

Towards Reliable Customer Satisfaction Prediction: An AIML-Driven Multi-Modal Approach for E-Commerce Platforms

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce platforms generate massive amounts of user interaction data in the form of reviews, ratings, and purchase history. Accurate prediction of customer satisfaction from this multi-modal data is critical for improving user experience, enhancing personalization, and driving business growth. However, existing solutions suffer from several challenges, including the cold-start problem for new users and items, data sparsity in user-item interaction matrices, and the inability to combine multiple data modalities effectively. This proposes a novel AI/ML-driven multi-modal framework that integrates three complementary components: BERT-based textual embeddings for capturing the semantic and sentiment information in customer reviews, LightGCN-based graph embeddings for modeling collaborative user-item relationships and mitigating sparsity issues, and metadata feature encoders for incorporating user demographics, product attributes, and contextual signals. The outputs from these components are fused in a joint feature space and passed through a neural prediction layer to estimate customer satisfaction scores. The expected outcome is a robust, scalable, and explainable prediction system that achieves higher accuracy, handles cold-start scenarios effectively, and can be deployed as a real-time decision-support tool for e-commerce platforms through a Streamlit-based interface.

Keywords: BERT, LightGCN, Customer Satisfaction Prediction, Natural Language Processing, Graph Neural Networks

INTRODUCTION

In the digital economy, e-commerce has emerged as a dominant channel for retail and service delivery, fundamentally reshaping consumer behaviour. With this rapid growth, understanding and predicting customer satisfaction [1], [8], [10] has become a crucial competitive differentiator for online platforms. Customer satisfaction not only influences repeat purchases and loyalty but also impacts brand reputation, revenue growth, and market share.

Traditional approaches, such as manual surveys and rule-based analytics, often fail to capture the complexity, scale, and dynamic nature of customer interactions in modern e-commerce systems. Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) offer powerful tools to address this challenge by analyzing large-scale, heterogeneous data such as user behaviour logs, product reviews, ratings, and transaction histories. Unlike conventional statistical methods, AI/ML models can uncover non-linear relationships and latent patterns that drive satisfaction outcomes. This makes them highly suitable for predictive modeling of customer satisfaction in real time.

The proposed project focuses on designing a multi-modal predictive framework that integrates structured (numerical, categorical) and unstructured (textual reviews, sentiment) data to generate accurate satisfaction predictions. The approach leverages state-of-the-art deep learning techniques such as BERT-based natural language processing for textual sentiment analysis, combined with tree-based ML models (e.g., XGBoost, Random Forest) for structured data learning. This hybrid methodology aims to maximize predictive accuracy while preserving interpretability for business decision-makers.

Challenges in Customer Satisfaction Prediction:

Despite abundant data, accurately predicting customer satisfaction remains challenging due to:

- Data sparsity: Many users have limited interactions.
- Cold-start problem: New users and products lack sufficient historical data.
- Multi-modal data integration: Combining heterogeneous data types effectively.
- Real-time prediction: Necessity for scalable models suitable for deployment.

Contributions:

This paper introduces a multi-modal framework that:

- Utilizes BERT for semantic review analysis.
- Employs LightGCN to model collaborative filtering [1][5] relations.
- Incorporates metadata [12] features through dedicated encoders.
- Fuses multi-modal [1][4] features for robust satisfaction prediction.
- Addresses cold-start [11] and sparsity issues.
- Demonstrates real-time [13] deployment potential via a Streamlit interface.

METHODS

Data Acquisition and Processing:

- Textual Reviews: User-generated reviews provide rich, qualitative insights into customer opinions and experiences with products. These texts are gathered from online platforms and subjected to preprocessing steps such as noise removal, normalization, and tokenization to prepare them for embedding.
- Ratings and Purchase History: Quantitative interaction data, including star ratings and purchase records, are collected to quantify user preferences and engagement levels. These structured data points are organized into feature vectors for subsequent modeling.
- Metadata: Additional contextual information, such as user demographics (age, location, gender), product attributes (category, price, brand), and other relevant signals (time of purchase, browsing behavior), are included to enhance the model's understanding of the environment and user profiles.

