

Psychographic Characteristics Linking Apparel & Lifestyle Pop-up Stores to Brand Experience and WOM Intentions of Generation Z Consumers

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at exploring the influence of psychographic characteristics such as hedonic shopping values, uniqueness values and store atmosphere on the brand experience and Word of mouth intentions of generation Z Indian consumers towards apparel and lifestyle pop-up store formats. A survey administered to 200 Indian consumers aged between 18-24 and analyzed using structural equation modelling to assess the same. The findings of this study illustrate that popup brand stores hedonic shopping value and store atmosphere have a direct significant relationship with brand experience but not with the WOM intentions of the consumer whereas uniqueness value does not exert influence on brand experience but stimulates positive WOM amongst target consumers. The findings did not ratify the indirect effect of hedonic shopping value, store atmosphere and uniqueness value mediated by brand experience on the WOM intentions of the generation Z consumers of India. The study also validates that brand familiarity does not act as a moderator between hedonic shopping value, store atmosphere and brand experience on WOM while, brand uniqueness is moderated by brand familiarity on WOM validating that popup store uniqueness value along with high brand familiarity results in generation of positive WOM for the store.

Keywords: Retail Marketing, Consumer behavior, Brand Experience, WOM, Hedonic values, Store uniqueness, Store atmosphere, Pop-up Stores

1. Introduction

The consumers' are experiencing a paradigm shift from a goods and services centralized economy towards a more experiential one, rendering traditional marketing techniques ineffective in contemporary retail (K. H. Kim, Ko, Xu, & Han, 2012). It is therefore becoming extremely important for retailers to provide the consumers with personalized experiences, (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, &

Knox, 2009; Sachdeva & Goel, 2015) greater choice, participation and engagement enabling them to connect with their brands at an emotional level (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009a; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Experiential marketing therefore fosters "sensation-rich and unique experiences that appeal to the growing desire for innovativeness and open-mindedness towards diverse, unique experiences, measured by consumer innovativeness" (H.

Kim, Fiore, Niehm, & Jeong, 2010, p. 134) interacting with recently evolved lifestyles of the consumer and moderated by ephemeral experiences, transience and immediacy (Baumann, Hamin, & Chong, 2015; Pomodoro, 2013).

Pop-up retail has been an upcoming tool of experiential marketing which during a short time frame enables highly experiential, face-to-face promotion of a brand. A feature that distinguishes pop-up retail from other formats is its temporary nature, which enables a brand to spring or “pop-up” temporarily at select locations or time of year to make itself visible and connect with consumers directly. In 2017, the retail industry plummeted with record closure of about 9000 stores in US surpassing that number in year 2018 by 30%. With the advent of corona virus pandemic in 2020 several brands filed for bankruptcy with 30% retail stores shutting down in India and an even grimmer future predicting closure of 80,000 US stores by year 2026 (Correspondent CBInsights, 2021; Shashidhar Ajita, 2020; Wahba Phil, 2021). In such scenario, popups can emerge a revitalizing tool to bring a new fresh perspective to the retail industry, especially by connecting with consumers by creating engaging, interactive and entertaining brand experiences. The Pop-up store format is relatively a new format in India where retail witnessed an upsurge in year 2014 in lieu of the FDI act allowed International brands to set shop in India (Mukherjee, Satija, Goyal, Mantrala, & Zou, 2014). The Indian market has since been fraught with several apparel and lifestyle brands patronized largely by the young generation Z consumers of India aged 18-25 who frequent the mall often. This generation of consumer is digitally savvy and in sync with latest fashion, making them frequent customers of brands which reinforce their social status, prestige value (S. Khan, 2013; S. Khan & Khan, 2017) and resonates with their self-identity (Chakraborty & Sadachar, 2021; Kautish, Khare, & Sharma, 2020). The Pop-up store format for apparel and lifestyle serves as an interesting retail format as it attracts the young generation Z Indian

consumers by creating the right amount of interaction and engagement for them (Biron Bethany, 2020; Marya Ritu, 2021). Since the direct effectiveness of popup stores by traditional sales calculation is impossible it makes important to ascertain the psychographic characteristics that indirectly influence the young consumer’s affinity for the same directly influencing their interpersonal brand participation. This research addresses three important questions in the Indian retail scenario. Do pop-up store formats stimulate positive WOM for generation Z Indian consumers? Secondly, does brand experience play an important role in enabling young generation Z consumers to generate positive WOM for Pop-up stores? Thirdly, the research addresses the viability of pop-up store formats as an effective marketing tool for the generation Z Indian consumers in the current day retail scenario especially for lifestyle and accessory brands.

