DETERMINANTS OF RETAIL PATRONAGE – A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the determinants of retail patronage to shopping centres. Previous studies have indicated that the long term success and profitability for any shopping centre in these challenging economic times depends on the level of retail patronage. This paper defines retail patronage as store choices and frequency of visits (loyalty). The dimensions used to measure includes product related factors (product features i.e. product quality and price), market related factors (services provided by retailers / shopping centre management) and personal factors (which pertains to the demographics of the consumers). For this study, previous empirical studies are synthesized in order to perform a critical review of the literature. The method used to synthesize this study includes the studying of the total effects of the different dimensions. Whilst the findings have indicated that retail attributes or shopping environments remain crucial to shoppers, shopping centre management should also pay attention to the market related factors such as providing convenience, improvement of quality aspects etc. Further findings from this study conclude that more studies should incorporate customer emotions as well as customer characteristics in order to establish their intentions to patronage intentions.

Keywords: retail patronage, product related factors, market related factors, attitude

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Recent trends globally have indicated that there is intense competition in the retail sector, namely shopping centres which have resulted in shopping centre owners moving beyond being merchandise focused to a focus on providing customer experience (Puccinelli, Goodstein, Grewal, Price, Raghubir & Stewart, 2009). Global retail business have indicated that the retail business has grown between 25% to 30% in India and 13% in fast growing and developing economies such as China and Russia. The traditional growth models that used to focus on rolling out more stores and adding more product lines were now no longer generating the high return on investment they once did. The key to survival in the retail business now all depends on adaptability and being able to serve customers who patronise them accordingly. Previous literature such as Wakefield & Baker (1998) as well as Shim & Eastlick (1998) have concluded that retail practitioners have to know their customers well in order to retain patronage rates to maximise the lifetime value of customers. Ahmed, Ghingold & Dahari (2007) indicated that a focus on ambience and brand image is required in order to increase shopper patronage.

The objective of this paper is to highlight the key areas of retailing with focus on retail patronage that have been studied and published in the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. This paper sought to study on journals published in the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services between 2004 to 2016. This study hopes to highlight the areas in which were most recently studied in retail patronage in recent times in view of the economic and technological advancement conditions that may have impacted the retail industry. Previous literature have highlighted that there are two dimensions of retail patronage, namely, (1) store choice (consumer's choice to patronise a particular store) and (2) frequency of visit (i.e. how often a shopper patronizes that store). These dimensions work towards building long term relationships with any store. The short term relationship is in the form of customer satisfaction that is usually associated with the quality aspects delivered by the store. For this paper, a total of 134 articles were reviewed but only 42 were pertaining patronage to shopping centres. Before proceeding to elaborate the factors that impact a shopper's decision to patronage a shopping centre, the study of attitude towards a particular shopping centre is discussed. The following table denotes the number of journals being reviewed in the respective years.

Table 1
Publications by Year

Tubications by Tear	1
Year	Number of publications
2002	1
2004	3
2005	0
2006	1
2007	0
2008	6
2009	6
2010	3
2011	3
2012	8
2013	2
2014	4
2015	0
1	

2016	5
Total	42

2.0 RETAIL PATRONAGE

In this study, the dependent variable is retail patronage. Retail managers ought to understand the patronage behaviour of consumers in order to generate a steady flow of shoppers. The study of patronage behaviour (analysis) is the measure of the relative appeal of a store or department which would explain the reasons why customers do or do not shop there. This can be a useful decision tool to retail owners. Shopping patronage can be viewed as repeat visits or loyalty as a function of actual buying behaviour (purchase frequency or purchase absence). Customers who are dissatisfied with certain features or attributes of a shopping mall or the quality and assortment of merchandise available there may result in them buying fewer or no items. As such, purchasing frequency as an indication of mall patronage. Previous research has also been in the realm of retail patronage have looked at the aspects of perceived prices and sales persons' attributes (Darian, Wimana & Tucci, 2005). Babin, Chebat & Michon (2004) examined the cognitive and affective determinants of retail patronage. Teller and Reutterer (2008) further expanded by including the marketing mix factors and attractiveness dimensions as a basis to form customer evaluations on a shopping centre. This would later determine the patronage behaviour of the customer. The following sections discusses the determinants of retail patronage. For this study, the perspective of retail patronage as store choice and frequency of visit is examined.

