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## Understanding Customer's Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Retailing Landscape of India

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#### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty within the retailing landscape of India. Convenient sampling method is utilized to select 533 sample respondents from the cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack in Odisha during the months of April and May 2023. Data analysis is done using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS4 software. The findings of the study offered deeper insights into key factors such as adventure, hedonism, value shopping, and utilitarianism, aiding in the development of effective strategies for enhancing customer relationships and fostering loyalty among retailers. The retailers operating in the Indian market can tailor their marketing strategies, product offerings, and customer experiences by implementing insights from this study and can get improved customer retention, increased sales, and enhanced competitiveness.

**Keywords:** Customer satisfaction; Customer loyalty; Adventure, Hedonism; Value shopping; Utilitarianism

## Introduction

In the contemporary global and Indian retailing landscape, understanding customer satisfaction and loyalty has emerged as a critical focal point for businesses aiming to thrive amidst dynamic market forces and evolving consumer behaviors (Kadam & Bhatt, 2021; Singh et al., 2024). Globally, the retail industry has experienced significant transformations driven by technological advancements, shifting consumer preferences, and the rise of e-commerce (Shankar et al., 2021).

According to data from eMarketer, global retail e-commerce sales amounted to \$4.28 trillion in 2023, highlighting the growing influence of digital channels in retail transactions (eMarketer, 2023).

India, as one of the world's largest retail markets, has witnessed remarkable growth and diversification in its retail sector. The retail market in India was valued at \$822 billion in 2020 and is projected to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2025, reflecting the country's expanding consumer base, rising disposable incomes, and increasing urbanization rates (eMarketer, 2023). The Indian retail landscape is characterized by a mix of traditional brick-and-mortar stores, modern retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets, and the rapid growth of e-commerce platforms.

E-commerce has emerged as a significant driver of retail growth in India, with the sector witnessing a surge in online shopping activities, particularly in categories such as electronics, fashion, and groceries (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the shift towards online retailing, with many consumers embracing digital channels for their shopping needs. As per the eMarketer (2024) report, India's e-commerce market is expected to reach \$99 billion by the end of 2024, underscoring the immense potential of online retail in the country. The Indian retail sector is also witnessing increased investments and collaborations, both domestic and international, aimed at enhancing retail infrastructure, supply chain efficiency, and customer experience (Banerjee, 2021). Major global retailers such as Walmart, Amazon, and Alibaba have made significant investments in India's retail market, leveraging technology and innovation to cater to diverse consumer demands (Banerjee, 2021).

Moreover, the Indian government's initiatives such as Digital India, Make in India, and Startup India have further fueled the growth of the retail ecosystem by promoting digital adoption, supporting local businesses, and fostering entrepreneurship (Modgil et al., 2022). These initiatives, coupled with favorable demographic trends, rising urbanization, and a growing middle-class population, present lucrative opportunities for retailers to tap into India's vibrant and dynamic retail market.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to delve into the nuances of customer satisfaction and loyalty within the modern retailing landscape of India. By analyzing the consumer's changing behavior, and identifying the factors affecting their behavior, this study will help the retailers to frame strategies for enhancing customer experience and building lasting brand loyalty.

## Literature review and hypotheses development

Research in the field of consumer behavior has delved into various dimensions that play critical roles in explaining buying behavior across different retailing contexts, including both online and offline channels (Dholakia et al., 2010). Among these dimensions, adventure stands out as a significant factor influencing consumer perceptions and experiences during shopping activities (Hardesty & Bearden,2009). The concept of adventure in shopping refers to the excitement, novelty, and exploration that consumers seek while engaging in retail experiences (Bansal et al., 2023). Consumers who value adventure are often motivated by the thrill of discovering new products, trying out unique experiences, and immersing themselves in engaging shopping environments. Similarly, hedonism has emerged as a key dimension that drives consumer behavior

in retail settings (Gupta et al., 2023). Hedonistic motivations reflect consumers' desires for pleasure, enjoyment, and gratification derived from their shopping experiences. Individuals with hedonistic tendencies are often drawn to shopping as a form of leisure and self-indulgence, seeking products and experiences that evoke positive emotions and sensory pleasures (Dahake et al., 2024). Value shopping, another important dimension, revolves around consumers' perceptions of value, affordability, and utility in their shopping endeavors (Alawadh & Barnawi, 2024). Consumers who prioritize value shopping are focused on obtaining the best deals, discounts, and high-quality products at reasonable prices. Their buying decisions are influenced by factors such as perceived value for money, cost-effectiveness, and the overall benefits derived from their purchases (Vollero, 2023).

