A Brief Review on Whether Physical Shopping Experience Still Holds a Strong Appeal Among Indian Consumers in this Digital Time Span

Mr. Varghese Abraham[1], Dr. Jerin Joseph[2], Ms. Fatima AlSikiti[3]

[1]Lecturer, Vocational College, Ibri, Sultanate of Oman
[2]Associate Professor Bharata Mata College (Autonomous) Thrikkakara
[3]Business Department head Vocational College, Ibri, Sultanate of Oman.

Abstract

The distribution channel is crucial in delivering goods and services to end consumers at the appropriate location and time. The consumer journey no longer follows a single channel every time to purchase products and service. Consumer often experiment variety of channel in their routine purchasing. Online shopping is increasingly becoming an essential and convenient option for modern consumers. Retail shopping has decreased, and the e-commerce sales have been steadily growing over the previous years. But majority of leading business are providing products online and offline in order to provide the best possible service for clients. In contrast to websites and online shops, a physical shopping appears to provide customers with a more engaging shopping experience. This paper is a significant step forward to understand whether physical shopping experiences of consumer still holds a strong appeal among Indian consumers in this digital age.

Keywords: Consumer, Experience, Shopping.

1. Introduction

The retail segment is constantly changing and new trends in the retail industry have great impact in the physical shopping of each individual consumer. Consumers seek convenience and personalized experiences, from their individual shopping. An and Han (2020) confirm that a successful shopping experience is crucial for maximizing hedonic value and reinforcing positive shopping memories, both of which increase customer engagement. Consumers can identify a retail store as a place where they can have a novel experience. When they have a memorable shopping experience, it makes the consumer to find time to be there and stand out as special. Buyers process information on their end and seek out retail stores to bring their preferences to life. They visit various stores to compare products and make purchases to meet their needs and requirements. Mouri et al. (2015). Customers are governed by all attributes of a shop, from the search for products to everything that may follow the actual purchase. Additionally, they stay informed about promotions and appreciate a strong brand selection. The choice of a specific retail outlet is influenced by various behavioral factors, such as reference groups, cultural background, and family influences. Store image plays a crucial role, along with factors related to the shopping experience, in shaping this patronage behavior. Beyond traditional considerations, with the evolving dynamics of money and luxury, it has become important for consumers to assess retail stores

based on their unique standards. Currently Consumers instinctively blend online and offline shopping experiences, while business groups continue to investigate the best ways to achieve seamless integration. Verhoef et al. (2015). Business group have tried out multi-channel approaches by creating online shops to complement their current physical locations, in order to determine whether this new digital avenue would enhance overall business results. The path a client takes now encompasses multiple channels rather than adhering to just one. For products that require ample inspection before taking a spending decision, the physical store provides the right engagement. Even with the rise of online shopping, personal interaction remains a crucial element of the retail experience. The retail store offers shoppers a real, hands-on experience that appeals to multiple senses, which is essential for products that need physical interaction. Bagdare & Jain (2013). The effects of in-store experiences go further than just immediate sales. A favorable in-store brand experience enhances the overall perception of the store, affecting future choices. Consumers recognize that the retailer assists them in making more informed purchasing decisions, thereby enhancing their satisfaction and loyalty to the brand. This ultimately enhances the profitability of the customer base. Retailers are now equipped with advanced tools and software. This enables them to optimize their operations, deliver tailored shopping experiences, and significantly enhance customer service. Bouzaabia et al. (2013). Customers can gain significant satisfaction from their experiences with in-store logistics activities. The performance of these operations, as perceived by customers, is a crucial factor in the retail shopping experience. Providing an outstanding retail experience is of utmost importance. It is not solely about providing excellent products; it is about creating an atmosphere where customers feel engaged and involved. A favorable shopping experience not only meets present demands but also builds emotional ties with the brand, encouraging lasting loyalty and support. Consumers are genuine individuals who seek out a tangible, multi-sensory experience when purchasing products that necessitate it. These experiences lead to increased loyalty and customer value in the future. This underscores the significance of physical engagement, particularly in today's digital age. Even though many research works manifest the topic physical shopping, there may be only a few studies that give importance to prove whether physical shopping experiences still holds a strong appeal among Indian consumers in this digital time span.

