

## EFFECTS OF THE FOUR REALMS OF EXPERIENCE AND PLEASURABLE EXPERIENCES ON CONSUMER INTENTION TO PATRONISE POP-UP STORES

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the effects of the four realms of experience and pleasurable retail experiences on consumers' intentions to patronise pop-up stores. A survey research design was followed. Data were collected through a pre-tested, online questionnaire, completed by a convenience sample that resided in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria, South Africa. The questionnaire was developed by adapting existing scales. A total of 257 usable questionnaires were analysed. The results support the positive effect of the realms of experience and pleasurable experiences on intention to patronise pop-up stores and ultimately a positive brand image. The multiple regression analysis indicated that the most predictive factors for patronage intention were esthetic and escapist experiences and intellectual pleasure. Although conducted pre-Covid 19, this study advances our understanding of how incorporating specific experiential elements (e.g., exciting store design, immersive activities, participation in events and engagement with knowledgeable brand representatives) can influence consumers' intention to patronise pop-up stores and positively direct brand image.

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### INTRODUCTION

Consumers' constant pursuit for more pleasurable and memorable shopping experiences has been a significant driver for new retail formats (Marciniak & Budnarowska, 2009). Consumer experience, together with interactive engagement with the retail environment, became an important factor for experiential retailers to consider in their retail offering (Pomodoro, 2013; Warnaby, Kharakhorkina, Shi & Comiani, 2015). In

experiential retail, consumer experience is the economic offering, layered with sensory, emotional, and cognitive-rich elements to make it memorable and connect the consumer with a store and brand (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999).

Pop-up stores, an experiential retail format, focus on creating memorable consumer experiences by incorporating interactive elements to engage the customer (Alexander, Nobbs & Varley, 2018; Niehm, Fiore, Jeong & Kim, 2007). Pop-up stores are widely used to promote a brand, product, or service through a personalised experience, customised to make the consumer enjoy and remember it (Surchi, 2011; Warnaby *et al.*, 2015). Memorable and personalised consumer experiences are created by transforming retail venues or settings into innovative and unusual spaces that literally “pops up” (Pomodoro, 2013:342). For instance, refurbished buses and trucks, vending machines, converted shipping containers, and vibrant open spaces have successfully been used as pop-up venues (De Lassus & Anido Freire, 2014). In addition, pop-up stores are event-driven, and to draw consumers to these stores, guerrilla marketing techniques (e.g., word-of-mouth) are used to create a buzz (Alexander *et al.*, 2018; Kim, Fiore, Niehm, & Jeong, 2010; Robertson, Gatignon & Cesareo, 2018). While pop-up stores have the potential to generate sales, the real value of pop-up retail formats is that it is promotional, experiential, and communicational, which all aim to improve brand awareness (Warnaby *et al.*, 2015). Undeniably, pop-up stores serve as an excellent retail format to promote and increase interaction with the store or brand and ultimately enhance positive brand image, brand loyalty, and patronage (Surchi, 2011; Taube & Warnaby, 2017).

Despite the success of *pop-up stores internationally, little is known about how consumers respond to it in the South African context* (Cassel, 2015; Retief, Erasmus & Petzer, 2018). The South African retail landscape has undergone numerous changes since 2012. The upcoming Black consumer market, growing spending power in previously disadvantaged population groups, an influential younger consumer market, the entry of international retailers, and South African apparel retailers’ expanding into global markets all

contributed to an evolving retail landscape (Hugo, Haskell, Stroud, Ensor, Moodley, & Maritz, 2016). These changes contributed to more competition in the South African retail landscape and a need to differentiate local stores and brands (Hugo *et al.*, 2016). Using pop-up stores became an exciting new retail format for South African clothing retailers to connect with their customers and better differentiate and position their brands (Retief, 2012). While pop-up retail has been around for some time, research about internal and external factors influencing consumers’ intention to visit them in the South African context has been limited (Retief, 2012; Retief *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, it is unclear how the underlying sensory and aesthetic and pleasurable experience offerings integrated into retail formats such as pop-up stores (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Picot-Coupey, 2014) will influence South African consumers to visit them. The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the four realms of experience (i.e. entertainment, education, esthetic, and escapist) as well as pleasurable experiences (i.e., sensory, social, emotional, and intellectual) on intention to patronise pop-up stores and in creating a positive brand image.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The four realms of experience