2. Pop-up Stores

Popup stores are temporary store formats in a retail environment catering to single brand and controlled by the manufacturer expecting an outcome of reinforcement for brand image rather than selling of any products or services. These stores are usually setup for a short duration of time, engaging in brand promotion and enabling a versatile and highly interactive retail environment between the consumers and the brand representatives (Baras, 2015). Popup stores therefore can best be described as “retail environment that carries a single brand, are controlled by the brand’s manufacturer, and are operated with the intention of reinforcing the brand experience rather than selling products at a profit” (Klein, Falk, Esch, & Gloukhovtsev, 2016, p. 5762). The nature of these popups can differ when they are short term and focus on distribution or long term enabling a more communication centric goal (Haas & Schmidt, 2016; Overdiek, 2018). The precise focus of a popup store is therefore to increase excitement and engagement resulting in word of mouth from the consumer. An example of such popups would be the Marvel

S.T.A.T.I.O.N in New York, Paris and Seoul creating an immersive interactive popup store experience for consumers exhibiting Marvel merchandise and all the while interacting with fans. Similarly, Huda beauty popup in Covent Garden, London created a cosmic experience to launch new product ranges and to reach out to customers (Moore, 2020). Popup stores are therefore event driven and thrive on gorilla marketing strategies, which encourage WOM (word of mouth) between consumers instead of relying on traditional media marketing strategies.

An analysis of consumers' environmental perception, experience and psychological responses on their final purchase motivation using consumers stimulus-organism-response paradigm (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) conceptualized the interaction of store environment ,consumers emotional state of mind and the complexity of store environment as contributing factors towards consumers affective response(Bakker, van der Voordt, Vink, & de Boon, 2014). Based on qualitative research done on the subject three primary store characteristics lead towards ultimate consumer experience. These characteristics identified as hedonic shopping value, store uniqueness and store atmosphere, together culminate in creation of superior retail experience, for the apparel and lifestyle pop-up store consumer. Hedonic shopping values are associated with the entertainment value associated with pop-up stores especially with the interactive environment enabling the consumer to access the brand first hand and give their inputs directly to the store staff. The store uniqueness enthralls the consumers by providing a different retail environment as compared to a traditional format. Pleasure seeking consumers seek creativity and uniqueness from their apparel and lifestyle buying experience making it important for such brands to incorporate the same via their store experience (Miller, 2013)

2.1 Hedonic Values

Research in social psychology has put considerable attention on the affective reactions of the consumers whose emotions

differ with the nature of cognitive enquiry made by them. Emotions such as pride, embarrassment or guilt are self-conscious and deliberative occurring during evaluation by others. In contrast, hedonic emotions are more spontaneous and happen during the brand consumption by the consumer. The cognitive element of shopping reflects upon the hedonic and utilitarian shopping experiences, which stimulate a consumer's reception towards new products and services. Consumers therefore experience an array of positive and negative emotions such as pleasure, delight, excitement, frustration and sadness while interacting with a brand ,communicated to them via experiential marketing (Kozinets et al., 2002, 2004). Thus, consumers with innovative bent of mind relate to products, which are attention catching, exciting and engaging or like "evaluating information, finding out how things work, discovering facts, and learning to do new things" (Engelland, Hopkins, & Larson, 2001, p. 17). Innovative consumers inherently depict a need for novelty and uniqueness from their brands and enjoy the experience of evaluating products, discovering new information and examining the functional attributes before arriving at a decision. Pop-ups therefore with their experiential shopping environment offer the consumer wider interaction and an environment, which fosters evaluation making them a success with consumers with high innovativeness (Bauman, 2000; Lagr e, 2004). Hedonic values therefore play an important role in engaging the young consumers who seek innovation, engagement and arousal from their brands making popups and effective retail experience for them (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014; Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017)

