

Article

The Influence of Mall Management Dimensions on Perceived Experience and Patronage Intentions in an Emerging Economy

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Abstract: A significant breakthrough in organised retail in an emerging economy such as Bangladesh, coupled with growing competition among mall managers, necessitates determination of the factors that contribute to a satisfactory shopping experience and long-term patronage intentions. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the factors influencing the overall experience of mall shoppers, which, in turn, shapes their patronage behaviour. For this purpose, 284 respondents were surveyed using the convenience sampling technique. Structural equation modelling was employed to test the hypothesised model. Among the three independent factors analysed, entertainment and accessibility wielded significant influence on shoppers' experience, while tenant mix exerted a statistically insignificant influence. Altogether, these three independent variables, along with shoppers' experience, accounted for 67% of the total variance in patronage. It was plausible to conclude that managing entertainment and accessibility can result in a more pleasant shopping experience. Being the first of its kind, this study investigated the combined impact of accessibility, tenant mix, and entertainment on the overall shopping experience that shapes patronage behaviour. This study's findings can help comprehend the dynamics of customer management in the retail market of an emerging economy.

Keywords: mall management dimensions; retailing; entertainment; accessibility; tenant mix; shoppers' experience; patronage intentions



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1. Introduction

The retail marketplace in Bangladesh has experienced revolutionary changes in the last few years. Organised retail has gradually evolved towards convenience-seeking consumers belonging to a new generation. As a result, malls and supermarkets are exposed to massive growth potential in Bangladesh.

The success story of Bangladesh is nothing short of a miracle. Within around five decades of its independence, Bangladesh managed to grow its GDP from a mere USD 8.752 billion to a whopping USD 323.06 billion [1]. Bangladesh's population of 165 million has a mean age of 28, with 62% of the people under the age of 35. By 2025, the country's middle and affluent class (MAC) population is predicted to reach 35 million [2]. As reported by [3], Bangladesh ranked second among the fastest-growing economies in South Asia. In the same vein, [4] predicts that the country will emerge as the 25th largest economy in the world by 2034. Even with the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Asian nation has shown remarkable resilience and is on track to become a middle-income nation within the next few years.

As a result of the improvement of these economic indices, Bangladeshi residents are claiming to have more disposable income, hence enhancing their purchasing power [5]. Today's shoppers anticipate a multiplicity of options in a hygienic, comfortable environment,

and are less interested in engaging in price haggling challenges: as a result, the demand for malls is experiencing a surge. Consequently, the intensity of rivalry among shopping malls is on the rise. Hence, shopping mall developers and retailers, as well as other stakeholders, need to understand customers' attitudes toward shopping malls.

It has been claimed that malls can set themselves apart by providing a unique and superior shopping experience [6,7]. According to [8], retailers should focus on shopping centre attributes, which are crucial to retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. Additionally, managers must comprehend the idea of "customer experience" to explore the reasons and dimensions that drive shoppers towards malls. Taking these factors into consideration, this research developed constructs associated with the shopping experience, and assessed the effects of the shopping experience shaping customers' patronage intentions.

According to the latest industry figures, the investment received by the organised retail sector of Bangladesh is robust. Retail players in Bangladesh are concerned with ensuring adequate footfall and a large volume of sales to justify their investments. Although a large number of Bangladeshi shoppers are still accustomed to shopping in disorganised retail outlets, the demand for organised retail shops is on the rise. Consequently, competition in the organised retail sector has intensified in recent times. Several studies indicate that the values perceived by the stores and the relationship maintained with the retailers [9], the degree of attachment developed with the community [10], and compliance with the social norms, are among the reasons why customers prefer traditional stores [11]. Cultural influence [12], poverty, and transportation issues [13] play key roles in influencing preferences. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered consumer purchasing patterns, necessitating the development of consumer-pleasing techniques [14]. Given this backdrop, mall management must concentrate on improving the shopping experience for customers, to attract them to malls. For a positive customer experience, management must be successful in pleasing consumers' sensory needs and serving their best interests, which, in turn, can lead to customers' long-term patronage. Therefore, it is imperative to identify what makes a shopping experience desirable.

