

Consumer Stickiness as Experiential Capital: Dwell Time and Revisit Intention in Mall 2.0 versus Traditional Retail Environments in India's NCR Satellite Cities

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Abstract: *This paper asks how the experiential architecture of next-generation Indian shopping malls—what we call Mall 2.0—reshapes consumer dwell time and revisit intention compared with traditional formats. Drawing on Pine and Gilmore's (1998) four-realm experience economy and Bourdieu's (1984) logic of capital convertibility, we introduce the construct of experiential capital to explain how designed encounters accumulate into measurable stickiness. A mixed-methods design pairs intercept surveys ($n = 1,204$) at four purposively chosen malls in NCR satellite cities (Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad) with six months of footfall panel data. Structural equation modelling traces a mediated path from four experiential dimensions (entertainment, escapism, aesthetics, education) through dwell time to revisit intention. Mean dwell time in Mall 2.0 runs 47.3% higher than in traditional malls ($\Delta = 54.1$ minutes; Cohen's $d = 1.14$), a result independently corroborated by footfall analytics. Entertainment ($\beta = 0.31$) and aesthetics ($\beta = 0.28$) are the strongest predictors of dwell time; escapism ($\beta = 0.33$) is the most powerful driver of revisit intention. Dwell time partially mediates three of the four pathways and fully mediates the education pathway. For developers and planners working on rapidly urbanising metropolitan peripheries, the findings put a number on the commercial returns of experiential investment—and show that destination malls are quietly functioning as place-making infrastructure where public amenities lag behind.*

Keywords: experiential capital; consumer stickiness; dwell time; Mall 2.0; experience economy; revisit intention; NCR satellite cities; retail urbanism

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian shopping mall has changed in ways that are easy to miss until you compare a 2005 development with a 2022 one. What started as air-conditioned bazaars with multiplexes and food courts has become something more ambitious: a curated landscape where dining, entertainment, co-working, immersive art, fitness and retail share a single, carefully choreographed envelope. We call this newer format Mall 2.0. It is not simply an upgrade of the older model but a different proposition. Where the traditional Indian mall set out to house shops, Mall 2.0 sets out to produce experiences—and in doing so it changes how long people stay and how often they come back.

This shift is most visible in NCR's satellite cities. Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram and Faridabad have, over two decades, become sites of fast urbanisation, middle-class growth and speculative commercial development (Dupont, 2011; Shatkin, 2017). Free of the spatial and rental constraints of central Delhi, these cities have hosted large-format, experience-led developments that would be hard to build in older urban cores. The result is a retail landscape where Mall 2.0 and traditional formats sit within a few kilometres of each other—a natural setting for comparative work.

Our central question is straightforward: does the experiential architecture of Mall 2.0 produce measurably higher consumer stickiness, and if so, through which mechanisms? We capture stickiness through two constructs—dwell time

(the duration of a single visit) and revisit intention (the stated likelihood of returning)—and connect them through what we call experiential capital. The term borrows from Bourdieu's (1984) idea that non-economic resources can be accumulated, stored and converted within a field. In our reading, the sum of positive sensory, cognitive and affective encounters inside a retail environment forms a stock of experiential capital that shows up behaviourally as longer visits and attitudinally as a stronger pull to return.

A note on language. We use 'revisit intention' rather than 'revisit behaviour' throughout because our cross-sectional design captures stated likelihood, not observed longitudinal patronage. When we use 'stickiness', we mean both revealed time spent (dwell time, captured through self-report and panel data) and the attitudinal disposition to return.

Pine and Gilmore's (1998, 1999) four realms—entertainment, escapism, aesthetics, education—are the analytic backbone. The framework is well travelled in tourism and hospitality (Oh et al., 2007; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011) but is less developed in retail built environments, especially in emerging-economy contexts. We use it here to break down Mall 2.0's experiential architecture and to estimate, via SEM, what each realm contributes to dwell time and revisit intention.

