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Sustainable Retail Entrepreneurship in Emerging Markets: An Empirical Study of Brand Identity, Retailer Satisfaction, and Decision-Making in India's DairySector

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Abstract
In competitive retail environments, branding has emerged as a critical strategic tool influencing retailer behavior and business performance. This study examines retailers' perspectives on brand identity, retailer satisfaction, influencing factors, and challenges in promoting dairy products within a localized market context. The research adopts a descriptive design and is based on primary data collected from 100 retailers using a structured questionnaire and a five-point Likert scale. Spearman's rank correlation was applied to analyze relationships among key variables.The findings reveal that brand identity is significantly influenced by product quality, brand image, customer demand, and recognition, with recognition and product quality emerging as the most influential dimensions. Retailer satisfaction is primarily driven by profit margins, support and communication, and product availability, highlighting the importance of financial and operational efficiency. Incentives and discounts are identified as the most significant factors influencing retailers' decisions, followed by consumer preferences and geographical conditions. Retailers also face challenges such as competition and logistical constraints, which affect performance.This study contributes to sustainable entrepreneurship literature by demonstrating how SMEs integrate branding and operational strategies to achieve long-term economic sustainability in emerging markets. It further highlights the role of small retailers in fostering resilient and inclusive retail ecosystems in Asia.

Keywords: Sustainable Entrepreneurship; Retail Entrepreneurship; Brand Identity; SMEs; Emerging Markets; Supply Chain Challenges

1. Introduction

In the emerging economies like India, retailers are not only an important part of the distribution system by acting as intermediaries, but are also micro-level entrepreneurial actors who drive and shape market results with their strategic choices. Retail businesses and other small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are now seen as one of the primary sources of economic growth, innovation, and sustainability, especially in swiftly evolving and competitive markets (Avelar et al., 2024; Caputo et al., 2024). The retailers in the dairy industry work in very competitive environments and have to constantly strike a balance between profitability, expectations of customers and relationship with suppliers whilst adjusting to the changing market conditions.

In terms of sustainable entrepreneurship, retailers are no longer seen as middlemen but as value-generating players that strike a balance between economic, social, and operational sustainability goals. SMEs play a key role in inclusive economic growth, job creation, and value creation in the long run in emerging market settings like India (Avelar et al., 2024; Caputo et al., 2024). The three elements of strategic adaptability, resource efficiency, and innovation are integrated in sustainable entrepreneurship in such environments to make the business resilient and competitive (Kraus et al., 2018; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2017). Retailers are thus important in influencing the localized market systems by matching the profitability and sustainability especially in the resource-limited and dynamic supply chain systems.

Branding has become one of the most important strategic instruments in these retail ecosystems as it allows differentiation, improvement of the perceived quality of products, and customer trust. Branding, especially in small businesses, is not only a marketing process but a competence, which leads to long-term competitiveness and development (Fluhrer and Brahm, 2025). Resource-wise, brand

identity is a strong intangible resource which helps to sustain competitive advantage in the SMEs (El Nemar et al., 2025). Retailers thus are entrepreneurial decision-makers whose curating, positioning and promotion of products depends on a variety of factors including the quality of the product, brand image, customer demand, and market recognition, all factors that affect business performance and growth (Reijonen et al., 2015).

Sustainability concept in retailing goes beyond the environmental issue and involves economic sustainability and operational sustainability especially in resource-limited SMEs. Sustainable entrepreneurship combines innovation, digitalization, and strategic flexibility to guarantee long-term sustainability (Avelar et al., 2024). Sustainability in the dairy industry is strongly connected with supply chain effectiveness, logistics, and the development of values within the larger ecosystem (Cantele and Signori, 2023). Product perishability, supply issues, and pricing are challenges that retailers need to deal with, that impact operational efficiency and business sustainability in the long-term. Additionally, the retail practices with regard to sustainability also help to increase brand recognition and customer loyalty, which leads to a cascade of the positive effects that can improve performance (Flores-Hernandez et al., 2020).

The market environment in which retails operate is complex and has an impact on decision-making processes as it is guided by various internal and external factors. The nature of consumer behavior, especially in emerging markets, is critical in the strategy of retailers and positioning products (Castaño & Flores, 2018; Desiderio et al., 2026). Also, competitor activities, incentives, brand loyalty schemes, and geographical aspects are all other factors that play a vital role in determining stocking and promotion. Marketing entrepreneurial practices also help SMEs to align their strategies with market needs as well as secure their sustainable growth (Al-Shaikh and Hanaysha, 2023). Simultaneously, network access and access to external resources increase firm survival and flexibility in competitive settings (Acheampong and Hinson, 2019).

