities including as purchasing, inventory management, pricing, promotion, and customer service, all of which strive to provide a great shopping experience and meet consumer expectations. Retailing can take place in physical stores, online platforms, or other distribution methods, and it covers everything from product selection and sales to delivery and post-purchase support.

The retailing can be both offline as well as online. The present study is based on online retailing, through which customer can experience the physical availability of product with the use of Augmented Reality. The Augmented reality helps in visualization of product for better customer buying experience of retail product.

Literature Review

- Gupta Ritvik (2024): the paper entitled "The Role of Augmented Reality in Enhancing the Retail Shopping Experience" This study explores how augmented reality (AR) can improve the in-store shopping experience by analyzing how it affects customer engagement, traditional retail settings, and purchase behavior.
- Enyejo, Obani, Afolabi & Igba (2024): the paper entitled "Effect of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) experiences on customer engagement and purchase behavior in retail stores" This research investigates how consumer engagement and purchase behavior in retail environments are affected by augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology.
- Sahli& Lichy(2024): the paper entitled "The role of augmented reality in the customer shopping experience" The purpose of this paper is to explore how augmented reality (AR) might improve the furniture industry's client buying experience. It looks into how augmented reality mobile apps may give users a hedonistic and practical shopping experience.
- Singla &Shirke (2024): the paper entitled "Virtual reality, augmented reality and its potential use case in space engineering"This paper explored VR technology usage in space borne systems and engineering. Virtual reality (VR) is an interactive, realistic, three-dimensional computer-created world that can be explored as you really there. The present article examines the potential and usefulness of VR and AR technologies in space engineering.
- Lampropoulos, Fernández-Arias, Sancho &Vergara (2024): the paper entitled "Affective Computing in Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, and Immersive Learning Environments" The purpose of this research is to present an overview of the application of affective computing in immersive learning environments, the metaverse, augmented reality, and virtual reality.
- Kour Manjit (2024): the paper entitled "Ethical Considerations in the Metaverse and Augmented Retail Reality Era"This research synthesizes case studies and current ethical frameworks to offer practical advice for the ethical adoption of VR, AR, and blockchain technologies in retail. Along with a detailed analysis of these technologies' ethical implications, it will pay particular attention to data security and user privacy.
- Alfonso Pellegrino (2024): the paper entitled "Experience at the Core: Digital Customer Experience and Customer Satisfaction" This study explains the critical role that digital customer experience plays in the field of digital marketing, emphasizing how important it is for building customer loyalty and happiness.
- Bethan Alexander (2024): the paper entitled "Customer Experience in Fashion Retailing: Merging Theory and Practice" This paper offers a comprehensive, cohesive, and detailed viewpoint on the rapidly expanding domain of customer experience (CX) within the fashion industry.

- Dafnis Cain Villagran-Vizcarrathe(2023): paper entitled "Applications Analyses, Challenges and Development of Augmented Reality in Education, Industry, Marketing, Medicine, and Entertainment"This paper presents a systematic review of AR issues, challenges, and advantages across current applications in five areas of interest: education, marketing, medicine, entertainment, and industry.
- Rane, Choudhary &Rane (2023): the paper entitled "Enhanced Product Design and Development Using Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), 4D/5D/6D Printing, Internet of Things (IoT), and Blockchain: A Review"The paper studies how 4D/5D/6D printing can facilitate the iterative design process, shorten time-to-market, and translate conceptual designs into physical prototypes. In addition, the Internet of Things (IoT) is being closely examined for its ability to use smart sensors and connections, enabling real-time monitoring, and supporting data-driven design improvements across the course of the product lifecycle to improve product functioning.
- Lewald, Perret & Terstiege (2023): the paper entitled "Augmented Reality in Fashion Retail

 Platform-dependent Acceptance by Customers" The study examines how a fixed and a mobile scenario differs, and it concludes, among other things, that attitudes toward technology are not always influenced by technological ease of use. Furthermore, research has demonstrated the importance of the customer experience as a new impact factor, particularly in the stationary scenario.
- Qadri, Masood Mir & Khan (2023): the paper entitled "Exploring the Impact of Augmented Reality on Customer Experiences and Attitudes: A Comparative Analysis with Websites" This study considers characteristics in both real and virtual world situations and offers many implications, including innovative features, sensational features, and unique visual illustrations that lead to a pleased consumer experience.
- Mohammed Mostafa Refaat Moharam (2023): the paper entitled "The Impact of Augmented and Virtual Reality Technologies on Customer Happiness in Immersive Shopping Experiences" The purpose of this study is to determine how augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) technologies affect consumers' satisfaction during immersive shopping experiences in the Bahraini apparel industry.
- De Gruyter (2023): the paper entitled "Retailing and e-commerce riding on technology: augmented reality and virtual reality" The paper examines the benefits and drawbacks of using augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in the retail and e-commerce sectors, as well as the reasons behind their limited uptake.
- Thu, Quyen & Hoai (2023): the paper entitled "Research on customer experience and customer loyalty in e-retailing" The study demonstrates the relationship between customer experience and customer happiness as well as loyalty. The variables influencing customer experience include web usability, flow state, customer services, products, and customisation.
- Dashkov, Buzin & Slobodyanyuk (2022): the paper entitled "Use of Augmented Reality (AR) Technologies in Retail"The paper explores the potential applications of augmented reality systems to meet present needs in the retail industry and gives a summary of current systems that employ the technology to automate business processes.
- Soni, Yadav & Soni (2022): the paper entitled "Virtual Reality & Augmented Reality: A way to Digital Transformation of Customer Engagement" The paper explores conceptual and managerial consequences, highlight shortcomings in the application of AR and VR for creative activities in marketing, and offer prospects for further research in this field.
- Ramdani& Belgiawan (2022): the paper entitled "Consumer Perception and the Evaluation to Adopt Augmented Reality in Furniture Retail Mobile Application" The study examines the ways in which consumer perceptions and attitudes are influenced by the features of augmented reality (AR) in mobile furniture retail applications. The understanding of users' perceptions of these apps are significantly influenced by AR features.
- Nil Engizek (2021): the paper entitled "Augmented Reality and Its Relationship with Customer Experience in Retailing" This study explores online interactions, support for digital branding, and ability to differentiate businesses from rivals, augmented reality improves the retail customer experience and offers exciting prospects for the future in the retail industry.

Alimamy & Al-Imamy (2021): the paper entitled "Customer perceived value through quality augmented reality experiences in retail: The mediating effect of customer attitudes" The study show that perceived value and experience quality are not correlated. This study is the first to look at how authenticity, presence, and interaction quality relate to the experiences that are created using augmented reality.

Objectives of the Study

- Analyzing the effectiveness of different types of AR content (e.g., gamification, virtual try-ons) in driving consumer engagement and purchase decisions.
- Examining the customer experience enhancement through Augmented Reality (AR) in retailing.

Research Methodology

The study used a mixed method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. The study uses an empirical research design, and its data come from primary and secondary sources. A Google Form is used to share the questionnaire, which is used to collect the primary data. There are five sections of the questionnaire, and each one includes pertinent questions about the study. 229 responses were obtained from the 250 samples of the Sagar district that were sent via a google form. Convenience sampling is the sample strategy employed in this research study.

Data Collection & Interpretation

Demographics of the respondents:



- The above pie chart shows the total no. of males and females responded to the questionnaire. The no. of males is 121 ie., 52% of the total respondent whereas there are 108 females which are 47.8% of total respondent.
- The survey sample is predominantly young, with the largest group being individuals aged 18-25 (34.1%), followed by those aged 25-35 (27.5%). Mid-career adults, aged 35-45, make up about 20.1% of the respondents, while those aged 45-60 account for 12.7%. The smallest group is individuals aged 60 and above, representing just 5.7%. Overall, the majority of respondents are younger, indicating a strong presence of younger individuals in the surveyed population, with progressively fewer participants in the older age brackets.

Familiarity & Use of Augmented Reality (AR):



Based on the above pie chart, 71 respondents (31.0% of the total) have heard of augmented reality (AR) but are unsure about it, indicating a moderate awareness. 12 respondents (5.2% of the total) are neither aware nor unaware of AR. A smaller group of 30 respondents (13.1% of the total) are not familiar with AR at all. Those who are somewhat familiar with AR comprise 83 respondents (36.2% of the total), suggesting a fair understanding. The smallest

group consists of 33 respondents (14.4% of the total) who are very familiar with AR. Overall, these numbers indicate a varying degree of familiarity with augmented reality among the respondents surveyed.

According to the pie chart, 77.3% of respondents indicated they would use augmented reality (AR) features if available in retail stores, while 22.7% stated they would not. This suggests a strong inclination towards adopting AR technology among consumers, potentially driven by its interactive and immersive shopping experiences. This trend highlights a growing interest and acceptance of AR as a tool for enhancing the shopping experience, indicating a potential opportunity for retailers to explore and invest in AR technologies to better engage their customers.