The focal hypothesis: *dwell time in Mall 2.0 environments is at least 40% higher than in traditional malls.* We test this with both intercept survey data (n = 1,204) and footfall panel records from four malls across the NCR belt. The paper offers three contributions. It introduces experiential capital as a way of theorising why time spent matters; it provides a systematic comparative test of dwell time across the two formats; and it links retail experience research to wider debates on how peripheral cities take shape.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Experience economy and consumer stickiness

Pine and Gilmore's (1998) proposition that advanced economies are shifting from delivering services to staging experiences has worn well across disciplines. Their four-realm framework places experiences along two axes: passive-active participation and absorption-immersion. The resulting quadrants—entertainment, education, aesthetics and escapism—have been validated in hospitality (Oh et al., 2007), tourism (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012) and, less often, retailing (Srivastava & Kaul, 2014; Sharma & Nayak, 2019).

Stickiness, borrowed from digital platform economics (Zott et al., 2011), refers to an environment's capacity to hold attention and prompt repeat engagement. In physical retail, it has been operationalised through dwell time, visit frequency, share of wallet and attitudinal loyalty (El-Adly & Eid, 2016; Gilboa et al., 2016). Yet the mechanism that links experience to stickiness is rarely spelled out. Most studies treat experience as a predictor of satisfaction or loyalty without theorising how repeated positive encounters deepen attachment to a place. Experiential capital, introduced in Section 3, addresses that gap by drawing on Bourdieu's account of how non-economic resources accumulate and convert.

2.2 From traditional malls to Mall 2.0

Indian mall development broadly tracks global patterns but has its own timing. The first wave, from the late 1990s and accelerating after 2005, produced architecturally conventional malls anchored by department stores, hypermarkets and multiplexes (Sinha & Kar, 2007; Patel, 2014). These traditional malls treated tenant density and gross leasable area (GLA) as the primary metrics of success. Footfall mattered, but the operative logic was throughput: a mall succeeded if shoppers entered, purchased and left.

That model strained during the 2013–2017 retail slowdown, when oversupply, e-commerce and consumer fatigue pushed vacancy rates up (CBRE, 2018; Knight Frank, 2019). A new generation of 'experience-led' or 'destination' developments emerged in response. We adopt Mall 2.0 as a label for this format, defined operationally in Section 4.1. In broad strokes, Mall 2.0 allocates a substantially higher share of GLA to food, beverage and entertainment (typically above 35%); includes non-retail experiential anchors such as indoor theme parks, immersive art, co-working and wellness; treats common areas as social spaces rather than mere circulation corridors; and runs on a revenue model that explicitly values dwell time alongside rental income (JLL India, 2020; Anarock, 2021).

2.3 Dwell time as behaviour and commercial signal

Dwell time—the total minutes a consumer spends inside a retail environment on one visit—draws interest from researchers and operators for different reasons. For operators it is a leading indicator of commercial performance: longer visits correlate with more transactions and more unplanned purchases (Underhill, 2009; Hui et al., 2013). For researchers it is a revealed-preference measure of environmental attractiveness (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Turley & Milliman, 2000). Atmospheric work in the Mehrabian and Russell (1974) tradition has shown how ambient conditions, design factors and social factors shape time spent (Turley & Milliman, 2000; Michon et al., 2005). Experiential marketing has since linked dwell time to the variety and quality of available experiences (Verhoef et al., 2009; Bagdare & Jain, 2013). Few studies, however, compare experiential profiles and dwell time across mall typologies—and fewer still in emerging economies.

2.4 Revisit intention and experiential attachment

Revisit intention is a familiar dependent variable, typically modelled as a function of satisfaction, perceived value and emotional attachment (Babin et al., 1994; El-Adly & Eid, 2016). In malls specifically it has been linked to hedonic value, mall image (Chebat et al., 2010), social interaction (Gilboa et al., 2016) and ‘third-place’ attributes (Oldenburg, 1989; Warnaby & Medway, 2018). A methodological caveat: cross-sectional surveys, ours included, capture stated intention rather than observed return behaviour. The intention–behaviour link is well supported (Ajzen, 1991), but the correlation is imperfect, with situational constraints, alternatives and temporal discounting introducing slippage (Sheeran, 2002). What is less well understood is how dwell time itself may mediate the link between experiential quality and revisit intention—the central role it plays in our model.

