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Elizabeth Lloyd Alison Y.K. Chan Ricky S.C. Yip Leslie Chan Andrew

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Time buying and time saving: effects on service convenience and the shopping experience at the mall

Alison Elizabeth Lloyd and Ricky Y.K. Chan

Department of Management and Marketing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Leslie S.C. Yip

School of Profession Education and Executive Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong, and

Andrew Chan

School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Abstract

Purpose – The domain of service convenience remains relatively unexplored. However, as time pervades all aspects of consumption, the value placed on time is likely to influence the importance of convenience. Prior studies call for the investigation of convenience beyond the store context; and malls being a one-stop shopping destination, present an ideal environment for investigation.

Design/methodology/approach – A conceptual model delineating the relationships between service convenience, shopping trip value, customer satisfaction and several retail outcomes is developed. This model is empirically tested using survey data collected from 619 mall shoppers; and analyzed using structural equation modelling.

Findings – For shoppers who place high economic value on time, the effects of service convenience are greater on hedonic value. Conversely, those who place low economic value on time, effects of service convenience are greater on utilitarian value. Effects of shopping value on retail outcomes also vary according to value placed on time.

Research limitations/implications – Further investigation utilizing full convenience scale and more elaborate time style measures encouraged.

Practical implications – Results signal the importance of enhancing the experiential aspects of the mall for high economic time value shoppers. Conversely, for low economic time value shoppers, findings suggest the importance of boosting the visual distinctiveness and ease of mall navigation.

Originality/value – This study sheds light on research gaps by examining the link between service convenience and its effects on retail evaluation in the mall. It also considers how the economic value placed on time impact perceptions of convenience and the shopping experience.

Keywords Customer satisfaction, Time, Service convenience, Shopping mall, Shopping value

Paper type Research paper

An executive summary for managers and executive readers can be found at the end of this article.

Introduction

The stresses and demands of modern day life mean that people are increasingly feeling a sense of time scarcity. Time paucity leads consumers to place a premium on shopping options that are quick and easy (Seiders *et al.*, 2000). Consequently, along with the combined forces of other economic and sociocultural factors, a steady rise in consumer demand for convenience from prepurchase to postpurchase is an ever-present trend in the marketplace (Seiders *et al.*, 2007). In response to this, numerous firms are shifting their resources to position themselves as convenience-focused in

their customer management strategy (Chang and Polonsky, 2012; Seiders *et al.*, 2007). However, although time pervades all aspects of consumption; its effects on convenience are an unanswered query.

Once heralded as a key retail revolution since the Second World War, mall patronage is now declining, with sales growth unable to match inflation rates (Pacelle, 1997). Declining patronage is attributed to lack of differentiation (Allard *et al.*, 2009), escalating time pressures faced by consumers (Wakefield and Baker, 1998), and stiff competition from a range of leisure activities other than shopping (Reimers and Clulow, 2009). Malls are facing growing rivalry not just from other malls, but from increasingly popular non-store options such as catalog, television selling, online shops, and direct selling (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007; Kim, 2002; Lotz *et al.*,

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2010), which offer greater convenience. Today's time-impovertised shoppers are frustrated with malls, resulting in fewer trips made, and instead defecting to convenience stores, discounters, revived main streets and specialty stores providing quality service and requiring less shopping time for top-up and planned shopping trips (Coleman, 2000; Haytko and Baker, 2004; Reynolds *et al.*, 2002; Wakefield and Baker, 1998). With the proliferation of alternative shopping options, retailers and mall developers are faced with the challenge of making their malls a more convenient place to shop. This can be accomplished in numerous ways such as through clustering of similar or complementary product category stores together or installing moving walkways and escalators that span several floors to save shopper time and effort.

Convenience adds value to consumers by conserving their non-monetary costs (time and effort) during purchasing (Colwell *et al.*, 2008; Farquhar and Rowley, 2009). Although convenience is increasingly essential to consumers, Berry *et al.* (2002, p. 14) suggests the construct is "unchartered territory and requires further investigation to increase our understanding of this phenomenon". Five types of convenience occur in services including: decision convenience, access convenience, transaction convenience, benefit convenience and post-benefit convenience (Berry *et al.*, 2002; Seiders *et al.*, 2007). To date, most of the studies on service convenience have been conducted on a store level and Seiders *et al.* (2005) urge for the study of this construct in other contexts.

Similar to retail stores, the mall is part of the metawrapping of products and services (Michon and Chebat, 2004). Malls are an important part of a consumer's lifestyle as they contain shops, restaurants, entertainment and more all under one roof; making them an ideal context to study convenience. Empirical studies using the context of malls (El-Adly, 2007; Reynolds *et al.*, 2002; Zhuang *et al.*, 2006) examine convenience from a macro viewpoint of convenient access; a perspective which ignores customer's expended effort and time relating to the sequence of activities they go through when buying and using services in the mall. Furthermore, accessible retailers are still susceptible to lose business if they are inconvenient in other ways (Seiders *et al.*, 2000).

Shopping entails expenditure of money and time. Unlike money, time is not expandable and its value differs among individuals. Consumers who are prone to view time as a scarce resource are more sensitive to the time costs of activities, as differences in time orientation shapes perceptions of convenience (Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994; Shimp, 1982). According to Berry *et al.* (2002), the greater the time costs associated with a service, the lower the consumers' perception of service convenience. Prior research affirms a positive link between service convenience and customer satisfaction, however, scholars have urged for the inclusion of shopping value and other retail outcomes to better comprehend the construct (Heinonen, 2006).

Therefore, this research is an attempt to narrow the existing research gaps by examining the link between service convenience and its effects on retail evaluation in a mall setting. Specifically, we consider whether the manner in which an individual approaches time influences their perceptions of service convenience and the shopping experience using a measure of time style. Findings from this empirical study are intended to provide mall operators and developers with useful

insights into enhancing the convenience of their services and facilities, and ultimately boosting patronage. Furthermore, this paper lays the foundations for investigating convenience in other contexts where one-stop shopping is paramount.

We address these questions by developing a conceptual model that delineates the relationships between service convenience, shopping trip value, customer satisfaction and resulting retail outcomes. The conceptual model is empirically tested by analyzing the survey data of 618 mall shoppers with structural equation modelling analysis. Subsequent sections of the research discuss the findings and provide managerial implications. Finally, the paper concludes with some limitations and suggestions for further research.

