

Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction in the Retail Formats in Rupandehi

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the Factors Affecting Customer Experience in the Retail Formats In Rupandehi district of Nepal. Primary data have been collected through structured questionnaire using online method i.e. Google Forms out of 384 different retail format users district of Nepal. A descriptive Research and causal comparative design was used and sample was selected by purposive sampling method. Smart PLS 4 is used as a data analysis tool and various tests like descriptive analysis, Measurement Model Assessment, Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity, Model Fit Assessment, Structural Model Assessment and Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IMPA) tests were conducted as analysis tool to assess the quantitative raw data. The study concludes that Price and Assortment has positive significant relationship with Customer satisfaction whereas social environment and Retail atmosphere has positive insignificant relationship with customer satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Analyzing customer experience is crucial for businesses seeking to build long-term relationships with customers, improve their products and services, and maintain a competitive edge in the market. It is a vital component of a customer-centric approach that prioritizes meeting and exceeding customer needs and expectations. One of the key elements in maintaining a company's advantage over competitors is the customer experience. Customers now have more sway over businesses, may validate them through websites and social networks, among other channels. Customers are searching for distinctive and memorable experiences that go along with the delivery of systems, products, and services as they are more knowledgeable about the products, services, competitors, and prices offered by businesses. From a potential customer's first knowledge of a product or service, through the purchasing process, and up until after the use of the product or service has recently emerged, the relationship between businesses and customers exists at numerous stages (Camila Bascur, 2020).

Customer Satisfaction is a key strategy for gaining an edge in all business sectors. Customers' reactions to environmental stimuli are either pleasant or unpleasant depending on how they interact with them. A good customer experience increases the effectiveness of marketing. By examining customer expectations, this study aims to evaluate the idea of customer experience and pinpoint its key determinants in the context of new-format retail establishments. The study examines the key elements of pre-purchase, in-store, and post-purchase customer interactions and offers insight into the main practical and emotional considerations that shoppers make when articulating their expectations for the in-store experience (Jain, Sep2009).

In today's retailing situations, improving the customer Satisfaction seems to be one of the main goals. The idea of customer experience management has been embraced by retailers all across the world, and many have even included it into their mission statements. For instance, Valero Energy Corporation is dedicated to providing customers with a great retail experience by emphasizing convenience, value, and quality. While Toyota's mission statement is to sustain sustainable growth by offering the best customer experience and dealer assistance, Dell Computers focuses on providing the best customer experience in the regions it serves. Similar to this, it has been claimed that Starbucks' success is built on providing its customers with a unique shopping experience (Peter C. Verhoef a, March 2009). Customers who have a positive experience and are satisfied with a company's products or services are more likely to become loyal, repeat customers.

Satisfied customers often become brand advocates and recommend the company to friends, family, and colleagues. A consistently positive customer experience builds a strong brand reputation and fosters trust among consumers. A focus on customer satisfaction can lead to improved customer retention rates and reduced churn. Good customer experiences can lead to fewer customer complaints and support inquiries. Analyzing customer feedback and satisfaction data provides valuable insights into customer preferences, needs, and expectations. Monitoring customer experience and satisfaction allows businesses to identify areas for improvement continually. Satisfied customers are more likely to leave positive reviews and high ratings on review platforms and social media. Positive online reviews can attract new customers and build brand credibility.

This study seeks to assess the Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction in the Retail Formats in Rupandehi. Understanding the factors that influence the customer experience is important, as it directly correlates with their performance and sustainable growth. Satisfied customers can be always positive over the period of time.

The main objective of studying the factors affecting customer satisfaction in the retail formats in Rupandehi (a district in Nepal) is to understand and improve the overall shopping experience of customers in this specific region. This research aims to identify the key elements that influence customer perceptions and satisfaction while shopping in various retail formats within Rupandehi. The primary goals of this study include: Understanding Customer Needs and Expectations, Identifying Pain Points and Improving Customer Satisfaction, Optimizing Store Layout and Visual Merchandising, Evaluating Customer Service and Staff Interactions, Assessing the Impact of Technology and Innovation, Analyzing the Role of Pricing and Promotions, Benchmarking against Competitors, Developing Customer-Centric Strategies, Enhancing Brand Reputation, Driving Business Growth and Profitability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Retail Atmosphere

Fatin Furoida (2018) Analyzed the direct-indirect impact of service quality, store ambience, and customer satisfaction as an intervening variable on customer loyalty in 2018 and discovered that service quality affect customer loyalty, store ambience affect customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction influence customer loyalty and mediate the impact of service quality and store ambience on customer loyalty.