Although a significant literature has been developed on branding, consumer behaviour and sustainability, there is a little information about the combined role of the retailers as entrepreneurial players in the dairy industry. The current literature has mostly investigated these dimensions separately, without looking at how they relate to each other, as well as how the brand identity, satisfaction of retailers, factors influencing decisions and operational constraints interrelate. Moreover, the concept of sustainability in SMEs has been actively discussed in reviews and conceptual research, which demonstrates the necessity of empirical research that will relate sustainability practices to actual business decisions (Martins et al., 2022). Moreover, current trends in retail and food systems, such as pricing and regional inequalities, further highlight the significance of studying the retailer-level decision-making in the changing markets.

This study seeks to offer an in-depth discussion of the views of retailers on the branding of dairy products by analyzing the interrelationships between brand identity, satisfaction of retailers, factors that influence and promotional issues. The study adds to a growing body of literature on sustainable entrepreneurship and SME performance by characterizing the retailers as entrepreneurial decision-makers that act within the constraints of sustainability. The results provide important guidelines to retailers, manufacturers and policymakers on how to improve branding, supply chain performance and sustainable retailing practices in the emerging market environment.

2. Literature Review

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as retail businesses, are important in the entrepreneurial activity and development of the economy in the emerging markets. Sustainable entrepreneurship has also become a topic of increased attention where companies are trying to achieve a balance of economic, social, and environmental goals in their business activities. The notion focuses on the responsible managerial actions and value creation in the long-term especially in the resource-bounded settings (Kraus et al., 2018). Sustainability as a part of business strategy means that firms need to enhance their economic performance with environmental and social concerns, which improves their competitive advantage in the long term (Schaltegger and Wagner, 2017). Here, entrepreneurship does not only concern exploiting opportunities, but it also involves building a sustainable value in complex market systems (Hall et al., 2010).

2.1 Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Emerging and Asian Contexts

The trend of sustainable entrepreneurship has gained relevance in the emerging economies, where the SMEs engage in activities under conditions of constrained resources, institutional and dynamic market environments. Sustainability in these situations goes beyond the environmental aspect and also incorporates economic strength, innovativeness, and effective use of resources (Avelar et al., 2024; Caputo et al., 2024). SMEs have a role to play in creation of employment, distribution of income and local economic development hence

they are key to sustainable development in Asia and other emerging economies.

The incorporation of sustainability in business ventures allows companies to be more competitive and at the same time help in the development at greater levels. Sustainable business models focus on the value generation by means of innovation, operational effectiveness, and engagement with stakeholders (Bocken et al., 2014; Cantele and Signori, 2023). The sustainability in agri-food and retail industries is significantly connected to the performance of supply chain, coordination, and flexibility. The retailers in this context act as entrepreneurial players in the sense that they optimize profitability in one hand and on the other hand the long-term sustainability results.

2.2 Branding and SME Performance

In the competitive retail sector, branding is a very significant issue towards improving the performance of SMEs. Brand orientation has been found to be a driving force of business success as it affects customer perceptions, customer loyalty and the overall firm performance. The combination of innovation strengths as well as online platforms allows the improvement of branding strategies with an additional aim to empower companies to reinforce their presence and position in the market (Odoom & Mensah, 2019). The brand-building process in SMEs is progressive and has several steps, including brand-building, brand development, and brand reinforcement, which all lead to long-term growth and sustainability (Centeno et al., 2013). To the retailers, brand identity is a key strategic resource that determines product positioning, customer interactions and sales.

2.3 Ethics and Responsible Retailing in SMEs

Responsible and ethical business practices are becoming a part and parcel of sustainable entrepreneurship, especially in industries that are SME dominated. Transparency, trust-building, and responsible stakeholder engagement are ethical aspects that lead to better relationships between retailers, suppliers, and customers, which ultimately increases the sustainability of business in the long term (Iglesias et al., 2019).

The connections between responsible practices and customer experience and brand perception are tightly connected in a retail setting and greatly affect satisfaction, loyalty, and purchasing behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Moreover, the branding that is sustainability-oriented produces positive effects as it improves organizational performance and relationships with the stakeholders (Flores-Hernandez et al., 2020). In the case of SMEs, which are subject to pressure due to competitive and resource-limited conditions, responsible retailing practices not only contribute to maintaining ethical alignment but also help to enhance operational stability and long-term viability.