2.2 Uniqueness Value

Consumes seek satisfaction from uniqueness as dissimilarity through consumption alleviates the threat to identity (Eren-Erdogmus, Cobanoglu, & Budeyri-Turan, 2015).A consumer therefore resists conformity from his peers by indulging in symbols of uniqueness and dissimilar

consumption which he believes would match and augur his self-concept. Marketers therefore seek to appeal to an individual's desire to appear different by creating advertising campaigns centralized airing scarcity, uniqueness and, appeals to break stereotypes and peer groups (Dion & Arnould, 2011). Consumers need for uniqueness directly influences their product acquisition and display behavior with material expressions satisfying the consumer's willful pursuit of counter conformity. Uniqueness therefore is a different concept from independence, which manifests itself due to individual tastes and requirements. Uniqueness on the other hand is a reflector of consumes self-image and self-concept which he needs to ratify by differentiation. Popup stores therefore enthrall the consumer by offering a unique store environment, which is vastly different from normal flagship stores (H. Kim et al., 2010).

2.3 Store Atmosphere

The degree of emotional engagement of the consumer becomes a guiding force towards their shopping behavior. Retail touchpoints especially store atmosphere can be utilized to manipulate the consumers cognitive, affective and conational assessment of a product (I. Khan & Rahman, 2015b; Verhoef et al., 2009). Thus a conducive store atmosphere can influence the consumer's affective response positively, enhancing consumer's involvement and purchase probability with a brand (Hollenbeck, Peters, & Zinkhan, 2008; Yu et al., 2018). The degree of consumers involvement with the stores atmosphere is interactive in nature and the store atmosphere manages to create an unforgettable brand

experience in the consumers subconscious mind improving store/merchandise perceptions and influencing spending behavior positively (Grohmann, Spangenberg, & Sprott, 2007; Massicotte, Michon, Chebat, Joseph Sirgy, & Borges, 2011). The consumer's interaction with brand related cues such as store design, store assortment, visual merchandising, store staff behavior, billing desk etc. all create a unique retail environment for the consumer to connect with resulting in brand experiences (Bäckström & Johansson, 2017; Bonnin & Goudey, 2012; Dolbec & Chebat, 2013). Despite there being several studies done in this direction, there is limited research available on the influence of primary characteristics, which influence the consumers brand and behavioral outcomes for a popup store. Since the impact of a popup store is unascertainable via sales outcomes, this research tries to establish the role of hedonic shopping value, store uniqueness and store atmosphere on consumer's brand experience and word of mouth outcomes. These values become all the more relevant from young Indian Generation Z consumers who frequent Lifestyle, accessory brands and seldom develop brand loyalty towards them. This group of young consumers seek prestige from their brands, which in turn augers their self-concept (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). Based on the analysis of retail popup store characteristics (Table 1) and assessing the above three attributes our hypothesis for the research would be as following:

H1 a) Hedonic shopping values, b) Uniqueness values and c) Store atmosphere result in a positive effect on the Brand experience of apparel and Lifestyle Pop-Up stores.

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Table 1. Retail Popup Stores, an Analysis of Characteristics

Author	Experiential Store	Hedonic Shopping Value	Uniqueness Value	Store Atmosphere	Findings
(Kozinets et al., 2004)	Themed flagship brand stores	×	×	×	Spectacular themed stores offering unique consumption experiences
(H. Kim et al., 2010)	Popup retail stores	×	×	×	Popup stores offer excitement, exclusivity, surprise, and engaging experiences.
(Dolbec & Chebat, 2013)	Flagships vs Brand stores			×	Store atmosphere is instrumental in creating an appropriate brand experience for the consumers with flagship stores providing more “anchoring points” as compared to brand stores.
(Haas & Schmidt, 2016)	Popup Retail stores	×	×	×	Popup stores create unique customer experiences by converting stores into art galleries.
(Overdiek, 2018)	Temporary Slow fashion retail stores	×	×	×	Slow fashion temporary stores offering an immersive store environment which is unique, exciting and sustainable
(Yu et al., 2018)	Popups in Omni Chanel Retail	×	×	×	Consumer’s psychographic characteristics such as innovativeness, market mavenism and shopping enjoyment create the ultimate popup experience.

