Indian Shopping Markets: A conceptual model of shoppers' behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Purpose/Rationale

India is considered a land of shopkeepers with 70 million small merchants and 1.3 billion consumers(Ari Altstedter, 2019).Despite presence of malls and e-commerce players, retail markets and shopping streets are crowded on weekends and festival time. This paper delves into shoppers' behaviour pertaining to markets as to what makes them stay and come back repeatedly to the markets through study of existing literature.

This study is based on existing literature and considers twelve factors to create a theoretical model of shoppers' behaviour in Indian Markets. These factors are: ambience, layout,retail tenant mix, convenience, arousal, exploration, escapism, flow, shopping pleasure, utilitarian, desire to stay and re-patronage intention.

Design/Methodology/Approach

This paper is based on study of secondary data from research journals, books, newspapers and digital databases.

Findings

Marketers should understand and cater to consumer emotions. Efforts which can increase shopping pleasure, arousal, provide relief from emotional discomfort and induce 'flow' should also be considered important besides tenant mix, ambience, convenience.

Research Limitations

The research is based on secondary data and the model needs to be tested with primary data from shoppers of Indian Markets

Practical Implications

Policy makers can use insights for improving shopping streets. Retailers can use it to decide store locations, training staff members to handle consumer emotions, creating experiences to encourage flow and facilitate escapism.

Originality/ Value

The study highlights important factors for attracting consumers to Indian markets and conceptualise interplay between various factors.

INTRODUCTION

India is considered a land of shopkeepers with 70 million small merchants, controlling 90% of India's retail trade and 1.3 billion consumers(Altstedter, n.d.).Retail sector is also the one going through major transition with more retail formats including e-commerce, m-commerce, omni channel and brick & mortar stores available for consumers. Despite presence of malls and e-commerce players, retail markets and shopping streets are crowded on weekends and festival time. This paper delves into shoppers' behaviour pertaining to markets as to what makes them stay and come back repeatedly to the markets. 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.

The study is meant to a)gain an understanding of factors influencing shoppers' behaviour in Indian markets b)help policy makers in identifying focus areas for improving markets/ shopping streets and c) help retailers make decision about store location.

Indian markets resemble "Unplanned Business Districts"(Evans, 2010), which is a type of retail location where two or more stores are situated together or in close proximity, but the total arrangement or mix of stores is not based on a prior long range planning. Retailers choose location based on their own preference and their own benefits.

For the purpose of this study the markets include both: evolved agglomerations- comprising of shopping streets, retail clusters, which evolved over a period of time and created agglomerations comprising of shopping centres which are planned by urban planners, real estate companies or retailers(Teller & Reutterer, 2008).

Retail Sector in India witnessed a 9 % growth from 2016 to 2018, contributed 11 % to GDP and is anticipated to reach 1.04 trillion dollars in 2021(*India Ranks 2nd In Global Retail Development Index Despite Uncertain Economic Climate*, n.d.). India topped GRDI(Global Retail Development Index) in 2017 and ranked second in 2019 which makes it amongst attractive destinations for retail business(*India Ranks 2nd In Global Retail Development Index Despite Uncertain Economic Climate*, n.d.).However, unlike developed countries where organised retail comprise of 75 to 80 % of total retail, it constitute only 4 % in the Indian market(Joseph, Soundararajan , Gupta , & Sahu, 2008).

Earlier research in Indian context has focussed on store choice rather than shopping streets choice. There are some studies related to shoppers' behaviour in malls but data for shoppers' behaviour in shopping markets is lacking.

This study is a descriptive study to find important tangible and intangible factors which attract consumers to shopping streets/ markets in Delhi NCR. It considers twelve factors to create a theoretical model of shoppers' behaviour in Indian Markets. These factors are: ambience, layout,retail tenant mix, convenience, arousal, exploration, escapism, flow, shopping pleasure, utilitarian, desire to stay and re-patronage intention.

This paper is divided into six parts: research objectives, research methodology, literature review, managerial implications and limitations.

Research Objectives

1. To gain an understanding of shoppers behavior in Indian shopping streets.

2. To identify the important factors for shoppers behavior in Indian shopping streets.

3.To help policy makers in identifying focus areas for improving markets/ shopping streets.

