# CHAPTER NUMBER- SIX

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

# CHAPTER SIX
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## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

### 6.0: PROLOGUE:

The retailers strive to ensure that their retail store is appealing to their target markets in this ferociously competitive retail market. As retailers are finding it increasingly difficult to create a differential advantage on the basis of merchandise alone, the retail store itself plays an important role for market differentiation. This empirical research study was undertaken to identify and understand the linkages between shopping orientations and selected store attributes viz.,  patronage behaviour of selected shoppers' from amongst the selected four cities of Gujarat State like Vadodara, Surat, Ahmedabad and Rajkot Cities respectively.

In this research study, an attempt was made to study and examine individual retail shoppers' behaviour, and examine differences in the shopping orientation groups, relative to their patronage preferences; frequency of patronage; attitude toward retail stores, and demographic characteristics respectively. It has covered conceptual and empirical aspects viz., retail shoppers' behaviour; shopping orientations; patronage preferences of retail shoppers; frequency of patronage, and attitude toward stores.

The success of a retailer rests upon their ability to attract and gain footfalls by understanding the retail shoppers' orientations. In this context, it was decided to study the linkages between shopping orientations and store attributes on patronage behaviour of selected retail shoppers in the selected cities of Gujarat State. Keeping in mind the importance and requirement of retail store attributes, the researcher had conducted this research study, focusing on retail shoppers' who had visited the retail stores for shopping various products of his or her own choice.

### 6.1: A BRIEF ABOUT ORGANIZATION OF THE Ph.D THESIS:

The entire Ph. D thesis has been divided into six chapters, in which first two chapters are based on theoretical & conceptual understanding comprising of an in-depth review of literature on the chosen topic of this research study. The remaining four chapters from chapter number three to chapter number six have dealt with the conduct of an empirical research study.

**The titles of each of the six chapters of the Ph. D thesis are as follows.**

Chapter One: An Overview of the Retail Industry of India and Worldwide

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter Four: Data Analysis & Interpretations

Chapter Five: Findings and Implications of the Research Study

Chapter Six: Conclusions, Recommendations & Suggestions of the Research Study

**6.1.1: A Brief about Chapterisation Scheme of the Ph. D Thesis:**

An attempt has been made to offer a concise review of the conceptual part covered in the first three chapters as follows.

**6.1.1.1: Chapter One: An Overview of the Retail Industry of India and Worldwide:**

The chapter number one has offered a brief review of retail sector of India, Gujarat State and worldwide. It has covered conceptual areas viz.,  the conceptual definitions of retailing; the historical and evolutionary landmarks of retail; growth of retail sector in India; organized versus unorganized retail; retail formats in India; the growth trajectory of retail in India, and Global retail industry respectively. The researcher had also reviewed the business environment of retail sector considering the emerging retail formats and the growth drivers of organized retail in India. It has also provided  a comprehensive picture of retail industry of India and the World. It has offerred bird-eye view of retail industry at the Global level, along with its Indian context. It had covered diverse areas concerning to retail viz., the evolution of word retail, growth, characteristics, classification of retail , review of the retail industry of India as well as Government of India's policies & its impact, overall trends, key problems, future prospects and challenges respectively. The researcher has also presented SWOC Analysis of the retail industry of India.

**6.1.1.2: Chapter Two: Review of Literature:**

The chapter number two had dealt with the review of literature viz., attributes and choice of retail formats; shopping orientations; retail shoppers' patronage  concerning retail orientation based shopper typology with a conceptual model of the research study followed in the conduct of this research study with an objective of browsing, classifying, compiling and critical examination of  earlier Ph.D theses; Dissertations as well as research articles; research papers; empirical studies; research reports and also results of empirical field surveys that were conducted by other researchers' in India and Worldwide. The researcher has made use of Reference Books and publication of the proceedings of the Seminars, Conferences and Workshops relating to chosen area of the research study.

The researcher has put efforts to identify the gaps in the review of literature to determine the objectives of this research study.

It has covered the different areas viz., Attributes and choice of retail formats; shopping orientations; retail shoppers' patronage; orientation-based shopper typology, and conceptual framework of shopping orientations and retail store attributes.

### 6.1.1.4: Chapter Three: Research Methodology:

The Chapter number three has been entitled as the, 'Research Methodology' which had described about the research methodology applied by the researcher in conduct of this research study. It comprises viz., Rationale of the research study, Scope and Coverage of the research study,Proposed Structural Model of the research study, Objectives of the research study, Research questions of the study, Hypotheses of the research study, Research Design, Research Methodology aspects viz., Sources of data and the Sampling decisions. It has also covered the review of literature pertaining to the drafting of the structured questionnaire put to use for the collection of the primary data, assessment of normality of the distribution of the data along with the test of reliability and validity of the research instrument that is structured questionnaire uses to collect primary data. It had also included statistical tools and techniques applied for data analysis and interpretations as well as limitations of the research study respectively.

### 6.1.1.5: Chapter Four: Data Analysis & Interpretations:

The chapter number Four has provided the results of the data analysis and interpretations of the primary data that were collected using structured non-disguised questionnaire from amongst retail shoppers in the retail stores located in the selected cities of the Gujarat State. The primary data pertaining to the profile of selected shoppers; ratio of awareness and their visit to retail stores; shoppers' preference for shopping from different retail stores  for shopping or buying the different product categories; experiences of the selected shoppers' in terms of their orientations for shopping too have been analysed. Further, the data pertaining to selected demographic characteristics viz., retail shoppers involvement in daily activities and ownership and usage of selected lifestyle products was analysed and its results have been presented in this chapter so as to share meaningful results from it.

### 6.1.1.6: Chapter Five: Findings and Implications of the Research Study:

In the chapter number five, the researcher had presented the findings of applications of Chi-Square Test of shopping orientations and retail store attributes. The various managerial implications have also been drawn based on the application of Chi-Square Test.

Further, the findings on the research study based on application of One-Way ANOVA and Factor Analysis; summary of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis [CFA] using AMOS, and Market Performance Analysis of the selected shoppers' satisfaction is also presented in this chapter. The researcher had also attempted to present overall implications based on the results and findings of this research study.

### 6.1.1.7: Chapter Six: Conclusions, Recommendations & Suggestions of the Research Study:

This chapter has offered conclusions, recommendations and suggestions that have emerged out of conduct of this research study.

It has suggested significant areas for improving retail activities in the Gujarat State.

In this chapter the key results of the research study viz., summary of findings based on Factor Analysis; application of Structural Equation Model [SEM], and Structural Equation Model [SEM] Using Path Analysis considering shopping orientations and retail store attributes were presented. Further, the researcher had offered city-wise summary of findings of retail store attributes in it. In the end, the overall recommendations of the research study; suggestion, conclusions as well as limitations of the research study, and directions for future research study have been offered in it. The researcher had also given valuable recommendations and Bibliography to cite the references used and sources of secondary data and other needed information i.e. 'Bibliography' and 'Webliography' respectively.

### 6.2: A BRIEF ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY:

In this study an attempt was made to show and examine retail shoppers' behaviour, and also their differences in the shopping orientations relative to their patronage preferences; frequency of patronage; attitude toward retail stores, and demographic characteristics.

The findings of this research study would enable the retailers to redifine their retail store attributes that can influence the retail shoppers' patronage intentions.

An attempt has been made to develop an understanding on selected retail shoppers' expectations and experiences on retail store attributes in the selected retail stores in selected cities of Gujarat State. The researcher had assessed overall awareness, expectations, satisfaction or dissatisfaction of selected retail shoppers who had visited and bought products of their choices from various retail stores in the Gujarat State.

In this research study, the primary data were collected to measure and evaluate the retail shoppers' responses pertaining to selected retail store attributes considering their shopping orientations in the selected four cities of Gujarat State viz., Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Surat and Rajkot Cities respectively.

## 6.3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

An empirical research study based on descriptive research design was conducted and the primary data were collected using structured questionnaire from 1500 retail shoppers who were conveniently drawn using  non-probability sampling design from different retail stores located in the selected cities of the Gujarat State viz; 280 retail shoppers from Vadodara, 470 from Surat City, 475 from Ahmedabad and 275 retail shoppers were drawn from the Rajkot City respectively.  The primary data were collected using personal interview schedules and the structured non disguised questionnaires were adminisistered by visiting the selected retail stores in the selected cities of Gujarat State using mall intercept method owing to the convenience factor . The reliability test was administered and the Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.700 to 0.870 which showed internal reliability of the scale. The data analysis had been carried out using SPSS 15.0 and AMOS 18.0. The researchers had also applied Confirmatory Factor Analysis [CFA] and the Path Analysis Model to study and examine the linkages amongst shopping orientations, store attributes and the patronage behaviour of selected retail shoppers.


## 6.4: A BRIEF ABOUT THE STRUCTURED NON-DISGUISED QUESTIONNAIRE:

This  research study was conducted using self-administered structured non-disguised questionnaire for the collection of the primary data from the selected shoppers' who had actually visited and boughtvarious products from selected retail stores located in the selected cities viz.,  Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot in the State of Gujarat in the year 2015. Out of the total number of 1600 duly filled up structured questionnaires that were collected by the researcher, after editing, finally it was decided to consider total number of 1500 qualifying questionnaires for the purpose of data analysis and interpretations. It was aimed at measuring selected retail shoppers' awareness and shopping orientations; their perceived importance on selected factors to assess his or her overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the selected retail store attributes.

The first part had dealt with the collection of primary data & information on retail shoppers' sources of retail store, their frequency of visit to retail store; their purchases/shopping amongst various product categories; their preferred shopping companion, and willingness to visit in the retail store.

The second part of structured non disguised questionnaire had covered questions to measure the selected retail shoppers' choice of a retail store and its third part had listed out items to measure selected retail shoppers' 'Expectations' and 'Experiences' on selected store attributes.

The fourth part of the structured non disguised questionnaire had considered questions to check internal validity and reliability of the structured non disguised questionnaire.

Separate questions were asked to selected retail shoppers to measure his or her overall expectations and experiences on selected criteria concerning store attributes of the retail store. The fifth part of the structured questionnaire had dealt with questions aimed at collection of information on loyalty of retail shoppers.

The sixth part of the structured questionnaire was used to gather information and data on demographic and socio-economic aspects of the selected retail shoppers in the selected cities of the Gujarat State.

The structured questionnaire consisted of neutrally worded questions and the retail shoppers were asked to rate the store attributes' toward retail stores using the likert scale. A thorough and comprehensive list of 65 items were laid down on 5 point scale (Expectation defined as : 1= Least Important; 2=Unimportant; 3=Somewhat Important; 4=Important; 5=Most Important), and Actual Experience was defined as: 1 = Highly Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Somewhat Satisfied / Can't Say / Undecided; 4=Satisfied and 5= Highly Satisfied).

**6.4.1: Assessing the Normality of the Distribution of the Data, Reliability and Validity:**

The researcher had put efforts to test the normality of the collected primary data using Histogram, Stem and Leaf Plot, Box Plot, Normal Q-Q Plot and Detruded Normal Q-Q Plot respectively. The reliability of structured questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha which ranged from 0.700 to 0.870 and showed internal reliability of the scale.

The criterion wise validity and overall means score too had been calculated. The researcher has measured convergent validity by comparing mean scores of scale with other measures of the same construct. The review of literature was primarily considered in the drafting of the questions and items that were included in the structured questionnaire.

**6.5: PROFILE OF SELECTED RETAIL SHOPPERS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:**

The researcher had provided profile of retail shoppers' considering their selected demographic variables viz., Age, Educational Qualifications, Marital Status, and Monthly Income respectively.

Overall, 56 per cent of the shoppers' were found as belonging to the age group of 16 to 40 years, followed by 30 per cent of them were belonging to the age group of 41 to 59 years, and the remaining 14 per cent were aged above 60 years. 70 percent male and 30 percent female retail shoppers' were found in this research study; 67 per cent retail shoppers were found as unmarried, and majority of them (62 percent) were living in Joint Family. Nearly, 32 per cent of retail shoppers were found as belonging to occupation category of "Self Employed" followed by 27 per cent of retail shoppers were having "Service Occupation", 20 per cent as "Professional", 11 percent as "Housewives", and remaining 10 percent were found as "Businessman/Women" respectively. 40 per cent of retail shoppers were having "Post-Graduation qualifications" s their educational qualifications followed by 32 per cent were graduates.

42 percent retail shoppers' were having annual family income of Rs 4 to 8 lakhs and 32 percent of them had annual income of less than 4 lakhs, and the rest 36 per cent were having income of more than Rs.8 lakhs Per Annum. In terms of the retail shoppers' having number of dependent family members, 35 per cent had 3 to 5 member and 32 per cent had no dependent family members whereas 26 percent had 1 to 2 dependent member in their family.

40 percent of retail shoppers were found as having dual earning family member and 32 per cent was having single earning member in his/her family. The daily chores of the retail shoppers' provided mixed results.

