

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENTERTAINMENT CONSUMPTION AT SHOPPING CENTRES: AN EXTENSION TO FUNCTIONAL CONGRUITY OF SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Entertainment consumption has been an emerging activity in the shopping centre habitat. To address the lack of satisfaction research on entertainment consumption, a conceptual model is proposed discussing the potential determinants of satisfaction formation of entertainment-seeking shoppers. The proposed model provides an extension to a recent work by (Sit, Merrilees and Grace 2003) on entertainment consumption. Previous studies of consumer satisfaction have been dominated by the *functional congruity* models such as the expectations congruency and desires congruency (Patterson and Spreng 1997; Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996). However, these models appear to be less comprehensive for the satisfaction measurement of entertainment consumption. This is because the functional congruity models are based on the perceived discrepancy between functional attributes of a retail institution and consumers' expectations or desires in relation to those attributes. However, as a form of hedonic consumption, entertainment consumption emphasises the attainment of affective experiences that provide self-gratification beyond functional outcomes (Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). Therefore, the proposed model aims to extend the functional congruity models by incorporating two psychological states, namely consumption motives and emotions. Propositions are derived and the research and managerial implications of the model are also presented.

Introduction

In the 1950s, early mall developers included benches, artwork and piped-in music to make the shopping experience more pleasurable (Evans 1999). Today, entertainment has become an integral part of shopping experience, and will be a point of strategic differentiation for shopping centres (Hazel 2002). That is, the integration of entertainment enables shopping centres to alter their roles of being an entertaining venue for various experiential activities rather than just a distribution outlet for acquiring goods or services (Sandikci and Holt 1998; Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson 1994). Indeed, several shopping centres in Australia have been designed with substantial floor spaces dedicated to entertainment, and thus could be referred to as entertainment-focused shopping centres such as Pacific Fair Shopping Centre (Gold Coast) and Knox Towerpoint (Melbourne) (Anonymous 2002).

Beyond the shopping centre industry, shopping centres are also competing with other commercial institutions or events for consumers' leisure time and spending such as amusement parks and sport events (ICSC 1996). This intense competition has placed greater pressure on shopping centres to continually enhance their entertainment to better satisfy shoppers' needs. Therefore, an understanding of satisfaction drivers of entertainment-seeking shoppers is pivotal because it will: (1) extend our knowledge regarding hedonic consumption of shopping centres; and (2) serve as a valuable input for shopping centre marketing. In

particular, this study aims to understand the determinants and consequences of entertainment consumption at shopping centres.

Shopping Centre Entertainment

Broadly, shopping centre entertainment can be classified into three categories, namely special event entertainment, specialty entertainment and food (Barreto and Konarski 1996; Haynes and Talpade 1996). The key distinction between these entertainment categories is their length of duration or span of operation. *Special event entertainment* is offered on an occasional basis for a shorter period of time such as bridal fairs and fashion shows. Conversely, *specialty entertainment* and *food* are generally part of the tenant mix of a shopping centre and thus are incorporated into the centre's property for a longer duration (Barreto and Konarski 1996). Specialty entertainment involves movie theatres and video arcades, and food refers to the range of eateries, cafés or restaurants at a shopping centre.

Overview of Literature Review

Retail Image. A review of the retailing literature manifests the 'big four' dominating shopping centre image studies, namely merchandise mix; accessibility; services and atmospherics (Reynolds, Ganesh and Lockett 2002; Dennis, Marsland and Cockett 2001; Frasquet, Gil and Molla 2001; Wong, Lu and Yuan 2001; Bell 1999). In the shopping centre literature, *merchandise mix* is commonly measured by merchandise range, quality, pricing and styling or fashion. *Accessibility* concerns the ingress and egress of a shopping centre, particularly the ease of navigation within the centre. *Services* of shopping centres are conceptualised by employees' attitudes, ambiances (such as escalators and direction signage) and amenities (such as parent rooms and restrooms). *Atmospherics* refer to the ambience, décor and layout of a shopping centre (Reynolds, Ganesh and Lockett 2002; Dennis, Marsland and Cockett 2001; Frasquet, Gil and Molla 2001; Wong, Lu and Yuan 2001; Bell 1999). The dominance of these 'big four' attributes indicates the negligence of *entertainment* that is also essential to the shopping centre image (Evans 1999; Barreto and Konarski 1996). Thus, this demonstrates the need for further research on entertainment consumption at shopping centres.