Experience is an intangible or nonmaterial offering created through the consumer’s participation and involvement within a sensory and emotional domain (Carù & Cova, 2007). Pine and Gilmore (2011) propose in the experience economy that the realms of experiences can be used as an economic offering, just like a product or service, to enrich consumers’ experiences and connect them to the store and brand. Experiences are divided into four broad realms, also referred to as the 4E constructs of the experience economy: (1) entertainment, (2) educational, (3) esthetic, and (4) escapist (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). These four realms of experience were employed to investigate consumers’ intention to patronage pop-up stores.

### **Entertainment experience**

Entertainment experiences are those in which consumers passively participate and are absorbed through their senses (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Consumers increasingly desire entertaining shopping experiences to feel a sense of fulfilment (Schmitt, 1999). Entertainment is a great way to create a memorable consumer experience and provides retailers with an opportunity to differentiate their pop-up store environments, using live performing artists, interactive activities, or unique scenery (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Picot-Coupey (2014:656) points out that pop-up retailers often use “events with artists and community groups as a means to generate long-lasting memories.” Pop-up stores have effectively satisfied consumers’ need for entertainment as it embraces entertaining elements such as fun activities, exciting events, and a festive atmosphere (Pomodoro, 2013; Taube & Warnaby, 2017). Entertainment experience can make a long-lasting emotional connection with the consumer (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). If consumers are absorbed in an experience and enjoyment is the result, they are more likely to return for more and continue supporting the retailer (Retief *et al.*, 2018). It is proposed that:

**H1a.** Entertainment experience will have a positive effect on consumers’ intention to patronise pop-up retail.

### **Education experience**

With educational experiences, consumers absorb the events through active participation (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Pop-up stores offer a good way for consumers to learn about the brand and test products, as free samples and services are often given to consumers (Alexander *et al.*, 2018; Taube & Warnaby, 2017). Encouraging consumers to try out or test products also increases brand awareness and the brand’s distinguishing features (Surchi, 2011). Allowing consumers to co-create the pop-up experience and be engaged personally will enable consumers to have educational experiences that involve learning and a real connection with the brand (Kim *et al.*, 2007). If consumers are actively engaged and improving their skills and knowledge, they are more likely to visit and revisit pop-up stores. Therefore, the following is hypothesised:

**H1b.** Educational experience will have a positive effect on consumers’ intention to patronise pop-up retail.

### **Esthetic experience**

In esthetic experiences, consumers are immersed in the environment but are not partaking in it (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The in-store design, store exterior, and atmospherics of pop-up stores are essential “to offer the consumer an immersive experience” (Picot-Coupey, 2014:655). Pop-up stores, especially, can offer consumers an aesthetic experience as these stores are packed with immersive elements such as the unique and unusual store designs and atmospherics (Jeong, Fiore, Niehm & Lorenz, 2009; Kim *et al.*, 2007). Retief (2012) found that the exterior design of pop-up stores positively affected a consumer’s intention to visit pop-up stores. Esthetic experiences generated by the physical environment can also influence consumers’ intention to patronise the stores (Sadachar & Fiore, 2018), indicating that there is a connection between the esthetic experience of a pop-up setting and intention to patronise the store. It is hypothesised that:

**H1c.** Esthetic experience will have a positive effect on consumers’ intention to patronise pop-up retail.

### **Escapist experience**

Escapist experiences are the opposite of entertaining experiences, involving total immersion and active participation in events (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Fiore and Ogle (2000:40) suggest that consumers take on “an alternative existence” through retail environments. Pop-up retail can provide a world of fantasy and allow them to escape reality (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Consumers are drawn in by the spectacle, as the excitement and novelty initiated by pop-up stores gives consumers a break from reality (De Lassus & Anido Freire, 2014). Many consumers seek shopping experiences that provide an escape from the mundane and, for them, visiting stores is “to explore, stalk, hunt down, touch, feel, and interact with products that might fit into their lives” (Valas, 2004: 26). This type of experience adds hedonic value to otherwise utilitarian shopping and helps differentiate one retail brand from another (Klein, Falk, Esch & Gloukhovtsev,

2016; Ryu, 2011). Escapist experiences build into pop-up retail (e.g. adventure, fantasy, fun, surprise) fulfil consumers' hedonistic needs and have also been positively associated with consumers patronising pop-up stores (Retief *et al.*, 2018). Thus, it is expected that:

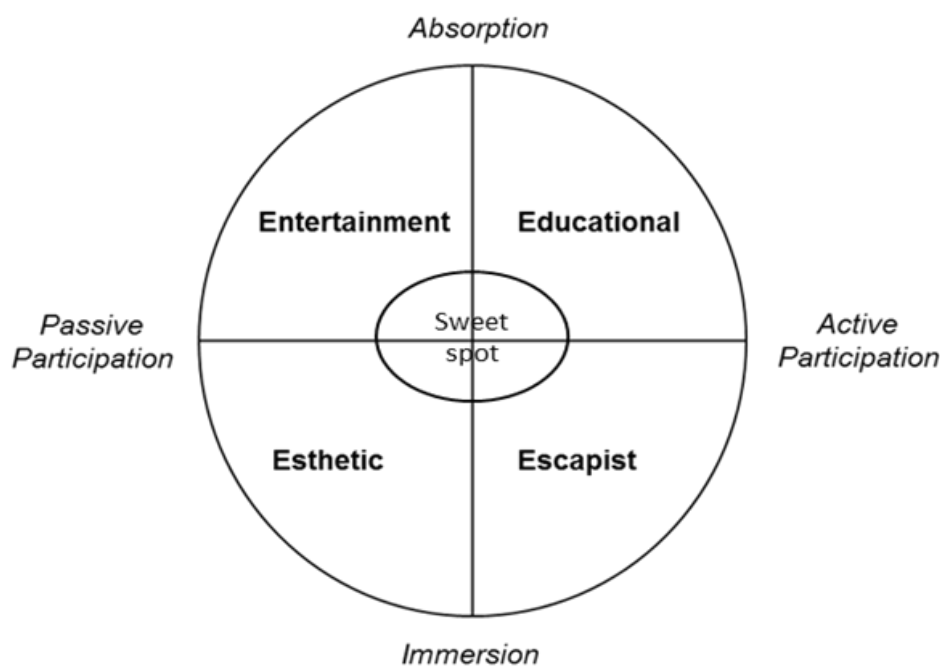
**H1d.** Escapist experience will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.

Figure 1 presents the four realms of the experience model, indicating that consumer involvement has two dimensions: participation and connection (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Participation is divided into active participation and passive participation. Passive participation is where consumers do not need to be actively involved in the performance or event. They experience the event as viewers—for example, attending a fashion show or window shopping. Active participation refers to an event where participants are actively involved and co-create their own experience, like participating in a fashion styling course (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Russo Spena, Caridà, Colurcio & Melia, 2012). The second dimension of experience describes the “connection” consumers have with the event (Pine & Gilmore, 1999:45). Connection relates to absorption and immersion. Absorption occurs when viewing an event from afar, like viewing a fashion show on the television.

In contrast, immersion is when a consumer is completely submerged and transported to another reality. For example, going to a mall created to look like an Italian village, where one can shop at Italian-look-alike stores, go to restaurants, or enjoy live theatre shows. The richest experiences would encompass all four realms, forming a “sweet spot” around the area where the quadrants meet (Pine & Gilmore, 1999:102). Shopping experiences designed to ensure an engaging and memorable experience for consumers will ultimately lead to patronage behaviour (Niehm *et al.*, 2007).

### Pleasurable experiences

Like Pine and Gilmore (1999), Dubé and Le Bel (2003) proposed that consumers' patronage intentions were influenced by the enjoyment the experience holds for them. Retailers that provide consumers with pleasurable or enjoyable shopping experiences are more likely to have returning customers who want to partake in the experience again (Cant, 2010). Pleasurable experiences should be integrated at every contact point within pop-up retail to create loyalty (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Picout-Copey, 2014). Pleasurable experiences comprise of four types: (1) sensory, (2) social, (3) emotional, and (4) intellectual (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003). For example, exploring the pop-up environment with friends



**FIGURE 1: THE FOUR REALMS OF EXPERIENCE (PINE & GILMORE, 1999:30)**

will become a pleasurable social experience, whereas a pleasurable emotional experience will be when one becomes nostalgic and relating it to good times with friends or family.

### **Sensory (or physical) pleasure**

Sensory (or physical) pleasure stems from pleasant sensations elicited during an event or from the environment and is experienced through consumers' senses (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003). The pop-up store environment can enhance enjoyment and pleasure (Robertson *et al.*, 2018). For example, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling products within the pop-up environment could elicit sensory pleasure. Consumers were found to respond positively to the sensory elements of retail settings (Fiore, 2010). Additionally, sensory pleasure often leads to strong emotional attachments with the store or brand (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). Consumers who want to be part of a memorable experience emphasised the importance of getting pleasure from the retail environment. The environment consequently influences their decision to patronise a store (Yoon, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2a.** Sensory pleasure will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.

### **Social pleasure**

Social pleasure is derived from one's interactions with others (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003). Linking social events with pop-up retail becomes an essential strategy for consumers to have a brand experience with others (Picout-Copey, 2014). Because consumers can experience pop-up retail with their friends or family, it can lead to social pleasure and prompt consumers to visit pop-up stores (Retief, 2012). Additionally, pop-up retail provides the ideal opportunity to create "a community around a brand", and consumers derive gratification from belonging to this brand community (Warnaby *et al.*, 2015:309). Studies have indicated that the social aspects of shopping positively influence consumers' in-store experiences (Bäckström & Johansson, 2006) and, ultimately, patronage intention (Yoon, 2013). Thus, it is expected that:

**H2b.** Social pleasure will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.

### **Emotional pleasure**

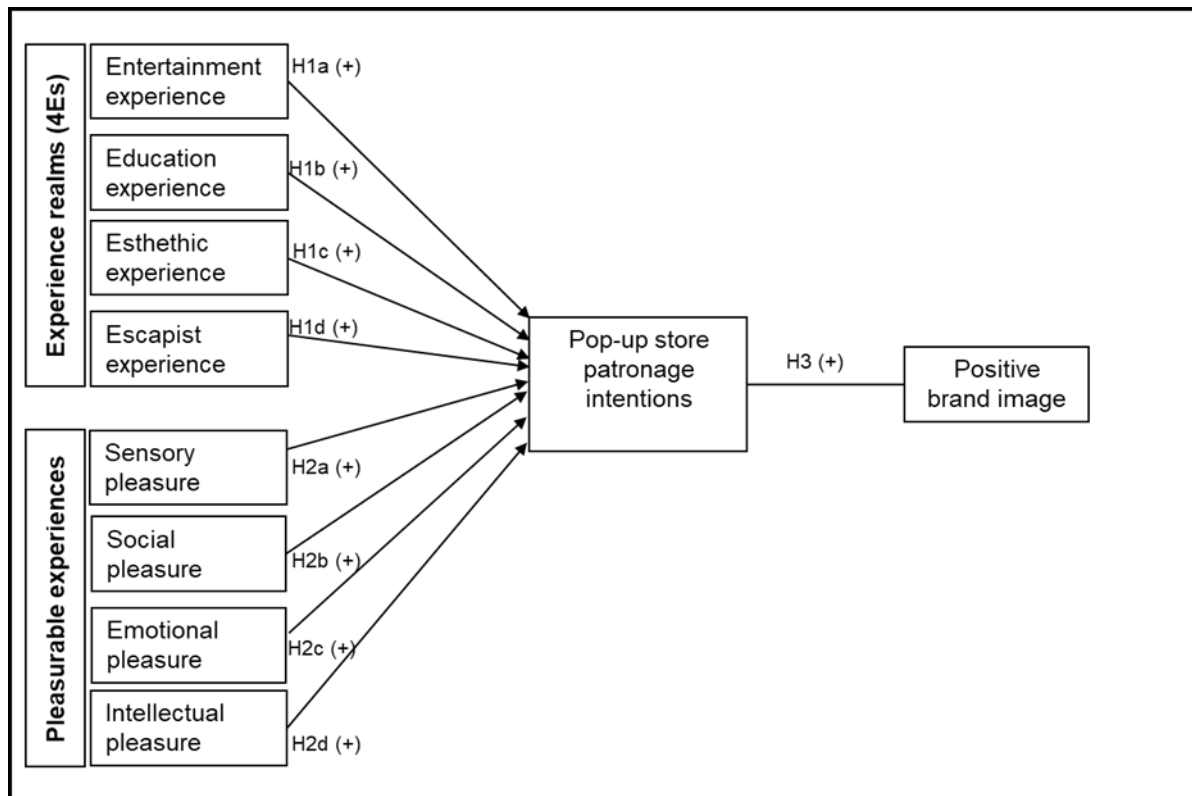
Emotional pleasure consists of consumers' positive feelings when shopping or interacting with the brand (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003). Russo Spina *et al.* (2012) argued that retail environments could be designed to provoke positive emotional states (e.g., excitement, enthusiasm, and stimulation) in the consumer. Specifically, pop-up retail has been associated with shopping experiences that engage consumers emotionally (Niehm *et al.*, 2007; Robertson *et al.*, 2018). Connecting consumers emotionally to a brand or emotional branding has been an effective pop-up retail strategy and is widely used by retailers to create loyal customers (Pomodoro, 2013; Surchi, 2011). Retief (2012) found that a consumer's positive emotional state can lead to visiting pop-up shops. For consumers to patronise a pop-up store requires understanding consumers' feelings and their need for emotional connection. The following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2c.** Emotional pleasure will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.

### **Intellectual pleasure**

Intellectual pleasure is triggered by "appreciating the complexities and subtleties of things around the consumer" (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003, p. 293). Adding expertise and relevant information about the brand or products can change an ordinary experience into one that elicits intellectual pleasure (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003). By actively engaging consumers' minds, their knowledge of the brand, product, and service can be enhanced (Robertson *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, a significant factor that attracts people to pop-up retail is the personal dialogue with brand representatives who can provide information about the brand on an individual level to customers (Taube & Warnaby, 2017). Pop-up retail is very effective in creating personal interactions with knowledgeable brand representatives or well-educated sales personnel (Surchi, 2011). It can create intellectual pleasure for consumers who might return for more information and expert advice. It is hypothesised that:

**H2d.** Intellectual pleasure will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.



**FIGURE 2: A PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**

### Patronage intention and brand image

Patronage intention refers to the probability that a consumer will support a specific brand or retailer, and is expected to lead to brand loyalty (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal & Voss, 2002). Emphasising the experiential value that a retail environment holds for consumers increases consumer patronage (Sadachar & Fiore, 2018). Patronage intention relies on providing added value to the consumer through a different retail experience (Fiore & Ogle, 2000). By incorporating the four realms of experience (4Es) and pleasurable experiences that consumers desire in pop-up retail, it is possible to enhance the patronage intention of consumers (Jeong *et al.*, 2009; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Niehm *et al.*, 2007; Warnaby *et al.*, 2015), and ultimately build positive brand image (Zogaj, Olk & Tscheulin, 2019).

Brand image is consumer perception of a particular brand, including subjective brand associations with the brand (Keller, 2013). Brand associations can include symbolic meaning (e.g., the brand is innovative) and functional attributes (e.g., the brand is durable) (Fiore,

2010). Surchi (2011) points out that pop-up retail is the perfect communication tool to project brand identity and image and increase brand awareness. Moreover, Hanson-Moore (2010) stresses the importance of creating experiences through pop-up stores to solidify consumer connection with the brand. A positive brand image was found to result from consumer patronage or support of the brand's pop-up store (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). A positive brand experience becomes vital in terms of brand image, as it enhances the overall brand identity and creates a positive mental picture of the brand in the consumer's mind (Schmitt, 1999). Once the four realms of experiences (4Es) and pleasurable experiences are delivered and enjoyed, consumers are likely to patronise the pop-up store, reinforcing the brand experience and leading to a positive brand image. Therefore, it is hypothesised that patronage intention will be affected by the four realms of experiences (4Es) and pleasurable experiences, which will positively relate to a positive brand image.

**H3.** Intention to patronise pop-up stores will be positively associated with a positive brand image.

The proposed conceptual framework for the study is presented in Figure 2 was specified to test the proposed hypotheses.

FIGURE 2 HERE

## METHODOLOGY

### Instrument development

An online, self-administered questionnaire was developed from existing reliable scales. The existing scales were adapted to measure the independent and dependent constructs. To measure the independent variables: the four realms of experience (i.e., entertainment, education, esthetic, escapist) and pleasurable experiences (i.e., sensory pleasure, social pleasure, emotional pleasure and intellectual pleasure) items were adapted from Kim *et al.*, (2007), Niehm *et al.* (2007), Oh, Fiore and Jeong, (2007), Jeong *et al.* (2009), and Kim *et al.* (2010). The dependent variable of this study, patronage intention towards pop-up retail, was measured by items adapted from Niehm *et al.* (2007, Jeong *et al.* (2009), and Kim *et al.* (2010). Six questions measuring consumer's patronage intention towards pop-up retail, the dependent variable, were included in the survey. At least four questions were designed for each independent variable to increase theoretical validity. Respondents had to rate all statements using a six-point forced Likert-type scale, ranging from "very strongly disagree" = 1 to "very strongly agree" = 6. The middle point was omitted to avoid neutral responses that are often an outcome of five- and seven-point scales (Mazzocchi, 2008). To measure consumers' brand image perception, they were asked two questions: (1) 'After experiencing the brand's pop-up store would you buy the brand?' (Yes/No), and (2) 'Indicate your perception of the brand after an experience of its pop-up store on a scale from 1 to 10?'. The latter question asked respondents to quantify their perceptions to pinpoint if they hold a negative or positive brand image. A ten-point scale with numeric anchors was used as it is simplistic and easy to understand (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Respondents are accustomed to rating or evaluating service on a scale from 1 to 10, and it has effectively been used to rate other

constructs such as pain and perceptions (SurveyMonkey, 2021). The ten-point scale provided more room to express differentiation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) than the 6-point Likert-type scale used for the other questions in the questionnaire. Questions addressing general demographic information, such as gender, age and income, were also included.

### Sample, sampling, and data collection procedures

A survey research design explored the effects of the four realms of experience (4Es) and pleasurable experiences on patronage intention. The target population consisted of consumers aged 20 to 45, living in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria. Urban consumers were the target population because they tend to be more involved in leisure and entertainment spending; they are more likely to have been exposed to some form of pop-up retailing and are often novelty seekers (Retief *et al.*, 2018). Gauteng province, which includes the Johannesburg-Pretoria metropolitans, is the most urbanised area in South Africa and densely populated (Stats SA, 2019).

A non-probability sampling technique was followed for data collection. Data collection commenced after ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of Pretoria. Data were collected from a convenience sample through a pre-tested online self-administered questionnaire hosted on a website. The online questionnaire was pre-tested on 31 respondents to increase the overall reliability of the questionnaire as well as to ensure questions were easy to understand and stated unambiguously (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011). The pre-testing also provided a good indication of the length of time needed to complete the questionnaire.

The website, created explicitly for this study, contained a detailed explanation of what pop-up retail was all about, various images and examples of pop-up stores, and the online self-administered questionnaire with a cover page to inform respondents about the content of the survey and for what the information will be used. Before answering the questionnaire, respondents who had not yet visited a pop-up

store had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with pop-up retail through the information and examples provided on the website. The convenience sample was recruited through sharing an open-participation link (<http://www.popupexperience.co.za>) on social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook) as well as emailing the link to personal contacts, friends and family. A snowball sampling technique was also employed to reach a larger number of potential respondents. After completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to re-share the link with family and friends living around Johannesburg and Pretoria. This collection procedure is lower in cost than other forms of data collection, and therefore a larger sample size could be reached. A total of 257 questionnaires were usable from the 261 who initially started, resulting in a 98% completion rate. Completion rate is a measure used to describe data collection procedures in online surveys. It is also an important data quality measure calculated by dividing the number of fully completed questionnaires by the number of started questionnaires (Liu & Wronski, 2018). Questionnaires completed by respondents living outside these areas and incomplete questionnaires were filtered out and excluded from the data analysis.

### Data analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 22. Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Questionnaires with missing data were omitted. A total of 257 questionnaires were used for data analysis. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and internal reliability analyses were done to validate the variables. The data set were subjected to an unrestricted EFA using Varimax rotation as the extraction method. The goal of the EFA was to identify the underlying factor structure according to how respondents responded (Mazzocchi, 2008) and interpret a smaller number of factors that explain most of the common variance (Kline, 2013). Pearson correlations were performed to determine the correlation between variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the effects of the multiple independent variables on the dependent variable.

## RESULTS

### Sample characteristics

The sample was predominantly (71.5%) female, with 28.5% male. Half of the respondents (49.8%) were between the ages of 20 to 29 years, followed by 33.6% between 30 and 39 years and the remaining over 40 years of age (16.6%). The disposable income of the respondents in this study varied. A little over a quarter of the respondents (27%) had a disposable income of between R 5001 – R 15 000 per month, a quarter (25.3%) had a disposable income of R 15 001 – R 25 000 per month and 24% between R 25 001 and R 50 000 per month. Respondents had a disposable income of less than R 5 000 were 13.1% of the total sample, and 10.6% earned more than R 50 000 per month. Most respondents resided in Pretoria (73.4%) and the remaining respondents lived in Johannesburg (26.6%).

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

To explore the underlying factors for this study, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed. The goal of the EFA is to identify and interpret a smaller number of factors that explain most of the common variance (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). In factor analysis, it is generally assumed that: (a) common variance is due to the effects of the underlying factors, and (b) the number of factors of essential interest is less than the number of indicators (Mazzocchi, 2008). An eigenvalue of preferably larger than one was used to identify the number of factors. Items were retained if they loaded greater than 0.5 on a factor and below 0.3 on other factors (Kline, 2013). After removing items with cross-loadings and a factor loading below 0.5, six factors were retained that explained 28.77% of the total variance. The six factors were labelled escapist experience, intellectual pleasure, patronage intention, edutainment experience, esthetic experience, and emotional pleasure. The six factors and their associated items are listed in Table 1.

Factor 1: *escapist experience* retained twelve items related to hedonic, social, and emotional pleasure as well as a break from reality. Hedonic aspects refer to consumers' gratification from a shopping experience and include emotions and



intangible benefits (Kim *et al.*, 2007). The items retained for the escapist experience similarly included escaping reality, fun, and socialising with family or friends. Escapist experience had an eigenvalue of 21.54 and explained 8.21% of

the variance. Factor 2: *intellectual pleasure* retained five of the original items and two sensory pleasure items (i.e., *provide a pleasant experience; create a great shopping experience*), one entertainment (*create*

**TABLE 1: EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR CONSTRUCTS: ROTATED FACTOR PATTERN**

Factor structure	Factor loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained	$\alpha$
<b>Factor 1: Escapist - I would visit a pop-up store because it...</b>		21.54	8.21	0.96
makes me forget about my everyday life	0.79			
would lift my mood	0.51			
made me feel like I was a different person	0.78			
is an escape from my reality	0.83			
is something to enjoy with my friends	0.65			
is a fun place to meet my friends	0.69			
would make me cheerful	0.63			
allows me to forget about my daily routine totally	0.87			
is a place where I can hang out with my friends	0.75			
would make me feel happy	0.64			
creates an unknown world	0.65			
impresses my friends	0.72			
<b>Factor 2: Intellectual pleasure – