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Exploring Customer Satisfaction and Engagement in Café Culture: The Role of Intergenerational Interactions and Digital Engagement

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Abstract: This study investigates the experiences and satisfaction levels of café-goers in Ahmedabad, focusing on the impact of intergenerational interactions, digital engagement, and cultural inclusivity on customer preferences and revisit intentions among younger consumers aged 18 to 35. Data were collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire that addressed key factors such as service quality, ambiance, and overall social reinforcement. Regression analysis revealed no significant relationships between the independent variables and the purpose of visiting cafés, indicating the complexity of factors influencing customer behavior. The findings suggest the need for further exploration of additional variables to capture the intricacies of customer satisfaction. This research contributes to understanding the evolving café culture and its implications for enhancing customer experiences in public spaces.

Keywords: Café Experiences, Customer Satisfaction, Intergenerational Interactions, Digital Engagement

INTRODUCTION

The café culture, especially among younger generations, has gained significant attention in recent years. Youngsters' satisfaction levels when visiting cafés are influenced by multiple factors, including social responsibility, environmental attributes, and even behavioral influences like stress and peer behavior. Understanding these elements can help café management develop strategies that foster positive customer experiences and loyalty.

Socially responsible business practices in coffee shops have been linked to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Ahmed et al. (2020), when coffee cafés engage in

socially responsible activities, customers perceive a positive impact, which enhances their satisfaction and loyalty to the brand. The study emphasizes the reciprocal nature of customer relationships, where ethical business practices foster goodwill and repeat patronage. This finding aligns with a broader trend in which social responsibility has become a key factor in consumer decision-making, particularly for younger demographics who tend to be more socially conscious.

Environmental attributes also play a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction. Alves et al. (2008) explored the preferences for environmental elements among older populations, but similar considerations apply to younger café users who prioritize atmosphere and aesthetics. Factors like comfortable seating, greenery, and ambient lighting contribute to a relaxed and enjoyable experience, making environmental attributes a significant factor in café satisfaction. This demonstrates the importance of the physical environment in affecting customers' overall perceptions of service quality and satisfaction.

The impact of contemporary lifestyle trends is also relevant. The rising preference for cafés as social or "third places" has been accelerated by recent lifestyle changes, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many to seek alternative social settings. Handarkho et al. (2023) applied the push-pull-mooring theory to understand youngsters' intentions to switch to virtual spaces during the pandemic. Their findings can help explain the attraction of physical cafés, where the environment serves as a pull factor, offering a setting for social interaction and escape from stress.

Moreover, behavioral factors such as stress and eating habits can influence young café users' satisfaction. Priporas et al. (2022) discussed how Generation Z's stress-driven consumption behaviors manifest in dietary choices. Young customers may view cafés as places to alleviate stress, seeking indulgence in food and drink as a form of comfort. This underscores the need for cafés to offer menu items that cater to both indulgent and health-conscious consumers, as catering to these emotional and psychological needs can significantly enhance customer satisfaction.

The rise of trends like bubble tea consumption also illustrates shifting preferences among young consumers, where novelty and the pursuit of unique experiences drive café visits. Koay and Cheah (2023) applied the theory of planned behavior to understand consumers' intentions to revisit bubble tea stores, highlighting factors such as attitude, social influence, and perceived behavioral control as crucial in determining satisfaction and revisitation intentions. In sum, various factors contribute to young café users' satisfaction levels, ranging from socially responsible practices, the ambiance and physical attributes of the café, to the evolving lifestyle and behavioral trends of the customers. These elements interact to create a holistic experience that influences how youngsters perceive and enjoy café visits.

METHOD

For the research study, data were collected from 100 respondents in Ahmedabad, focusing on their experiences and satisfaction levels with local cafés. The sample primarily consisted of youngsters, aged 18 to 35, who frequent cafés for social interaction, work, or leisure. A structured questionnaire was used to gather insights on key factors such as service quality, ambiance, pricing, digital engagement, and the role of intergenerational interactions in shaping customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. The questionnaire was distributed both physically and digitally to ensure broader reach and accessibility.

Objectives

- To analyze how age-related dynamics, particularly intergenerational interactions, influence customer satisfaction and social engagement in public spaces such as cafés, retail environments, and third places.

- To investigate the impact of digital engagement and cultural inclusivity on customer preferences and revisit intentions, especially among younger consumers in social and retail settings.

Hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between intergenerational interactions and customer satisfaction in public and social spaces like cafés and retail environments.

H2: Digital engagement and cultural inclusivity significantly enhance revisit intentions among younger consumers in social and retail settings.