Conceptual development

Service convenience

Service convenience is defined as consumers' time and effort perceptions related to buying or using a service (Berry *et al.*, 2002). Early studies of convenience are primarily based on a physical goods context and a review of the literature on its dimensions reveals some overlap. Convenience pertains to the costs incurred by the customer through the expenditure of time, physical and nervous energy, and money to overcome time and space constraints when obtaining possession of goods and services (Kelley, 1958). Yale and Venkatesh (1986) claim that convenience comprises largely economic and temporal dimensions, with the former being indicative of the value of time, and the latter the consumer's ability to buy or save time. Studies on convenience in services remain relatively sparse; however, recent work by Seiders *et al.* (2007) shows that the construct consists of five major dimensions namely: decision, access, transaction, benefit, and post-benefit convenience. These dimensions manifest the major activities involved in the service acquisition process and specifically reflect perceived time and effort expenditure in deciding how to obtain a service, reaching and requesting a service, securing the right to use a service, experiencing the service's core benefit, and reinitiating contact with the service provider after obtaining the benefit (Berry *et al.*, 2002).

Decision convenience is salient before the service exchange and entails the decision of which service provider to patronize to obtain a good or service; hence availability of information about the service provider facilitate and its competitors determine this dimension (Seiders *et al.*, 2007). This dimension is equally applicable to the mall context as consumers can ascertain whether they are able to find information about the mall, and whether it offers what they need. Access convenience is critical as nothing happens until the consumer gets in touch with the service provider (Keh and Pang, 2010). Access convenience is determined by the service provider's physical location, operating hours and remote contact options (Berry *et al.*, 2002). The properties of this dimension remain valid for the mall context. Benefit convenience involves the customer's experience of the core benefits of the service and is contended to vary in importance across service categories and may be less important for services high in hedonic value as opposed to utilitarian value (Seiders *et al.*, 2007). A key benefit of the mall is the provision of a variety of shops under one roof. In the mall context, this dimension is considered valid and pertains to the ease of finding particular stores and availability of assistance or advice by the mall operator. Transaction convenience entails the

perceived time and effort to complete the purchase transaction of a service (Colwell *et al.*, 2008). In the mall setting, this can be rendered as the ability of the mall to offer one-stop shopping and whether consumers can complete their purchases quickly. Post-benefit convenience is omitted here as it occurs when the customer contacts the service provider after the sale is complete to initiate requests for maintenance, upgrades or the handling of product exchanges. In the mall context, this facet appears to be less applicable.

In general, convenience is applicable in a mall setting as it offers spatial and temporal utility to facilitate possession utility, and can be designed correspondingly to attract patronage (Clulow and Reimers, 2009). Temporal utility pertains to the consumer's ability to buy or save time while spatial utility infers proximity in location which gives rise to efficiency (Yale and Venkatesh, 1986). These types of utility are reflected in the various dimensions of convenience mentioned previously.

Time style

Time is an antecedent to and a consequence of purchase (Jacoby *et al.*, 1976). There are several perspectives on time. From an economic viewpoint time is regarded as an intangible commodity that exists in limited and finite quantities, and can be acquired by trading another resource such as money or effort (Becker, 1965; Jacoby *et al.*, 1976). Utilizing a commodity perspective of time, studies have focused on time use patterns, dividing time among different temporal categories such as work, homework, and leisure; and how consumers spend time in the different stages of consumer purchase (problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and postpurchase evaluation) (Jacoby *et al.*, 1976; Graham, 1981; Usunier and Valette-Florence, 2007). In the social psychological perspective, focus is placed on measuring time allocation and expenditure largely through time budgets (Robinson, 1977). From a psychology viewpoint, models of time have examined how individuals apprehend time with perceived time duration comprising the majority of research (Hirschman, 1987).

The term time style originates from Feldman and Hornik (1981) to describe the allocation of time among the various activities involved in the consumption of goods and services. This study considers time style as an individual's general attitude toward time as adopted by Durrande-Moreau and Usunier (1999). Time style is regarded as multi-faceted, consisting of social orientation (time for self or time with/for others), temporal orientation (significance attached to past, present or the future), planning orientation (analytic versus spontaneous time management style), and poly/mono chronic orientation (preference for handling either multiple versus several things at one time) (Cotte and Ratneshwar, 2003). Similarly, Durrande-Moreau and Usunier (1999) consider time style being comprised of several dimensions including economicity of time (preference for structured or organised time, and value placed on time), temporal orientation (past and future), time submissiveness (capacity to comply with schedules) and feeling of uselessness of time (belief that one's own time is of little value). Several overlaps can be inferred from these orientations, such as the dimensions of planning orientation with economicity of time. In subsequent research, economicity of time or economic value of time has frequently emerged as the most important factor of time styles and is

shown to have good reliability (Durrande-Moreau and Usunier, 1999).

The economic value of time or the worth placed on one's time is attributed to the value placed on its scarcity (DeVoe and Pfeffer, 2011). DeVoe and Pfeffer (2011) further posit that the value of time manifests itself in behaviour, where higher economic value of time works to increase the perception that time is scarce and hence induces feelings of time pressure. Customers who view time as a scarce resource often plan time usage carefully and prefer polychronic time usage (Jacoby *et al.*, 1976). The individual's sensitivity to the value of time and proneness to plan its usage has been put forth as a potential moderator of service convenience (Berry *et al.*, 2002). The economic value of time has the potential to permeate service convenience preferences and shopping experience evaluation and in the following sections we outline theoretical framework of its influence on shopping evaluation.

One's sense of time is often distorted when in a flow state; which is described as an intrinsically optimal state where the individual is so intensely absorbed in the activity at hand that the passage of time becomes distorted because attention is focused elsewhere (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Flow is a psychological condition epitomized by intense involvement and vigor (Lotz *et al.*, 2010). Flow theory has been extensively used to study leisure activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1982), online consumer experience (Novak *et al.*, 2003), and in-store shopping (Wang and Hsiao, 2012). Flow state can be induced during shopping and according to flow theory, an experience is most positive when an individual perceives that the environment contains high enough opportunities for action (or challenges), which are matched with their own capabilities or skills (Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989). The passage of time appears to pass faster than normal when in a flow state (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

Service convenience and shopping value

Value comprises all factors, quantitative and qualitative, objective and subjective that comprises the complete shopping experience (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Jackson *et al.*, 2011; Zeithaml, 1988). Prior research validates that shopping provides both utilitarian and hedonic value (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Babin and Attaway, 2000). Although both types of value are present, consumers will tend to characterise their choices as being driven primarily by either hedonic or utilitarian value (Batra and Ahtola, 1991). The shopping trip evokes value by successfully accomplishing its intended goal (utilitarian value) or by providing enjoyment and fun (hedonic value) (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Stoel *et al.*, 2004). Utilitarian value reflects the functional and instrumental benefits and is considered as a more task-oriented, and cognitive aspect of the shopping experience (Jones *et al.*, 2006). When shopping is viewed as an errand or task it is conducted for extrinsic reasons (Bellenger *et al.*, 1977; Jones *et al.*, 2006).