**6.6: KEY RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:**

The key results of the research study had revealed as follows:

**Awareness and Actual Visit of the Retail Store:**

In terms of the ratio of awareness of the retail store and the actual visit of that particular retail store, the In-Orbit Mall had the highest ratio of 0.94, followed by Vadodara Central (0.91) and Centre Square (0.89) in the Vadodara City.

In case of the Rajkot City, the Big-Bazaar had the highest level of awareness of 0.84, followed by D-Mart (0.83) and Grand Central Mall (0.81) respectively.

In the Ahmedabad City , the Ahmedabad Central Mall had the highest ratio of 0.96, followed by Iscon Mega Mall (0.94) and Big-Bazaar (0.90) respectively.

**Frequency of Visit to Retail Store:**

Considering the retail shoppers' frequency of visit to the retail store, overall results had shown that 40 percent retail shoppers' had visited retail store once in a week, 35 per cent had visited once in fortnight, and 25 percent shoppers had visited retail store once in a month, and once in two months respectively.

**Retail Shoppers' Most Preferred Companion for Shopping:**

In case of the Vadodara City, the most preferred companion of retail shoppers' for shopping was found as friends. The family members, colleagues and retail shoppers' relatives too were found as the most preferred companion in case of shoppers' of Rajkot City, whereas retail shoppers' of the Ahmedabad City had prefered to shop alone.

**Retail Shoppers' Sources of Information for the Retail Store:**

In case of the retail shoppers' preferred source of information for shopping the advertisements in newspapers, leaflets in Newspapers and the advertisements in local Television Channels whereas, the hoardings displayed in the city also was found as important sources of information in Surat and Rajkot Cities respectively.

**Retail Shoppers' Preferences for Product Categories:**

In case of the selected retail shoppers' shopping preferences from different retail stores from amongst the the different product categories revealed that in case of Vadodara City, the shopping mall emerged as the most preferred retail store for shoppers of Bags and Luggage, Footwear and Small Kitchen Appliances. The convenience store was found as most preferred for buying Stationery, Instant food, Bakery Items, Staples and Health and Fitness Products respectively. The supermarkets too were found as most preferred for buying Home Ware and Cleaning Products, Stationery, Beverages, Fragrance and Cosmetics and Bed and Bath items respectively.

The Hypermarkets were found as preferred for shopping of product catgories viz., Hair Care / Skin Care / Personal Health Hygiene/ Baby Care, Bakery Items/Staples, Vegetables and fruits respectively. The Speciality stores are preferred for shopping of IT & Mobile Accessories, Pharmacy/Medicines Jewellery Articles, Health and Fitness Products and Apparels and Accessories respectively.

**Actual Shopping of Product Categories:**

In the Surat City, the most preferred product categories that were bought by retail shoppers from shopping malls were viz., Footwear, Bags and Luggage, Small Kitchen Appliances and apparels and Accessories. In case of Convenience Stores, retail shoppers' had mostly preferred to buy Fruits, Instant Food and Sports product categories respectively .

In case of Supermarkets and Departmental stores, the product cateories that were most preferred viz., Beverages, Groceries, Home Ware And Cleaning, Stationery, Apparels and Accessories and Bakery Items respectively. In case of Hypermarkets in the Surat City retail shoppers' had purchased Home Ware & Cleaning, Hair Care / Skin Care / Personal Health Hygiene / Baby Care, and Bed and Bath linen respectively. In case of the specialty store, the retail shoppers' preferred to buy Pharmacy/Medicines, IT & Mobile Accessories and Footwear respectively.

In case of the Rajkot City, the most preferred product categories for shopping from shopping malls were viz., Sports items, IT & Mobile Accessories, Fruits and Toys and Games respectively. In case of Convenience Stores, retail shoppers' had preferred to buy viz., Fruits, Health & Fitness and Pharmacy/Medicines whereas, in case of Supermarkets and Departmental stores the retail shoppers' had also purchased viz., Beverages, Grocery Items, Home Ware & Cleaning products. The retail shoppers' had purchased viz., Apparels & Accessories, Home Ware & Cleaning, Hair Care / Skin Care / Personal Health Hygiene / Baby Care from Hypermarkets in the Rajkot City. The retail shoppers' also purchased Pharmacy/Medicines, Jewellery and IT & Mobile Accessories and furniture from the Specialty Stores in the Rajkot City.

In case of the Ahmedabad City, the product categories that were purchased most by shoppers' from Shopping Malls were viz., Footwear, Small/Kitchen Appliances and Fragrances & Cosmetics. In case of Convenience Stores shoppers' had bought viz., Instant Food, Fruits, Vegetables and Home ware and Cleaning Products whereas, they had preferred to buy Apparels & Accessories, Beverages, Stationery items and Bed and Bath linen from Supermarkets and Departmental Stores respectively.

The retail shoppers' had preferred to buy products viz., Small/Kitchen Appliances, Home Ware & Cleaning, Jewellery from Hypermarkets in the Ahmedabad City. The retail shoppers' had also bought Pharmacy/Medicines, Health & Fitness and Bags and Luggage from the Specialty Stores in the Ahmedabad City.

**Retail Shoppers' Shopping Orientations:**

Considering the retail shoppers' shopping orientation regarding their Ways of Shopping; Planning for shopping; fashion trends they follow, and their actual shopping experiences, the key results of data analysis summarised as follows:

In case of Vadodara City, 14.8 percent of retail shoppers' had preferred to shop where the Shopping is full of joy & fun, whereas 15.8 percent of them had disliked the presence of crowds while shopping, 22.7 percent had preferred buying from a particular retail store, 20.8 percent of them had preferred to buy products from nearby located retail stores, whereas17.7 percent purchased due to lower price offers, and 16.5 percent had bought due to offer of special prices.

In case of the Surat City, 31.6 percent of retail shoppers' had preferred to buy in a retail store where the sales people added enjoyment to them for shopping, whereas 33 percent retail shoppers' did not like to spend too much time to plan for shopping, and 32.7 percent retail shoppers' felt that Shopping wass full of joy & fun, whereas 31.8 percent of them had disliked the presence of crowds while shopping, and 31.7 percent of them had expressed opined that Shopping had provided them social experiences followed by 30.9 percent of them had done shopping due to special prices.

In case of the Rajkot City, 24.4 percent of the retail shoppers' had preferred to shop in a retail store where the sales people had added enjoyment to their shopping, 20.4 percent of them did not like to spend too much time to plan for shopping as well as, 20.5 percent retail shoppers' had dislike the presence of crowds while shopping, and 22.1 percent of them had belief that shopping provides social experiences, whereas 19.6 percent had bought due to special prices.

In case of the Ahmedabad City, 33.9 percent retail shoppers' did not like to spend too much time to plan for shopping, as well as 31.1 percent of them believed that shopping was full of joy & fun. 32 percent of them disliked the presence of crowds while shopping, and 33.4 percent shoppers had a belief that shopping provides social experiences, and 39.5 percent retail shoppers' believed that shopping makes them feel better, and 33 percent retail shoppers' had bought due to special prices.

**Retail Shoppers' Planning Activities Before and During Shopping Trips:**

Considering the experiences of the selected retail shoppers' relating to their pre-planning activities before and during shopping trips; it mainly revealed following:

In case the Vadodara City, 19.8 percent retail shoppers' had preferred checking the price tag before buying a particular product, 20.4 percent had touched and inspeedct the products before buying, whereas 21.9 percent retail of them had compared different product before buying a particular product, and 25.9 percent retail shoppers' had prepared a shopping list before actual shopping.

In the Surat Ctiy, 28.2 percent retail shoppers' had preferred to check price tag before buying a particular product, 28.3 percent had touched and inspected the product before buying, 28.8 percent had sought help from sales staff , and 35 percent had prepared a shopping list before actual shopping. 36.2 percent of them had belief that the retail stores offered them better services, 31.6 of them had compared different product before buying a particular product, and 32.6 percent had preferred spending less time while shopping.

In case of Rajkot City, 18.4 percent retail shoppers' had preferred to seek help from sales staff while buying a product, 21.3 percent had compared different product before buying a particular product, 22.7 percent had preferred to spend less time while shopping, and 23.1 percent retail shoppers had believed that the retail store offers better services to them.

In case of Ahmedabad City, 36.1 percent retail shoppers' had touched and inspected the products before shopping, 36.4 percent had checked price tag before buying a particular product, 34.3 percent had sought help from sales staff while buying a product, and 37.5 percent had preferred to make an unplanned visit to retail stores followed by 31.3 percent of them had ended up shopping more products than actually needed.

**Retail Shoppers' Experience Related to the Fashion Trends:**

In terms of the experiences of the selected retail shoppers relating to the fashion trends, the retail shoppers' did shopping to keep up themseleves with the latest fashion trends, to get new ideas on fashion, to stay informed with the latest Brands etc.

In case of the Vadodara City, 18.7 percent retail shoppers' believed had that shopping helped them to choose from a wide variety of products, 20.8 percent had liked to visit new retail stores, 20.5 percent bought branded products only, and 21.3 percent of them had believed that shopping helped them to get new ideas.

In case of the Surat City, 31.3 percent retail shoppers' had believed that shopping helped them to choose from a wide variety of products, 28.4 percent liked to visit new retail stores, and 29.9 percent retail shoppers' had preferred branded products only.

In the Rajkot City, 18.3 percent retail shoppers' believed that shopping helped them to choose from a wide variety of products, 15.2 percent liked to visit new retail stores, and 14.8 percent had purchased branded products only.

In case of Ahmedabad City, 37.5 percent shoppers' had preferred visiting the retail stores to know the latest trends of fashion, 36.2 percent had preferred to get new ideas, whereas 35.6 percent like to visit new retail stores, and 34.8 percent had bought branded products only.

**Shoppers' Actual Experiences vis-a-vis Shoppers' Shopping Orientations:**

Considering the actual experiences of the shoppers' with reference to their shopping orientations it revealed the following.

In case of the Vadodara City 20.1 percent retail shoppers had preferred to discuss with his/her family members about products to be purchased, 19.5 percent had shared bad shopping experiences with others, 19.2 percent had shared information about various sales promotion schemes with them.

In case of Surat City, 31 percent retail shoppers' had discussed with their family members about products to be purchased, and 31.8 percent had discussed about products in the retail store, whereas, 31.7 percent retail shoppers' had preferred to even share their bad shopping experiences with others.

In case of Rajkot City, 22.7 percent shoppers' had preferred to discuss with others about products in the retail store, 18.9 percent retail shoppers had shared his or her bad shopping experiences, and 20.1 percent had also shared information about various sales promotion schemes with others.

In case of Ahmedabad City, 31.5 percent shoppers' had preferred to discuss with family members about products to be purchased, 29.9 percent had shared bad shopping experiences, and 30.6 percent had also shared information about various sales promotion schemes with others.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Accessibility of Retail Store' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

The location of the retail store that is the location of retail store nearby his or her residence and office was most preferred by shoppers' of Surat, Ahmedabad and Vadodara Cities.

The "Convenience" attribute of retail store to visit the retail store at any time by shoppers' was also most preferred by the shoppers' of Ahmedabad and Surat Cities, whereas, the "Information" desire for shopping was found as most important for shoppers' of Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara Cities, and . the "Opening Hours" of the retail store too was very important for shoppers' of Surat and Ahmedabad Cities respectively.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Sales Promotion Schemes Offered' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

Considering the important store Atrribute of "Sales Promotion Schemes" offered to the shoppers' by the retailers to attract and incentivise them to buy products from the retail store, the retail shoppers' in the Vadodara, Rajkot and Ahmedabad Cities preferred the "Products that were offered with lower prices which reduced their burden of payment".

The "Discount Schemes" offered was found as more important to them' in the Vadodara, Surat and Rajkot Cities, whereas, the influence of "Colour" and "Symbols" used in promotions and advertisements that catches the attention of retail shoppers' was observed more by shoppers' of Vadodara, Surat and Ahmedabad Cities. The "Liking and Preference to buy" the products that were sold on discounted rates and promotional schemes was also found as most important for the retail shoppers' of Ahmedabad, Surat and Vadodara Cities respectively.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Instittional Factors' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

The "Institutional Factors" of the retail store served as a facilitating factor for drawing more number of retail shoppers' to the retail store. The overall image of the retail store, the other people visiting the retail store, the reputation of the retail store also was found as playing a pivotal role in building image of the retail store in the minds of the actual shoppers' as well as amongst the potential retail shoppers'. In case of item the "Retail Store wishes Birthday by sending personalized messages" was liked by the retail shoppers' Surat, Rajkot and Ahmedabad Cities respectively.

The efforts made by retailers to stay in touch with retail shoppers by maintaining database and using it as a tool of Customer Relationship Management [CRM] by "Sending Wishes for Birthdays and regular updates from the retail store on various products via e-mail" was found as most important by majority of retail shoppers in each of the selected cities of Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot and Ahmedabad Cities of Gujarat State. The "Customised offers and deals" offered by the retail stores for maintaining cordial relations with retail shoppers was found as positively influenced the majority of retail shoppers , and the factor of crowding was found as playing an important role in attracting and drawing retail shoppers to the retail store.