Regression line

$$VP = \beta_0 + \beta_1(CES) + \beta_2(IISE) + \beta_3(DECE) + \beta_4(OSRI) + \epsilon$$

Once the data were collected, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to analyze the responses. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics and key variables of interest. Additionally, reliability analysis was conducted to ensure the consistency of the questionnaire. Hypothesis testing, including correlation and regression analysis, was performed to examine the relationship between independent variables (such as service quality, ambiance, and digital engagement) and dependent variables (such as customer satisfaction and revisit intention). This helped in determining the significance of factors like age-related dynamics and digital engagement on café users' overall satisfaction. The use of SPSS provided a robust statistical framework to validate the hypotheses and interpret the results meaningfully.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic analysis of the study's participants reveals a diverse composition of respondents, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of café-goers' experiences. A total of 100 respondents were surveyed, with age groups predominantly between 18 to 35 years, accounting for 75% of the sample. This indicates a strong representation of younger consumers, who often frequent cafés for social interaction and leisure.

Gender distribution shows a balanced representation, with 52% female and 48% male respondents. This gender diversity is essential in understanding varying preferences and behaviors in café settings. Educational background indicates that 60% of participants hold at least a bachelor's degree, suggesting that the findings reflect the views of an educated demographic, likely influencing their expectations regarding service quality and ambiance.

In terms of frequency of café visits, 40% of respondents visit cafés weekly, while 35% do so monthly, illustrating a strong engagement with the café culture. Additionally, 25% of respondents indicated they visit cafés occasionally. This frequency distribution highlights the importance of cafés as social spaces among the younger population. Overall, the demographic analysis underscores the significance of age, gender, education, and visiting frequency in shaping customer satisfaction and engagement in cafés.

Table 1. Regression Line for Visiting Purpose

Call:

```
lm(formula = VP ~ CES_combined + IISE_combined + DECs_combined + OSRI1, data = Untitled_form_Responses_)
```

Residuals:

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-1.33394	-0.90538	0.03447	0.92955	1.38110

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	1.44014	0.30045	4.793	5.98e-06 ***
CES_combined	-0.01088	0.04281	-0.254	0.800
IISE_combined	0.03546	0.05455	0.650	0.517
DECs_combined	0.04927	0.07229	0.682	0.497
OSRI1	0.01739	0.09780	0.178	0.859

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 0.9419 on 96 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.04303, Adjusted R-squared: 0.00316
F-statistic: 1.079 on 4 and 96 DF, p-value: 0.3712

Table 1 presents the results of the regression analysis conducted to examine the factors influencing the visiting purpose (VP) of customers in cafés, using various predictors: Customer Experience Satisfaction (CES_combined), Intergenerational Interaction Satisfaction Experience (IISE_combined), Digital Engagement Confidence (DECs_combined), and Overall Social Reinforcement Intention (OSRI1). The regression model aims to understand how these independent variables relate to the dependent variable, VP, and the overall effectiveness of the model is assessed through the reported statistics.

The call line indicates the regression formula utilized, revealing the relationship between VP and the selected predictors based on data collected from the study participants. The residuals section illustrates the distribution of the model's residuals, which range from a minimum of -1.33394 to a maximum of 1.38110. This range indicates some variability in the predictions, with a median close to zero, suggesting that the model fits reasonably well around the mean.

The coefficients section provides estimates for the intercept and each predictor. The intercept (1.44014) represents the expected value of VP when all predictors are equal to zero. However, the significance of this estimate is highlighted by the t-value (4.793) and a highly significant p-value (5.98e-06), denoting strong statistical evidence that the intercept is different from zero. Conversely, none of the predictors—CES_combined, IISE_combined, DECs_combined, and OSRI1—exhibited statistically significant relationships with VP. Their respective p-values (0.800, 0.517, 0.497, and 0.859) indicate that there is no evidence to suggest that these factors significantly influence the purpose of visiting cafés. For instance, while CES_combined has a negative estimate (-0.01088), this implies that higher customer experience satisfaction does not correlate positively with visiting purpose, a finding further validated by its high p-value.

The overall fit of the model is assessed with the Multiple R-squared value of 0.04303, indicating that only about 4.3% of the variability in the purpose of visits is explained by the independent variables. The Adjusted R-squared, slightly lower at 0.00316, suggests that the model does not effectively account for the variance in VP. Additionally, the F-statistic (1.079) and associated p-value (0.3712) imply that the model as a whole is not statistically significant, meaning the independent variables collectively do not provide a better fit than a model without them. In conclusion, the regression analysis shows that while the selected factors were hypothesized to influence customer satisfaction and engagement in cafés, the findings indicate a lack of significant relationships. These results prompt further exploration of alternative variables or contextual factors that may better explain visiting purposes in the café environment.

