



Assessing the Level of Retail Therapy among Retail Shoppers in Kerala

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Abstract

Shopping is an integral part of our regular day to day life. Many customers take part in shopping and buying as a way to repair their negative feelings, that notion normally referred to as retail therapy. Retail Therapy is a strategic effort to improve the mood or make the person feel better as a result of shopping. This study was conducted among 200 retail shoppers from Kerala. The study intends to assess the level of retail therapy undergone by retail shoppers. The overall retail therapy was assessed based on the level of therapeutic shopping motivations, the level of positive mood reinforcement as a result of therapeutic shopping, the level of negative mood reduction as a result of therapeutic shopping, and the level of the therapeutic shopping outcomes. The results of the study indicated an average level of retail therapy among Kerala retail shoppers. The level of different aspects of retail therapy has been measured and suggestions are put forward based on the findings.

Key Words: Retail Therapy, Retail shopping, therapeutic shopping

Introduction

Retail therapy is referred to as the way consumers attain happiness from a state of negative emotion as a result of modern life. The customers do shopping for achieving happiness or reducing the negative mood or feeling. It is found from the recent research that modern consumers use shopping as a therapy for favorable mood enhancement. Retail therapy occurs when a person feels a lack, a need, or a desire that they cannot satisfy with a primary fulfillment so that they seek and utilise an alternative means of fulfillment, which is shopping, as because of this nature, retail therapy is referred as a compensatory consumption. (Tanase, 2014). In compensatory consumption, consumers shop when they feel unfavorable of negative moods such



as stress, frustration, depression, anxiety, etc. Besides, during the economic downturns, the consumers who usually undergo compensatory consumption tend to purchase lower priced and lower quality products. (Tanase, 2014).“Treat Yourself”, the well-known expression has gained acceptance in recent years, and it formed a tendency of using shopping for therapeutic purposes. Many customers view self-treating as a cathartic, albeit, and impulsive activity which is often used to excuse indulgent behaviour. Shopping is considering as an effort to improve one’s well-being sense is mainly called by Retail Therapy. (Tanase, 2014), (Atalay & Meloy, 2011)

Literature Review

According to self-regulation theory, individuals are motivated in managing their multiple standards such as goals, standards, and ideas that may be competing or complementary in nature in any point of time which the individuals are drowning or repelled from a feedback loop (Baumeister& Heatherton, 1996; Baumeister&Vohs, 2004). Self-regulation theory has four categories of self-regulation goals such as the attempt of the individuals to control their emotions, impulses thoughts, and performances. (Baumeister, Muraven, & Tice, 2000). In the attempt to achieve these multiple self-regulation goals, the goals form a queue and the goal which is there in the first position in the queue is actively pursued at the present moment. The priorities change with the fluctuating circumstances and people shift the focus of the behaviour constantly (Carver and Scheier, 2002)

Retail Therapy

Retail Therapy is a strategic effort to improve the mood or make the person feel better later to immediate shopping. (Rath, 2010). There are two different approaches to retail therapy. The first approach is compensatory consumption, that described retail therapy as a condition of an individual when he/she feels a desire, need, or lack which they are cannot be able to satisfy with the primary fulfillment so that they use shopping or purchase behaviour as an alternative (Woodruffe-Burton, Eccless, & Elliott, 1998). The second approach is the mood- alleviates behaviour where shopping plays a role in the mood improvement of a consumer and this provides a distinction between the experience of retail therapy and the experience of compulsive



buying (Kacen, 1998).The researchers in this area found that the importance of understanding the retail therapy concept in a much deeper sense.(Melindra & Aprianingsih, 2018)

Therapeutic motivation

Motivation is the driving force within individuals to specific actions such as buying and using. Therapeutic motivation is the driving mode or urges within the individuals to go shopping for alleviating the negative mood. Negative mood includes stress, dejection, or irritation. Consumers want to reduce these feelings to reach the desired end-state or consumer goal. The primary purpose of buying becomes the reduction of negative mood and the primary function or utility of the product becomes secondary. Shoppers in negative mood purchase clothing with more frequency compared to others because of therapeutic reasons (Kacen, 1998). The sensory stimulations such as light, sound, smell, etc. emanating from the consumption environment function therapeutically (Luomala, 2002) (Kang and Johnson (2011).