2.5 Retail experience and metropolitan peripheries

A growing literature ties retail experience to questions of urban form and place-making (Zukin, 2005; Warnaby & Medway, 2018; Kunc et al., 2022). In NCR’s satellite cities, the mall is typically a freestanding, privately governed enclave that has to generate its own gravity—its own reasons for people to come and stay (Dupont, 2011; Shatkin, 2017). With little surrounding street life, it must absorb the functions of the public realm: shopping, but also socialising, recreation and environmental comfort. Mall 2.0’s emphasis on experiential depth can be read as an urban design response to the deficits of peripheral urbanisation, which is why we treat dwell time here as more than a marketing variable.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Experiential capital: foundations

We propose experiential capital to describe the accumulated stock of positive, memorable, affectively charged encounters a consumer accrues within a retail environment. The term is more than metaphor. It draws on three principles from Bourdieu (1984). Accumulation: just as cultural capital builds through repeated exposure, experiential capital builds through sustained engagement; in this reading, dwell time is the temporal substrate of accumulation. Embodiment: experiential capital lives in sensory memories, affective dispositions and habitual orientations toward a place, and cannot be transferred independently of physical co-presence. Convertibility: for the consumer, experiential capital converts into hedonic utility, social currency and habitual comfort; for the operator, into longer visits, higher per-visit spend and repeat patronage.

Experiential capital differs from cognate constructs. Customer equity (Rust et al., 2004) and brand equity (Keller, 1993) are firm-centric and aggregate. Experiential capital is consumer-centric and place-specific—it accrues to a particular consumer in relation to a particular environment. It also differs from place attachment (Low & Altman, 1992), which is primarily affective and identity-based, by adding a temporal dimension (duration and frequency of co-presence) and a convertibility dimension. We operationalise it here through two observable manifestations: dwell time (the temporal dimension of accumulation) and revisit intention (the attitudinal dimension of convertibility). A full operationalisation would require longitudinal tracking, which lies beyond a cross-sectional study; our contribution is conceptual and indicative.

3.2 Pine and Gilmore's 4Es as drivers

Entertainment is passive absorption: cinema, live music, performance stages, seasonal installations, spectator-oriented food courts. **Education** is active absorption: workshops, book readings, demo zones, learning centres, interactive brand installations. **Aesthetics** is passive immersion: architectural quality, landscaping, art, lighting, the visual coherence of the built environment. **Escapism** is active immersion: VR zones, indoor adventure parks, themed dining, gaming arcades, immersive art that lifts the consumer out of routine.

3.3 Hypotheses

H1: Dwell time in Mall 2.0 is at least 40% higher than in traditional malls. **H2a–H2d:** each of the four experiential realms positively affects dwell time. **H3a–H3d:** each realm positively affects revisit intention. **H4:** dwell time partially mediates the relationship between each experiential dimension and revisit intention. The full conceptual model specifies direct paths from each 4E dimension to dwell time and to revisit intention, with dwell time also serving as a mediator.