2.4 Retail Dynamics and Customer Behavior

Retail environments are undergoing constant change as a result of technological change, shift in consumer preferences, and escalation in competition. The retailing of the future is described as the convergence of digital technologies, stronger customer experiences, and more adaptable and responsive market relationships that demand that retailers become flexible and adaptive (Incorporating, 2017). This is due to the fact that retailers have come to the realization that customer experience during the customer journey is important as it directly influences customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer purchasing behavior (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, external shocks, such as economic misfortunes or international pandemics, severely impact how the retail sector operates and businesses have to adapt to the new reality and consumer needs as quickly as possible (Pantano et al., 2020). The dynamics shed light on strategic decision-making and resilience in the retail entrepreneurship.

2.5 Sustainability and Supply Chain Management

Retail and supply chain management sustainability has emerged as a key issue especially in the dairy industry where operational efficiency and resource management is a key factor. Sustainable supply chain practices are important in enhancing organizational performance and reducing environmental impact (Govindan et al., 2014). Sustainable business models further help firms to generate value by efficiently using the resources, innovating, and engaging the stakeholders (Bocken et al., 2014).

The combination of information and communication technologies (ICT) and supply chain management practices in agri-food supply chains improves the coordination, efficiency, and overall performance (Kumar et al., 2020). Such practices are especially applicable to the dairy industry, where logistics, storage, and distribution issues are of great importance in determining the outcomes of business.

2.6 Challenges in Sustainable SME Operations

The application of sustainable supply chain management practices involves the identification and management of critical success factors, especially in emerging market settings. Organizational commitment, technological capabilities, and appropriate coordination of

stakeholders are some of the factors that must be in

place to ensure successful implementation (Prasad et al., 2018). Nevertheless, SMEs usually struggle to incorporate such practices because of resource constraints, incompetence, and operational issues. These are also complicating market forces, competition and changing consumer needs which require continuous change and strategic plannings.

2.7 Research Gap

Although there is a lot of literature on sustainability, branding, and retail dynamics, there is still a knowledge gap of how these aspects interrelate within a context of retailer decision-making. The literature has been very individual in terms of branding performance, efficiency of the supply chain or customer experience without combining them into a framework. Specifically, the empirical studies on the impact of brand identity, retailer satisfaction, influencing factors and operational challenges as a holistic force on the retailer behavior and business performance in dairy industry are limited. It is vital to address this gap to create an in-depth knowledge of retailers as entrepreneurial agents in sustainable and competitive business settings.

3. Conceptual Framework

Retailers in the dairy industry as retail entrepreneurs in the retail sector, operate as strategic and operational decision-makers balancing various strategic and operational factors that guarantee business performance and sustainability. The framework, in turn, is based on the sustainable entrepreneurship theory, according to which retailers are the agents balancing profitability, relations with stakeholders, and long-term sustainability results. This perspective does not only put retailers in mediating position but also as entrepreneurial agents in the formation of value in localised and resource-constrained market places.

The present study proposes a conceptual model, which integrates brand identity, satisfaction of the retailer, motivation of the same and operational problems to explain the behavior of a retailer under competitive and dynamic environment. The interrelationship between these dimensions leads to the interaction of strategic and operational aspects in order to bring about short-term and long-term sustainability.

Brand identity is regarded as a pivotal strategic skill, which determines what retailers think about them and what business will yield. These aspects include product quality, brand image, customer demand and recognition which determine it. A good brand image boosts customer confidence, better product placement as well as rising sales performance. In theoretical terms, brand equity is a key determinant of the creation of stakeholder perceptions and value, which enhances the business performance and competitiveness in the long term (Keller, 2016). This means that retailers will tend to like and push brands that exhibit high identity and market awareness in the retail environment and this will influence their satisfaction degree.

Key performance-related factors such as profit margins, supplier support and communication, availability and distribution efficiency and after sales service affect retailer satisfaction. An increase in their level of satisfaction implies that retailers can obtain anticipated financial returns and operational efficiency, which are required to keep the business afloat in the long-term. Therefore, brand identity has a major contribution in determining the degree of satisfaction among retailers as it impacts on the market demand and performance of a business.

Besides brand related issues, there are external and market-based issues which affect retailer decision-making including consumer preference, competitor behavior, incentives and discounts, brand loyalty programs and geographical issues. The contemporary retail spaces are becoming more and more complex and integrated, with retailers having to adjust to the changing market environment and customer demands. The shift towards the traditional retailing to more integrated and multi-channel systems brings up the issue of strategic decision-making in product selection and promotion (Verhoff et al., 2015). Retailers as entrepreneurs have to constantly analyze these driving forces to maximize their business strategies and be able to react to evolving market conditions.