Therapeutic value

Consumers believe that the purchasing of the product would help them to attain a value-based goal and because of that value holds an important role to play in consumption activities. People believe that the purchase behaviour would give value such as the reduction of the negative mood as a result of shopping activity, shopping is an escape from loneliness, self-indulgence, etc. The reasons behind people indulge in retail therapy can be categorised into seven. They are an escape, positive distraction, activation, indulgence, the elevation of self-esteem, sense of control, and social connection (Kang, 2011). Consumer's core value has a key influence on the cognitive process and choice behaviour in the decision making process and overall consumer behaviour. Therapeutic shopping outcomes are of two types, positive mood reinforcement, and negative mood reduction. (Kang and Johnson, 2011)

Therapeutic shopping outcome

Therapeutic shopping outcome means the after effect feeling felt by the shopper as a result of shopping. The consumer felt outcomes of retail therapy. As a result of shopping, the consumer can relieve the bad mood, feel better, enhancing the mood, etc. The level of the outcome as a result of undergoing shopping may differ for different consumers (Kang and Johnson, 2011)



Research Methodology

The study aims at assessing the level of retail therapy among the retail shoppers in Kerala in terms of therapeutic shopping motivations, level of positive mood reinforcement as a result of therapeutic shopping, level of negative mood reduction as a result of therapeutic shopping, and therapeutic shopping outcomes. The samples of the study are the retail shoppers in the state of Kerala. The sample size of the study was 200. Simple random sampling was used as the sampling method. A survey using a systematically designed questionnaire was used for collecting the data. A well-structured questionnaire with Likert-scale had been distributed by the researcher randomly and collected the filled questionnaire. The data collection sources are primary and secondary. The study was descriptive in nature.

Objectives

Primary Objective

1. To assess the level of retail therapy among retail shoppers in Kerala

Secondary Objectives

1. To measure the therapeutic shopping motivations
2. To measure the level of positive mood reinforcement as a result of therapeutic shopping
3. To measure the level of negative mood reduction as a result of therapeutic shopping
4. To measure the therapeutic shopping outcomes

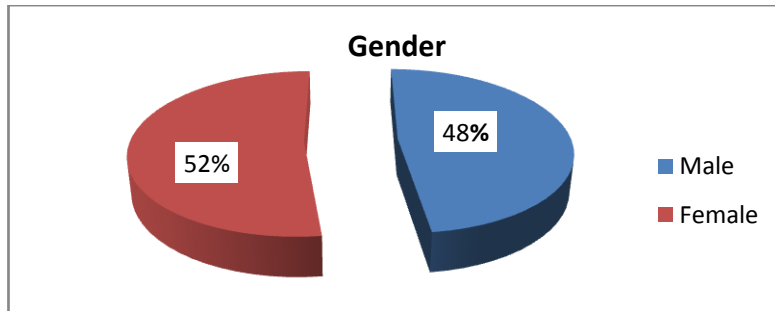
Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1- Respondents Profile- Gender wise

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender			
Male	96	48	100
Female	104	52	

Source: Primary Data

Figure 1- Respondents Profile- Gender wise



Source: Primary Data

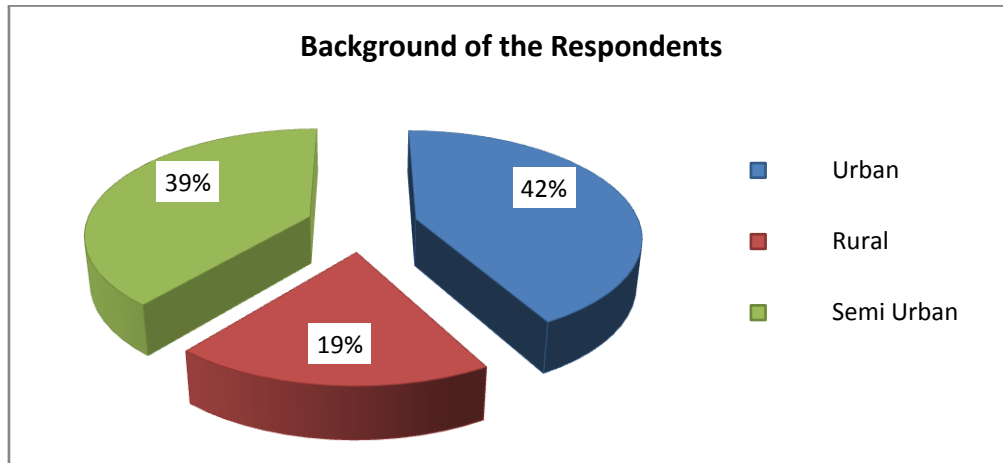
Table 1 and Figure 1 describe the gender-wise presentation of the respondents. It is clear that 52% of the respondents are male and 48% of the respondents are Female