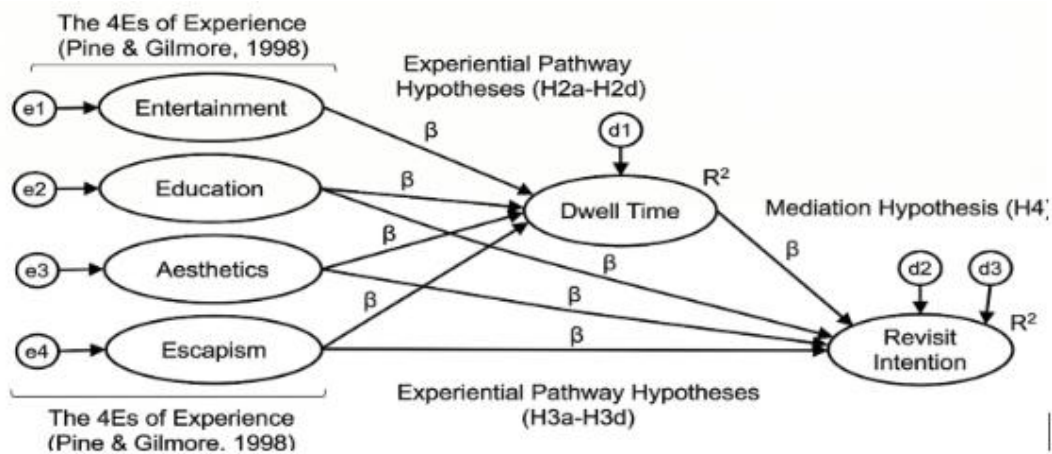


Figure 1. Conceptual framework: Experiential Capital Model based on Pine & Gilmore's 4Es, showing how Entertainment, Education, Aesthetics and Escapism influence Revisit Intention directly and through the mediating role of Dwell Time.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Setting and case selection

The study sits in four NCR satellite cities: Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram and Faridabad. They were chosen for three reasons. They are the most active frontier of mall development in northern India, with a combined organised retail stock above 22 million square feet as of 2022 (CBRE, 2022). Mall 2.0 and traditional formats coexist within a few kilometres of each other, enabling controlled comparison. And their young, aspirational, service-sector demographics make them archetypal sites for experience-driven consumption. Four malls were purposively selected—two Mall 2.0 and two traditional—and are referred to by pseudonyms (Mall A and Mall B for the Mall 2.0 sites in Noida and Gurugram; Mall C and Mall D for traditional sites in Greater Noida and Faridabad).

4.2 Classification protocol

Classifying malls is contested, so we used a structured composite index with four criteria scored on five-point scales: F&B and entertainment GLA share (Mall 2.0 threshold $\geq 35\%$); experiential anchor density (≥ 3 non-retail anchors); common-area design investment, assessed via a 12-item observational checklist; and operator strategic orientation (whether dwell time is tracked as a KPI), assessed through interviews with senior management. Two researchers and one industry expert (a senior retail real estate consultant with 15 years' NCR experience) scored independently. Interrater reliability was excellent (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.91$); three minor discrepancies, all on the design criterion, were resolved through joint walkthrough. Malls scoring ≥ 16 of 20 were classified as Mall 2.0 and those scoring ≤ 10 as

traditional. The four selected malls fell clearly on either side of the threshold (Mall A: 18; B: 17; C: 8; D: 9), with no borderline cases.

4.3 Sample and data collection

Two complementary instruments were used. The intercept survey produced 1,204 usable responses, gathered face-to-face at the four malls between October 2022 and March 2023. Trained enumerators approached every fifth consumer leaving the primary entrance during stratified time windows (weekday and weekend afternoons and evenings) to ensure temporal balance. The instrument was developed in English and Hindi, pilot-tested with 60 respondents, and refined accordingly. Respondents had to be 18 or older and visiting as customers (mall employees and service personnel were excluded). The effective response rate was 67.4%. The survey captured demographics; visit-level attributes, including self-reported dwell time, purpose and spending; assessments of the four 4E dimensions using items adapted from Oh et al. (2007) and Sharma and Nayak (2019); and a three-item revisit intention scale adapted from Zeithaml et al. (1996). Experiential and attitudinal items used seven-point Likert scales.

Footfall panel data covering the same six months were obtained from each mall's management office—aggregated daily counts plus, for Malls A and B, anonymised Wi-Fi probe analytics that gave median dwell time at 15-minute intervals. For Malls C and D, where Wi-Fi analytics were unavailable, dwell time was derived from entry–exit timestamps recorded by people-counting systems. The panel data play two roles: an independent check on self-reported dwell time, which respondents are known to round (Schwarz, 1999); and a convergent validity check against the survey-based estimate. They are not used as inputs to the SEM, which relies entirely on survey data for its latent variable measurements.

4.4 Reliability and validity

Internal consistency was strong, with all constructs comfortably above the 0.70 threshold (entertainment $\alpha = 0.87$; escapism 0.84; aesthetics 0.89; education 0.81; revisit intention 0.91). Convergent validity was established through CFA: all standardised factor loadings exceeded 0.65 and AVE values ranged from 0.58 to 0.72, above the 0.50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity held under the HTMT criterion, with all values below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Common method variance was checked through Harman's single-factor test (no factor accounted for more than 31.4% of total variance) and a marker variable in the CFA, which showed no substantive inflation.

