



# Satisfaction of mall shoppers: A study on perceived utilitarian and hedonic shopping values

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## ABSTRACT

Declining consumer footfall and diminishing sales in Indian metro cities have guided the expansion of malls in cities of central India. Shoppers of these cities are unfamiliar with the mall concept and have limited exposure of shopping values in the past. The present research focused on the influence of utilitarian and hedonic shopping values on satisfaction of mall shoppers of central India Bhopal by establishing a proposed research framework based on 288 responses from two shopping malls, using utilitarian and hedonic dimensions of shopping values. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) are used to analyze and validate the proposed research framework. The result supports the relationship between shopping values and customer satisfaction, where both the shopping values show positive significant influences on customer satisfaction. Therefore this research paper would help mall owners to focus on these shopping values effectively and efficiently while planning malls in central India for gaining competitive advantage, attracting new customer and hold their profitable customers by enhancing customer satisfaction with shopping values in the current retail scenario.

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## 1. Introduction

Mall culture plays a significant role in consumers' lifestyle (Bloch et al., 1994; Terblanche, 1999) and it is essential for mall managers to design the mall ambience along with entertainment facilities, assortment of products and services by targeting customer preferences (Robertson, 1995) and shopping values (Babin et al., 1994, 2005; Babin and Darden, 1995). Study of Babin et al., (1994) verifies the existence of hedonic and utilitarian shopping value and shows that the satisfaction procured will influence consumer behavior. In utilitarian shopping values, shoppers consider shopping as a mission-oriented experience and only by acquiring each product or service he completes this mission (Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Babin and Darden, 1996). For example, shoppers perceive greater utilitarian shopping value only when they need to buy something; they buy it and then leave. Velitchka and Barton (2006) study shows that the task-oriented shoppers derive shopping value from the outcome of the shopping activity itself and not necessarily by buying a product or services. Academicians believe that studying about the procurement of product or completion of mission is not enough to represent shopping value. It has been found that some customers enter the mall primarily to get value of sensual and emotional satisfaction during shopping process, (Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Roy,

1994; Wakefield and Baker, 1998) representing hedonic shopping values. These shoppers love the fun and enjoyment of shopping process and viewed shopping malls as a place of entertainment and exploration (Bloch et al., 1994). According to Khare (2011) shopping behavior of Indian consumer is affected by shopping orientations, personal values, and social influences. Therefore the different segment of consumers' reflects different shopping behavior and values. For example, shopping behavior of younger consumers' are more focused towards seeking entertainment and exploration while older consumer focuses on convenience and monetary savings.

Today the malls in Indian metro cities experienced decrease in consumer footfall and diminishing sales, therefore the mall operators explore their operational activities in Indian smaller cities. These smaller cities are attractive due to low rental and operating costs (KPMG, 2009) and private companies are investing large amounts of money in developing and designing shopping malls to fulfill the shopper's desire of global brands, multiplex, food court, hotel and restaurants, gaming zone etc. with motivational and relaxing retail environment. The shopper of small city feels that malls in their city have helped them get access to better quality branded. The sensual pleasure and experiences are enhanced in malls as touching, sensing, and feeling new products affects the consumer shopping behavior (Khare, 2011). Shopping motives of Indian consumers are governed by their role in society and duties they have to perform towards their family. For example, the utilitarian shopper visits mall for performing their responsibilities of being a father, mother, wife or husband (Khare, 2011).

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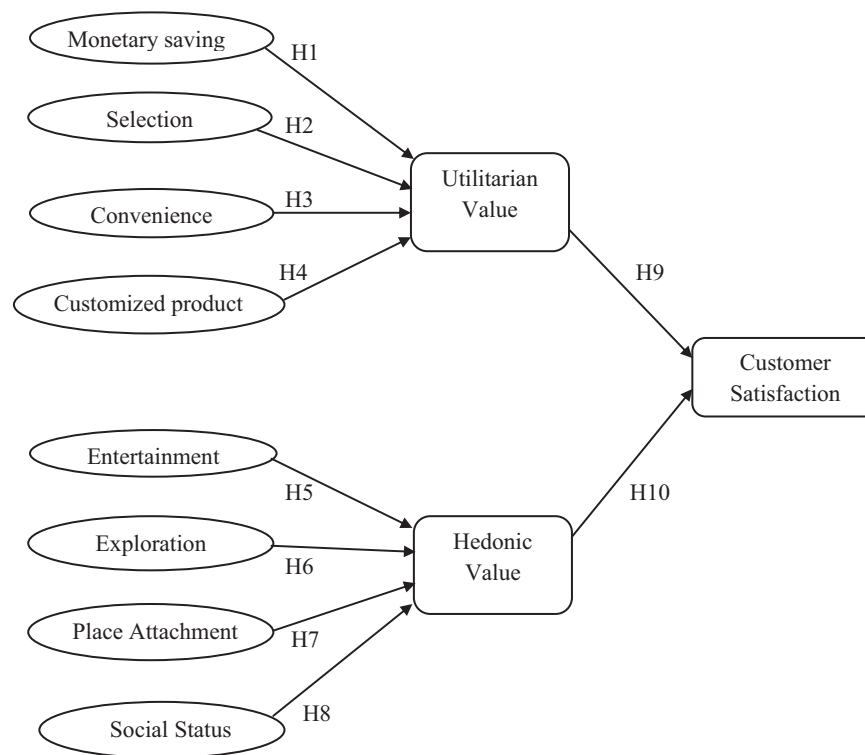