The retail shoppers' of the Rajkot City sought to prefer to shop in retail stores where there was availability of large number of shoppers' which gave them the feeling of warmth and security.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Behaviour of the Sales Staff' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

 In terms of the retail shoppers' responses to the "Behaviour of the Sales Personnel" store attribute of the retail store, the item of "Knowledge of the Sales Staff regarding the products and their availability" was valued most by the shoppers of Surat and Ahmedabad Cities.

The item of "Knowledge of the Sales Staff on Price of various products" were found as preferred by the shoppers of Vadodara, Surat and Ahmedabad Cities.

The "Knowledge of the Sales staff on display of various products" item was found as having influence on the retail shoppers' in the Surat and Ahmedabad Cities. The item of "Sales personnel ability to respond to queries' of retail shoppers" and "Sales personnel ability to empathise with retail shoppers' needs and problems" was found as an important item of consideration for the retail shoppers' of Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Surat Cities while choosing the retail store. The shoppers of Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Surat Cities had preferred the "Courtesy and Politeness" of the sales staff while shopping in the retail store. The properly trained staff of the retail store located in Vadodara, Surat and Ahmedabad Cities were found to be a determining factor for attracting and retaining the retail shoppers' in the retail store.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Store Atmosphere' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

The retailers' considered the "Atmosphere" as an important retail store attribute which induces and motivate retail shoppers. The item of "Feeling of Pleasure ,Comfort and sense of security"; "Comfort due to light Music played in the retail store" was given preference by retail shoppers' in the Vadodara, Surat and Rajkot Cities. The item of "Sufficient lighting" in the retail store; "Proper Air-Conditioning" and "Proper housekeeping" too was found as an important item to the retail shoppers for shopping in Surat and Ahmedabad Cities which gave them ease while shopping in the retail store. The retail shoppers of the Ahmedabad and Surat Cities was found as motivated to shop considering the "Pleasant Environment" of the retail store. The shoppers' of Vadodara and Surat Cities felt motivated for shopping due to the pleasant and fresh smells inside the retail store.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Physical Facilities' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

The "Physical Facilities" in the retail store too emerged as one of the most important attribute of the retail store as it included all the infrastructural facilities of the retail store and it was related with the utilitarian aspect of shopping.

In this retail criterion, the key item "Exchange and Refund offers on products sold" by the retail stores and "Availability of Trolley or Basket" for shopping and carrying products was found as important by the shoppers' in the Surat and Ahmedabad Cities.

The retail shoppers' of the Vadodara, Surat and Ahmedabad Cities had shown their agreement with the item that the retail store easily accepts the "Debit Card" and /or "Credit Card". The item of "Discounts and special offers on Membership cards" too were found as most important to retail shoppers in the Surat City.

Further, in case of the Surat City retail shoppers had considered certain important physical facilities viz.,; regular discounts on privilege cards; provision of after sales service; escalator and elevator faculty; clean and well maintained wash rooms; availability of resting area , and provision for the physically challenged people respectively. The retail shoppers' of Ahmedabad City had also given importance to the item of resting area and provision for the physically challenged people. In case of the other physical facilities of the retail store viz; spacious dressing rooms; adequate arrangements of the security of vehicles in parking area'; sufficient and ample parking space, and the availability of restaurants' and other recreational facilities in the vicinity of the retail store in case of the Surat City continued to maintain at the first place.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Range of Products' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

Considering the "Range of Products" offered by the retail store in the Surat and Ahmedabad Cities on the important item of "Wide variety of Products in different categories" received highest attention of the retail shoppers. The item of "Availability of products in different sizes" too was found as more important amongst the retail shoppers of Surat City. The retail shoppers' in the Surat and Ahmedabad Cities too had shown their agreement for good quality products offered to them by the retail store.

**Retail Shoppers' Responses on 'Ambience' as Criterion of Retail Store Attribute:**

Based on the findings of the study of the store attribute of "Ambience" of the retail store, which had acquired more importance as it was related with the hedonic aspect of shopping. The retail shoppers' of Surat and Ahmedabad Cities had felt at ease while shopping in the retail store. The retail shoppers' of Vadodara and Surat Cities had shown agreement and strong liking for those retail stores which had maintained their infrastructure properly as well as those retail stores which were successful in creating an "Attractive look". The item of "Attractive Interior" of the retail store and another important item "the placement of Aisles in the Retail Store" were found as more important to the retail shoppers' in the Surat and Ahmedabad Cites. The retail shoppers in case of the Ahmedabad and Surat Cities also gave more importance to the item of "Abundant space" to walk around in the retail store and "Sufficient information on signboards" which facilitated ease and convenience of buying on the part of retail shoppers.

The item of "Attractive Decor of the retail Store" was also found as more important amongst the retail shoppers' in the Surat City and the item of "Clearly Visible Store Advertisements" ; "Striking Windows Display that increases the desire to buy products" , and "the entry of the retail store was comfortable" were found as more important to the retail shoppers in the Surat and Ahmedabad Cities respectively. The important item of "Retail Store has enough checkout points" were also found as more important to retail shoppers of Vadodara and Surat Cities.

## 6.7: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS BASED ON FACTOR ANALYSIS:

**Summary of the Key Findings are presented as follows:**

### Table Number: 6.1: Summary of the Key Items of Selected Retail Store Attributes

| Sr No. | Selected Factors of Store Attributes of Retail Store | Key Items of Selected Retail Store Attributes | Factor Loading Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Accessibility of Retail Store | I get required information about the retail store | 0.909 |
| | | The opening hours of the retail store are convenient to me | 0.823 |
| | | I like a retail store for shopping which is located near to my office | 0.806 |
| | | It is convenient for me to go for shopping at any time in the retail store | 0.759 |
| | | I like a retail store for shopping which is located near to my residence | 0.752 |
| 02 | Atmosphere of Retail Store | I feel safe due to the presence of other shoppers in the retail store | 0.888 |
| | | The retail store has sufficient air conditioning | 0.879 |
| | | The house keeping of retail store is good | 0.796 |
| | | There are sufficient lights in the retail store | 0.793 |
| | | I feel comfortable because of light music being played in the retail store | 0.774 |
| | | I feel pleased and comfortable due to the presence of the other shoppers in the retail store | 0.756 |
| 03 | Physical Facilities of Retail Store | The retail store accepts a debit card | 0.908 |
| | | The retail store accepts a credit card | 0.879 |
| | | The retail store has a resting area | 0.855 |
| | | The retail store provides membership cards | 0.842 |
| | | The availability of parking area in retail store is sufficient | 0.835 |
| | | The retail store provides discount on membership cards | 0.807 |
| | | The retail store refunds price of products once sold | 0.790 |
| | | The retail store has an escalator facilities | 0.781 |
| | | The retail store has spacious fitting and dressing rooms | 0.774 |
| | | There are restaurants and other shops in the vicinity of the retail store | 0.765 |
| | | The retail store has adequate security arrangements for the safety of vehicles in the parking area | 0.754 |
| | | The retail store exchanges products returned by me | 0.747 |
| | | The retail store has clean washroom/toilets | 0.737 |
| | | The retail store has a provision for physically challenged people | 0.702 |
| 04 | Sales Promotion Schemes of Retail Store | I like to buy products offered to me by retail store on promotional, discounted schemes | 0.778 |
| | | The colour(s) and symbols used in promotions (e.g. advertisements) are attractive | 0.665 |
| | | I like to buy products at special events (For e g Wednesday bazaar at big bazaar) | 0.615 |
| 05 | Range of Products in Retail Store | The retail store provides me a variety in different categories of products | 0.655 |
| | | The retail store provides me a wide variety of products | 0.638 |
| | | The products are available in different sizes in the retail store | 0.607 |
| 06 | Behaviour of the Sales Staff of Retail Store | The sales staff of retail store are well trained | 0.883 |
| | | The sales staff of the retail store responds to my queries | 0.87 |
| | | The sales staff of the retail store responds to my problems | 0.836 |
| | | The sales staff of the retail store has required information of the products | 0.765 |
| | | The sales staff of retail store are polite and courteous | 0.738 |
| | | The sales staff of the retail store has required information of the availability of the products | 0.720 |
| | | The sales staff of the retail store has the required information of the price of the products | 0.716 |
| | | The sales staff of retail store are friendly with me | 0.623 |

| Sr No. | Selected Factors of Store Attributes of Retail Store | Key Items | Factor Loading Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 07 | Institutional Factors of Retail Store | The retail stores are crowded | 0.977 |
| | | I receive birthday wishes on email from the retail store | 0.816 |
| | | I receive anniversary wishes on mobile from the retail store | 0.790 |
| | | I receive anniversary wishes on email from the retail store | 0.764 |
| | | I receive birthday wishes on mobile from the retail store | 0.714 |
| 08 | Store Ambience of Retail Store | The infrastructure of the retail store is properly maintained | 0.880 |
| | | The retail store has an attractive look | 0.755 |
| | | The retail store has an attractive interior | 0.742 |
| | | The placement of aisles in the retail store is appropriate which makes easy for me to get what I want | 0.759 |
| | | There is plenty of room to walk around in the retail store | 0.808 |
| | | The sufficient information on signboards is displayed in the retail store | 0.712 |
| | | The décor of the retail store is attractive | 0.844 |
| | | I like clearly visible store advertisements in the retail store | 0.808 |
| | | The entry to the retail store is comfortable | 0.801 |
| | | The retail store has enough checkout points | 0.734 |

The above table consisted of 55 items which shoppers' had considered important for retail stores for expressing his/her satisfaction/dissatisfaction with regard to services as provided to them by retail store.

**Table Number: 6.2: Summary of Factor Wise Key Items of Selected Retail Store Attributes that Need Improvement**

| Sr. No. | Selected Factors of Store Attributes of Retail Store | Key Items of Selected Retail Store Attributes that Need Improvement | Factor Loading Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Ambience of Retail Store | Striking window displays of products increases my desire to buy in that retail store | 0.558 |
| | | I feel at ease while shopping at the retail store | 0.535 |
| 02 | Atmosphere of Retail Store | The environment of the retail store motivates me for shopping | 0.481 |
| | | I get pleasant smells inside the retail store | 0.697 |
| 03 | Physical Facilities of Retail Store | The retail store has an elevator facilities | 0.627 |
| | | A trolley and/or shopping basket for carrying products is available in the retail store | 0.394 |
| | | The retail store provides after sales services | 0.385 |
| 04 | Sales Promotion Schemes of Retail Store | The products offered with lower prices makes me feel less burden of making the payment | 0.132 |
| | | The retail store gives me discount schemes | 0.099 |
| 05 | Range of Retail Store | I get products of good quality in the retail store | 0.446 |
| 06 | Behaviour of the Sales Staff of Retail Store | The sales staff of the retail store has the required information of the display of the products | 0.683 |

The above table has listed out 11 key items which retail shoppers' had considered as important ones and needs further improvement by the retailers.

**6.8: APPLICATION OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING [SEM]:**

In order to test the proposed structural model of the research study, the researcher had developed the model of relationship between overall satisfaction and selected retail store attributes by using AMOS 18.0 Software given as follows.

