# IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL RETAIL PRACTICES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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## Abstract

*Decades ago, shopping was considered a leisure activity by many Pakistani families on weekends. People used to buy groceries, other fast-moving consumer goods, and utilities from the general locality store. But with the modernization and introduction of smart devices, people now have access to information from all around the world. People now delve into the ocean of the internet, browse and select the product, and can pay in the most convenient way they like. Where technology has facilitated humans, it has also influenced human health and made them technology-dependent, drifting away from nature. Retail stores were considered to be the point where salesmen had direct contact with customers, but now people don't look for just products or services, they are more looking for an experience. So, in this regard, this study was conducted to examine the impact of major internal and external factors that affect customer experience in retail shops in Multan, Punjab, Pakistan. The data were collected with the help of carefully designed questionnaire from a sample of 200 respondents using convenience and random sampling techniques. Data then were transformed into computer, arranged, analyzed, and interpreted using software SPSS version 25. The results revealed that inside store temperature and accessibility to the store were the main and most prioritized factors that enhanced the customer shopping experience in an experiential retail setting. Also, it was discovered that out of all variables that were studied in this research 7 variables were found to have a moderate correlation with customer loyalty. In contrast, 3 were found to have a positive weak correlation, and only customer satisfaction was found to have a highly positive correlation with customer loyalty. Results also exhibited the positive impact of experiential retail practices on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the early 2000s, shopping was seen as a pleasant and entertaining weekend activity by many families, customers had the chance to leisure, browse, and relax at retail outlets Retailers are also finding it increasingly challenging to retain customers and keep them loyal to their stores due to increased competition and squeezing profits. Due to modernization and the introduction of digital marketing, it has been now much easier and more practicable for customers to delve into a sea of vast information, select a product, and make a payment in the most convenient method possible (Wu & Tseng, 2015), increasing competition among businesses particularly retail stores.

### Impact of modernization in retailing

The emergence of modern retailing has resulted in technological innovations and advancements (Senthil et al., 2011). This modernity has had a declining impact on retail businesses that consumers are opting for e-commerce over the typical brick-and-mortar system for purchases, hence resulting in less inflow of customers and declining profits. However there still exists a way to regain your customer flow and increase profitability of

retail store. So the avenue is that is to deliver your customer supreme memorable shopping experience (Jamal and Naser, 2013) .

## Retailing in Pakistan

Researchers and scholars have studied multi-channel marketing; multi-channel retailing; experiential marketing; experiential retailing; bricks & clicks; click & mortar; bricks, clicks & slicks in professional journals and research papers focusing on the business economy (Huré et al., 2017). These retailers usually operated out of their very own little residential areas, with just a few had multiple locations and had no choice but to rely on the cooperation of everyone else around them (Tyrvainen et al., 2020). But today in a world full of technologies and innovations, changes in retailing practices in Pakistan have caused a shift from traditional retailing to modern experience-based retailing (Amin and Mahasan, 2019).

This transformation of the retail sector is changing not only the transactional methods but also the customer purchase experience and store environments (Sharma et al., 2016). The Majority of such studies have been done in Asia, particularly in countries like India, Pakistan and Malaysia. Overall, 69% of the studies were conducted in developing countries (i.e. India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia) and 31% conducted in Europe and America. Out of all the studies, three were focused on consumers in Pakistan (Amin and Mahasan, 2019).

Conventional retail has experienced huge disturbances and difficulties in the last five years in terms of surviving and thriving in the market. Retail analysts are concentrating on a wide range of aspects to boost consumer satisfaction and loyalty to their shops (Bolton et al., 2018). To maintain and compete in the market, retailers are increasingly focusing on 4Cs strategies: customer value, cost, convenience, and communication, which are regarded as a modernized version of the 4Ps: product, price, place, and promotion (Irfan et al., 2019).

Public purchasing is escalating enormously via online platforms as the technological abilities and efficiency of delivery increase. In a marketplace led by online retailers like Amazon, retailers wishing to compete for ways to distinguish themselves by providing value to customers through approaches like experiential retailing, which involves engaging and social events (Sundström et al., 2021). The past several years have been among the most challenging in the industry's history, particularly for traditional physical shops and stores in shopping malls. The phenomena of experiential retail include various playful leisure activities, sensory pleasures, daydreams, esthetic enjoyment, and emotional responses (Holbrook and Hirschman, 2022).

## Experiential Retailing

Experience is one of the prime tools that is viewed as the essential instrument for attracting and keeping a customer bonded and loyal to you (Ong et al., 2018). The notion experiential retailing has been driven from experiential marketing which has emerged in the early 2000's as a way to reclaim and regain the flow of consumers in physical stores. According to Wu & Tseng (2015), experiential retailing is a novel approach to traditional retailing that aimed at providing customers with more informative and enjoyable experiences than it has ever been, as well as a pleasant lasting memory. The basic aim of experiential retailing is to create unique experience for customers by inducing their purchase intentions to sense, touch, feel, think, act and relate. Customer experience is an intangible, psychological and emotional attribute that is very sensitive and important which determines the success and profitability for store and has been providing sustainable competitive edge over rivals (Kursunluoglu, 2017).

## Customer Satisfaction

In simple words customer satisfaction is the degree to which a customer is happy or satisfied after using a product or service. Wu & Tseng, (2015) argues that's a customer's satisfaction can be evaluate by the comparison of perceived and actual value of product or service after post purchase. Satisfaction can be explained as the degree to which a retailer is succeeded in satisfying the needs and wants of customer (Kursunluoglu, 2017). Satisfaction can be generated from the physical product that is economic satisfaction or by the communication with the representative which is social satisfaction and both can effect a customer's purchase intention (Low et al., 2013).

