Shopping Experience of Hypermarket Shoppers on Weekends

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Abstract

Improving the retail customer shopping experience in hypermarkets, especially in weekends is a key to enhance the performance of retail stores. The present research focused on hypermarket shoppers to measure the customer shopping experiences with different dimensions of customer shopping experiences by establishing a research framework based on 366 user responses. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used to analyze and validate the proposed research framework. The paper is a first of its kind to discuss the various dimensions of customer shopping experience, especially in Bhopal city (Central India). The research findings showed that the customer shopping experiences are unpredictable and are positively influenced by enjoyment, emotional attachment, comfort, uniqueness, and impulsiveness dimensions of customer shopping experiences. Therefore, this study would help hypermarket retailers to focus on these constructs, which are considered as an important dimension of the customer shopping experience, and would help the retailers in gaining a competitive advantage, attracting new customers, and to hold their profitable customers by enhancing customer shopping experiences in the current retail scenario.

Keywords: **customer, customer shopping experience, hypermarket, retail, retailers**

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Rapid emergence of organized retail format in the form of hypermarkets are augmenting the growth of organized retail in the Indian market (Indian Brand Equity Foundation, 2013). Hypermarkets are an attractive location, facilitate convenience, entertainment, exploration (Bloch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994), enjoyment, and offer a one stop shopping experience to the customers in a pleasurable environment (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Wakefield & Baker, 1998). Hypermarkets were the largest retail segment accounting for 21% of the total retail space in 2013 - 14 (IBEF, 2013), offering a wide range of branded products. Indian consumers are changing rapidly (Pathak, & Tripathi, 2009) and the average consumer today is richer, younger, and more focused toward the shopping experience. It has been observed that to increase the footfalls, retailers use various promotional activities to shift the customer preference from the local kirana stores to hypermarkets (Venkateswaran & Mahalakshmi, 2009).

The IBEF Report (2013) showed that India was ranked fifth in the Global Retail Development Index in 2012 because of increased urbanization, consumerism, and the emergence of organized retail outlets like mega malls and hypermarkets (Jahan & Ramakrishnan, 2009 ; Venkateswaran & Mahalakshmi, 2009) which opened enormous opportunities of retail expansion for foreign players. Customers in India have a tendency to visit

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different retail stores for similar product categories, competitive pricing, shopping comfort, emotional connectivity, saving time and energy (Berry, Gresham, & Millikin, 1990), and solving problems of the customers leads to great customer shopping experiences.

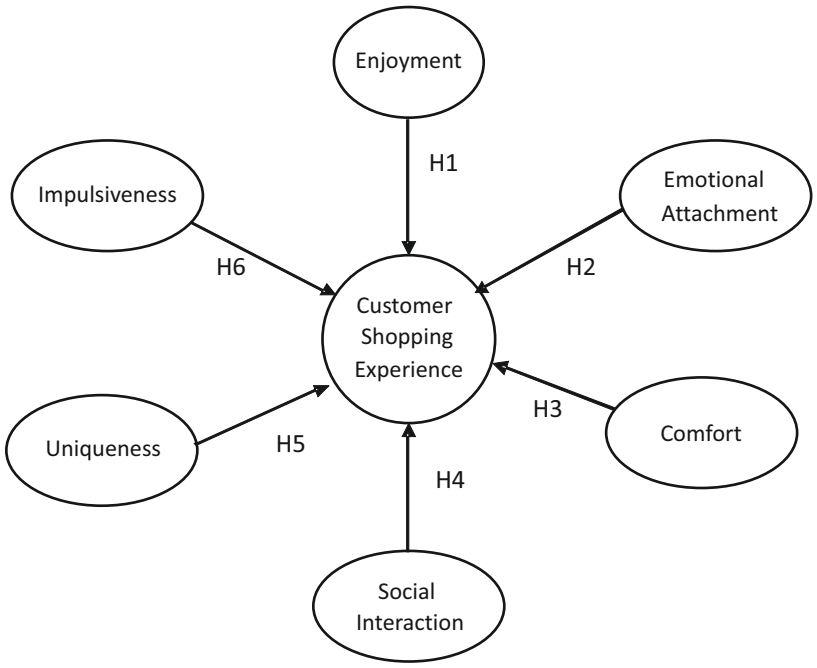
Researchers in the past have focused on consumer buying behaviour (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Pathak & Tripathi, 2009), customer preferences (Berry et al., 1990), customer satisfaction (Babin et al., 1994; Wakefield, & Baker, 1998), and shopping values (Babin et al., 1994; Babin, Lee, Kim, & Griffin, 2005) mostly in USA, European countries (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, & Schlesinger, 2009), and metro cities of India (Bagdare & Jain, 2013 ; Ghosh, Tripathi, & Kumar, 2009 ; Khare, 2011), but very little attention has been given to customer shopping experiences in the cities of Central India. Hence, the question arises, how these shopping experiences will be created by hypermarket retailers, which motivated us to work on customer shopping experiences in Central India.

