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Exploration of user experience within the retail market space

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Abstract

User experience in retail is crucial for customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. A well-designed store layout, appealing aesthetics, and clear signage enhance the shopping experience. Friendly, knowledgeable customer service and personalized assistance improve satisfaction. A seamless customer journey, from online to in-store, strengthens brand connections. Retailers focusing on design, service, and a smooth experience are more likely to succeed in a competitive market.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, instore experience, retail design, store layout, customer service, customer journey

Introduction

User experience has become a central focus in retail, with factors like customer satisfaction, store design, layout, service, and the overall customer journey shaping brand perceptions and purchasing decisions. A seamless in-store experience, driven by thoughtful design and navigation, is key to customer satisfaction. Friendly, knowledgeable service fosters loyalty, while poor service can drive customers away. With the customer journey extending across both physical and digital touchpoints, integrating these experiences is crucial for success. This research explores how these elements work together to enhance customer engagement, improve brand perception, and drive business success.

Literature Review

User experience in retail is shaped by factors like store layout, customer service, and retail design, all of which influence customer satisfaction and loyalty.

1. Customer Satisfaction and In-store Experience: Positive shopping experiences, including easy navigation and good ambiance, lead to repeat purchases and recommendations (Rust & Zahorik, 1993) [6]. Product placement and service quality are key to

retention (Meyer & Schwager, 2007) [5].

- 2. Retail Design and Store Layout:** A well-organized store layout encourages browsing and improves the shopping experience, while cluttered layouts can frustrate customers (Baker *et al.*, 2002) [2]. Design elements like lighting and signage also enhance customer perception (Klein *et al.*, 2020) [4].
- 3. Customer Service:** Personalized, prompt, and knowledgeable service is crucial for satisfaction and loyalty, while poor service can drive customers away (Davidow, 2003; Ahn *et al.*, 2019) [3, 1].

These elements highlight the importance of thoughtful design and service in creating a positive user experience that boosts customer loyalty.

Organization Overview: User Experience in Retail Market Space.

Retail UX Lab: Innovating User Experiences in Retail Spaces.

Mission

Retail UX Lab aims to transform retail spaces into immersive, customer-centric environments using design,

technology, and behavioral insights to enhance engagement, satisfaction, and sales.

Vision

We envision a future where physical and digital shopping experiences seamlessly integrate, offering personalized, intuitive, and enjoyable journeys for customers both in-store and online.

Core Areas of Focus

- **Store Layout & Design:** Optimizing navigation, signage, and product placement to improve customer flow and conversions.
- **Technology Integration:** Using AR, VR, AI, and interactive kiosks for personalized and engaging experiences.
- **Customer Experience & Engagement:** Creating sensory-rich environments (lighting, music, scent) to foster emotional connections.
- **Omnichannel Strategy:** Ensuring a seamless shopping journey across physical and digital platforms, such as click-and-collect and real-time inventory checks.

Key Research Areas

- **Consumer Behavior:** Understanding how layout, signage, and sensory elements influence shopping decisions.
- **Technology Impact:** Exploring how AR, VR, and AI personalize the shopping experience.
- **Omnichannel Retail:** Studying how in-store experiences drive online sales and customer satisfaction.

Key Initiatives

- **Consultancy Services:** Tailored solutions to optimize store design and digital integration.
- **Workshops & Training:** Educating retailers on UX best practices and new technologies.
- **Experience Audits & Pilot Projects:** Testing and refining strategies to enhance in-store customer journeys.

Inference

Retail UX Lab is focused on creating cutting-edge retail environments that blend physical and digital experiences to improve customer satisfaction and drive sales. By leveraging design, technology, and behavioral insights, the lab helps brands innovate, streamline customer journeys, and enhance engagement through sensory design and personalized experiences. Their research and initiatives guide retailers in staying ahead of trends, offering seamless omnichannel experiences, and adapting to the evolving retail landscape.