Concurrently, retailers are encountering a number of operational issues that serve as limiting factors in their quest to attain sustainable performance in their businesses. These problems are sensitivity of the price, stiff competition, logistical problems, and penetration problems in the market. These limitations not only impact on the profitability in the short run but also on long-term sustainability, especially in industries such as dairy where supply chain efficiencies and product perishability are crucial issues. Thus, these issues are framed as sustainability limitations, which affect the decision-making of retailers and the overall business performance.

The framework implicitly considers several aspects of sustainability, such as economic sustainability (profit margins and financial performance), operational sustainability (supply chain efficiency and logistics), and relational sustainability (supplier support and communication) which can be regarded as having a sustainability perspective. These inter-relational dimensions support the idea of retailers as entrepreneurial actors that act in the context of larger socio-economic structures.

According to these associations, the study conceptual framework postulates that brand identity affects retailer satisfaction, factors that affect influence retailer decisions, and the operational challenges are the restraint of sustainable results.

4. Hypotheses Development

H1: Brand identity has a significant positive impact on retailer satisfaction.

H2: Influencing factors have a significant impact on retailers' decisions to stock and promote dairy products.

H3: Operational challenges have a significant impact on sustainability constraints in retail operations.

H4: Retailer satisfaction positively influences sustainable business performance.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The current research paper follows a systematic approach to research to analyze the views of retailers regarding brand identity, retailer satisfaction, influencing factors, and issues in marketing dairy products. It adheres to the descriptive research design since the study seeks to examine and interpret the relationships between important variables including brand identity, satisfaction of retailers and how the retailers make decisions. This design is suitable in detecting the patterns, associations, and trends among the chosen sample thus offering a holistic picture of the retailer behavior in dairy industry

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5.2 Scope of the Study

The research area is limited to those retailers in the city of Ahilyanagar, and the dairy product market is a narrowed down area. This geographical and industry constraint makes it possible to examine in detail the views of retailers in a specific market context.The study aims at capturing the realities and decision making tendencies of the retailers who deal with dairy products in their quest to provide localized perceptions about branding, satisfaction and operational challenges.

5.3 Data Collection

The research source was primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire, which was distributed to the retailers. The questionnaire was well designed to generate the responses related to the brand image, satisfaction of the retailer, the reasons and challenges faced in the marketing of dairy products. The five-point Likert scale was used to measure the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents which ensured that there was consistency and comparability of responses. Respondents were approached directly and data was collected and the responses recorded.

5.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employs non-probability convenience sampling approach where it uses a sample of 100 retailers in the study area. This strategy was adopted due to the availability and access of the respondents in the selected area. Convenience sampling, though limited to the external validity of the results, provides realistic information about the behavior of retailers as it relates to the research.

5.5 Data Sources

The research is founded on primary and secondary sources of data. The structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data and secondary data was collected using the existing research papers, academic articles and other literature pertinent to the research problem. Primary and secondary data combination increases the credibility and situational insights of the research.

5.6 Variables of the Study

The research takes into account four significant variables, which are brand identity, retailer satisfaction, influencing factors, and issues that retailers have to endure. Dimensions that are used to analyze brand identity include product quality, brand image, customer demand as well as recognition. Such aspects as profit margins, support and communication, availability and distribution, and after-sales service are used to measure the retailer satisfaction. The consumer preferences, competitor actions, incentives and discounts, brand loyalty programs, and geographical conditions are factors that influence it. The issues of the retailers are brought out as the price sensitivity, competition, logistical issues, and market penetration. The combination of these variables can provide a complete framework on the study of the views of retailers in the dairy sector.

5.7 Tools and Techniques of Analysis

The study employs the rank correlation coefficient developed by Spearman to analyse the relationships between the selected variables. It is a suitable statistical approach to examine ordinal data obtained with the help of Likert scales and it helps to determine the strength and the direction of the relationships between the variables. The interpretation of the analysis is to understand the interactions between brand identity, retailer satisfaction, and influencing factors and the operational challenges to provide meaningful information on the decision-making, and performance of retailers.

6. Data Analysis and Results

6.1 Brand Identity Analysis

The five dimensions of the brand identity were assessed through the assistance of the product quality, brand image, customer demand and recognition to identify the connections between them and their contributions in making the brand powerful. The findings show that the variables are highly interrelated and that brand identity is a multidimensional concept wherein the enhancement of one dimension has a positive impact on the rest.