In comparison to utilitarian value, Tauber (1972) argued that consumers will shop for motives other than product procurement, namely for intrinsic reasons. Intrinsic motivations are closely linked to hedonic shopping value (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Lotz *et al.*, 2010). Hedonic value stems from more fun and playfulness than from task completion (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) and is indicative of shopping's entertainment and emotional worth

(Babin *et al.*, 1994). Shoppers who enjoy exploring new products, shop to escape or simply just shop for the sake of shopping are seeking hedonic value from the experience (Stoel *et al.*, 2004).

Service convenience is a means to add value to consumers via the reduction of time and effort expended to obtain a service (Colwell *et al.*, 2008). In the mall context, this contention is also expected to hold. Shoppers consume different types of goods and services in the mall. Malls facilitate shoppers by having suitable tenant mix, good design and layout, attractive visual displays and signage (Bloch *et al.*, 1994). Service convenience is crucial for the utility oriented shopper who wants to promptly complete the shopping task (Rintamäki *et al.*, 2006). Conversely, for the fun-seeking shopper, service convenience enables them to navigate their way through the mall easier and makes browsing more enjoyable, and facilitates comparison shopping (Collier and Sherrell, 2010). Malls providing service convenience facilitate shoppers to complete their shopping goals more efficiently by minimizing shopping costs while enhancing hedonic value by increasing shopping benefits (Clulow and Reimers, 2009). Consumers can minimize their shopping costs in the mall by one-stop shopping, cross-shopping, and multi-purpose shopping (Kim, 2002). Hence, it is expected that service convenience will have a positive effect on both hedonic and utilitarian shopping value.

Individuals who place high economic value on time are particularly sensitive to wasted time, and display a preference for structuring their time with planned tasks. It can be argued that such individuals regard time as being more valuable than their low economic value counterparts; thus the ability to achieve additional benefits other than simply purchasing required goods would essentially facilitate them to “expand time” and accomplish several goals within the shopping trip to the mall. The mall, being a one-stop shopping destination facilitates such shoppers to engage in polychronic time use in with multiple objectives being achieved at the same time. Polychronic consumers are likely to prefer environments that encourage one stop shopping (Kaufman *et al.*, 1991). Alternatively, it is plausible that shoppers who place low value on economic time are inclined to engage in more monochronic time use; hence service convenience provides them with greater utilitarian by facilitating them to complete each task quicker by saving time. Thus, it is expected that service convenience provides greater hedonic value to shoppers with high economic value of time by effectively facilitating them to buy time. Conversely, it is expected that service convenience provides greater utilitarian value to shoppers with low economic value of time by facilitating them to save time.

H1a. The positive effect of service convenience on hedonic shopping value is greater for high economic time value than for low economic time value shoppers.

H1b. The positive effect of service convenience on utilitarian shopping value is greater for low economic time value than for high economic time value shoppers.

Shopping value and customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation containing both cognitive and affective elements (Mano and Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1997). This concept of satisfaction is referred to as the “two-appraisal” model (Oliver, 1989).

Similar to prior research on convenience, satisfaction is conceptualised as a cumulative, global evaluation based on experience with a firm over time (Colwell *et al.*, 2008; Seiders *et al.*, 2005). Mano and Oliver (1993) contend that utilitarian evaluation of the consumption experience is more cognitive while hedonic evaluation is affective. Both hedonic and utilitarian shopping value are positively correlated with customer satisfaction (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Jones *et al.*, 2006; Mano and Oliver, 1993). Customer satisfaction is influenced more by the hedonic aspects of shopping rather than by utilitarian aspects (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Jackson *et al.*, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2006). Drawing on flow theory, consumers who shop for intrinsic rewards or for hedonic motives are more likely to experience flow states (Parsons, 2002). Intrinsically motivated leisure activities are associated with arousal, which produces affective outcomes (Day, 1981). Individuals in flow are reported to feel more active, alert, happy, and satisfied regardless of the task being performed (Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989), and hence the effects of hedonic shopping value on customer satisfaction would be expected to be greater than that of utilitarian shopping value.

As hedonic value is posited to be of more importance to high economic time value shoppers, this effect is expected to be greater than for their low economic time value counterparts. Similarly, utilitarian value is conjectured to be of higher importance to low economic time value shoppers, and thus the effect of this relationship is expected to be higher for this group of shoppers.

H2a. The positive effect of hedonic shopping value on customer satisfaction is greater for high economic time value than for low economic time value shoppers.

H2b. The positive effect of utilitarian shopping value on customer satisfaction is greater for low economic time value than for high economic time value shoppers.

Shopping value and retail outcomes

Positive moods result from both hedonic and utilitarian shopping value (Wakefield and Baker, 1998). The shopping experience itself evokes pleasure and arousal states. Shoppers experiencing high pleasure and arousal states engage in favourable consumption-related outcomes such as spending more time in the store, and greater willingness to repurchase (Babin and Darden, 1995; Wakefield and Baker, 1998). The retail outcomes examined in the conceptual model include repatronage intention, word-of-mouth, and desire to stay.

Similar to the definition adopted by Jones *et al.* (2006), repatronage intention is defined as the likelihood the customer will visit the mall again. In an earlier study, both hedonic and utilitarian shopping value positively influence customer share, which is captured in a way equivalent to actual repatronage behaviour (Babin and Attaway, 2000). Similarly, Jones *et al.* (2006) argue that hedonic value is positively related to repatronage intentions as shopping elicits affective experiences which are antecedents of approach motivation such as repatronage intention (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). Likewise, Jones *et al.* (2006) stipulate that the sense of accomplishment derived from obtaining sought-after goods or information prompt the shopper to remember their success and to be more likely to consider visiting the retailer again when similar shopping needs arise. Thus both utilitarian and hedonic value is expected to exert a positive effect on repatronage intention. However, research has shown that

hedonic value exerts a stronger positive effect on repatronage intention than utilitarian value (Jones *et al.*, 2006). As shoppers with high economic time value are expected to consider hedonic value more important, it is conjectured that the positive effect will be stronger for this group of shoppers. Similarly, low economic time value shoppers are predicted to place higher importance on utilitarian value and the effect of this on repatronage intention is expected to be higher for this group of shoppers.

- H2c.* The positive effect of hedonic shopping value on repatronage intention is greater for high economic time value than for low economic time value shoppers.
- H2d.* The positive effect of utilitarian shopping value on repatronage intention is greater for low economic time value than for high economic time value shoppers.