2.1 Antecedents of retail patronage: Theoretical foundations

Competitive advantage in retailing requires the knowledge of the quality attributes that consumers use to evaluate stores and an understanding of why these attributes are important. Retail loyalty happens when there is congruity between store image attributes (advertising, physical characteristics of the store, convenient location, merchandise assortment, store personnel) with consumer attitudes, satisfaction, and patronage intentions or loyalty and this has been confirmed (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998; Kaul, 2006; Korgaonkar, Lund, & Price, 1985; Osman, 1993). However, there is a contrasting view by Rabbanee, Ramaseshan, Wu & Vinden (2012) who established that loyalty (re-patronage) towards a shopping centre is based on the type of stores available (which leads to store loyalty) and store loyalty which happens when shoppers have to travel some distance to go shopping.

A review of the literature revealed that 8 antecedents were reported and this is to be included in the study. These antecedents are classified into product-related factors (product features and attributes such as product quality and price), market-related factors (service provided by the retailer) and personal factors (which pertains to the demographics of the consumers).

2.2 Relationship between product-related factors and patronage

Product quality

Wong & Dean (2009) have indicated in their study that the quality and choice of products are significant predictors of perceived value and loyalty. This is because supermarket shoppers are constantly seeking quality in the merchandise they purchase as it leads to value. The availability of quality products also impacts shoppers' shopping value (Davis & Hodges, 2012; Nguyen & Klaus, 2013). Shopping value is the interaction between the consumer and the product or service that pertains not only to the object itself, but also to the consumption experience. From this, it can be deduced that the quality of merchandise or products available in a shopping centre along with its reputation influences patronage behaviour amongst shoppers.

H₁: The availability of quality merchandise or products is positively related to retail patronage intentions.

Price

In the study of the retail landscape of China, Wong & Dean (2009) concluded that the variable of price consciousness has a direct and positive relationships with value and loyalty particularly in supermarkets and departmental stores. Shoppers viewed factors such as value for money and good prices as amongst the factors that would influence their decision to repatronage a retailer (Nguyen & Klaus, 2013). Darian, Wiman & Tucci (2005) established that the value in which shoppers receive is derived from the ratio between the bundle of benefits customers receive and the costs incurred in evaluating, obtaining and using the product or service. To a certain extent, the level of service along with the price or costs incurred influences retail patronage intentions.

H₂: There is a positive correlation between the price of merchandise and retail patronage intentions.

Product selection / assortment

Part and parcel of being a successful retail outlet is the provision of providing an assortment of products and services that appeal to shoppers. As one of the components of the marketing mix, product assortment represents a strategic positioning tool for customer acquisition and retention (Bauer, Kotouc & Rudolph, 2012; Davis & Hodges, 2012). Consumers primarily evaluate grocery categories' attractiveness by combining assortment price, quality, variety and perceptions. Kumar & Kim (2014) further explained that the right combination of store and merchandise assortment plays a role in creating the brand image that may encourage the appropriate response from shoppers. Also, Wong & Dean (2009) also concluded that the consumers in China are consistently looking for choice in the range of products.

H₃: There is a positive correlation between product selection or assortment and retail patronage intentions.

2.3 Relationship between market-related factors and patronage

Convenience (opening hours, location and parking)

As retailers continue to expand their network, particularly in suburban and residential areas in order to be closer to consumers, they continue to offer shoppers the convenience of not

having to travel too far to patronize a shopping centre. The 'Accessibility' of a retail site indicates the degree of convenience that shoppers would experience in their endeavour to access a shopping centre. The availability of parking is vital as there are more and more cars available on the road, hence shopping centres that provide for ample parking is crucial in the decision that shoppers might make when deciding to patronise a shopping centre (Teller & Reutterer, 2008).

H₄: There is a positive correlation between shopping convenience, namely opening hours, location and parking availability and retail patronage intentions.

Service quality

Service quality is defined in different ways. Researchers like Bitner, Booms and Mohr (1994) have defined service quality as 'the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority or superiority of the organisation and its services' whilst other researchers such as Cronin and Taylor (1994) tended to view service quality as a form of attitude representing a long-run overall evaluation of it. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) defined service quality as 'a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions'.

According to Davis & Hodges (2012) shoppers viewed in-store service value in department stores as important as good service when shopping. Service value can be viewed as retail fairness. This concept of retail fairness is receiving more emphasis (Nguyen & Klaus, 2013). Retail fairness in the way shoppers are given fair treatment, customer care and good services tend to generate re-patronage and loyalty. Service quality also encompasses relationship quality that may be formed after shoppers receive retail fairness. This is especially true when consumers receive good service from salespeople or employees which are the basis for customer satisfaction and trust (Tripathi & Dave, 2013; Pavlos & Vrenchopoulos, 2012).

Salespeople or personnel are the front liners in that they are the first to establish a relationship between the shoppers and store. Customer satisfaction is derived by the friendliness and performance of frontline employees (Chen & Quester, 2009). A satisfied customer tends to become a loyal customer which in turn exhibits repeat patronage behaviour and intention. This is also the conclusion as derived from Davis & Hodges (2012).

H₅: Service quality is positively related to retail patronage intentions

Retail (store) atmospherics

The term "atmospherics" was first introduced by Kotler (1973). Atmospherics is the impact of environmental sensory stimuli, such as sight, sound, smell, and touch, on consumer behaviour intention. The study on stimuli responses was further studied by Mehrabian and Russell (1975) who went on to develop the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) model that environmental stimuli (S) induce emotional reaction (O) and influence consumers' behavioural response (R). The study using the SOR framework is prevalent in recent studies especially when it comes to the congruence of product brands carried and the store image (Kumar & Kim, 2014).

According to Babin, Chebat & Michon (2004), store atmospherics can be defined as retailstore factors which include display design and fixtures, flooring, smell, sound level, store lighting and temperature, wall coverings, and other elements of store's ambience which are controlled by a retailer to influence the consumer's staying or patronage behaviour. Further studies by Spence et. al (2014) have indicated that store atmospherics should be viewed in a multisensory perspective that is a combination of visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile and taste perspective. When these sensory factors are combined in the right order, it usually triggers a shopper to stay longer, browse or repeat patronage to a store.

There are various responses by shoppers towards retail atmospherics which include increased sales due to effective window displays (Oh & Petrie, 2012; Diamond & Diamond, 2007), store front displays (Cornelius, Natter & Faure, 2010), the effect of lighting on the number of items handled by shoppers and time spent at a display (Mohan, Sivakumaran & Sharma, 2012), music congruency (Demoulin, 2011), store layout and price perceptions (Darian, Wiman & Tucci, 2005; Massicotte et. al. 2011; Borgers & Vosters, 2011), retailer reputation (Ou, Abratt & Dion, 2006; Kumar & Kim, 2014; Gupta & Pirsch, 2008; Nguyen & Klaus, 2013), e-atmospherics (Poncin & Mimoun, 2014; Dennis, Newman, Michon, Brakus, & Wright, 2010) and merchandise arrangement (Bauer et. al. 2012) as well as approach behaviours such as patronage behaviour (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998; Kaul, 2006; Korgaonkar, Lund, & Price, 1985; Osman, 1993).

Recent studies by Chebat, Michon, Haj-Salem & Oliveira (2014) have exerted the importance of atmospherics to shopping centre owners which calls for the maintenance or improvement of atmospherics to cater towards making shopping more functional by providing the following: easier access and parking, signage and maps to facilitate wayfinding, more open spaces to reduce negative effect of crowding, clean and appealing common areas and food courts as well as an enhanced store layout that will encourage traffic and exploration. This is especially important for shopping centres that are undergoing refurbishments or renovations to better their store image. These factors, of course, should not be the blanket decision for all shopping centres to undertake as certain shopping centres i.e. community malls cater towards providing for shoppers who are more sensitive to convenience and crowding (Chebat et. al., 2014). Rosenbaum, Otalora & Ramirez (2016) further add that brick and mortar stores can promote patronage by incorporating green elements into their built elements.

H₆: Retail (store) atmospherics is related to retail patronage behaviour.

2.4 Relationship between personal factors and patronage

Demographics

According to Allard, Babin & Chebat (2009), apart from the product and market related factors that influence patronage, the income bracket of people also plays an important role on the elements present at a retail place. From their study, it was found that lower income groups were more appealed towards the hedonic elements of a retail place. Also, Tripathi & Dave (2013) established that demographic characteristics such as age, income and occupation impacts decisions on store format choice and store choice amongst shoppers. The state of emotions and minds of shoppers can further play a role in shoppers determining if they choose to re-patronage. Demographics and lifestyle variables influence mall behaviour. This is pertinent to shoppers in India. In this study by Kuruvilla & Joshi (2010), careful studies of the areas of catchments (demographics), shopping orientation and lifestyle is needed in order for shopping centre management to harness the appropriate and required shoppers. In a study on Chinese shoppers by Maruyama & Wu (2014), it was found that multiple store patronage behaviour is influenced by household income and employment status and promotions in the

store has a positive effect on it. Personal factors of shoppers also affect their patronizing decision to shopping centres (Luceri & Latusi, 2012).

In a recent study of shoppers in China, Rahman & Wong (2016), in order for a shopping centre to be successful, the mall operators should pay very close attention to the shoppers' response to the perceived mall personality by them. Also, it was found in their study that the high-fashion-oriented shoppers, also known as fashion leaders, are concerned with the congruity of the mall personality with their shopping value and this generates a mediating effect on the mall patronage intention. This is also the same conclusion as derived by Rahman et. al. (2016) whereby shopping centres should attempt to become associated with certain age groups, lifestyles and levels of social status. Therefore, it can be deduced that the following hypothesis is derived.

H₇: Personal factors such as age, income, education and social status play a significant role in retail patronage.

Store / retail attitude

In general, shoppers and people form attitudes towards a person or object. This holds true especially when it comes to the scenario of shopping centres or retail places whereby shoppers may have either a positive or negative disposition or feeling towards it. According to Morschett, Swoboda & Foscht. (2005), attitudes are formed by shoppers by first forming a perception towards retailers. Perception is the process by which an individual is exposed to, attends to, selects, organises and interprets stimuli (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Perception towards a shopping centre or retail place tends to be short term and should there be a change of any attribute or feature of a shopping centre or retail outlet will lead to a change of perception. Any change of perception depends on a person's experiences, memories and expectations which aids in attaching meaning to a stimulus. Perception tends to be selective whereby a shopper can have their shopping tasks influenced by different stimuli like the atmospherics and other different attributes of the shopping centre. From here, the cognitive part of the attitude is formed as supported by the study of store atmospherics by Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal & Roggeveen (2014). This perspective looks at store atmospherics as a multisensory perspective is indicative that shoppers process cues by five different atmospherics – visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile and taste. These five different atmospherics affect both the cognitive and affective aspect of the shoppers and hence affect the shopping behaviours of shoppers. These behaviours would determine if they choose to stay longer at a shopping centre, be loyal or form a long term relationship with the retail place.

It is after the formation of perception that consumer attitudes are formed whereby beliefs, feelings, behavioural intentions towards an object (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Attitude has a main characteristic attribute in that it has an evaluative nature (Ajzen, 2005). According to Blythe (2013) and Ajzen (2005), there are three dimensions to attitude. These dimensions include Affect, Cognition and Conation. When these three dimensions are balanced in combination, it results in a stable attitude. Ajzen (2005) separates these dimensions into verbal as well as non-verbal responses.

Table 2
Responses used to Infer Attitudes

		Response category	sponse category								
Response mode	Cognition	Affect	Conation								
Verbal	Expressions of	Expressions of	Expressions of								
	beliefs about attitude	feelings towards the	behavioural								
	object	object (attitude).	intentions								
Nonverbal	Perceptual reactions	Physiological	Overt behaviours								
	to attitude object	reactions to attitude	with respect to								
		object	attitude object								

Source: Ajzen (2005)

Over the past, most of the literature written on mall atmosphere on mall evaluation. This is evident in the research by Massicotte, Michon, Chebat, Sirgy & Borges (2011). According to Massicotte et. al. (2011), there is a distinction as to how adults and teenagers evaluate the mall atmospheric cues. In a supermarket setting, the attributes that mostly affect consumer's attitude would include quality and choice of merchandises available as well as time constraints and price of merchandise (Wong & Dean, 2009). However, this study is limited whereby there exists a need to extend towards from the evaluation of the mall atmosphere towards dependent measures such as mall patronage and mall loyalty. The value that is created from a shopping trip (shopping experience) is formed by the fulfilment of consumers' general shopping motivations, and the retail elements that are created in the store (Davis & Hodges, 2012; Wong, Osman, Jamaluddin & Chan, 2012). Wong et. al (2012) in the study of Malaysian youth indicated that the balance between shopping motives and store attributes play a role in influencing the attitudes of shoppers (shopping enjoyment). In a recent study by Rahman et. al (2016), it was indicated that high-fashion-oriented shoppers are mostly concerned with the congruity of the mall personality to their fashion orientation. This is also the same view that is held by El-Adly & Eid (2016) whereby the atmospherics of a mall does play a key role in altering the perceptions of shoppers whereby shoppers perceive the high value of the shopping experience in the mall (MALLVAL: hedonic, self-gratification, utilitarian, epistemic, social interaction, transaction and time convenience).shoppers gain satisfaction from this and this in itself is reflective in their willingness to continue shopping and to recommend the mall to others as well.

Hs: The general attitude toward a store is positively related to the retail patronage intentions.

3.0 METHODS AND RESULTS

Sampling frame

The articles were chosen based on the same criterion: retail patronage. Based on this research, the construct of retail patronage is most often operationalised by shopper's store choice or

shopping frequency. As such, for this study store choice represents the likelihood a shopper will patronise a shopping centre and shopping frequency represents the number of times a shopper patronises the shopping centre.

The studies were examined by the following search procedures: (1) using the initial keyword search in the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. (2) a search on the upcoming publications by this journal (from 2004 to 2016). This journal is in the 'A' ranking in the ABDC journal lists, 'Q2" ranking in Scimago Journal and Country Rank, SCOPUS listing for top level in social sciences and JCR (Journal Citation Report), 2016. This search does not include studies that examine patronage intentions for specific products for example product's price affecting shoppers' intention to buy the product (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991) because as mentioned in the previous section, the dependent variable is patronage choice or intentions towards a retailer. Out of the 134 journals pertaining retail marketing, it was found that only 42 journals were related to the dependent variable.

Table 3 is a taxonomy of the antecedents of retail patronage along with the range of effects (r) as reported in the original studies.

