

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SURVEY A MODEL CORRESPONDED TO MAIN FACTORS OF IN-STORE EXPERIENCE: MIXED METHOD APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Customer experience is one of the most fundamental concepts in marketing literature which results in hedonic & memorial experience for customers. In-store experience is an important phenomenon that increasingly attracts the professional marketing experts and academics around the world and can use them as a distinctive tool in the stores. The methodology of this study is based on descriptive and mixed method. The qualitative part of this study which was based on phenomenological method began with protocol design on the basis of systematic studies & then through eighteen individual deep interviews. With multiple purposive sampling professional shoppers were selected and then three types of coding include open coding, axial coding and selective coding in ATLAS.ti software are used to determine the themes and categories. In quantitative part of this study, 298 shoppers were selected randomly and standardized questionnaires were distributed among them. Lisrel software was used for data analysis. The results convey that antecedents of in-store experiences have a positive relationship with consequences.

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INTRODUCTION

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel, Maya Angelou (2013). What people remember about shopping experience is determined by the mood, feelings and intensity of emotions created in particular moments while shopping (Alexander and Varley, 2025). Various diverse and innovative retailing formats emerged as competitors for supermarkets. To compete with these new arrivals, supermarkets had to reconsider their offerings and implement strategies that are challenging and difficult for competitors to emulate. In this respect, Levy and Weitz (2012) found that traditional supermarkets use strategies to compete successfully by differentiating their products and services from other competitors. They do this by emphasizing the freshness of perishables; focusing on the needs and wants of health-conscious and multi-cultural consumers; offering superior value with reduced cost private-label merchandise; and providing customers a shopping experience better than those of competitors. Customer experience is widely recognized as an internal response customers have to any interaction with a company (Ali *et al.*, 2018).

Undoubtedly, customer experience plays a significant role in determining the success of a company's offering (Chen *et al.*, 2025). Organizations have used both tangible products and intangible services to generate unforgettable events for consumers (Chen and Lin, 2015). Over the last few decades, the researchers on retail marketing have taken a keen interest in how in-store retail environments influence the consumer experience (Chen *et al.*, 2025). Research on the consequences of retail crowding has mainly focused on affective responses and satisfaction (Machleit *et al.*, 2000). According to De Keyser *et al.*, (2015), customer experience consists of "the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, and social elements that mark the consumer's direct and indirect interaction with a (set of) market actors". Chen *et al.*, (2025) added that despite the fact that retail marketing researchers have been enthusiastic in studying how in-store retail environments influence customer experience, present-day methodologies and research designs whether qualitative, quantitative or triangulation, are unable to capture the tacit unreflective dimension of customer experience. The primary objective of this research was to answer this question through in-store experience and mixed method: what are the main factors of in-store experience in shopping centers and malls in Iran?

The secondary objectives were to

- What are the antecedents of in-store experience in shopping centers and malls in Iran?
- What are the consequences of in-store experience in shopping centers and malls in Iran?

Theoretical framework: Customer Experience is multifaceted in nature, involving sensory-focused aspects, incorporating functional and hedonistic experience controlled in ways that enable value co-creation and enhance brand commitment. Customer experience is defined as an internal subjective response to an interaction with a product or service (Japutra *et al.*, 2021). A review of early research reveals the early role of practitioner studies in introducing and propelling customer experience into mainstream marketing literature, while later studies formed its theoretical underpinnings (Gao *et al.*, 2021). The customer experience paradigm recognizes customers' search for delightful experiences from using products and the culmination of these experiences (prior experiences influencing subsequent experiences) determine the quality of their journeys with their service providers (Tivasuradej and Pham, 2019). The insights obtained by these studies have led to various attempts by researchers to define customer experience. It is unlikely that a comprehensive review of the customer shopping experience is possible within the confines of an academic paper such as this one. Nevertheless, it is necessary to offer different views on customer shopping experiences to provide some rationalization for the context of the study. Thompson and Kolsky (2004), for instance, describe customer experience as "the sum total of conscious events", indicating the importance of the opportunities created by each sensitive interaction with a customer. Mascarenhas *et al.* (2006) emphasize the extensiveness of customer experience by defining it as "a totally positive, engaging, enduring, and socially fulfilling physical and emotional customer experience across all major levels of one's consumption chain and one that is brought about by a distinct market offering that calls for active interaction between customers and providers". Shopping is no longer merely an exercise to obtain a preferred product or service; it has become a social experience (Van Rompay *et al.*, 2012). Today's consumers frequently expect a multi-sensory, interactive, and holistic shopping experience that entertains, stimulates, emotionally affects and creatively challenges them (Foster and McLelland, 2015). These circumstances present retailers with opportunities to differentiate themselves from competitors by designing retail environments that will create memorable customer experiences. It is especially research on customer experiences in in-store environments from an all-inclusive approach that seems to be truly scarce (Petermans *et al.*, 2013).