Most of the customers visit hypermarkets on weekends or holidays for spending valuable time with their family members along with shopping. Therefore, it is important to measure the influence of factors enhancing the customer shopping experience (Bagdare & Jain, 2013). It has been observed that the consumer footfall increases in the hypermarkets (Jahan & Ramakrishnan, 2009) during weekends for shopping and enjoying their time in the recreational center (Bloch et al., 1994; Wakefield, & Baker, 1998). Therefore, this research paper focused on hypermarket shoppers of Bhopal city (Central India) and the main objective of this study is to measure the shopping experiences of hypermarket shoppers on weekends with the help of the proposed research framework (Figure 1).

Literature Review and Hypotheses

↳ **Customer Shopping Experience :** According to Palmer (2010), the word experience used as a "verb" refers to a learning process ; whereas, when it is used as a "noun," it refers to addition in knowledge, emotions, skills,

Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework



sensations, and attitudes. For enhancing the retail shopping experiences (Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1997), retailers have to understand the various aspects of shopping experiences such as enjoyment (Wakefield & Baker, 1998), comfort, interaction, emotions, involvement, relaxing and refreshing (Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder, & Lueg, 2005; Backstrom, 2011) and it remains a critical area for academic research also.

According to Berry et al. (1990), retailing provides value, creates involvement, emotional connectivity, saves time and energy, and solves the problems of the customers and produces a total customer experience. Verhoef et al. (2009) highlighted the significance of past customer shopping experiences and showed that for improving the future customer shopping experiences, retailers have to enhance the in-store retail setting and values for the customers. Retailers in hypermarkets encourage interaction and involvement of the customer in a multi sensory environment by stimulating senses like visual, auditory, olfactory, and tangible to energize the shopping experience (Jones, Comfort, Clarke-Hill, & Hillier, 2010). According to Gentile, Spiller, and Noci (2007) and Verhoef et al. (2009), the customer shopping experience is a combination of emotional, sensorial, cognitive, and behavioral aspects that the customers experience during the entire buying process. Palmer's (2010) study showed that the customer requires uniqueness with a product that makes it different from the ordinary one. Therefore, the retailers offer a pleasurable (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) retail store environment to the customer, which creates a distinctive retail store image, uniqueness, memorable and sustainable environment, which they can remember for a long period of time. The study of Bagdare and Jain (2013) focused on joy, mood, leisure, and distinctive dimensions of customer experiences. So, the present study focuses on enjoyment, emotional attachment, comfort, social interaction, uniqueness, and impulsiveness dimensions of the customer shopping experience with the help of the proposed research framework (see Figure 1).

(i) Enjoyment : The enjoyment part of a retail store, believed to be the most important competitive tool, enables customers to shop (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003) and every customer necessitates it while shopping from hypermarket retail stores. So, the hypermarket retail stores offer an enjoyable, relaxing, and refreshing retail store environment (Khare, 2011 ; Wakefield & Baker, 1998) as a source of motivation, and represent the lifestyle of a customer. The entertainment facilities like music (Jha & Singh, 2013), events, and refreshment facilities generate fun and enjoyment (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982 ; Kesari, & Atulkar, 2016 ; Wakefield, & Baker, 1998) during the shopping process. Shopping has been recognized as an enjoyable retail experience, therefore, the store environment, facilitated with entertainment facilities, enhances the excitement and enjoyment of the shopping process (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014; Kesari & Atulkar, 2016 ; Wakefield, & Baker 1998) and creates feelings of pleasure and enjoyment in the customer. Babin et al. (1994) revealed how a customer would experience a sense of curiosity and excitement, which enhances the fun and pleasure of the shopping process. Sinha and Banerjee (2004) showed how entertainment facilities are important for shoppers in the category of leisure stores (lifestyle, books, and music). Therefore, this study presents the following hypothesis:

- **H1 :** Enjoyment has a significant positive influence on the customer shopping experience.