Fig. 1. Research Framework.

Prior to this, researchers have focused on the effects of shopping values on consumer buying behavior (Batra and Ahtola, 1991), customer preferences (Robertson, 1995) and customer satisfaction (Babin et al., 1994, 2005; Roy, 1994; Wakefield and Baker, 1998) mostly in the USA, European countries (Jin and Kim, 2003; Li et al., 2004) and metro cities of India (Kuruvilla and Joshi, 2010; Khare and Rakesh, 2011; Deb, 2012; Tripathi and Dave, 2013), but very little attention has been given to cities of central India. Most of the shoppers in Bhopal city are unfamiliar with the mall concept or have limited exposure of shopping values in the past, as the mall culture starts its operations in central India (Bhopal) with DB city mall (First mall) in August 2010. Understanding of utilitarian and hedonic shopping values perceived by shoppers will help retailers to design their retail store environment in a more attractive manner, where both the shopping values are addressed. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to identify the influence of perceived utilitarian and hedonic shopping values on satisfaction of mall shoppers with the help of proposed research framework (Fig. 1). Discussing various factors of both the shopping values researchers try to focus on the importance and how these shopping values influence satisfaction of mall shoppers in cities like Bhopal. The researcher applies a structural equation modeling to verify the relationship amongst various factors in the research framework.

## 2. Literature review and hypothesis

Several researches suggest that customer satisfaction provided by mall owners have the combination of both utilitarian and hedonic shopping value (Babin et al., 1994, 2005; Babin and Darden, 1995). A review on these shopping values indicates that mall shopping behavior is influenced by customer values (Babin et al., 1994) provided by retailers in the mall and it is argued that creating and delivering customer value is essential for producing satisfaction in mall shopper, as well as for the retailers to survive in today's competitive marketplace (Swinyard, 1993). Customers recognize

utilitarian shopping value by receiving more valuable products that fulfill the needs (Oliver, 1987; Fornell, 1992), at the same time customer also perceives hedonic shopping value coupled with the entertainment and enjoyment. Babin et al. (1994) defined utilitarian shopping values as acquiring the benefit of the product needed effortlessly during the shopping process, where hedonic shopping value include the joy and excitement of shopping. Generally, it is believed that customers purchase not only for utilitarian values of the products, but also for receiving satisfaction during shopping process. So it is clear that both the shopping values, utilitarian and hedonic value, (Babin et al., 1994, 2005; Babin and Darden, 1995; Wakefield and Baker, 1998; Rintamaki et al., 2006; Kaul, 2007) are important for satisfaction of mall shoppers. Then the question is what actually constitutes these shopping values?

### 2.1. Utilitarian shopping value

Utilitarian shoppers have a greater desire to get more value for their purchases. Utilitarian shopping value starts with a mission or task, and the perceived benefit depends on whether the mission is completed efficiently during the process or not (Sherry et al., 1993; Babin et al., 1994). The basic criterion of Indian customer is to shop economically and they do not want to sacrifice their time, efforts and money for shopping process (Bettman, 1979). Customers perceive more utility and value (Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Sherry et al., 1993; Babin et al., 2005) when they feel satisfied after getting a branded product at discounted rates with effortless shopping (Babin and Darden, 1995; Babin and Darden, 1996). For increasing utilitarian shopping values, retailers offer wide range of high quality branded merchandise to customers to shop from shopping malls. Therefore, the shoppers will have the opportunity of monetary saving (Chandon et al., 2000) by selecting products from available product choices with convenience (Chandon et al., 2000). These studies categorize utilitarian shopping values into monetary saving, selection, convenience and customized products.

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