2. Objectives

- To study Physical shopping behavior of Indian customers in general.
- To study whether physical shopping experience still holds a strong appeal among Indian consumers in this digital time span.

3. Methodology

This study is based on the analysis of the secondary data published in the various magazines and websites.

4. Literature review

Avery et al., (2012). Retailers need to modify their customer relationship management systems to prevent losing current customers. By introducing a new selling innovations, retailers can more effectively predict and react to shifts in sales across established channels. Dagger et al.,(2014). Identified those sales before and after the remodeling of retail shop for new and existing customers, sales increases after the remodeling effort. However, sales for new customers are significantly higher than for

existing customers after the remodel of shop. Sachdeva et al., (2015). It is crucial to engage customers on both emotional and behavioral levels. The communication strategies used on social media and in physical retail locations should both shine in emotional resonance and promote different ways for customers to interact with the brand. Betancourt et al., (2016). In online transactions, anxiety related to payment methods is linked to a naturally greater degree of uncertainty compared to face-to-face transactions. In the offline setting, individuals can always use cash, which alleviates worries regarding the privacy and security of their financial details. Zhang et al., (2016). The levels of trust and commitment among customers often align, differing only to strengthen the relationship between retailers and their customers.Bell et al. (2017). Indicates that the launch of physical showrooms boosts online product sales by minimizing uncertainty in the buying process, as they offer consumers tangible product information. This finding implies that the prominent features of brick-and-mortar stores significantly assist consumers in making more definitive purchase choices.Bustamante & Rubio(2017). Retail management in stores should aim to make customers feel better physiologically so that they can have a better shopping experience. Many factors influence the customer's physiological experience at the point of sale, including the service interface, retail atmosphere, social environment, assortment, and prices. Wang and Goldfarb (2017) Demonstrated that the brand prominence provided by physical retail locations may encourage consumers to make purchases from the same retailer through alternative channels. Dahana et al., (2018). The influence of in-store experiences reaches far beyond just the immediate transactions. A positive brand encounter within the store improves the overall image of the store, influencing the future purchasing decisions of individual shoppers.

Kumar et al. (2019). Physical retail locations boost sales due to a store engagement effect. The authors illustrate this store engagement effect by revealing that the percentage of shoppers who buy from both online and physical stores grows at a faster pace than those who shop exclusively online, particularly in areas where new stores have been established compared to regions without new stores. Grewal et al.,(2020). Integrating technology into stores will enhance convenience and social interaction, leading to increased sales in retail business. Shoppers are anticipated to engage in more vibrant experiences with the technologies present in the store. Shankar et al., (2021). Technological advancements are progressing rapidly. Numerous innovations are significantly transforming the retail environment.New technologies such as micro-cloud computing, robotics, 5G and drone are significantly reshaping retailing business. Alexander and Kent.(2022). By identifying the in-store technologies that contribute to the store's aesthetic appeal and immersive experience, this study adds to the body of research on creating memorable shopping experiences in sporting goods stores. Furthermore, this study identifies the expectations and needs of physical customers that are met by these in-store technologies. Chatzoglou et al. (2022). The marketing executives and shop managers must pay particular attention to the quality of their merchandise. For repurchase intentions, retail establishments must cultivate a base of dedicated and loyal customers Neslin (2022). consumers strongly prefer consistency across channels. Business should try to deliver a coherent and consistent brand image, tone of voice, and set of values across all channels to establish better brand recognition and trust. Zhang et al., (2022). Retail business shops ought to actively involve customers on-site by hosting cultural events or engaging in socially responsible initiatives. Retailers could think about revising their customer segmentation strategies to better align with the desire for physical interaction among shoppers. Breugelmans et al., (2023). Retail shopping help customers to discover products, conveniently organize shopping, get customized experiences or products, bond with others that belong to the same community, and to have an entertaining shopping