Table 3

Effects Reported in the Studies

Predictor Predictor	Number of effects reported	Range of reported effects (r)	Cumulative n
Product related factors			
- Product quality	23 ^(a+b)	0.082 to 0.60	1004
- Price	4 ^(a+b)	0.052 to 0.59	1004
- Product selection /	2 ^(a+b)	0.83 to 0.88	223
assortment			
Market related factors			
- Convenience	10 ^(a)	0.000 to 0.228	667
- Service quality	39 ^(a+b)	-0.715 to 0.710	3248
- Retail (store)	55 ^(a+b)	-0.005 to 0.946	2251
atmospherics			
Personal factors			
- Demographics	20 ^(a)	0.000 to 0.399	2717
- Store / retail	54 ^(a+b)	0.048 to 0.286	714
attitude			

a = store choice

b = loyalty

The above table is a complete taxonomy of the predictors of retail patronage along with the range of effects (r) which are reported in the original studies. In this study, the effect size estimates the degree to which the predictor or criterion variable relationship appears in the population of the retail patronage research. There seems to be a marked direction as to the type of research that has carried out with regards to this area of research over the years. The reporting of the effect size is to measure the strength of a phenomenon. As seen from the table above in terms of the effect sizes, it can be seen that retail (store) atmosphere is has the largest effect size range (-0.005 to 0.946). This meant that shoppers still relied heavily on retail and store atmospherics to help them make decisions on the store choices as well as where to lay their loyalty in. This conclusion is well supported by Chebat et. al (2014) and Rosenbaum et. al (2016) who have done studies on the shopping centre renovations or restorations or facelifts on shopping centres. This is also the case for service quality in which staff or employees provide for shoppers there. This is also evident in the selected empirical studies of retail patronage as highlighted in Appendix A. Most of the studies from 2002 till 2016 have highlighted that there is significant importance placed on the market related factors predominantly the development and improvement of retail attributes which are crucial for the formation of retail atmospherics. However, some studies have indicated negatives effects but this could be due to errors in sampling, measurement etc).

For product related factors such as product selection or assortment indicate the effects of between 0.83 to 0.88 despite not having many studies being done. It is a common view that product selection and assortment are deemed as important to shoppers when choosing where to shop.

As seen in Table 3, studies on demographic factors are still being reported and usually the demographic factors such as age, income and education affect the shoppers choice of stores that they choose to shop in. This reported the effect size of between 0.000 and 0.399. This conclusion is well supported in a study of income levels influencing shopping orientations (Allard, Babin & Chebat, 2009). Apart from that, studies by Tripathi & Dave (2013) also support this finding. Basically, demographics and lifestyles influence mall behaviour.

As mentioned earlier, the attitude towards a retail outlet or store can be derived on the perceptions that shoppers may have on the experiences they encounter on their shopping trips. The reported effect size for this is between 0.048 to 0.286. in previous research attitude towards a retail outlet or store is treated as a mediating factor between store atmosphere / environment and retail patronage.

4.0 CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be seen that the retail atmospherics and service quality reporting the highest effects are amongst the factors that seem to be mostly studied on. There seems to be a lack of studies that are being conducted in the areas of demographic factors or even lifestyles that may affect retail patronage.

As seen in Appendix A, it would seem that there is a lot of research that is done in the areas of retail atmospherics being the predictors of retail patronage. Store choice being one of the measures of retail patronage records the highest and this indicates that most shoppers value the attributes of a shopping centre being the determinant of retail patronage. Another interesting thing to note from Table 3 is that shoppers do form attitudes towards shopping

centre and this serves to follow the notion that in the retail study, attitudes can be viewed as the mediating factor for patronage behaviour.

4.1 Future direction and Limitation

Future research should really be in the areas of demographics and lifestyle in order to highlight the importance of providing for the right atmospherics in order to attract the right type of patrons to the shopping centres. In the long run, it would be wise for shopping centre management and developers to pay attention to the demographics or type of shoppers who patronage the shopping centres. There seems to be a lack of research that was being conducted in the areas of customer emotions, self-congruity as well as the influence of peers and this could be a gap for future research in the area of retail patronage.

Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of research being undertaken in the area of corporate reputation and its short and long term impact on retail patronage or repeat business.

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Appendix A Selected Empirical Studies on Retail Patronage

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