

# Mall Shopping Behavior: An Examination of Differences in Utilitarian versus Hedonic Shoppers' Mall Shopping Experiences

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## **Abstract**

*Shopping* and *shopping behavior* have been interesting subjects for academicians over the decades. The gradual shift in shopping environments, significance of shopping in different social/cultural contexts, and individuals' shopping motives and behaviors represent the three main research streams within this literature. However, although *shopping malls* represent the main consumer habitats in most Western cultures within which all individual, social, or cultural aspects of shopping can be examined at the same time and are the basic shopping contexts with highest customer drawing power; they are rarely used as the unit of analysis in most retailing studies.

A comprehensive review of literature shows that knowledge on the mechanisms through which consumers' mall shopping behaviors are shaped is still far from being complete. Therefore, this study aims to provide insights on the direct and indirect effects of

shoppers' mall perceptions and personal characteristics on their mall satisfaction levels and patronage patterns. To this end, a *mall shopping behavior model* that also rests on the stimulus-organism-response framework but extends it in a number of ways to incorporate all relevant aspects of experiential or consumption oriented shopping in a mall setting is proposed.

According to the model, both *situational* and *non-situational* stimuli shape consumers' responses to their environments. Specifically, malls' atmospheric elements, breadth and width of assortments, potential to provide a comfortable shopping experience, entertainment orientations, non-shopping related facilities, promotional activities, and social environments are identified as situational factors influencing consumers' mall shopping behaviors. In addition, an enduring involvement with shopping, high needs for social affiliation and recognition, a brand-oriented, price-insensitive decision-making style, and a number of demographic characteristics are positioned as non-situational or personal variables affecting attitudes and behaviors toward shopping malls.

Moreover, individuals' emotional experiences at a shopping mall measured in terms of pleasure, arousal and dominance; their cognitive evaluations of a shopping mall; and the types of activities they do in a shopping mall (like going to a movie, having a lunch, or shopping) are all proposed as organism factors mediating stimulus-response relationships. Finally, two specific mall shopping motivations – *utilitarian* versus *hedonic* – frequently discussed in literature are proposed as moderators of the set of relationships among all the stimulus-organism-response factors.

Proposed relationships are tested with data collected from 603 respondents through structured questionnaires. Results provide evidence that mall satisfaction is not a predictor of mall patronage and mall visit frequency, time and money spent in a mall, and repatronage intentions are separate patronage indicators that are affected by different environmental or

individual factors. Specifically, consumers' perceptions of shopping mall attributes are found to have greatest influence on their level of mall satisfaction and repatronage likelihood, while personal characteristics are shown to have greater impacts on mall visit frequencies and the amount of time and money spent in malls. On the other hand, although emotional experiences at a mall is proved to be unrelated to shoppers' patronage behaviors, cognitive responses to the mall environment is reported to increase the total amount of mall spending and future mall visits significantly and activity patterns in a mall is found to be positively associated with the time spent in the mall. Finally, results are in support of the fact that mall shopping experiences of utilitarian shoppers are shaped primarily by cognitive processes while those of hedonic shoppers are influenced by affective mechanisms to a greater extent.