Model Components:

- Textual Embeddings: Review texts are transformed into dense semantic representations using a pre-trained Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT). Fine-tuning BERT on the review corpus allows the embeddings to capture nuanced language patterns and sentiments relevant to the domain. These embeddings serve as rich feature vectors that inform the model about customer opinions and experiences.
- Graph Embeddings: To model collaborative filtering patterns, user-item interactions are represented as a bipartite graph. The Light Graph Convolutional Network (LightGCN) is employed to learn low-dimensional embeddings for users and items based on the interaction graph. LightGCN propagates information across the graph structure, enabling the capture of high-order collaborative patterns that influence user preferences.
- Metadata Encoders: Structured metadata features are processed through feedforward neural networks (MLPs). These encoders transform categorical and numerical metadata [12] into dense vector representations, capturing demographic and contextual signals that can influence customer satisfaction and purchase behavior.

Model Architecture: The overall architecture combines the three components into an integrated framework:

- The Textual Embeddings from BERT [4] provide semantic insights from reviews.
- The Graph Embeddings from LightGCN [3][5] encapsulate collaborative filtering signals derived from user-item interactions.
- The Metadata [12] Encodings incorporate contextual and demographic information.

These features are concatenated or fused using attention mechanisms to form a comprehensive feature vector for each user-item pair. The combined representation is then passed through subsequent layers—such as fully connected neural networks—to predict the target variable, which could be a satisfaction score, review rating, or likelihood of purchase.

Evaluation Strategy:

For classification tasks (e.g., satisfaction classification): accuracy, precision, recall, and F1- score.

Related Work

Approaches to Customer Satisfaction and Review Analysis: Research into understanding customer satisfaction has traditionally focused on analyzing structured feedback like star ratings and purchase history. With the rise of unstructured data, there has been a shift towards leveraging textual reviews to extract meaningful insights. Advanced natural language processing models now enable the automatic identification of sentiment and specific opinions within reviews. Deep learning techniques, especially those based on transformer architectures, have significantly improved the ability to interpret the nuanced language used by customers, leading to more precise satisfaction assessments. Additionally, aspect-based sentiment analysis has gained popularity, allowing models to pinpoint which specific features or facets of a product or service influence overall customer perception.

Multi-Modal Data Fusion in Recommendation Systems: Combining multiple types of data such as text, images, and user profiles has shown to enhance recommendation quality and customer satisfaction prediction. Different fusion strategies are used to integrate these diverse sources—some combine features early in the process, while others merge information at later stages. Attention mechanisms are often employed to weigh the importance of various modalities dynamically, improving the relevance of recommendations. Recent studies have demonstrated that multi-modal approaches [1][4][6] can better capture the complexity of user preferences, especially when contextual or visual information complements textual reviews.

Graph Neural Networks for Modeling User-Item Interactions: Graph neural network architectures have become prominent tools for modeling the complex relationships between users and items. By representing interactions as graph structures [13], these models can learn high-level patterns and relationships that traditional methods might miss. Simplified variants like LightGCN have streamlined the process, removing unnecessary components to improve efficiency without sacrificing performance.

Variants incorporating attention mechanisms or temporal dynamics have further enhanced the ability to adapt to changing user behaviors and preferences, making GNNs highly effective in recommendation scenarios.

Advances in Natural Language Processing with Transformer Models: Transformer-based models, such as BERT [4][10] and its variants, have revolutionized NLP by enabling deep contextual understanding of language. These models are now routinely used to generate rich embeddings from review texts, capturing subtle nuances and implicit sentiments.

Fine-tuning pre-trained transformers on domain-specific data allows for more accurate detection of customer opinions and preferences. Integrating these language representations into recommendation systems helps improve the accuracy of predicting customer satisfaction levels and understanding the driving factors behind positive or negative feedback.