## Customer Loyalty

Gaining customer loyalty is one of the most key goals in marketing, and loyalty programs support businesses in accomplishing this aim. Developing and gaining customer loyalty and satisfaction is one of the main objective of marketing and retailing, and to achieve this objective one must first win their trust (Sun & Lin, 2010). In order to gain trust and loyalty of customer one must initiate loyalty and CSR programs (Evanschitzky et al., 2012). Loyalty and trust provide retailer the repeated buying behavior of customer regardless the efforts or campaigns made by rivals to gain that customer (Kursunluoglu, 2017).

## Problem Statement

As the world is progressing day by day and every field of life is getting advance and modernize, the retail sector is also getting affected by this transformation. Customer now have access to knowledge, thanks to internet and globalization. Where in past customer didn't had numerous choices, today customer delve in to the deep and vast ocean of online information and make purchases. Due to digitalization a numerous customer have shifted towards online shopping and e-commerce, no doubt it has facilitated human kind and has saved time for many people but on the other side of the picture it also have some negative impacts on human health (brain and eyes), also today humans are becoming totally dependent on technology which has made human being dull and passive in nature, also it has caused less inflow of customers and desolation in shopping malls and retail shops. Today customers don't look for only products but also for enjoyable, joyful and relaxing experience because people forget what other had done to them but people never forget how one has made them feel.

## Objectives of the study

1- To study customer perceptions and understanding towards experiential retailing practices.
2- To analyze the relationship between experiential retail practices and customer loyalty with customer satisfaction as a mediator.
3- To identify problems faced by customers and suggest recommendations.

## Significance of Study

This study is aimed to explore and acknowledge the importance of customer experience and experiential retailing and its influence on customer's satisfaction and loyalty. In the past literature and publications, researchers and scholars had investigated the impact of various attributes of Customer satisfaction and loyalty with respect to retail service, setting and performance, but the issue of experiential retailing and collective impact of all experience-generating variables in retailing sector on consumer's satisfaction and loyalty are yet to be analyzed because in Pakistan a very little work is found in context of customer's experience, experiential retail practices, customer's satisfaction and customer's loyalty. The research on experiential retailing perspective is narrow so in this regards this study will attempt to identify the impact of some internal and external factors

of experiential retail practices on customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover this study will investigate the impact of different variables on customer experience which will further help practicing retailers, managers and policy makers to develop various policies that could boost and enhance the impact on Customer experience, satisfaction and loyalty.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term literature review means to appear again at the variables literature in the related field of particular study (Kraus et al., 2021). Japutra et al. (2021) looked upon the influence of customer application experience and value in use on customer experience and loyalty towards retail stores. The sensory experiencing condition, emotional experiential situation, connectivity, and facilitating conditions on value in utilization all enhanced the beneficial influence of customer experience. The results also showed that sensory, emotional, and intellectual experiences (such as engagement and perceived benefits) boost the value of using store apps.As a result, when a store's application succeeds in meeting customers' demands through great experiences, loyalty to the store may arise.

Rather (2020) examined customer experience and engagement in tourism in the context of experiential marketing. The findings also indicated that consumer engagement aspects had indirect effect on behavioral intentions via experience and identification. As per findings, there were notable differences in the level of customer engagement aspects such as cognitive, affective, and social, customer experience, identification, and behavioral expectations between first-time and recurring tourists. Based upon the results authors concluded, that recurring tourists were considered to be relatively more engaged, experienced, and loyal than first-time visitors. Hutauruk et al. (2020) interrogated the effectiveness of marketing mix and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty by examining the role of environmental moderation on super market customers in the form of a plastic bag diet policy. Customer loyalty was found to have been positively influenced by the marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and canton plastic dietary regulations. However, the plastic, adaptable and flexible diet strategy is unable to moderate or decrease the association between the customer loyalty marketing mix and the relationship between client satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Abedi and Jahed (2020) examined the effects of customer experience on brand equity while kept the role of customer satisfaction as a mediation in mind, and it was discovered that customer experience had a considerably favorable impact on brand equity. In addition to their more explicit effect on the dependent variable, the predictor variable customer experience and brand attachment had an indirect impact on brand equity. This suggested that customer satisfaction is a key mediating variable that had the strongest influence on customer experience and brand equity.

Khan et al. (2020) analyzed the impact of age group and shopping experience on the commitment and loyalty to brand. Customer age, retailer commitment, and brand loyalty all had a significant impact on customer experience. Young customers were more influenced by their shopping experience than older customers, and as a result, they created loyalty more quickly than older customers. Consumer brand experiences created an emotional tie that is more successful in developing customer loyalty than rational, functional benefits.

An and Han (2020) investigated the relationship between perceived psychological benefits, intrinsic motivation, customer engagement, customer value creation, customer purchasing behavior and effect of the hedonic value between customer engagement and shopping memories. Because an experience-based retailing results in improved consumer engagement, competent experience-based retailers implement a psychological approach to

enhance hedonic value and promote happy shopping memories. This setting not only intrinsically inspires customers, but also encouraged their involvement and participation.

Batat (2019) delved into the concept of the 7E's of experiential retailing that are experience, exchange, extension, emphasis, empathy, emotional touchpoints, emic/etic process, which is a methodology based on the consumer as a beginning point in marketing initiatives. Businesses could use these to create appropriate, emotive, and valuable consumer experiences in both physical and virtual spaces, including both offline and online digital experiences. The author contends that a typical product-centric strategy should be substituted with an effective combination of 7Es based on a more customer experience approach.

Nimbalkar and Pabalkar (2019) assessed the impact of artificial intelligence technology in context of retailing in India and concluded that factors including customer relationship management, quality, and big data bases were discovered to have a major impact on the retailer's aims and customer fulfilment. Further improvement of these trends may aid in the development of super robotics and Meta systems.