(ii) Emotional Attachment : Customers like to shop from retail stores to which they are loyal and are emotionally attached (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). They not only visit the retail stores for shopping but also to relax, refresh their mind, and for positive feelings (Babin & Darden, 1996). Shoppers' emotions are associated with the shopping process ; the happiness of shopping (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Webster, Trevino, & Ryan, 1993), escape from daily routine, and spending time in an enjoyable manner (Wakefield & Baker, 1998). Retailers create a positive customer shopping experience to satisfy the customers' shopping values and emotional needs (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003 ; Bloch et al., 1994 ; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982 ; Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2010) as the experience has a direct relationship with customer shopping values, moods and emotions, where the emotional part of a customer directs him/her towards purchases and satisfaction (Babin & Darden, 1996). Customers today

are emotionally attached to the hypermarkets, which creates positive emotions such as happiness and excitement (Liljander & Strandvik, 1997), enhances confidence, and involves them in purchasing from a particular retail store (Amos, Holmes, & Keneson, 2014). Therefore, this study presents the following hypothesis:

- **H2 :** Emotional attachment has a significant positive influence on the customer shopping experience.

(iii) Comfort : A hypermarket retail store offers pricing advantage to make itself a core destination, and the comfort of shopping gives it a competitive advantage. Comfort at a retail store is an essential factor for shopping centre choice, helps in creating a good shopping centre image in the customers' mind. According to Berry, Seiders, and Grewal (2002), the ability to reduce time, energy, and efforts is convenience, which increase the comfort level of customers in retail stores. Store ambience (layout, aroma, lighting, aisle, music, and cleanliness) and excellent customer service (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004 ; Westbrook, & Black, 1985) generate positive attitude and comfort to shop. To, Liao, and Lin (2007) identified trading hours, service convenience, and shopping convenience as the important attributes for producing comfort. Hypermarket retail stores (Venkateswaran & Mahalakshmi, 2009) are spacious and are facilitated with physical facilities (like trolleys, elevators, air conditioning, and washrooms) and offer all kinds of products all under one roof, which makes the shopping process (Berry, Seiders, & Grewal, 2002 ; Khare, 2011) more comfortable. Therefore, this study presents the following hypothesis:

- **H3 :** Comfort has a significant positive influence on the customer shopping experience.

(iv) Social Interaction : The interface between customer and the service provider is referred to as interaction. Social dimension consists of all the interactions such as physical and emotional that customers have with other members of the society (Mattila, & Wirtz, 2008 ; Sullivan & Adcock, 2002). The consumption pattern and shopping behavior (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002) of a customer is highly influenced by the surrounded cultural and social atmosphere. Hypermarkets facilitate social interaction by appealing to the social motive (Kelly, 1983; Silvera, Lavack, & Kropp, 2008) of a customer. A hypermarket is a place for interactions of customers with the sales staff (Jha & Singh, 2013) as well as amongst the customers themselves during service encounters, which is essential for generating positive responses, enhancing positive feelings and beliefs of a customer, and to make them realize the state of social status (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014 ; Holbrook, 1999 ; Mattila, & Wirtz, 2008; Silvera et al., 2008). Shopping as an everyday activity is considered as a societal process (Holbrook, 1999; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008), promotes social gathering at a particular place, and affects the overall perception of customers towards the retail store. Therefore, this study presents the following hypothesis:

- **H4 :** Social interaction has a significant positive influence on the customer shopping experience.