Word-of-mouth is "informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers" (Westbrook, 1987). Word-of-mouth can be positive, neutral or negative. This study focuses on positive word-of-mouth. Instances of positive word-of-mouth include relating pleasant, vivid or novel experiences and recommendations to others (Anderson, 1998). Word-of-mouth results from heightened product/use involvement that consumers' experience, which subsequently produces a tension that is released through sharing experiences with others (Westbrook, 1987; Dichter, 1966). Previous studies establish a positive relationship between hedonic value and word-of-mouth (Jones *et al.*, 2006).

Word-of-mouth is also associated with cognitive processes as it requires consumers to engage in attributional analysis, recall and interpret events, communicate and share meaningful information with others (Weiner, 1986). Sharing with others about the aspects of a shopping trip is a way to enhance the shopping experience, heighten the gratification received and boost self-esteem (Jones *et al.*, 2006). Since utilitarian value relates to the cognitive aspect of the shopping experience, it too should influence word-of-mouth. Past studies have shown that hedonic value exerts a stronger positive influence on word-of-mouth than utilitarian value (Jones *et al.*, 2006).

As shoppers with high economic time value are expected to consider hedonic value more important, it is conjectured that the positive effect of this type of shopping value on word-of-mouth will be stronger for this group of shoppers. Similarly, low economic time value shoppers are predicted to place higher importance on utilitarian value and the effect of this on word-of-mouth is expected to be higher for this group of shoppers than for their high economic time value counterparts.

- H2e.* The positive effect of hedonic shopping value on positive word-of-mouth is greater for high economic time value than for low economic time value shoppers.
- H2f.* The positive effect of utilitarian shopping value on positive word-of-mouth is greater for low economic time value than for high economic time value shoppers.

A concern to mall developers and retailers is the duration of the shopping trip, because the longer consumers' stay in a retail environment, the more likely they are to spend (Wakefield and Baker, 1998; Donovan and Rossiter, 1994). Shoppers experiencing high pleasure and arousal spend more

time in a store (Babin and Darden, 1995). Hence a positive relationship between hedonic value and desire to stay should be expected; the positive relationship is expected to be greater for high economic time value shoppers as the mall setting provides them with the ability to engage in several tasks all under one roof. Conversely, consumers who hold a utilitarian value perspective to shopping consider this activity as a chore and are considered as task shoppers. Task shoppers possess characteristics that make them similar to individuals that are reluctant to shop at malls and often engage in few activities while there (Bloch *et al.*, 1994); hence a negative relationship is expected between utilitarian value and desire to stay. This negative relationship is expected to be stronger for shoppers with high economic time value

- H2g.* The positive effect of hedonic shopping value on desire to stay at the mall is greater for high economic time value than for low economic time value shoppers.
- H2h.* The negative effect of utilitarian shopping value on desire to stay at the mall is greater for high economic time value than for low economic time value shoppers.

Customer satisfaction and retail outcomes

For mall operators, enhancing overall satisfaction boosts visitation and revenues (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Satisfaction is generally regarded as an affective construct (Olsen, 2002) and is defined as pleasurable fulfillment resulting from consumption that realizes a need, desire or goal (Oliver, 1997). Previous empirical studies also show that customer satisfaction leads to favourable behavioural outcomes such as higher repurchase intentions, loyalty, and repatronage intentions (Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Jones *et al.*, 2006). Affective reactions precede behavioural intentions such as word-of-mouth (Bagozzi, 1992) and indeed, this relationship is empirically demonstrated in prior research (Bitner *et al.*, 1990; Jones *et al.*, 2006; Swan and Oliver, 1989), and a similar relationship is also expected in the mall context. Desire to stay is a type of approach behaviour in environmental psychology; and scholars corroborate the association between approach behaviours and pleasure/arousal affective states (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). Hence satisfaction is likely to exert a positive influence on desire to stay. It is expected that these positive effects of customer satisfaction on the different retail outcomes should hold for both low and high economic time value shoppers.

- H3.* Increasing customer satisfaction increases repatronage intention.
- H3b.* Increasing customer satisfaction increases positive word-of-mouth.
- H3c.* Increasing customer satisfaction exerts increases desire to stay at the mall.

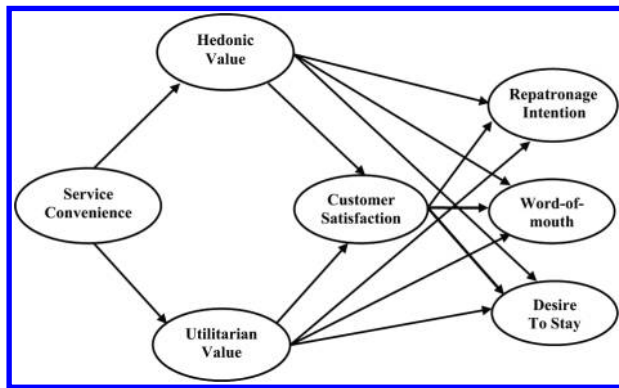
Figure 1 shows the overall model reflecting the predictions and proposed hypotheses.

Method

Data collection and sample

Trained interviewers were instructed to recruit respondents from several shopping districts covering several major entertainment malls throughout Hong Kong. Data were collected using street-intercept techniques over a three week

Figure 1 Conceptual model



period. Interviewers randomly intercepted every fifth respondent and all respondents were screened to ensure only those who had visited and stayed in an enclosed shopping mall in the district (with or without purchase made) for half an hour or more within seven days prior to the day of data collection were included in the study. Respondents were not provided with any compensation or incentives for their participation. Data collection was conducted throughout the day to ensure adequate representation of different shoppers in each of the shopping areas. The authors chose Hong Kong as the location for this study due to the city's renowned reputation as a shoppers' paradise. Hong Kong has a high density of shopping malls that are frequented by millions of shoppers each year, which provide ripe opportunity to study a wide range of shoppers.

The intercepts produced a total of 618 useable surveys. The sample consisted of 282 men (46 per cent) and 336 women (54 per cent). Forty-three per cent of shoppers were aged 25 or under, 34 per cent were aged 25–36 years old, 13 per cent were aged 36–45 years old and the remaining 9 per cent were aged from 46 to 66 years old and over. Just over half of the respondents were married. Almost 44 per cent of respondents earned annual incomes of less than US\$15,000. Just over one fifth of the sample (21.7 per cent) earned annual incomes of US\$30,000 or more. Majority of the sample were well-educated with 60.7 per cent of respondents having attained college or university education.

