



Research Article

ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE USING AUGMENTED REALITY IN RETAIL -A DISCERNIBLE CHANGE

Dr Simran Jewandah

Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Punjab

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ABSTRACT

The Modern day ecommerce industry has undergone a tremendous transformation by creating a strong online presence and continuous improvement in the in store variety. Numerous Online deals easy of accessibility and wide variety online has made e-commerce profitable for businesses, small and big alike. The exponential growth of retail has led to higher stakes and created more challenges to be able to sustain and run a successful e-commerce platform. The shopping experience has come a long from being just about the in-store contents. The need of the hour is to provide the consumer a value in terms of an unforgettable experience and time for building loyalty amongst the Consumers. In order to give an unique experience to the customer retailers these days are incorporating novel technologies into their businesses to stay ahead of the competition .One emerging technology is technology is Augmented Reality (AR), which has gained a lot of traction in recent times .This paper aims to investigate how augmented reality in helping to improve the shopping experience in terms of its application and to know some of the retailers using the Augmented reality by enriching the customer experience

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INTRODUCTION

With majority of businesses nowadays going digital and every customer has become a digital customer. Reciprocating to the rise in the demand on E-commerce and rising customer engagement in online activities, retailers are looking for ways to leverage the digital presenceThe retail industry is goingthrough a robust transformation, in terms of employing new technologies and exploring new store formats, revamping business strategies or creating personal experiences; retailers are indeed getting ready for the future by looking beyond conventional retail and evolving along with their modern consumer. The e-commerce sector is slated to increase by about 1200% to \$200 billion by 2026, up from \$15 million in 2016, according to a report by financial services expert Morgan Stanley. The idea of "new retail" is to bring a new level of experience for customers by blending the digital and in-store retail experienceOne area that prominently holds significance and promises sure success is augmented reality.

The phase of demonetization in India has incentivized the companies to invest in these technologies to make the retail business much smooth. The rising youth population who were facing the problem of unavailability of time during their schedule have made the shift of the traditional brick and mortar stores to shift to an online B2B r B2C or C2C websites.

Augmented Reality

Augmented Realitythe most talked about and emerging technology which has aroused the interest of retailers with its unbelievable capabilities

An area of computer science that deals with giving machines the ability to seem like they have human intelligence. In short, it is the power of a machine to copy intelligent human behavior.

It uses computer generated images with content to create an interactive environment, which enhances the user's perception of reality by combining physical elements with the virtual ones. AR is also being used to convey the full product information to the buyer. It is also being used by various companies for comparison between two products allowing customers to do comparative analysis.

According to Global Market Insights report, by 2024 the global market of AR in retail industry will surpass \$8 billion. .

The way that AR can helpin bridging the gap between the online and offline worlds in retail industry and improve customer experience



Awareness: AR helps in grabbing the attention of the online users and bringing them closer to store visit. AR products can entice the customers by tempting them try out in-store products. With the help of in-store action apps, retailers can improve the shopping experience. Retail stores can even offer

**Corresponding author: Dr Simran Jewandah*
Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Punjab

AR-powered kiosks that can bring products to life using 3D technology.

Engagement: One of the ways to engage the new visitors is to blend the AR technology into fun experiences. The idea of engaging the customers is to increase their time spent in the store, allowing them to have a memorable experience. This helps in building a connection between the store visitors and the brand. This technique is considered as successful, even without gaining an immediate conversion, if it compels people to come back to either enjoy the in-store experience or refer a friend.

Conversion: The stores offering unique AR experiences attract more number of visitors. This directly indicates that by offering AR technology to the customers' in-store experiences, the retailers have got more chances to enhance their sales. Most of the time these experiences facilitates the customers in making their purchase decision easier, blend engagement, thereby increasing the sales.

Loyalty: With the help of existing engagement through AR, retailers can keep the customers interested in the brand and let them experience uniqueness in offerings. A personalized experience allows the customers to feel that they are important. Also, if customers spend more time in-store, they help the store owners in collecting more data about them (customers). Store owners can then provide more personalized experience to their customers in their next visits.

