**Portfolio Overview:**

This portfolio will require you to demonstrate the ability to apply mathematical tools and analytical methodologies to real-world business decision-making scenarios. The tasks will focus on assessing data quality, analysing decision alternatives, interpreting results, and effectively communicating findings. The portfolio will be divided into several tasks, each designed to align with one or more of the specified learning outcomes.

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| **Conditions:**   * The due date/time for submission of this assessment is 11:59 PM on 13/9/2024 * This assessment is an individual work. * Other than the discussions held during the class you need to collaborate with other teammates in completing this assessment. * If you use the ideas, models or words of others they must be properly referenced (**PLAGIARISM** is a serious offence and can result in harsh penalties). * By submitting the tutorial via Brightspace you are agreeing that the work is your own and that you have kept a copy of all files, codes, designs and documents. * Use “ecommerce\_product\_dataset” in Brightspace, or download it from:  <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/muhammadroshaanriaz/e-commerce-trends-a-guide-to-leveraging-dataset> | |
| **Submission instructions:**   1. Include an executive summary reflecting on the learning outcomes achieved through the portfolio work. 2. Ensure that the portfolio is professionally presented, with clear organization, proper citations, and a coherent narrative linking all tasks 3. Compile all the tasks into a single portfolio a single ZIP file. 4. The Zip file should be named according to the naming standard StudentLastName.zip. 5. Submission should be through the Learning Management System (Brightspace). 6. Include your details below and submit this document alongside with all other files. 7. See the marking criteria that will be used to assess your work at the end of this assessment. 8. Late submission without an approved extension will result in a penalty of 10% reduction in the marks from the total available, per calendar day late. 9. If you request an extension, you must email your lecturer one week before the due date. 10. A tutorial submission over 7 days late will not be accepted. | |
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**Case Study:**

An online retail company, "TrendyShop," has experienced significant growth in recent years, expanding its product offerings and customer base. However, with this growth, the company has encountered several challenges, including high cart abandonment rates, inconsistent sales during peak shopping periods, and difficulty maintaining optimal inventory levels. The company's leadership is keen on leveraging data to address these issues and improve overall performance.

The "E-commerce Trends" dataset provides a comprehensive look at online shopping behaviours, customer demographics, product performance, and sales trends, making it an excellent resource for the following tasks.

**Task 1: Data Description and Statistical Summary**

**Objective:** Describe the dataset and provide a statistical summary.

**Instructions:**

* Provide a brief description of the dataset, including the types of variables and what they represent (e.g., customer demographics, sales figures).
* Generate a statistical summary of the data, including measures such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for key variables.
* Explain the significance of these statistics in understanding the dataset.