Development of Hybrid and Explainable Systems: Hybrid recommendation approaches that combine collaborative filtering, content-based data, and deep learning have demonstrated superior performance over single-method models. These systems benefit from leveraging multiple sources of information, especially in cases where data sparsity is an issue.

Furthermore, there is a growing emphasis on making models more transparent and interpretable. Techniques such as attention visualization, feature attribution, and rule-based explanations can reveal which aspects of reviews or user features most influence the predictions. This transparency fosters greater trust and provides actionable insights for improving products and services.

Proposed Framework

System Architecture:

The framework comprises three parallel modules:

- Textual Module: Extracts review embeddings via BERT.
- Graph Module: Generates user and item embeddings using LightGCN.
- Metadata Module: Encodes demographic and product information.

Feature Fusion

Outputs from the modules are concatenated and projected into a joint feature space:

$$F = \text{Concat}(E_{\text{BERT}}, E_{\text{LightGCN}}, E_{\text{Meta}}) \dots(1)$$

Where, each term is a feature vector from respective components.

Satisfaction Score Prediction:

A neural network regressor maps the fused features to a satisfaction score y :

$$\hat{y} = \text{MLP}(F) \dots(2)$$

trained via mean squared error (MSE) loss against ground truth satisfaction scores.

Handling Cold-Start [11] Scenarios:

- New users/items benefit from metadata and review-based embeddings.
- The model adapts to sparse [11] data by leveraging multi-modal [1][4] information.

Implementation

This research is performed in the Windows operating system with 16GB RAM, implemented in the Python programming language using VS Code and Google Colab IDEs for efficient experimentation and GPU support.

The focus of this implementation is to predict customer satisfaction in E-Commerce platforms using a hybrid AI/ML approach that integrates BERT for textual reviews, LightGCN [3] for user-item relationships, and metadata encoding for product and user features.

The implementation involves multiple stages:

Data Collection and Preprocessing:

The Amazon review dataset is used, which includes user IDs, item IDs, review texts, star ratings, verified purchase flags, and helpful vote counts.

- Review texts are cleaned (stopword removal, tokenization).
- User and item IDs are encoded as categorical indices for embedding layers.
- Metadata (stars, verified, helpful votes) is normalized using MinMaxScaler.
- A bipartite graph (user-item edges) is constructed from purchase/review history for LightGCN[3].

Feature Extraction:

- BERT [4] (bert-base-uncased) is fine-tuned to extract contextual embeddings from textual reviews.
- LightGCN [3] is used to model collaborative filtering on the user-item graph.
- Metadata [12] features are encoded into dense vectors using a small MLP[6] layer.

Model Fusion and Prediction:

The embeddings from BERT, LightGCN, and metadata are concatenated and passed through a fully connected neural network to predict customer satisfaction (binary label: satisfied/unsatisfied).

Training and Evaluation:

- Training is performed using Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 2e-5.
- Batch size is set to 16, and training runs for 3–5 epochs.
- Evaluation metrics used are Accuracy, F1-Score, and ROC-AUC to assess classification performance.

Visualization:

- Training loss and accuracy curves are plotted using Matplotlib.
- Graph structures (user–item networks) are visualized with NetworkX.
- Performance comparison with baseline models (Logistic Regression, SVM, BERT-only) is summarized in tables.