Roozen and Katidis (2019) discussed the importance of service and customer experience in a retail environment with regards to the customer-retailer relationship for various age and gender groups, as well as the influence of service and shopping experiences on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and desire to suggest. However, no significant changes were noted for gender or age. Male and female participants did not rate the situation differently, and no significant influence of age was found.

Imbug et al. (2018) studied the influence of customer experience on customer loyalty in case of a telecommunication organization and the study's objective was to look into the relationship between customer experience and loyalty among network service provider subscribers. Results revealed that customer experience had a strong influence on customer loyalty in the telecommunications industry. The study's findings aided to discover the critical variables that enhance or enhance customer experience, which comprises of 3 dimensions: core service, charging, and brands, which then enhanced customer loyalty. Author further narrated, if a consumer had a pleasant experience at one site, he or she will generate positive feelings for the same brand in other locations, increasing customer loyalty to the service brand.

**METHODOLOGY**

The term "research methodology" is widely used to refer to all of the technical applications in doing research (Lather, 2013). In the domain of management and social sciences, methodology refers to the method of conducting research that includes all legal and professional information gathering, organizing, and analysis procedures (Gog, 2015). The purpose of this research is to measure and quantify the influence of experiential retail practices on consumer satisfaction and loyalty in Multan, Pakistan. The research queries are divided into distinct purposes in this study. The study's major goal is to look into the link between experiential retail and customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Research is the organized, systematic, and scientific process of collecting information, analyzing it, evaluating it, and deriving inferences from it (Gerlich et al., 2018). There are three main forms of research that are routinely carried out.

- Descriptive Approach
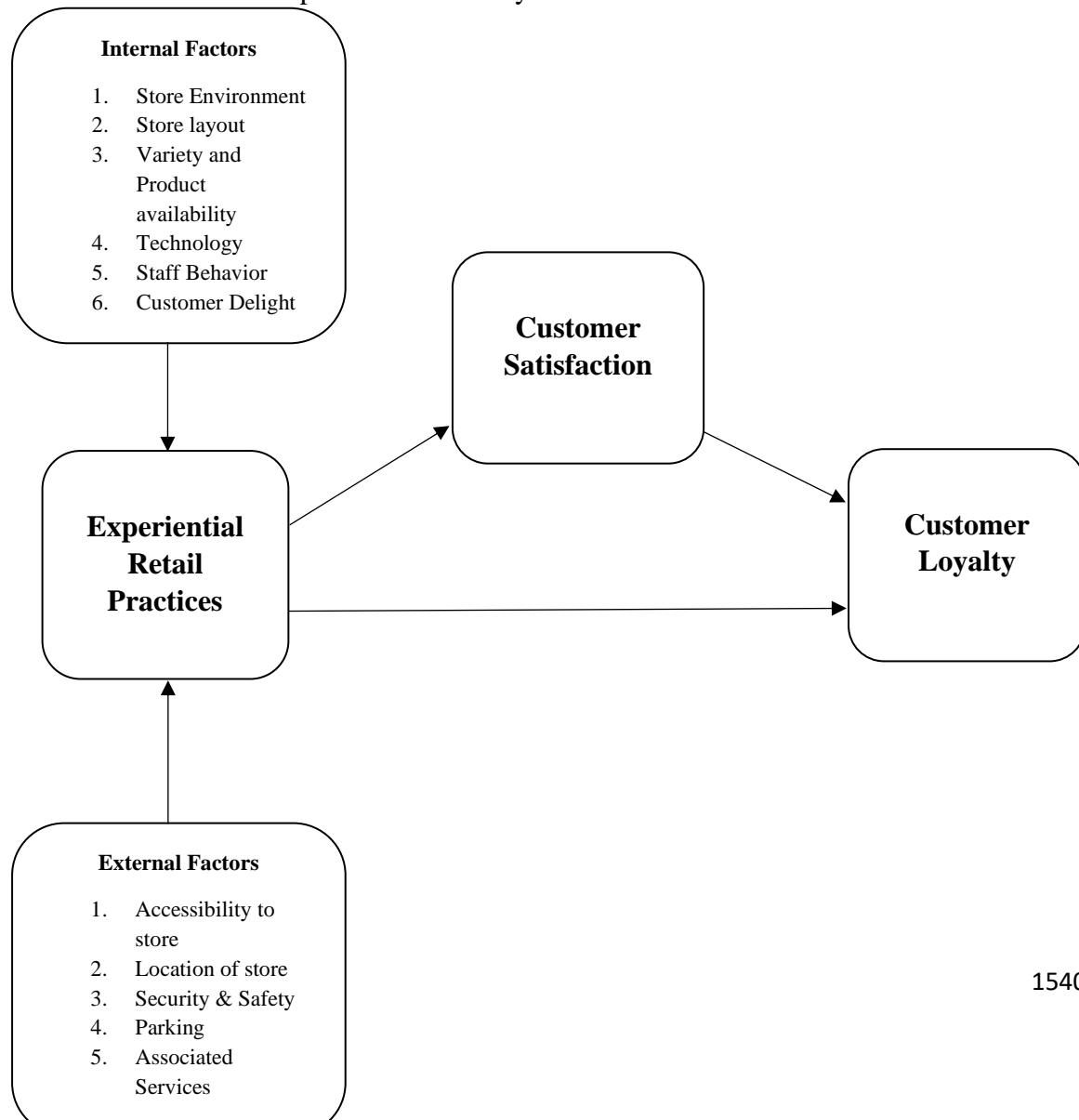- Exploratory Approach
- Explanatory approach

The descriptive approach focuses on the circumstance and populations for whom the assumption and research will be conducted (Seixas et al., 2018). The addendum of exploratory and explanatory research is the descriptive approach. Explanatory techniques

look for facts and statistics that influence the relationship between reliant and uncontrolled variables (Bowen et al., 2017). Exploratory research is a method of determining the critical state of an issue. This approach works well if there is a scarcity of data on the subject (Kieft et al., 2018).