**Deliverable:** A report summarizing the dataset description and statistical overview.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  This report analyzes the dataset provided by "TrendyShop," an online retail company experiencing growth alongside challenges such as high cart abandonment rates, inconsistent sales, and inventory management issues. By leveraging the "E-commerce Trends" dataset, the aim is to gain insights into customer behavior, product performance, and sales trends to identify potential areas of improvement. This initial task provides a detailed description of the dataset and a statistical summary of key variables, which will serve as the foundation for subsequent analyses.  **Dataset Description**  The dataset consists of **999 entries** and **16 columns**, with a mix of numerical and categorical variables. The key attributes of the dataset include:   1. **ProductID**: A unique identifier assigned to each product. 2. **ProductName**: The name of the product, indicating the specific item being sold (some missing values). 3. **Category**: A categorical variable that describes the type of product (some missing values). 4. **Price**: The numerical value representing the price of each product in the dataset. 5. **Rating**: A numerical variable representing customer ratings on a scale of 1 to 5. 6. **NumReviews**: The number of customer reviews for each product. 7. **StockQuantity**: The quantity of the product available in stock. 8. **Discount**: The percentage of discount applied to the product. 9. **Sales**: The number of units sold for each product. 10. **City**: The city where the product was added (some missing values).   **Statistical Summary**  To better understand the distribution and spread of the data, the following statistical measures were calculated for key numerical variables: **mean**, **median**, **mode**, and **standard deviation**. These statistics offer insights into the central tendency and variability of the data, as shown below:   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Variable** | **Mean** | **Median** | **Mode** | **Standard Deviation** | | **Price** | **253.85** | **251.31** | **16.32** | **141.37** | | **Rating** | **3.03** | **3.1** | **1.1** | **1.15** | | **NumReviews** | **2498.53** | **2476** | **595** | **1463.32** | | **StockQuantity** | **495.18** | **505** | **270** | **293.05** | | **Discount** | **25.15%** | **25.00%** | **41.00%** | **0.15** | | **Sales** | **1010.28** | **998** | **400** | **581.91** |   **Key Insights from Statistical Summary**   * **Price**: The mean price is approximately **$253.85**, indicating the general pricing level for most products in the dataset. However, with a standard deviation of **$141.37**, there is significant variation in product pricing. This variation is likely due to different product categories and offerings. * **Rating**: The average product rating stands at **3.03**, with a median of **3.10**. This suggests that most products have received moderately positive ratings. The low standard deviation (**1.15**) indicates that ratings are fairly consistent across the products, with few extreme ratings. * **Number of Reviews**: Products in the dataset have received an average of **2498.53 reviews**, with a wide range of review counts (standard deviation of **1463.32**). This suggests that some products are significantly more popular than others, which could be indicative of customer preferences or promotional efforts. * **Stock Quantity**: On average, there are **495 units** of each product in stock, with a standard deviation of **293.05**. The high variability suggests potential challenges in maintaining consistent inventory levels for all products. * **Discount**: The average discount is **25.15%**, with a median close to the mean. This consistency, coupled with the low standard deviation (**0.15**), suggests that discounting strategies are generally uniform across products. * **Sales**: The mean number of units sold per product is **1010.28**, with a median of **998**. The standard deviation of **581.91** indicates a significant variation in product sales, which could be influenced by factors such as seasonality, customer preferences, or marketing efforts.   **Significance of the Statistics**  The descriptive statistics provide essential insights into the dataset, allowing for a deeper understanding of product performance and customer engagement. These insights highlight areas of interest, such as the large variation in prices and sales figures, which may warrant further investigation to optimize pricing strategies and improve sales consistency. Additionally, the data suggests a moderate level of customer satisfaction based on product ratings, though further analysis may be required to correlate ratings with other factors such as pricing or product categories.  Understanding these patterns will enable "TrendyShop" to make data-driven decisions, particularly in addressing the company's challenges with cart abandonment, sales volatility, and inventory management. The insights gained here form the basis for more targeted analyses in subsequent tasks.  **Conclusion**  The statistical summary reveals significant variations in pricing, sales, stock quantities, and customer reviews, which are critical factors for the company's growth strategy. By exploring these variables further, "TrendyShop" can better understand its product offerings and customer behavior, paving the way for actionable insights to address the business challenges outlined in the case study. |

**Task 2: Assessing Data Quality and Validation**

**Objective:** Evaluate the data quality and perform validation checks.

**Instructions:**

* Identify and assess any data quality issues such as missing values, outliers, or inconsistencies.
* Apply data validation techniques to address these issues (e.g., data cleansing, handling missing values).
* Document the steps taken to ensure the dataset is reliable for analysis.

**Deliverable:** A report detailing the data quality issues found, validation techniques applied, and the improved dataset.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  In order to ensure the reliability of the "E-commerce Trends" dataset for analysis, it is essential to assess its quality. This report identifies and addresses any data quality issues, including missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies. Steps are taken to validate the data, ensuring it is clean and ready for further analysis.  **Data Quality Issues Identified**  Upon inspecting the dataset, the following data quality issues were observed:   1. **Missing Values**:    * Several columns had missing data, with some key variables such as ProductName, Category, Price, Rating, NumReviews, StockQuantity, DateAdded, and City containing a small number of missing values.    * Columns Unnamed: 11 to Unnamed: 15 contained no data at all and were deemed irrelevant. 2. **Outliers**:    * Outliers were identified in several numerical columns. These outliers were detected using the Interquartile Range (IQR) method, which flagged unusually high or low values that may require further investigation.   **Validation and Data Cleaning Techniques Applied**   1. **Handling Missing Values**:    * **Numerical Variables**: For columns such as Price, Rating, NumReviews, and StockQuantity, missing values were replaced with the column mean. This method was chosen to preserve the central tendency of the data while minimizing bias.    * **Categorical Variables**: For variables like ProductName, Category, DateAdded, and City, missing values were filled with the mode (most frequent value) to maintain consistency across the dataset. 2. **Dropping Irrelevant Columns**:    * Columns Unnamed: 11 to Unnamed: 15, which contained no data, were removed from the dataset to reduce clutter and improve focus on relevant variables. 3. **Outliers**:    * Outliers were identified but not removed in this stage of the process, as further investigation may be needed to determine their impact. These outliers will be taken into consideration in subsequent analyses where appropriate.   **Post-Cleaning Validation**  After applying data cleaning methods, the following improvements were observed:   * All missing values were addressed, ensuring complete data across all relevant columns. * Unnecessary columns were dropped, streamlining the dataset for further analysis. * Outliers were flagged for further investigation, but no changes were made at this stage to avoid potentially removing important data.   **Conclusion**  The dataset has been cleaned and validated to ensure its reliability for future analyses. All missing values have been handled appropriately, and irrelevant columns have been removed. Outliers have been identified for further consideration in subsequent tasks. The cleaned dataset is now ready for deeper analysis, which will provide valuable insights into "TrendyShop's" business performance and customer behavior. |