3. Brand Experience in Retail

Customer experience in today’s age is the key to fostering long-term customer-brand relationships. This is the reason marketers of modern retail need to actively manage consumer experiences (Verhoef et al., 2009) by creating a retail environment which differentiate themselves from the functional attributes of product and services and focus on connecting with the consumers at an emotional level (Grewal, Levy, & Kumar, 2009; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009) fostering a long term relationship. By definition Brand experience is therefore described as “subjective internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognition) and behavioral responses evoked

by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications and environments” (Brakus et al., 2009a, p. 53). Marketers therefore are trying to create superior competitive advantage by creating innovative, interactive, co-produced and entertaining retail experiences for the consumers which depict the brands value and ideology (Grewal, Roggeveen, Sisodia, & Nordfält, 2017; Hultén, 2011). Consumers interaction with retail touch points and physical and non-physical attributes of retail through store layouts, store environments, store staff behavior, product assortment ,visual merchandising ,branding and marketing activities stimulate their brand contributing

significantly towards developing affinity with a brand (I. Khan & Rahman, 2015a; Pomodoro, 2013). The experience therefore creates an image in the consumers head resulting in consumer formulating mental conceptions and perceptions which in turn significantly contribute towards an individual's feelings, thoughts and opinions about brand (Jones, Comfort, Clarke-Hill, & Hillier, 2010; Ngo, Northey, Duffy, Thao, & Tam, 2016; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014).

4. Word of the Mouth for Retail Brands (Lifestyle and Accessories)

Since the last few years, marketing researchers has been evaluating the role of brand experience in creation of brand equity and generation of positive WOM (word of mouth) intentions of the consumers (Bill Xu & Chan, 2010; Ngo et al., 2016). When a satisfied consumer spreads a positive referral about a brand ("Phil" Klaus & Maklan, 2012) it results in a positive brand image, creation of interpersonal repertoire (Barasch & Berger, 2014) and creation of social relationships which becomes key determinants in developing brand experience and positive WOM about a brand (Wang & Yu, 2017). WOM therefore is a result of social and emotional drivers, which arise out of consumer's positive experience with a brands touchpoint. The social drivers are predominantly a result of consumer's desire to enhance his social self by indulging in social interaction and sharing unique content with their peers. Emotional drivers are a result of emotional arousal which consumers go through following an encounter with a brand and sharing those positive feelings with their peers (Schwarz, 2020). This is especially true for the young generation Z consumers who believe in sharing information about their brands either directly or through social media (Sharma, 2020). Word of mouth therefore plays an active role especially in context of apparel and lifestyle brands where social influence is a key determinant in influencing the purchase decisions of young consumers (S. Khan & Khan, 2017; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). The hypotheses therefore to assess the

influence of Pop-up store values on WOM would therefore be

H2 a) Hedonic shopping values, b) Uniqueness values and c) Store atmosphere result in a positive effect on the WOM for apparel and Lifestyle Pop-Up stores.

In a retail context especially apparel and lifestyle brands where the in store brand experience is getting severely threatened due to online brands, the brands have to ensure that they build characteristics of brand experience via direct indirect brand touchpoints (Grohmann et al., 2007; Rigby, 2011). Brand experience in a retail setting especially popups with their hedonic, uniqueness values and store atmosphere are no simpler transactions. Since each consumer's perception about their individual brand experience differs, the WOM can also be positive or negative dependent upon the same. This leads us to our following hypotheses, which seeks to assess the brand experience outcomes on the WOM of Pop-up retail stores for generation Z Indian consumers.