All of the abovementioned methodologies are implemented in this research. A descriptive technique was used to discover the socioeconomic characteristics of the target group. Then, using an exploratory approach, the major characteristics of experiential retail were discovered. The study's major purpose was to see how experiential retailing strategies affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty. The third explanatory technique was applied to establish a cause and effect link between the parameters of experiential retail practices, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty.

### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides an over look of the whole study towards the dependent and independent variables. In the past some researchers and scholars had studied internal and some studied external variables of experiential retail practices. Also in previous studies some researchers had analyzed the impact of experiential retailing on customer loyalty and retention with the mediation of customer's satisfaction. In present study researcher had considered both internal and external factors equally important with the mediating effect of customer satisfaction. So the conceptual frame for this research is based on the variables used in previous studies by researchers.

**Internal Factors**

1. Store Environment
2. Store layout
3. Variety and Product availability
4. Technology
5. Staff Behavior
6. Customer Delight

**Customer Satisfaction**

**Experiential Retail Practices**

**Customer Loyalty**

**External Factors**

1. Accessibility to store
2. Location of store
3. Security & Safety
4. Parking
5. Associated Services

### 3.2 Empirical framework

**Research Design**

Surveying, field testing, experimentation, interviewing, action research, archival analysis, and case analysis are all examples of research design. The surveying method is commonly used to acquire information and data. There are numerous methods for conducting research and gathering data and information; however, the survey is perhaps the simplest and most straightforward.

Respondents filled out a questionnaire that was framed as a series of closed-ended questions in a well-designed and very well-structured questionnaire. Every survey method study demonstrates a fairly speedy approach to gathering information and data in the form of replies like (yes, no, maybe) or (agree, neutral, disagree). The study design has been used to acquire information for qualitative data and information.

This research assisted me in developing a survey method to find the characteristics that contribute to a superior customer experience in a retail store, resulting in increased satisfaction and loyalty. For the purpose of collecting information from respondents, convenience sampling and survey methods were utilized

**Selection of study area**.

In Pakistan out of all five provinces Baluchistan, Interior Sindh and Southern Punjab are the areas which are still neglected and are struggling for development. This study was conducted in Multan city of Southern Punjab because it is a cultural city. Multan is also known as the 'City of Pirs and Shrines', and is a prosperous city of bazaars, mosques, shrines and superbly designed tombs the city of saints and also has importance due to political and industrial personalities.

**Sample Selection**

The city of saints "Multan" is selected for the reason that it is the one of most important city of Southern Punjab and the 6th largest city of Pakistan and this type of research has never been conducted in the southern Punjab of Pakistan. In this city there are many malls and modern retail store and people's buying behavior is shifting with the change in their lifestyle.

**Sample size and sampling technique**

In this research study a sample of 200 respondents was selected for the purpose of data and information selection. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect information and data from respondents. (Keng et al., 2007) used a sample size of 186 respondents in their study also we used sample size calculation formula which gave us a sample size of 196 at 7% marginal error so we rounded off the sample size and selected 200 as our sample size.

**Formula used for sample size calculation**

$$s = z^2 + p + \frac{(1-p)}{m^2}$$

Where,

$S$ = Sample size

z = Z score

p = Population size

m = Margin of error

**Data collection and Analysis**

Under the guidance of my supervisor data was acquired via the use of a properly and technically constructed questionnaire. The questionnaire was broken down into sections. The first section focuses on the customers' socioeconomic aspects. The second section focused on the internal elements that influence experiential retail practices, while

the third section focused on the external aspects that influence customer experience in experiencing retail. The fourth and final sections focused on the mediator and dependent variables, respectively, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

## Data Editing and Coding

The questionnaires were grouped by sequential numbers after patiently collecting data from customers on the questionnaires. The questionnaires were then meticulously examined to discover if any had been answered incorrectly or intentionally left unanswered. Data was transformed into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for further analysis after careful examination of questionnaires. The data was coded in SPSS according to the author's preference and convenience.

## Statistical techniques for data analysis

The data was adjusted before being entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25, to be tested using the following statistical procedures and data analysis techniques.

## Standard Deviation

It a method that is used to calculate the sum of scattering or distinction of a set of factual values

It is calculated using following formula

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(X_i - \overline{X})2}{X - 1}}$$

## Reliability

The clarity and consistency of research or examination techniques are typically regarded as reliability. In most cases, dependable outcomes are considerable, as well as capable of being extensive and primarily connected to the population. Cronbach alpha may be used to measure the reliability of surveys when there are multiple inquiries and questions in the questionnaire, which may support the complexity of the inner correlation directed at the check items. We took the question of reliability very seriously in this investigation. The present study's questionnaire included questions on retail practices, both internal and external, that improve the customer's shopping experience and satisfaction, resulting in customer loyalty to the business and retailer. It was calculated by following formula.

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K - 1} \left[ 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} S_i^2}{S^2} \right]$$

Where,

$\alpha$ = Cornbash's alpha.

$K$ = Total number of test items.

$S_i^2$ = It is item variance.

## Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation is a trendy method for determining the relationship between a single dependent variable and a large number of independent variables. It can also be used as a strategic fit for a regression model. The coefficient of determination is the most commonly used metric for determining a model's quality of fit

The correlation was found using the following formula.

$$r = \frac{n(\Sigma xy) - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{\sqrt{[n\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2][n\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2}}$$

## Regression Analysis

The conclusion of Customer's loyalty based on customer satisfaction and experiential retail practices was calculated using regression analysis. Andrew Haye's

Regression Process Model analysis was created to provide greater variable elucidation through coefficient estimates. In this technique we developed two models to check the impact of independent variables on dependent variable that are models of direct and indirect impact. The coefficient controls the strength with which independent factors influence the dependent variable.