Table 1. Correlation Analysis of Brand Identity Dimensions

Variables	Product Quality	Brand Image	Customer Demand	Recognition
Product Quality	1.000	0.788	0.652	0.881
Brand Image	0.788	1.000	0.674	0.780
Customer Demand	0.348	0.654	1.000	0.845
Recognition	0.841	0.856	0.447	1.000

A product quality, as indicated in Table 1 has a strong positive correlation with brand image (r = 0.788) and very strong correlation with recognition (r = 0.881), which means that an increase in product quality affects the brand perception and recognition significantly. Further, the quality of the products is moderately related to the customer demand (r = 0.652), implying that the better the quality, the more the consumer demand. Associations with brand image, and customer demand also indicate strong associations with recognition as a product of brand identity. In order to further depict these relationships, Figure 1 gives a line depiction of the strength of association between dimensions of brand identity.

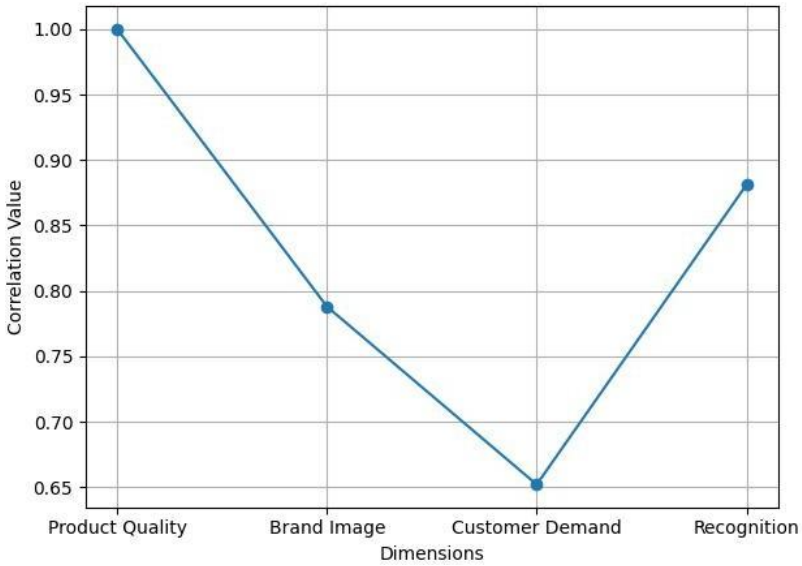

Figure 1. Brand Identity Relationships

Recognition and brand image exhibit a relatively stronger correlation value, whereas customer demand exhibits a medium relationship as shown in Figure 1. The quality of the product can be regarded as a key factor that affects all other dimensions, which proves its key role in building a strong brand.

6.2 Retailer Satisfaction Analysis

The level of satisfaction of the retailers was analysed using the following key determinants; profit margins, support and communication, availability and distribution and after sales service. The results indicate that financial performance and operational support are the main contributors to retailer satisfaction.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis of Retailer Satisfaction Factors

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Profit Margins	0.801	0.001

Support & Communication	0.754	0.032
Availability & Distribution	0.658	0.042
After-Sales Service	0.542	0.062

As indicated in Table 2, the profit margins have a strong positive relationship with retailer satisfaction (r = 0.801), thus making it the most important determinant. Another pair of variables that show a close positive relationship (r = 0.754) is the support and communication, which proves the significance of the effective interaction between retailers and suppliers. Availability and distribution are moderately related (r = 0.658) and this demonstrates the contribution of regular supply and logistical efficiency. Contrarily, the influence of after-sales service is relatively lower (r = 0.542).

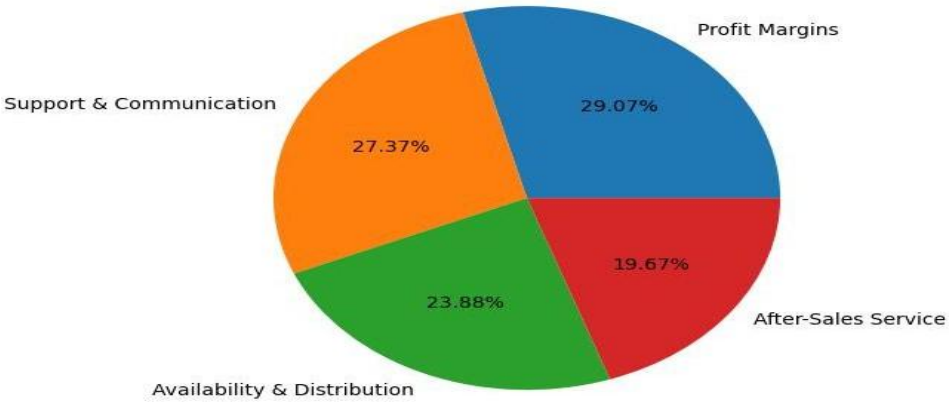

Figure 2. Contribution of Factors to Retailer Satisfaction

As indicated by Figure 2, the largest proportion of retailer satisfaction is contributed by profit margins and support systems albeit with a relatively lower level of support service. This ascertains the role of financial returns and operational coordination as the main drivers of retailer satisfaction.