In contrast, utilitarianism reflects consumers' practical and functional motivations for shopping (Chekembayeva et al., 2023). Utilitarian shoppers prioritize meeting their needs, achieving specific goals, and maximizing efficiency in their shopping experiences (Taufique et al., 2024). They are driven by factors such as convenience, functionality, and the ability of products or services to fulfill their intended purposes effectively (Chang et al., 2023). Together, these dimensions - adventure, hedonism, value shopping, and utilitarianism - form a comprehensive framework for understanding and explaining consumer buying behavior in the dynamic landscape of retailing. Whether consumers are shopping online or in physical stores, these dimensions play crucial roles in shaping their attitudes, preferences, and decision-making processes (Zhang et al., 2023).

Past research has demonstrated that the dimensions of adventure, hedonism, value shopping, and utilitarianism can play significant roles in shaping customer satisfaction within the retailing context. Adventure, characterized by excitement, novelty, and exploration in shopping experiences, has been linked to increased levels of customer satisfaction (Alawadh & Barnawi, 2024). Consumers who perceive shopping as an adventure often derive satisfaction from discovering new products, engaging in unique experiences, and enjoying the overall excitement of their shopping journeys (Chang et al., 2023). Similarly, hedonism, emphasizing pleasure, enjoyment, and gratification, contributes significantly to customer satisfaction in retail environments (Chang et al., 2023). When consumers experience positive emotions, sensory pleasures, and a sense of indulgence during their shopping interactions, their overall satisfaction levels tend to increase. Hedonistic motivations drive consumers to seek out pleasurable shopping experiences, leading to enhanced satisfaction with the retailer or brand. Value shopping, focusing on perceived value, affordability, and utility, is closely associated with customer satisfaction in retailing (Zhang et al., 2023). Consumers who feel they have obtained good deals, discounts, and high-quality products at reasonable prices are more likely to be satisfied with their shopping experiences. Value-driven satisfaction stems from meeting or exceeding customers' expectations regarding the value proposition offered by retailers. Furthermore, utilitarianism, centered on practical needs, functionality, and efficiency, plays a crucial role in fostering customer satisfaction (Kadam & Bhatt, 2021; Singh et al., 2024). When consumers find that their shopping activities are convenient, effective, and align with their specific needs and goals, they are more likely to experience satisfaction with the retailer's offerings and services.

Accordingly, for the purpose of our study we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a: Adventure associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's satisfaction in the context of retailing.

H1b: Adventure associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's loyalty in the context of retailing.

H2a: Hedonism associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's satisfaction in the context of retailing.

H2b: Hedonism associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's loyalty in the context of retailing.

H3a: Utilitarianism associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's satisfaction in the context of retailing.

H3b: Utilitarianism associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's loyalty in the context of retailing.

H4a: Value shopping associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's satisfaction in the context of retailing.

H4b: Value shopping associated with shopping significantly affects the customer's loyalty in the context of retailing.

H5: Customer's satisfaction with shopping significantly affects the customer's loyalty in the context of retailing.

#### Method

Convenient sampling is utilized to select 533 sample respondents from the cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack in Odisha during the months of April and May 2023. Convenient sampling is chosen due to its practicality and accessibility, allowing for efficient data collection within the specified timeframe. The sample size of 533 respondents is determined based on the feasibility of data collection and statistical requirements for conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Primary data is collected through the administration of a pre-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire is developed based on established constructs related to consumer behavior dimensions such as adventure, hedonism, value shopping, and utilitarianism, as well as variables related to customer satisfaction in the retailing context. The questionnaires are distributed electronically or through face-to-face interactions, depending on the convenience of the respondents.