Understanding & Experience of Augmented Reality (AR)



- The information makes it evident that respondents' understanding of augmented reality (AR) is not entirely clear. While 107 respondents (46.7%) mistakenly believed AR created a completely simulated world, which is actually a feature of virtual reality (VR), 72 respondents (31.4%) properly identified AR as improving the real-world environment. To compound the confusion, 77 respondents (33.6%) believed augmented reality to be a virtual reality experience. However, 114 respondents (49.8%) wrongly thought augmented reality (AR) involved enhancing physical things through improved design, while 98 respondents (42.8%) mistakenly associated AR with employing 3D printing to create new objects. Based on these findings, there is a need to increase public comprehension and awareness by providing clearer education and communication about the differences between AR, VR, and related technologies.
- According to the data supplied, interactive product demos-which 100 respondents, or 43.7%, found compelling—seem to be the most engaging kind of augmented reality (AR) encounter. Gaming options and in-store navigation come in second and third, respectively, with 99 (43.2%) and 81 (35.4%) respondents finding them to be interesting. Virtual try-ons attracted a lot of attention as well; 71 respondents (or 31%) thought they were interesting. Though still noteworthy, online educational services had the least amount of engagement out of all the possibilities provided; only 66 respondents, or 28.8%, thought they were participating in an AR setting. These results imply that consumers place a premium on augmented reality's ability to improve interactive product experiences and in-store navigation, in addition to its uses in gaming and marketing.

Rate AR Experience & Better Understanding of Categories of Product



- Data show that respondents' perceptions of the quality of their augmented reality (AR) experiences in retail establishments differ greatly. A sizeable percentage—41.9%—had a neutral impression, followed by 29.7% who thought it was good and 9.6% who thought it was exceptional. On the other hand, 18.8% gave the AR experience a low rating, with 13.1% calling it poor and 5.7% calling it extremely poor. There is potential for improvement to improve user satisfaction and the adoption of AR technologies in this context, as these results show that AR is receiving mixed reviews in the retail sector, with a significant part of respondents expressing neither strong admiration nor disappointment.
- The data indicates that a significant number of consumers are interested in using augmented reality (AR) to comprehend products in a variety of categories more fully. Electronic items came in second with 105 responses (45.9%), daily consumer goods with 113 responses (49.3%), and automobiles with 96 responses (41.9%). Specialty products and furniture also garner a lot of interest, with 63 (27.5%) and 58 (25.3%) of respondents, respectively. This highlights the general desire to use augmented reality (AR) to visualize and explore things before making selections about what to buy.



Used AR features & Rate Value Addition to AR Feature

- The data reveals a notable adoption of Augmented Reality (AR) features for online shopping among respondents. A substantial 35.8% reported using AR frequently, demonstrating a regular use of tools like virtual furniture placement and 3D visualization to assist in decision-making. Additionally, 31.9% used AR rarely, while 15.3% utilized it once or twice, indicating varied levels of engagement. A smaller but dedicated 7.9% used AR very frequently, underscoring a committed user base leveraging advanced visualization technologies. Only 9.2% stated they had never used AR for online shopping, suggesting a growing preference for AR-enhanced experiences among consumers looking to better understand products before purchase.
- According to the data, respondents generally perceive Augmented Reality (AR) features as valuable additions to their shopping experiences. A combined 51.5% rated AR as adding significant value, with 36.2% giving it a rating of 4 ("more value") and 15.3% rating it as 5 ("most value"). Another 31.4% found AR to provide some value (rating of 3), indicating moderate usefulness in enhancing their shopping understanding. Conversely, 11.8% felt AR added less value (rating of 2), while 5.2% perceived it as providing no value (rating of 1). These responses suggest a majority find AR beneficial for improving their shopping experiences, particularly in visualizing products and making more informed purchase decisions.



Type of Information in AR &AR Suitability

- Consumers are very interested in combining Augmented Reality (AR) with product packaging to provide various forms of information. Usage instructions are in great demand at 58.1%, followed by special offers (54.6%), customer evaluations (44.1%), and ingredient details (33.2%). 34.5% of respondents are interested in health and nutrition information. These findings show a strong preference for interactive and instructive content delivered via augmented reality, with the goal of increasing consumer engagement and transparency in product information.
- The opinions of respondents about the applicability of augmented reality (AR) in retail settings are divided: 23.6% think AR is better suited for improving online retail experiences, 41.9% think it benefits both online and physical stores, and 34.5% support its use in physical stores. These results demonstrate how augmented reality (AR) can improve shopping experiences by providing interactive and educational features that are suited for both online and offline retail locations.

