

# Adoption of persuasive technology in Retail: Insights from a model of shoppers' behavior

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## ABSTRACT:

This paper delves into shoppers' behaviour in shopping markets as to what makes them stay and come back repeatedly to the markets. 411 responses were collected from Delhi National Capital Region through self administered questionnaire in India using non probability convenience sampling. The study highlights important factors for attracting consumers to Indian markets, finds interplay between shopping pleasure, escapism, desire to stay and re patronage intention and suggest types of persuasive technologies which retailers can use. Policy makers should focus on tenant mix, utility and social aspects and design technological solution to provide motivation, improve ability and trigger the desired behaviour. Convenience sampling and limited geographical area are the major limitations of this study.

## Keywords:

Street Markets, Indian Shoppers, Escapism, Shopping pleasure, Flow, Retail tenant mix, Social, Desire to Stay, Re patronage Intention, Persuasive Technology

## I. INTRODUCTION

India is considered a land of shopkeepers with 70 million small merchants, controlling 90% of India's retail trade and 1.3 billion [1]. Retail sector is also the one going through major transition with more retail formats including e-commerce, m-commerce, omni channel [2] and brick & mortar stores available for consumers. Covid 19 marked a major evolutionary step as small retailers including kirana stores were forced to adopt technology and many of them moved from physical to digital formats[3]. Technology can unleash potential of small retailers provided they don't get entangled in its complexities [4]. Changes in business models and use of innovative practices and technology in existing supply chain structure and relationships results in "digitisation" of relationships also [5].

According to FBM model for designing persuasive technologies, behaviour is a product of motivation, ability and trigger[6]. Retailers need to ensure that technology ensures a smooth journey of customer by improving ability and by providing triggers at right time. Providing information about merchandise through QR code is an example of improving 'ability' and sending automated messages during weekend can be a 'trigger' to bring motivated customer to the store. This paper delves into shoppers' behaviour pertaining to markets as to what makes them stay and come back repeatedly to the markets and how technology can make

this journey pleasurable and smoother. The outcome of this study can be useful for policy makers to sustain the momentum of shoppers, for mall managers to adapt and replicate aspects of shopping markets which are relevant for Indian shoppers.

Earlier research[7], [8] in Indian context has focussed on store choice rather than shopping streets choice. There are some studies [9], [10] related to shoppers' behaviour in malls but data for shoppers' behaviour in shopping markets is lacking. Covid 19 pandemic diverted the footfalls from malls to markets making it important to study consumer behaviour in shopping streets[11].

This study is a descriptive study to find important tangible and intangible factors which attract consumers to shopping streets/ markets in Delhi NCR and suggest suitable persuasive technology solutions. It considers seventeen factors to create a model of shoppers' behaviour in Indian Markets. These factors are: retail tenant mix, non-retail tenant mix, social, utility, merchandise fashion, shopping pleasure, ambience, layout, convenience, exploration, excitement, flow, perceived crowding, safety, escapism, desire to safety and re-patronage intention.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- a) To gain an understanding of shoppers behavior in Indian shopping streets
- b) To identify the important factors for shoppers behavior in Indian shopping streets
- c) To help policy makers in identifying

focus areas for improving markets/ shopping streets d) To help retailers/merchants gain consumer insights for choosing and designing persuasive technologies to improve revenues .

### III.LITERATURE REVIEW

**A. S-O-R(Stimulus-Organism-Response) Model:** This study makes use of S-O-R model(stimulus-organism-response) [12],to formulate a base where shopping pleasure(stimulus) acts on desire to stay(organism) and result in re patronage intention (response).

**B. Cue Utilization Theory:** According to Cue utilization theory [13] arousal due to cues can impact attentional selectivity .and a number of cues are involved in consumer decision making [14].The model integrates various cues to connect different factors.

**C. FBM (Fogg Behaviour Model for Persuasive Design):**This model postulates that persuasive technology automates behaviour. To get desired behaviour, motivation, ability and trigger should be present simultaneously[6].Motivation includes pleasure/pain, hope/fear and social acceptance/rejection. Triggers are effective when people notice it, associate with target behaviour and they will require both motivation and ability.

**D. Retail Tenant Mix:** Tenant mix especially retail tenant mix with broad and deep assortment of shops and goods exert substantial impact on attractiveness of shopping centres [15]–[17].Recreational shoppers place importance on quality and variety in a shopping centre and consider shopping as a leisure activity [15].

H1: Retail Tenant Mix is positively related to shopping pleasure.

**E. Non Retail Tenant Mix:** Shopping streets are preferred for meeting friends, entertainment, window shopping and using beauty parlours [18] and these options turn them into shopping destinations [16].

H2: Retail Tenant Mix is positively related to shopping pleasure..