The direct impact of independent variables on dependent variable was calculated following formula.

$$\gamma = \int (X_i)$$

This equation can be explained as,

$$\gamma = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10} + \beta_{11} X_{11} + \epsilon$$

Where,

Y is the dependent variable (Customer Loyalty)

$X_i$ is the vector of all independent variables in experiential retail practices.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7, \beta_8, \beta_9, \beta_{10}, \beta_{11},$ Are regression coefficients.

XI = Store environment

X2 = Store layout

X3 = variety and product availability

X4 = Technology

X5 = Staff behavior

X6 = Customer delight

X7 = Accessibility to store

X8 = Location of store

X9 = Security and Safety

X10 = Parking

X11 = Associated Services

" $\in$ " Is the random error.

The indirect impact of independent variables on dependent variables through mediator impact of mediating variable was calculated using following formula.

$$\gamma = \int (X_i, Cs)$$

Where,

Y = Dependent variable (Customer Loyalty).

$X_i$ is the vector or all independent variables in experiential retail practices.

CS = Mediating variable (Customer Satisfaction).

In this research the reason behind to utilize the multiple regression analysis by Andrew Hayes's is to check the overall impact of multiple independents variables on dependent variable (customer loyalty).

**Hypothesis 1**

$H_0 =$ Experiential retail practices does not have any impact on customer loyalty.

$H_1 =$ Experiential retail practices have significant impact on customer loyalty.

**Hypothesis 2**

$H_0 =$ Customer satisfaction plays a negative mediating role in the relation between experiential retail practices and customer loyalty.

$H_1 =$ Customer satisfaction plays a positive mediating role in the relation between experiential retail practices.


**Explanation of Variables**
**Store Atmosphere**

Philip (1973) used the word "atmospherics" to describe the first notion about the physical environment. Physical environment is described as a collection of three elements: sensorial, architectural, and social factors. Vision (colors, lighting), audition (types of music, sound level), touch (cleanliness), and sensory (scent, hints) are all intangible characteristics of physical environments that are combined in atmospherics (Kolb et al., 2006). In today's modern era of rivalry and competition internal environment and atmosphere regarding retailing is a key to stand above your competitors and make profit. Store atmosphere is one of the main elements that's enhances the customer's experience in store and hence tends to generate customer's satisfaction and loyalty.

**Store Layout**

A store layout is the design in which a store's interior is setup. A well planned store layout allows a retailer to maximize sales for each foot of the allocated selling space within the store (Happ et al., 2021). Store layout depends upon the interior settings of store, interior designing, type of merchandize and ways of merchandizing. Today the competition in retailing is all about creating unique shopping experience for customers. So for this purpose a retailer should focus on store location, store atmosphere and store layout.

**Variety and product availability**

It refers to the availability of products and services and their alternatives so that customer could experience one stop shop. It creates convenience for them customers which could further derives his satisfaction. Creating convenience in buying and selecting products and generating happy joyful shopping experience for customers is all about experiential retailing. To improve your customer's experience through the availability of their desired products a retailer must have the knowledge of customer choices and their preferences, also maintain a healthy positive relationship with its suppliers so that inbound activities may not disrupt and at the end the products should be properly and professionally be merchandized on shelves (Kim and Takashima, 2019) .

**Technology**

The development of devices or machinery through the use of scientific knowledge which helps humans in their daily work routine and minimizes their effort is called technology. It plays an important role in every field of life. Due to modernization, retailing sector is also going through many technological changes due to which customers buying pattern and buying behavior has been changed in the last few decades (Parise et al., 2016). Today customers are now more experience oriented rather than product or price oriented. So today if retailers want to give their customers that shopping experience that is beyond the traditional shopping experience one must use technology for creating ease and convenience for customers in shopping.

**Staff Behavior**

Customer and staff contact and behavior may be characterized as a verbal and nonverbal social activity that occurs between them to share information, experiences, and opinions (Tran et al., 2020). In service retailing, social contact is defined as any engagement that customers/buyers may have with staff members, other consumers, and services cape. In today's world the behavior of one person with another is considered as the base of the relationship between them. Today psychology says that humans can neither forget what others had done to them nor can they forget how one has made them feel. In retailing the behavior of staff and managers with its clients and customers matters a lot and is an extremely important element that decides the success of business.

**Customer Delight**

Customer delight is a term used to describe when a customer's expectations are exceeded to an unexpected degree. Customer delight has its roots in a dissatisfying

revelation made in the 1990's when consumers were discovered to swap retailers while claiming high levels of contentment and satisfaction with the particular retailer. The fact that only satisfied consumers are not the assurance that business will flourish and fly in bright colors has shifted the aim shifted from matching expectations to going above and beyond (Barnes et al., 2021). In experiential retailing retailers not only try to satisfy their customers but they also try to enhance their shopping experience with multiple touch points in retail environment.

## Accessibility to store

The ability to access and benefit from a system or organization is referred to as accessibility. In terms of retailing the accessibility to stores refers to the ways and channels through which one can reach the destined store or mall (Swoboda et al., 2013). Accessibility to store is an element in convenience that creates ease for customers in approachability. This can be a major factor in a store or malls success. This directly has influence on customer's inflow hence sales and profitability of retailer. While selecting site for a outlet of any brand or mall construction, accessibility is a major consideration. In today's busy routine of humans a retailers must consider this as the major factor that would be having an impact on his future business and could decide his success or failure.

## Location of store

Location can be considered as a geographical approach to any destination. In retailing industry the location of store and mall is considered a vital element of profitability. The geographical location of site should not be very far from the city or town as it will create inconvenience for the customers hence that will result in less inflow of customers and hence decreased profitability (Caruso et al., 2018). Site should not be close to industry area nor should it be in the middle of city where the flow of traffic is high as it will create traffic blockages and hustle during rush hours. The location of store should be somewhere where the customers can go to relax to shop and shop to relax.