**Figure Number: 6.10: SEM Model showing the Relationship between Overall Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction and Selected Store Attributes in the Retail Store**
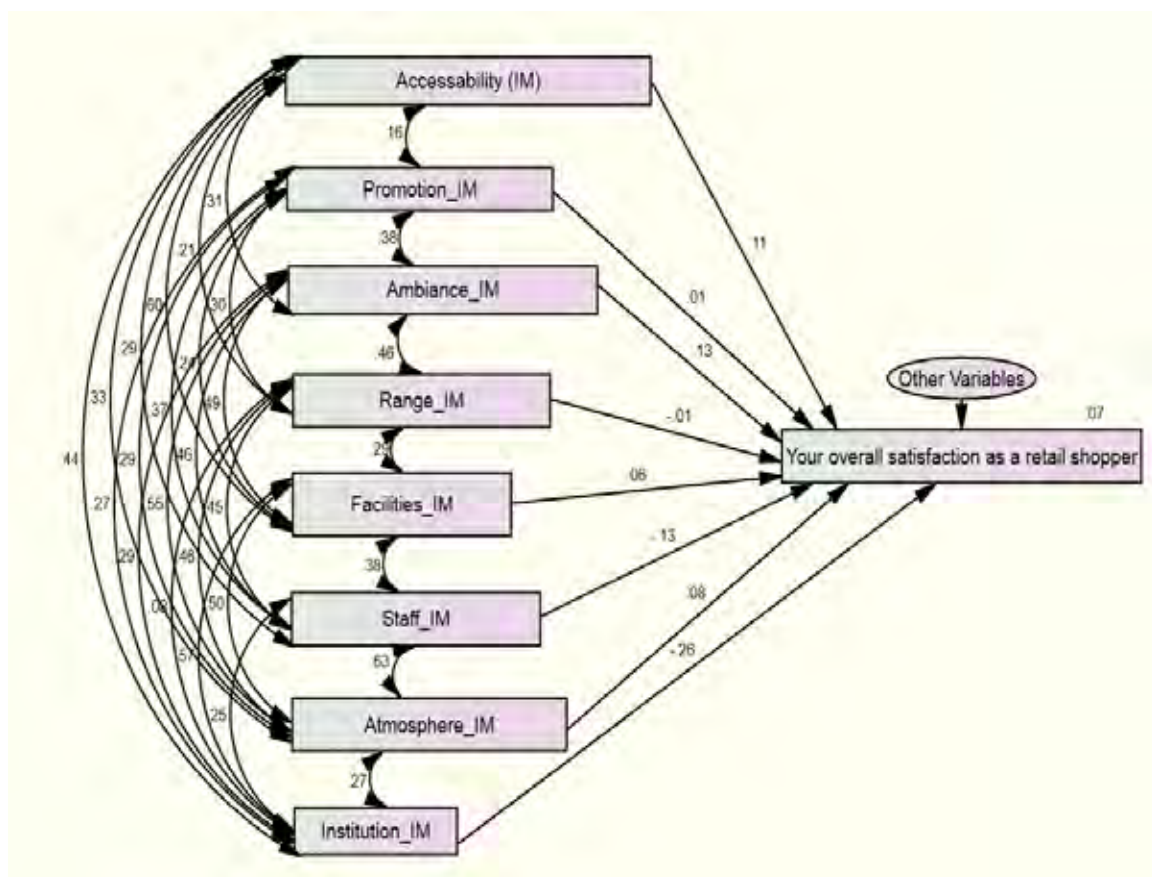


This is a simple regression model where one observed factors, the overall satisfaction of the retail shopper, is predicted as a linear combination of the other eight observed factors, viz., ambience of the retail store; accessibility; sales promotion schemes of the retail store; atmosphere of the retail store; behaviour of the sales personnel in the retail store; physical facilities offered in the retail store; range of products in the store; and institutional factors of the retail store respectively.

As with nearly all empirical data, the prediction will not be perfect. There are some other factors other than selected eight factors that also assumes to have an effect on overall satisfaction of the retail shopper for which the model assumes '1' as standardized regression weights which specifies that other factor must have a weight of 1 in the prediction of effect on overall satisfaction of the retail shopper.

Each single-headed arrow represents a regression weight. The value shown against two sided arrows (0.25, 0.57, 0.50, 0.08, 0.46, 0.29, 0.45, 0.55, 0.27, 0.44, 0.29, 0.46, 0.49, 0.37, 0.33, 0.29, 0.24, 0.60, 0.30, 0.21, 0.31, 0.16, 0.38, 0.46, 0.29, 0.38, 0.63 and 0.27) is the correlation between eight observed factors. The values shown with single sided arrow (0.11, 0.01, 0.13, 0.01, 0.06, 0.13, 0.08 and 0.26) are standardized regression weights.

The value 0.07 is the squared multiple correlations of the overall satisfaction of the retail shopper and eight factors of the retail store attributes that affect the overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the retail shopper.
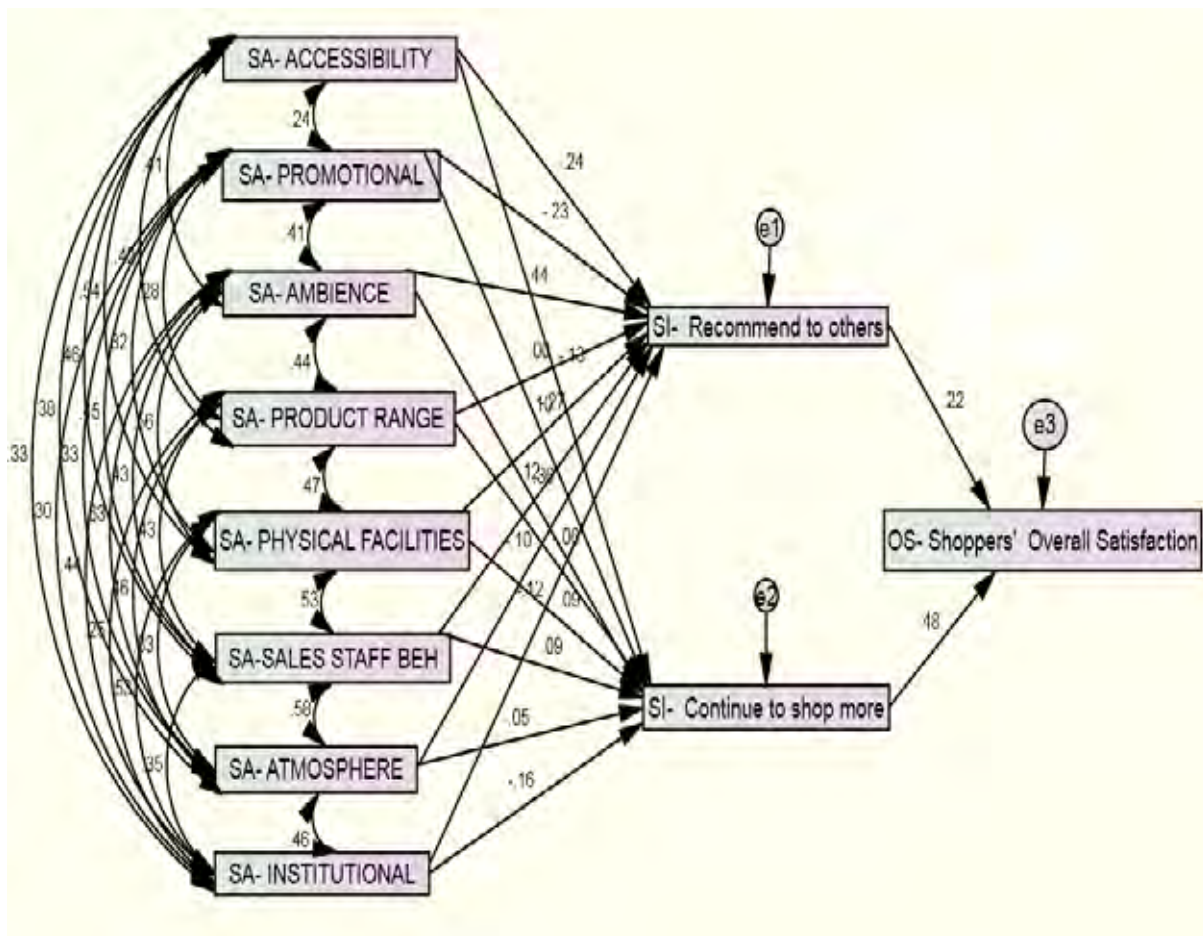
It meant that the overall satisfaction of the retail shopper considering eight factors was influenced mainly by factors, viz.,  Ambience of the Retail Store  (0.13) followed by Accessibility of the Retail Store  (0.11); Atmosphere of the Retail Store  (0.08); Behaviour of the Sales staff in the retail store (0.13); Institutional factors  of the Retail Store  (0.26); sales promotion schemes of the retail store (0.01), and Physical facilities of the retail store (0.06) respectively.

 It is also suggested that the retail store attributes that played an important role in motivating the retail shoppers to visit the retail store frequently leading to store patronage intentions that is the ambience of the retail store including the artefacts' and the interiors of the retail store, the accessibility of the retail store which encompasses the proximity of the retail store for the retail shoppers', the store atmosphere, the behaviour of the sales staff of the retail store, the institutional factors, the variety of sales promotion schemes of the retail store followed by the various physical facilities offered by the retail stores respectively.

## 6.8.1: Structural Equation Modeling [SEM] Using Path Analysis Considering Retail Store Attributes:

The researcher had developed a Structural Equation Model [SEM] using path analysis for portraying the influence of selected store attributes on the retail shoppers' overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction through two mediating items that is retail shoppers' intention to shop from the same retail store and retail shoppers' intention to recommend the retail store to others.

**Figure Number: 6.11: Structural Equation Modelling [SEM] Using Path Analysis**



As given in the above figure, simple regression model is depicted where one observed item, the overall satisfaction of the retail shopper, is predicted as a linear combination of the other eight observed factors, viz., ambience of the retail store; accessibility of the retail store; sales promotion schemes of the retail store; atmosphere of the retail store; behaviour of the sales staff in the retail store; physical facilities offered in the retail store; range of products in the retail store; and institutional factors of the retail store respectively considering the two mediating items that is 'The retail shoppers' intention to continue to shop more' , and 'The Shoppers' Intentions to recommend the retail store to others'.

Each single-headed arrow represents a regression weight. The value shown against two sided arrows (0.35, 0.53, 0.63, 0.25, 0.44, 0.46. 0.43. 0.63, 0.30, 0.33, 0.34, 0.38, 0.45, 0.56, 0.46, 0.32, 0.54, 0.28, 0.42, 0.46, 0.58, 0.53, 0.47, 0.44. 0.41 And 0.24) is the correlation between eight observed factors. The values shown with single sided arrow (0.127, 0.27, 0.36, 0.05, 0.09, 0.09, 0.05 and 0.16) are standardized regression weights for influence of selected retail store attributes on retail shoppers' intention to shop more from the same retail store.

The values shown with single sided arrow (0.24, 0.23, 0.44, 0.03, 0.10, 0.11, 0.10 and 0.11) are standardized regression weights for influence of selected retail store attributes on retail shoppers' intention to recommend the same retail store to others and spread positive word of mouth. The values of 0.22 showed against the single sided arrow is the standardized regression weight for Influence of retail store attributes on overall satisfaction through the mediating items viz., the shoppers' intention to recommend the same retail store to others.

The values of 0.48 showed against the single sided arrow is the standardized regression weight for influence of retail store attributes on overall satisfaction through the mediating item viz., the retail shoppers' intention to shop more same retail store to others that indicates the repurchase and loyalty intentions of the retail shoppers' for a particular retail store.

**Table Number: 6.3: Table Summarising the Value of Standard Path Co-efficient [Standardized Regression Weights] for Selected Eight Store Attributes**

| Sr. No. | Selected Store Attributes of the Retail Store | Patronage Intentions of Shoppers to Continue to shop | Recommendations to others |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Standard Path Co-efficient [Standardized Regression Weights] | |
| 01 | Accessibility | -.127 | **-.240** |
| 02 | Sales Promotions Schemes | **-.265** | **-.231** |
| 03 | Store Ambience | **.363** | **.442** |
| 04 | Range of Products | -.055 | .003 |
| 05 | Physical Facilities of Store | .092 | .096 |
| 06 | Behaviour of Sales Staff | .091 | **.116** |
| 07 | Store Atmosphere | -.047 | **-.104** |
| 08 | Institutional Factors | **-.160** | -.118 |

The above table has summarised the score of standard path co-efficient considering the effect of selected retail store attributes on shoppers' overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction through two mediating items that is shoppers' patronage intention which represents the likelihood that retail shoppers would continue to shop more from the same retail store and their intention to recommend the retail store to others and spread positive word of mouth. The result had shown selected retail store attributes viz., sales promotion schemes (0.265)**;** Store Ambience (0.363), and Institutional factors of the retail store (0.160) were found as the strong determinants of the retail shopper's intention to shop more and also they became the deciding factor for the shoppers' overall satisfaction. Whereas, in case of retail shoppers' intention to recommend to others the selected retail store attributes viz., Accessibility (0.24); Sales Promotion Schemes (0.231)**;** Store Ambience (0.442)**;** Behaviour of the sales staff (0.116), and the Store Atmosphere (0**.**104**)** were found as the strong determinants of the shopper' overall satisfaction.

Thus, it can be inferred that the retail shopper determines his level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction considering his own intention to shop more is influenced strongly by sales promotion schemes, retail store ambience and institutional factors of the retail store.

It can also be inferred that the retail shopper determines his or her level of satisfaction considering his strong intention to recommend the retail store to others is heavily influenced by the selected store attributes that is viz., accessibility, sales promotion schemes, store ambience, and behaviour of the sales staff and the store atmosphere respectively.