In-Store Experience: The analysis of in-store consumer shopping behavior is one of the most critical aspects to be taken into consideration regarding decisions related to the development of a standardized distribution format versus an adapted one. This analysis must be carried out carefully. The retailers need to both match their profit targets with their client's needs and to maximize their shopping activity outcome (Bakhshizadeh *et al.*, 2017). In sum, in the experience literature, there is a consensus that it is useful to conceptualize experiences along multiple experience dimensions.

These experience dimensions include sensory-affective, cognitive-intellectual and behavior-and-action oriented components. Today's consumers frequently expect a multi-sensory, interactive, and holistic shopping experience that entertains, stimulates, emotionally affects and creatively challenges them (Foster and McLelland, 2015). Accenture (2015) has also acknowledged that the improvement of customers' experience should be a priority for businesses. The integrative conceptual framework of Esbjerg *et al.* (2012) that analyses customer satisfaction with shopping experiences in grocery retailing was used to inform the investigation. While retailers create in-store experiences across dimensions such as product display, providing knowledge, product trials, store layout and store-level special activities, consumers assess the in-store experience based on their motives to visit the store, time available to purchase, mood at the time of visit, and familiarity with the store (Pettersen *et al.*, 2024). The alignment of expectations and in-store experience is, therefore, essential for effective brand positioning, whatever that positioning is (Alexander and Kent, 2020).

Perceived value: The role of value is becoming an increasing concern to customers because it is one of the most powerful forces in today's marketplace. Value is being described as customer's overall appraisal of the product/service net worth based on benefits sought and costs in acquiring and utilizing the services. Walls (2016) further added that customer experiences will lead to customers' perceived value of the product/services. Value may be viewed as a consumer's overall assessment of product utility based on perceptions of what is received (benefits) compared to what is given (costs) in a service encounter. According to equity theory, a customer evaluates what is fair, right, or deserved for the perceived cost of the offering, including monetary payments and non-monetary sacrifices such as time consumption, energy consumption and stress experienced by consumers (Zhang & Prebensen, 2025).

Layout & Design. Design elements strongly rely on vision to evoke customers' awareness; the store layout, signage, and the organization of the website are all visually perceived elements (Zhang and Lee, 2014). Compared with the other senses, vision exerts a stronger effect on human perception and cognition. Store layout has been shown to have a significant impact on consumer behavior both in traditional and online environments (Mallapragada *et al.*, 2016). An important aspect of conventional retailing is store layout. Layout decisions in retail business also directly affect customer sightlines and need to be considered from multiple perspectives, such as price, quantity and profit. A layout problem can be considered as the assignment and arrangement of buildings and location and/or relocation of machines/departments in manufacturing facilities (Altuntas, 2017). Clear and well-arranged mental maps of a store and knowledge of the locations of specific products, categories, checkouts, have been found to positively influence customers' perceived shopping convenience (Vianelli *et al.*, 2007). **Employee's skill.** In the last two decades, employers have become more demanding when it comes to new graduates' skills (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2015; Janali *et al.*, 2020). Increased demand for skills is a response to change in technology, which has brought about globalization of markets, international competition, the drive for productivity growth, sector reforms

and a change in output demand. In recent years, we have seen a low productivity of human resources. In many cases, low productivity is due to the weakness of the skills and abilities of human resources, and training can be applied to develop the skills and abilities of human resources (Momeni *et al.*, 2020). The way individuals develop and acquire skills is of fundamental importance. Initially, individuals acquire skills through training and the award of qualifications. For both the individuals and the organization, these supply the core theoretical fundamentals for the work they undertake. These skills are then reinforced by practical experience. It is therefore important to acknowledge, when developing a training strategy, that skill proficiency is achieved from a combination of academic and professional training=qualification and practical experience (Matsumoto, 2005).

Brand equity. In recent years, the importance of branding has dramatically increased on the ground that brands have the potential to be a source of long-term competitive advantages for any businesses (Honarmandi *et al.*, 2019). In the last decade, several scholars have acknowledged that managing experiences ought to be a key concern for any brand (Iglesias *et al.*, 2018). Brand equity is one of the most important constructs within the field of brand management, from both academic and managerial perspectives. The content and meaning of brand equity have been debated in a number of different ways and for a number of different purposes, but so far no common viewpoint has emerged (Vazquez *et al.*, 2002). It can be discussed from the perspective of the manufacturer, retailer, or the consumer. When marketing practitioners use the term “Brand Equity”, they tend to mean brand description or brand strength, referred to as “customer brand equity” to distinguish it from the asset valuation meaning. More recently, however, several scholars conceptualize brand equity as a relational market-based asset generated by means of interactions and relationships between brands and their customers (Iglesias *et al.*, 2018).

Word of mouth WOM. WOM refers to informal interpersonal communication regarding the evaluation of a store, product, service, and related experience. WOM is the exchange of information and experiences among customers that helps them make purchasing decisions. WOM as one of the most common non-trading behaviors, plays a fundamental role in disseminating information about products and services (Torabi *et al.*, 2021). WOM represents one of the most influential sources of information transfer by consumers. WOM affects our behavior as consumers by creating awareness, changing or confirming our opinions, creating interest in purchasing products/brands (Keiningham *et al.*, 2018; Ananda *et al.*, 2019) in addition to accelerating purchases/adoption (Kumar *et al.*, 2016) and encouraging repeat purchase (Iyengar *et al.*, 2015).