Augmented Reality Technology while Shopping in the Future



- **AR enhances the shopping experience with virtual try-ons and product visualizations:** The data reveals that 91.3% of respondents either strongly agree (28.4%) or agree (62.9%) that Augmented Reality (AR) enhances the shopping experience with virtual try-ons and product visualization. A minority expressed neutrality (5.2%) on the matter, while only a small percentage disagreed (2.2% disagree, 1.3% strongly disagree). These numbers highlight a strong consensus among consumers regarding the positive impact of AR in improving shopping interactions and decision-making processes through enhanced visual experiences.
- **Depending on the availability and convenience of AR features:** The data shows that 60.7% of respondents either strongly agree (20.5%) or agree (40.2%) that they depend on the availability and convenience of Augmented Reality (AR) features when shopping. About 30.6% are neutral on this, while a minority disagree (6.1%) or strongly disagree (2.6%). These results highlight the notable effect of AR's accessibility on consumer engagement and decision-making in shopping environments.
- I'm open to trying AR but not actively seeking it out while shopping: Approximately 53.6% of respondents are open to trying Augmented Reality (AR) but are not actively seeking it out while shopping. This includes 19.2% who strongly agree and 33.2% who agree. About 34.5% are neutral on the matter, while 12.1% (9.2% disagree, 3.9% strongly disagree) express reluctance towards trying AR during their shopping experiences.
- I prefer traditional methods of shopping without AR technology: Approximately 40.2% of respondents prefer traditional methods of shopping without Augmented Reality (AR) technology. This includes 12.7% who strongly agree and 27.5% who agree with this preference. A significant portion, 35.4%, neither agree nor disagree, indicating a neutral stance on AR in shopping. Meanwhile, 24.5% (19.7% disagree and 4.8% strongly disagree) are open to or prefer AR-enhanced shopping experiences. These numbers highlight a diverse range of attitudes towards the integration of AR in traditional shopping practices.

I have no interest or need for augmented reality while shopping: From the above data collected 45.7% of respondents express either no interest or need for Augmented Reality (AR) while shopping. This includes 8.7% who strongly agree and 26.6% who agree with the statement. Another 37.1% neither agree nor disagree, indicating a neutral stance on AR in shopping. Conversely, 27.5% (17.9% disagree and 9.6% strongly disagree) either have some level of interest in or recognize a need for AR in their shopping experiences. These findings highlight varying levels of receptiveness towards AR technology among consumers, reflecting mixed attitudes towards its integration into shopping practices.

Results & Findings

- According to the research, 91.3% of participants recognized the advantages of augmented reality (AR) in virtual try-ons and product visualization, indicating how well-liked it is for improving the shopping experience.
- The expanding importance of augmented reality (AR) in customer engagement and decisionmaking is shown by the noteworthy 60.7% of participants who depend on it for a more convenient shopping experience. Although 40.2% still favor traditional buying techniques, 53.6% are willing to test augmented reality (AR), although it is not currently a major motivator for many. In addition, 45.7% of respondents said they had no special need or interest in augmented reality, indicating differing opinions about its incorporation.
- The study also reveals varying levels of familiarity with augmented reality, with interactive product demos being the most engaging. AR adoption is increasing, with 35.8% using it frequently and 51.5% saying it offers substantial value to their purchasing experience. Overall, augmented reality's role in retail is growing, with promised benefits for both online and physical establishments, despite some people's continued preference for traditional purchasing techniques.

Conclusion

The study explores how Augmented Reality (AR) can enhance the shopping experience, revealing that 91.3% of participants find AR features like virtual try-ons and interactive product visualizations valuable additions that improve engagement and informational value. Despite this positive reception, there is a notable split in consumer attitudes: 60.7% consider AR elements essential for a seamless shopping experience, yet 45.7% express no particular interest in or need for AR, and 40.2% still prefer traditional shopping methods. This suggests that while AR is increasingly recognized for its potential benefits, a significant portion of shoppers remains either uninterested or hesitant to adopt this technology into their regular purchasing habits. The study also highlights a discrepancy in AR's perceived effectiveness, with 35.8% of respondents using it regularly and 51.5% feeling it significantly enhances their shopping, but a large number rate their experiences as neutral or unsatisfactory. This variability indicates that, although AR can offer substantial improvements to the shopping experience, its current application and user experience need further development. To address these mixed reactions, retailers should strive to integrate AR with traditional shopping methods, enhance customer education about AR, and refine its features to close the interest gap and elevate overall satisfaction. As AR technology evolves, it holds the promise to fundamentally transform retail by merging digital innovations with tangible shopping experiences.

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