(v) Uniqueness : Customers experience uniqueness when the involvement (Arnold et al., 2005 ; Backstrom, 2011) and the retail store environment gives them a unique personality that is different from others (Palmer, 2010). To et al. (2007) showed that branded retail stores in a hypermarket not only offer customization in a product that fulfills the shoppers' basic needs, but also enables them to compare products, avail discounts and offers, and create uniqueness (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000) in the customers. Customers realize uniqueness when the shopping is appreciated in its own right and by obtaining pleasure and excellent customer service (Kyle et al., 2004 ; Westbrook & Black, 1985). Hypermarkets facilitate a refreshing and relaxing retail store environment (Backstrom, 2011 ; Wakefield & Baker, 1998) for the customer to escape from his/her busy, complex, and stressful lifestyle, resulting in pleasurable and delightful experiences (Arnold et al., 2005; Backstrom, 2011). Such experiences obtained by a customer create a perception of genuineness. Therefore, this study presents the following hypothesis :

- **H5 :** Uniqueness has a significant positive influence on the customer shopping experience.

(vi) Impulsiveness : Impulsiveness is a major research area among researchers, as the retail store ambience generates curiosity in the customers, engages and involves them to stay for a longer time in a store, and spend more money, which leads to impulse purchases (Amos et al., 2014 ; Badgaiyan, & Verma, 2014 ; Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997; Sharma et al., 2010). Offering a wide range of brands, varieties in the assortments (Jones et al., 2010; Sharma et al., 2010), attractive pricing and motivational promotional activities by the hypermarket retailers creates impulsiveness in the customers, which motivates them towards higher purchases (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014). In-store pricing and promotional (Kotler, 2003) activities such as advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and public relations etc. help retailers to offer various benefits, and influences customers to make more purchases of products or services (Jones et al., 2010 ; Sharma et al., 2010), which the retailers use to attract and reward new customers. According to Kotler (2003), promotion includes all the activities that help to communicate and promote the products and services offered ; whereas, the price is the amount of money charged for the products and services. Therefore, this study presents the following hypothesis:

- **H6 :** Impulsiveness has a significant positive influence on the customer shopping experience.

Methodology

(i) Construct Measures : All the elements that encourage customers while interacting with the retailers create a customer shopping experience. Therefore, the constructs and the observable items were developed by us from an extensive review of literature and studied definitions described in the Table 2. A final set of 18 items in seven different constructs were used by us for the development of the research framework and for data collection process, examined with the help of structural equation modeling (SEM). All the responses taken for the items (Table 2) were measured on 5-point Likert scales, ranging from value 1 - *"strongly disagree"* to value 5 - *"strongly agree"*. Initially, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 35 respondents to check the validity of the questionnaire and to check whether the used question format was clear and understandable to the respondents. On the basis of respondents' feedback, some changes were made in the questionnaire to better fit the research topic and then it was used for final data collection process. The final set of questionnaire consisted of two sections, the first section consisted of respondents' demographic characteristics and the second section contained the questions related to customers' shopping experience.

(ii) Sampling Design and Data Collection : Testing the suggested research hypotheses used in the research framework, we visited three hypermarket stores located in Bhopal city in the capital of Madhya Pradesh (Central India) for the data collection process. The questionnaires were distributed to the shoppers using the convenience sampling method. Only those respondents participated in the study who felt convenient to answer the questions. A total number of 391 out of 500 questionnaires were collected in the months of July- September 2015, out of which 366 questionnaires were found to be completely filled and usable for structural equation modeling analysis. The detailed demographic breakdown of the respondents is shown in the Table 1.

Data Analysis and Findings

SmartPLS 2.0 (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) software was used for measurement and structural model (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009) estimates, focusing on one dependent variable, for example, customer shopping experience. This software solves two purposes, first, it determines the association of constructs with dependent

Table 1. Demographic Breakdown of Respondents

Category		*n*	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	207	56.56%
	Female	159	43.44%
Age			
	16-25	115	31.42%
	26-35	157	42.90%
	36-45	55	15.03%
	46-55	39	10.66%
Occupation			
	Business	31	8.47%
	Service	127	34.70%
	Profession	106	28.96%
	Students	75	20.49%
	Others	27	7.38%
Salary Structure			
	0-2 lakhs (INR)	89	24.32%
	2 lakhs- 4 lakhs (INR)	137	37.43%
	4 lakhs - 6 lakhs (INR)	67	18.31%
	6 lakhs - 8 lakhs (INR)	45	12.30%
	>8 lakhs (INR)	28	7.65%

variable and secondly, it identifies the effects of each measuring construct on customer shopping experience (Palmer, 2010). Parallel to this, it also estimates the statistical significance of factor loadings and the path coefficients (Chin, 2001; Davison, Hinkley, & Young, 2003) using the non-parametric bootstrap procedure.

(i) Scale Validity and Reliability : Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted by us to examine the construct validity of each latent construct in the measurement model (Bagozzi, & Edwards, 1998 ; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998) through convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity methodology proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggests that if the value of outer factor loadings and average variance extracted *(AVE)* is greater than 0.50 in both the cases (Lin & Ding, 2006), the explained variance is greater than the measurement error. Therefore, the resulted value of factor loadings lies in between 0.62 to 0.96 and the value for *AVE* lies in between 0.63 to 0.83 (Table 2).

However, the discriminant validity methodology proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) showed that the value of square root of AVE should exceed the construct correlations with all other constructs (Table 3). All the values are computed from a confirmatory factor analysis using SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) which shows that the measurement model reflects good construct validity and reliability. The value of composite reliability *(CR)* (Raykov, 1997 ; Werts, Linn, & Joreskog, 1974) and the values of Cronbach's alpha are used to measure the internal consistency of the constructs supposed to be underestimated scale reliability with the recommended threshold criterion of 0.70 for both (Nunnally, 1978). The Table 2 shows that the value of composite reliability lies in between 0.83 to 0.93 and for Cronbach's α, the values lies in between 0.76 to 0.89.

Table 2. Construct, Items, and Measurement Model Summary

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Enjoyment (Babin et al., 1994 ; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982)			0.71	0.88	0.78
	Retail store creates involvement with the product and services offered to me.	0.93			
	Retail store provides fun and enjoyment during the shopping process.	0.94			
	While shopping, I enjoy the soft music entertainment facility in the retail store.	0.62			
Emotional Attachment (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003 ; Bloch et al., 1994 ; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Wakefield & Baker, 1998)			0.83	0.93	0.89
	The retail store environment produces positive feelings for the products and services.	0.96			
	While shopping, an entertaining retail environment creates happiness in me.	0.80			
	While shopping, I feel excited by seeing new products and brands.	0.96			
Comfort (Berry et al., 2002 ; Khare, 2011 ; To et al., 2007)			0.66	0.85	0.76
	The store ambience always engages me to stay for a longer time in a store.	0.85			
	I like this retail store due to good physical facilities.	0.84			
	I get every essential product and service because of one stop shopping place.	0.73			
Social Interaction (Kelly, 1983; Mattila, & Wirtz, 2008 ; Sullivan, & Adcock, 2002)			0.63	0.83	0.80
	While shopping, I always interact with new customers of the society.	0.73			
	I enjoy the interaction with sales staff to get new things.	0.90			
Uniqueness (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Palmer, 2010)			0.83	0.91	0.82
	Excellent customer services encourage me to visit the store again and again.	0.96			
	I perceived a delightful shopping experience due to relaxing and refreshing retail store facilities.	0.86			
Impulsiveness (Amos et al., 2014; Badgaiyan, & Verma, 2014 ; Sherman et al., 1997)			0.79	0.88	0.77
	Varieties in the assortments motivate me to spend more money on products and services.	0.79			
	Attractive pricing and promotional activities motivate me to purchase more than my scheduled purchases.	0.96			
Customer Shopping Experience (Gentile et al.,2007 ; Jones et al., 2010 ; Oliver et al., 1997; Palmer, 2010 ; Verhoef et al., 2009)			0.80	0.89	0.76
	The shopping process always creates pleasure of shopping for me.	0.87			
	I share a memorable shopping experience with others.	0.92			

Note: - AVE=average variance extracted, CR=composite reliability.