Facilities. Prior research highlights that consumers perceive a facilities shopping experience as a means to reduce time and effort spent in the purchasing process (Pan and Zinkhan, 2006). Following El-Adly and Eid (2015), facilities could be defined as anything that reduces customer time and effort; and in turn, the facility of shopping malls can be defined as the utility derived from the mall’s ability to provide customers with the opportunity to carry out a wide variety of shopping

tasks with minimal time and effort. So, facilities in shopping mean effortless shopping, the amount of time consumed in search of location, store, product, and information. Shopping malls that are located in highly accessible areas to customers are likely to be perceived more favorably and to be patronized more than those less accessible malls (Chebat *et al.*, 2010). Anselmsson (2016) notes that the variable access is also labelled as availability or location, and can be divided into two dimensions: the external and the internal access. The perception that customers have of the mall convenience has a strong positive influence on their level of satisfaction with the mall (Chebat *et al.*, 2010) and on the mall visit frequency.

Sales Promotion. With the growing importance of sales promotion, marketers and researchers are trying to explore the multifaceted nature of sales promotion (Buil *et al.*, 2013). Although understanding the comprehensive nature of sales promotion requires multidisciplinary studies, the psychological aspect carries more importance (Sinha and Verma, 2018). Prior research in retailing highlights the critical role of retailers’ communication and promotion activities as key factors for creating customer experience (Grewal *et al.*, 2009). Sales promotion aimed at retailers, wholesalers and sales promotion called the trade. Nagar (2009), has been recognized in literature that only customers with repeat purchases are profitable from sales promotion. Sales promotion has effects on several aspects of customer’s buying choices such as brand choice, buying time, quantity and client’s sympathy to price (Ashraf *et al.*, 2014; Acelian and Basri, 2021). Sales promotion is defined as a special offer which basically aims to stimulate consumer demand for a product. Sales promotion is able to have an impact on emotions in the form of positive emotions on consumers. Positive emotion of consumers is what can trigger sales promotion to work so that consumers make impulse buying (Kumala and Wardana, 2021).

Shopping satisfaction. Satisfaction is a multidimensional concept associated with a variety of psychological and social factors (Alexander & Varley, 2025; Hanzae and Mirvaisi, 2013). Satisfying customers is the ultimate goal of every business, due to its potential impact on repeat purchasing behaviour and profits (Ali *et al.*, 2018; Japutra *et al.*, 2021). The satisfaction of consumers’ increasing expectations of seamless, consistent, and personalized shopping experience requires the integration of retail organizations’ channels and touch points (Alexander and Kent, 2020; Hanzae and Mirvaisi, 2011). Shopping is an important socialization and engagement tool that provides consumers with opportunities to interact with others, which in turn satisfies their social needs (Babin and Attaway, 2000). Customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction results from the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance (Tzeng *et al.*, 2020). To effectively foster social shopping in retail environments and thus achieve desirable marketing and retailing goals, practitioners must understand consumers’ social behaviors and underlying motivations (Kauppinen-Raisanen *et al.*, 2020).

Flaneur. Consumers acquire and utilize decision-relevant information as an integral part of decision making. From this perspective, flaneur constitutes a key source of decision-relevant information in the external retail environment. Some

research suggests that consumers may seek out store windows primarily as a leisure activity, to have fun and feel good. Alternately, consumers may use the flaneur to obtain information about the product category. The secondary dimension captures the extent to which the information is directly evident from the flaneur. Observed information is obtained from the flaneur, whereas inferred information refers to meanings generated on the bases of relevant informational cues (Sen *et al.*, 2002). A key instrument of many retailers' communication strategy is their store flaneur. Recent surveys suggest that consumers are very likely to attend to and acquire information from flaneur. Similarly, a renewed faith among retailers in the ability of flaneur to capture consumers' attention and draw them into a store has generated recent interest in this communication tool after years of neglect. Yet, to our knowledge, no research as examined whether, how, and for whom flaner work. Flaneur are akin to advertising in helping create and maintain an overall image of the retailer in consumers' minds (Park *et al.*, 2005). The influence of flaneur, particularly relative to other marketing actions, is likely to depend on various characteristics of the consumer, the product category, the retail context, and the shopping task.