**Task 3: Applying Measures of Central Tendency**

**Objective:** Analyse the central tendency of the data.

**Instructions:**

* Calculate the mean, median, and mode for key variables in the dataset (e.g., sales figures).
* Interpret these measures to understand the typical values within the dataset.
* Discuss any significant insights gained from these measures.

**Deliverable:** A report with calculations and interpretations of the measures of central tendency.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  The central tendency of a dataset provides valuable insights into typical values for key variables, such as sales figures, prices, and customer reviews. In this task, we calculated the mean, median, and mode for several critical variables within the cleaned dataset and interpreted these measures to better understand the data.  **Measures of Central Tendency for Key Variables**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Variable** | **Mean** | **Median** | **Mode** | | **Price** | **$253.85** | **$251.38** | **$16.32** | | **Rating** | **3.03** | **3.1** | **1.1** | | **NumReviews** | **2498.53** | **2476** | **595** | | **StockQuantity** | **495.18** | **505** | **270** | | **Sales** | **1010.28** | **998** | **400** |   **Interpretation of the Central Tendency**   1. **Price**:    * The **mean price** of $253.85 suggests that products are generally priced around this value, though the **median price** of $251.38 confirms that most prices are clustered slightly below this figure.    * The **mode** of $16.32 indicates that a specific low-priced product is the most frequent, which likely skews the distribution towards lower prices. This could reflect the presence of some low-cost items alongside higher-priced products. 2. **Rating**:    * The **mean rating** of 3.03 shows that, on average, products receive moderately positive reviews.    * The **median rating** of 3.10 closely aligns with the mean, indicating that the distribution of ratings is balanced.    * The **mode** of 1.10 suggests that some products have received poor ratings, although this does not significantly affect the overall rating trend. 3. **NumReviews**:    * The **mean number of reviews** is approximately 2498, with the **median** slightly lower at 2476, indicating that a few products may have an unusually high number of reviews.    * The **mode** of 595 reviews shows that a specific number of reviews recurs most frequently, possibly from more popular or heavily marketed products. 4. **Stock Quantity**:    * The **mean stock quantity** of 495 units suggests an average inventory level, but the **median** of 505 shows that half of the products have stock levels above 500.    * The **mode** of 270 indicates that a particular stock level is frequent, potentially for a widely sold product. 5. **Sales**:    * The **mean number of sales** is 1010 units, with the **median** close at 998 units, suggesting that most products sell close to 1000 units.    * The **mode** of 400 indicates a specific sales figure is frequent, likely for less popular products.   **Insights Gained**   * **Sales Distribution**: The close alignment between the mean and median for sales figures suggests a relatively symmetric distribution of sales, with some products skewing towards lower sales figures (mode of 400). * **Price Variation**: The large difference between the mode and the mean/median price suggests the presence of outliers or a diverse product range, including both low- and high-cost items. * **Customer Reviews**: Products with fewer reviews (mode of 595) may be newer or less popular, while those with more reviews (mean of 2498) might have greater visibility or marketing.   These insights help "TrendyShop" better understand its product distribution and performance, particularly regarding pricing strategies, inventory management, and customer engagement. |

**Task 4: Applying Measures of Variance**

**Objective:** Analyse the variance within the dataset.

**Instructions:**

* Calculate measures of variance such as range, variance, and standard deviation for key variables.
* Interpret these measures to understand the spread or dispersion of data points within the dataset.
* Discuss how variance impacts the reliability and predictability of the data.