Mohammed (2016) Analyzed the connections between malls in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the shopping environment, customer perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty The major findings of this study demonstrate that customer satisfaction and the consumer's perception of the value of malls are both influenced by the mall environment.

Bawa (2013) Analyzed the answer to the fierce competition the Indian retail industry is experiencing is quality retailing and providing value to the customer. Long-term success goes to the retailer who offers high-quality goods and services as well as a satisfying shopping experience while keeping in mind the value framework. The effectiveness of organized retailing is largely influenced by the level of service quality, service delivery, and service delivery quality. Customers' perceptions of value delivery are considered a key component of corporate success in all service organizations. The impact of retail service quality on value delivery and customer satisfaction in a retail shop setting in Ludhiana, the commercial capital of Punjab, was empirically investigated in this article.

2.2 Assortment

Diehl (2010) Analyzed larger assortments can enhance choice deferral and switching, contrary to recent research, which contradicts the notion that more choice is always preferable. According to the recent research, even when consumers make a purchase, the same item may result in less happiness when chosen from a bigger as opposed to a smaller assortment. An expectation-disconfirmation mechanism is used by the authors to explain this phenomenon. Customers have low expectations about an assortment's capacity to satisfy their tastes when it is tiny. The level of preference match that customers anticipate retailers to be able to accomplish increases along with assortment sizes. As a result, customers may experience more negative expectation disconfirmation or less positive expectation disconfirmation when a product they

choose is part of a bigger collection as opposed to a smaller one. Disconfirming information that is either more or less positive.

Tessa Desara (2021) Analyzed the intense rivalry in the retail sector has pushed participants to continue focusing on estimating future sales volume through repurchase intention. Indirectly through the indirect mediating effect of customer satisfaction, this study tries to determine the direct effects of product assortment and service quality on repurchase intention.

Bauer (2012) Analyzed that consumers generate impressions regarding four higher-level assortment dimensions—pricing, quality, variety, and presentation—using a relatively small number of informational signals. According to the attitude theory, we discovered that consumers incorporate these higher-level selection features into an overall assessment of the attractiveness of the grocery category. The grocery assortment perception (GAP) scale is thus derived as a second-order construct made up of four first-order components. Evidence supporting the GAP scale's predictive power and nomological validity comes from the scale's.

2.3 Price

Sikandar Ali sidqalati (2019) Analyzed how consumer purchasing patterns mediated the situation. According to research, there is a direct correlation between price and consumer satisfaction. Price and consumer purchasing behavior have a positive link, and the latter plays a beneficial mediating role between price and customer pleasure.

Carmen Salvador (2007) Analyzed that the objective aspect has a significant influence while the perceived aspect has less of an impact. In this context, we also examine the factors that are crucial for ensuring customer satisfaction, emphasizing both the objective factor (the appropriateness of the charges for the services received) and the value the customer places on the provided services. This study stands out because it provides a model of the service price components and details the effects that each one has on university services.

Anderson (1996) Analyzed relationship between price tolerance or willingness to pay and customer happiness. The objective is to assess the strength of the relationship between customer satisfaction and price tolerance in addition to deciding whether it is positive or negative. The information is provided by the

Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer. According to the empirical investigation, there is a bad correlation between the firm's level of customer satisfaction and the level of price tolerance that its clients display. The levels of customer satisfaction and price tolerance do, however, show a favorable correlation when compared year to year.

2.4 Social Environment

The customer's satisfaction is impacted by the social environment. There are often multiple customers in a store simultaneously and the experience of each customer can impact that of others. A customer demanding attention from the sales person can take away the experience of another customer who is also in need of help. Customers often visit a retail space with friends or family members. This can also affect the customer's own experience as well as that of fellow customers. (Verhoef et al 2009).

Customers can also affect other customers directly by the different roles that each customer may assume. Some customers are disruptive, while some may assist fellow customers by playing the role of an advisor, with the other customers assuming the role of advisees. McGrath and Otnes (1995) developed a typology of roles that strangers can play in a retail environment. They identified specific roles such as the help seeker, helper, competitor, and complainer, among others. The positive and negative effects of customer-to-customer interactions have been empirically documented for the tourism industry (Wu 2007).