## 6.9: STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING [SEM] USING PATH ANALYSIS CONSIDERING SHOPPING ORIENTATIONS AND STORE ATRRIBUTES OF THE RETAIL STORE:

**Figure Number: 6.12: Structural Equation Modelling [SEM] Using Path Analysis Showing Relationship between Shopping Orientations and Retail Store Attributes with Overall Satisfaction Through Mediating Variables**



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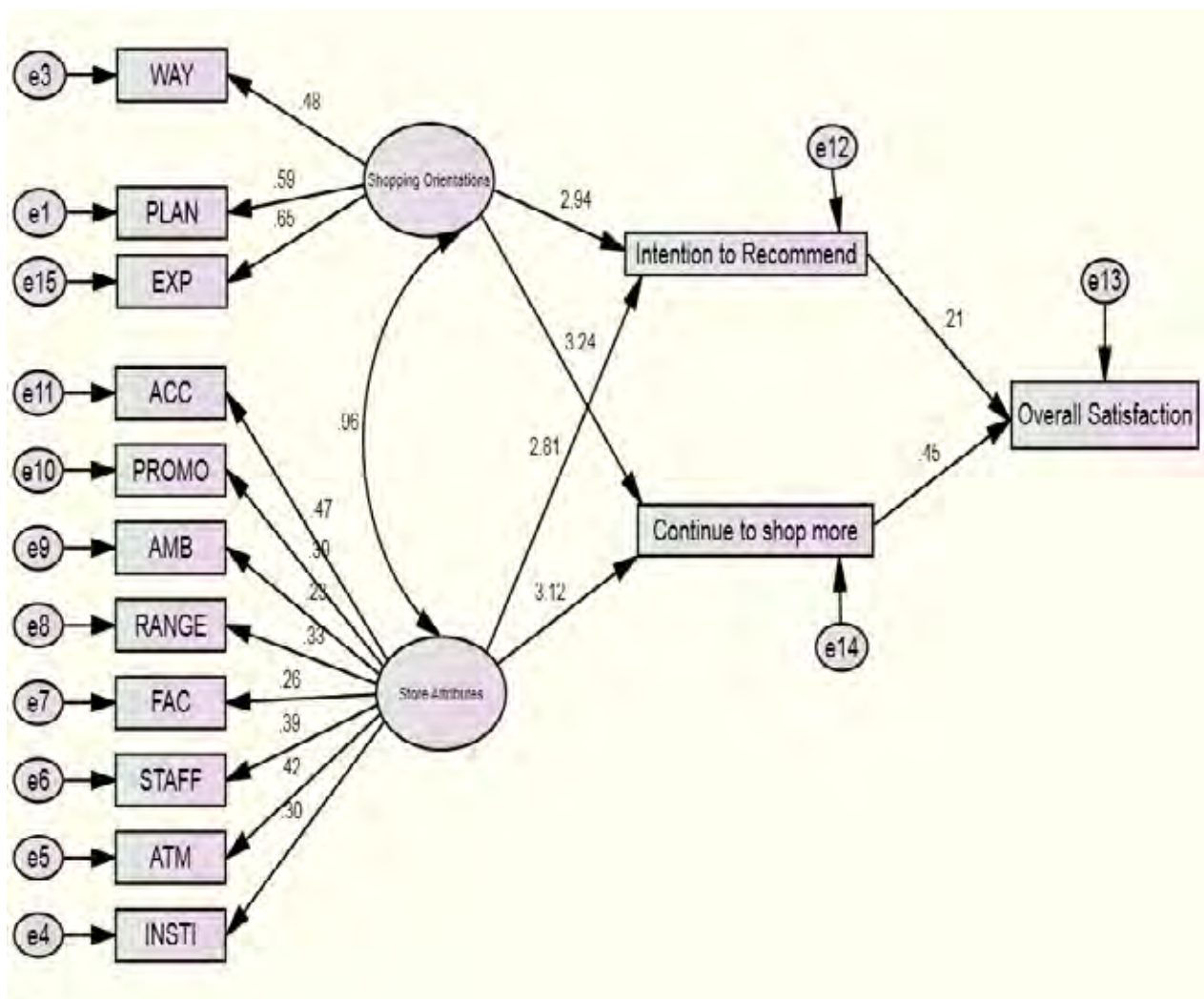
The above given figure depicted a relationship between shopping orientations and retail store attributes with overall satisfaction through mediating variables of "I would continue to shop more" and "Recommendation to others". In the above mode the relationships between the constructs were examined based on chi-square associated with path coefficients between the constructs. The Chi-square value (2473.987) was on higher side than a certain critical value i.e. $p < .05$ which indicated that a significant relationship existed between constructs.

The major determinants of shopping orientations included all the three variables depicted in the model that is the style or way of shopping, his or her planned effort for shopping and his or her actual experience from shopping.

The major determinants of retail store attributes included the five factors that is promotional schemes of retail store; range of products of the retail store; atmosphere of the retail store; accessibility of the retail store; sales staff behaviour of the retail store, and store atmosphere of the retail store out of eight depicted in the model that is accessibility, promotional schemes, ambience of the store, range of products, facilities in the store, staff behaviour in the retail store, atmosphere of the store and the institutional factors of the retail store respectively.

The shopping orientation of retail shoppers' that reflects his or her own way of shopping and the retail store attributes used by the retailers in order to attract retail shoppers' were found as the major determinants of the retail shoppers' overall satisfaction through the mediating effects of "I would continue to shop more" and "Recommendation to others".

The result of SEM analysis indicated that the path from the construct of shopping orientations as well as the construct of store attributes was found as significant and positively related with overall satisfaction of retail shoppers' through mediating variables. Thus, it can be inferred that shopping orientations and retail store attributes both plays a vital role in determining the retail shopper's own decision to shop, and his recommendation to others to shop from the same retail store that is the positive word of mouth to be spreaded to others. The influence of the selected retail store attributes used by the retailers also play an important role while shoppers were inside the retail store for actual shopping. The retailers must focus on understanding the shopping orientations of the retail shoppers' so as to effectively create an atmosphere and align the retail store attributes that matches with the shoppers' own style and predisposition of shopping.

## Table Number: 6.4 : Fit Indices of Measurement Model
### [Model as Given in Figure Number: 6.12]

The Table Number: 6.10 provides the model fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model [SEM] Using Path Analysis showing relationship between shopping orientations and retail store attributes with overall satisfaction through mediating variable.

| Name of the Index | Model Fit Indices |
|---|---|
| CMIN (Chi-square or Minimum Discrepancy Chi-square) | 30.54 |
| GFI  (Goodness of Fit Index ) | 0.804 |
| NFI  (Normed-Fit Index) | 0.623 |
| RFI (Relative Fit Index) | 0.576 |
| CFI  (Comparative Fit Index ) | 0.630 |
| AGFI  (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) | 0.746 |
| RMR  (Root Mean Square Residual) | 1.116 |
| RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ) | 0.140 |

## Table Number 6.5: TABULAR SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF RETAIL STORE PATRONAGE INTENTIONS [POST PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR]  OF THE RETAIL SHOPPERS' IN THE GUJARAT STATE:

| Sr. No | Selected Demographic Variables of Retail Shoppers | I will continue to shop from the same retail store | I will recommend the same retail store to others |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Shopper's Age Group (in years) | 47 per cent in the selected age group of 16 to 40 years had strong intention to continue to shop from the same retail store. | 50 per cent in the selected age group of 16 to 40 years had strong intention to recommend the same retail store to others. |
| 02 | Gender | 76 per cent Males were willing to continue to shop from the same retail store. | 74 per cent Males were willing to recommend the same retail store to others. |
| 03 | Marital Status | 77 per cent of the married retail shoppers' were willing to continue to shop from the same retail store | 77 per cent of the married shoppers' were willing to recommend the same retail store to others. |
| 04 | Type of Shopper's Family | 68 per cent of retail shoppers' living in joint family had a strong determination to continue to shop from the same retail store. | 68 per cent of retail shoppers' living in joint family had a strong determination to recommend the same retail store to others. |
| 05 | Educational Qualifications | 70 per cent of shoppers' were having Educational qualifications of Graduation and Post Graduation were willing to continue to shop from the same retail store. | 70 per cent of retail shoppers' having Educational qualification of graduation and post graduation were willing to recommend the same retail store to others. |
| 06 | Occupation | 81 percent of retial shoppers' belonging to occupation category of self employed, service and profession are willing to continue to shop from the same retail store. | 81 percent of retail shoppers' belonging to occupation category of self employed, service and profession were willing to recommend the same retail store to others. |
| 07 | Annual Family Income (in Rs.) | 74 per cent retail shoppers' were having Annual Family Income of Rs.4 to 12 lakhs had showed willingness to continue to shop from the same retail store. | 68 per cent retail shoppers' who werer having Annual Family Income of Rs. 4 to 12 lakhs were willing to recommend the same retail store to others. |

**6.11: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF SELECTED RETAIL STORE ATTRIBUTES: CITY-WISE:**

The researcher had derived mean score of overall satisfaction using descriptive statistics for analyzing selected retail store attributes.

**6.11.1:Summarised Results of Selected Retail Store Attributes Based on Mean Score:**

**Table No. 6.6:  City wise Mean Score of Overall Satisfaction of Retail Shoppers from Selected Store Attributes**

| Selected Retail Store Attributes | Vadodara City | Surat City | Rajkot City | Ahmedabad City |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accessibility | **3.45** | 3.32 | 3.18 | 3.39 |
| Range | 3.29 | 3.49 | 3.43 | **3.51** |
| Sales Promotion | 2.74 | 3.46 | **3.58** | 3.32 |
| Behaviour of Sales Staff | 2.98 | **3.47** | 3.45 | 2.90 |
| Ambience | 3.07 | **3.53** | 3.49 | 3.21 |
| Facilities | 2.88 | 3.49 | **3.66** | 2.94 |
| Atmosphere | 2.80 | 3.56 | 3.78 | **3.94** |
| Institutional | 2.80 | 3.55 | **3.73** | 3.55 |

The research study made it evident that the study on attributes of retail store would help the retailers in identifying its optimum mix based on perceived importance as reported by retail shoppers and findings of the research study would be important for retailers as research study had shown that the score of the factor of "Accessibility" with overall satisfaction mean Score of 3.45, was the most important store attribute for Vadodara City followed by Ahmedabad with the mean score of 3.39, Surat with mean score of 3.32 and Rajkot City with the mean score of 3.18 respectively.

The mean score of the factor of the "Sales Promotion Schemes", with overall satisfaction mean Score 3.58, was the most important store attributes for Rajkot City followed by Surat City with the mean score of 3.46, and Ahmedabad City had mean score of 3.32 and Vadodara City was having the mean score of 2.74 respectively.

The mean score of the factor of "Ambience", with overall satisfaction mean Score 3.53, was found as the most important retail store attribute for Surat City followed by Rajkot City with the mean score of 3.49, and  Ahmedabad City had mean score of 3.21 whereas, Vadodara City was having the mean score of 3.07 respectively.

The mean score of the factor of "Facilities in the Retail Store", with overall satisfaction mean Score 3.66, was found as the most important retail store attribute for Rajkot City followed by the Surat City with the mean score of 3.49, Ahmedabad City with mean score of 2.94, and Vadodara City with the mean score of 2.88 respectively.

The mean score of the factor of "Atmosphere" in the Retail store, with overall satisfaction mean Score of 3.78 emerged as the most important retail store attribute for Rajkot City followed by Surat City with the mean score of 3.56, Ahmedabad City with mean score of 2.94 and Vadodara City had the mean score of 2.88 respectively.

The mean score of the factor of "Institutional Factors" in the retail store, with overall satisfaction mean Score 3.73, was found as the most important retail store attribute for Rajkot City followed by Surat and Ahmedabad Cities with the mean score of 3.55, and Vadodara City had the mean score of 3.29 respectively.

The mean score of the factor of "Range of products" offered in the retail store, with overall satisfaction mean Score 3.51, emerged as the most important retail store attribute for Ahmedabad City followed by Surat City with the mean score of 3.49, Rajkot City with the mean score of 3.43 and Vadodara City with the mean score of 3.29 respectively.

The mean score of the criteria of "Behaviour of Sales Staff in the Retail Store", with overall satisfaction mean Score of 3.47, was found as the most important store attribute for Surat City followed by Rajkot City with the mean score of 3.45, whereas Vadodara City with the mean score of 2.98 and Ahmedabad City with the mean score of 2.9 respectively.

The researcher has offered the city wise implications of the research study considering the relationship between selected retail store attributes and selected demographic variables of retail shoppers' of the Gujarat State. The selected retail store attributes in this research study were viz., Accessibility; Range of Products in the retail store,; Store Ambience; Institutional factors,; Behaviour of the sales staff; Sales Promotional Schemes;Store Atmosphere , and the Physical Facilities of the retail store and their relationship with selected demographic variables.

**6.11.2: City Wise Summarised Results for Selected Store Attributes:**
**AHMEDABAD CITY:**

In case of the selected retail store attributes the 'Ambience of the Retail Store' , the retail shoppers' in the Ahmedabad City gave more importance to the attractiveness of interior decoration, the appropriateness in arrangement of aisles in the retail store which helped them in getting what they actually wanted to buy. The abundance of walking space was also an important criterion for the retail shoppers of Ahmedabad City. Further, it was found that the retail shoppers preferred the sufficient information on signboards that was displayed in the retail store which made it easier for them to select the product which they wanted to buy.

Considering the store attribute of atmosphere within the store the retail shoppers desired a well illuminated space with proper air-conditioning which made their shopping journey pleasant and less cumbersome. The maintainence of house keeping of retail store was given weightage by the retail shoppers of Ahmedabad City. The store attribute of "Store Facilities" which encompasses the most important criteria of facilities of exchange offers, refund or replacement too was found as important. The retail shoppers in the Ahmedabad City had a strong preference for sales promotion schemes offered by the retailers'.