6.3 Factors Influencing Retailers' Decisions

The choice of stocking and marketing of dairy products by retailers are based on a number of market-driven factors, such as consumer preference, competitor behavior, incentives and discounts, brand loyalty programs, and geographical factors. The analysis discloses the relative value of these factors in determining the behavior of retailers.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis of Factors Influencing Retailers' Decisions

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Consumer Preferences	0.654	0.001
Competitor Actions	0.291	0.001
Incentives & Discounts	0.861	0.001
Brand Loyalty Programs	0.541	0.001
Geographical Factors	0.628	0.001

According to Table 3, the most significant effect on the retailer decision is provided by incentives and discounts (r = 0.861), which makes promotion strategies crucial. The relationship amongst consumer preferences (r = 0.654) also focuses on a demand-based decision-making. Geographical (r = 0.628), brand loyalty programs (r = 0.541) and competitor actions (r = 0.291) play a moderately significant role.

6.4 Challenges Faced by Retailers

There are a number of challenges faced by retailers in the promotion of dairy products which affects their efficiency in operations and their performance in the market. These are price sensitivity, competition, logistics and penetrating the market.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis of Challenges in Promoting Dairy Products

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Price Sensitivity	0.237	0.023
Competition	0.407	0.001
Logistical Issues	0.327	0.001
Market Penetration	0.232	0.020

Competition shares a moderate positive relationship (r = 0.407) and thus it is one of the most important challenges as evidenced in Table 8.4. Another significant relationship is also found between logistical issues (r = 0.327), which is an indication that supply chain efficiency is significant. Price sensitivity (r = 0.237) and market penetration (r = 0.232) have less pronounced but significant relationships, indicating that they are also additional restraints. In order to give a comparative perspective on the influencing factors and challenges, a bar graph representation is given in Figure 3.

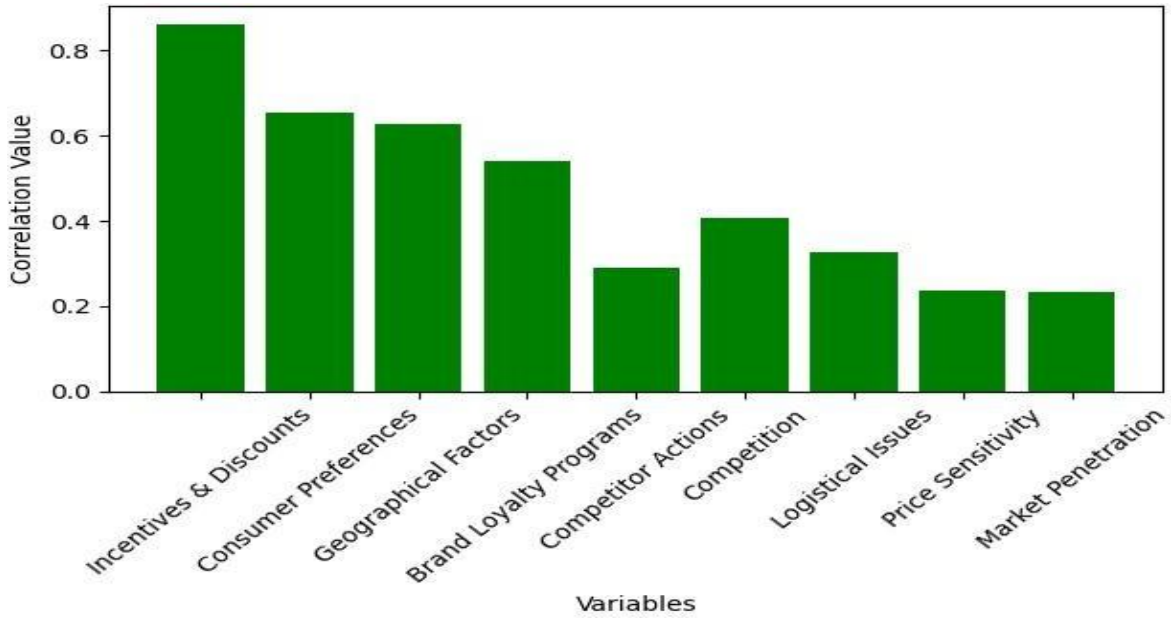

Figure 3. Influencing Factors and Challenges in Retail Operations

This shows that the most powerful influencing factor is incentives and discounts and the most important challenge is competition and logistical issues. This analogy demonstrates the difference between decision driving forces and implementation limitations.

7. Discussion

The results of the research offer valuable information regarding the influence of branding, the satisfaction of retailers, the determinants of decision-making, and operational issues in the dairy retail market. The findings affirm that the retailers serve as important entrepreneurial players whose actions are shaped by the market-based determinants as well as operational restrictions. Sustainability and competitiveness are interconnected in the context of emerging markets as companies have to keep changing their strategies to sustain the performance and ensure their survival in the long-run (Roxas and Chadee, 2016; Famiyeh et al., 2018).

This information may be explained in terms of sustainable entrepreneurship in which retailers focus more on economically viable approaches like incentives, profit margins, and product positioning as they maneuver operational limitations like logistics and competition. This is indicative of the conditions of SMEs in emerging economies, where the sustainability remains, more resource-based and adaptive as opposed to being environmental. Retailers, then, are resource-constrained actors who seek to strike the right balance between profitability in the short term and business survival in the long term.

The brand identity analysis indicates that the product quality, brand image, customer demand, and recognition are closely connected with each other with a product quality being a major driver. The high correlations found between the product quality and recognition, and brand image, reflect that the retailers have regarded quality as a key determinant of brand strength. This result aligns with previous studies that emphasized the importance of brand-related variables like

awareness, reputation, and customer perception in enhancing the overall brand performance (Foroudi, 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2015). Moreover, the contribution of brand equity through ethical brand perception and recognition has been demonstrated, supporting the significance of a high brand identity in determining the behavior of retailers (Iglesias et al., 2019). In terms of entrepreneurship, retailers can use a good brand identity to minimize uncertainty and enhance sales performance, thus facilitating sustainable business development.

The findings associated with retailer satisfaction indicate that the most important determinants are profit margins and support systems. The positive correlation between retailer decisions and profit margins is very strong, indicating that financial performance is a significant element in influencing decisions made by retailers. Likewise, support and communication portray the essence of effective collaboration in the supply chain. The results of this research are consistent with other studies that underline that operational competitiveness and sustainability performance are closely interconnected with the effective management practices and use of resources (Famiyeh et al., 2018). In terms of sustainability, the retailer satisfaction may be viewed as a measure of business stability and sustainability since, companies that demonstrate a stable financial and operational performance have higher chances of maintaining its operations in the long run.

The influencing factor analysis shows that the most powerful influencing factors are incentives and discounts which are followed by consumer preferences and geographical factors. This implies that retailers focus on short-term economic gains and at the same time, demand-based and contextual considerations. The contemporary retail settings are becoming more complex and integrated in distribution, whereby retailers have to react to a variety of channels and changing customer demands (Huebner et al., 2016; Verhoef et al., 2022). The somewhat lesser impact of competitive action indicates that retailers are more attentive to direct financial rewards over competitive pressure, indicating an opportunistic and pragmatic stance to entrepreneurship.

The results pertaining to challenges reflect the fact that retailers have the greatest impediments in terms of competition and logistical problems. Competition is also very high, which is an indication of the dynamic environment of the retail markets with companies having to innovate and adapt continuously in order to survive. Evidence on innovation and firm survival implies that firms in competitive settings have to build adaptive capacities to continue to perform in the long term (Cefis & Marsili, 2019). Logistical problems such as transportation, storage and inefficiency in supply chain also make the operations of the retail business more difficult, especially in the dairy industry where commodity perishability is also a big issue. These issues align with the research highlighting the significance of supply chain interactions and coordination in attaining sustainability (Yun et al., 2019).

In a wider sustainability consideration, these operational issues are a constraining factor that prevents the capacity of retailers to realize long term business performance. Supply chain effectiveness and information-driven decision-making play a pivotal role in overcoming these limitations since the advanced functionality of analytics and organizational flexibility has the potential to promote operational responsiveness and efficiency (Dubey et al., 2019). Moreover, eco-innovation and sustainable practices have been demonstrated to facilitate growth and competitiveness of firms, especially in SMEs that work in resource-constrained settings (Demirel and Danisman, 2019).