While past researchers focused on identifying the antecedents to a satisfying shopping experience, only a few have investigated how shoppers' experience influences their patronage behaviour. Those studies have investigated how the shopping experience impacts outcome variables including emotional response, shopping response, and satisfaction [15,16]. However, no study has yet been conducted on the collective impact of accessibility, tenant mix and entertainment on the overall experience at the shopping mall, which in turn shapes patronage behaviour, and so, in this study, an effort was undertaken to investigate the matter further. Furthermore, this research was undertaken in the context of Bangladeshi mall shoppers, where adequate studies on the matter have yet to be conducted. The findings derived from this study can pave the way for understanding customer management dynamics in the retail market of an emerging economy.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Literature Review

Spacious floorage, an enormous range of merchandise, a large variety of speciality outlets, as well as recreational activities, are commonly mentioned as the factors that characterise malls [17]. Conventionally, mall developers have aimed to draw consumers to malls by luring them with a massive variety of stores and available merchandise which are accessible at a single specific location. Over the years, the concept of building and maintaining malls as one-stop convenience centres has grown to include a wide range of service outlets and entertainment venues, making them increasingly popular. Malls, which provide a unique type of shopping environment, have become a popular destination for those who want to engage not only in purchasing activities but also in gaining a holistic experience from their surroundings. Social activities such as going to the movies, dining out, gathering with friends or family, and self-care such as hair styling, all add value [18].

According to [19], a shopper entering a mall today is confounded as to whether they are in a store or a bright theme park. The malls' eye-catching architectural designs, retail offerings, dining options, and entertainment options elevate them to the status of tourist hotspots in their own right [20]. Malls are visited today for both utilitarian and recreational purposes. They provide shoppers with emotional solace and a respite from monotony and stress [21].

Management and consumer behaviour scholars [22–24], notably, have taken great lengths to explain how customer experiences gathered from malls are enhanced through a variety of dynamic exchanges and the effect of contact points in the sensory, emotional, social, and intellectual context. The shopping experience at a mall is influenced by a variety of characteristics such as product assortment, pricing and transactional convenience. All of these features, together with the mall's ambience, style, and design, work together to evoke a range of emotional responses from shoppers [25]. Researchers, however, have identified a number of other factors that influence a mall's success, including location, store atmosphere [25], size and services, and facilities [26].

According to the available literature that has theorised customer experience [27], the term "retail customer experience" can be defined as the collection of cognitive, emotional, sensory, and behavioural responses that occur throughout the purchasing process. This also includes an integrated series of collaborations with people, objects, processes and environment in retailing. Some scholars in the field of mall management, such as [15,28], have posited that the formation of satisfying experiences may play a critical role in enhancing the competitive mileage of shopping malls. To learn more about this, a thorough review of the literature indicated that research into the characteristics of the shopping experience that encourages shoppers to visit and stay at malls has been ongoing since the 1960s.

Retailing has developed beyond merely completing transactions, to facilitating experiences. Currently, shoppers view malls as destinations where they may have fun and fulfil their desire for positive experiences [29]. Consequently, shoppers have started perceiving these "places" as of higher value than simpler products [30]. As suggested by the studies, several dimensions should be considered to increase a mall's appeal and ameliorate the shopper experience [6,31,32]. As mall shopping can be viewed as a phenomenon of relative choice [6], mall attractiveness is critical in determining customers' intentions to revisit, facility evaluations, and word-of-mouth communications [33]. Having said that, patronage motivations have been one of the most widely explored areas of retailing [34]. Only a handful of experimental studies have explored the consumers' motivational aspects and attempted to explain their underlying attraction toward shopping malls [35,36].

Initially, the argument was that some shoppers were driven towards malls solely for economic motives while others made their way towards malls due to emotional motives; however, shoppers with multiple purposes had a blend of both of these motives [36]. For instance, [35] asserted that convenience, the mall's availability of a certain store, requested services, and prices, were all critical factors in shortlisting malls.

In the research conducted by [37], it was found that consumers in Chili were drawn to malls for purchase intentions, while consumers residing in the U.S.A. visited malls for myriad reasons, mostly centred on entertainment. The authors of [15] established that the environment inside the mall considerably influenced the intention to stay and further patronage motives towards the mall. Research conducted by other scholars has highlighted the significance of the shopping centre image as a critical basis for consumer patronage decisions [38].

The authors of [39] highlighted the impacts of attributes on shopping centres' patronage such as travel components comprising comfort, transport mode, effort, tension, distance, and value, in addition to the impact of malls' internal features on patronage. According to [40], little attention has been paid as to how shoppers view malls as places of consumption rather than places of shopping—in short, the mall experience. Through this research, an effort has been undertaken to identify the contributing factors to an enjoyable shopping experience.

2.2. Hypothesis Development

The present study is based on three independent variables (IV), namely, accessibility, tenant mix, and entertainment; one mediating variable (MV) named shoppers' experience; and one dependent variable (DV), i.e., patronage. A thorough review of the extant literature led to the selection of these study variables. A brief description of these variables, followed by the development of hypotheses, is provided below.