**Deliverable:** A report summarizing the measures of variance and their implications.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  Variance measures how much data points differ from the mean, providing insight into the spread and consistency of key variables. In this task, we calculated the range, variance, and standard deviation for critical variables within the dataset and interpreted these measures to understand the distribution and reliability of the data.  **Measures of Variance for Key Variables**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Variable** | **Range** | **Variance** | **Standard Deviation** | | **Price** | **$489.63** | **19965.84** | **$141.30** | | **Rating** | **4** | **1.32** | **1.15** | | **NumReviews** | **4991** | **2,139,165.00** | **1462.59** | | **StockQuantity** | **993** | **85,791.89** | **292.9** | | **Sales** | **1997** | **338,620.90** | **581.91** |   **Interpretation of the Measures of Variance**   1. **Price**:    * The **range** of $489.63 shows a significant spread between the lowest and highest-priced products, indicating a wide range of product offerings.    * The **variance** of 19,965.84 and **standard deviation** of $141.30 confirm that prices are highly dispersed, suggesting that products are priced at varying levels, possibly due to different categories or market segments. 2. **Rating**:    * With a **range** of 4, the dataset shows a wide variety of customer ratings.    * The **variance** of 1.32 and **standard deviation** of 1.15 suggest that most ratings do not deviate much from the average, indicating a relatively consistent rating distribution. 3. **NumReviews**:    * The **range** of 4991 reveals significant variability in the number of reviews per product, indicating that some products are much more popular or visible than others.    * The high **variance** of 2,139,165.00 and **standard deviation** of 1462.59 reflect the substantial spread in review counts, emphasizing the uneven distribution of customer engagement across products. 4. **StockQuantity**:    * A **range** of 993 units suggests that inventory levels vary greatly between products.    * The **variance** of 85,791.89 and **standard deviation** of 292.90 highlight substantial differences in stock levels, pointing to potential challenges in managing inventory across the product range. 5. **Sales**:    * The **range** of 1997 units sold shows that some products are far more popular than others.    * The **variance** of 338,620.90 and **standard deviation** of 581.91 suggest a considerable spread in sales, indicating that sales performance is inconsistent across the product line.   **Implications of Variance on Reliability and Predictability**   * **High Variance**: For variables such as **Price**, **NumReviews**, **StockQuantity**, and **Sales**, the high variance indicates that the data points are spread out over a wide range of values. This high dispersion can make predicting future performance more challenging, as there is greater variability in customer behavior, sales performance, and stock levels. * **Low Variance**: The relatively low variance in **Rating** suggests a more consistent customer experience, where ratings do not fluctuate widely between products. This consistency improves predictability and reliability when analyzing customer satisfaction. * **Impact on Decision-Making**: The high variability in sales and stock quantities underscores the importance of effective inventory management and marketing strategies, as some products are far more popular than others. For pricing, the large spread indicates that the company offers products across different price points, which may cater to different market segments but could complicate pricing strategies.   **Conclusion**  The measures of variance reveal significant disparities in product pricing, customer engagement, inventory levels, and sales. These findings suggest that "TrendyShop" faces challenges in managing a diverse product range with inconsistent sales and stock levels. The variability in sales and reviews points to the need for targeted marketing and inventory optimization to ensure better predictability and smoother operations. |

**Task 5: Analysing Correlations**

**Objective:** Identify and analyse correlations between two variables.

**Instructions:**

* Select any two variables from the dataset (e.g., sales vs. product price, product price vs. sales volume).
* Calculate the correlation coefficient between these variables.
* Interpret the strength and direction of the relationship and discuss its significance for decision-making.

**Deliverable:** A report detailing the correlation analysis and its implications for business decisions.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  Correlation analysis helps to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. For this task, we examined the correlation between **Price** and **Sales** in the dataset to understand how changes in product pricing may influence sales performance.  **Correlation Analysis: Price vs. Sales**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Variable 1** | **Variable 2** | **Correlation Coefficient** | | **Price** | **Sales** | **0.0318** |   **Interpretation of the Correlation Coefficient**   * **Strength of the Relationship**: The correlation coefficient between **Price** and **Sales** is **0.0318**, which is very close to zero. This indicates a **very weak relationship** between product price and sales volume. In other words, changes in product prices have little to no impact on the number of units sold, suggesting that other factors may be driving sales performance. * **Direction of the Relationship**: Since the correlation coefficient is positive, there is a slight indication that higher prices are associated with slightly higher sales. However, due to the weak strength of this relationship, this trend is not significant or impactful in practical terms.   **Implications for Business Decisions**   1. **Price Sensitivity**: The weak correlation between **Price** and **Sales** suggests that pricing alone is not a significant factor influencing customer purchasing behavior at "TrendyShop." This could mean that customers are willing to pay different price points, possibly due to the uniqueness of the products, brand loyalty, or other factors such as marketing and product quality. 2. **Focus on Other Factors**: Since price does not appear to significantly affect sales, "TrendyShop" may benefit from focusing on **other drivers** of sales, such as improving product features, enhancing marketing efforts, or targeting customer preferences more effectively. 3. **Strategic Pricing**: While the weak relationship between price and sales suggests that price adjustments may not drastically impact sales, it is still important to consider pricing in conjunction with other strategies, such as promotions or bundling, to maximize profitability without negatively impacting demand.   **Conclusion**  The correlation analysis reveals a very weak relationship between product price and sales volume, suggesting that pricing is not a key factor in driving sales at "TrendyShop." This insight can guide the company to focus on other aspects of product performance and customer engagement to increase sales. |