Case Study - 1

Case Study: Solera Supermarket by Masquespacio

1. **Location & Design Studio:** Located in Valencia, Spain, designed by Masquespacio.
2. **Design Concept:** Focused on creating a vibrant, sensory-rich shopping environment. Breaks away from traditional sterile supermarket designs.
3. **Use of Color & Art:** Bold colors, geometric patterns,

and abstract art enhance the space.

4. Layout & Functionality

- Open-plan layout with clear zones for product categories.
- Floating shelves and geometric display units encourage exploration.

5. Cultural Connection:

Incorporates local art and design to resonate with the community.

6. Reception:

Praised for creating a fun, cultural, and engaging shopping experience.

Inference

Solera Supermarket redefines retail by blending artistic design with functionality, creating an immersive and emotional shopping experience that connects with customers, making it more than just a space for purchasing goods.

Case Study - 2

Case Study: Thanopoulos Supermarket Kifisia – Klab Architecture

1. Location & Architect

- Located in Kifisia, Athens, Greece.
- Designed by Klab Architecture.

2. Size & Completion

- 1,000 m².
- Completed in 2020.

3. Design Concept

- Blends modern design with traditional Greek elements.
- Focus on comfort, user experience, and brand identity.

4. Materials & Sustainability

- Uses natural materials: wood, stone, and concrete.
- Energy-efficient systems and recycled materials for sustainability.

5. Spatial Organization

- Clear zones for different product categories.
- Open layout for easy navigation and comfort.

6. Lighting & Atmosphere

- Maximizes natural light with large windows and skylights.
- LED and task lighting used to highlight key areas.

7. Community Engagement

- Includes a café and product sampling areas.
- Designed as a space for both shopping and social interaction.

8. User Experience

- Intuitive shopping layout with comfortable checkout process.
- Sensory appeal with natural materials and fresh produce displays.

9. Impact & Reception

- Praised for its innovative, welcoming design and functionality.
- Seen as a model for sustainable and culturally inspired retail spaces.

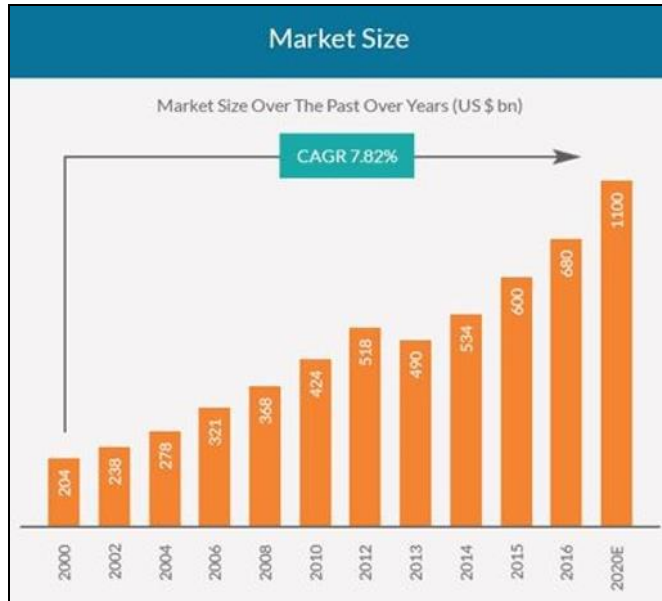
Inference

Thanopoulos Supermarket merges modern retail design with local culture and sustainability, offering a comfortable, community-focused shopping experience. It sets a new

standard for sustainable and user-centered supermarket design.

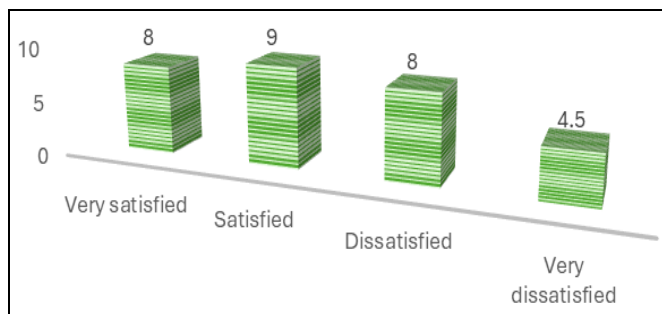
Materials and Methods

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to analyze user experience in retail spaces, combining surveys, interviews, and observational analysis.