H3 Brand Experience results in a positive effect on the WOM for apparel and Lifestyle Pop-Up stores.

Whilst studying the influence of Brand experience in retailing it is important to remember that it shapes the behavioral outcomes or shopping intentions of the consumers by changing their perceptions which are result of "sensory, affective and participatory experiences that a consumer has with a brand" (Schmitt, 2012, p. 8). Brand experience therefore effects the consumer at a psychological level creating multi-sensory perceptions which influence the consumer brand participation in turn (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Our current work therefore tries evaluating the effect of psychographic pop-up store characteristics on the WOM intentions of generation Z Indian consumers with brand experience acting as a mediator leading us to propose the following hypotheses.

H4 Brand Experience acts as a mediator on the effect of a) Hedonic shopping values, b) Uniqueness values and c) Store atmosphere on WOM for apparel and Lifestyle Pop-up stores.

Brand familiarity improves positively when the consumers experience positive sensory, emotional, behavioral and relational brand experiences from their brands (Bapat, 2017). Brand familiarity encompasses the total number of direct and/or indirect experiences a consumer has had with brand eventually acting as a moderator between the psychographic popup store characteristics i.e. hedonic shopping value, store uniqueness, store atmosphere, and brand experience on WOM of lifestyle & accessory Pop-up stores. Thus when a consumer has been exposed to brand for a longer period of time they develop higher brand familiarity and formulate stronger brand attributes, beliefs, attitudes, or experiences related to a brand and entrenched in their memory, also known as brand schema (Dahlén, Lange, Sjödin, & Törn, 2005; Rahman & Mannan, 2018). The brand schema however is far lesser for consumers who have not been exposed to a brand for multiple encounters and it is these consumers who are likely to generalize their opinions about the Pop-up stores based on a single encounter (Halkias, Micevski, Diamantopoulos, & Milchram, 2017; Ruiz-Equihua, Romero, & Casaló, 2020). Brand familiarity therefore acts as a moderator between the psychographic popup store characteristics and WOM as well as between brand experience and WOM leading us to propose the following hypothesis.

H5 The positive effect of psychographic store characteristics (a) hedonic shopping value, (b) store uniqueness, (c) store atmosphere, and (d) brand experience on WOM of apparel and Lifestyle Pop-up stores, increases as brand familiarity decreases.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

In order to ascertain consumer's psychographic characteristics for lifestyle

and accessory store popup store formats in India, we collected data during the month of July–September 2021 via a self-administered questionnaire (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Two hundred college students aged 18-24, residing in metro cities of India were administered the questionnaire, as they would have frequented pop-up stores often. The scale has been created using existing studies in retail and the consumers rated their choice on a Likert scale with 1 being “Strongly Disagree” to 7 “Strongly Agree”. The items used to measure Hedonic value construct were (fun, exciting & thrilling)(Rayburn & Voss, 2013). Store uniqueness construct has been measured using 1 item (is unique)while the Store Atmosphere construct has used scale for 2 items (attractive & pleasant)(Ray & Chiagouris, 2009). The Brand Experience constructs has adopted items from the (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009b) affective scale (induces feelings & sentiments, have strong emotions and is an emotional brand)while the WOM intentions of the consumers have been measured using 3 items (will spread WOM, will recommend & will recommend a brand to friends)(James G. Maxham & Netemeyer, 2018). A single item has finally been used to measure the brand familiarity of the consumers (Very familiar/Not at all familiar)(Milberg, Sinn, & Goodstein, 2010).

6. Measurement Model and Hypothesis Testing

We conducted a multi group confirmatory factor analysis where we integrated single indicators of Uniqueness value and Brand familiarity to test our hypotheses (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). This resulted in standardized factor loadings for all constructs which do not go down below the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Table 2) establishing convergent and discriminant validity with adequate Cronbach alphas (not below 0.6) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Pallant, 2000) and AVE not falling below the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as stated in Table 3.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Apparel and Lifestyle Popup Store Values

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Popup store Hedonic shopping Value	Popup store shopping is Fun	0.78	0.83
	Popup store shopping is Exciting	0.88	
	Popup store Shopping is Thrilling	0.75	
Popup store Uniqueness Value	Popup stores are Unique	-	-
Popup store Atmosphere	Popup store atmosphere is Attractive	0.71	0.64
	Popup store atmosphere is Pleasant	0.66	
Popup store Brand Experience	Popup stores induce feelings and sentiments in me	0.80	0.74
	I have strong emotions for Popup stores	0.72	
	Popup store brands are emotional brands	0.57	
WOM intentions for Popup stores	I will spread positive WOM about my favorite lifestyle & accessory brands	0.73	0.80
	I will happily recommend my favorite lifestyle and accessory brand to my friends.	0.78	
	If my friends were looking for an a lifestyle or accessory brand I would recommend a brand to them	0.73	
Brand Familiarity for Popup brand stores	I am familiar with my lifestyle and accessory brand.	-	

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Average Variance Extracted and Shared Variance

	MSV	ASV	HV	UV	SA	BE	WOM	BF
HV	0.65	0.33	0.65					
UV	0.41	0.25	0.62	-				
SA	0.65	0.34	0.8	0.64	0.5			
BE	0.42	0.24	0.64	0.48	0.65	0.5		
WOM	0.19	0.13	0.36	0.4	0.44	0.35	0.6	
BF	0.075	0.05	0.27	0.26	0.21	0.16	0.24	-

AVE has been marked in bold in the Table diagonally; The numbers below diagonal depict shared variance between constructs; HV = hedonic shopping value, UV = Uniqueness value, SA = store atmosphere, BE = Brand Experience, WOM = Word of Mouth, BF = Brand Familiarity.

The resultant structural model employed maximum likelihood estimation, run on SPSS/AMOS 22.0. The interaction effects in the overall model get support by an unconstrained approach resulting in satisfactory fit fittings meeting the required criterion as suggested by literature for SEM models. $\chi^2(54) = 181$, $\chi^2/df = 3.3$; CFI = 0.9; TLI = 0.8; RMSEA = 0.09 < 0.10, (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kenny, Kaniskan, & McCoach, 2015; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Fig 1 gives details of the model paths and standardized path coefficients. The resultant standardized path coefficients of hedonic shopping value ($\beta=0.50$, $pb < 0.05$) and store atmosphere ($\beta=0.34$, $pb < 0.05$) on popup store brand experience depict significant and positive results. However, the path coefficients of uniqueness value ($\beta=0.03$, $pb > 0.05$) on brand experience was found to be insignificant, thereby validating hypothesis H1a and H1c but not H1b. The standardized path coefficients of hedonic shopping Value ($\beta=0.05$, $pb > 0.05$), and store atmosphere ($\beta=0.17$, $pb > 0.05$) on WOM were found to be insignificant leading us to reject H2a and H2c. However the standardized path coefficients of uniqueness value on WOM ($\beta=0.18$, $pb < 0.05$) were found to be positive and significant ratifying H2b and confirming that pop-up stores uniqueness value leads

J towards WOM generation. On assessing the effect of brand experience on WOM we found the standardized path coefficients ($\beta=0.10$, $pb > 0.05$) to be insignificant leading us to reject H3 proving that brand experience does not lead towards word of mouth for apparel and lifestyle popup stores of India.

M The study has incorporated bias corrected bootstrapping method to assess the indirect effect of psychographic popup store characteristics i.e. hedonic shopping value, uniqueness value and store atmosphere on WOM with brand experience acting as a mediator (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). Drawing 200 samples at 95% confidence rate the standardized indirect effect coefficients of hedonic Shopping Value (0.05, 95% CI: [-0.05; 0.39]) uniqueness value (0.18, 95% CI: [-0.03; 0.07]) and store Atmosphere (0.17, 95% CI: [-0.03; 0.43]) on WOM were found to be insignificant. This proves that brand experience is not a mediator for the three values on WOM leading us to reject H4a, H4b and H4c. The existence of a significant direct relationship between hedonic shopping value (H1a) and store atmosphere(H1c) on brand experience but not with WOM prove that both hedonic shopping value and store atmosphere of apparel and lifestyle popup stores leads towards brand experience for generation Z consumers but fails to generate WOM. Similarly, the direct relationship of

uniqueness value on brand experience is insignificant (H1b) but on WOM is significant (H2b). This finding leads us to conclude that uniqueness value of pop-up stores affects the WOM of generation Z consumers positively without the mediation of Brand Experience.

The second part of our model tries to assess the role of brand familiarity acting as a moderator between popup store characteristics and WOM intentions of the consumers and the relationship between brand experience and WOM. In order to achieve accuracy, the interaction terms were tabulated by mean centering the construct variables (hedonic shopping value, uniqueness value, store atmosphere and brand experience) and the moderating variable (Brand familiarity) and then integrating the results into our structural

model resulting in the following output. The effect of hedonic shopping value and brand familiarity on WOM ($\beta = -.07, p > 0.05$) was found to be negative and insignificant while, the effect of store atmosphere and brand familiarity ($\beta = 0.31, p > 0.05$), and brand experience and brand familiarity ($\beta = 0.09, p > 0.05$) on WOM, was found to be insignificant too. The results therefore effectively ratify that brand familiarity does not act as a moderator between store characteristics and WOM as well as brand experience and WOM leading us to reject hypothesis H5a, H5c and H5d. The analysis however validated our hypothesis H5b as a positive interaction emerged between uniqueness value and brand familiarity ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.05$) indicating that the effect of store uniqueness gets stronger on WOM for consumers with high brand familiarity.

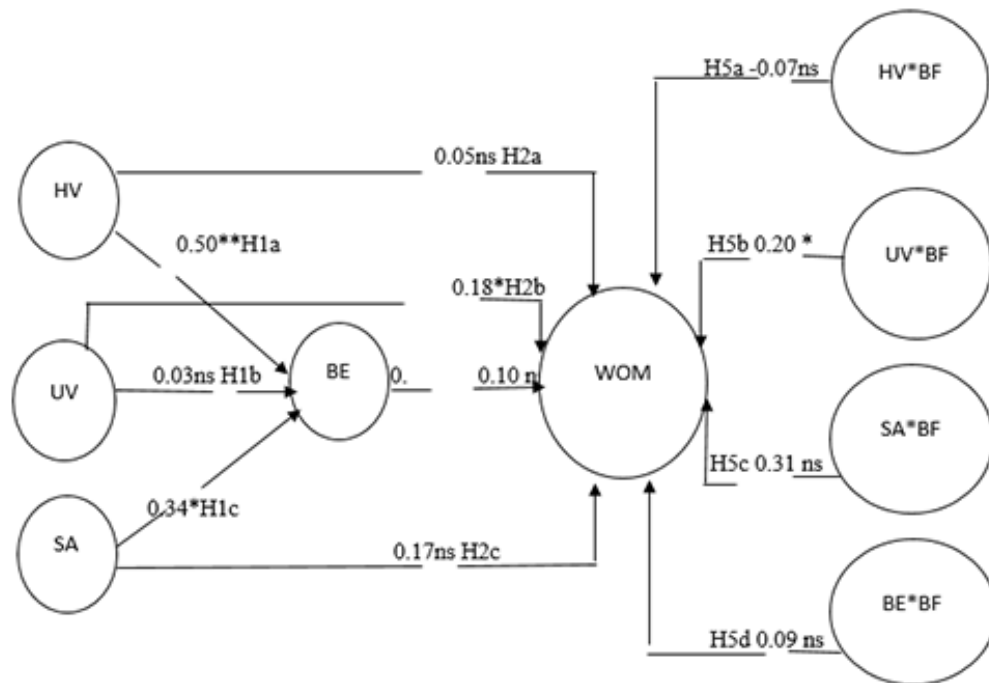


Figure 1. Structural model results. *p b <0.001, **p b <0.01, *p b <0.05, n.s. =not significant; $\chi^2 (54) = 181, \chi^2/df = 3.3; CFI = 0.9; TLI = 0.8; RMSEA = 0.09 < 0.10$; HV=hedonic shopping value, UV= uniqueness value, SA= store atmosphere, BE= brand experience. WOM= word of mouth, BF= brand familiarity.**

7. Contribution to Theory and Retail Practice

The findings of this study provide important implications for retail managers regarding popup store marketing especially in a developing country context. Firstly, it quantifies the effect of psychographic characteristics of apparel and lifestyle popup stores and their result in creation of brand experience and WOM resulting in motivating generation Z purchase motivation and resulting in brand loyalty in return. Secondly, it proves that brand experience by stimulating the consumer emotions becomes instrumental in creating brand equity and brand loyalty for the consumer. These results are consistent with brand experience literature ratifying that elements of fun and excitement (hedonic values), store atmosphere (indirect cues such as store atmosphere, product assortment, store staff behavior, product branding, advertising, brand ambassadors and marketing strategies) all contribute towards creating the apt brand experience for the consumer. A positive brand experience in turn secures consumer patronage and loyalty (Huang, Mitchell, & Rosenaum-Elliott, 2012; Joshi & Garg, 2021; Law, Wong, & Yip, 2012; Schmitt, 2012; Verhoef et al., 2009). Thirdly, our research proves that brand experience is not a moderating factor between the psychographic store characteristics resulting in WOM in return. Thus, hedonic store values and store atmosphere, which lead towards positive brand experience, do not contribute towards generation of WOM while store uniqueness influences WOM intentions positively and directly. This can especially be a case for apparel and lifestyle brands where the consumers brand image, brand love, brand trust and brand personality play moderators between store psychographics and consumers word of mouth generation (Anggraeni & Rachmanita, 2015; Ismail & Spinelli, n.d.; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Therefore, in order to generate WOM it is imperative for apparel and lifestyle popup stores to build upon brand image and brand personality in order to generate high involvement and brand commitment from young generation Z Indian

consumers. This conclusion is also validated by retail research which categorically states that high uniqueness directly results in WOM generation for publically consumed goods with WOM giving positive recommendation is higher than WOM sharing product details with others (Cheema & Kaikati, 2010; Lovett, Peres, & Shachar, 2013; Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). Our work also explored the mediating role of brand familiarity between psychographic pop-up store characteristics on WOM and Brand experience on WOM and with the exception of store uniqueness value, the remaining three values viz-hedonic shopping value, store atmosphere and brand experience did not have a significant effect on the WOM generation. Current literature has also supported this outcome as brands with high consumer familiarity and store uniqueness value indeed result in generating positive WOM for the consumers (Chan, Peters, & Marafa, 2016; Klein et al., 2016). Apparel and lifestyle pop-up stores, therefore need to create scarcity and dissimilarity through limited style and assortment options, exclusive product categories and innovative marketing, branding and advertising strategies to differentiate their products and services. Thus by creating an environment of paucity these brands will be able to appeal to the young generation Z consumers, who seek exclusivity from their brands (Pomodoro, 2013; Rajput, Kesharwani, & Khanna, 2012; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). The outcome of this research would therefore enable apparel and lifestyle brands seeking to create equity amidst young generation Z consumers to build the right store psychographics in order to create the right brand experience and generate WOM especially for pop-up store formats in developing economies.

8. Limitations of the Study

This study is not without limitations, as it deals with the buying behavior of generation Z cohort aged 18-24 and residing in the metro cities of India, implying that there would be difference in outcome of popup store psychographic characteristics while assessing the buying behavior of a

different age group or country centric population. It is also limited in its approach towards focusing on only Apparel and lifestyle pop-up store formats, patronized by young consumers who are highly influenced by prestige value and esteem, associated with Apparel and lifestyle brands influencing both their brand experience as well as word of mouth intentions. A similar study therefore if undertaken for different nature of pop-up stores such as luxury retail, FMCG or commodities would yield different results giving retail marketers, detailed insights on how to setup, sustain and build brand equity by building business practices especially for pop-up stores in the changing world economies.

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