Companies can gain by having knowledgeable customers who can assist other customers. Fostering such exchanges can, therefore, be rewarding for the company. This also relates to the notion of using customers as partial employees, so that they may help in disseminating useful customer knowledge that can influence the customer's experience (Harris and Ogbonna 2002).

Occasionally, customers may destroy the experience of other customers in an attempt to sabotage the company (Harris and Reynolds, 2004). Apart from the direct negative effect that it can have on the company (e.g., damaging company property, lowering employee morale and increasing employee turnover), it can also ruin the experience of other customers.

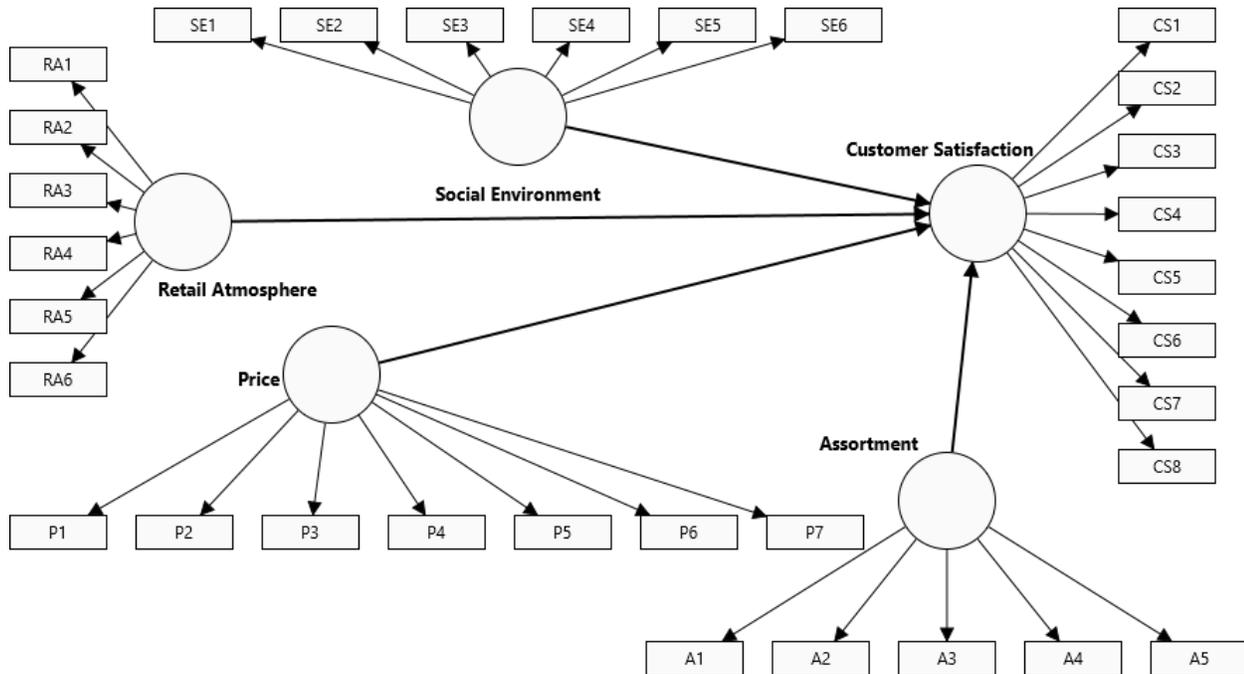
Martin (1996) has identified several customer categories (e.g. grungy, inconsiderate, crude, violent, gregarious, malcontent, leisurely) that may affect other customers' experience and highlighted the importance of customer compatibility and the need to manage customer conduct to influence expectations

and prevent misbehaviour by posting codes of conduct, designating certain time periods for certain customers, or grouping compatible customers by offering multiple sections. Since customers share the retail environment, the need for compatibility management has emerged. Compatibility management involves attracting similar customers and

managing the service environment to foster customer-to-customer interactions that enhance customer satisfaction (Martin and Pranter 1991). According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2004) within the service delivery system, a customer's overall experience is affected by various potential interactions: interactions with service (contact) personnel, interactions with internal and external physical surroundings (including equipment), and interactions with other customers.

In many service contexts, customers receive a service simultaneously while other customers are being served. Therefore, fellow customers who are present in the service environment can affect the nature of the service outcome or process. Fellow customers can either enhance or detract the customer satisfaction and perception of quality (Grove and Fisk 1997).

