


# Chapter 5


## Enhancing the Shopping Experience: The Role of Augmented Reality

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The impact of AR is being researched vigorously across various domains, particularly in business. With its emergence, significant disruptions were observed in the way people shop. This paper examines the effect of AR in enhancing the shopping experience, specifically how it improves customer experience, perceptions, and views about products while shopping. This paper also reviews the advantages of AR over virtual reality (VR). The research uses the data collected from 307 respondents using a standardized questionnaire and an extensive literature review to answer the research questions. Hypotheses testing was done to check the relationships between the study variables.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-8608-8.ch005

## INTRODUCTION

Every industry has been transformed by technological advancement, which has improved operations and efficiency. Augmented Reality (AR) is one such technology that is reshaping businesses worldwide (Roxo & Brito, 2018). AR is a more sophisticated version of virtual reality (VR) that brings virtual elements into the real world. This technology superimposes a computer-generated image on top of the user's view of the natural world, resulting in composite artificial imagery. Scientists mention AR as the next evolution in the field of computer vision. AR is already outpacing VR adoption, with corporations leading the way, particularly in healthcare, education, retail, and gaming. AR has a significant advantage over VR because it does not need special hardware and can be experienced through a smartphone. For example, a smartphone camera can be used by a shopper to run an AR application to see what an eyeglass may look like. In contrast, VR may need a dedicated VR headset for the application. Firms that deal with AR technology, products, and services are known as augmented reality companies.

The global market for VR and AR will be worth more than USD 31.12 billion by 2023 (Statista, 2023). Because of the high anticipated demand, retail organizations should be prepared to receive these technological advancements. Interest in this area will grow as these technologies allow organizations to develop and expand their financial capabilities. Implementing AR and VR in retail improves the shopping experience for retailers and customers while lowering retailers' operating costs and providing a vivid experience for customers. Point-of-purchase displays enhance the truth through aesthetically designed shelves, colors, and spotlights to attract customers for detailed product inspections. AR uses a real-world environment to enhance it using computer-generated materials like sound, video, drawings, or GPS data. Customers can use AR to enjoy a genuine experience of a product in today's retail environment, all from the comfort of a lounge chair. Research findings suggest that customers have substantially preferred AR because of its convenience and novelty, which adds to the fun and excitement of the shopping experience (e.g., Arghashi, 2022).

AR applications have been on the ascent with virtual “attempt before-you-purchase” encounters. Brands like Lenskart and IKEA attempt extravagant designs to give prospective customers a feel of the product before the actual purchase. AR has quickly evolved from a nice-to-have feature to a critical innovation for retailers. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the transition to advanced shopping by about five years (Jaswal, 2022). According to a Nielsen global survey from 2019, buyers identified Augmented and Virtual Reality as the top advancements to help them in their daily lives. AR has shown that it can significantly increase the value of a shopping experience for customers (Nielsen Consumer LLC,

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