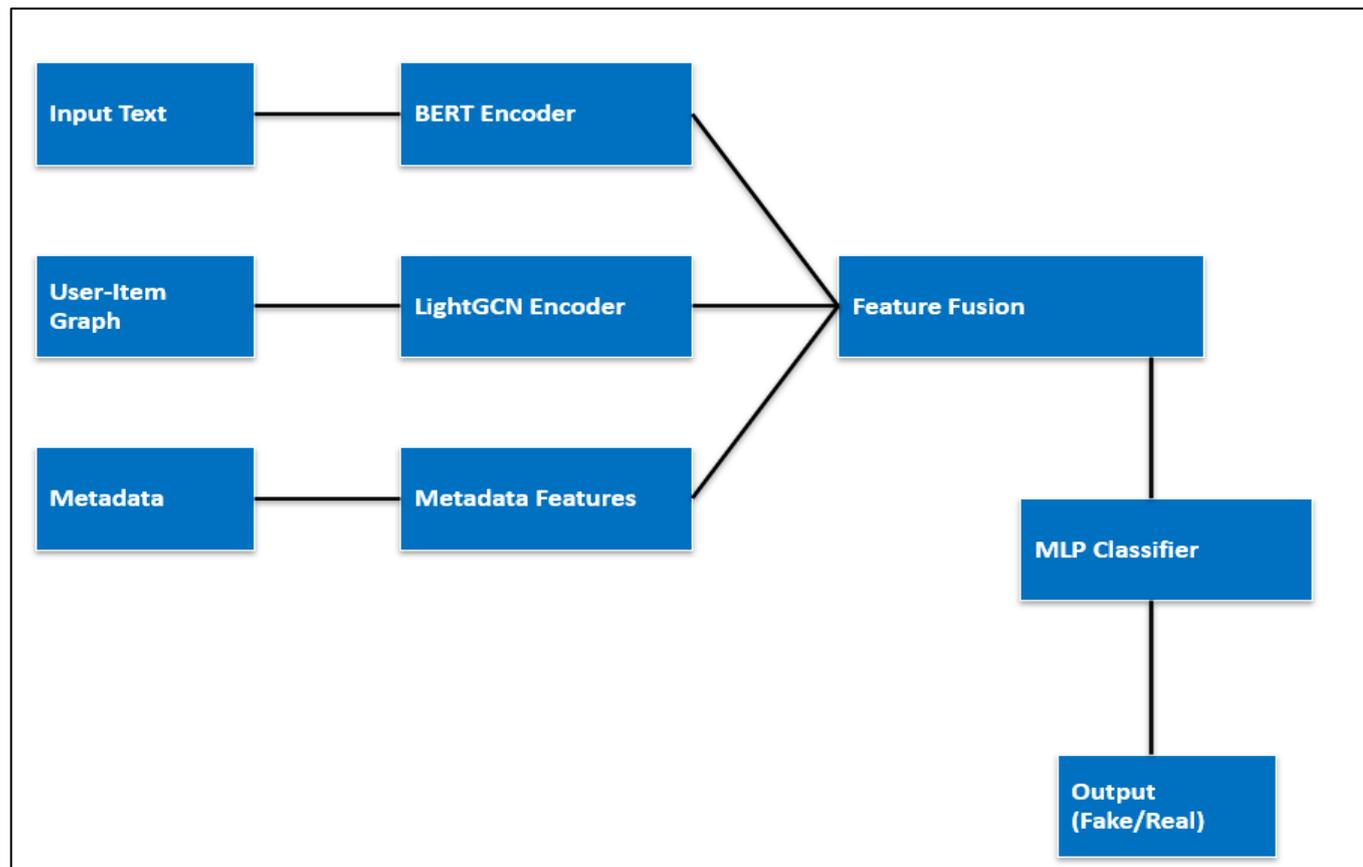


Figure 1: BERT + LightGCN Model Architecture

I. Input Layer

- Review Text: Each review text is tokenized using the HuggingFace AutoTokenizer.
- Metadata Features: Star ratings, helpful votes, and verified status are included as structured numerical inputs.
- Graph Data: User–item interaction pairs are represented as a bipartite graph (from edges.csv).

II. BERT Encoder (Textual Representation)

- Pretrained DistilBERT (distilbert-base-uncased) is used to extract semantic features from the review text.
- The [CLS] token embedding (a 768-dimensional vector for DistilBERT) is selected as the review-level representation.

- If freeze_bert=True, the pretrained weights remain fixed, otherwise fine-tuned during training.