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS



(Independent Variable)

(Dependent Variable)

4. HYPOTHESIS

H₁: There is Positive Insignificant relationship between Social Environment and customer satisfaction.

H₂: Retail Atmosphere and customer satisfaction have Positive Insignificant relationship.

H₃: Price and customer satisfaction have Positive significant relationship.

H₄: There is positive significant Relationship between Assortment and Customer Satisfaction.

5. RESEARCH METHOD

The population in the article is from all the age group which consists of child, adult as well as young age which is categorized in the different age groups. The sample of this article is 384 and the sampling technique used to collect the data is questionnaire method. The reason of adopting such technique is because it involves preparing a set of structured questions that respondents can answer either in writing or orally. All the data are collected through online platform like social media, personal concern and so on and the type of data used is primary.

6. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The Descriptive information of the variables used in the study is analyzed in this section.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution

		Frequency	Percent
Age	Below 25	6	1.6
	26-30	368	95.8
	31-35	5	1.3
	above 40	5	1.3
	Total	384	100
Gender	Male	212	55.2
	Female	172	44.8

	Total	384	100
Occupation	student	216	56.3
	service	41	10.7
	business	15	3.9
	professional	32	8.3
	self employed	28	7.3
	others	52	13.5
	Total	384	100
Education	+2	76	19.8
	Bachelor	166	43.2
	Masters and above	142	37
	Total	384	100

Out of total respondents, 55.2% were male, and 44.8 % were female. Out of total respondents, 1.6% were below 25 years of age, 95.8 % were age of 26-30 years and 1.3%, 1.3%, were age group of 31-35, 40 and Above respectively. Out of total respondents, 19.8% were +2 passed out, 43.2% were Bachelor passed out, 37% had completed masters and above. Out of the total respondents, the maximum respondents were the students with 56.3% followed by service and others.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer Satisfaction	384	1	5	4.0771	1.08955
Social environment	384	1	5	2.9097	1.37324
Retail atmosphere	384	1	5	3.0833	1.32531
Price	384	1	5	3.9252	1.09051
Assortment	384	1	5	4.2818	1.0223

The Mean and the standard Deviation of Customer Satisfaction is 4.0771 and 1.08955 respectively which indicates the customers considers various factors while selecting the retail formats. Besides, the mean of

other independent variables I.e. Social environment, Retail atmosphere, Price, Assortment are 2.9097, 3.0833, 3.9252 and 4.2818.

4.2. Measurement Model Assessment

Table 1: Assessment of survey Item

Variables	Items	Loading	VIF	Mean	SD
Assortment	A1	0.914	4.353	4.494	1.097
	A2	0.908	4.022	4.409	1.160
	A3	0.930	4.900	4.328	1.264
	A4	0.744	1.827	3.920	1.397
	A5	0.791	1.856	4.068	1.378
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.894	3.977	4.273	1.236
	CS2	0.839	3.035	3.835	1.485
	CS3	0.769	2.988	3.803	1.503
	CS4	0.811	3.038	3.861	1.548
	CS5	0.874	3.717	4.255	1.285
	CS6	0.787	2.161	3.613	1.486
	CS7	0.857	3.051	4.129	1.327
	CS8	0.730	1.843	4.518	1.130
Price	P1	0.762	1.942	3.927	1.470
	P2	0.899	4.270	3.898	1.363
	P3	0.773	2.254	3.491	1.530
	P4	0.854	3.294	3.847	1.323
	P5	0.750	1.886	3.574	1.506
	P6	0.861	3.096	3.869	1.466
	P7	0.789	2.090	4.418	1.220

	RA1	0.788	2.567	3.365	1.629
	RA2	0.777	3.069	3.727	1.541
Retail Atmosphere	RA3	0.869	3.265	3.287	1.569
	RA4	0.863	3.338	3.238	1.605
	RA5	0.881	3.888	2.569	1.567
	RA6	0.828	3.165	2.431	1.678
	SE1	0.887	3.268	3.431	1.567
	SE2	0.876	3.267	3.165	1.622
Social Environment	SE3	0.847	2.490	3.190	1.659
	SE4	0.846	2.809	2.895	1.650
	SE5	0.920	4.628	3.105	1.666
	SE6	0.707	1.707	2.635	1.629

Table 1 indicates the measures and validity related to the outer model. It shows the standardized outer loading, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), mean, and Standard Deviation (SD) of the outer model. Thirty two scale items are used to assess seven latent variables. The outer loading values of all the items are above the threshold value of 0.70, which indicates the absolute contributions of each item to measuring the respective variable (Sarstedt et al., 2017). Similarly, the VIF values of all the items are below 5, indicating no multicollinearity among the scale items (Hair et al., 2019). Consequently, there is no multicollinearity among the items. The mean and standard deviation (SD) results of all the measurement items are in a good range on 5-point Likert scale data. Hence, the measurement items qualify for reliability and validity for further assessment.