## Security and safety

The term "security" and "safety" are commonly used combined which refers to the safety of humans in every aspect. In retailing the terms security and safety is referred to the management's effort to protect their customers from any kind of harm and make them feel free from any kind of danger and uncertainty (Owen and Harrison, 2019). Today in the prevailing conditions of Pakistan the customers are more concerned about the safety and security of themselves and their belongings. To ensure the fear free shopping of customers a retailer must take steps to enhance the security and safety features for its customers and try to eradicate customer's fear with advanced security system.

## Parking

A car park, car lot, often known as a parking lot, is a cleared place where automobiles can be parked. Parking lots are a characteristic of every city and sub-urban region in most nations where vehicles are the major form of transportation (Srivastava and Kaul, 2014). Today in Pakistan where traffic on roads is increasing day and night, retailers can set oneself apart by offering their products and services more accessible, i.e. more convenient. One of the most significant components in generating a positive shopping experience is the comfort of shopping in a business. Here customers and general public is more concerned about their vehicle and its safety. Retailers can create convenience for their customers by providing them with a well-managed and spacious parking area where customers can park their vehicle without the fear of theft or any kind of damage. The value of each form of convenience varies depending on the service type or context, and it has an influence as

parking space/lot seems to be a very minor factor in customer convenience and customer satisfaction but it have a great impact on customer shopping experience, his satisfaction and loyalty.

**Associated Services**

In the context of retailing associated services are referred to those services which are given or provided by the retailer that are connected or supplementary. In today's world where competition has increased and has gone too far the profitability of retailers is measured by the loyalty of customers with that retailer and to keep customers loyal and to retain them for a longer period of time a retailer must provide customers associated services that could enhance their shopping experience and generate loyalty (Lim and Winkenbach, 2019). Associated services ca be of many types. It depends on the type of product or services provided by retailers. Some examples of associated services are free installation, free shipping, and free service for a limited time period, free packaging and gift wrapping.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research was conducted in the city Multan of Pakistan to see in general if experiential retail practices have in impact on customers shopping experience and hence if these practices tends to enhance customer's satisfaction and their loyalty with the store. Moreover this research aimed to see which internal and external factors customers consider the most important and valuable in their shopping journey. The study of these factors turns out to be very useful for the retailers and managers as it enables them to develop certain customer's touch points.

**Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

Descriptive analysis of level of angriness of respondent's perception towards the variables of research.

The researcher used the itemized scale to construct the range. This range will be used to measure the perception level of the respondents towards each variable. The researcher uses the following formula to construct the perception level.

$$\frac{Max - min}{Max} = \frac{5 - 1}{5}$$

**Itemized Range Scale**

| Interval of means | Perception | Ranking |
|---|---|---|
| 1.00 - 1.80 | Strongly Disagree | 5 |
| 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree | 4 |
| 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral | 3 |
| 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree | 2 |
| 4.21 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree | 1 |

**4.7 Reliability Test**

The reliability of questionnaire is checked by the Cronbach's alpha for various queries exists in the questionnaire, which may endorse the sophisticated notch of inter correlation aimed the checked items. This research focused on the reliability concerns seriously. The questionnaire of current study was comprised on 67 questions based upon the internal and external variables of experiential retail practices.

| Variables | Items | Cronbach Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Store Environment | 4 | 0.793 |
| Store Layout | 4 | 0.753 |
| Variety & Product Availability | 5 | 0.780 |
| Technology | 6 | 0.804 |
| Staff Behavior | 4 | 0.820 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Customer Delight | 3 | 0.830 |
| Accessibility to Store | 3 | 0.760 |
| Location of Store | 3 | 0.736 |
| Security & Safety | 3 | 0.755 |
| Parking | 4 | 0.903 |
| Associated Services | 3 | 0.870 |
| Customer Satisfaction | 6 | 0.884 |
| Customer Loyalty | 6 | 0.876 |

The above table states the reliability test and the values of Cronbach's alpha. The general rule for the acceptance of reliability is that its value should be greater than 0.7. The above table states the satisfactory results of all the variables of experiential retail practices

**4.8 Parson's Correlation**

**Pearson's Correlations**

| | | CL | CS | SE | SL | VPA | TECH | SB | CD | ATS | LOS | SAS | PAR | AS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CL | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CS | Pearson Correlation | .808** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SE | Pearson Correlation | .459** | .529** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| SL | Pearson Correlation | .517** | .555** | .664** | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| VPA | Pearson Correlation | .399** | .432** | .526** | .490** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| TECH | Pearson Correlation | .253** | .308** | .303** | .325** | .651** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| SB | Pearson Correlation | .549** | .645** | .524** | .539** | .497** | .502** | 1 | | | | | | |
| CD | Pearson Correlation | .593** | .645** | .505** | .518** | .457** | .337** | .668** | 1 | | | | | |
| ATS | Pearson Correlation | .524** | .510** | .366** | .444** | .354** | .333** | .594** | .514** | 1 | | | | |
| LOS | Pearson Correlation | .590** | .597** | .417** | .424** | .371** | .334** | .589** | .454** | .665** | 1 | | | |
| SAS | Pearson Correlation | .508** | .544** | .365** | .403** | .566** | .597** | .545** | .509** | .436** | .481** | 1 | | |
| PAR | Pearson Correlation | .250** | .296** | .190** | .158* | .476** | .659** | .367** | .291** | .277** | .217** | .564** | 1 | . |
| AS | Pearson Correlation | .170* | .195** | .170* | .069 | .375** | .613** | .261** | .121 | .215** | .262** | .510** | .632** | 1 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation among variables was found to be fluctuating from highly significant correlated to weakly positive correlated. The above table states the relationship of dependent variable with all other independent variables. The relation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty was found to be highly correlated as (0.808 & P < 0.01); the value of correlation between store environment and customer loyalty was calculated to be (0.459 & P < 0.01) which is also positively correlated but is a moderate relation; the correlation between customer loyalty and store layout was calculated to be (0.517 & P < 0.01) which is also a positive value and the relation is thus moderately correlated; the relationship between customer loyalty and the factor of availability of products and variety was found to be moderately significant (0.399 & P < 0.01); the relation between the use of technology and customer loyalty was calculated to be (0.253 & P < 0.01) which is positive but a weak relationship; the relationship between the behavior of staff and customer loyalty was also found to be moderately significant (0.549 & P < 0.01); the relationship between customer loyalty and customer delight was found to be moderately significant as it has a value of (0.593 & P < 0.01), the relationship between the customer loyalty and accessibility to store and location of store was calculated to be (0.524 7 P < 0.01) and (0.590 & P < 0.01) respectively which is also a moderately significant relation; the relation between customer loyalty and security and safety in mall and store was found (0.508 & P < 0.01) which is also a positive relation but It is a weakly correlated. The relationship between the parking area, its management and customer loyalty was found to be weakly correlated as its value was calculated (0.250 & P < 0.01) and in the last the relationship between customer loyalty and associated services was found to be (0.170 & P < 0.05) which is also a positive relation but is weak in nature.