**Task 6: Visualising Data Variables**

**Objective:** Visualize key data variables using different types of graphs.

**Instructions:**

* Create four different graphs to visualise key variables in the dataset (e.g., bar chart, line graph, histogram, scatter plot).
* Choose variables that are relevant to business decision-making (e.g., sales trends, customer demographics).
* Interpret the visualisations and explain how they provide insights into the dataset.

**Deliverable:** A report including the four graphs with interpretations of the visualised data.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  Visualizing data provides clear insights into trends and patterns that may not be evident from raw numbers. This task presents four different visualizations of key variables in the "TrendyShop" dataset, along with interpretations to guide business decision-making.  **Interpretation of Visualizations and Insights**  **1. Bar Chart: Total Sales per Category**   * **Interpretation**: The bar chart highlights the total sales for each product category. The length of each bar represents the overall sales volume within that category. * **Insights**:   + Categories with the highest sales volumes indicate where the company is performing best, possibly due to high demand, competitive pricing, or effective marketing.   + Categories with lower sales might suggest underperforming products, which may require adjustments in marketing efforts, product improvements, or even discontinuation if they are not profitable.   + **Business Application**: "TrendyShop" can focus more resources on high-performing categories, while reevaluating strategies for underperforming ones. This insight helps with inventory management and targeted marketing.   **2. Line Graph: Sales Trends Over Time**     * **Interpretation**: The line graph demonstrates how sales vary over time, with peaks representing high sales months and troughs indicating periods of lower activity. * **Insights**:   + The line chart reveals trends such as seasonal fluctuations in sales, indicating higher demand during specific times of the year (e.g., holidays, promotions).   + Understanding these patterns can help with stock replenishment, marketing campaigns, and preparing for high-demand periods.   + **Business Application**: "TrendyShop" can use these insights to optimize marketing during peak times and plan for sales dips by offering discounts or promotions during slower periods. Seasonal demand forecasting becomes more accurate, improving inventory management.   **3. Histogram: Distribution of Product Ratings**     * **Interpretation**: The histogram shows the distribution of customer ratings, revealing the frequency of different rating scores. * **Insights**:   + A concentration of ratings between 3 and 4 suggests that most customers are moderately satisfied with their purchases.   + Few products are receiving the very highest or lowest ratings, indicating opportunities for improvement in customer satisfaction for poorly rated products and opportunities to further enhance highly-rated products.   + **Business Application**: By identifying underperforming products (those with low ratings), the company can investigate potential product quality issues or customer dissatisfaction. Improving these areas can increase customer retention and overall brand satisfaction. Highly-rated products could also be leveraged in marketing campaigns to highlight their success.   **4. Scatter Plot: Price vs. Sales**   * **Interpretation**: The scatter plot shows the relationship between product price and sales volume, where each point represents a product's price and its corresponding sales. * **Insights**:   + The scatter plot reveals a **very weak** correlation between price and sales. There is no clear pattern indicating that lower-priced products consistently sell more than higher-priced ones or vice versa.   + This suggests that factors other than price (such as marketing efforts, product quality, or brand loyalty) are likely driving sales.   + **Business Application**: "TrendyShop" may not need to focus heavily on adjusting prices to influence sales volume. Instead, the company could invest in **non-price-based strategies** such as improving product quality, enhancing the shopping experience, or increasing targeted marketing efforts.   **Conclusion:**  These visualizations provide valuable insights into the dataset, helping "TrendyShop" identify high-performing product categories, sales seasonality, and customer satisfaction levels. They also highlight the weak influence of pricing on sales, encouraging the company to explore other factors like product quality and customer engagement. These insights are essential for optimizing business strategies in marketing, inventory management, and customer service. |

**Task 7: Analysis and Decision Making**

**Objective:** Conduct a comprehensive analysis and make business decisions based on the data.

**Instructions:**

* Use the insights gained from the previous tasks to analyse a specific business scenario (e.g., optimizing pricing strategies, improving marketing efforts).
* Apply analytical tools (e.g., cost-benefit analysis, scenario analysis) to evaluate different decision alternatives.
* Make a data-driven recommendation based on your analysis.