Measures

Existing scales are either used or adapted; items employed are shown in Table I. Seiders *et al.* (2007) developed full and reduced item versions of the service convenience scale. The full service convenience scale contains 17 items to capture each of the dimensions of decision, access, benefit, transaction and post-benefit convenience. However, if the focus of a study is not to ascertain how each of the dimensions of convenience influence customer perceptions or behaviour, then the use of the reduced item scale, is sufficient and is a parsimonious approach to capturing the construct (Seiders *et al.*, 2007). Results from Seiders *et al.* (2007) indicate consistency between the reduced and full convenience scale. Other studies have also employed the reduced version scale (Voss *et al.*, 2010). The reduced item scale contains 5 items, derived from using one item from each dimension of the original full scale. In this research, 4 items are utilized as post-benefit convenience is not considered in the scope of this

study. These 4 items were adapted to reflect decision, access, benefit and transaction convenience dimensions in the mall.

Shopping value was measured using the Personal Shopping Value scale developed by Babin *et al.* (1994) where hedonic and utilitarian value are captured with 11 and four items respectively. Hedonic value items pertain to the benefits from purchase or emotions experience during the shopping trip. Utilitarian value items relate to the benefits attained from accomplishing specific tasks or goals while shopping. Reliability for the hedonic scale has often been reported to exceed 0.90, however, reliability for the utilitarian scale has often been reported much lower (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Babin and Darden, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2006).

Customer satisfaction was measured with three items used by Seiders *et al.* (2007) with slight wording amendment to make the items applicable to a mall context. This research focused on consumers' overall assessment of satisfaction. This approach parallels the measurement of this construct in past research on convenience (Colwell *et al.*, 2008; Seiders *et al.*, 2005; Seiders *et al.*, 2007).

Repatronage intention was captured using three items adapted from Wakefield and Baker (1998). Word-of-mouth utilized three items from the behavioural intentions battery (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). Desire to stay adopted the two-item scale of Wakefield and Baker (1998).

Economic value of time was measured using 4 items adopted from Durrande-Moreau and Usunier's (1999) from the economic time dimension of the time styles scale. This scale has been employed in prior research and shows good psychometric properties (Usunier and Valette-Florence, 2007). With the exception of repatronage intention, all items in the survey were measured using seven-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Repatronage intention employed seven-point semantic differential scales.

Results

Measure validation

The psychometric properties of all multiple item constructs were evaluated by estimating a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model using AMOS 6.0 that includes eight latent constructs. Each item's loading was restricted to its *a priori* factor and allowed each factor to correlate with all other factors, while items and errors were not. Initial results showed that one item of hedonic value and two items of utilitarian value had low factor loadings (below 0.60) and were subsequently removed. These three items also yielded a negative item-total correlation. Furthermore, on closer examination of the items for hedonic and utilitarian value, they mirror those employed by Cotte *et al.* (2006). CFA was run again and results demonstrated that all items loaded highly significantly onto their expected factors only, serving to verify unidimensionality of measures. As shown in Table I, the confirmatory factor model fitted the data well: $\chi^2 = 1100.26$ ($df = 377$), comparative fit index = 0.937, normed fit index = 0.907, incremental fit index = 0.937, Tucker-Lewis index = 0.927, and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.056. Results show that all the measurement items load significantly on their corresponding latent constructs, with the lowest being 0.498, thereby providing evidence of convergent validity. To assess item reliability, either the Cronbach alpha or the Pearson correlation coefficient is reported in Table II. With

Table I Measurement model results

Measures	Mean	Standard deviation	Standardized estimate
SERVCON			
I can easily determine prior to shopping whether the mall will offer what I need	5.27	1.22	0.498
I am able to get to the mall quickly and easily	5.57	1.08	0.514
The stores that I want to visit at the mall can be located quickly	5.38	1.10	0.589
The mall makes it easy for me to conclude my transaction	5.27	1.17	0.737
Hedonic			
This shopping trip was truly a joy	5.25	1.05	0.660
I continued to shop, not because I had to, but because I wanted to	4.65	1.49	0.537
This shopping trip truly felt like an escape	5.00	1.26	0.726
Compared to other things I could have done, the time spent shopping was truly enjoyable	4.99	1.12	0.811
I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products.	4.91	1.58	0.646
I enjoyed this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased	4.93	1.27	0.790
I had a good time because I was able to act on the "spur-of-the-moment"	4.99	1.28	0.796
During the trip, I felt the excitement of the hunt	4.44	1.66	0.599
While shopping, I was able to forget my problems	4.68	1.71	0.597
While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure	4.41	1.78	0.516
Utilitarian			
I accomplished just what I wanted to on this shopping trip	5.16	1.27	0.789
While shopping, I found just the item(s) I was looking for	5.13	1.48	0.626
Repatronage intention			
In future, my shopping at this mall will be "Not at all" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 "Very frequent"	5.07	1.29	0.913
"Unlikely" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 "Likely"	5.14	1.36	0.934
"Impossible" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 "Very possible"	5.05	1.34	0.905
Word of mouth			
Say positive things about the mall to other people	5.20	1.06	0.917
Recommend the mall to someone who seeks your advice	5.15	1.12	0.904
Satisfaction			
I am satisfied with the service I receive from the mall	5.44	1.00	0.696
I am happy with the service I receive from the mall	5.34	1.10	0.946
I am delighted with the service I receive from the mall	5.25	1.15	0.937
Desire to stay			
I like to stay at this mall as long as possible	4.51	1.56	0.794
I enjoy spending time at this mall	4.43	1.58	0.875
Economic value of time			
I plan my activities so that they fall into a particular pattern during the day	4.51	1.56	0.894
I like to have a definite schedule and stick to it	4.43	1.58	0.926
I like to plan my daily activities so I know just when to do each thing	4.56	1.53	0.913
I enjoy following a schedule	4.44	1.58	0.915

Notes: All loadings significant ($p < 0.001$). Goodness of fit statistics: χ^2 (df) 1100.260 (377), CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.927, IFI = 0.937, NFI = 0.907, RMSEA = 0.056

Table II Scale analysis properties

Variable	Coefficient alpha	AVE	SC	HV	UV	CS	RI	WOM	DS
Service convenience (SC)	0.673	0.351							
Hedonic value (HV)	0.882	0.573	0.563						
Utilitarian value (UV)	0.493	0.507	0.454	0.273					
Customer satisfaction (CS)	0.890	0.752	0.498	0.518	0.271				
Repatronage intention (RI)	0.941	0.842	0.218	0.258	0.062	0.223			
Word of mouth (WOM)	0.830	0.829	0.508	0.537	0.376	0.531	0.323		
Desire to stay (DTS)	0.694	0.698	0.376	0.665	0.240	0.458	0.281	0.452	
Economic Value of time (ET)	0.952	0.832	0.119	0.127	0.072	0.107	0.125	0.122	0.144

Notes: *Cronbach alpha reported for Service convenience, Hedonic value, Customer satisfaction, Repatronage intention, and Economic value of time. Pearson correlation coefficient reported for Utilitarian value, Word of mouth, and Desire to stay. AVE = average variance extracted. Correlations are reported in the lower half of the matrix

the exception of the scale for service convenience, all Cronbach alphas are greater than 0.80 and all Pearson correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$. Discriminant validity of the constructs is supported as the squared correlation between each pair of constructs is less than the average variance extracted for each construct.