4. To help retailers/merchants gain consumer insights to build competitive advantage and to sustain their business.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on study of secondary data from research journals, books, newspapers and digital databases. Following keywords were

shortlisted for carrying out literature review: shoppers, shopping, street markets, Indian shoppers, servicescapes, retail behaviour, shoppers' behaviour, shopping centres and market attractiveness.

These keywords were reviewed by two professors and two retail professionals. Based on these keywords research papers were sourced from Google Scholar, Researchgate, Proquest, Ebsco,Emerald.Science Direct, Sage, taylor& Francis Subsequently research papers were selected based on content analysis.

Literature Review:

Markets in India

High Streets can be of two types in India: Destination & Transit oriented (JLL, 2015).Destination high street comprise of all the markets which have created a niche due to their product categories or novel experiences (JLL, 2015).Most of these high streets may have food outlets to attract consumers(JLL, 2015).

Table 1: Factors for shoppers' behaviour in Indian Shopping streets/Markets	
Tangible Factors	Intangible Factors
Ambience Layout Retail Tenant Mix	Convenience Arousal Exploration Escapism Flow Shopping Pleasure Desire to stay Utilitarian Re-patronage Intention

Ambience

Ambience is one of the differentiating factors between markets and malls. Factors which tilt shoppers' preference towards markets are ethnic ambience and economic savings(Rajagopal, 2009).Shoppers' senses can be stimulated by smells ,natural colours, texture of products, noises of hawkers and bargaining(NG, 2003).Ambience and atmosphere are important factors for attracting customers to retail locations(Valerie, louviere, & Finn, 2001; Teller & Thomas, The Evolving concept of retail attractiveness: what makes retail agglomerations attractive when customers shop at them?, 2008).

H1: Ambience is positively related to re-patronage intention.

Layout

Spatial convenience is an important factor for customers in both malls and shopping strips(Reimers & Clulow, 2010; Dellaert, Arentze, Bierlaire, Borgers, & Timmermans, 1985; NG, 2003).It exerts its influence in two ways: one by being in close proximity to consumers and second

through intra centre spatial convenience. Customers can save their time and efforts if the market is nearby, and an effective layout ensures that they visit their preferred stores fast.

Layout can make a significant difference even if two centres have same size. A customer needs to walk less in a non linear layout compared to a linear layout(Reimers & Clulow, 2010).In case of shopping strips/ shopping markets, urban planners in India did not give much attention to the layout. If the shoppers perceive intra centre spatial convenience as more negative, then they are more likely to prefer shopping at malls than shopping strips.

H2: Layout is positively related to convenience.

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(Bellenger, Robertson, & Greenberg, 1977; NG, 2003; Teller & Thomas, 2008; Medrano, Olarte-Pascual, Pelegrin-Borando, & Sierra-Murillo, 2016).Recreational shoppers place importance on quality and variety in a shopping

centre and consider shopping as a leisure activity(Bellenger, Robertson, & Greenberg, 1977). Even process averse shoppers who have low participation in shopping activity receive gratification from finding and obtaining exact merchandise that they were searching for (Westbrook & Black, 1985).

H3: Retail Tenant Mix is positively related repatronage intention.

Convenience

Utilitarian shoppers confront several problems in shopping streets due to limited parking spaces, restricted accessibility by vehicles and unplanned location of stores(Teller & Thomas, The Evolving concept of retail attractiveness: what makes retail agglomerations attractive when customers shop at them?, 2008). Convenience is amongst key drivers for shopping centre choice(Valerie, louviere, & Finn, 2001; Bellenger, Robertson, & Greenberg, 1977; NG, 2003; Medrano, Olarte-Pascual, Pelegrin-Borando, & Sierra-Murillo, 2016; patel & sharma, 2009)

H4: Convenience is positively related to repatronage intention

Arousal

Excitement is amongst 10 distinct emotions according to Differential Emotions theory (Izard et al., 2000).According to this theory each emotion is a distinct system acting as a primary motivation system within the personality (Izard et al., 2000.Exciting emotion is a combination of pleasant and arousal and is an important behavioural reaction to environment or situations(Russell & Pratt, 1980). Interest-Excitement is among the nine affects coined by Tomkins(Tomkins, 1962) which acts as a stimulant. Affect is a biological response and awareness of this affect is feeling. Arousal can make shoppers come back and generate positive word of mouth(Jayawardhena & Wright, 2009).Effective design and maintenance of tangible service environment can increase level of arousal which in turn can lead to re-patronage intentions and favourablerecommendations (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999).