2.2.1. Accessibility

According to [41], accessibility refers to the ease enjoyed by a mall visitor in terms of entering and exiting a shopping mall. Accessibility is then classified into macro- and micro-accessibility. The concerns of macro-accessibility include conditions of the access road to the shopping centre and the vicinity of the shopping centre to the customer's workplace or residence. In contrast, micro-accessibility indicates the ease of navigation and the availability of ample parking facilities within the mall [42]. In research conducted by [35], it was put forward that among the primary reasons for prioritising malls were convenience, the existence of specific stores inside the mall, quality services, and prices. The authors of [43], in a bid to define one-stop shopping, stated that almost all the abstracts of shopping needs could be catered to in one particular centre, all at once. In another study on the determinants of consumers' purchasing behaviour, transportation and location-related factors were found to have the greatest impact on mall shoppers' purchase decisions [44]. Since consumers currently are more interested in taking multi-purpose visits to shopping malls [45], it is more likely that they will favour centres that facilitate one-stop solutions for shoppers. According to [46], a shopping mall should be conveniently accessible because the layout of a store influences a customer's satisfaction with his/her shopping experience, which, in turn, affects the amount of time they spend in the store and their desire to return in the future. It can, thus, be posited that:

Hypothesis 1. *Accessibility exerts a positive impact on shoppers' experience.*

2.2.2. Tenant Mix

Tenant mix is another factor that holds pertinence regarding the studies on shopping malls. The authors of [47], in their study conducted in the U.K., explored the management of tenant mix in new shopping centres. They investigated numerous occupancy issues encountered by shopping centre owners/managers in terms of tenant management, and discovered that developing a strong, ideal, and consistent tenant mix was critical to a shopping centre's success. Malls with a greater number of and larger centrepieces were deemed to be more suitable locations for speciality chains of small stores. In a study regarding new shopping malls conducted shortly after they were launched, ref. [48] claimed that it was the selection of stores and the optimal retail mix that played a vital role in ensuring patronage was influenced by an effective image.

In retail, the merchandise mix (assortment) is considered a crucial strategic component of the retail mix that greatly adds to the retailer's (corporate) brand [49]. In the context of a mall, the tenant mix helps define the mall's overall brand and has an impact on customer satisfaction. Previous researchers have recognised the need for finding an appropriate tenant mix [50], as well as the importance of examining the connection between tenants and mall managers [51].

Following that, a study conducted by [52] on how to create trust with retail tenants, shed insight on how mall managers might enhance relations with their tenants. Additionally, research on shopping mall tenants revealed that the quality of service (from mall management) had a favourable impact on their brand attitude, and also that brands played a variety of roles in the relationship between tenants and mall management [52]. Under such a condition, it is reasonable to assume that tenant mix positively influences shoppers' experience.

Hypothesis 2. *Tenant mix is positively related to shoppers' experience.*

2.2.3. Entertainment

The author of [53], in his study, regarded various means of entertainment such as food courts, movie theatres, children's play areas and relaxation corners as integral parts of any mall. The "entertainment" factor examined by [54] revealed that malls are perceived as a destination by consumers not only for shopping but also for other activities such as entertainment.

The authors of [37] further corroborated these findings by revealing that today's mall patrons tended to be more leisure and entertainment-driven than shoppers from the early 1990s. It is the mall environment that stimulates the shoppers' desire to spend time and motivates re-patronage towards the mall. In an experimental study, ref. [55] developed a thorough taxonomy of entertainment in a shopping mall, distinguishing between permanent and temporary entertainment activities. According to their findings, permanent entertainment facilities had a direct effect on shoppers' satisfaction. Thus, recreation or entertainment can be considered an essential deliverable in shopping. The authors of [56] examined the shopping experience provided by malls explicitly, and discovered that an entertainment-driven shopping experience increased shoppers' likelihood of store patronage. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 3. *Entertainment has a positive impact on shoppers' experience.*

2.2.4. Shoppers' Experience

Extensive research has been undertaken in the past that emphasised the importance of the shopping experience, however, the majority of these studies were conducted in the context of retail stores, rather than the organised setup of shopping malls. The implication of experiential aspects regarding shopping was highlighted by [57] when they enhanced the usual approach of information processing with an amalgamation of symbolic, hedonic, and aesthetic dispositions of consumption. Furthermore, the study discovered that when it comes to explaining shoppers' value judgments of a retail store, the perceived shopping experience was deemed more essential than the price and quality views of merchandise [58].

To ensure a long-term relationship, [59] noted that retailing has shifted its focus from transactions to creating unique shopping experiences. The authors of [60] predicted that experiences would be a modern source of creating value for firms and a major decision-making factor in the development of marketing strategy.