To test for common method variance, the marker variable technique was employed (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). Here the second smallest correlation among the manifest variables was utilized as a conservative proxy for common method variance. Also reported in Table III are the corrected standardised parameters. After correction, estimates are still in the expected direction and there are no changes to levels of significance, hence common method bias is not deemed a serious threat in this study.

Hypothesis testing

The next step in the analysis was to estimate the structural model. To examine the moderating effects of high and low economic time value on the proposed relationships in the conceptual model, a median split was first used to split the sample into high and low economic time value groups. Before testing the hypotheses, a series of t -tests were performed to compare the two groups. Results show significant differences in all except one of the items pertaining to utilitarian value, hence running separate structural models for each group was deemed suitable. Chi-square difference test was then used to compare a model in which all hypothesised paths are constrained to be equal across both groups with an unconstrained model in which the hypothesised path to be moderated could vary freely. The difference in chi-square between the unconstrained and constrained model was slightly significant ($\Delta\chi^2 [19] = 35.244$, $p = 0.013$); indicating some support for the moderation effect of economic time value. A second structural model was estimated that allowed the paths of interest to vary freely across both groups and results are provided in Table III.

Results show that the positive effects of service convenience on hedonic value to be higher for the high economic time value group, lending support to H1a. As predicted, the low economic time value group demonstrated a stronger positive relationship between service convenience and utilitarian value, thereby supporting H1b. Hypotheses H2a and H2b are also supported as the positive effect of hedonic value on customer satisfaction is greater for high economic time value shoppers; and the positive effect of utilitarian value on customer satisfaction is greater for low economic time value shoppers. In both shopper groups, hedonic value has been shown to exert a stronger, positive impact on customer satisfaction than utilitarian value and this aligns with results attained in previous research (Jones *et al.*, 2006; Babin *et al.*, 2005). This is ascribed to the ability of hedonic judgments to trigger of higher levels of arousal that subsequently generate higher levels of affect in contrast to utilitarian judgments (Mano and Oliver, 1993). H2c was also supported as hedonic value exerts a positive effect on repatronage intentions particularly for the high economic time value group. This path was insignificant for the low economic time value group. Utilitarian value failed to exert any significant positive effect on repatronage intention in both shopper groups, hence H2d was not supported. Prior research by Stoel *et al.* (2004) in the mall setting reaches similar results with only hedonic but not utilitarian value positively influencing repatronage intention. H2e was supported as hedonic value exerted a stronger, positive effect on word-of-mouth for the high economic time value group as predicted. Similarly, H2f was also valid as the positive effect of utilitarian value on word-of-mouth was stronger for the low economic time value group. The positive impact of hedonic value on desire to stay was expected to be greater for the high economic time value group; however results showed that this path was stronger for the low economic time value group, hence H2g was not supported. Utilitarian value exerted a negative, albeit insignificant effect on desire to stay in the high economic time value group,

Table III Structural model results by group

	Standardized estimates (not controlled for common method variance)		Standardized estimates controlled for common method variance		Differences between Low Econ and High Econ z-Score
	Low Econ	High Econ	Low Econ	High Econ	
SERVCON → Hedonic value	0.521 ***	0.584 ***	0.521 ***	0.584 ***	0.624
SERVCON → Utilitarian value	0.573 ***	0.380 ***	0.573 ***	0.379 ***	−1.88 *
Hedonic value → Customer satisfaction	0.428 ***	0.498 ***	0.427 ***	0.497 ***	0.752
Utilitarian value → Customer satisfaction	0.220 ***	0.117 *	0.219 ***	0.116 *	−0.704
Hedonic value → Repatronage intentions	0.084 (ns)	0.337 ***	0.083 (ns)	0.336 ***	2.315 **
Utilitarian value → Repatronage intentions	−0.004 (ns)	−0.028 (ns)	−0.005 (ns)	−0.029 (ns)	−0.264
Hedonic value → Word-of-mouth	0.218 ***	0.444 ***	0.217 ***	0.443 ***	2.149 **
Utilitarian value → Word-of-mouth	0.318 ***	0.132 **	0.317 ***	0.131 **	−0.1625
Hedonic value → Desire to stay	0.577 ***	0.548 ***	0.577 ***	0.548 ***	0.054
Utilitarian value → Desire to stay	0.109 *	−0.044 (ns)	0.108 *	−0.045 (ns)	−1.59
Customer satisfaction → Repatronage intentions	0.103 (ns)	0.112 (ns)	0.102 (ns)	0.111 (ns)	0.015
Customer satisfaction → Word-of-mouth	0.274 ***	0.288 ***	0.273 ***	0.287 ***	−0.104
Customer satisfaction → Desire to stay	0.054 (ns)	0.249 ***	0.053 (ns)	0.248 ***	2.281 **

Notes: * Coefficient is significant at $p < 0.10$; ** coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$; *** coefficient is significant at $p < 0.001$; ns = nonsignificant; model fit: $\chi^2_{(572)} = 1323.972$ ($p = 0.000$); CFI = 0.913; TLI = 0.902; NFI = 0.858; IFI = 0.914; RMSEA = 0.046

however its effect was positive for the low economic time value group, thus *H2h* was not supported.

Although customer satisfaction has a positive impact on repatronage intention across both shopper groups, its effect were insignificant, thereby lending only partial support to *H3a*. As predicted, customer satisfaction positively impacts word-of-mouth and this was found across both groups, giving support to *H3b*. Lastly, *H3c* was only partially supported as the positive effects of customer satisfaction on desire to stay were found to be only significant for the high economic time value group. With reference to Miles' (2003) recommended approach to analyzing statistical power within the structural equation modelling context, the present multi-group structural analysis attained a power level of 1.00 for the proposed model.

A test of the differences between high and low economic time value shoppers was conducted by estimating the standardised path coefficients of the structural model separately for each group. To examine the earlier non-invariance detected a critical ratio of differences test was conducted to examine whether the differences in parameter estimates across the two groups from the unconstrained models are significant. The estimates are given in Table III and results indicate that four significant differences exist between the two groups namely for: the effects of service convenience on utilitarian value, hedonic value on repatronage intentions and also word-of-mouth, and lastly for the impact of customer satisfaction on desire to stay.