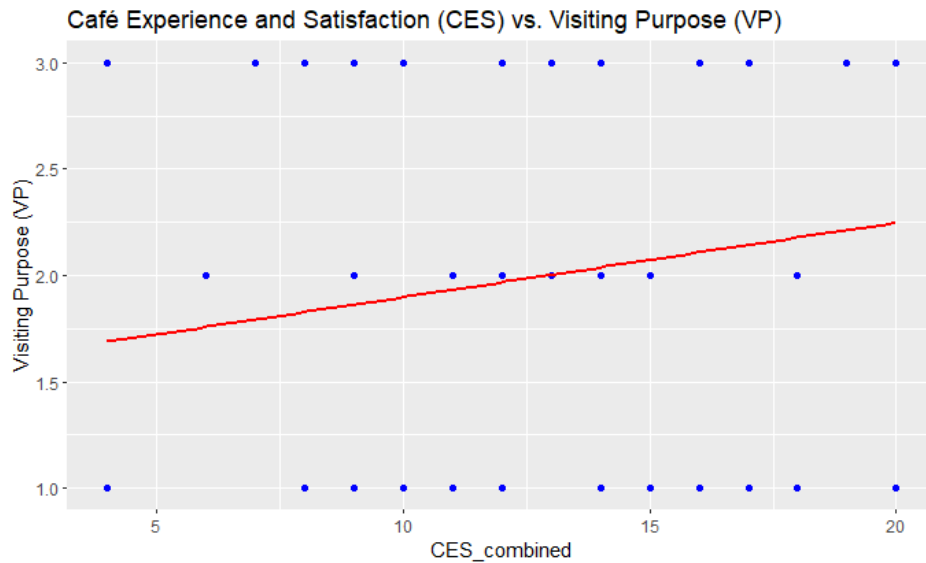


Figure 1. Cafe Exp. and Satisfaction Vs VP Regression line

Figure 1 illustrates the regression line depicting the relationship between café experience and satisfaction and the purpose of visiting (VP). The line represents the predicted values of VP based on the independent variables, suggesting how customer experience and satisfaction may influence the purpose of their visits. However, the slope of the line is minimal, indicating a weak correlation, as reflected in the regression analysis results. This figure visually emphasizes the need for further exploration of other variables that might better account for the variability in customers' visiting purposes.

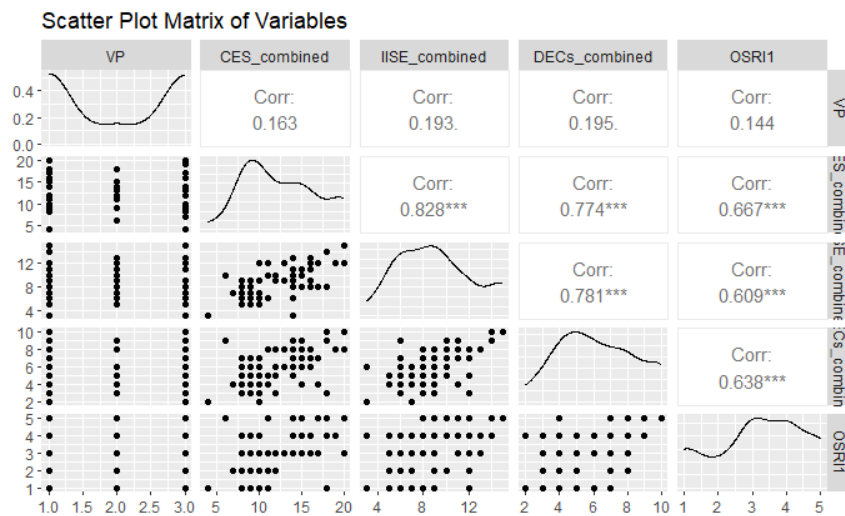


Figure 2. Scatter Plot Matrix of Variables

Figure 2 displays a scatter plot matrix showcasing the relationships among the key variables in the study, including Customer Experience Satisfaction (CES_combined), Intergenerational Interaction Satisfaction Experience (IISE_combined), Digital Engagement Confidence (DECs_combined), Overall Social Reinforcement Intention (OSRI1), and the purpose of visiting (VP). Each scatter plot reveals the pairwise relationships, allowing for visual assessment of correlations and potential patterns among the variables. This matrix aids in identifying any linear or non-linear relationships and informs further statistical analysis, helping researchers to understand the interdependencies among the factors influencing customer behavior in cafés.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study on customer experiences and satisfaction levels in local cafés has revealed critical insights into the dynamics of social engagement and revisitation intentions, particularly among younger consumers aged 18 to 35. The regression analysis indicated a lack of significant relationships between the independent variables—Customer Experience Satisfaction, Intergenerational Interaction Satisfaction Experience, Digital Engagement Confidence, and Overall Social Reinforcement Intention—and the purpose of visiting cafés. These findings suggest that factors influencing customer behavior in cafés are more complex and multifaceted than initially hypothesized.

The study highlights the need for further investigation into additional variables that may better capture the nuances of customer satisfaction and engagement, such as emotional connections, community involvement, and the impact of specific cultural contexts. Future research could explore longitudinal studies to assess how changing social dynamics and technological advancements influence customer behavior over time. Additionally, expanding the demographic scope to include different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and geographical regions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive customer satisfaction in cafés and similar establishments.

The global impact of this research is significant, particularly as the café culture continues to grow worldwide, influenced by social trends and the increasing importance of customer-centric business models. Understanding the role of intergenerational interactions and digital engagement in shaping customer experiences can inform strategies for café owners and marketers, fostering more inclusive and engaging environments. Furthermore, as businesses adapt to a rapidly changing landscape, insights from this study can contribute to the development of policies and practices that enhance customer satisfaction across diverse public spaces, promoting social cohesion and community engagement in an increasingly interconnected world.

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