Recent advancements in the field of experiential marketing and retailing have facilitated a widespread knowledge of the impact of the diverse elements of the retail/mall environment on the senses of customers and, consequently, their patronage. Holistically developed customer experience may aid retail organisations in creating value for customers in a more effective manner than meticulously defined relations [61]. Additionally, ref. [62] argued that enjoyable shopping experiences based on aesthetic appeal may enhance retailers' potential revenue by encouraging customers to spend more time in the store. Not only by improving the practical design of products/services, but also by facilitating consistent, emotive, and engaging cognitive situations, meticulously crafted experiences can boost customer loyalty [63]. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that:

Hypothesis 4. *Shoppers' experience has a positive impact on mall patronage.*

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

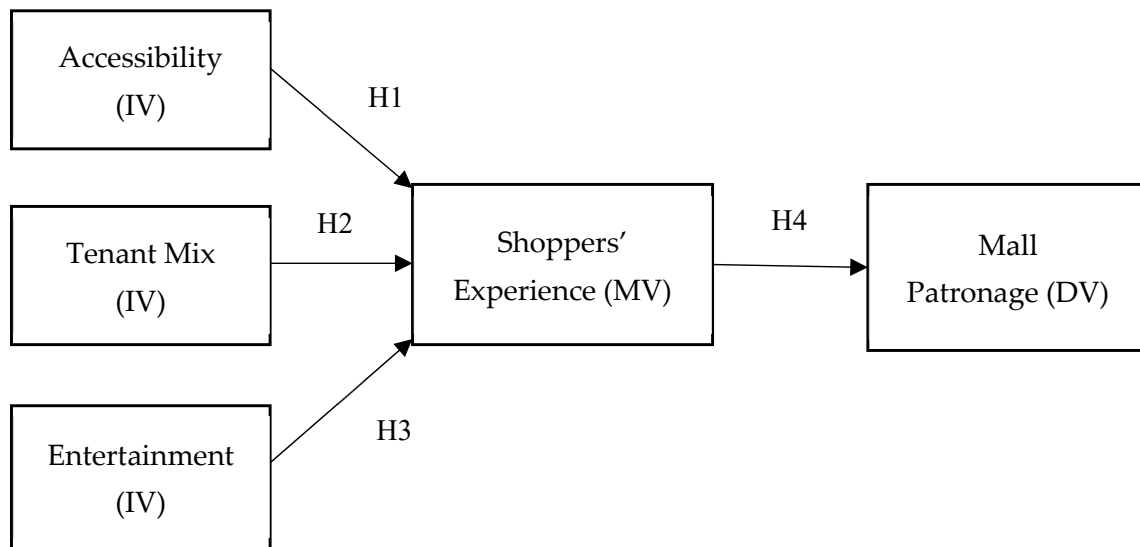


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, several scholarly articles relevant to the study were reviewed to comprehend the problem and design a structured questionnaire to address those issues. Then, responses were collected in the second phase. Additionally, the study used a deductive research approach for hypothesis development.

3.1. Development of Research Instruments

A comprehensive review of the relevant literature yielded a tentative list of items influencing shoppers' experience, which, in turn, lead to patronage. After much scrutiny, thirty-three measurement items were finally identified for the questionnaire survey. These measurement items were used to assess the impact of accessibility, tenant mix, and entertainment on shoppers' experience, which, in turn, shapes their patronage behaviour. Therefore, the study was based on three independent variables, namely, accessibility, tenant mix, and entertainment; one mediating variable called shoppers' experience; and one dependent variable, i.e., patronage.

The measurement items developed for this study were based on the extant literature [39,64–68]. To examine the hypothesised model, these thirty-three items were structured to access the respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements representing the variables. The responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, in which 5 implied strong agreement and 1 implied strong disagreement [69]. The questionnaire also covered the demographic aspects of the respondents along with their shopping behaviour.

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

According to [70,71], the number of the sample should be at least ten times the number of measurement items for conducting factor analysis. Another study, [72], stressed the importance of a large sample size, of at least 200, for producing statistically significant results. In accordance with the above recommended guidelines and taking into account the number of measurement items of this study, the target number of respondents was decided to be at least 240. The research population consisted of all the people residing as well as visiting the malls of Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. A mall intercept data collection technique was used because it was simpler and faster to collect mall-related data. To ensure tenant mix and size uniformity, some popular malls in Dhaka city were selected. A total of 450 survey questionnaires were distributed across the target population using the convenience sampling technique. Finally, 284 of the respondents returned the questionnaires, yielding a response rate of about 63%.

3.3. Research Application Used

For data input and statistical analyses, version 21.0 of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used. Descriptive analysis of the demographic variables as well as reliability analysis of the factors studied were conducted using this statistical software. To test the hypotheses developed in this study, structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed with the help of AMOS version 21.0. SEM is primarily built for explaining theories in an exploratory study. It enables researchers to set up and verify hypothesised relations among theoretical constructs as well as between the constructs and their observed indicators in a simple and reliable manner [71]. This was why it was selected for this research.

4. Results

Prior to using various analytical techniques, data screening was conducted to identify a few missing values in the survey response. The respondents' demographic profile is highlighted at the beginning of the results section. The following sections give descriptive and reliability analyses of the study's variables. Finally, a full-fledged structural model was constructed to examine the causal relationship between the variables in this hypothesised model.

4.1. Analysis of Demographic Variables

The demographic profile of the sample studied is portrayed in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents.

| Demographic Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 174 | 61.27 |
| Female | 110 | 38.73 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |
| Age | | |
| 16–20 | 35 | 12.32 |
| 21–30 | 183 | 64.44 |
| 31–40 | 45 | 15.85 |
| 41–50 | 16 | 5.63 |
| Above 50 | 5 | 1.76 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |
| Academic Qualification | | |
| Secondary School Certificate (SSC) | 2 | 0.70 |
| Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) | 71 | 25.00 |
| Graduate | 124 | 43.66 |
| Post Graduate | 80 | 28.17 |
| Others | 7 | 2.47 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |
| Occupation | | |
| Student | 159 | 55.99 |
| Homemaker | 16 | 5.63 |
| Businessperson/Self-employed | 9 | 3.17 |
| Private Service | 89 | 31.34 |
| Govt. Service | 5 | 1.76 |
| Others | 6 | 2.11 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |

Table 1. Cont.

| Demographic Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Monthly Family Income (BDT) | | |
| Less than 25,000 | 37 | 13.03 |
| 25,001–50,000 | 90 | 31.69 |
| 50,001–75,000 | 70 | 24.65 |
| 75,001–100,000 | 44 | 15.49 |
| Above 100,000 | 43 | 15.14 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |
| Frequency of Shopping Mall Visit | | |
| Once a month | 149 | 52.47 |
| Once every two weeks | 43 | 15.14 |
| Once a week | 92 | 32.39 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |
| Time Spent on Each Visit (in hours) | | |
| Less than 1 | 33 | 11.62 |
| 1–2 | 154 | 54.23 |
| More than 2 | 97 | 34.15 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |
| Primary Reason for Visiting | | |
| Entertainment | 22 | 7.75 |
| Shopping | 182 | 64.08 |
| Have a good time out with friends/families | 55 | 19.37 |
| Explore new product | 25 | 8.80 |
| Total | 284 | 100.00 |

An analysis of the demographic variables revealed that the sample was dominated by male respondents (61.3%). In terms of age group, a substantial majority of approximately 64.4% fell between the ages of 21 and 30 years. In terms of academic qualifications, 43.7% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while 28.2% held a master's degree. With respect to their income level, more than 56% of the respondents reported a monthly family income in the range of BDT 25,001–75,000.

Regarding the frequency of mall visits, most of the respondents (52.5%) reported that they visited once a month. When asked how long they spent in the mall, around 54% stated that they spent between one and two hours. About 64% of respondents said their primary reason for visiting a mall was to shop, while only 7.7% mentioned that their primary focus was entertainment. Around 19% said they visited malls primarily to spend time with friends and family.

4.2. Reliability and Discriminant Validity

4.2.1. Reliability

The construct-wise value of Cronbach's Alpha is reported in Table 2. In the current study, the overall value of Cronbach's Alpha was found as 0.912.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics.

| Constructs | Accessibility | Tenant Mix | Entertainment | Shoppers' Experience | Patronage | Overall |
|------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | 0.776 | 0.798 | 0.825 | 0.835 | 0.794 | 0.912 |
| No. of Items | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 24 |

The value of Cronbach’s alpha ranges from 0 to 1. If the value is 0.7 or above, it is considered adequate for measuring the internal consistency of an instrument [73]. Depending on the value of Cronbach’s Alpha, it can be concluded whether the constructs used in the model are reliable.

4.2.2. Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity was also checked. If the value of the correlation among the independent variables is higher than the threshold, one can conclude that there is a lack of discriminant validity [74]. A threshold value of 0.90 was proposed by [75]. However, some other scholars [76] recommended a threshold of 0.85. The correlations among manifest variables were checked against AMOS output (Figure 2). The values were as follows: the correlation between accessibility (ACC) and tenant mix (TEN) was 55% (0.55); the correlation between tenant mix (TEN) and entertainment (ENT) was 38% (0.38); the correlation between accessibility (ACC) and entertainment (ENT) was 41% (0.41). As it was observed that all the values were below the cut-off value, the model passed the discriminant validity test.