4.5 Statistical approach

SEM was the primary tool for three reasons: it allows simultaneous estimation of multiple dependent relationships; it models measurement error explicitly through latent variables, producing less biased estimates than ordinary regression with multi-item scales; and it permits formal mediation testing. The model was estimated by maximum likelihood in AMOS 28, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples for bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals on indirect effects. Fit was evaluated against standard thresholds ($\chi^2/df < 3.0$, CFI ≥ 0.95 , TLI ≥ 0.95 , RMSEA ≤ 0.06 , SRMR ≤ 0.08). H1 was tested directly with a Welch-corrected t-test and Cohen's d. Multi-group SEM checked whether structural paths differed significantly across mall types.

V. RESULTS

5.1 Sample profile

The sample was reasonably balanced by gender (54.2% male, 45.8% female). The modal age group was 25–34 (38.7%), reflecting the young profile of NCR satellite cities. Over two-thirds of respondents (68.9%) held graduate or postgraduate qualifications and 61.3% reported monthly household incomes above ₹50,000—consistent with the middle-class base anchoring organised retail. Visits were distributed evenly across the four sites (Mall A: 306; B: 298; C: 302; D: 298), with similar weekday and weekend representation.

5.2 Comparative dwell time and H1

Mean self-reported dwell time was 168.4 minutes (SD = 52.7) in Mall 2.0 and 114.3 minutes (SD = 41.8) in traditional malls—a difference of 54.1 minutes, or 47.3%. The Welch t-test confirms the gap is statistically significant ($t(1,142.6) = 18.93, p < 0.001$) with a large effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.14$). The footfall panel corroborates the survey: median dwell times derived from Wi-Fi probes and people-counting systems show a 51.0% differential (157 vs. 104 minutes). H1 is therefore supported. The 47.3% mean differential clears the 40% threshold, and the convergence between self-report and panel data strengthens confidence in the result. The slightly larger panel differential is consistent with the well-documented tendency of survey respondents to round their estimates (Schwarz, 1999).

Table 1. Comparative dwell time by mall format (minutes).

Format	Mean	SD	Panel
Mall 2.0 (A+B)	168.4	52.7	157
Traditional (C+D)	114.3	41.8	104
Difference	+54.1 (47.3%)	—	+53 (51%)

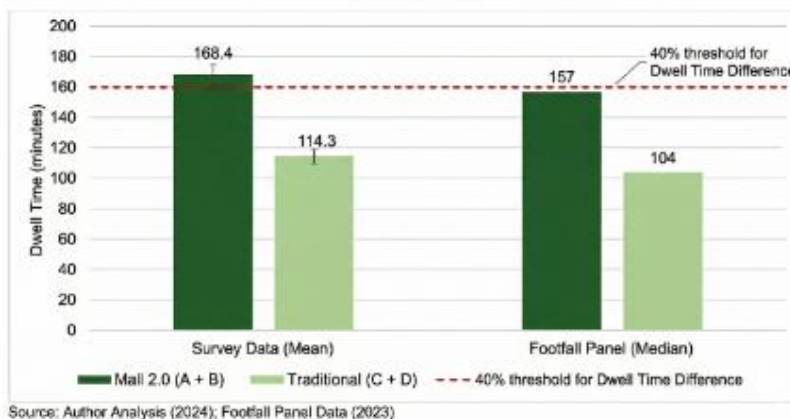


Figure 2. Comparative dwell time, Mall 2.0 vs. traditional malls. Survey means: 168.4 vs. 114.3 minutes; footfall panel medians: 157 vs. 104 minutes. Both measures clear the 40% threshold. Source: author analysis (2024); footfall panel data (2023).