Repurchase Intention. Repurchase intention is a consideration of making decisions for repeatedly purchasing products from prior or same seller by estimating situation and current circumstances. While according to Varga *et al.* (2014), it is the intention to often buy or utilize the product or service of a company in the future. Pramatatya (2015), also stated that it is a consideration to purchase more than once (Simanjuntak *et al.*, 2020). Still others have considered the predictive validity of repurchase intention for subsequent repurchase behaviour (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001). Repurchase intention has a significant importance in current business strategies, as it represents an opportunity to increase the value of customers and reduce costs. Retention rate encompasses a degree of fuzziness (Kwon and Kim, 2012). Indeed, it is easy to calculate it in contractual settings, but difficult in non-contractual settings. Retention should be defined and calculated with regard to the business context (Yan *et al.*, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study is applied research in which its data are collected by a mixed method. Mixed research itself has three types: merging two datasets, connecting two datasets, and embedment of one dataset into another. This research is a type of datasets connectivity, because the qualitative data are collected first and then quantitative data collected on the basis of those qualitative ones. The research design is an exploratory mixed method. Therefore, first the qualitative data are analyzed and then quantitative data used to determine the relationships. The researcher first identified the variables through a systematic study. We should keep in mind that qualitative data generates quantitative data and then the researcher has been examined the relationships by collecting quantitative data. The sample included in qualitative research were professional shoppers and individuals who have been shopping at least once a week from shopping malls of Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz and Tabriz cities and have more useful experience than others and so they are called "well-

informed experts". The reason for selecting these cities is that they have those features which are defined by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). These cities have the largest inhabitants and subcultures among other cities in Iran and can be representative of other cities in this field. The sample of quantitative study include all those who have bought from shopping malls of mentioned cities in the past week. Multiple purposive sampling was used to determine the participants of qualitative part in which the interviewee was asked to introduce the next participant at the end of each interview session, and since the interviewee is familiar with purpose of study and type of interview questions, he or she can better introduce the next person for interview. After 18 interviews, the researcher reached to data saturation and ended the interview processes. In the quantitative part of this study, in order to reach the customers' mind and considering the unlimited statistical populations, we can use the Morgan table to estimate sample size. Thus for the population of over 100,000 (unlimited), a total of 298 participants are acceptable. Therefore, with regard to the population of each city, a five-point Likert- was used to collect the data and data analysis.

Table 1. Profile of quantitative respondent

Classification	no	percent
Gender (n=296)		
Male	212	72/1
Female	79	26/9
Missing value	3	1/0
Education (n=296)		
Before diploma	37	12/6
Diploma & after	121	41/2
Licensee	103	35/0
M.S	10	3/4
PH D.	10	3/4
Regional Education	10	3/4
Missing Value	3	1/0
Employment (n=296)		
Employees	199	67/7
Unemployed	87	29/6
Miss value	8	2/7

Data Collection Tool: In the qualitative part of this study, we used semi-structured interviews for data collection. In the quantitative part, the method of descriptive-analytical research and structural equation model (SEM) was used to test hypotheses and complicated patterns of relationships among variables and also achieve the levels of generalizability for larger samples. The opinion of scholars and professional experts in this field has been used to ensure the validity of the qualitative part and the accuracy of research findings. Participants were also assisted in analyzing and interpreting the data. In all phenomenological research, reliability coefficient (reliability) needs to be computed for ensuring coding procedure and therefore its objectivity. Therefore, in this study, the reliability of the interview was measured by interviewing between two coders in which the second coder was asked to participate in the study for calculating the reliability of the interview. The results show that the reliability of coding for these interviews is 0.89 and since it is higher than 70%, the reliability of coding procedure has been confirmed. In the quantitative part of this study, the face and content-related validity of the questionnaire was approved by experts and academics. In addition, two types of convergent and divergent validity have been used to evaluate the construct validity which is specific to the structural equation modeling. In this study, Cronbach's alpha method in SPSS software was

used to determine the reliability of the data collection tool. Cronbach's alpha was 0.93.

RESULTS

Findings of the qualitative part suggest that there are 412 categories (frequently repeated) which are extracted through open coding from two concepts of antecedents and consequences of an in-store experience. The results of this study convey that these extracted categories are aligned with the concepts which are achieved in the next steps of predicting antecedents and consequences of an in-store experience. Two categories were identified on the basis of relationships between concepts in axial coding.

41 items were related to antecedents of the in-store experience & 18 items were related to consequences of in-store experiences (Table 7). The following hypotheses are presented with regard to the systematic study and initial model of research:

- H1.** Perceived values have a direct impact on the in-store experience.
- H2.** Design and layout have a direct impact on the in-store experience.
- H3.** Employee skills have a direct impact on the in-store experience.
- H4.** Brand Equity has a direct impact on the in-store experience.