Table 3. Latent Variable Correlation

	Enjoyment	Emotional Attachment	Comfort	Social Interaction	Uniqueness	Impulsiveness	Customer Shopping Experience
Enjoyment	**.84ª**						
Emotional attachment	.726	**.91ª**					
Comfort	.819	.647	**.81ª**				
Social Interaction	.505	.583	.362	**.79ª**			
Uniqueness	.221	.237	.259	-.117	**.91ª**		
Impulsiveness	.416	.223	-.290	-.224	.025	**.88ª**	
Customer Shopping Experience	.241	.212	.235	-.516	.195	.390	**.89ª**

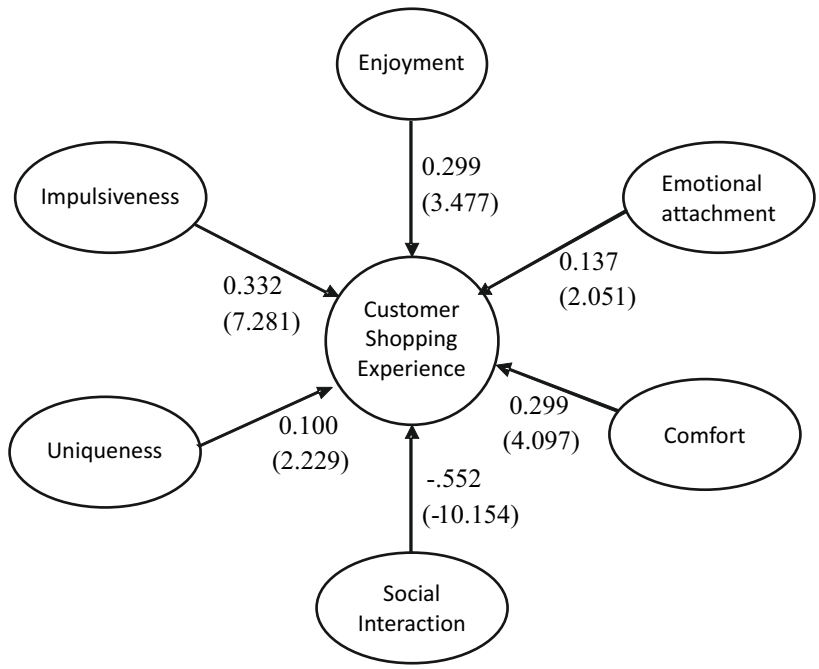
Note: - ª Diagonal elements are squared AVE.

Table 4. Structural Model Estimates (Path Coefficient)

Path	Coefficients	*t*-value	*P*-value	Result
H1: Enjoyment -> Customer shopping experience	.299	3.477	.001*	**Accepted**
H2: Emotional attachment -> Customer shopping experience	.137	2.051	.041*	**Accepted**
H3: Comfort -> Customer shopping experience	.299	4.097	.000*	**Accepted**
H4: Social interaction -> Customer shopping experience	**-.552**	**-10.154**	.000	Rejected
H5: Uniqueness -> Customer shopping experience	.100	2.229	.026*	**Accepted**
H6: Impulsiveness -> Customer shopping experience	.332	7.281	.000*	**Accepted**

Note: - *Significance level <0.05, if *t*-value =>1.96, based on two-tailed t-test.

Figure 2. Structural Model



(Note: *t*-values are in the bracket with beta coefficient)

(ii) Main Effects and Path Coefficients : Results from bootstrap procedure with 2000 resample are presented in the Table 4, which shows the values of standardized path coefficients (β) (Chin, 2001; Davison et al., 2003), *t*-values, and the associated significance levels for all relationships. The path coefficient is significant if *t*-value is greater than 1.96, with a significance level of 5%, using a two-tailed *t*-test in IBM SPSS 20 software (Table 4).

The resulted values for the constructs : enjoyment (β = 0.229 ; *t*- value = 3.477 ; *p* = 0.001), emotional attachment (β = 0.137; *t*- value = 2.051; *p* = 0.041), comfort (β = 0.299 ; *t*-value = 4.097 ; *p* = 0.000), uniqueness (β = 0.100 ; *t*-value = 2.229 ; *p* = 0.026), and impulsiveness (β = 0.332; *t*- value = 7.281; *p* = 0.000) show a positive and significant effect on the customer shopping experience. Therefore, the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H5, and H6 are accepted. Whereas, the resulted values for social interaction (β = - 0.552 ; *t*-value = -10.154; *p* = 0.000) show a negative value for β-coefficient and *t*-value. Therefore, it shows a negative significant effect on customer shopping experience (Figure 2). Hence, the hypothesis H4 is rejected.