They preferred the advertisements that gave them attractive sales promotion offers. They also had a strong preference to buy products at special events and gave importance to the "polite and courteous behaviour of the sales staff" in the retail store. The respondents opined that the sales staff should be well trained.

**SURAT CITY:**

In case of the Surat City, the attribute of 'Accessibility' was found as most important considering their strong desire to have the variety of information about the retail store when needed. They preferred the retail stores which had convenient opening and closing hours. Considering the attribute of "Ambience of the retail store" the criteria of well maintained infrastructure of the retail store, the attractive look and décor was found as important by them. The shoppers in the Surat City were found as influenced by clearly visible store advertisements.

Considering the important item store attribute 'atmosphere of the retail store' the presence of the other shoppers in the retail store gave them a sense of security to retail shoppers of Surat City. Theretail shoppers were also found as highly influenced by the light background music being played in the retail store. The ambient environment of the retqail store having proper ventilation, Air conditioning and lighting too were found as important factors that determined the store patronage intentions of retail shoppers in Surat City. The facilities of the retail store viz., availability of adequate security arrangements for the safety of vehicles in the parking area; restaurants and other shops in the vicinity of the retail store , and clutter free environment within the retail store were also found as important determinants of store patronage intentions of retail shoppers in the Surat City.

**RAJKOT CITY:**

Considering the 'Accessibility' factor of the store availability of information was found as the key deciding factor for retail shoppers in the Rajkot City. The shoppers in the Rajkot City gave importance to the opening hours of the retail store which they found more convenient.

The store ambience was an important attribute for the shoppers in the Rajkot City and they gave importance to the infrastructural facilities that were available to them in the retail store which enabled them to buy the products according to his or her own choice. The retail shoppers of the Rajkot City were found as more attentive towards the attractive look, décor, artifacts and the overall decoration of the retail store. The shoppers' of the Rajkot City preferred to buy in the retail store where they got clear visual effects of the advertisements. The selected item of warmth and comfort in the retail store due to the presence of other retail shoppers motivated them in the Rajkot City. Further, the light music being played in the retail store created a mood for retail shoppers' in the retail store in the Rajkot City.

The retail shoppers preferred to buy from the retail store where sufficient illumination; Air Conditioning , and proper housekeeping facilities existed. The various facilities of the retail store viz., escalator facilities; clean washroom/toilets; availability of resting area, and provision for differently abled people also considered important by them.

The retail shoppers of Rajkot City gave importance to the selected items of adequate security arrangements for the safety of vehicles in the parking area and availability of restaurants as well as other shops in the vicinity of the retail store which increased their feeling of security during their shopping journey. Receiving wishes from the retail store on special occasions of shoppers' Birthday, Anniversary was also perceived as an important factor by the retail shoppers of the Rajkot City.

**VADODARA CITY:**

In case of the retail shoppers in the Vadodata City the retail store attribute of "Accessibility" considering the nearness of the retail store to the residence and office of the retail shoppers was given due consideration by the retail shoppers' in the Vadodara City as they posses to have a special tendency to visit the retail store at any time as per their own convenience.

 The most important attribute for retail shoppers' in the Vadodara City was "Ambience" in the retail store supported with light background music which is being played inside the retail store and the presence of other shoppers made them feel pleasant, uplifted and comfortable during his or her shopping journey and it gave them opportunity of socialization. The easier check-in and check-out was also felt of prime importance by the retail shoppers' in Vadodara City.

The availablilty of proper lighting in the retail store was also an reported as an important determinant for choosing a retail store for shopping. Further, sufficient Air Conditioning, clean and hygienic housekeeping services in the retail store too were rated as more important by shoppers in the Vadodara City. In terms of flexibility of payment terms, the retail shoppers' ofthe Vadodara City preferred the retail store which accepted Credit Card, Debit Card and gave him or her discounts on membership points for his or her loyalty. The retail shoppers preferred a clutter free environment for shopping where they received adequate security arrangements for the safety of vehicles in the parking area and other amenities in the retail store. The retail shoppers' in this city preferred a retail store which gave them extended credit facilities for retail shopping and also refund, replacement and exchange schemes for the products which they sell. It was specifically observed for the retail shoppers' behaviour in the Vadodara City that in case of apparel retail stores that the retail shoppers' preferred safe and spacious fitting and dressing rooms. The Barodians preferred a retail store which could offer them extensive range of products in terms of product assortment or mix and quality so that they can make their buying decisions befitting to his or her budget.

It was deduced from this research study that retail shoppers' in Vadodara City were found as price sensitive. The retail shoppers' always seek assistance from the sales staff of the retail store while they select products for their shopping basket. The retail  shoppers' of the Vadodara City like to be counselled by the store personnel and they expected a friendly behaviour from sales staff while they do shopping in the retail store.

They preferred a caring, polite and empathetic behaviour from the sales staff of the retail store. The retail shoppers of the Vadodara City did not prefer to visit the overcrowded retail retail store.

The retail shoppers of Vadodara City gave importance to the selected items of adequate security arrangements for the safety of vehicles in the parking area and availability of restaurants and other shops in the vicinity of the retail store which increased the feeling of security during their shopping journey. Receiving wishes from the retail store on special occasions of retail shoppers' Birthday, Anniversary too was found as an important criterion by the retail shoppers in the Vadodara City.

**6.12: OVERALL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF SELECTED RETAIL STORE ATTRIBUTES:**

The researcher had put efforts to bring out the key implications based on the responses of selected retail shoppers on the selected retail store attributes being used in the retail store which mainly revealed following:

The responses of the retail shoppers for the selected store attribute of "Accessibility" of the retail store, when considered collectively implied an important message for retail store managers especially in the Rajkot City, that is to be accessible by working out on the proposition of the location based aspects of the retail store. The most important criteria of consideration emerged as the availability of public transportation system; connectivity with the road and city infrastructure; availability of restaurants, and other basic facilities for the retail shoppers.

Upgrade Point-of-Sale Systems with current technology or use of Mobile Payment Systems to take payments anywhere in retail store is the need of hour in to be implemented in retail store.

For the store attribute of "Sales Promotion Schemes", "Store Ambience", "Facilities" in the Retail Store, "Store Atmosphere", "Range of Products" in the Retail Store and "Institutional factors" in the Retail Store gave a clear indication that in case of the Vadodara City, it needs a special consideration. The retail shoppers' of Vadodara City were of the opinion that sales promotion schemes offered were not enough to persuade and influence their shopping intentions, and to entice them to visit the retail stores. Hence, the retail shoppers' attitude towards shopping malls was found as strongly influenced by the absence or presence of certain criteria viz., shopping location; infrastructure and amenities; ambience; merchandising and pricing; entertainment value, and personal value respectively.

In case of the retail store attribute of the store facilities as provided in the retail stores it too was found as playing an important role in determining the spatial convenience of the retail shoppers. These physical facilities are generally infrastructure related aspects which retailers' must provide to them.

The overall appearance and layout of the retail store; congestion within the store; convenient facilities which can offer ease of shopping; facilities for senior citizens and children were found as crucial by retail shoppers. The store attribute of atmosphere should be synergistically integrated with the physical facilities made available to the retail shoppers.

The retail shoppers preferred a pleasant store atmosphere with a large variety of high quality merchandise. It was found that thet tend to spend more time shopping even after making purchases, which made them to buy something s/he liked regardless of urgency or need, and would spare less time deliberating before shopping. The store atmosphere can certainly arouse a positive and stimulating feeling in the minds of the retail shopper which can also make him or her to stay longer inside the retail store. The range of merchandise was found as another crucial criterion both in terms of [i] variety 'number of different merchandise categories' and [ii] product assortment that is number of different items made available in a merchandise category which too were found as crucial by the retail shoppers who compared the product offerings and store attributes of retail store in the Vadodara City with other cities and States.

The institutional factors of the retail store too was found as playing pivotal role as it connotes the overall image of the retail store. The retail shoppers who visited the retail store referred as store clientele can also act as a motivating factor for the potential retail shoppers' to visit and make their shopping from that particular store. The positive Word of Mouth as an outcome of the institutional factor can act as catalyst which can lures the shoppers to a particular retial store.

It can be done by providing consistent services; giving assurance using knowledge and courtesy so as to develop trust and confidence among retail shoppers. The retailers can give positive image by providing good tangible facilities; expressing empathy by caring and giving individualized attention to the retail shoppers'; being responsive by providing them prompt services, and treat retail shoppers' with dignity and respect.

In case of Ahmedabad City, the behaviour of the sales staff in the retail store was found as requiring a different approach as each retail shopper carry different set of expectations from the retail store and moulds his or her perception in positive or negative manner. The retail shoppers with a favourable attitude towards a retail store would most likely to patronize the retail store and buy its products, whereas those retail shoppers who had engaged in opposing behaviour if they have an unfavourable attitude by sharing their negative experiences about their shopping journey with other retail shoppers.

The retailers need to be diligent in training the sales staff and shaping their behaviour in such a way that it can evoke positive feelings in the mind of the retail shoppers.

They need to have adequate knowledge regarding the availability of the product categories; the price of the products; the alternatives available in a particular product category; the operating instructions for using the product, and precautions to be taken to avoid hazards.

Friendly, helpful sales and service associates are vital for creating moments of truth. The more retailers understand each shopper before they walk in the door, the greater chance they have of delivering that positive moment of truth—a personalized, satisfactory shopping experience that would enable him or her to visit the retail store again. The role of  sales associate should therefore need to evolve from one of an information provider and facilitator of transactions, to a facilitator of engagement and a trusted advisor. Hiring, training and retaining sales staff who can deliver such enhanced experience have emerged as obivious critical success factors in the of retail store. The sales staff must be empowered with information and tools to help them to be successful as far as possible.

## 6.13: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

In this section, the researcher has offered recommendations based on the findings and results of the empirical research study conducted in the selected cities of the Gujarat State.


· In order to spread the awareness of the retail store, the retailers should deploy specific targeting and segmenting tools to position themselves as discount stores, providing value for money outlets, giving quality products to shoppers etc.

· The retail store managers should use Customer Relationship Management [CRM] techniques so as to maintain and monitor the cordial relationship with retail shoppers. The data of retail shoppers gathered can help retailers significantly to increase their marketing and sales effectiveness through customized offers, loyalty programs, targeted content, contests and promotions delivered physically, via social media or on mobile devices. All of these can be hyper-targeted to reach specific customer segments, demographic groups and geographies.

· The retailers should give specific tailor made discount offers to those retail shoppers who bring along with them their family members, friends, relatives. By doing so the retail shoppers can be be influence to bring with them their family members, friends, relatives whenever they come for shopping.

· The one clever way of increasing the number of products in the shopping cart of retail shoppers' per visit is by capitalizing on bulk culture. By presenting products as part of a larger collection of items, promoted as a money saving opportunity, retail shoppers will jump at the chance to get their hands on the whole set if there is a saving element in it.

- The retailer should opt for identification of different product categories that is 'Speciality' and 'Value-Focused' product categories. The retailer need to rationalise the product mix while maintaining healthy margins and chart out an advertising media mix accordingly.

- The retailers need to develop a retail format that meets the needs of the local market. The change in magnitude, level and composition in demand of the local market should be taken into consideration and the retail format should be redesigned keeping in mind the product assortments, services, physical facilities etc. as per the needs of the retail shoppers. The retailers should also ensure availability of wide range of products in the retail store rather than adopting a rigid product assortment plan.

- The retailers should provide a friendly and peaceful environment to the retail shoppers' as some tend to shop leisurely in their free time. For such retail shoppers, the retailers should provide a clutter free environment which should facilitate them to roam around freely in the retail store without any disturbance.

- It is also recommended that the retailers should opt for a strategy that shall suit the shopping orientations of economic shoppers, recreational shoppers, personalizing shoppers, and those who also seek entertainment while shopping. The retailers need to match their resources and core competencies to lure retail shopper.

- The retailer should not only stock the latest products according to the current fashion trends but the retail store also need to provide a visually appealing merchandise display on the mannequins which motivate the retail shopper to enter the retail store which might result into increased footfalls thereby influencing their buying decisions.

- The retailers should ensure the availability of those varieties of brands which are recently launched in the market. The retailers need to focus on effective integration of Supply Chain Management [SCM] so as to ensure timely availability of products, smart handling of inventories and reduce handling costs.

- For satisfying the retail shoppers having a planned and or unplanned approach for buying, the retailers should offer them store facilities and should also improve the retail store infrastructural amenities so as to make such retail shoppers feel at ease and comfortable. The retailer can have special checkout zones or counters, quicker bill processing units, experienced sales staff to support retail shoppers who would enter the retail store with a definite pre-determined shopping list.

- The retailers need to evoke positive feelings in the minds of the retail shoppers by uniquely positioning the retail store. This can be done by adequate illumination, proper product display, ease of check-in and checkout, neat and well- managed shelves in the retail store. For doing so, the retailers need to closely keep a track of the involvement of the companions who accompany the retail shoppers as they too tend to exert influence on the shopping decisions of the retail shoppers.