Data analysis is done using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) techniques. CFA is employed to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model, ensuring that the constructs and items in the questionnaire are appropriate and accurately capture the intended variables. PLS-SEM, specifically using the SmartPLS4 software, is utilized to analyze the structural relationships among the constructs and variables, examining their effects on customer satisfaction.

#### **Results**

#### Assessment of measurement model

CFA was used to assess the measurement model's validity and reliability. According to Hair et al. (2019), the construct reliability metrics used in this study were Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Based on the fact that every construct included in this study exceeded the benchmark value of 0.7 for these measurements, it is possible to conclude that each construct had a high degree of reliability. After the reliability study is finished, the average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the degree of variation shared by the items that comprise the constructs, is calculated to determine the constructs' convergent validity. As a result, convergent validity has been demonstrated because the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed the benchmark value of 0.50. Furthermore, the component loading scores calculated by CFA are larger than 0.7 for each and every item. This implies that each item adds to the variance of the latent concept, which serves as a supplement to the convergent validity test. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE values, as well as the factor loadings.

Table-1, Results of measurement model assessment

Constructs	Items	Factor loading s	Cronbach' s alpha	Composit e reliability (rho_a)	Composit e reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracte d (AVE)
	To me, shopping is					
	an adventure	0.705				
	I find					
	shopping stimulating	0.727				
	Shopping					
	makes me		/		0 00 <b>=</b>	0.7
Adventure	feel like I am		0.724	0.773	0.897	0.566
	in my own universe	0.891				
	When I'm in					
	a down					
	mood, I go					
	shopping to					
	make me feel					
	better.	0.790				
Hedonism	To me, shopping is a	0.796	0.756	0.759	0.823	0.592

	way to					
	relieve stress					
	I go					
	shopping					
	when I want					
	to treat					
	myself to					
	something special	0.762				
	I like	0.702				
	shopping for					
	others					
	because					
	when they					
	feel good I					
	feel good	0.750				
	For the most					
	part, I go					
	shopping					
	when there					
	are sales	0.950				
	I enjoy					
	looking for					
	discounts	0.040				
	when I shop	0.949				
	I go					
Utilitarianism	shopping to		0.799	0.785	0.889	0.523
Othitarianism	keep up with the trends	0.804	0.799	0.783	0.889	0.323
	I go	0.004				
	shopping to					
	keep up with					
	the new					
	fashions	0.756				
	I go					
	shopping to					
	see what new					
	products are					
	available	0.787				

Value shopping	It feels good to know that my shopping trip was successful  On a particular shopping activity, it is important to find items I am looking for  It is important to accomplish what I had planned on a particular shopping activity  A good store visit is when it is over very quickly  It is disappointin g when I have to go to multiple outlets to	0.706	0.861	0.732	0.798	0.529
		0.731				
Satisfaction	The overall service quality of my retailer is good	0.773	0.746	0.782	0.843	0.534

	Overall I am					
	satisfied with					
	my retailer	0.761				
	I would					
	recommend					
	the retailer to					
	my friends					
Loyalty	and relatives.	0.706	0.801	0.81	0.863	0.558
	In future, I					
	will remain					
	loyal with					
	the retailer	0.777				

Source: compiled from the output of SmartPLS4

A discriminant validity evaluation was used to assess the uniqueness of one notion in relation to another (Hair et al., 2019). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), for the study to meet the criteria for discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE values for each idea must be bigger than the comparable values for the other associations. Table 2 shows that all of the constructs differ significantly from one another. This is because the AVE square root of each construct is greater than the correlations between all of the constructs.

Table 2, Fornell-Larcker criteria

	Adventure	Hedonism	Utilitarianism	Value shopping	Satisfaction	Loyalty
Adventure						
Hedonism	0.602					
Utilitarianism	0.46	0.194				
Value						
shopping	0.263	0.194	0.34			
Satisfaction	0.29	0.198	0.31	0.701		
Loyalty	0.749	0.752	0.191	0.204	0.3	