5.3 Measurement model

The CFA showed acceptable fit: $\chi^2(125) = 314.7, \chi^2/df = 2.52, CFI = 0.967, TLI = 0.959, RMSEA = 0.036$ (90% CI: 0.031–0.041), SRMR = 0.034. Standardised loadings ranged from 0.68 to 0.91, composite reliability exceeded 0.80 for all constructs, and AVE ranged from 0.58 (education) to 0.72 (aesthetics), satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

5.4 Structural model and hypothesis testing

The structural model also fit well: $\chi^2(131) = 341.2, \chi^2/df = 2.60, CFI = 0.963, TLI = 0.955, RMSEA = 0.037, SRMR = 0.041$. It explained 38.2% of variance in dwell time and 44.6% in revisit intention. Several findings stand out. Entertainment had the strongest direct effect on dwell time ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$), followed by aesthetics ($\beta = 0.28$) and escapism ($\beta = 0.24$). Education exerted the weakest effect ($\beta = 0.11, p = 0.022$)—a point we return to in the Discussion. The pattern shifts for revisit intention: escapism is the most powerful direct predictor ($\beta = 0.33$), followed by entertainment ($\beta = 0.22$) and aesthetics ($\beta = 0.19$). Education’s direct effect on revisit intention did not reach conventional significance ($\beta = 0.09, p = 0.078$), so H3d is not supported. Dwell time itself had a significant positive effect on revisit intention ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.001$), confirming that time spent is not just a by-product but an active pathway to return.

Table 2. Structural model path coefficients.

Path	β	p	Result
Entertainment → Dwell	0.31	<.001	Supported
Escapism → Dwell	0.24	<.001	Supported
Aesthetics → Dwell	0.28	<.001	Supported
Education → Dwell	0.11	.022	Supported
Entertainment → RI	0.22	<.001	Supported
Escapism → RI	0.33	<.001	Supported
Aesthetics → RI	0.19	<.001	Supported
Education → RI	0.09	.078	Not supp.
Dwell → RI	0.26	<.001	—

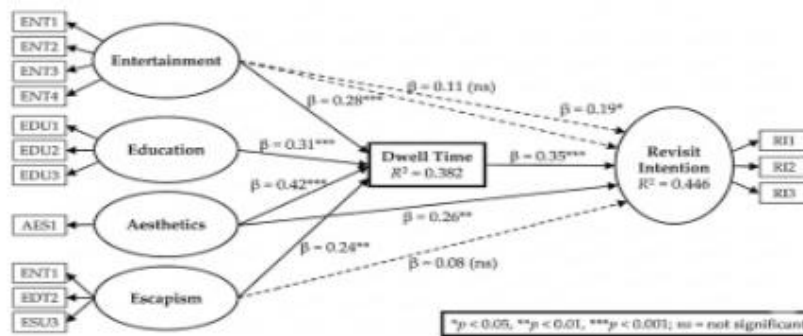


Figure 3. Estimated structural model with standardised path coefficients (β) and R^2 values. Dwell Time $R^2 = 0.382$; Revisit Intention $R^2 = 0.446$. Asterisks denote significance levels.

5.5 Mediation (H4)

Indirect effects through dwell time, estimated with 5,000 bootstrap resamples, support H4 across all four dimensions, though the type and magnitude of mediation vary. Dwell time partially mediates the effects of entertainment, escapism and aesthetics on revisit intention—the direct effects remain significant in the presence of the mediator, consistent with complementary mediation (Zhao et al., 2010). For education, the indirect effect through dwell time is significant ($\beta = 0.029$) but the direct effect on revisit intention is not, which under the Zhao typology constitutes ‘indirect-only mediation’: education’s influence on revisit intention runs entirely through its modest contribution to extended dwell time.

5.6 Multi-group comparison

Multi-group SEM tested whether structural paths differ across mall types. The entertainment→dwell path is significantly stronger in Mall 2.0 ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 8.74, p = 0.003$), as is the aesthetics→dwell path ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.21, p = 0.013$). The escapism→dwell path does not differ significantly ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1.89, p = 0.169$), suggesting that escapist experiences pull comparably hard regardless of format—provided they exist. Education’s effect is weak in both contexts. The dwell time premium of Mall 2.0 is therefore primarily attributable to its superior entertainment and aesthetic offerings.