Discussion

With the proliferation of malls in many developing countries, understanding how service convenience drives shopping value is imperative for mall operators. Malls need to facilitate shopping productivity by reducing the costs of shopping, as convenience triggers both positive hedonic and utilitarian value, leading to customer satisfaction, and ultimately some important retail outcomes. Furthermore the findings demonstrate that the value placed on time leads to notable differences in the effects of service convenience on shopping value and evaluation of the shopping experience in general. For shoppers who regard time as having high economic value, this is a resource that is scarce and hence service convenience in the mall is an important means for them to buy time or even expand time through being able to engage in several activities in one shopping trip. On the other hand, shoppers who hold low economic time value orientation are less inclined to view time as scarce and hence are less concerned with maximizing the number of activities undertaken within a specified time. It is likely in this instance that service convenience serves save time spent on shopping and instead increases the time for pursuing other activities or tasks. Results indicate clear significant differences in the effects of service convenience on utilitarian shopping value between the two groups. Shoppers holding low economic time value orientation regard utilitarian value more highly than their counterparts, implying that such individuals want to minimize time and effort on this type of activity.

The findings indicate that with the exception of the positive effect of hedonic value on desire to stay, the mall shopping trip predominantly triggers more hedonic rather than utilitarian value; while the opposite is true for their low economic time value counterparts. It is reasonable to infer

that shoppers with high economic time value orientation place a premium on polychronic time usage and the ability to perform multi-tasking in the mall. Low economic time value orientation shoppers appear to resemble what Cotte *et al.* (2006) metaphorically describe as shoppers who regard time as river. Such shoppers avoid planning their time and deem shopping as a chore, thereby attempting to minimize or save the amount of time spent on this activity. The ability to find a particular store in the mall and navigate around the mall is likely to be crucial for shoppers who want to complete their shopping trip efficiently.

Unexpected findings were obtained in the effects of both types of shopping value and desire to stay in the mall (*H2g* and *H2h*). It is reasonable to speculate that these were attributable to the context of the mall itself, being a destination combining shopping, dining and recreation all in one. Perhaps for low economic time value shoppers, the positive effects of hedonic value on desire to stay were greater because the mall allowed them to complete their shopping chores efficiently, and freed up time for them to engage in other pursuits within the mall such as dining, or entertainment. A similar line of reasoning for this group of shoppers with the unexpected positive path from utilitarian value to desire to stay could also be applied. Findings indicate that hedonic value has greater consequential effects on satisfaction and all the retail outcomes (except desire to stay) than utilitarian value.

Utilitarian value was found to exert a negative, albeit insignificant impact on repatronage intentions (*H2d*). This finding is similar to previous research findings from Stoel *et al.* (2004), and can be attributed to the fact that providing utilitarian value may not necessarily translate to intention to revisit the mall again. It may also be that the items used to capture utilitarian value in the current scale are interpreted to be more a factor of specific stores where the shopper was able to complete their shopping task, rather than the mall itself. Hence, in subsequent investigations, refinement of the utilitarian value items is needed to suit the mall context.

The prevailing influence of hedonic value serves to verify Kim's (2002) connotation that although consumers have an increasing need for efficiency and convenience, they want what they need in a more entertaining way whether it be in a store, or in the mall. Hedonic value represents the emotional worth of the shopping experience and the results underline its importance in securing future patronage. Facets of the mall experience constituting utilitarian value being considered as hygiene factors by shoppers is plausible; whereby their presence is expected but may not necessarily be value adding; and are insufficient in garnering customer satisfaction or loyalty alone. Similarly, partial support was attained for the effects of customer satisfaction on repatronage intention and desire to stay at the mall. These findings serve to underline that reliance on customer satisfaction alone is insufficient to ensure these important retail outcomes. The results of this study highlight the importance of creating an environment conducive to experiencing hedonic value to remain competitive.

Implications

The implications of the study shed light on how the mall environment can be designed or configured to enhance service convenience for these two shopper groups. To appeal to low economic time value shoppers, mall operators can enhance

service convenience by employing environmental differentiation, which is concerned with the visual distinctiveness of areas within the shopping environment (Haytko and Baker, 2004; Titus and Everett, 1995) through means such as colour zoning, or placing stores that aim at similar target groups together. In practice, clustering of stores is done to facilitate shoppers however, mall operators need to exercise care to avoid too much competition between tenants. Orientation aids in high traffic areas or consumer choice points can help shoppers find their way by improving the accessibility of information (Titus and Everett, 1995). Embracing newer forms of technology including mobile phone applications that are designed to provide time-poor shoppers with interactive maps of the mall, highlight elevator locations and the quickest route to stores may facilitate malls to win over utilitarian shoppers. Such applications can also guide a visitor to a mall, locate a vacant parking space quickly, and let the vehicle's position on a plan of the mall. Shoppers are guided to their favourite stores, and alerted of special offers inside the mall. An example of one such application is Fastmall, which is designed to make the shopping experience simpler and conserve time. This type of application is also likely to fare well with younger shoppers who are comfortable with using technology.

In contrast, for high economic time value shoppers, service convenience can be enhanced by providing environments that offer sensory stimulation and engaging activities, aiding to positively influence consumers' affective responses (Berry *et al.*, 2002; Bitner, 1990, 1992). Mall operators can strive to attract tenants that operate combination store formats (e.g. bookstore, florist, and cafe in one store) to facilitate polychronic time usage and multi-tasking. Mall atmospherics can be tailored to create and enhance shopping environments, or by focusing on the experiential aspects of the mall. A pleasant shopping environment entices shoppers to stay longer and return more through an appeal to the multiple senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste (Kim, 2002). Berry *et al.* (2002) argue that when hedonic shopping value is the prevalent focus for the shopper, he/she does not consider time and effort expenditures as a cost, but regards the mall visit as a time investment instead.

The importance of hedonic shopping value highlight the need for mall owners or operators to consider investments in improving the fun or enjoyable aspects of the mall visit can generate favourable outcomes. For instance, mall developers should consider boosting the sensory stimulation of the shopping environment to add a sense of "challenge" to shoppers as this is an important antecedent for inducing a flow state (Guiry *et al.*, 2006; Lotz *et al.*, 2010). The results also signal the importance of emotions in consumption and the need to strive to deliver a true experience for shoppers evidence demonstrates that pleasurable emotions entice shoppers to increase shopping time, unplanned expenditure (Donovan and Rossiter, 1994) and willingness to buy (Baker *et al.*, 1992).

Limitations and future research

The findings support the view that service convenience is pertinent to the mall context as it can buy and save time; however findings are still preliminary and further investigation is needed. Results also verify that the economic value of time influences perceptions of service convenience, shopping value

and other retail outcomes. However, this study is not without its limitations. The low Cronbach's alpha for the reduced service convenience scale signal the need to improve operationalisation, possibly by employing the full scale in future investigations. Utilizing the full scale would provide greater insight into the effects of each of the service convenience dimensions on the shopping experience. For instance, high economic time value shoppers have a tendency to carefully plan their time in advance, hence the effects of decision or access convenience, which occurs prior to reaching the shopping destination, would be stronger.