Table 2- Respondents Profile- Background

Description	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Resident Status			
Urban	84	42	100
Rural	38	19	
Semi Urban	78	32	

Source: Primary Data

Figure 2- Respondents Profile- Background



Source: Primary Data

Table 2 and Figure 2 describe the background wise representation of the respondents. It is clear that 42 % of the respondents are from an urban background, 39% from semi-urban and 19% are from a rural background

Table 3- Level of retail therapy factors

Retail Therapy Factors	Mean Value
Therapeutic Shopping Motivations	2.89
Positive Mood Reinforcement	3.66
Negative Mood Reduction	2.88
Therapeutic Shopping Outcome	3.28
Overall Retail Therapy	3.18

Figure 3- Retail Therapy Factors

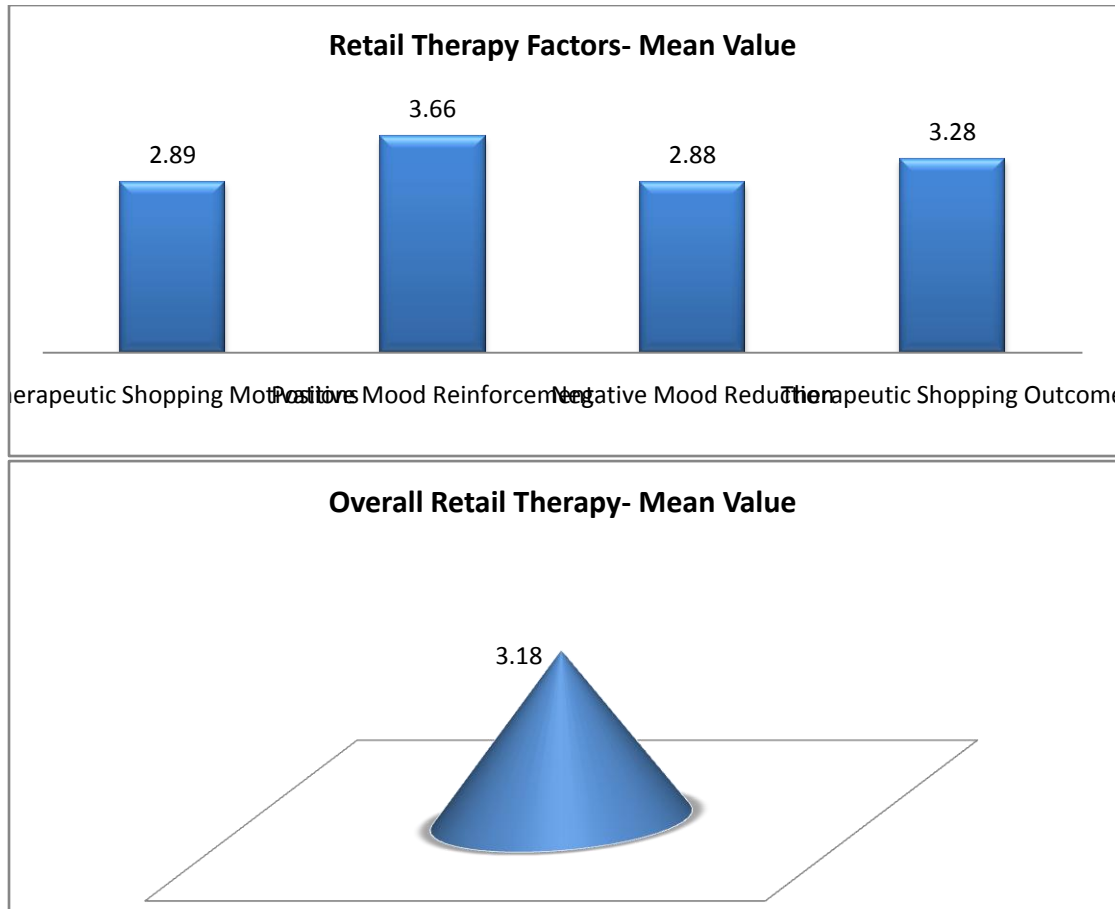


Table 3 and Figure 3 represents the level of Retail Therapy factors and level of overall retail therapy in terms of its mean value. The mean value of Therapeutic shopping motivation was 2.89, the level of positive mood reinforcement was 3.66, the level of negative mood reinforcement was 2.88 and the therapeutic shopping outcome was 3.28. The mean value of overall retail therapy was 3.18.



Findings and Discussion

The level of overall retail therapy undergone by the retail shoppers in Kerala is at a moderate level. The overall level of retail therapy includes the level of therapeutic shopping motivations, the level of positive mood reinforcement as a result of therapeutic shopping, the level of negative mood reduction as a result of therapeutic shopping, and the level of the therapeutic shopping outcomes. The level of therapeutic shopping motivation among the retail shoppers in Kerala is at a low to moderate level. Therapeutic shopping motivation means the therapeutic intention of shoppers in doing retail shopping. It includes the intention of the shoppers to choose shopping to relieve the stress, to cheer up, to feel better, to compensate for a bad day, to be relaxed, and to feel good among themselves. All these intentions are found to be on an average level. The retail shoppers in Kerala are having a low to moderate level of intention to go shopping with a therapeutic intention. The therapeutic shopping value as positive mood reinforcement was found to be at a moderate level. The therapeutic shopping value as positive mood reinforcement includes the opinion of the shoppers about the positive feeling given by shopping exercise, the sense of achievement given by shopping, the visual stimulation as a result of shopping, the knowledge about the new styles given by shopping, the enjoyment the consumer gets from the pleasant environment, the positive feeling about themselves as a result of finding a great deal in shopping. The results indicate that Kerala retail consumers