H5: Layout is positively related to arousal.

H6: Arousal is positively related to re-patronage intention.

Exploration

Feelings like arousal can propel people to seek novel experience or exploration(Tomkins, 1962).In new format stores, onus of information on shoppers and they can access, touch and feel merchandise without the help of shopkeeper/salesperson(Sinha, 2003).Involved shoppers enjoy all aspects of shopping to derive satisfaction from process of shopping(Westbrook & Black, 1985), and exploration(Ahmed, Ghingold, & Dahari, 2007).People may browse merchandise just for information and entertainment purpose without an intent to buy (Blotch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994).Explorer is the term coined for shoppers who simply enjoy exploring the retail space i.e., movement, sensation and browsing experience(Cox, Cox, & Anderson, 2005).

When consumers gain information through browsing, it adds tohis shopping pleasure(Bloch & Richins, 1983).

H7: Exploration is positively related to shopping pleasure.

Escapism

Escapism may be of two types: escaping from boredom (due to lack of stimulating activity) and escaping from negative emotional situations (or avoidance coping) (Panova & Lleras, 2016). It includes managing unpleasant moods, unwanted impulses and also a mechanism to overcome stress, aggression and anxiety (Bowditch, Chapman, & Naweed, 2018).

Retail therapy can help shoppers opt for emotion regulation consumption (ERC)(Izard et al., 2011)compensatory consumption to overcome psychosocial deficiencies. Shopping can help improve bad moods(Atalay & Meloy, 2011) and it can also help in managing negative emotions(Kang & Johnson, 2011). Shopping proves to be a better remedy as it does not have any side effects as shoppers don't feel guilt, stress or repentance even after making purchases which were not planned earlier (Atalay & Meloy, 2011).

H8: Escapism is positively related to shopping pleasure

Flow

An optimum mix of skills and challenge can produce 'flow' experience, which means entire focus and immersion in an activity(Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).People may lose sense of space and time while they are engaged in activities like shopping (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).Achieving 'Flow' is one of the important customer motive(Ahmed et al., 2007). 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(Csikzentmihalyi, 2002).This can provide escape from negative thoughts and a person capable of finding 'flow' can enjoy even despairing situation.. It's not easy to find activities in personal or work situations where one can feel competent derive pleasure, meet challenges without being controlled by anyone(Ryan & Deci, 2000).Shopping can provide such a scenario where consumers feel in control as they make product choices.

H9: Flow is positively related to escapism.

Utilitarian

Customers wish to fulfil their utilitarian needs during marketplace exchanges(Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). Utilitarian shopping values are obtained from efficiency of shopping process, purchasing the right product or service at right price with least shopping efforts and use of resources(Teller, Reutterer, & Schnedlitz, 2008). For utilitarian shoppers, shopping is a means to a predefined end. These shoppers look for shopping experience and convenience to make their lives easier and more enjoyable(Teller, Reutterer, & Schnedlitz, 2008).

Utilitarian motivations for Indian shoppers are convenience, economic and achievement shopping(Patel & Sharma, 2009).

H10: Convenience is positively related to utilitarian values.

Shopping Pleasure

Throughout history of mankind most people lived in scarcity and frugality was the norm. But modern capitalist economy created a new ethic – consumerism **Invalid source specified.**. With the help of popular psychology, consumerism convinced people that indulgence is good for you and frugality is a sign of self oppression**Invalid source specified.**. As a result shopping has become a favourite pastime and consumer goods assumed significant proportion in relationships between spouses, family members and friends. Even memorial day in US, which is to remember fallen soldiers, is now an occasion for special sales **Invalid source specified.**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(Teller, Reutterer, & Schnedlitz, 2008).