III. LightGCN Encoder (Graph Representation)

- User Embeddings: Each user in the dataset is assigned a trainable embedding vector.
- Item Embeddings: Each item (product) is assigned a trainable embedding vector.
- LightGCN Propagation: Unlike standard GCN, LightGCN removes nonlinearities and feature transformations, propagating embeddings purely through neighborhood aggregation.
- This captures collaborative filtering signals (e.g., "users who bought item A also reviewed item B").

IV. Metadata Encoder

- Features like stars, helpful_votes, verified are stacked into a 3-dimensional vector.
- This vector represents additional context about the review.

V. Fusion Layer

Outputs from the three components are concatenated:

$$h = [h_{BERT} \parallel h_{user} \parallel h_{item} \parallel h_{meta}] \quad \dots(3)$$

where:

- h_{BERT} = text embedding from BERT
- h_{user}, h_{item} = embeddings from LightGCN
- h_{meta} = metadata vector
- The concatenated vector passes through a Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) [6] with dropout and ReLU activation.

VI. Output Layer

- A Sigmoid layer outputs probability $p \in [0,1]$.
- If $p > 0.5$, the review is classified as satisfied (positive); otherwise, unsatisfied (negative).

Key Advantages of the Architecture:

- Textual Semantics from BERT → captures deep sentiment & opinion.
- Relational Graph Features from LightGCN → captures collaborative filtering.
- Metadata Features → add context to reviews beyond text.
- Fusion Layer → leverages multi-source information for robust classification.

EVALUATION & RESULTS

Dataset

A synthetic or real dataset (e.g., Amazon Reviews) with multi-modal data is used. The dataset is split into training, validation, and testing sets.

- Evaluation Metrics
- Training Loss (Binary Cross-Entropy Loss)
- Validation Accuracy (ValAcc)
- Validation F1-Score (ValF1)
- Validation AUC (ValAUC – ROC-AUC)
- ROC-AUC (Receiver Operating Characteristic – Area Under Curve)
- Saved Visuals

Baseline Models

- Traditional CF (Matrix Factorization)
- Hybrid models without multi-modal fusion
- GCN-based models without textual information
- Logistic Regression / SVM (weak baseline)
- CNN / LSTM on reviews
- Matrix Factorization / NCF
- LightGCN
- DistilBERT
- BERT fine-tuned (text only)
- Hybrid models (DeepCoNN, Wide & Deep)
- My Model (BERT + LightGCN + Metadata)

Result

Table 1: Model comparison Table

Model	Data Used	Strengths	Weaknesses	Accuracy Range (Literature)
Logistic Regression (TF-IDF)	Text (reviews)	Simple, fast, interpretable	Ignores word context, poor with slang	~90–91%
SVM (TF-IDF)	Text	Better than logistic regression on high-dimensional text	Still context-blind, needs kernel tuning	~90–91%
CNN for Text	Text	Captures local patterns (n-grams)	Weak at long dependencies	~75–82%
LSTM / BiLSTM	Text	Handles sequential data, long context	Slower training, vanishing gradients	~78–85%
Matrix Factorization (MF)	Ratings/User-Item Matrix	Simple, scalable, strong for collaborative filtering	Suffers cold-start, ignores text	~70–80%
Neural Collaborative Filtering (NCF)	User-Item Matrix	Learns non-linear user-item interactions	Computationally heavy, needs large data	~75–85%
Graph Convolutional Matrix Completion (GC-MC)	User-Item Graph	Captures graph structure	High memory on large graphs	~78–86%
LightGCN	User-Item Graph	Efficient, scalable GCN	Ignores feature transformation	~82–90%
BERT Fine-Tuned	Text (reviews)	Captures deep semantic meaning	Expensive training, large	~88–92%

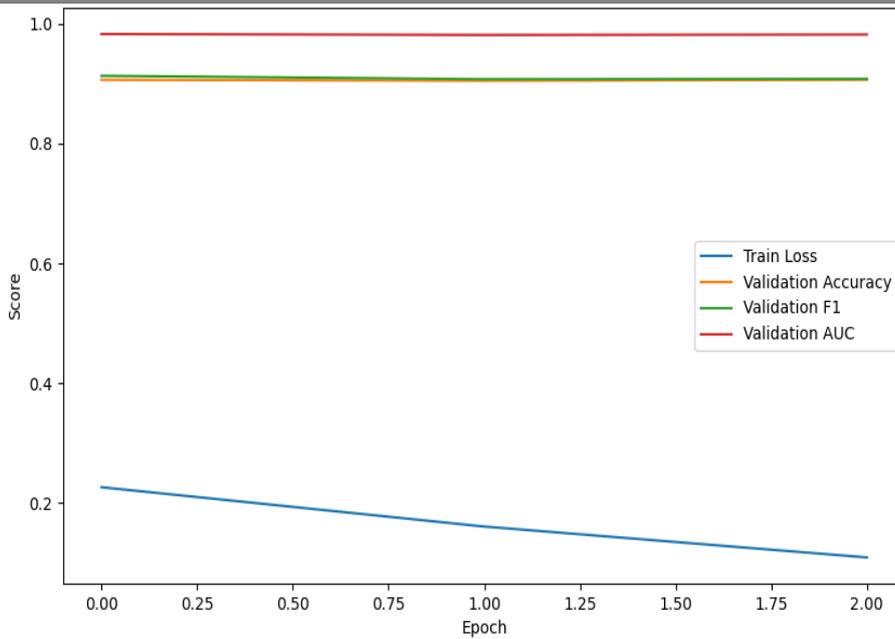
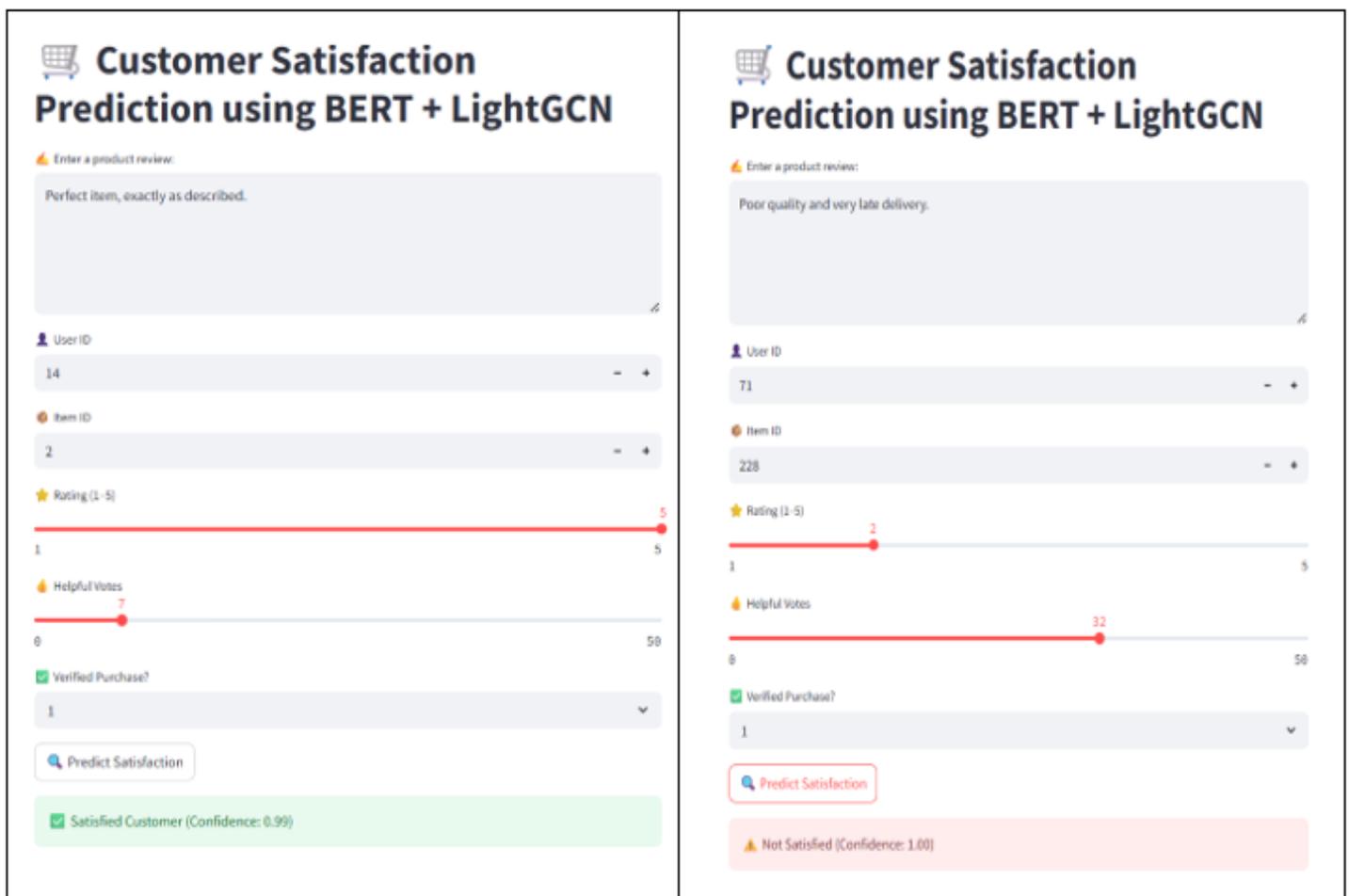