have a moderate level of opinion about these factors. The Kerala retail shoppers feel an average level of positive mood reinforcement as a value outcome of shopping. The level of therapeutic shopping value as negative mood reduction is found to be at a moderate to low level. The level of therapeutic shopping value as negative mood reduction includes the opinion about the consumers on the outcome of retail therapy as the escape from the loneliness, removal from the stressful environment personally, take the mind off from the things which are bothering the consumer personally, filling the empty feeling, as a means of control things. It is found that Kerala consumers experience a moderate to a low level of negative mood reduction as a result of shopping. The level of Therapeutic Shopping Outcome is moderate to high among the Kerala retail shoppers. The therapeutic shopping outcome includes the opinion of the consumers on the



ability of shopping experience they undergone to relieve the bad mood, feeling better after the shopping trip, feeling good after the shopping trip, the ability of the things brought in relieving the bad mood, and the remembrance of the shopping experience. It is found from the study that Kerala retail shoppers on an overall basis having a moderate to a high level of opinion about the therapeutic outcome as a result of shopping.

Conclusion

The study intends to assess the level of retail therapy undergone by retail shoppers in Kerala. The overall retail therapy was assessed based on the level of therapeutic shopping motivations, the level of positive mood reinforcement as a result of therapeutic shopping, the level of negative mood reduction as a result of therapeutic shopping, and the level of the therapeutic shopping outcomes. It is found from the study that the overall retail therapy experience by Kerala retail shoppers is at a moderate level. The retail shoppers are having a low to moderate level of intention to go shopping with a therapeutic intention. The retail shoppers feel an average level of positive mood reinforcement as a valuable outcome of shopping and consumers experience a moderate to a low level of negative mood reduction as a result of shopping. It is found from the study that Kerala retail shoppers on an overall basis having a moderate to a high level of opinion about the therapeutic outcome as a result of shopping. Retail marketers can plan their marketing strategy by more concentrating on retail therapy aspects such as therapeutic shopping motivation, positive mood reinforcement, negative mood reduction, and therapeutic shopping outcomes. By doing so, retail marketers can have a much more competitive advantage and sales prospects in the retail market.

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