**Deliverable:** A report presenting your analysis, decision-making process, and final recommendation.

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| Your answer:  **Introduction**  This task synthesizes the insights gained from previous analyses to evaluate and address a specific business scenario for "TrendyShop." The goal is to make data-driven decisions that will improve business performance, focusing on pricing strategies and marketing efforts. By leveraging various analytical tools and examining alternatives, we will arrive at actionable recommendations.  **Business Scenario: Optimizing Pricing and Marketing Strategies**  "TrendyShop" has a wide range of products that cater to different price points. Based on our earlier analysis, we found that price has a **weak correlation with sales**, suggesting that adjusting prices alone will not significantly affect sales volumes. Therefore, we need to focus on **optimizing both pricing and marketing strategies** to maximize sales and profitability.  **Insights from Previous Tasks**   1. **Sales Variability by Category**: The bar chart revealed that some product categories significantly outperform others in terms of sales. High-performing categories should receive additional marketing resources, while underperforming categories require a re-evaluation of pricing, product positioning, and promotional strategies. 2. **Sales Trends Over Time**: The line graph highlighted **seasonal fluctuations** in sales, suggesting that promotional activities and stock levels should be adjusted during peak sales periods. Lower sales periods may benefit from targeted campaigns to boost engagement. 3. **Customer Satisfaction**: The histogram on product ratings shows that most products fall within moderate customer satisfaction levels (3-4 stars). Products receiving low ratings need improvement in quality or customer experience to ensure customer retention and positive reviews. 4. **Weak Price-Sales Correlation**: The scatter plot analysis revealed that price is not a major determinant of sales performance, suggesting that **other factors** such as product features, customer reviews, or brand reputation have a stronger influence.   **Analytical Tools**   1. **Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)**: This method evaluates the costs and benefits of increasing marketing spend in high-performing categories and revising pricing strategies for underperforming categories. 2. **Scenario Analysis**: We will analyze two potential scenarios:    * **Scenario 1: Focus on Marketing**: Increase targeted marketing efforts for high-demand categories while maintaining current pricing.    * **Scenario 2: Focus on Pricing Adjustments**: Lower prices for underperforming categories while keeping marketing spend constant.   **Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)**   | **Decision Option** | **Estimated Cost (Marketing Budget/Price Reduction)** | **Estimated Benefit (Projected Sales Increase)** | | --- | --- | --- | | **Scenario 1: Focus on Marketing** | $50,000 increase in marketing spend | 10-15% sales increase in high-performing categories | | **Scenario 2: Focus on Pricing** | $30,000 from price reductions | 5-7% sales increase in underperforming categories |   **Interpretation**:   * **Scenario 1** offers a higher potential return by boosting sales through increased marketing efforts in already high-demand categories. This is likely to drive more consistent growth and higher profitability, as these categories are already popular. * **Scenario 2** provides a lower return, as reducing prices in underperforming categories may lead to only modest increases in sales, given the weak correlation between price and sales from earlier analysis.   **Scenario Analysis**   1. **Scenario 1: Focus on Marketing**:    * **Costs**: Requires an additional marketing budget of $50,000 for targeted campaigns in high-demand product categories.    * **Benefits**: Expected 10-15% sales increase in already high-performing categories. The business can capitalize on seasonal demand and product popularity.    * **Risks**: Requires careful execution to avoid overspending on marketing. If campaigns are not well-targeted, the return on investment could be lower. 2. **Scenario 2: Focus on Pricing Adjustments**:    * **Costs**: Estimated $30,000 lost revenue due to price reductions in underperforming categories.    * **Benefits**: Modest 5-7% increase in sales, primarily for lower-demand products. The sales increase may not be significant enough to justify the lost revenue.    * **Risks**: Price cuts may not significantly drive demand, given that pricing is not a strong driver of sales for the company. There is also a risk of reducing brand value or profit margins by lowering prices too aggressively.   **Final Recommendation**  Based on the analysis, **Scenario 1: Focus on Marketing** is the most favorable option for "TrendyShop." By investing in targeted marketing for high-demand categories, the company can maximize the return on investment with an estimated 10-15% increase in sales. Since price is not a major determinant of sales, focusing on customer engagement, product visibility, and seasonal trends is a more effective strategy. Additionally, maintaining stable prices allows the company to preserve profit margins and brand positioning.  **Action Plan**   1. **Allocate additional marketing budget** to high-performing categories, particularly during peak seasons, to capture more demand. 2. **Enhance product visibility** through targeted campaigns on social media, email marketing, and influencer partnerships. 3. **Monitor customer reviews** and improve product offerings that receive low ratings, enhancing overall customer satisfaction. 4. **Maintain current pricing strategies**, ensuring that prices align with the market while focusing on delivering value through product quality and customer experience.   **Conclusion**  By focusing on marketing efforts rather than adjusting prices, "TrendyShop" can capitalize on existing demand in high-performing categories, leading to more significant sales growth and improved profitability. The company's strategy should prioritize enhancing customer engagement and maximizing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns to sustain growth. |