Table 2. Status of Tehran's Interviews

Tehran						
Number of Interviewees	5 Interviewees	Gender		Education		
		Female	Male	B.A	M.A	PH.D
		3	2	2	2	1
Total time of Interviews	120 Minutes					
Place of Interviews	Kourosh Mall, Palladium, Tirazheh, Etk					

Table 3. Status of Mashhad's Interviews

Mashhad						
Number of Interviewees	4 Interviewees	Gender		Education		
		Female	Male	B.A	M.A	PH.D
		1	3	1	2	1
Total time of Interviews	115 Minutes					
Place of Interviews	Almas-e-Shargh, Kian Center, Armitaj, HyperMe					

Table 4. Status of Tabriz's Interviews

Tabriz						
Number of Interviewees	3 Interviewees	Gender		Education		
		Female	Male	B.A	M.A	PH.D
		1	2	2	2	-
Total time of Interviews	120 Minutes					
Place of Interviews	Laleh Park, Setareh Baran, Kourosh					

Table 5. Status of Shiraz's Interviews

Shiraz						
Number of Interviewees	3 Interviewees	Gender		Education		
		Female	Male	B.A	M.A	PH.D
		2	1	-	2	1
Total time of Interviews	105 Minutes					
Place of Interviews	Persian Gulf Complex, Zeytoun-e-Fars, Hyper Star					

Table 6. Status of Isfahan's Interviews

Isfahan						
Number of Interviewees	3 Interviewees	Gender		Education		
		Female	Male	B.A	M.A	PH.D
		1	2	1	2	-
Total time of Interviews	115 Minutes					
Place of Interviews	City Center, Qeysarieh, Kourosh					

Also, in selective coding, two themes were identified for both categories of goods. These results are shown in table 7. In (Figure 1), the results suggest that the findings of this stage have consistency with the findings of other stages in predicting the antecedents and consequences of the in-store experience; In sum, 10 concepts were identified for both antecedents and consequences; selective coding, which involves the integration of categories and determines the central and core elements, represents the main theme of this research. Also, 59 items were extracted from concepts of the in-store experience.

- H5.** Word of mouth has a direct impact on the in-store experience.
- H6.** Facilities have a direct impact on the in-store experience.
- H7.** Sales Promotion has a direct impact on the in-store experience.
- H8.** In-store experience has a direct impact on the shopping satisfaction.
- H9.** In-store experience has a direct impact on the revisit intention.
- H10.** In-store experience has a direct impact on the flaneur.

Table 7. Concepts & Items (frequency)

	Concepts	Items (Frequency)		Concepts	Items (Frequency)
	Perceived Values	Utilitarian Shop (52) Hedonic Shop (51) Customer Perception (13) Customer Value (15) Delight (9)	Consequences	Shopping Satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction (28) After Sales Services (18) Purchase Feelings (32) Trust to Salespeople (19) Customer Knowledge (19)
		Design and Layout			Product Layout (16) Product Assortments (29) Shop Space (41) Shop Attractiveness (29) Shop Cleanliness (21)
Antecedents	Employee Skills			Employee Knowledge (29) Respect to Customer (29) Employee Responsibility (18) Employees Training (18) Intimacy (Personal Care) (29) Cleanliness (14)	Flaneur
		Brand Equity		New Brands (29) Brand Awareness (31) Brand Variety (55) Brand Loyalty (12) Brand Quality (29) Brand Value (39)	
	WOM			Word of Mouth (3) Billboard Advertisement (12) Advertisement Messages (29) Virtual Advertisements (13) Free Samples (4)	Facilities

Table 8. Descriptive statistics and correlations & R2

	No of item	Mean	Std dev.	Min	Max	Source	Alpha Cronbach
Perceived value	7	13/67	3/612	4	20	Babin & Attaway, 2000	0/91
Design & layout	4	10/8	3/236	7	20	Terblanche, 2018	0/92
Employee skills	3	9/614	2/221	3	15	Terblanche, 2018	0/89
Brand equity	4	9/880	2/827	3	15	Jamshidi et al., 2017	0/93
Word of mouth	3	9/401	2/89	3	15	Elizabeth et al., 2014	0/89
Facilities	3	8/21	2/211	3	16	Calvo-Porrall et al., 2018	0/86
Sales promotion	5	9/021	2/67	4	17	Ashraf et al., 2014	0/89
Shopping satisfaction	3	8/91	4/04	3	15	Terblanche, 2018	0/88
Repurchase intention	3	8/94	3/41	4	20	Hussain & Ali, 2015	0/90
Flaneur	9	14/86	4/10	5	20	Sen et al., 2002	0/90

Table 9. Results of quantitative study

Hypothesis	Relationship of construct	Result	T - value
H1	Perceived value → in- store experience	Accepted	0/01
H2	Layout & Design → in- store experience	Accepted	8/83
H3	Employee Skills → in- store experience	Accepted	5/08
H4	Brand Equity → in- store experience	Partly	-0/20
H5	Word of mouth → in- store experience	Accepted	8/83
H6	Facility → in- store experience	Partly	-0/78
H7	Sales Promotion → in- store experience	Accepted	5/08
H8	in- store experience → shopping satisfaction	Accepted	3/40
H9	in- store experience → flaneur	Accepted	3/48
H10	in- store experience → repurchase intention	Partly	3/45
H11	shopping satisfaction repurchase intention shopping satisfaction	Accepted	3/03
H12	flaneur flaneur → repurchase intention	Partly	-0/10
H13		Accepted	4/95
$\chi^2_{261/90}$			
DF			98
CFI			0/85
NFI			0/94
NNFI			0/91
RMSEA			0/84