**F. Social:** Social dimensions include employees, customers, social density and displayed emotions of others and it signify that customers wish to fulfil their social and psychological needs besides utilitarian needs during marketplace exchanges [19].People who seek personal attention prefer to go to shopping streets than malls [20].

H3: Social benefit is positively related to shopping pleasure.

**G. Utility:** Customers wish to fulfil their utilitarian needs during marketplace exchanges [19]through efficiency of shopping process, purchasing the right product or service at right price with least shopping efforts and use of resource.to make their lives easier and more enjoyable [21].

H4: Utility is positively related to shopping pleasure.

**H. Merchandise Fashion:** The variety of retailers and their complementary level [18] and display of

merchandise is a decisive factor for pleasure derived out of shopping [22].

H5: Merchandise Fashion is positively related to shopping pleasure.

**I. Ambience:** Factors which tilt shoppers' preference towards markets are ethnic ambience and economic savings [23].Ambience and atmosphere are important factors for attracting customers to retail locations [16], [24].

H6: Ambience is positively related to convenience.

**J. Layout:** Spatial convenience is an important factor for overall convenience for shoppers in both malls and shopping strips [17], [25], [26].

H7: Layout is positively related to convenience.

**K. Exploration:** Feelings like excitement can propel people to seek novel experience or exploration [27]. People may browse merchandise just for information and entertainment purpose without an intent to buy[28].

H8: Exploration is positively related to flow.

**L. Excitement:** Excitement is an important influencer of positive and negative hedonic dimension of consumption [29]. Its a dominant and positive emotion for new, complex and challenging problems [30].

H9: Excitement is positively related to flow.

**M. Flow:** During 'Flow' experience an intense concentration ensures that you are so absorbed in the activity that you can not worry about your problems or pay attention to irrelevant things [31]. Using this concept in retail scenario, shoppers can feel competent when they make right choice and are in control of outcome[32], helping them escape self discrepancy.

**N. Safety:** Lack of safety is one of the key deterrent for shopping streets [18]. Amongst Indian shoppers safety and security is an important factor for deciding on shopping location [33].

H10: Safety is positively related to escapism.

**O. Perceived Crowding:** Indians many need a little bit of "crowding" spaces as spacious layout are considered wasteful rather than luxurious (Mall, 2015).

H11: Perceived crowding is positively related to re patronage intention.

**P. Shopping Pleasure:** Hedonic value of shopping is derived from the process of shopping and not just by transaction or product satisfaction [21]. For hedonic shoppers, shopping is an end itself and they derive emotional entertainment and sense of exploration These shoppers look for fun, amusement, fantasy and sensory stimulation[21].

H12: Shopping pleasure is positively related to flow.

**Q. Convenience:** Convenience is amongst key drivers for shopping center choice[15], [17], [20], [24], [34].

H13: Convenience is positively related to desire to stay.

*R. Escapism:* Retail therapy can help shoppers opt for emotion regulation consumption (ERC)[35] compensatory consumption to overcome psychosocial deficiencies and to repair and alleviate negative emotions [36], bad moods and that too without any side effects as people don't feel guilt, anxiety or remorse after making unplanned purchases [37].

H14: Shopping pleasure is positively related to escapism.

H15: Escapism is positively related to desire to stay.

*S. Desire to Stay:* The longer one stays in a facility, the greater the influence of perceived quality of servicescape or service satisfaction [38]. More hedonists visit created agglomerations, their frequency of shopping trip is higher, they stay longer but the money spent per trip is the same as utilitarian's [16]. Shopping pleasure and excitement can make people stay longer [39], incentivise them spend more money and can make them come back to shopping centres/malls [40].

H16: Shopping pleasure is positively related to desire to stay.

H18: Desire to stay is positively related to re-patronage intention

*T. Re-patronage intention:* Re-patronage or repurchase intention denotes consumer's choice about buying again a specific service from the same company, taking into account his or her current situation and likely circumstances [41].

H17: Flow is positively related to re-patronage intention.

**IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*A. Data Collection:* Data for this study was collected through self administered questionnaire from Delhi

National Capital Region using convenience sampling. The questionnaire was examined for content validity by two retail professionals and three professors. 411 responses collected through online and in person mode were processed for data analysis. A 7-point Likert scale, where '1' signified strong agreement and '7' signified least agreement, was used to measure all constructs except merchandise fashion, safety, perceived crowding and excitement. The latter were measured through semantic differential scale.

*B. Measures:* The questionnaire comprised of 61 items derived from literature: Ambience [42], Convenience, exploration, social, flow, escape [28], Layout [43] Retail Tenant Mix[44], Shopping Pleasure, utilitarian [45], [46], Desire to stay [47], Perceived Crowding [48], Excitement [49], Retail Tenant Mix, Non Retail Tenant Mix [16], Re patronage Intention [50], Merchandise Fashion [51].