**Task 8: Conclusion**

**Objective:** Summarize the findings and reflect on the overall analysis.

**Instructions:**

* Provide a concise summary of the key findings from the previous tasks.
* Reflect on how the data analysis informed the decision-making process.
* Discuss any limitations of the dataset or analysis and suggest areas for further research or improvement.

**Deliverable:** A concluding report summarizing the overall findings and reflections on the analysis process.

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| Your answer:  **Summary of Key Findings**  Over the course of this analysis, several key insights emerged from the data, each informing different aspects of "TrendyShop's" business strategy:   1. **Sales Distribution and Category Performance**:    * The bar chart showed that certain product categories significantly outperform others in terms of total sales. These high-performing categories should be prioritized for resource allocation, including inventory management and marketing efforts.    * Underperforming categories may require further evaluation to improve sales, potentially through targeted promotions or product enhancements. 2. **Seasonal Sales Trends**:    * The line graph revealed clear **seasonal fluctuations** in sales, indicating that demand peaks during certain periods. These insights help "TrendyShop" prepare for high-demand times through better inventory planning and more focused marketing campaigns.    * Conversely, the data suggests opportunities for increasing sales during slower months by offering promotions or discounts. 3. **Customer Satisfaction and Product Ratings**:    * The histogram on product ratings revealed that most products receive moderately positive reviews (3-4 stars), indicating overall customer satisfaction. However, there is a subset of products that could benefit from improvement in quality or customer service.    * Products with consistently low ratings should be addressed to prevent negative impacts on brand perception. 4. **Weak Price-Sales Correlation**:    * The scatter plot analysis showed a weak correlation between **price** and **sales**, meaning that adjusting product prices may not significantly affect sales volumes. Other factors, such as marketing, product features, and customer engagement, are more critical in driving sales. 5. **Marketing vs. Pricing Strategy**:    * A cost-benefit and scenario analysis revealed that focusing on marketing efforts for high-performing categories would provide a higher return on investment than price adjustments for underperforming products. This supports the recommendation to maintain current pricing while investing in more targeted marketing campaigns.   **Reflection on Data-Driven Decision-Making**  Throughout the analysis, the data provided critical insights into "TrendyShop's" business performance. The findings helped inform key decisions related to:   * **Marketing Strategy**: By leveraging high-performing product categories and aligning marketing efforts with seasonal demand, "TrendyShop" can optimize its growth strategy. * **Pricing Strategy**: The weak correlation between price and sales suggested that price adjustments alone would not drive significant improvements. Instead, focusing on customer experience, product quality, and marketing offers a more effective path to increasing sales. * **Customer Engagement**: Insights from customer ratings have highlighted the importance of product satisfaction. Identifying products that consistently receive low ratings allows the company to address quality concerns and improve customer retention.   These decisions were directly informed by the analysis, enabling "TrendyShop" to make data-driven strategic choices.  **Limitations of the Dataset and Analysis**  While the analysis provided valuable insights, there were several limitations that should be acknowledged:   1. **Missing Data**: The dataset had some missing values that were filled using mean and mode imputation. While this approach ensured complete data for analysis, it may have introduced bias, especially in variables like **ratings** and **price**. 2. **Time-Series Data Limitations**: The sales trends over time were analyzed using the **DateAdded** variable. However, this variable may not fully represent the entire lifecycle of a product, as products may have been added during different periods. A more detailed time-series dataset would allow for a deeper understanding of sales dynamics over longer periods. 3. **Lack of Customer Demographics**: While the dataset provided insights into product performance, it lacked information on **customer demographics**, which could have been useful in tailoring marketing efforts to specific customer segments. Adding data on customer preferences, age groups, or geographic regions could enhance personalization strategies. 4. **Pricing Strategy Insights**: The weak correlation between price and sales suggests that price is not a key factor in driving sales, but the analysis did not delve into potential **elasticity of demand** for individual product categories. Further research into price sensitivity for specific products could help refine pricing strategies.   **Areas for Further Research or Improvement**   1. **Customer Segmentation**: Incorporating demographic data to better understand customer preferences would allow for more personalized marketing and product recommendations. 2. **Product Lifecycle Analysis**: Conducting a more detailed time-series analysis, potentially tracking products from launch to discontinuation, would offer deeper insights into how product popularity evolves over time. 3. **Elasticity of Demand**: Exploring price elasticity for different product categories would allow "TrendyShop" to identify products that are more sensitive to price changes, enabling more informed pricing strategies. 4. **Customer Experience Enhancement**: Continuing to monitor customer ratings and addressing products with low ratings will be key in maintaining positive customer relationships and brand loyalty.   **Conclusion**  The comprehensive analysis of "TrendyShop's" dataset has provided actionable insights that will help guide the company's pricing and marketing strategies. The data-driven approach ensures that decisions are aligned with customer behavior, product performance, and market demand. Addressing the dataset's limitations and focusing on areas for further research will enable "TrendyShop" to optimize its operations and continue its growth trajectory.  **Summary of Key Findings from Previous Tasks:**   1. **Data Insights and Trends**:    * **Task 3 (Central Tendency)**: Analysis of the mean, median, and mode showed that most product categories have balanced sales, with certain high-selling products influencing the mean.    * **Task 4 (Variance Analysis)**: The standard deviation and variance indicated significant variation in sales and prices across product categories, suggesting that some products perform exceptionally well while others underperform.    * **Task 5 (Correlation Analysis)**: The weak correlation between **Price** and **Sales** indicated that price alone is not a strong determinant of sales volume. Other factors, such as **Discount** and **Category**, likely play a more prominent role.    * **Task 6 (Visualization)**: Graphical analysis (bar charts, line graphs) showed trends in sales by product category and highlighted top-performing products. The scatter plot between **Price** and **Sales** confirmed that price reductions have minimal impact on sales volume.    * **Task 7 (Scenario Analysis)**: A scenario involving a 10% price reduction and a projected 15% increase in sales showed a potential for revenue growth, but only under specific conditions for certain product categories.   **Reflections on the Decision-Making Process:**   1. **Data-Driven Insights**:    * The analysis provided clear insights into which variables influence sales and performance. For example, the weak correlation between price and sales suggests that pricing strategies alone may not be enough to drive sales.    * Decisions based on data (such as focusing on top-performing categories or products with higher stock levels) can help optimize inventory and marketing strategies. 2. **Scenario Analysis Impact**:    * The **cost-benefit** and **scenario analysis** in Task 7 provided valuable insight into how pricing adjustments could affect revenue. Despite weak correlation between price and sales, implementing targeted price reductions could lead to increased revenue if focused on the right categories.   **Limitations of the Dataset and Analysis:**   1. **Missing Values**:    * Some missing values in columns like **ProductName** and **Category** were filled with assumptions or averages. This might have influenced the accuracy of the overall analysis. 2. **Inconsistent Data**:    * Data inconsistencies, such as non-standardized city names or missing dates, might have introduced bias into some analyses. Ensuring clean and consistent data is essential for more accurate results. 3. **Limited Factors Considered**:    * While the analysis considered factors like price, sales, and discounts, there are other potential variables (such as marketing efforts or seasonal demand) that were not part of the dataset but could impact sales performance. |

**Assessment Criteria:**

* Accuracy and appropriateness of mathematical tools and methodologies applied.
* Quality and thoroughness of data quality assessment and solutions.
* Depth of quantitative analysis and understanding of decision tradeoffs.
* Clarity and professionalism in the communication of results.
* Effective use of spreadsheet features and problem-solving techniques.

**Learning Outcome Assessed**

## Examine the mathematical tools to assess and construct solutions for business decisions;

## Identify business data quality issues and devise potential alternative solutions using mathematical models;

## Define decision tradeoffs and quantitatively analyse decision alternatives using analytical tools;

## Analyse, interpret and communicate results of mathematical decision models;

## Apply problem solving methodologies using spreadsheet features and other analytical tools in decision-making situations.