Discussion and Conclusion

A hypermarket retail store is a place where a retailer creates a motivational retail environment by enhancing the customer shopping experience (Oliver et al., 1997). Retailers connect themselves with the customers with the help of different factors of customer shopping experience such as enjoyment, emotional attachment, comfort, social interaction, uniqueness, and impulsiveness, which helps in creating a pleasurable and memorable shopping experience. Bagdare and Jain (2013) focused on joy, mood, leisure, and distinctive experience as a customer's multidimensional constructs of shopping experience and the results showed that all these four dimensions made an important contribution in conceptualizing and developing a retail customer's shopping experience. The present research paper focused on six dimensions of customer shopping experience in different hypermarkets of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (Central India) during weekends .

We observed that customers expect an enjoyable shopping experience while shopping in hypermarket retail stores and to fulfill these requirements, hypermarkets offer a relaxing and refreshing retail store environment along with entertainment facilities like soft music and aromatic environment, events, sales benefit from various sections, and refreshment facilities where the customers can relax and can engage and involve themselves in shopping along with fun, so that the shopping experience becomes more enjoyable. The resulting value supports the enjoyment construct by showing the positive and significant effects on the customer shopping experience. Thus, the hypothesis H1 is accepted, which supports the results obtained by previous research studies (Badgaiyan & Verma, 2014 ; Kesari & Atulkar, 2016 ; Sinha & Banerjee, 2004). Therefore, the constant efforts of retailers in making shopping more exciting and enjoyable will attract customers to indulge in instore browsing for a longer time.

Shopping from hypermarkets creates emotional attachment, as it is strongly associated with perceived shopping outcomes and value for products and services by the customers in retail stores. The study shows that the entertaining and enjoyable retail store environment produces excitement, positive feelings, and positive emotions in the customers. A hypermarket generates happiness in the customers by fulfilling their basic needs of shopping and labeling the product categories which are easily recognizable by the customers, as the customers do not want to sacrifice their valuable time, effort, and money in search of products. Therefore, the hypothesis H2 is accepted and the resulted value for the emotional attachment construct also ropes in previous research (Amos et al., 2014 ; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Sharma et al., 2010) by showing the positive and significant effects of emotional attachment on the customer shopping experience.

The construct comfort also shows positive and significant effects on the customer shopping experience. We observed that while shopping in hypermarket retail stores on crowded weekends, the customers always preferred physical facilities like trolleys, elevators, lifts etc. to carry and hold their purchased merchandise easily. Hypermarkets offer all kinds of products from groceries to footwear, clothes, cosmetics, furnishings, and electrical items at one particular place. Therefore, the store ambience facilitates with attractive layout ; the store design, interiors, lighting, aroma, music, and cleanliness play a significant role in providing comfort of the shopping process and the resulted value also supports the previous studies (Khare, 2011 ; Kyle et al., 2004 ; To et al., 2007) by investigating the positive significant effects of comfort on the shopping experience. So, the hypothesis H3 is accepted.

The study findings show that the customers' interaction with the sales staff was not quite important for those customers who visited the retail stores only for shopping. We observed that the frequency of customers' visit to the hypermarkets on weekends or on holidays is more than it is during the normal days, and due to this, the customers are more focused towards the shopping process. On crowded weekends, the customers' motive to visit the hypermarket is only for shopping along with their family members because they want to spend their valuable time shopping with their family. Therefore, the resulting value for the social interaction construct has a negative effect on the shopping experience. Thus, the hypothesis H4 is rejected. However, this finding is contrary to the results of previous research (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008 ; Sullivan, & Adcock, 2002; Silvera et al., 2008) as the researchers

observed that social interaction positively influenced the shopping experience.