trip. Grewal et al.,(2023). Revamping retail stores can enhance operational efficiency. Retailers must consider the expenses involved in transforming their physical locations. By cutting costs in certain front- and back-end processes, they can redirect funds toward initiatives that genuinely set their offerings apart and achieve better profit margins. Marchand et al., (2024). Managers of retail stores curate an appropriate range of products, guarantee that their store is easily reachable, deliver an excellent experience for shoppers, and facilitate smooth transactions by providing convenient operating hours.

5. Experiential Learning through physical Shopping

In the contemporary retail landscape, a key competitive factor is the ability to create memorable experiences rather than merely focusing on product promotion and pricing. Many consumers appreciate this shopping approach, as it facilitates immediate interaction between buyers and sellers. The value generated by a physical store for its shopper's is referred to as experiential learning, which emphasizes learning through direct experience. Each consumer benefits from a variety of tangible, multi-sensory experiences during their in-store shopping. Pantano & Gandini (2018). The shopping experience is no longer confined to the actual point of sale. Retailers should think about the implications of this change. Consumers' interactions with retailers, information sharing, and information access are all significantly impacted by digitally mediated communication channels. A rich store experience fosters physical engagement, which the consumer acknowledges. This engagement allows them to make more informed purchasing decisions, leading to greater satisfaction and an understanding that the store meets their needs. Every shopper receive the opportunity to touch and examine products, while knowledgeable and skilled sales staff also provide personalized feedback and address individual inquiries. The objective should be to transform the shopping visit into an engaging and unforgettable occasion. As a result, consumers develop trust in the store, increasing the likelihood of future shopping visits.
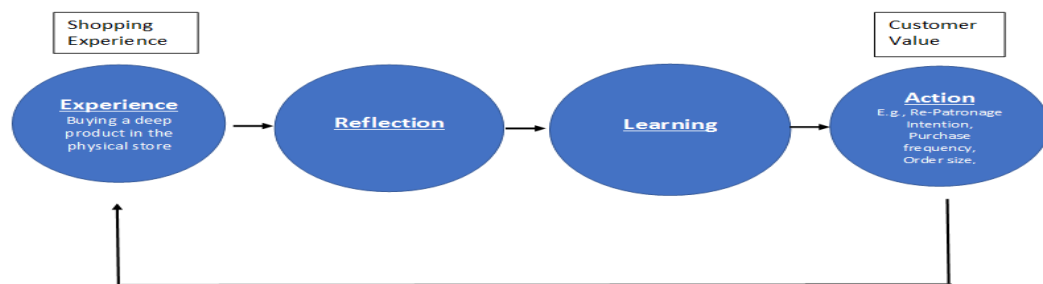
6. Enhancing physical shopping experience:
The key to improving the retail consumer experience is comprehending and satisfying consumer needs. Getting direct feedback from each consumer and conducting surveys by sales persons yields priceless insights. Gensler et al., (2017). Inferred that quality of information collected in-store, quality of sales personnel, and availability of sales personnel are important factors in retail sales. Effective use of technology also can greatly enhance the shopping experience for consumers in physical stores. A number of essential components come together to create an unforgettable in-store experience that greets, engages, and delights the consumers. Bonfanti et al. (2023). The experiences are designed to meet the needs of each consumer and are made memorable by the use of in-store technologies. Every piece of in-store technology satisfies particular consumer requirements. Due to this, each technology needs to be used according to what physical consumer's

desire. A better retail shopping experience for each individual consumer can be achieved by reviewing the following important aspects.