Note: Significant at p<0.05

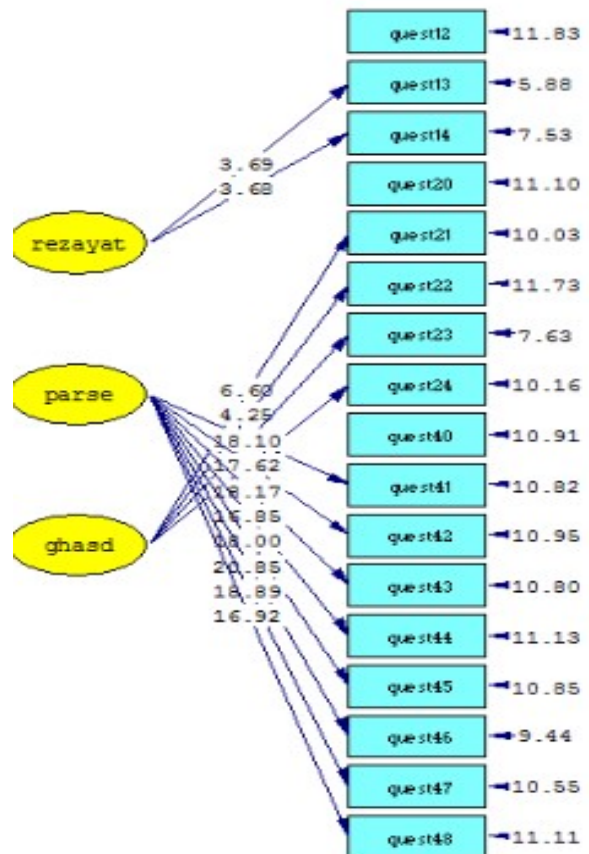
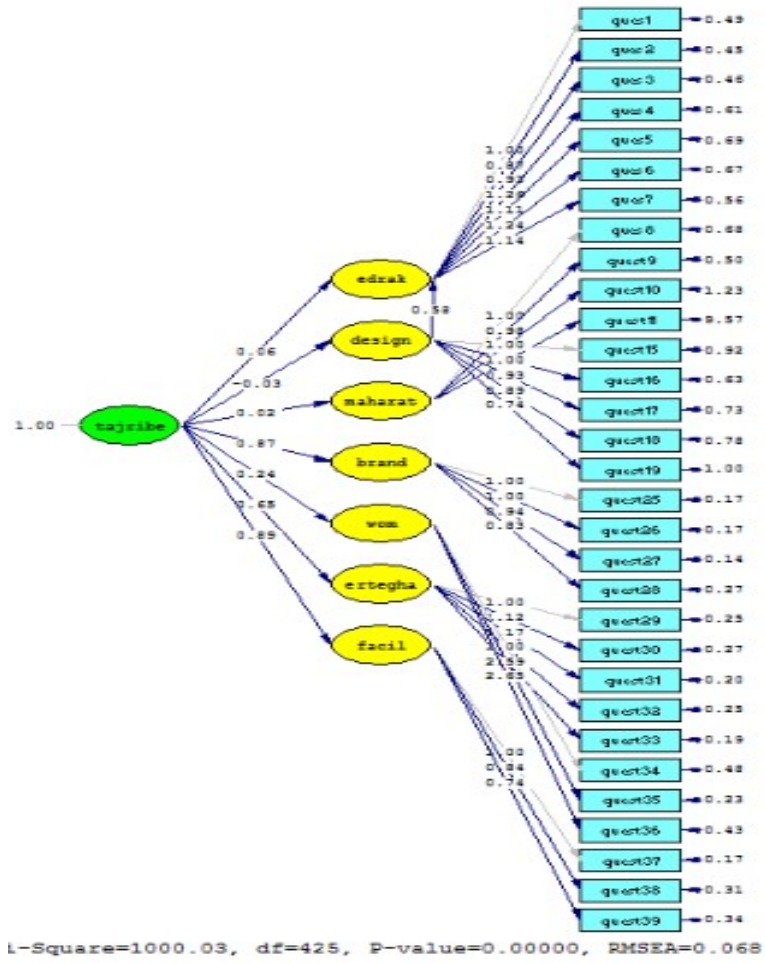


Figure 3: Anticipate and consequences of culture experience

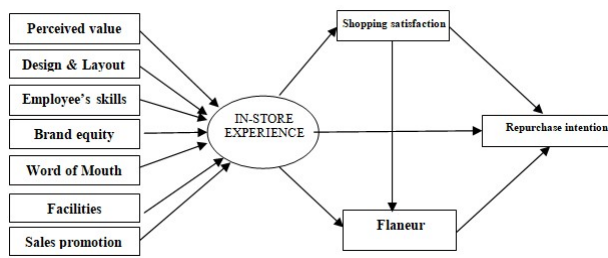


Figure 2. Conceptual Model

H 11. Shopping satisfaction has a direct impact on the revisit intention.