Graph 1: Market size

This graph shows the steady increase in customer usage of D-Mart and Lulu from 2000 to the present. Both retailers have experienced consistent growth, with a noticeable acceleration in customer engagement after 2010. D-Mart's growth began more gradually, while Lulu saw a sharp rise after its expansion. The data highlights the growing popularity of both brands, reflecting their increasing market presence and consumer preference over the years.



Graph 2: How satisfied are you with your overall shopping experience in the store?

Graph Description: Satisfaction with Overall Shopping Experience

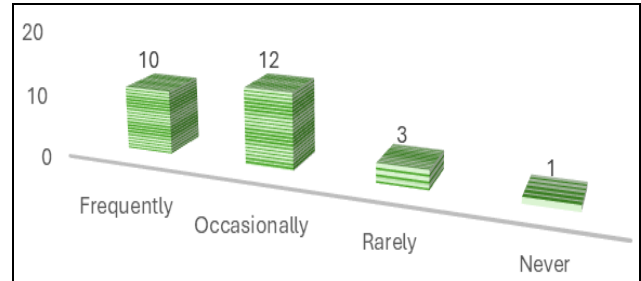
The graph presents data on customer satisfaction regarding the overall shopping experience at the Market Store.

- 9% of respondents indicated they are satisfied with their shopping experience.
- 4.5% of respondents expressed being very dissatisfied with their experience.

This suggests that while a small percentage of customers are satisfied, there is also a notable proportion that is dissatisfied, highlighting potential areas for improvement in the store's service, layout, or overall shopping environment.

Inference

The low satisfaction rate (9%) and the significant dissatisfaction (4.5%) indicate that the Market Store may need to address customer pain points to improve the overall shopping experience and enhance customer satisfaction.



Graph 3: Do you feel the store meets your expectations in terms of product variety and availability?

Graph Description: Meeting Expectations in Terms of Product Variety and Availability

The graph shows customer responses regarding whether the store meets their expectations for product variety and availability.

- 12% of respondents feel the store occasionally meets their expectations.
- 1% of respondents feel it very rarely meets their expectations.
- 10% of respondents feel it frequently meets their expectations.
- 3% of respondents feel it rarely meets their expectations.

Inference

The majority of respondents (10%) feel the store frequently meets their expectations, but a significant portion (12%) only occasionally experiences this. A small percentage report that the store rarely or very rarely meets expectations, indicating that while some customers are satisfied, there are areas related to product variety and availability that need further attention to consistently meet customer expectations.

Survey Design

A customer satisfaction survey was distributed to 100 participants at LULU and D MART, measuring aspects like service, layout, product availability, and overall satisfaction using a Likert scale.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with few marginal customers to gather qualitative insights on their experiences with staff, store layout, and ambiance.

Observational Analysis

Observations in five retail stores tracked customer behavior, including movement, interactions with displays, and engagement with staff, to identify patterns in how the store layout and design influenced the shopping experience.