6.1.Experiential retail: Retailers are embracing experiential retail, focusing on creating unique in-store experiences that captivate and engage consumers. The engaging displays and live demonstrations enhance consumer's experiences, not only drawing in foot traffic but also creating a memorable impact on consumers, thereby contributing to the establishment of both immediate and long-term objectives for the store.

6.2.Integration of technology: Technology is becoming a key ally in the transformation of physical stores. Now retailers are using technologies like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and Interactive displays provide retail shoppers with supplementary information, tailored suggestions, and an overall improved shopping experience while they are in the store.

6.3.In store click-and-collect services: The buyer collects their online purchase at a physical store of the retailer itself. Also termed as buy online, pick up in-store, which will help each consumer to shop at their own convenience places and collect their online purchase at nearby physical locations. The click and collect service is both convenient and time-efficient, as it reduces time spent and eliminates delivery expenses.

6.4.Omni channel retailing:. Single-channel represents the conventional retail model. Retailers adopting Omni channel retailing provide customers with multiple purchasing options through both online and offline channels. It helps to achieve a smooth experience across various channels while maintaining accuracy and efficiency.

6.5.Community engagement: Retailers have to redefine the purpose of their physical stores to maintain relevance. Many have been transforming their stores into a business community centers by organizing events, workshops, and activities to connect with local residents. This strategy can cultivate a feeling of connection and loyalty among customers, integrating the store into the local community rather than merely serving as a shopping destination.

6.6.Personalization shopping experience: As technology increasingly facilitates real-time data connectivity with consumers, retailers are now more equipped than ever to offer personalized shopping experiences within their establishments. By implementing targeted promotions, providing recommendations based on past purchases, and developing loyalty programs that align with consumer preferences, astute retailers are leveraging data to cultivate deeper relationships with their consumers.

6.7.Sustainability & ethical practice: As consumers place greater emphasis on environmental issues, a growing number of retailers are adopting sustainable practices. Initiatives such as energy-efficient lighting, recycling programs, sustainable packaging, and sourcing products locally are among the strategies retailers are implementing to align with the values of socially conscious consumers. In certain instances, sustainability efforts prove to be financially advantageous in multiple ways, including minimizing waste and energy usage, as well as providing slower delivery alternatives.

6.8.Customer feedback & complaints: By making the feedback process simple and easy to use, retail business can gather useful data to improve the in-store experience. Receiving and handling complaints promptly and professionally is crucial to enhancing the shopping experience. Through surveys, comment cards, or online reviews, retail establishments should encourage their patrons to express their thoughts.

6.9.Loyalty Programs and Incentives: Loyalty programs and incentives are a great way to improve the consumer experience in retail establishments. These programs' implementation fosters client loyalty by providing incentives and special benefits. Consumers experience gratitude, which enhances their opinion

of the retail shop. By strengthening the in-store experience and fostering a long-lasting relationship, this tactic increases the likelihood that the consumer will return again for a purchase.

6.10.Self-service kiosks: In retail establishments, kiosk are a fantastic way to enhance the consumer experience. Shoppers can check out products, look up product information, and even place orders using these kiosks on their own. Stores can cut down on wait times and give shoppers more control over their shopping experiences by offering self-service options.

7. Conclusion

The enjoyment of the shopping experience among consumers may differ across various geographic regions and international borders. Today, consumers seek additional valuable elements when selecting retail outlets for their purchases. Given the intensifying competition in the retail industry, particularly within the supermarket sector, shoppers are increasingly focused on maximizing the value they derive from each shopping trip. The environmental factors of a store significantly impact consumer's experience and purchase intentions. Retailers must recognize that consumers are individuals who desire a tangible, multi-sensory experience when they visit stores and make purchases. Such experiences contribute to enhanced future loyalty and consumer's value. This underscores the importance of physical engagement, especially in the digital era. The observations for the study indicate that the physical shopping experience continues to resonate strongly with Indian consumers, even in the modern digital age. Additionally, as this review was conducted over a brief period, it may not encompass all previous findings related to this subject.

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