Most of the customers feel unique when the shopping process is completed by receiving excellent customer service. It has been observed that the encounter between sales staff and the customer themselves is essential for generating a positive response. A hypermarket creates involvement of customers in a multi sensory retail environment, and produces a unique retail store image in the customers' mind. A delightful shopping experience obtained by customers from a hypermarket retail store - with relaxing and refreshing retail store environment facilities - helps customers to escape from their complex and stressful busy lifestyles. Therefore, the hypothesis H5 is accepted, which supports past research efforts of Arnold et al. (2005), To et al. (2007), and Backstrom (2011) by showing the positive and significant effects of uniqueness on the customer shopping experience.

Varieties of merchandise in the hypermarkets attract, engage, involve, and motivate customers towards the purchase, resulting in impulsive buying. Parallel to this, retailers use attractive pricing and promotional activities to offer various benefits of products and services to the customers, especially on weekends, holidays, and during the festival season to generate curiosity in the customers and to engage them to spend more time and money in the retail stores (so that they indulge in impulse buying). Motivational activities such as sales promotions, advertisements, supportive sales staff (Jha & Singh, 2013) etc. enhance the confidence and involves customers in the retail store which leads to impulse purchases. Therefore, the hypothesis H6 is accepted, which shows the positive and significant effect on customer shopping experience and also supports the past research studies (Amos et al., 2014; Badgaiyan, & Verma, 2014 ; Jones et al., 2010 ; Sharma et al., 2010) which showed that the customers act impulsively when they get extra from their invested money.

This paper concludes that while making purchases from hypermarkets, all the personal elements of the customers like thinking, feeling, sensing, acting, and relating are performed collectively. Therefore, the hypermarket retailers offer a pleasurable shopping environment to satisfy these personal elements of the customers, which also creates a distinctive retail store image for their products and services. Hence the enjoyment, emotional attachment, comfort, uniqueness, and impulsiveness dimensions of the customer shopping experience play an important role to make the shopping process memorable to the customers for a long period of time. The customer shopping experience dynamics have changed with time, and the same has gained the attention of the retailers, as now, it is not only limited to interactions with the customers in the store. Therefore, the present study provides some useful insights about the attitude and purchase behaviour of the customers at retail stores in Bhopal city, which is positively influenced by enjoyment, emotional attachment, comfort, uniqueness, and impulsiveness dimensions, while the social interaction dimension does not affect the customer shopping experiences.

Managerial Implications

This research paper suggests that the retailers have to engage and involve their customers every day by catering to uniqueness and creating a memorable retail environment at a particular retail store. For gaining competitive advantages, the retail managers have to focus on the discussed dimensions of the customer shopping experience to measure customer perceptions and feelings towards their retail store. An in-depth understanding of the customer shopping experience would provide them an edge over their competitors and it becomes a key input and essential part for them to compete with other retailers in this challenging retail environment. Therefore, it is important for the retailers to gratify customer needs, generate positive responses, and stimulate motivation to buy products or services in an attractive and entertaining retail store environment. The retailers also need to put in efforts to attract new customers and retain their profitable customers in the retail store by offering them tangible and intangible benefits by enhancing the customer shopping experience.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

This study focuses on the effects of some specific factors related to customer shopping experience and all these factors were derived from previous studies. We also faced some limitations while using these factors for the study location (Bhopal). This study is limited to only one city Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) with a sample size of 366 respondents, who were shoppers from different hypermarket formats. So, the results cannot be generalized as we have taken only one city. Therefore, the scope of this study is also limited to hypermarkets of Bhopal city and the study would help academicians, researchers, and retailers to understand the customer shopping experiences of customers from hypermarkets of Central India (Bhopal).

This paper shows the effects of six limited factors of the customer shopping experience. However, there are some more factors that can be taken up in future research studies - such as customer feelings, purchasing patterns, decision making, and so forth with customer shopping experience as a dependent variable in different types of other retail formats such as malls, department stores, variety stores, etc. Researchers may also focus on the impact of the customer shopping experience on purchasing behaviour, as most of the retail stores attract their customers on the basis of the experience they provide to a customer. Thus, the understanding of customer shopping experiences may help retailers in the development and better management of the retail store in this competitive environment, as well as guide future researchers to work on customer shopping experiences by considering some other factors.

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