- The retailers need to focus on the accessibility aspect as it is the most important dimension of shopping favoured by any retail shopper as he or she can save his or her precious time and efforts by shopping from a nearly located store. A store location usually requires a sizable financial investment and long term commitment by the retailer.

- The retailer can win the trust and confidence of the retail shopper by providing this utilitarian aspect of shopping that concerns itself with ease of reaching to the retail store, minimise costs, and enhance value of shopping. This would result into a retail shopper who has more residual time left for shopping and choosing products.

- Based on the empirical findings of the research study it is recommended that retailers therefore need to ensure convenient location of the retail store, viz., longer and flexible operating hours, adequate parking too can draw more shoppers to the retail store.

- The retailers need to integrate the various elements of promotion mix in such a way that it create a unified impact by seamless integration of discreet elements. While making sales promotion plan, retailers should be aware of what targeted retail shoppers to be focussed requires to identify retail shoppers' preference first based on their past shopping habits and potential prospect of increasing price image and then effectively customised targeted sales promotion campaigns for set of retail shoppers. The in- store sales promotional campaigns like the 'End of Season Sale' can help the retailers as seasonality also affects certain specific product categories especially like the Apparel sector and hence it becomes critical for a retailer to clear off the stocks at the end of season otherwise retailer will be forced to bear substantial inventory carrying costs. The pairing of complementary products with the other products too can make a huge difference in achieving the sales target and can influence the retail shoppers' perceived value.

- The retailers need to design their stimuli in their retail store in such a way that it would will encourage customers to make a purchase in that store, because the store atmosphere creates a certain effect on retail shoppers and push them to make an unplanned buying, besides increasing their tendency and dependency to visit that retail store again.

- The retailers should also work on store atmosphere by integrating several environmental elements viz., bright or dim lighting, classical or familiar music, attractive window dressing, unique store layout, magnificent architectural design, freshness and fragrance, appropriate temperature to make it cosy and comfortable for retail shoppers to shop, soothing and trendy colour, attractive logo, and gentle crowding are ideal conditions that can affect the current and future behaviour of retail shoppers.

- The retailers need to understand that retail shoppers' perception of assortment are not simply a function of the number of items offered in the product category. A key principle is that shoppers' perception of assortment are also a function of the similarity of the items in the product assortment, the size of the shelf display, and the availability of their favourite products. The retailers need to plan the product category assortments in such a way that it can deliver the feeling of abundance to the retailshopper in the retail store. The wide variety and sizes of products available in the retail store across all product categories would satisfy the retail shoppers. The retailers should not only work on the proposition of making the products available but also on appropriately organising the same on the Stock Keeping Units [SKU] that are appropriately displayed in the retail store. The full range of products made available in the retail store can be arranged side-by-side that can facilitate brand comparisons, while separate displays are better for high priced brands. Organizing by Brands can encourage retail shoppers to buy by brand, while organizing by model stimulates the use of other attributes such as price. Organized displays are better for large product assortments, but for small assortments arrangement need be done in a unique way. It is important to align product assortments with retail shoppers' internal knowledge structures if shoppers are familiar with the product category and if they are using the same product from a long period of time.

- The physical facilities of the retail store too plays a role of an important store attribute as it related with the tangible element of the retail store that shoppers would remember and would cherish. In-store experiences can offer gratifying experiences that retailers will remember. This also may affect building their future repurchase intentions.

- The retail stores can become social gathering places, pleasurable to visit from start to finish. The various amenities of the retail store relating to the physical infrastructure plays a crucial role in service delivery encounters of the retail shoppers. The retailers in the Gujarat State should evolve state-of-art facilities with the help of technology that should augment the retail shoppers' level of satisfaction.

- The signboards of the retail store should be visible and it should be placed in a prominent place with adequate amount of information so as to facilitate the retail shoppers' to quickly choose and make a buying decision. There should be adequate number of checkout points so that the retail shoppers' can complete their shopping transactions quickly by consuming less time. The retailers must ensure the availability of adequate staff for handling transactions, for appropriate packaging of bought goods as well as to guide in the buying decision.

- It can be recommended from the data analysis of the research study that the shopping facilities in the retail store viz., availability of adequate number of shopping trolleys for shopping, refund and exchange offers, discount schemes on membership or privilege cards, after sales services, escalator and elevator facilities, clean washrooms, spacious dressing rooms, adequate parking space and security arrangements and availability of restaurants and other shops in the vicinity of the retail store would serve as important factores in making a selection of the retail store by the retail shoppers.

The retail store must have a proper policy for refund and replacement of various products bought by the shopper so as to facilitate the retail shopper while making the buying decision. The retail store must accept all types of credit cards and debit cards to give the retail shoppers the ease and convenience of transactions while shopping. The retail stores must give flexible payment terms thereby creating a unique image. The provision for the resting area especially for the differently abled retail shoppers should be made in the retail store which would create a feeling of warmth and comfort amongst the senior citizens who accompany the other retail shoppers. The provision for the children play area was also found as important as the families would repeatedly visit the retail store with their kids.

The role of the sales staff in the retail store cannot be undermined owing to technology adoption in retail. The human touch of the sales associate will continue to play a major role as they serve as the soft part of the retail strategy. A retailer's relationship with their shoppers; is key to repeat store visits, brand loyalty and ultimately sales conversions.

The retail shoppers need to be enticed when they are in the retail store by the sales associate. The sales staff of the retail store needs to create a welcoming environment as well as an experience for their customers. Having an accurate retail CRM database, focused on the customer, is an integral part of the jigsaw for any retailer. The retail ahoppers are savvy, demanding and often in a hurry, so a successful retail CRM system would pay dividends when it comes to building loyal customers.

The retailers need to think smarter to engage retail shoppers and create shoppers' loyalty towards their brand, and to do this they need to know as much as possible about them.

In terms of the institutional factors of the retail store, the overall store image would continue play a crucial role in developing retail shoppers' loyalty intentions towards the retail store. The retailer apart from his mainstream business portfolio needs to carry out various activities aimed at maintaining a close contact with the retail shoppers. This can be done by maintaining retail shoppers' database and involving them in all activities of the retail store. The overall image of the retail store would be very important in order to achieve the mindshare of the retail shoppers.

The retailers should position themselves as niche stores aimed at delivering a particular value to a group of retail shoppers. In addition to the positioning strategy of the retail store, other factors viz., Corporate Social Responsibility [CSR] activities, ethical governance practices, and passion to satisfy shoppers can create and convey a categorical, distinct, consistent and enduring image that the target market can relate to. The retail image is the way in which the public perceives the retail store and the products it offers. The retailers in the Gujarat State need to develop a policy decision for constantly monitoring and tracking retail shoppers' perception of the store image.

## 6.14: SUGGESTIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

An attempt in this section had been made to offer suggestions concerning significant areas where improvement is expected from the retailers who are offering products to the retail shoppers' in the retail store in the Gujarat State given as below:

**Awareness:**
In order to increase the awareness, the retailers should make use of tailor made marketing strategies specifically suited to their local areas proximate to the retail store by organising special events, sales promotional events, contests, shows and competitions for especially children to promote the store as a brand so as to fetch more number of shoppers' to their store.

**Retail Shoppers' Frequency of Visit:**
The retailers in order to increase the footfalls should come out with shopper loyalty programmes for regular visitors as well as membership programmes to lure the retail shoppers for frequent visits to the retail store.

They should also deploy specific targeting and segmenting tools to position themselves as discount stores, providing value for money outlets, giving quality products to shoppers etc. by launching various sales promotion schemes.

**Retail Shoppers' Preferred Companion:**

The key here for the retailer is to provide retail shoppers' a family friendly space so that they feel at ease during their shopping journey. The retail shopper seeks emotional gratification when they are in the retail store. The retailer therefore should focus on providing naturally stimulating environment so as to satisfy the retail shopper by knowing their various touch points. The retailers should have a mechanism to train and support their sales staff so that they can provide necessary support to the retail shoppers' who are visiting the retail store.

The employees of the retail store should be trained to solve certain problem instantly in case there is a delivery of defective product, poor service, or facility by replacing defective goods spontaneously or providing free shipping if there is delay in fulfilment of orders.

The retailers need to keep a track of the involvement of companions accompanying the retail shoppers as they tend to exert influence on the buying decisions of the retail shoppers. The retailers should try to provide an enriching shopping experience to the retail shoppers' to convey positive word of mouth about his or her experiences of the retail store.

**Retail Shoppers' Preference for Source of Information:**

The retailers should try to reach the retail shoppers innovative sources of information by targeting those shoppers residing in the vicinity of the retail shoppers so as to fetch them to the store. The retailers can conduct specifically targeted promotional schemes in the local areas to lure these retail shoppers residing proximate to the retail areas. The retailers should come out with special schemes in which the retail shopper can be motivated to visit with his or her family, friends, relatives and others.

Further, a conscious deliberate attempt need to be made by the retailers to effectively monitor the various sources of information that the retail shopper uses before choosing a retail store. This would help the retailers to target the specific clusters of retial shoppers for motivating them to visit the retail store.

**Retail Shoppers' Preference for Retail Store Formats:**

The retailers need to devise a unique format which incorporates aspirations of the local shopper by effectively monitoring the shopper behaviour. Such a store format, would encapsulate all the products in one store that can offer a unique single buying destination to different shopper groups.

**Retail Shoppers Shopping Orientations: [Ways of Shopping]**

In order to match with varied shopping orientations of different categories of Retail Shoppers, the retailers should train the sales staff in the retail store which understands the various styles of shopping of various shoppers. The retailers should also modify their Human Resource Management [HRM] strategy by job rotations, transfers, and promotions. By doing so, the retail shoppers would get pleasant experiences while shopping in the retail store as their expectations are fulfilled by the manner in which the retail shoppers are handled.

**Retail Shoppers' Shopping Orientations: [Fashion Trends]**

As observed in the research study, the retailers should adopt a robust retail strategy which takes into account the availability of latest brands for the fashion conscious shoppers especially in the apparel and lifestyle product categories.

The retailers need to consider the geographical area specific lifestyle and accordingly the product categoreis to be offered. The retailer needs to make an attempt so as to position as low cost alternatives to regional, national or international brands. The retailer should consider to offer low cost alternatives under 'private labels' so as to compete with international and national brands. Thus, the retailer should strike a balance by selling latest brands of international and national repute and also low cost products considering the 'Glocal' Strategy.

**Retail Shoppers' Planning for Shopping:**

The retailers in order to establish synergy with diverse groups of retail shoppers having planned and unplanned buying approach towards shopping should try to realign their facilities, sales counters, infrastructure, and support services. The retailers can opt for a strategy where retail shoppers can place an order online, toll- free customer support services, mobile applications and pick up the products later at their convenient hours. These customer support practices are more prevalent amongst the retail stores of other countries which need to be followed by the retailers in the State of Gujarat.

**Retail Shoppers' Actual Experiences:**

The retailers should try to provide pleasant and memorable shopping experiences to retail shoppers which would subsequently result into positive word of mouth by satisfied retail shoppers. The retailers should come out with a strategic plan by providing pleasant ambience of the retail store, store layout, proper display of sign boards, in-store display and merchandise, trained sales staff and varieties of product assortment which can result into a unique and enthralling shopping experience of the retail shoppers.

This should be consistently pursued by the retailer without any substantial variations to avoid the distortion of positive perception of retail shoppers about the retail store. It can be clearly deduced from this research study that some retail shoppers sought enjoyment and fun while shopping, whereas some wanted to economize on their shopping. Some retail shoppers seek recreation whereas other retail shoppers want a personalized and customized offering from the retailer. These shopping orientations are varied and the retailer may not be able to satisfy all different types of retail shoppers. The retailers therfore should put efforts to strike a balance by positioning their store image in such a way that can satisfy the retail shoppers' needs and wants and yet maintain a distinct unique image. The key for retailers is to interweave all those aspects of sales staff behaviour, special discounts and weekly offers and pleasant shopping ambience in the retail store so as to provide memorable shopping experiences to their shoppers. The retailers need to locate their stores in open, airy spaces surrounded with greenery which can appeal to the passerby and shall evoke a strong feeling in their mind to visit the retail store.

**The Retail Store Attribute: Accessibility of the Retail Store**

The retailers may decide to open more branches in densely populated areas so that the access in terms of place, time, cost, availability, convenience of buying can be improved.

The retailers can conduct analysis of the geographical area by evaluating the demographic characteristics of the area. The retailers can use the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software to determine their retail store location where the traffic is high.

These can include the size and characteristics of the surrounding population; the level of competition; access to transportation; the availability of parking; attributes of nearby stores; property costs, and the length of a lease agreement as well as legal restrictions. From the findings of this research study, it was inferred that it is possible to influence the orientation of the retail shoppers by offering newer retail store formats.

The retailers therefore must formulate a marketing strategy that should entail retail mix planning; tenant selection; lease management; facilities management; utilities management; parking facilites and organizing events , and collaborative promotions which are critical drivers for the success of retail stores in the Gujarat State.

**The Retail Store Attribute: Sales Promotion Schemes offered by the Retail Store**

The retailer need to take strategic advantage of clearing the old piled up stock by launching product category via specific sales promotion campaigns. The retailers should also add the element of fun and frolic in advertising campaigns of certain product categories so as to add newness to their existing promotional programmes.

The retailers can offer discounts, rebates, coupons, or free items to incentivize retail shoppers to buy at given by a deadline. The retailers should roll out various shopper loyalty programs for shoppers to induce them for repeat purchase. The use of Point-of-Purchase [POP] displays too can bring out leverage  to result into the impulse buying behaviour of the retail shoppers. The retailers can take into consideration the festive season to make the shopping increasingly interesting and entertaining. Further, various concepts such as kid friendly activities, games, and in-store events can also be incorporated while framing sales promotion campaigns.

The retailers in the Gujarat State need to focus on wide scale advertising in newspapers as the local newspapers are regularly referred by the retail shoppers as a source of information. The traditional print media still holds true for the modern day Brick and Mortar retail stores. The print media still has its appeal as far as tactical advertising is concerned as it allows for a focused geographic reach. With tactical advertising clearly scoring over brand advertising in the retail industry, the next logical step comes in determining the advertising media that is the electronic including the power of mobile penetration through SMS or print media.

**The Retail Store Attribute: Store Atmosphere**

The retailers should strive to create a unique and exciting in-store atmosphere. This can be done by effective store design that is soothing and clutter free. The entire design schema should be laid out effectively by creating different colour combinations on shelves where the products are displayed. The retailers can facilitate the retail shoppers by proper signage which leads them to the desired place in the retail store.

The light music played in the background, proper sitting arrangement, proper Air Conditioning and attractive décor of the retail store can induce the retail shopper to stay longer in the retail store. The other factors viz., adequate parking facilities, security staff, shopping baskets, and caring sales staff too can play a major role in determining the satisfaction level of the retail shoppers. The retailers need to create a stimulating retail store atmosphere that can create a pleasant store ambience with cool air and exhilarating decorations too stimulate shopping intentions.

In addition, the retailers can add the aspect of fun and novelty which can lead to curiosity amongst the retail shoppers to visit a particular section in the retail store. These elements when used imaginatively can lead to increase in sales.

The retailers should also focus on proper assortment of merchandise, display of products in such a way that retail shoppers are attracted to visit the retail store. This can be done by creating aesthetic appeal of the products stored on the shelf of the retail store. The key to success for retailers in the Gujarat State is to have effective shelf space management.

The retailers should therefore make adequate arrangements for stocking different products which matches synergistically with their retail store format and retail store image.

The retailers in the Gujarat State should aim to understand and fine tune their retail store attributes by understanding the orientations of retail shoppers.

**The Retail Store Attribute: Range of Products**

The retailers of the Gujarat State can ensure availability of wide range of products by proper Supply Chain Management [SCM] practices. Further, the availability of the complete range of products needs to be properly displayed in a well thought out way. While displaying products, retailers can choose between showcasing and mass merchandising. Showcasing of the range involves displaying a few samples on the shelves with the remaining stock stored out of sight. This method is convenient when retail store has minimal space to work with. Mass merchandising of the range involves placing larger amounts of inventory on display, but if not carefully managed, it could result into a 'cluttered' feel.

In certain product categories, especially Specialty Goods retailers may also wish to display fewer and more expensive items.

The retailers need to be diligent and exercise prudence for transparency in their offerings as the retail shoppers are aware of the price, quality, availability and ingredients of the products when they visit to the retail shop for shopping. The retailers therefore need to understand the shopping pattern of their retail shoppers each time when they visit their retail store for shopping by keeping a database of the goods that they had bought in their last shopping trip.

The retailers also need to ensure the availability of the wide variety of products in the retail store which too can play an important role in determining the repurchase intentions of the retail shopper from the same store. The retailers must ensure the availability of branded commodities and private labels across product categories. Moreover, the retailers need to constantly strive to maintain uniqueness in their product offering and ambience of the retail store so as to remain popular amongst the retail shoppers.

The retailers need to take care about the quality of the products sold and its entire range which is to be displayed effectively using window display and mannequins. This should constitute an important consideration in the strategic marketing and merchandising plan of the retail store manger.

The focal point for the retailers is to give consideration to visual display that is the information displayed on the signboards would help the retail shoppers to identify, inspect and browse the products in a convenient manner.

## The Retail Store Attribute: Physical Facilities

The physical facilities of the retail store would continue to remain an important factor of consideration not only when the retail shoppers will visit the store but also to make the retail shopper feel at ease when s/he is carrying out his or her task of shopping.

The retailers must ensure the availability of the security personnel in the parking space which would enable the retail shoppers to shop with a sense of security. Moreover, the ample parking space should be allotted adequately so that the retail shoppers can park their vehicles without any hassles of the traffic police and congestion.

The basic and conventional physical facilities are not enough to create uniqueness. The retailers in the Gujarat State should invest in building capabilities by leveraging advanced technology to smoothen the retail experience of shoppers visiting the store. The retailers can use effective Point-of-Sale [POS] Terminals by recognizing the opportunities emerging from the Internet of Things [IOT] and develop strategies to help increase buying in the home and through integrated products and services.

In order to facilitate information processing of the retail shoppers the retailers should enhance the store image dimensions in terms of the interior decoration of the retail store, colour combination of products on shelves to enhance overall aesthetic appeal and effective merchandising.

The retailers must pay attention and keep the facilities available in the retail store up-to-date as these plays a very silent and yet a dominant role in deciding the satisfaction level of the shoppers visiting the retail store. These are the variables that can serve as internal cues to the retail shoppers while they are in the retail stores.

## The Retail Store Attribute: Behaviour of the Sales Staff:

By the very nature of its business, a retail store requires all employees to be highly service oriented. Since service orientation would involve interaction with retail shoppers, it is therefore not surprising that employee personality act as antecedents to their performance in a retail setting. The retail sales associate who comes into a direct contact with the retail shopper needs to carefully trained, so that s/he can deliver the desired level of service to the retail shoppers. The Brick-and-Mortar retail store can add the element of in-person interaction, where store associates represent the face and voice of your retail store company. The retailers in the Gujarat State should institutionalize a mechanism in which they effectively monitor the feedback of the retail shoppers regarding their interaction with the sales staff in the retail store.

Asking shoppers if they were greeted, assisted, recommended related items, were able to buy everything the intended, or similar tactical questions and quantifying their impact on future shopper behaviour can help the retailer to identify, evaluate and modify the behaviour of sales staff in order to better serve them. The retailers' also need to develop an effective performance appraisal system aimed at motivating the sales staff. So if sales associates of the retail store company are satisfied and engaged, they are likely to enthusiastically participate in company-wide initiatives to improve the customer experience, which in turn can help to deliver higher shopper satisfaction and they might build intentions to revisit the retail store for rebuying in near future.

**The Retail Store Attribute: Institutional Factors**

The retailers need to create an image or identity of the retail store with which the retail shoppers can relate to. The retailers need to create specific price-performance combinations to attract a relevant target segment. The retailers can evolve a differentiation strategy by engaging in community outreach programmes, corporate social responsibility practices, and conducting events so as to build a unique image in the mind of the shopper.

The results of this research study support the proposition that the retail shoppers buying grocery products emphasise on retail store attributes viz., product assortment, product availability and retailer's attitude respectively.

Similarly the importance of different retail store attributes varies with product categories. Thus, the retailers' dealing with different product categories need to emphasise on different retail store attributes depending upon the type of retail shoppers' s/he deals with. The retailers need to use carefully crafted positioning strategies to differentiate themselves from growing competition and encourage retail shoppers to create a preference, build retail shoppers' loyalty and thus increase the patronage by giving special facilities to them. The retailers should continuously strive to position their store as 'Brand' by engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility [CSR] activities, organising special events to create a positive image in their minds.

**6.15: CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:**

The contribution of retail sector has lead to emergence of shopping culture of Gujarat. The retailing in India is receiving global appreciation and attention, and this emerging market is witnessing a significant change in its growth and investment pattern. Today's urban Gujarati retail shoppers' do prefer retail stores that gives them value for money and "self service" options in the retail store. This beckons the era of "Serviced Retailing," where the ertail shopper approaches the retailer and asks for specific items, which the retailer fetches from behind the counter.

In order to devise appropriate plans and strategies and take advantage of these opportunities of growth to its fullest extent, the retailers need to give the best shopping experience in kind of malls and organized retail stores.

It is imperative to understand the retail shoppers' behaviour in different formats of organized retailing which would help the different stakeholders of retail industry. Factually, retailers' are spending millions of rupees to sway retail shoppers through the medium of advertisements, packaging, product features, sales pitches and retail store environment. But it is evident that every marketing strategy formulated for attracting retail shoppers might have different implications. Thus, it can be concluded that understanding the shopping behaviour of retail shoppers at a greater depth specifically with reference to the selected retail stores in the Gujarat State could lead to increased store traffic of retail store.

In terms of retail store attributes the retail shoppers in the selected cities of Vadodara, Surat, Ahmedabad and Rajkot of the Gujarat State, it was found that they accorded more importance to the promotional schemes; ambience of the store; range of products; atmosphere of the retail store, and the overall image of the retail store.

These store attributes of the retail store need to be given due consideration by the retailers in State of Gujarat by seamless integration of all of each of the retail store attributes in order to portray a uniqueyet a holistic image of the retail store.

From this research study, we can deduce that the orientation of the retail shoppers in Gujarat State which is based largely on entertainment value derived out of shopping needs a special attention by the retailers'.

The data analysis has indicated that the retail shoppers' sought emotional value more than the functional value of shopping. Although, there is a belief that shopping being considered a task and should be finished as soon as possible, this shopping orientation is overshadowed by the entertainment value derived by the retail shoppers.

The tendency of the retail shoppers to talk about their shopping experience has implications for building the reputation of the retail store. It is imperative that every retail shopper visiting a retail store needs to be handled carefully because whether the retial shoppers buy or not. Further, they would also discuss about his or her visit with others, an inclination to patronize retail stores, and attached importance to referrals. A positive opinion would surely help build retail store traffic as well as loyalty to the store.

The research study had also pointed out that the retail shoppers in Gujarat State is having a limited choice of retail formats, an important variable in shaping shopping orientation.

Due to the lack of a varied experience, the retail shoppers do not seem to expect distinctive characteristics from different retail stores which usually retail shoppers in developed western countries usually expect. The format of the retail store would contine to be a prime driver to shape retail shoppers' intentions.

From this research study, it was also concluded that the retail stores in the selected cities of Gujarat State were chosen by the retail shoppers based on the products that they sell. Hence, the products become the primary consideration for them and it subdued the importance of other retail store attributes taken into account in this research study. The retailers in Gujarat State need to take up the task of demonstrating the value added characteristics by a retail store where the store acts as a brand in itself.

**6.16: LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:**

- As this study research study involves collection of primary data through informal discussion and use of structured-non-disguised questionnaire based on an empirical field survey by mall intercept interviews, all efforts were made to check, reduce and minimize ambiguous responses as provided by the selected retail shoppers that might lead to distorted and incorrect data information, analysis and findings of the research study.

- As this empirical field study was mainly undertaken based on collection of primary data and information was collected mainly from urban population, it would be inappropriate to generalize it as fit and representative for the entire population of the Gujarat State.

- The research study is mainly carried out in the four selected cities only viz., Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot of the Gujarat State. This research work does not aim to cover the total picture of all urban customers.

- The findings of the research study are suffering from limitations of restricted sampling size, sampling design as followed by the researcher in the research study.

- Errors due to misinterpretation or misunderstanding of retail shoppers', inattention might or might not have affected results of this empirical research study systematically.

## 6.17: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDY:

- While the findings of this research study have implications for retail store format decision, they do not give any indication of other aspects such as location and assortment planning for each of the retail stores in specific which can be considered as a probable area of further research in future.

- The research study had focused on four major cities of the Gujarat State similar studies or comparative empirical research studies can be conducted in various other cities of Gujarat State and this research study can also be extended to national level in other States of India. Since, it is possible that different cities would have a different socio-cultural setting and retailing requires good "local'' knowledge, we suggest that future research should also study the differences in orientation across cities or regions. A detailed study of the retail shoppers for a particular product class may yield more focused findings that may be easier to implement. This research study is also not specific to a particular retail store or retail store format. The researchers may also like to find out the relationship of shopping orientation with store attributes viz., merchandising, location, communication, and customer retention.

- The researcher has conducted a retail shoppers' study focusing on shoppers' behaviour in retail stores in the selected retail stores of Gujarat State. Similarly, a two-fold study can be undertaken considering the specific aspects of retailer's as well as shoppers which help in formulating robust retail marketing strategies.

- Other research studies can be carried out separately for each of the department of retail stores separately so as to improve and strengthen retail practices possibly for each of the service encounters specifically.