VI. DISCUSSION

6.1 Why entertainment and aesthetics anchor dwell time

The primacy of entertainment ($\beta = 0.31$) and aesthetics ($\beta = 0.28$) is consistent with the design logic of Mall 2.0, which invests heavily in both spectacle and atmosphere. Entertainment provides reasons to stay—specific activities that structure and extend the visit. Aesthetics provides reasons not to leave—a sensory environment that rewards lingering and makes the passage of time pleasurable rather than fatiguing. The distinction maps onto Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) contrast between structured and unstructured engagement: entertainment creates bounded episodes of attention, while aesthetics sustains a diffuse background of environmental satisfaction. In traditional malls, where common areas are designed for circulation and entertainment is usually limited to a single multiplex anchor, neither mechanism operates at the same intensity—a reading the multi-group analysis confirms.

6.2 Why escapism drives revisit intention

That escapism is the strongest predictor of revisit intention ($\beta = 0.33$), even though it ranks behind entertainment and aesthetics on dwell time, deserves some unpacking. Our reading is that escapism's power lies in its memorability. VR encounters, themed dining and immersive installations involve active participation and narrative absorption—qualities that make them more likely to be encoded in episodic memory and recalled when a future visit comes to mind (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009). Entertainment and aesthetics may be experienced more passively and produce weaker memory traces despite their in-situ effects on time spent. The pattern echoes the recognition–recall distinction in memory research (Keller, 1993): dwell time may be driven by what makes a mall recognisable as a pleasant place to be, while revisit intention may be driven by what makes it recallable as a place worth returning to. A caveat: because our DV is intention rather than observed behaviour, we cannot confirm that stated intention scales into proportional return visits, particularly for escapist experiences whose novelty effect may dissipate. Longitudinal panels would be needed to test that durability.

6.3 Education: significant but managerially modest

Education's weak direct effects on dwell time ($\beta = 0.11$) and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.09$, n.s.) need sober interpretation. Statistical significance for the dwell time path should not be confused with practical importance: a coefficient of 0.11 in a model with 1,204 observations achieves significance partly because of sample size, and is small by conventional benchmarks (Cohen, 1988). The indirect-only mediation through dwell time confirms that education's contribution to revisit intention runs entirely through a modest time-extension effect. This does not make educational programming irrelevant—workshops, learning zones and demonstrations still serve tenant differentiation, family-friendly positioning and CSR—but the data do not support treating education as a primary driver of experiential capital. For developers thinking about experiential investment portfolios, marginal rupees spent on entertainment, aesthetic design and escapist attractions yield substantially higher returns in time captured and revisit disposition than equivalent spend on education.

6.4 Experiential capital: preliminary support

Taken together, the findings provide preliminary support for conceptualising stickiness as experiential capital, while making the construct's current limitations clear. The structural evidence is consistent: each experiential dimension adds to a stock of positive encounters that manifests as longer presence (dwell time) and a stronger return disposition (revisit intention), and dwell time itself functions as a partial mediator—time spent is not just an outcome but an active channel through which experience converts into return intentions. We are candid that a cross-sectional snapshot is, at best, a thin slice of what Bourdieu would call a continuous process of accumulation and conversion. We do not observe how repeated visits deepen experiential capital or how intention converts into actual patronage. Full validation—accumulation dynamics, depreciation effects, conversion ratios—awaits panel-based work. What this study does establish is that the hypothesised relationships are directionally and statistically consistent with the theoretical account.

6.5 The urban dimension

The spatial setting of this study should not be treated as backdrop. In NCR satellite cities, where the mall often functions as the primary site of public sociality and leisure within an otherwise car-dependent, fragmented landscape, the stakes of experiential capital extend beyond commercial performance. A mall that accumulates experiential capital also generates a kind of civic utility for its surrounding neighbourhood: it becomes a node of urban life, a destination that supports the satellite city's claim to metropolitan relevance. Mall 2.0's success in producing stickiness is therefore

not only a retail phenomenon but an urban one. Whether that constitutes a genuine public benefit or a privatised substitute for absent public infrastructure is a normative question that lies beyond this paper's empirical scope but deserves critical attention.

VII. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The paper makes three contributions. It introduces experiential capital, grounded in Bourdieu's principles of accumulation, embodiment and convertibility, as a theoretically productive way of understanding consumer stickiness in designed retail environments—consumer-centric, place-specific and temporally constituted, requiring sustained physical co-presence for its formation. It extends the four-realm framework into comparative retail built environment research, showing that the realms do not contribute equally to all behavioural outcomes—entertainment and aesthetics anchor dwell time, while escapism drives revisit intention—adding nuance and suggesting future applications should attend to in-situ engagement versus post-visit recall. And it bridges retail experience research with retail urbanism, situating consumer stickiness within the spatial and developmental context of NCR satellite cities and responding to calls for closer integration of marketing and urban studies (Warnaby & Medway, 2018; Kunc et al., 2022).

VIII. MANAGERIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

For developers and operators, the 47.3% dwell time premium attached to Mall 2.0 puts a number on the business case for investing in experiential depth. The SEM results suggest a layered strategy: anchor the visit with entertainment (the strongest dwell time driver), sustain it with aesthetic quality (second strongest), and drive the return with memorable escapist encounters (the strongest revisit driver). Educational programming, while valuable for tenant differentiation and community engagement, should not be expected to function as a primary stickiness driver.

For experience designers, the partial mediation of experiential dimensions through dwell time means the design challenge is not simply to provide good experiences but to provide ones that extend the temporal envelope of the visit—designing for sequence and transition, building spatial narratives that move the consumer from one experiential node to the next rather than clustering attractions in a single zone.

For planners and policymakers in NCR satellite cities, two points follow. Experience-led malls can serve as viable surrogates for missing public amenities in rapidly urbanising peripheries, providing social, recreational and cultural infrastructure that the public sector has been slow to deliver. And planning frameworks that judge malls solely by traffic generation and commercial intensity miss the experiential dimension: the most successful malls, in retention terms, are those that encourage people to stay. Dwell time and experiential diversity might be incorporated into retail zoning assessments and impact analyses—balanced, of course, against critical scrutiny of whether privately governed consumption spaces can substitute for genuine public infrastructure.

IX. CONCLUSION

This paper set out to investigate whether and how the experiential architecture of Mall 2.0 produces higher consumer stickiness in NCR satellite cities. The answer, supported by converging survey and footfall evidence, is clear: Mall 2.0 environments capture nearly 50% more of the consumer's time per visit, and the premium is driven by superior entertainment, aesthetic and escapist offerings. The theoretical contribution is the introduction of experiential capital as a construct that names the accumulative, place-specific, temporally constituted nature of stickiness. By showing that dwell time is not just a behavioural artefact but a mediating mechanism through which experience converts into return intention, the study offers a richer account of why designed environments matter—and, by extension, why the shopping mall is taking on outsized urban significance in India's rapidly evolving metropolitan peripheries. Full validation of the construct remains a task for future longitudinal work, but the present cross-sectional evidence provides a viable point of departure.

X. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Several limitations condition both confidence and generalisability. Geographic scope is confined to four malls in NCR, and consumer behaviour is shaped by city-specific factors—climate, transport, cultural norms, competitive ecology—

that vary across India and beyond. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference: while SEM imposes a directional structure, reverse causality (consumers prone to revisit may also stay longer) and omitted variables (tenant mix, promotions, travel distance) cannot be ruled out. The binary Mall 2.0/traditional typology, although validated, simplifies a continuous gradient. Dwell time was self-reported (with footfall validation) rather than tracked observationally; smartphone or beacon analytics would offer greater precision. And the dependent variable is intention, not behaviour—loyalty programme transaction data or longitudinal footfall tracking of identified consumers would let researchers test actual return.

Future research could pursue: longitudinal panels that track the accumulation and depreciation of experiential capital over multiple visits; cross-cultural and cross-regional comparisons of the 4E–stickiness relationship; integration of spending data to test whether the dwell time premium translates into a proportional expenditure premium; qualitative phenomenological work on the lived experience of time in Mall 2.0; and critical urban studies on whether Mall 2.0's place-making function constitutes a genuine public benefit or a privatised substitution for absent civic infrastructure.

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