Objective of the study

The Major Objective of the study include

1. To understand the augmented retail market in India.
2. To analyse the Application of Augmented reality in Indian Retail.
3. To Know about Retailers using the Augmented Reality to enrich the customer Experience

Methodology of the study

The research is descriptive by nature, a qualitative method of data collection and analysis seems relevant and the data collected has been collected from authentic and reliable sources. The current research focuses on Augmented Reality and its application by retailers in India along with getting information about the successful adoption of the technology by the modern Retailers. Descriptive research was conducted to know importance of using the Augmented Reality in Retail and to investigate how it can be used effectively used by retailers. Descriptive research refers to a set of procedures that describe Augmented Reality especially in retail. These variables are displayed through descriptive research by answering who, what, why and how questions. This mode of research is used to describe such things as Augmented Reality in Retail., its application and finding about the retailers using the Technology to enhance the customer experience

Applications of Augmented Reality in Retail

Below are some of the applications of augmented reality in the retail sector which has impacted the customers shopping experience in a more advanced manner Retailers are using AR technology into their stores to provide best experience to their customers. Below are some of the widest applications of augmented reality in the retail sector which has impacted the customers shopping experience in a more advanced manner

Interactive User Experience

The saying "Content is the King" no longer holds true because with AR features the customers may be both, the content consumer and the content creators. AR allows users to make a personal interaction to the offline, or online products which are available for scanning with AR tech. By using the feature of AR, the users can change the color, style of the chosen product. Through AR, customers can try on products before buying them. By simply sitting at their home, they can try different variations of the products, e.g., sizes and colors. Once they are satisfied with their selection, the exact item is delivered to their doorstep. It basically offers the convenience of online shopping with the experience of physically interacting with the product

Customization

AR can uncover precise consumer needs by tapping into where and at what price customer's shops across all channels and devices. AR can help in gaining more knowledge about the customer in terms of pricing, assortments and needs by keeping a check on the real time touch points

Connectivity

AR can help create a new storytelling medium by increasing the various benefits from enriched experiences which can bridge the gap between the printed and digital media, which would further lead to for better understanding how readers get engaged with their content and continually improve how that content is being delivered.

Resolution of Language Barriers

The International companies no longer need to face the challenge of language barrier as the AR provides wide options to avoid most of the language problems by using Google Translator AR mode allows users to look any text of 40 foreign languages as the native one.

Reduces Returns

With the use of AR apps, retail stores can reduce in-store inventory, thus minimizing costs for shipping and storing a large inventory.

It Reduces the need for in-store staff: Retail shops can use AR to cater to customers' needs to try out different products without in-store assistance

Some of the examples of the Companies using Augmented Reality:

1. Lenskart, an online eyewear retailer, and Ray Ban, a maker of eyeglasses, are employing AR to allow customers to virtually try multiple frames and glasses before buying them
2. Aditya Birla10 group's fashion portal abof.com has introduced a new 3-D trial room. It allows users to create their 3-D avatars resembling their body type and try on various outfits.
3. Ikea, (A furniture Based Company) made a name for itself as one of the early adopters of AR app technology. The company worked with Apple's ARKit to create the Ikea Place app, which allows shoppers to virtually place Ikea furniture within their home, checking for fit in color, look, size and more. The app scales furniture size to an impressive 98% accuracy, giving consumers

confidence that they're ordering something that will work, and saving them from the nightmare of actually visiting an Ikea store and breaking up with their significant other.

4. Dulux Paint :AR apps have revolutionized the paint shopping experience by allowing customers to instantly envision their entire home with the new shade., by Simply holding up a phone, scanning the room, and seeing how the shade looks with the windows open and how it complements existing furniture.

CONCLUSION

Augmented Reality in its initial phase is consequently growing its areas and applications. The potential for Augmented Reality in Retail industry is immense and the market will be seeing huge growth in the future. The competition landscape is fragmented with many companies currently trying to adopt this technology and use it to their advantage. The research in the field of AR suggests an era where there is direct interaction between individual and information being accessed without the need of any devices utilization. There has been much collaboration between technology giants and retails and FMCG companies which are trying to integrate this technology and make the best out of the both. The Retail sector should be on its toes to adopt AR and take advantage of its capabilities. AR is the future of their stores' online and offline presence. With betterment in their product-focused campaigns, AR can drive customers to the stores and shop frequently. It has practically made shopping an enjoyable spree with realistic representations of actual products on the customer's screen anywhere, anytime.

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