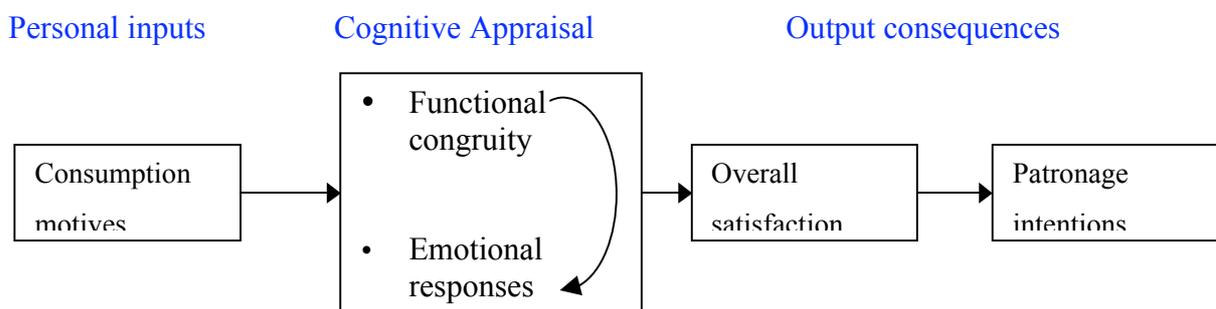
Hedonic Consumption of Shopping Centres. In this study, entertainment consumption is conceived as a form of *hedonic consumption* of shopping centres, emphasising the attainment of positive affective experiences such as fun or excitement (Sit, Merrilees and Grace 2003; Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). That is, entertainment consumption is executed voluntarily and during free time, and thus is expected to result in pleasant recollections (Sit, Merrilees and Grace 2003). Therefore, to foster shopping satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers, shopping centre management should appreciate positive emotive experiences of entertainment consumption besides functional attributes of shopping centres (Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994).

Consumer Satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction can be conceived as the evaluation of one's accomplishment of a consumption outcome (Oliver 1997). The two most widely discussed models of consumer satisfaction are the expectations-disconfirmation model and the desires congruency model (Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996; Oliver 1981). Both satisfaction models share at least two commonalities. First, both satisfaction models emphasise the evaluation of two stimuli. That is, a realised outcome in terms of perceived performance, and a comparison referent in terms of expectations or desires. Second, in relation to the realised

outcome, both models primarily focus on the *functional attributes* of a product such as the versatility of a camcorder (Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996). Therefore, both the expectations congruency and desires congruency are also known as functional congruity (Sirgy, Grewal and Mangleburg 2000).

Despite the considerable contributions of the functional congruity models (expectations congruency or desires congruency) to consumer satisfaction (Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996; Westbrook and Reilly 1983), they deem to be less comprehensive for measuring entertainment consumption. That is, as a form of hedonic consumption, entertainment consumption focuses on the attainment of positive affective experiences beyond functional outcomes (Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994). Thus, a limitation of the functional congruity models is that they have not embraced *affective aspects* in satisfaction formation (Machleit and Mantel 2001; Machleit and Eroglu 2000). Indeed, very few studies have examined the role of emotions in determining satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers (Sit, Merrilees and Grace 2003; Yu and Dean 2001). Therefore, drawn on a recent work by (Sit, Merrilees and Grace 2003), this study proposes a research framework that conceptualises the satisfaction formation of entertainment-seeking shoppers. In particular, the model aims to extend the functional congruity models by incorporating two psychological states of shoppers, namely patronage motivations and emotions. The proposed model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework of Entertainment Consumption at Shopping Centres



Source: developed for this paper

Discussion of Key Constructs

There are five key constructs in this study, namely mall patronage intentions, overall satisfaction, emotive experiences, functional congruity, and consumption motives.

Patronage Intentions. The first construct, patronage intentions, is a major concern to shopping centre management because the cost of acquiring a new customer usually exceeds the cost of retaining a customer (Machleit and Mantel 2001; Spreng, Harrell and Mackoy 1995). In particular, patronage intentions refer to approach responses that occur as an outcome of one's post-consumption evaluation (Donovan and Rossiter 1982). Examples of patronage intentions include the likelihood of re-patronising a shopping mall for entertainment, the likelihood of spending on entertainment and the likelihood of staying longer at the mall for entertainment.

Overall Satisfaction. Overall satisfaction is the second construct of this study, and can be conceived as a summary post-consumption evaluation of the overall entertainment experience at the mall (Oliver 1997; Patterson and Spreng 1997; Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996). The focal point of this study is shoppers' overall experiences of an entertainment trip to a shopping mall, and thus overall satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers will be measured. Given the increasing competition for shoppers' leisure time and money, patron satisfaction can be a source of competitive advantage to shopping centres (Rust and Zahorik 1993).