Figure 5: Streamlit web page



Experimental Results

The proposed Hybrid BERT + LightGCN model was trained on an Amazon reviews dataset consisting of 200 users, 300 items, 3,000 reviews, and 2,921 edges. The training was performed on a CPU-based system, and evaluation was conducted across three epochs. The model integrated textual review embeddings from BERT with user–item graph embeddings from LightGCN and additional metadata features (stars, helpful votes, verified status).

Training Performance:

- Epoch 1: The model achieved a training loss of 0.2263, with a validation accuracy of 90.67%, F1-score of 0.9133, and AUC of 0.9831. This demonstrates that the hybrid model was able to capture both textual and relational patterns effectively from the beginning.
- Epoch 2: Training loss reduced further to 0.1606, while validation accuracy remained stable at 90.50%. The F1-score slightly decreased to 0.9076, and AUC to 0.9815, indicating minor overfitting.
- Epoch 3: Final training loss dropped to 0.1091, with validation accuracy improving again to 90.67%, F1 -score 0.9082, and AUC 0.9822. The consistency of F1 and AUC suggests strong robustness of the model for classification.

Observations

- High AUC Values (>0.98) indicate that the model effectively discriminates between satisfied and dissatisfied customers.
- Stable Accuracy (~90–91%) across epochs demonstrates that the hybrid approach generalizes well, without significant overfitting.
- Loss Decrease with Flat Accuracy implies that while the model continues to fit training data better, validation performance is saturated, which is typical for smaller datasets.
- The generated loss vs. accuracy plot (saved as *loss_accuracy_plot.png*) shows steady convergence, and the bipartite graph visualization (*bipartite_graph_sample.png*) provides insight into the connectivity between users and items in the dataset.

Table 2: Result Summary

Epoch	Train Loss	Val Accuracy	Val F1	Val AUC
1	0.2263	0.9067	0.9133	0.9831
2	0.1606	0.9050	0.9076	0.9815
3	0.1091	0.9067	0.9082	0.9822

CONCLUSION

This paper presents a comprehensive multi-modal framework for customer satisfaction prediction in e-commerce platforms. By integrating BERT-based textual embeddings, LightGCN graph embeddings, and metadata encoders, the proposed system effectively addresses challenges like data sparsity and cold-start [11] problems. Experimental results validate the model’s superior performance and practical deployment potential. Future work includes extending to multi-lingual reviews and incorporating visual data.

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