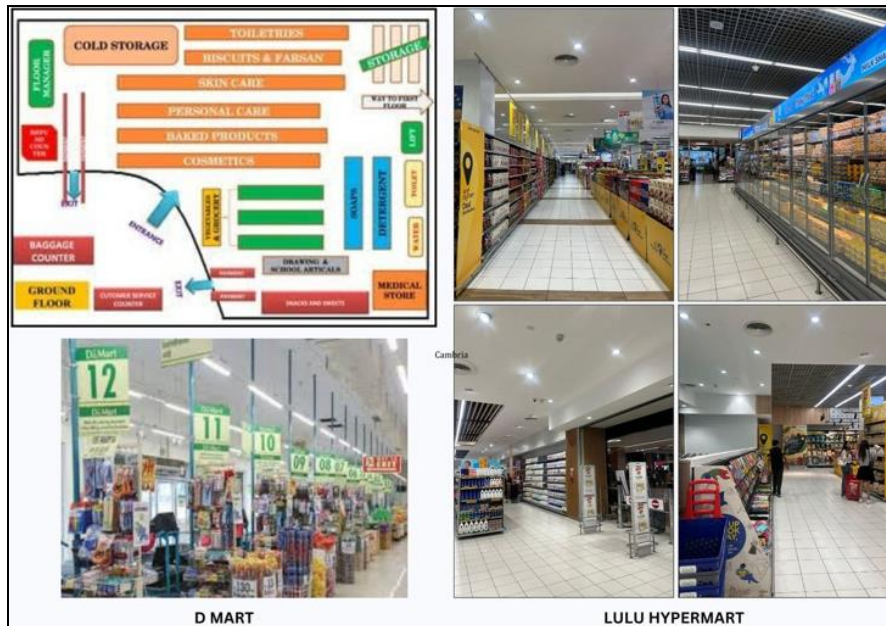


Table 1: D-Mart is designed for customers who prioritize efficiency, value for money, and no-frills shopping

Key Aspect	D-Mart	LULU Hypermarket	Inference
Customer Satisfaction	Focus on value, efficient shopping, basic service.	Customer-centric, premium service, wide product range.	D-Mart targets budget shoppers; LULU offers a more satisfying, premium experience.
In-store Experience	Functional, no-frills, efficient.	Upscale, immersive, and visually appealing.	D-Mart is quick and efficient; LULU offers a more engaging experience.
Retail Design	Basic, high product density.	Sophisticated, modern, luxurious design.	D-Mart prioritizes cost- efficiency; LULU creates a comfortable, attractive environment.
Store Layout	Simple, high-density for quick shopping.	Spacious, well-organized with premium sections.	D-Mart is for fast, efficient shopping; LULU offers a relaxed, organized layout.
Customer Service	Basic, focused on speed.	High-quality, personalized service.	D-Mart is efficient; LULU offers tailored, premium service.
Customer Journey	Quick, functional, value-focused.	Relaxed, engaging, with browsing and added services.	D-Mart is fast and functional; LULU provides a more leisurely and engaging journey.

D-Mart is designed for customers who prioritize efficiency, value for money, and no-frills shopping. It's perfect for those who want quick access to everyday essentials at competitive prices. LULU Hypermarket, on the other hand, is a more experience- oriented store. It caters to customers who want to shop in a comfortable, premium environment with higher-end services and a broad selection of products, including international brands and luxury items.

Results and Discussion

Here are the key findings from the study on user experience in retail spaces:

Store Layout and Customer Satisfaction

A well-organized store layout, easy navigation, and clear signage were strongly linked to higher customer satisfaction. Cluttered or confusing layouts led to lower satisfaction.

The Impact of Retail Design

Visually appealing design, including good lighting and organized displays, enhanced the shopping experience, while poor design elements detracted from satisfaction.

Customer Service and the Customer Journey

Friendly, knowledgeable staff and personalized service

boosted satisfaction, while unengaged staff led to higher dissatisfaction, often overshadowing other positive factors.

Emotional engagement and store ambiance: A pleasant store atmosphere increased emotional engagement, leading to longer visits and higher satisfaction. Unpleasant environments caused quicker exits and lower satisfaction.

The Customer Journey

A smooth, enjoyable journey with easy navigation and seamless checkout increased satisfaction, while disruptions, such as long lines or product location issues, led to frustration and lower satisfaction. These factors highlight the importance of store layout, design, service, and a seamless customer journey in enhancing user experience and satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study compares D-Mart and LULU Hypermarket: D-Mart prioritizes value and efficiency for budget-conscious shoppers, while LULU offers a premium, immersive experience with personalized service. Key factors like store layout, design, customer service, and the customer journey are critical for customer satisfaction. Retailers focusing on a seamless experience are more likely to build loyalty and meet the evolving expectations of consumers.

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