Emotive Experiences. Emotive experiences (the third construct) refer to affective states that arise in response to one's consumption appraisal (Winter and Kuiper 1997). According to the *cognitive theory*, emotions are conceived to have a specific reference or object and thus are intentionally induced (Ben-Ze'ev 2000; Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999; Erevelles 1998; Cohen and Areni 1991). For example, a shopper becomes excited when he or she is amazed by a fashion show held at a shopping mall. Moreover, emotions arise in response to appraisals of an event or a stimulus that is relevant to oneself, including a behaviour one performs or a result one produces or a change in an object, person or thought that has personal meaning (Richins 1997). Indeed, the intensity of emotions experienced by shoppers is related to the degree of perceived relevancy of an event or a stimulus (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999). For example, a fashion-conscious shopper may be more excited by a fashion show at a shopping mall than a shopper with little interest in fashion trends.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of emotions experienced by shoppers in influencing shopping consequences such as approach behaviour (Donovan and Rossiter 1982), spending intentions (Hui, Dube and Chebat 1997), patronage preference and choice (Dawson, Bloch and Ridgway 1990), and willingness to buy (Baker, Levy and Grewal 1992). Few studies have specifically explored the emotive experiences of entertainment consumption at shopping centre. Instead, previous studies of consumer emotions have focused on leisure activities such as skydiving (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993), playing football (Holbrook, Chestnut, Oliva and Greenleaf 1984), impulse buying (Piron 1993) and internet shopping (Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon 2001) *other than* entertainment consumption.

Functional Congruity. Functional congruity is conceived as the appraisal of the matching between functional attributes of a shopping mall and shopper's expectations or desires related to those attributes (Sirgy, Grewal and Mangleburg 2000; Oliver 1997; Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996). In this study, functional congruity can be measured from two dimensions: mall entertainment and non-entertainment. Despite the core attribute of this study is mall entertainment, there are other non-entertainment functional attributes that are also important to entertainment-seeking shoppers. Indeed, these attributes may *facilitate* the entertainment consumption at the mall. Examples of non-entertainment attributes include the tenant mix, accessibility to and within the mall, availability of amenities (such as restrooms or parent rooms) and mall design (Sandikci and Holt 1998).

Consumption Motives. The final construct involves the consumption motives of entertainment seeking shoppers, pertaining the energising forces that trigger their consumption behaviours. Indeed, consumption motives provide the purpose and direction to that behaviour (Mahatoo 1989). Given the hedonic nature of entertainment consumption, emotive experiences derived from the consumption serve as a fulfilment of shoppers' motives (Hirschman 1984; Holbrook et al. 1984; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1980).

Relationships between Key Constructs

Overall Satisfaction and Patronage Intentions. Numerous studies have demonstrated that overall satisfaction positively determines patronage intentions of consumers. For example, in a department store study, shopper satisfaction was reported to be a significant predictor for repeat visiting behaviour and store commitment (Bloemer and Ruyter 1998). Likewise, a study concerning business clients of consultancy firms demonstrated that client satisfaction positively determined their repurchase intentions (Patterson and Spreng 1997). Further, through measuring customer experience of a removal service, (Spreng, Harrell and Mackoy 1995) noted that customer satisfaction with claims personnel directly associated with their overall satisfaction and thus influenced repurchase intentions and positive word of mouth. Thus:

Proposition 1: Overall satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers positively influences mall patronage intentions.

Emotive Experiences and Overall Satisfaction. Emotive states experienced by entertainment-seeking shoppers will influence their overall post-consumption evaluations and thus their overall satisfaction (Taylor 1996; Schwarz and Clore 1988; 1983). In this study, emotive states are particularly essential to shopper evaluation of entertainment consumption because the core objective of hedonic consumption is the attainment of subjective experiences rather than utilitarian outcomes (Sandikci and Holt 1998; Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994; Holbrook et al. 1984; Holbrook and Hirschman 1980). Therefore:

Proposition 2: Emotive experiences derived from entertainment consumption will influence overall satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers.

Functional Congruity and Overall Satisfaction. Consistent with the disconfirmation paradigm, shopper satisfaction is positively related to the valence or size of the functional congruity (Patterson and Spreng 1997). That is, the higher the functional congruity, the more favourable the summary post-consumption evaluation, and thus the greater the overall satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers. However, the core emphasis of entertainment seeking is the attainment of emotive experiences that provide self-gratification beyond the functional attributes of a shopping centre (Holbrook et al. 1984; Holbrook and Hirschman 1980). This leads to:

Proposition 3: Functional congruity will influence overall satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers, but its influence will be secondary to emotive experiences.