**4.9 Estimated Regression Model**

To calculate the impact of independent on dependent variable Andrew Hayes's technique was used on both models of direct and indirect impact.

**Model 1. Direct Impact of independent variable on dependent variable**

| Variable | Coefficient | St. Error | T - Value | P - Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Constant** | 1.0830 | 0.2919 | 3.7105 | 0.000 |
| **ERP** | 0.7587 | 0.725 | 10.4601 | 0.000 |

$R^2 = 0.35$      **F** value = 109.4

This table exhibits the direct impact of experiential retail practices on customer loyalty. From the table we can conclude the overall model fitness as F value is far greater than the normal significance level. Also R-square value was calculated to be 0.35 which means 35% change in customer loyalty will be observed due to experiential retail practices, keeping all other variables constant. Also if we increase ERP by one unit then CL will change by 0.7587 units. This model is also significant (t > 1.96 and P < 0.01). The results also approves our first hypothesis that experiential retail practices have significant impact on customer loyalty.

**Model 2. Impact of experiential retail practices on customer loyalty with the mediating effect of customer satisfaction as mediator.**

| Variables | Coefficient | St. Error | T - Value | P - Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 0.1306 | 0.2237 | 0.5836 | 0.5602 |
| ERP | 0.1552 | 0.0694 | 2.2344 | 0.0266 |
| CS | 0.7933 | 0.594 | 13.3470 | 0.0000 |

$R^2 = 0.66$        **F** value = 192.7

This table exhibits the indirect impact of experiential retail practices on customer loyalty through the mediating effect of customer satisfaction. From the table we can conclude the overall model fitness as F value is far greater than the normal significance level, also the R value was calculated to be 0.66 which means 66% change in customer loyalty will be observed due to experiential retail practices and customer satisfaction, keeping all other variables constant. The combined effect of both ERP and CS will bring 66.18% change in CL as the R square value was found to be 0.6618 at significance level P < 0.05. It means that if we increase one unit of both ERP and CS then CL will increase by 0.7933 and 0.1552 units respectively with the coefficient value of both variables P < 0.05 which indicated the fitness of model. Results also satisfy our second objective and the results of this model also approves our second hypothesis that customer satisfaction does play a positive mediating role in the relation between experiential retail practices and customer loyalty.

By observing the R-square values from the models we can clearly see a rise in R-square value of model 2, which is the impact of independent variable on dependent with the mediation effect, which confirms that experiential retail practices had a significantly positive impact on customer satisfaction with customer loyalty as a mediator, also the P and t values of both direct and indirect effects states that the model is statistically fit, So we can say that customer satisfaction does play role in enhancing the customer loyalty

**Conclusion**

In past customers used to buy grocery from the local karyana shop in their street or from the general store of their locality, and shopping/grocery was considered as a leisure activity by many Pakistani family on weekends and at the first weekend of every month. But today a numerous families residing in Pakistan now go to shop or mall for the purpose of shopping and grocery. With the passage of time the buying behavior and customers preference towards the products and their alternatives is changing. This is all because of modernization and globalization that human life style is also evolving.

In this modern world where today people don't have time and have busy routine and schedule's, people finds very little and no time for outing and relaxation. For the purpose of relaxation and enjoyment people are now facing towards the shopping malls where they can shop and relax or shop to relax. Today is the era of modernization and experience hence retailing industry has gained a lot of importance because it is the only and first stage in a supply chain where the contact with the customer is face to face. Today customer feedback and suggestions are given a lot of importance because upon working on these one can satisfy and retain a customer. In this time span where there are numerous competitors and alternatives for a product of single brand, to retain customers has become a challenge for retailers. Also it is assumed in today's retailing industry that a retailers earns only from loyal customers so to retain and keep customers loyal to you is very critical and important in retailing in-order to survive.

Today experience is only the factors that can generate customer's satisfaction and can help retailers to generate and gain customer's loyalty to the store. Customer's satisfaction can be describes as the degree to which a customer is happy and satisfy with your products and services while customer loyalty can be described as the repeated buying behavior of a customer from your store/mall. No doubt this modernization has helped boosting and enhancing human's life style and in context of retailing it has helped customers in gaining knowledge about products and services and have facilitated customers in choosing products from any corner of world and pay in desired way, on the other hand it has some negative impact on humans health in terms of eyesight. It has this modernization

and technological world has made human's nature passive, dull and lazy. Now humans are nothing without technology, they are dependent on technology.

The objectives of this study were to analyze the understanding of towards experiential retailing with the impact of experiential retailing on customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Also to suggest some recommendations and suggestions for the retailers and malls managers through which they could understand customer's needs and wants and with the help of which they could create happy and joyful shopping experience for customers that would enhance customer satisfaction and generate customer's loyalty with the store and mall.