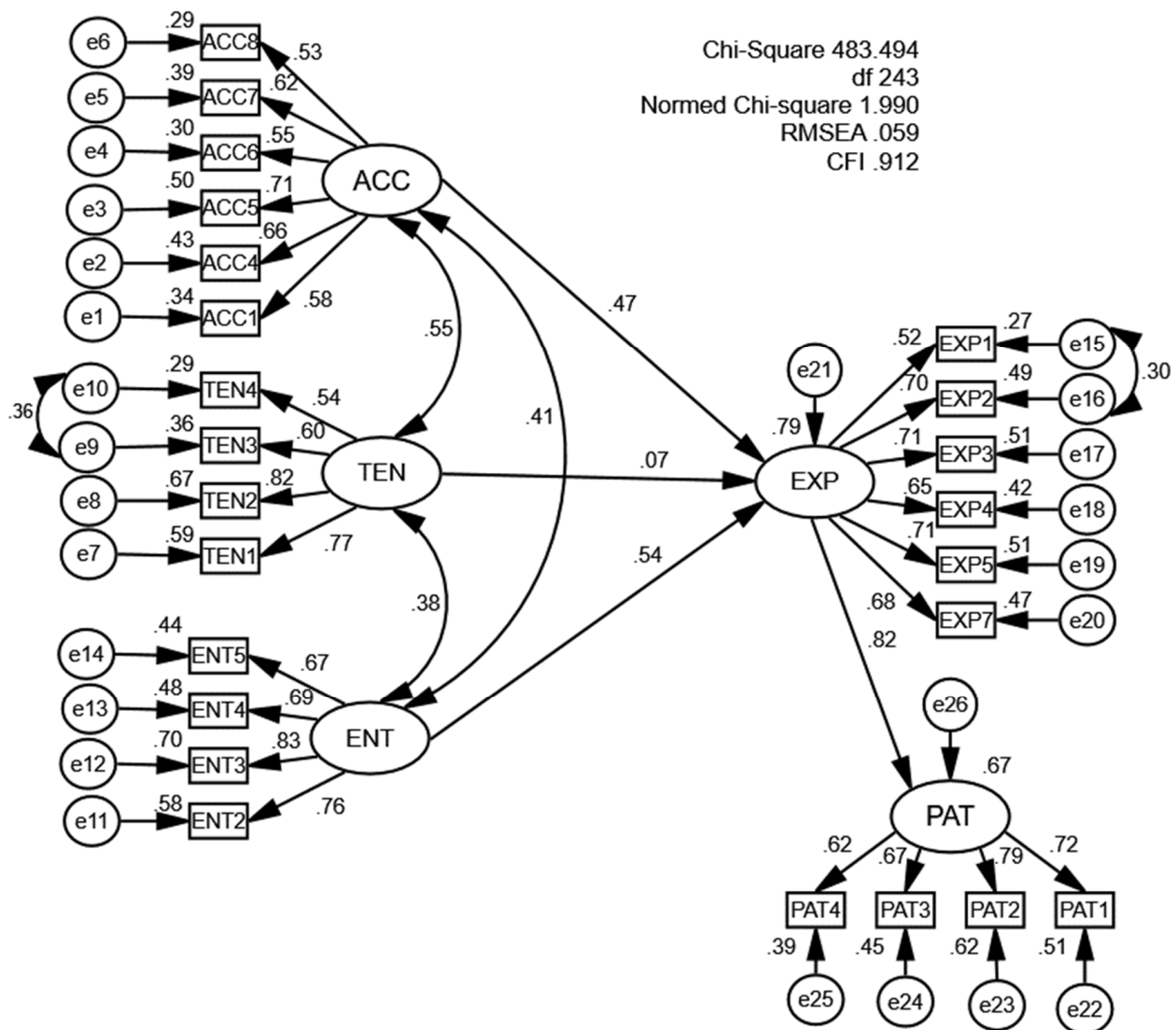


Figure 2. Full-fledged structural model.

4.3. Normality Testing

In SEM, according to [76], it is required that each of the individual variables be normally distributed. The authors of [77] advocated that skewness and kurtosis values of greater than 3.0 and 10.0, respectively, would indicate the contravention of multivariate normality. Normality testing of all items was performed accordingly and no value of skewness or kurtosis was found to cross the aforementioned threshold, which indicated that the variables were normally distributed.

4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The structural equation model (SEM) is a widely used technique for determining the causal relationship among the primary constructs of a hypothesised model [76]. It consists of two processes: first, validation of the measurement model via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and secondly, validation of the structural model. Additionally, ref. [76] stated that the measurement model demonstrates the observed indicators' applicability as a measurement instrument for a latent variable. CFA is used to determine the applicability of a measurement model. Three fit indices are used to determine the model's fit to the data: the normed chi-square, the root mean square error (RMSEA), and the comparative fit index (CFI). The general guideline proposes the following cut-off values for these indices to obtain an acceptable model fit: the normalised chi-square and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be less than 5 and 0.08, respectively, while the CFI should be greater than 0.9 [78,79].

Table 3 presents the CFAs for the five constructs, i.e., accessibility, tenant mix, entertainment, shoppers' experience, and patronage. As seen in Table 3, all five factors or constructs had acceptable construct validity, with all three indices' cut-off points adequately satisfied.