Desire to Stay

Physical design or surroundings exert an influence on employees and customers which can result in approach or avoidance behaviour(Teller & Thomas, 2008).Desire to stay is one of the approach behaviours. The longer one stays in a facility, the greater the influence of perceived quality of servicescape or service satisfaction (Bitner, 1992).

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(Teller & Thomas, 2008).

Shopping pleasure and arousal can make people stay longer (Das & Varshneya, 2017), incentivise them spend more money and can make them come back to shopping centres/malls (Jayawardhena & Wright, 2009).

H11: Shopping pleasure is positively related to desire to stay

H12: Arousal is positively related to desire to stay

H13: Desire to stay is positively related to re-patronage intention

Re-patronage intention

Intentions are plans which an individual makes pertaining to future behaviour and these plans/ propositions make life manageable(Soderlund & Ohman, 2005).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(Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003). Physical surrounding of service setting has an impact on repatronage and this effect varies depending on the kind of services availed. In case of leisure services or services where customers spend a significant amount of time in "servicescapes", these surroundings exert their influence even more(Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994).Relational benefits provided by employees to customers also affects their repatronage intentions(Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). Consumers with greater enduring involvement experience more arousal and have a higher repatronage intention(Wakefield & Baker, 1998). Enduring involvement refers to an ongoing interest in a product or service.

Hypothesis no.	Hypothesis
H1	Ambience is positively related to repatronage intention
H2	Layout is positively related to convenience
H3	Retail Tenant Mix is positively related to repatronage intention
H4	Convenience is positively related to utilitarian values
H5	Layout is positively related to arousal
H6	Arousal is positively related to re-patronage intention
H7	Exploration is positively related to shopping pleasure
H8	Escapism is positively related to shopping pleasure
H9	Flow is positively related to escapism
H10	Convenience is positively related to re-patronage intention
H11	Shopping pleasure is positively related to desire to stay
H12	Arousal is positively related to desire to stay
H13	Desire to stay is positively related to re-patronage intention

Figure 1: Theoretical model of Shoppers' Behaviour in Indian Shopping Markets
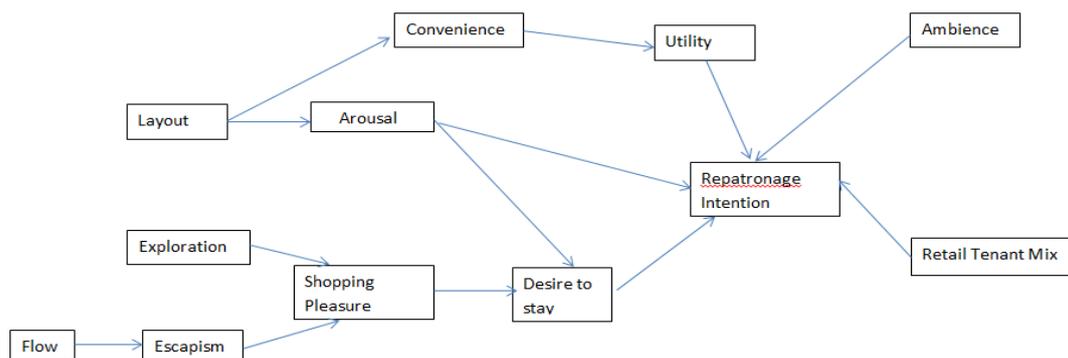
Managerial Implications

Retail tenant mix and ambience exert a direct positive influence on re-patronage intention. Layout, convenience, shopping pleasure, flow and escape are also significant aspects for consumers in the context of Indian shopping markets.

Policy makers can use insights for improving shopping streets as this sector provides livelihood to street vendors and small retailers also. Retailers can use it to decide store locations, training staff members to handle consumer emotions, creating experiences to encourage flow and facilitate escapism. They can look beyond price discounts and quality merchandise and should also focus on intangible aspects of shopping experience. As Indian consumers is now pampered by e-commerce players with product variety, discounts and easy returns, brick and mortar retailers need to strengthen their models using face to face interaction, providing personal attention and more opportunities to browse and touch the products.

Limitations

The study is based on secondary data. Primary data should be collected to validate the model in the Indian context.

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