Source: Author's calculation using SmartPLS4

## **Assessment of structural model**

After determining that the measurement model was appropriate, we investigated the structural model. The variance inflation factor (VIF) is a measure of multicollinearity, R<sup>2</sup> is a measure of predictive power, and path coefficients are calculated using the PLS technique with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. All of these measures will be examined more in the following paragraphs. Similarly, the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) was used to evaluate model compliance (Henseler et al., 2016). The SRMR value estimated for this study is 0.062, which is less than the figure proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), which was 0.08. Prior to assessing the structural model, a collinearity diagnostic must be performed to ensure that it does not affect the route analysis findings (Hair et al., 2019). According to the findings of this investigation, the

calculated VIF values ranged from 1.13 to 2.78. This figure is much lower than Hair et al.'s (2019) recommended threshold value of 3, indicating the absence of multi-collinearity. R-square values are generated to determine how well the model explains the data (Hair et al., 2019). The R-square value for satisfaction was calculated to be 0.411, indicating that the suggested model can account for 41.6% of the variation in customer satisfaction in connection to retailing. Furthermore, the model reveals that consumer contentment with the store, as well as adventure, hedonism, utilitarianism, and value purchasing, account for 55.7% of the variance in customer loyalty with respect. The R-square values for store loyalty are 0.557, demonstrating this. Customer satisfaction with the retailer is equally important for value buying.

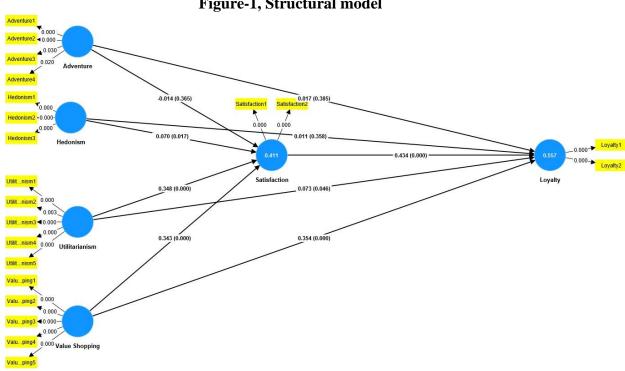


Figure-1, Structural model

Source: Computed through SmartPLS4

Table 4, Path analysis results

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Hypotheses	Path	Path coefficient	T statistics	P values	Results		
H1a	Adventure -> Satisfaction	-0.014	0.344	0.365	Not supported		
H1b	Adventure -> Loyalty	0.017	0.292	0.385	Not supported		
H2a	Hedonism -> Satisfaction	0.07	2.126	0.017	Supported		
H2b	Hedonism -> Loyalty	0.011	0.364	0.358	Not supported		
НЗа	Utilitarianism -> Satisfaction	0.348	7.231	0.001	Supported		
H3b	Utilitarianism -> Loyalty	0.073	1.684	0.046	Supported		
H4a	Value Shopping -> Satisfaction	0.343	6.74	0.001	Supported		
H4b	Value Shopping -> Loyalty	0.354	7.683	0.001	Supported		
H5	Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0.434	9.744	0.001	Supported		

## Source: Author's calculation using SmartPLS4

Data presented in Table-4 provides insights into the connections among different factors affecting customer shopping behavior and their satisfaction and loyalty towards the retailer. These relationships are analyzed using path coefficients, T statistics, and p-values. For instance, H1a's path coefficient of -0.014 indicates a weak and insignificant link between customer adventure in shopping and consumer's satisfaction, supported by the non-significant T statistic (0.344) and p-value (0.365). Similarly, H1b reveals a non-significant connection between customer adventure and loyalty towards the retailer, with a path coefficient of 0.017, T statistic of 0.292, and p-value of 0.385.

Conversely, H2a, H3a, H4a, and H5 exhibit significant relationships. For example, H2a highlights a positive and significant correlation between customer hedonism in shopping and retailer satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.07, T statistic of 2.126, and p-value of 0.017. Similarly, H3a, H4a, and H5 demonstrate significant links between customer utilitarianism, value shopping, and their shopping-related satisfaction, as indicated by their respective path coefficients, T statistics, and p-values.

On the flip side, H2b, H3b, and H4b show non-significant relationships. For instance, H2b suggests that customer hedonism in shopping has no significant impact on loyalty towards the retailer, with a path coefficient of 0.011, T statistic of 0.364, and p-value of 0.358.