**V. DATA ANALYSIS**

A two stage analysis was carried out using SPSS and SmartPLS3.

First, the model was examined for validity and reliability and second, the structural strengths of relationships were tested. Table 1 summarises results of hypothesis testing. Based on cumulative impact of T statistics of 1.96 and more and p value of less than .001, H1, H3, H4, H6, H7, H8, H14, H15, H16 and H18 are acceptable. This validates a positive relationship between tenant mix, social factors and utility and shopping pleasure, ambience & layout to convenience, exploration to flow, shopping pleasure to escapism and desire to stay, escapism to desire to stay and desire to stay to re patronage intention.

Hypothesis	Hypothesized Relationship	T Statistics	P Values	Supported
H1	Tenant Mix -> Shopping Pleasure	3.279	<0.001	Yes
H2	Non Retail Tenant mix -> Shopping Ple	2.811	0.005	No
H3	Social -> Shopping Pleasure	4.231	<0.001	Yes
H4	Utility -> Shopping Pleasure	5.571	<0.001	Yes
H5	Merch. Fashion -> Shopping Pleasure	0.281	0.779	No
H6	Ambience -> Convenience	8.933	<0.001	Yes
H7	Layout -> Convenience	5.473	<0.001	Yes
H8	Exploration -> Flow	6.952	<0.001	Yes
H9	Excitement -> Flow	0.241	0.81	No
H10	Safety -> Escapism	0.958	0.338	No
H11	Crowding -> Re-pat. Intention	1.225	0.221	No
H12	Shopping Pleasure -> Flow	2.485	0.013	No
H13	Convenience -> Desire to stay	0.536	0.592	No
H14	Shopping Pleasure -> Escapism	15.162	<0.001	Yes
H15	Escapism -> Desire to stay	12.542	<0.001	Yes
H16	Shopping Pleasure -> Desire to stay	3.965	<0.001	Yes
H17	Flow -> Re-pat. Intention	1.739	0.082	No
H18	Desire to stay -> Re-pat. Intention	8.634	<0.001	Yes

TABLE: 1 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS

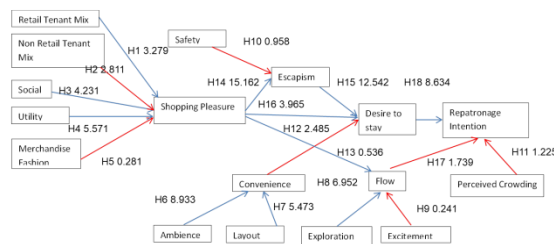


Fig:1 Structural Model

VI.THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

As per the structural model, (Fig1), shopping pleasure as a stimulus, acts on organism- desire to stay leading to a response as re patronage intention and thereby, abiding to SOR model [12]. Shopping pleasure and exploration acts as a cue for flow but as per the model, relationship between flow and re patronage intention is not significant. Similarly ambience and layout leads to convenience but convenience is not significant for desire to stay. Shopping pleasure also exerts an indirect effect on desire to stay through escapism. Tenant mix, social factors and utilitarian aspects emerge as the key factors for enhancing re patronage intention. Shopping pleasure is a motivation to for repeat visits to shopping streets,

VII.MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Policy makers should collaborate with urban planners and marketers to research and plan tenant mix of a new shopping streets/ markets as individual retailers or street vendors don't have resources to do extensive research. Results of preferred product categories/ retailers should be shared with industry so that they can make their choices related to store location. Persuasive technological solution should be designed to enhance shopping pleasure like interactive shopping screens, creating social presence through augmented reality. Automated triggers can be timed according to customer groups.

Technological triggers should be designed considering time, money, physical efforts, brain cycle, extent of social deviance involved and they should be non routine to make them effective.

As social and technological aspects are important, organisation like NASVI (National Association of Street Vendors of India), TRRAIN (Trust for Retailers and Retail Associates of India) can organise behavioural and technology training for street vendors and staff of retailers. Retailers with higher utilitarian value should choose shopping streets as a preferred destination. Their staff should be trained to boost self esteem of customers helping customers escape from self discrepancy. Events and promotions can be planned regularly to help consumer escape boredom.

VIII.CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out factors responsible for shopper re patronage in shopping streets. Tenant mix, social and utilitarian aspects emerged as most important factors as they lead to shopping pleasure which makes shoppers stay longer and results in repeat visits. Besides shopping streets can also provide escape to shoppers from pain due to self discrepancy, routine, boredom etc.

IX.LIMITATIONS & FUTURE STUDIES

This study is restricted to Delhi National Capital region only due to paucity of resources. Convenience sampling is another major limitation. Future studies can be conducted on wider geographical area with randomised sampling.

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