4.3. Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity Assessment

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Assortment	0.91	0.919	0.934	0.741
Customer Satisfaction	0.931	0.936	0.943	0.675
Price	0.914	0.918	0.932	0.663
Retail Atmosphere	0.915	0.941	0.933	0.698
Social Environment	0.922	0.935	0.939	0.722

Table 2 contains the internal reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study. The Cronbach’s Alpha values of all constructs are above the standard threshold value of 0.705 (Bland & Altman, 1997), which indicates that the internal consistency of all constructs and validates the scale used for measuring each of the constructs is reliable. Further, Composite Reliability (CR) rho_a and CR rho_c values are above 0.70, indicating construct reliability and validity (Saari et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2022). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50 threshold values, suggesting that the convergent validity of all the constructs is established (Hair et al., 2022). Hence, the results of the above table qualify all the quality criteria measures.

Table 3: Heterotrai- Monotrait ratio of correlation

	Assortment	Customer Satisfaction	Price	Retail Atmosphere	Social Environment
Assortment					
Customer Satisfaction	0.820				
Price	0.819	0.847			
Retail Atmosphere	0.488	0.403	0.460		
Social Environment	0.514	0.448	0.461	0.880	

Table 3 contains the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations of all the variables used in this study. The HTMT ratio values range from 0.403 to 0.880. The standard acceptable range of HTMT ratio values is below 0.85; however, one value is above 0.85 but below 0.90. We can also accept the variable having an HTMT ratio up to 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015). Hence, discriminant validity has been established between the reflective constructs of this study (Hair et al., 2022).

4.4 Model Fit Assessment

We examined the goodness-of-fit indices for the model. Specifically, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was utilized for this purpose. The SRMR value was 0.070, less than the threshold value of 0.08. Moving on, the study of the significance of exogenous variables in the model was conducted by assessing effect size (f^2) on endogenous constructs, measured in terms of r-square change. This approach is based on the methodology laid out by Cohen (1988). R² values of 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25 for endogenous latent variables can, as a rough rule of thumb, be respectively described as substantial, moderate or weak. Moving on, the study of the significance of exogenous variables in the model was conducted by assessing effect size (f^2) on endogenous constructs, measured in terms of r-square change. This approach is based on the methodology laid out by Cohen (1988). The F-square value of customer Assortment is 0.462, Price is 0.283, Retail Atmosphere is 0.302 and Social Environment is 0.258 for customer satisfaction. The effect size of Assortment, Price, Retail Atmosphere and Social Environment over customer satisfaction is small. Lastly, the R-square value of customer satisfaction is 0.754, which indicates strong predictive power (Hair et al., 2013).

4.5. Structural Model Assessment

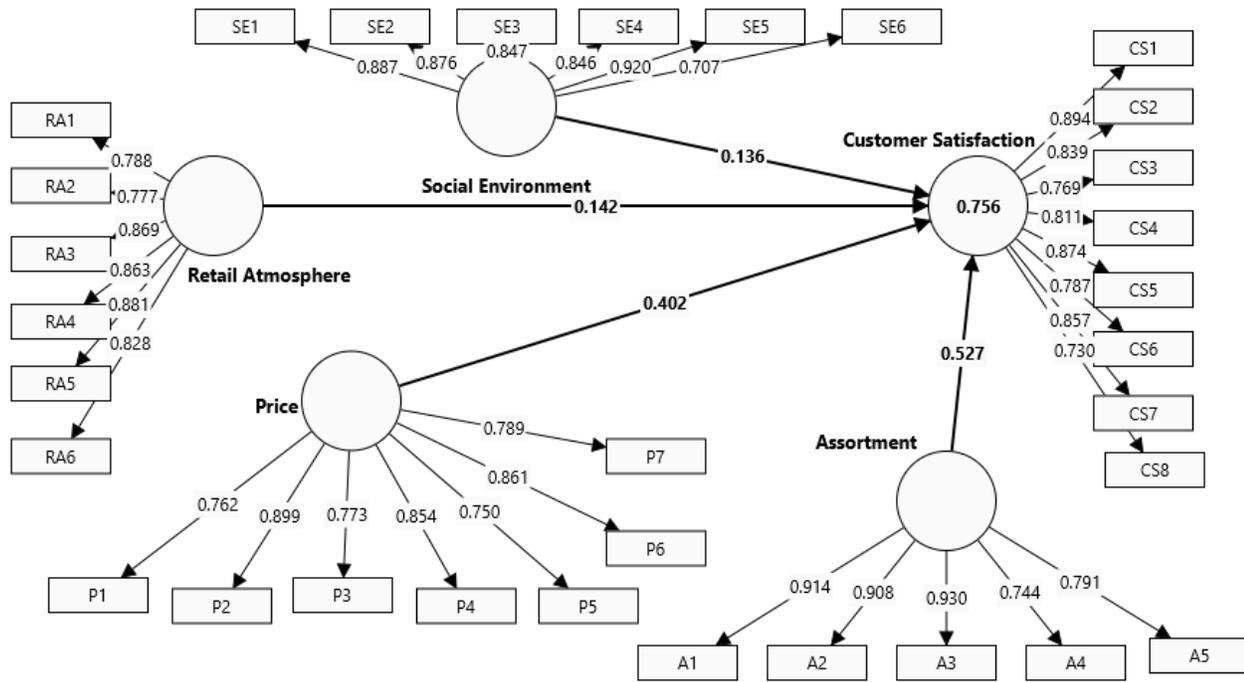
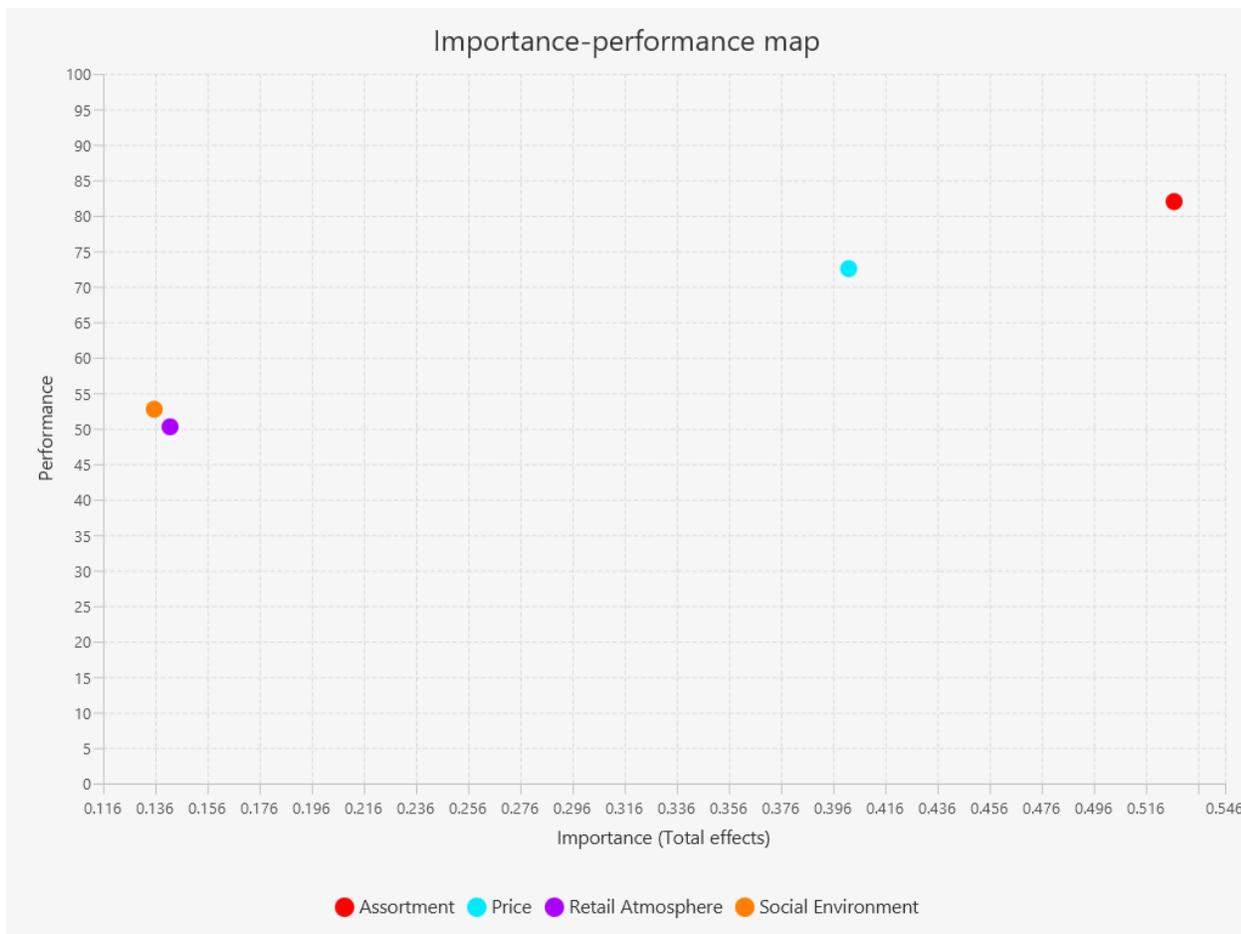


Table: Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

	Beta	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
H₁: Assortment -> Customer Satisfaction	0.527	0.529	0.047	11.228	0	Accepted
H₂: Price -> Customer Satisfaction	0.402	0.4	0.043	9.419	0	Accepted
H₃: Retail Atmosphere -> Customer Satisfaction	0.142	0.142	0.074	1.926	0.054	Rejected
H₄: Social Environment -> Customer Satisfaction	0.136	0.136	0.069	1.951	0.051	Rejected

Figure 2 and Table 4 show the boot-strapping results under 5000 subsamples and decisions on hypotheses. Hypotheses H1 and H2 are accepted at a 0.05 significance level. Hypotheses H3 and H4 are rejected at significance level of 0.05. Hence, Assortment ($\beta=0.527$; $p<0.05$) significantly and positively impacts customer satisfaction. Similarly, Price has a positive and significant impact ($\beta=0.402$; $p<0.05$) on customer satisfaction. Remaining variables such as Retail Atmosphere ($\beta=0.142$; $p>0.05$) positively insignificant impact on customer satisfaction and Social Environment ($\beta=0.136$; $p>0.05$) positively insignificant impact on customer satisfaction in Various Retail Formats.

4.6. Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)



	LV performance	Importance
Assortment	81.992	0.527
Price	72.543	0.402
Retail Atmosphere	50.261	0.142
Social Environment	52.732	0.136
Mean	64.382	0.30175

This table indicates the importance-performance analysis of the factors of customer experience. The results indicate that if we increase 1 unit in Assortment from 81.992 to 82.992, the customer satisfaction will increase from 77.172 to 77.699. Similarly, if we increase 1 unit in Price from 72.543 to 73.543, the customer satisfaction will increase from 77.172 to 77.547. Likewise, if we increase 1 unit in Retail Atmosphere from 50.261 to 51.261, the customer satisfaction will increase from 77.172 to 77.314. Again if we increase 1 unit in Social Environment from 52.732 to 53.732, the customer satisfaction will increase from 77.172 to 77.308. Hence, it indicates that Assortment is the most critical factor for increasing customer satisfaction in various Retail formats.

7. CONCLUSION

One of the main purpose of the study is to find the customer satisfaction in the various retail formats in Rupandehi District. Study also explores the factors influencing customer experience in various formats. The quantitative research method used which is more relevant to current study. The questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect the data and the likert scale questions used. The multiple regression models used to analysis the data.

Furthermore, H1 and H2 has positive insignificant relationship with customer satisfaction whereas H3 and H4 has positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction. the study finds that the relationship with the price has the strongest impact on customer experience. It is concluded that Relationship with the price has the strongest predictor to customer experience among all the independent variables. The study also finds that all the dependent as well as independent variables are reliable as they cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.70 which indicates the reliability. It was also found that there is significant difference in between the factors affecting Customer Satisfaction in the various Retail Formats. And the relationship with the

demographic variables has no significant relationship as the significance value is greater than that of alpha value. the availability and accessibility of products, as well as the level of personalized service provided by knowledgeable and friendly staff, directly impact customer satisfaction. Moreover, the integration of technology. Furthermore, the responsiveness of the retailer to customer feedback and complaints can make or break long-term relationships. By prioritizing these factors, retailers can cultivate positive customer experiences, foster brand loyalty, and ultimately thrive in today's competitive retail landscape.

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