The external shocks, including the economic uncertainty and world crises, also highlight the importance of flexibility in retail activities. The dynamic nature of the retail markets forces the businesses to keep on refining their strategies as the conditions and consumer expectations change (Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020). This reinforces the necessity of sustainability and strategic decision making in the retail practices in order to ensure long-term resilience and success.

The research identifies interdependence of branding, satisfaction of retailers, choice, and operational matters. Retailers are also a kind of entrepreneurial decision-makers who evaluate the opportunities in the market, financial profits, and the constraints of the business to sustain the business. The findings contribute to the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship by indicating the usefulness of branding and operational efficiency in enhancing performance and the necessity to introduce structural problems in the supply chain in order to achieve sustainable growth of the retail.

8. Implications

The study results provide valuable theoretical and practical implications to the area of retail entrepreneurship and sustainable business practices. Theoretically, the research will help to bridge the gap in the literature by shaping branding, retailer satisfaction, and decision-making factors and operational problems in a comprehensive framework. It adds to the body of knowledge on retailers as actor entrepreneurs that can shape the market outcomes by making strategic and operational choices. Connected to brand identity,

retailer satisfaction and decision-making, the study identifies the importance of intangible assets including brand perception and recognition in determining the business performance. Moreover, the incorporation of challenges related to sustainability, including logistics and competition, contributes to the developing literature on sustainable entrepreneurship by showing how the constraints of operations influence the viability of small and medium-sized retail businesses in the long run.

In terms of sustainable entrepreneurship, the paper highlights the fact that, in the context of emerging markets, retailers have to work in resource-limited environments, where economic, operational, and relational sustainability has to be weighed in harmony. The results support the assumption that sustainability among SMEs is often motivated by their practical and adaptive approaches as opposed to the environmental concerns. This helps to develop a better understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship in the case of emerging economies, where the company is more focused on resilience, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

The study offers great information to retailers, the manufacturers of dairy products, and the stakeholders in the supply chain. In the case of retailers, the results indicate the need to prioritize on quality products, good brand image, and good relationships with suppliers to improve customer satisfaction and business. The high impact of incentives and discounts indicates that retailers need to take advantage of promotional plans to maximize sales and profitability. In the case of dairy brands and manufacturers, the findings emphasize the importance of maintaining the quality of the products, an effective distribution channel, as well as effective communication with the retailers to enhance brand acceptance and performance in the market. Also, the recognition of logistical problems and competition as the two major challenges suggests the need to enhance the efficiency of the supply chain, infrastructure, and the alignment of the stakeholders.

Policymaking With regards to policy, the research offers information to policymakers to enhance sustainable SME ecosystems within emerging Asian markets by improving infrastructure, enhancing supply chain integration, and the institutional support systems. The effectiveness of the functioning of small retailers and their sustainability in the long run can be enhanced through strengthening logistics networks and encouraging digital integration and access to resources.

In sustainability context, the results suggest the need to build resilient and inclusive retail networks that facilitate the growth of small businesses and guarantee the stability of the market. Stakeholders can play a role in sustainable development of retail in competitive and dynamic markets by ensuring that the branding strategies are aligned with operational efficiency and market responsiveness.

The research highlights the significance of combining branding, operations effectiveness, and sustainability oriented decision-making to facilitate business success in the retail field in the long run.

9. Conclusion

The present study highlights the critical role of brand identity, retailer satisfaction, influencing factors, and operational challenges in shaping retailer perspectives within the dairy sector. The findings confirm that brand identity is a key determinant of retail success, with product quality, brand image, customer demand, and recognition collectively contributing to stronger market positioning. Among these, recognition and product quality emerge as the most influential dimensions, reinforcing the importance of consistent quality and effective branding strategies.

Retailer satisfaction is primarily driven by profit margins, support and communication, and availability of products, indicating that financial returns and operational efficiency are essential for sustaining retailer engagement. While after-sales service has a comparatively weaker influence, overall satisfaction is closely linked to the ability of retailers to achieve stable and profitable operations. The study also reveals that incentives and discounts play a dominant role in influencing retailers' decisions, followed by consumer preferences and geographical factors, highlighting the importance of both economic benefits and market demand in decision-making.

However, retailers face significant challenges, particularly in terms of competition and logistical constraints, which affect their ability to promote products effectively. Price sensitivity and market penetration further add to these complexities. Overall, the study concludes that achieving sustainable retail performance in the dairy sector requires a balanced approach that integrates strong branding, efficient supply chain management, and strategic responsiveness to market dynamics.

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