Table 3. Results of CFAs of the five factors.

| Goodness-of-Fit Statistics | Normed Chi-Square | RMSEA | CFI |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Accessibility (ACC) | 1.528 | 0.043 | 0.956 |
| Tenant mix (TEN) | 1.253 | 0.030 | 0.992 |
| Entertainment (ENT) | 1.104 | 0.019 | 0.999 |
| Shoppers' experience (EXP) | 2.277 | 0.067 | 0.977 |
| Patronage (PAT) | 1.479 | 0.041 | 0.997 |
| Threshold values for the fit indices | <5.0 | <0.08 | >0.90 |

4.5. Structural Equation Modelling

In this study, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to examine the causal relationship between the major constructs of a hypothesised model [76]. A causal model was built to evaluate the structural linkages between the three constructs or factors examined in this study, and is illustrated in Figure 2.

To assess the individual item reliability of the proposed model using SEM, the loadings (or simple correlations) of the measures (items) with their respective constructs were checked. The authors of [73] proposed that items with unusually low loadings should be carefully examined because they would contribute little explanatory power to the model while weakening (and so biasing) the estimates of the parameters connecting constructs. In general, it is considered that items with loadings of less than 0.4 (a threshold widely used for factor analysis results) or 0.5 should be phased out [80]. Items with a factor loading of 0.5 or greater were accepted in this study. Hence, nine items were eliminated from further study. The full-fledged structural model consisting of twenty-four items is shown in Figure 2.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the structural model fitted the sample data adequately, as indicated by three fit indices, with the normed chi-square and RMSEA values lying

considerably below 5.0 and 0.08, respectively, and the CFI value exceeding 0.90. Additionally, the constructs demonstrated strong evidence of convergent validity, as all loadings exceeded the 0.50 threshold. It was also observed that shoppers' experience (EXP) stood out as the mediating variable, through which accessibility (ACC), tenant mix (TEN) and entertainment (ENT) applied indirect effects on patronage (PAT). In this model, three path coefficients, namely, ACC → EXP, ENT → EXP and EXP → PAT, proved to be statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ (Table 4). Thus, it is suggested that in this study, that hypotheses H1 (accessibility exerts a positive impact on shoppers' experience.), H3 (entertainment has a positive impact on shoppers' experience), and H4 (shoppers' experience has a positive impact on patronage) are supported. However, the second hypothesis, H2 (tenant mix is positively related to shoppers' experience) was not validated by the model.

Table 4. Significance of the path coefficients.

| | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | <i>p</i> | Result |
|-----------|----------|-------|-------|----------|---------------|
| ACC → EXP | 0.605 | 0.105 | 5.758 | 0.001 | Supported |
| TEN → EXP | 0.069 | 0.064 | 1.090 | 0.276 | Not Supported |
| ENT → EXP | 0.416 | 0.053 | 7.870 | 0.001 | Supported |
| EXP → PAT | 0.773 | 0.083 | 9.359 | 0.001 | Supported |

The model revealed (Figure 2) that among three manifest variables, entertainment (ENT) wielded the greatest influence (0.54) on shoppers' experience. The second highest influence was accessibility, i.e., ACC (0.47), which was followed by tenant mix (TEN) with a very minimum influence (0.07). These three manifest variables collectively accounted for 79% of the variance in shoppers' experiences. The AMOS output also disclosed that shoppers' experience (EXP), the mediating variable, had a very high influence (0.82) on patronage. Collectively, these three manifest variables, coupled with the consumer experience, accounted for 67% of the variance in patronage.

The indirect effects of manifest variables on patronage (shoppers' experience) were also analysed through the mediating variable (Figure 2). It was inferred from the model that through shoppers' experience (EXP), accessibility (ACC), and tenant mix (TEN), and entertainment (ENT) held indirect effects of about 39% ($0.47 \times 0.82 = 0.385$), 6% ($0.07 \times 0.82 = 0.057$), and 44 % ($0.54 \times 0.82 = 0.443$), respectively, on patronage.

5. Discussion and Implications for Managers

Customer shopping behaviours have shifted dramatically. Shoppers are not only utilitarian; their feelings, individual personalities, and purchase motivations are all carefully studied as elements impacting shopping behaviour and store/mall patronage [81]. Modern customers are on a constant lookout for improved convenience, efficiency, and a vast array of products—in brief, a one-stop experience. Traditional retail settings have transformed from utilitarian consumption to fostering a holistic perspective. Although some may argue that experience is subjective, retailers still need to strive to develop a rational framework to address the evolving needs of customers.

A summary of the hypotheses testing is reported in Table 5. The outcomes implied that mall visitors' experiences should be enhanced by the incorporation of an effectively created mix of accessibility and entertainment. Currently, customers are surrounded by a number of choices as more malls are developed. They are, nevertheless, more likely to select malls that complement their preferences in terms of attractiveness, product variety, and store diversity.

A critical objective for owners and mall management should be to consider the variables that contribute to the overall shopping experience by developing holistic experiences for their customers. In this way, the tenants will also gain an opportunity to increase their opportunities to proliferate revenues.