H12. Shopping satisfaction has a direct impact on the flaneur.

H13. Flaneur has a direct impact on the revisit intention.

Based on factor loadings, since the index having a larger factor load has a more share in the measurement of the relevant construction, index having a lower factor load will have less share. The most important factor influencing the in-store experience in shopping malls is design and layout which has the most significant coefficient of 0.93. According to the data presented in Table 8, the data on the matrix diameter and above, the covariance and sub-diameter, indicate the correlation matrix between latent variables (endogenous and exogenous variables of this study). Dispersion values are common between latent variables (covariance). Also, the data obtained from the correlation matrix convey that all the relationships between latent endogenous and exogenous variables are significant and positive. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) which is reported in a decimal way is based on the decentralized parameter. If X^2 is lesser than the degree of freedom, the RMSEA will be zero. This index for suitable models equals 0/05 or lesser than 0/05. The model in which its RMSEA index is 0/1 or higher, has a lower fitness.

The confidence interval can be calculated for this index. Ideally, the lower limit of the confidence interval is close to zero and the upper limit is not too large. The root mean square residual (RMSR) is an indicator for measuring the mean of the residuals and can only be interpreted in relation to the value of variance and covariance. Usually, the smaller value of this index will indicate more goodness of fit index. The goodness-of-fit index is influenced by sample size and can be larger for poorly formulated models. The value of this index varies from 0 to 1. The value of 1 indicates the complete fitness of the model and 0 shows any fit. The closer this value to 1, the goodness of fit index for that model will be more. Since the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) is affected by sample size, the adjusting goodness of fit index moderates the value of AGFI to some extent relative to the sample size and degrees of freedom. This index can also range from zero to one, in which values close to 1 indicates more goodness of model. Fit indices are generally placing in the range from zero to one. Those coefficients which are higher than 0.90 considered acceptable, although this value is optional (like in some other levels such as $P = 0.05$). The noticeable point about fitting data to a model is that while it shows the fit of the structural model, it never proves that it is the only valid model. The above analysis shows the fit of the collected data.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to present a model related to the antecedents and consequences of in-store experiences with the aim of identifying the influencing factors on customer experience in stores of some cities such as Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz and Tabriz in Iran. It offers a comprehensive view about all aspects of antecedents and consequences of in-store experience that can be a guidance for managerial decisions in different areas of retailing industry. According to the results of this study, the factors related to antecedents can affect the in-store experience.

Antecedents of in-store experience. Perceived values have a direct impact on the in-store experience. This finding is in line with the results of some previous studies such as Babin and Attaway (2000), Weitzl and Zniva (2010), Kumar and Polonsky. (2019) and Jain *et al.* (2017). These findings suggest that the key components of perceived values (hedonic and utilitarian shopping) have had a positive effect on creating a positive experience for consumers in shopping malls and stores. Since these components are so important, Iranian retailers are advised to create and offer what customers have in their minds in order to offset some shortcomings of the retail industry and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage which considers as a key element for shopping malls. They should also understand the key function of the perceived value which is one of the most important elements for consumers and marketers. The findings also confirm that the design and layout of shopping malls can affect in-store experience. This finding is in line with the results of some studies such as Malhotra and Birks (2006) and Hussain and Ali (2015). It should be noted that according to consumer behavior and unplanned purchasing decisions, proper design and layout can have the most effect on in-store experience. Proper design and layout can make more repeated purchases and create a mental image and ultimately a positive in-store experience for customers in shopping malls and stores.

The layout of shelves, facilities and refrigerators can be some reasons for fluctuations and changes in sales volumes. These are rules that do not have visible effects at first but in a subtle way can affect customer choices, feelings and minds. Some elements from the shape and structure of front door to shopping carts, lighting, decoration, design and layout of shelves, colors and all other simple details about malls can raise sales volume even up to 100%. The layout of the store should be a convenient and easy way to access the goods in an attractive place. The Discipline of a store can create beauty that provides tranquility for customers and also improve their motivation and enthusiasm for shopping. In addition, the layout of products can lead to a reduction in waste. Results of study as well as previous research such as Terblanche (2018) and Menon *et al.* (2000) suggest that employee skills can significantly influence the in-store experience. Customer positive affections stem from employee knowledge their immediate service and personal attention to customers play an important role in creating a positive experience and satisfaction. Unique value creation is provided to create a positive customer experience while interacting with service staff at critical moments.

In addition, store managers and shopping malls strive to create a friendly and intimate atmosphere in various ways, thereby fostering honesty and mutual trust between consumers and employees. To this end, direct dialogue and encountering with different levels of employees even as simple as a few sentences is effective. The findings of the fourth hypothesis indicate that brand equity has a positive effect on in-store experience. Some other studies such as Kapferer (2005), Jamshidi *et al.* (2017), Jones *et al.* (2010), Chartrand and Fitzsimons (2008), Ofir and Simonson (2001) also confirmed the positive effect of brand equity on in-store experience. Brand equity can emerge favorable behavioral responses and affects the consumers' behavior and their minds. Brand equity provides a summary of all products, purchases, services and consumption experience of customers while they interact with shopping malls and stores. According to fifth hypothesis, word of mouth can influence customer experience that has been considered in previous research as an influencing factor on consumer decision-making and creating a positive and negative customer experience (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Janoschka, 2004; Fisher, Gainer and Bristol, 1997; Goff *et al.*, 1997).