These findings shed light on the complex nature of consumer behavior and its implications for retailer-customer dynamics. While factors like hedonism, utilitarianism, and value shopping play crucial roles in enhancing satisfaction, the translation of these positive experiences into lasting loyalty depends on various contextual and situational factors. Understanding these nuances is crucial for retailers aiming to build enduring relationships with customers and foster long-term loyalty and advocacy.

### Conclusion

Based on the results presented above, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationships between various factors impacting customer shopping behavior, satisfaction, and loyalty towards retailers. Firstly, it's evident that customer adventure associated with shopping has a limited and non-significant effect on both satisfaction with the retailer and loyalty towards the retailer. This suggests that while novel or adventurous shopping experiences may attract customers, they may not necessarily translate into long-term satisfaction or loyalty.

On the other hand, the findings highlight the significance of hedonism and utilitarianism in shaping customer satisfaction with the retailer. Customer hedonism and utilitarianism demonstrate significant positive associations with retailer satisfaction, indicating that both the pleasure-seeking aspects and practical utility considerations strongly influence customer satisfaction levels. Additionally, the concept of value shopping shows a notable positive relationship with satisfaction associated with shopping, which in turn impacts satisfaction towards the retailer. This underscores the importance of customers perceiving value in their purchases to enhance overall satisfaction.

However, it's crucial to note that while these factors contribute to satisfaction, they do not significantly impact loyalty towards the retailer. This implies that while customers may be satisfied

with their shopping experiences based on hedonistic, utilitarian, or value-driven factors, their loyalty behaviors towards the retailer may be influenced by other considerations beyond satisfaction alone.

These conclusions emphasize the complex dynamics of consumer behavior and the interplay between different factors in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards retailers. Retailers should take into account not only providing enjoyable and utilitarian shopping experiences but also delivering value to customers to enhance satisfaction. Nonetheless, converting satisfaction into sustained loyalty requires a deeper understanding of additional contextual and situational factors that influence customer decision-making processes.

## **Implications**

The conclusions derived from the analysis of factors influencing customer shopping behavior, satisfaction, and loyalty towards retailers have significant implications for both managerial practices and theoretical frameworks in the retail industry. Managers can leverage these findings to enhance customer experiences by integrating hedonistic and utilitarian elements, effectively communicating value propositions, and adopting data-driven decision-making processes. Moreover, understanding that loyalty is a multifaceted construct influenced by various contextual factors beyond mere satisfaction can guide retailers in developing long-term relationship-building strategies.

From a theoretical perspective, these conclusions call for the integration of dynamic elements such as emotional attachment and brand affinity into existing models of consumer behavior and loyalty. The study underscores the need for a holistic approach to customer value creation, encompassing not only product attributes but also experiential and relational aspects. Furthermore, recognizing the interplay between different dimensions of customer value can lead to more comprehensive theoretical frameworks that capture the complexities of customer decision-making in retail environments. Overall, these implications highlight the evolving nature of retail dynamics and the importance of aligning managerial strategies with theoretical insights to drive customer satisfaction and loyalty effectively.

## Limitations and scope for future research

Like any other research this study is also having its own limitations. Future research in the field of consumer behavior and satisfaction in retailing should address several key areas to expand knowledge and enhance practical applications. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the dynamics and changes in customer behavior over time, allowing researchers to establish causal relationships and track trends. Additionally, incorporating qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups can offer a deeper understanding of customers' motivations, perceptions, and experiences in retail environments. Exploring the impact of multichannel and omnichannel experiences, especially in the context of digital retailing, is crucial to understanding how technological advancements influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. Investigating moderating variables such as demographics, shopping preferences, and brand perceptions can help identify specific factors that shape customer behavior and satisfaction. Cross-cultural comparisons can also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior by examining

cultural influences on shopping attitudes and preferences. Furthermore, future research should explore the role of sustainability practices, ethical considerations, and corporate social responsibility initiatives in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty, reflecting the evolving priorities of modern consumers. Integrating these research directions can lead to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of customer behavior and satisfaction in the dynamic landscape of retailing, benefiting both academia and industry practitioners.

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