Another limitation is the predominantly young sample obtained in this study. Over 40 per cent of respondents are aged 25 or lower. A possible explanation for this occurrence is the tendency for teenagers and young adults to frequent the mall more often. Although mall patronage on average has been on the decline in many countries, visits to the mall have been increasing for adolescents who are estimated to make almost 40 per cent more trips to the mall than other age groups (Haytko and Baker, 2004). Given the size of this market segment, it is important that mall developers and operators gain insight into their evaluation of the shopping experience. Subsequent studies may consider older age groups and possibly different stages of the consumer lifecycle to see how convenience impacts shopping behaviour. For instance, it would be interesting to examine how some groups with considerably more leisure time such as retirees view convenience.

Examination of time style has been only considered from the factor of economic value of time. Although this factor has commonly emerged as one that explains the greatest variance across an array of studies, it is likely that other factors such as temporal orientation could play a role in perceptions of the shopping experience. Future investigations can employ more dimensions of time style to garner a better grasp of how attitudes towards time pervade use of time in shopping.

Future studies on service convenience in the mall can extend to examining the convenience preferences of different shopper types. Prior research on shopper types demonstrates that certain groups of shoppers display strong preference for convenience, although this was only captured as the physical distance between the mall and home/work (Reynolds *et al.*, 2002). Future investigations can utilize a broader definition of convenience to explore the effects of shopper orientation. For instance, the effects of service convenience on utilitarian value are likely to be more pronounced in shoppers holding a functional orientation. An investigation of the effects of shopping goal such as gift shopping, or bargain hunting on service convenience, or even the effects of whether shopping is done alone or in the company of friends or family are worthy avenues of further research.

Other than considering customer satisfaction as an affective construct, this study has not employed other affective or emotional measures. Given the importance of hedonic value and satisfaction in swaying important retail outcomes such as repatronage intention, word-of-mouth and desire to stay, future research would benefit from the inclusion of other affective constructs such as excitement or mood to acquire a better picture of the effects of service convenience.

Lastly, the findings of this research are based on the context of entertainment malls only; however they provide a platform for the exploration of service convenience in other contexts where time buying and time saving are paramount, such as

Internet shopping or self-service settings. Future studies should investigate convenience in more non-mall retail formats such as discount stores, and factory outlets for instance. Better comprehension of the drivers and effects of service convenience can facilitate retailers and mall operators alike to improve the value of their offering and supplement shoppers in their efforts maximize convenience through saving time and buying time.

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Corresponding author

Alison Elizabeth Lloyd can be contacted at: alison.lloyd@polyu.edu.hk

Executive summary and implications for managers and executives

This summary has been provided to allow managers and executives a rapid appreciation of the content of this article. Those with a particular interest in the topic covered may then read the article in toto to take advantage of the more comprehensive description of the research undertaken and its results to get the full benefits of the material present.

Those who run retail outlets – shops and shopping malls – have a tough choice. On the one hand they want to keep customers they have attracted in there as long as possible in the hope that they will buy more. On the other hand, they

know that busy people with limited time to shop want stores which allow them to find and pay for what they want as quickly as they can.

It's a tough call because some people want to enjoy the "shopping experience", to wander around, see what's on offer, and maybe have a coffee and a snack while they are there. Other people want the convenience of finding what they want immediately, not having to wait in a queue to pay so they can then rush off to their next appointment. For the former group, having an enjoyable and leisurely time at a mall might be welcome relief from their normally busy lives. For the latter group, they are likely to see it as part of their busy lives – and would welcome anything that got them through it faster, such as a mobile phone application which leads them to a parking spot, then to the shop which stocks just what they are looking for.

Another challenge facing store and mall operators is the increase in alternative shopping options and the consequent need to make their outlets a more convenient place to shop. This can happen in numerous ways such as through clustering of similar or complementary product category stores together or installing moving walkways and escalators that span several floors to save shoppers' time and effort.

With the proliferation of malls in many developing countries, understanding how service convenience drives shopping value is imperative for mall operators. The value which people place on their time leads to notable differences in the effects of service convenience on shopping value and evaluation of the shopping experience in general. For shoppers who regard time as having high economic value, it is a scarce resource and, consequently, service convenience in the mall is an important means for them to make best use of their time by engaging in several activities in one shopping trip. On the other hand, shoppers who are less inclined to view their time as scarce ("low economic time value shoppers") are less concerned with maximizing the number of activities undertaken within a specified time.

In "Time buying and time saving: effects on service convenience and the shopping experience at the mall" Dr Alison Elizabeth Lloyd *et al.* attempt to provide mall operators and developers with useful insights into enhancing the convenience of their services and facilities and ultimately boosting patronage. They do so by developing a conceptual model that delineates the relationships between service convenience, shopping trip value, customer satisfaction and resulting retail outcomes.

The study sheds light on how the mall environment can be designed or configured to enhance service convenience for these two shopper groups. To appeal to some shoppers, mall operators can enhance service convenience by employing environmental differentiation, which is concerned with the visual distinctiveness of areas within the shopping environment by means of, for instance, colour zoning, or placing stores that aim at similar target groups together. In practice, clustering of stores is done to facilitate shoppers. However, mall operators need to exercise care to avoid too much competition between tenants.

Orientation aids in high traffic areas or consumer choice points can help shoppers find their way by improving the accessibility of information. Embracing newer forms of technology, including mobile phone applications that are designed to provide time-poor shoppers with interactive maps of the mall, highlight elevator locations and the quickest route

to stores may facilitate malls to win over shoppers. Such applications can also guide a visitor to a mall, help them to quickly find a vacant parking space and log the vehicle's position. Shoppers are guided to their favourite stores, and alerted to special offers. This type of application is likely to fare well with younger shoppers who are comfortable with using technology.

Mall operators can strive to attract tenants that operate combination store formats (e.g. bookstore, florist, and cafe in one store) to facilitate multi-tasking. Mall atmospherics can be tailored to create and enhance shopping environments, or by focusing on the experiential aspects of the mall. A pleasant shopping environment entices shoppers to stay longer and

return more frequently. Previous research has argued that when hedonic shopping value is the prevalent focus for the shopper, he or she does not consider time and effort expenditures as a cost, but regards the mall visit as a time investment instead.

The importance of hedonic shopping value highlights the need for mall owners or operators to consider investments in improving the fun or enjoyable aspects of the mall visit which can generate favourable outcomes.

(A précis of the article "Time buying and time saving: effects on service convenience and the shopping experience at the mall". Supplied by Marketing Consultants for Emerald.)