In this regard, shopping malls' managers should gather all members of consumer community through positive word of mouth and good brand association. The results of sixth hypothesis convey that facilities can significantly affect in-store experience that other studies by Ailawadi *et al.* (2009) and Van Herde and Neslin (2008) also concluded as same. Desirable facilities can improve customers' satisfaction and in-store experiences. These facilities include from the time of customers' entrance into shopping mall until their exit. Some elements that categorized as store facilities are: Convenient location for car parks, facilitation of transportation and mobility, places for seating and resting, places for disabled people, proper display of goods etc. Sales promotion influences in-store experience and this finding is confirmed by some other researchers such as Chiou-Wei and Inman (2008) and Levy *et al.* (2012). Sales promotion is one of the most important elements of marketing mix tool that can play an important role in marketing policies and customer attraction.

Consequences of in-store experience. Customer satisfaction were examined by some researchers such as Ali *et al.* (2018), Mohan *et al.* (2013), Lichtle and Plichon (2014), Borghini *et al.* (2012), Terblanche (2018) and they all confirmed that there is a direct relationship between the in-store experience and customer satisfaction.

Rose *et al.* (2012) and Wesley *et al.* (2006), assumed repurchase intention in their model as the final variable and considered it as the most important output of the customer experience. Sen *et al.* (2002) conducted a survey about the influence of flaneur in shopping malls and concluded that this variable can significantly increase repurchase intention and create a positive in-store experience because customers randomly choose a place for spending time. No previous studies have been done about this variable in the marketing and sales literature and present study examined the impact of the flaneur on in-store experience for the first time in this industry. The flaneurs are not the people to go to the shopping malls and stores for shopping. They seek some hobbies in shopping malls, symbolically resist unequal opportunities in social life, show off their power through virtual ownership of

shopping malls and stores, and renovate their lives through hedonic shopping. Finally, it is the experiences created by shopping malls' managers and stores that can turn flaneurs into loyal customers. In general, people gather together for some purposes other than shopping such as being a flaneur and shopping malls' managers should be able to increase their repatronage intention by some tailored tools and policies.

Future suggestions

Managerial suggestions Based on the main purposes of this study, it is suggested to shopkeepers and policymakers to consider the effective factors on in-store experiences that are in line with the attitudes and perceptions of their customers, try to provide a memorable experience for them and persuade them to repatronage the shop. Also, researchers should try to make an immediate change in the professional experience of some managers, staff, and supervisors who always perform based on their past experiences and not willing to utilize the new technologies in their management of shopping malls and for the availability of their products and services. Managers should provide easy-to-understand training in mass media such as radio and television, where some audiences are still unfamiliar with new ways of communicating and finally create a well in-store experience for them.

Suggestions for malls Shopping malls should consider both the emotional and functional aspects of customer needs. Emotional needs are part of an enjoyable in-store experience that was also highlighted in this study. Customers are no longer entering the shopping malls just for searching a product; rather they seek value creation and want to make an unforgettable experience for themselves. *Suggestions for customer* the knowledge and technology used in some stores and malls go far beyond the level of customer knowledge in society. Some shopping mall managers offer in-service training for their customers to facilitate the use of marketing and sales techniques that are important and essential for them. Customers should also keep in mind that in Iran, store managers are confronted with the culture of our country and with many restrictions which are related to customer orientation, layout, and other elements.

Suggestions for further research: It is suggested to design an in-depth exploratory or mixed method research about each dimension of "antecedents", "consequences" and "in-store experiences" in stores and malls (or other industries), to identify and evaluate each of its categories and reviewing these categories in the cultural context of Iran. It is advised to future researchers that gather their research data from experts and follow the wider samples due to the growth of the malls and store industries and conduct such research internationally. It is therefore recommended that future research establish a measurement scale for this concept to assess its relevance to antecedents and consequences of the in-store experience. Future researchers are also advised to use the concept of "flaneur" in other academic areas that can help marketing and sales science.

Limitations: This study relies on conscious and mental associations that can transfer verbally. So, unconscious associations, combined thoughts, beliefs, and emotions are not explored.

The verbal language of humans is not similar to their thoughts, so unconscious thoughts of them are image-oriented and cannot infer by verbal communications. The exploration of these associations is necessary because most methods of marketing research (such as free associations technique) are based on verbal communication. As the concept of in-store experience has not been well defined, there has also been no scientific analysis in this area. Thus the main limitation of this study is the lack of related literature for conceptualization and analysis of this notion. For future studies, it is suggested that researchers try to explore the way for measuring this type of experience, from mall's managers and sales personnel perspectives.

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