Age is an important factor in the socio-economic characteristics; it represents the maturity level of the respondents. The stats revealed that the most of customers fallen within the age group of 21-30 years and the occupation of most of the respondents was private job with an educational level of graduation and post-graduation respectively. According to the responses it was also found that mostly customers did not had any knowledge about the term experiential retailing and they use to shop from mall on monthly basis for the purpose of grocery and clothing mostly. According to customers Both (internal & external) factors of experiential retailing influence their shopping experience but according to them internal factors is the most important factor that have influence on customers shopping experience. Upon asking which factors according to them is most important factor in internal and external factors that influence the customer experience, it was found to be temperature inside store (Internal) and accessibility to the store (external). Out of 11 variables understudy only customer satisfaction was found to have highly positive correlation with dependent variable, which matches with the results of (Goncalves and Sampaio, 2012), while 3 variables that were technology, Parking and associated services showed weak positive correlation with dependent variable which in-lines with the results of (Djelassi et al., 2018; Othman et al., 2021) while remaining 7 variables showed positive correlation which positively relates with the results of (Stein and Ramaseshan, 2016; De Villiers et al., 2018). Regression analysis showed the direct and indirect impact of experiential retail practices on customer loyalty with customer satisfaction as a mediator. The r-square value increased when customer satisfaction acted as a mediator between experiential retail practices and customer loyalty with the store or mall, which proves that experiential retail practices has positive impact on customer satisfaction and customer's loyalty.

**Suggestions and recommendations to retailers and managers**

The outcomes of this research study revealed that experiential retailing has a positive significant impact on customer's satisfaction and customer's loyalty. It was also found that there were numerous factors that enhance the customer's shopping experience. Although all the elements enhance the customer shopping experience, customer's satisfaction and customer's loyalty but still customers were facing some problems and issues in retail store and malls. And to counter those issues and problems below are some suggestions and recommendations regarding the variables used in the study which will help and aid retailers and managers in shopping malls, through which they can enhance the shopping experience of customers and their satisfaction which will ultimately strengthen customer's loyalty with that particular mall and store.

**Store environment:**

Retailers should use proper lightening scheme, light colors, focused lights and dim lights along with the use of light and pleasing fragrance inside the store, also they should maintain the store's temperature because in Pakistan especially in Multan the summer season is extremely hot.

**Store Layout:**

The layout should be proper, spacious while construction and interior designing of the store and mall.

**Staff Behavior:**

Retailers are suggested that while hiring staff, management must ensure that the person must be educated and have good moral ethics. Management should also train the staff on their personal hygiene, cleanliness and dressing.

**Customer Delight:**

Keep in mind that today customers share their experience on social media so retailer must have attractive and beautiful interior designing along with some specific selfie points, quotes and sceneries. Because today customer don't look only for product but for happy experience and content for their social media feed.

**Technology:**

In context to technology adaptation retailers and mall managers are suggested that they should enhance and maintain their security with the latest technologies also they are informed that customers face problems while checking out. So, for this purpose retailers should adopt various payment methods like online payment, QR scan.

**Parking and management:**

The malls management should specially look down on this issue of customers because in the matter of vehicles, people of Pakistan are very conscious and exhibits a lot of concerns. Retail owners specifically the Malls owners and management of malls should consider large space area for their customers and try to ensure the proper management and proper safety of customer's automobiles.

**Associated services:**

Associated services play a great role in the customer's satisfaction and retention hence in growing customer's loyalty with the store. Mall owners must consider this as a vital element that attract the customer and tends to satisfy them. Malls owners must make sure that the parking of mall is spacious and is well managed along with the safety of customer's vehicle.

**Limitations**

**Time Constrain:**

In today's world time is valuable and considered as important element in human life. The time for this research study was very little and limited that is 4 months only. Due to the time constrain this research could not be carried out on a larger scale.

**Financial Budget:**

To carry out any task especially research, finance is a major factor that helps the researcher to carry all the steps smoothly without any delay or disruptions. For this research purpose no financial aid was given to the researcher, also researcher is still a student and is dependent upon his family income. The researcher had a very low financial budged and managed all the processes in that specified budget and had to deal all financial problems on his own.

**Behavior of respondents:**

In Pakistan general public are not really well aware of the procedures of the research and hence due to this reason researcher faced a lot of problem in gathering data. It took

researcher more than expected time in gathering data and filling up questionnaire. The main problem researcher faced was that customers were not willing to fill up questionnaire mostly due to the personal questions asked in socio-economic part of questionnaire. It was very hard and difficult for researcher to satisfy customers that their provided data will be kept confidential and it will only be used for research purpose. It took researcher four weeks to gatherer data due to unwillingness and distrust of customers.

**Generalizability:**

As the simple size was selected only 200, and due to many more reasons like behavior of respondents, time constrains, lack of financial resources and low budged of researcher this research study could not be generalize. Although the data was collected from 200 respondents but still it does not reflect the opinion of majority.

**True Opinion:**

The data was gathered through convenience and random sampling technique by the use of questionnaire and as the questionnaire was designed with mostly close ended questions so customers didn't have choice to express their true opinion. Although the customers responded the customers had limited options to choose from, effects the generalizability of the study.

**Future Research**

Future research can be conducted regarding experiential retailing and customer experience using other variables. There is a few published literature about the external factors of experiential retail. The research upon the external factors of experiential retail is needed to be expand in depth so scholars can conduct a research study using different external variables of experiential retailing. Future research can also be conducted on the elements that enhance customer experience, customer satisfaction and loyalty with a retail store, brand or shopping mall. Also this study can be carried out on provincial level and country level to gain a better understanding. Moreover, combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques could be used in future as this could provide the richest interpretation.

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