Table 5. Summary of hypotheses testing.

| Hypothesis Statement | Result |
|--|----------|
| H1. <i>Accessibility exerts a positive impact on shoppers' experience.</i> | Accepted |
| H2. <i>Tenant mix is positively related to shoppers' experience.</i> | Rejected |
| H3. <i>Entertainment has a positive impact on shoppers' experience.</i> | Accepted |
| H4. <i>Shoppers' experience has a positive impact on mall patronage.</i> | Accepted |

The mall management can focus on persistently designing the buying environment to influence special emotional effects in shoppers, which, in turn, increases their likelihood of purchasing [82]. On this note, the current study demonstrated that the mall's entertainment experience plays a vital role in shaping positive consumer experiences. This finding, in line with other studies [55,66,83], suggests that mall management needs to work on improving entertainment facilities, which will lead to enhanced customer satisfaction and patronage intentions. These entertainment items may include a movie theatre, special fairs and festivals, and also amusement parks and gaming zones.

Secondly, our study proposed that the accessibility to and inside the malls had a significant impact on the minds of customers in terms of shaping their experience. These findings were consistent with previous studies [41,44] that found a significant positive relation between accessibility and shopping experience, and suggest that shopping centres should be accessible with only reasonable effort.

This is particularly pivotal in the context of Dhaka City—a bustling city that is jam-packed with traffic and possesses a shortage of transportation would appreciate the shopping mall located in the vicinity of the customers' workplaces and homes. The parking lots and road conditions should also be favourable for customers. The outcomes of the current study were also congruent with the shopping preference theory developed by [84] which identified the factors that influence shopping preferences and showed how these factors may influence actual shopping behaviour.

For nearly one and a half-decades, shoppers in this city have been accustomed to modern format retailing and shopping malls. Over time, their expectations of organised retail formats have evolved from basic to advanced. These shoppers will lose interest if shopping malls cater to them solely based on convenience and a diverse tenant mix, as these are now deemed par for the course. However, it is not reasonable to expect that shoppers will remain indifferent to their absence. These factors can be regarded as hygiene factors that are associated with an availing of the service of a mall; hence, the absence of these might lead to dissonance, but the presence will not ensure motivation. Therefore, mall managers should rightly identify what motivates shoppers further.

6. Conclusions

A substantial advancement in organised retail in Bangladesh, coupled with growing rivalry, has necessitated the identification of factors that lead to a positive shopping experience and long-lasting patronage intention. Hence, this study aimed to explore the impact of accessibility, tenant mix, and entertainment on the shoppers' experience, which, in turn, shapes their patronage behaviour. The results obtained from structural equation modelling indicated that entertainment had the highest influence on shoppers' experience, followed by accessibility. Tenant mix, however, was found to have no statistically significant impact. The mediating variable, shoppers' experience, was also found to have a positive and significant influence on patronage intention. Based on these findings, it was plausible to conclude that by controlling entertainment and accessibility, mall managers in emerging economies can facilitate a more enjoyable shopping experience and, consequently, increase shoppers' patronage intentions.

This study contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, it investigated the collective influence of accessibility, tenant mix, and entertainment on the overall shopping

experience at the mall which, in turn, shapes customers' patronage intention. No prior studies have investigated the combined effect of these variables. Second, the study was undertaken in an emerging economy, such as Bangladesh, where a significant lacuna of research still exists.

7. Limitations and Scope for Future Research

7.1. Limitations

The data that were collected for the study were limited to the capital city Dhaka, only. The factors could have been validated and proven more reliable if the study included other metropolitan areas of the country as well. Another constraint was that the survey's geographic scope was limited.

Although the study was conducted incorporating mall-specific inventory rather than a general inventory of various items, the scales of the study used items that were adapted from multifarious international research. As a result, all of the mentioned scales might not properly reflect the consumers of Bangladesh. Due to these limitations, the findings of this study may lack generalisability.

7.2. Future Research Scope

The findings of this study may serve as a basis for additional research into the retail market dynamics in Bangladesh, as well as for cross-country comparisons with other emerging economies in South Asia.

The role of price vis-a-vis the tenant mix can further be explored in subsequent studies. This study revealed that tenant mix had no discernible impact on creating a positive shopping experience. Researchers can examine the same hypothesis in neighbouring countries for further verification.

To conduct a more in-depth analysis of customers' perceptions of mall shopping, future research can conduct longitudinal surveys over different time frames. Additionally, the discrepancy between customer expectations and the services supplied might greatly drive future studies. Moreover, the direct influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable can be checked. Simultaneously, additional behavioural variables can be assessed, allowing for the development of a model of mall patronage in future research. Researchers are, therefore, encouraged to conduct additional tests of the derived factors and hypothesised relationships.

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