Functional Congruity and Emotive Experiences. Functional congruity may arise in three states: *negative* (expectations/desires exceed functional performances); *zero* (functional performances equal expectations/desires); and *positive* (functional performances exceed expectations/desires) (Parker and Mathews 2001; Oliver 1997; Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996). As postulated by (Oliver 1997), different congruity states will result in different emotion states. For example, *negative congruity* may result in negative emotive experiences such as despair and anger, whereas *zero congruity* may result in pleasant emotive

experiences such as contentment and happiness. Furthermore, positive congruity may induce higher level of positive affective experiences such as upbeat and amazement (Oliver 1997). Thus:

Proposition 4: Different states of functional congruity (negative, zero, or positive) will result in different dimensions of emotive experiences of entertainment-seeking shoppers.

Consumption Motives and Functional Congruity. Consumption motives of entertainment-seeking shoppers will direct them to seek and emphasise certain entertainment and/or non-entertainment attributes that lead to the attainment to their motives (Machleit and Eroglu 2000). For example, shoppers with a socialising motive will emphasise the sit-down venues with comfortable seating at a shopping centre such as the food court (Feinberg, Sheffler, Meoli and Rummel 1989). On the other hand, shoppers with a thrill seeking motive may emphasise the novelty and excitement of a carnival festival held at the centre (Moller and Karppinen 1983). Therefore:

Proposition 5: Consumption motives will have an impact on the functional congruity of entertainment-seeking shoppers.

Consumption Motives and Emotive Experiences. Consumption motives may direct shoppers to seek certain emotive experiences matching their motives. That is, the nature of emotions experienced by shoppers can be motive-driven, especially for hedonic consumption like entertainment consumption (Machleit and Eroglu 2000; Richins 1997; Piron 1993). Thus, shoppers with different shopping motives are likely to entail different emotive experiences. For example, shoppers with a thrill-seeking motive may seek feelings of excitement (Feinberg et al. 1989), whereas shoppers with a escapism motive may emphasise feelings of relieved or relaxed (Moller and Karppinen 1983). Further, emotional responses of shoppers were found to vary between two purchasing activities, namely planned and unplanned (Piron 1993). In particular, shoppers with planned purchasing reported a greater sense of pleasure than shoppers with unplanned purchasing. Conversely, shoppers with unplanned purchasing experienced a greater guilt feeling than shoppers with planned purchasing. Similarly, (Machleit and Eroglu 2000) found that shoppers patronising a mall or a department store experienced higher levels of joy, as compared to others who shopped at a discount store and reported higher levels of fear. Hence:

Proposition 6: Consumption motives will have an impact on emotive experiences of entertainment-seeking shoppers

Mediators of Consumption Motives. In this study, consumption motives serve as a goal or benchmark of entertainment consumption. The goal or benchmark *per se* should not have direct impact on satisfaction formation of entertainment seeking shoppers (Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996). Alternatively, it is the *fulfilment* of the goal or benchmark that results in satisfaction response (Oliver 1997). Similarly, (Spreng, MacKenzie and Olshavsky 1996) found no direct impact of consumer expectations or desires on consumer satisfaction rather the impact of expectations or desires was mediated by functional congruity (such as expectations congruency and desires congruency). Thus:

Proposition 7a: The impact of consumption motives on overall satisfaction of entertainment seeking shoppers will be mediated by functional congruity.

In addition, the influence of consumption motives on satisfaction response will be mediated by emotive experiences. That is, entertainment consumption is conceived as hedonic consumption (Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994), and thus the fulfilment of consumption motives should also focus on emotive experiences. Indeed, emotive experiences should play a primary mediating role in comparison to functional congruity (Sandikci and Holt 1998; Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994; Holbrook et al. 1984; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1980). Therefore:

Proposition 7b: The impact of consumption motives on overall satisfaction of entertainment-seeking shoppers will be mediated by emotive experience.

Proposition 7c: The mediating impact of emotive experience will be primary in comparison to functional congruity.

Research and Managerial Implications

The proposed model represents a starting point for examining entertainment consumption at shopping centres and thus there is scope for further theoretical and empirical research in this area. Each of the relationships proposed within the model offer avenues for more detailed measurement and examination. From a managerial perspective, beyond functional attributes, shopping centre management should give emphasis to motivations and emotive experiences sought by shoppers. This is particularly important to foster shopping satisfaction of *experiential mall patrons*.

Conclusion

Given the increasing competition for shoppers' leisure time and money, shopper satisfaction can be a source of competitive advantage to shopping centre management. However, previous studies of shopper satisfaction have been dominated by the functional congruity models, positing that shopper satisfaction is the perceived matching between functional attributes of a shopping centre and shoppers' expectations or desires in relation to those attributes. Beyond the functional attributes of a shopping centre, entertainment consumption (a form of hedonic consumption) emphasises the attainment of positive emotive experiences that in turn leads to positive post-consumption evaluation, and thus favourable satisfaction response. Therefore, to better understand satisfaction formation of experiential shoppers including entertainment seekers, this study extends the functional congruity models by incorporating two psychological factors, namely consumption motives and emotive experiences.

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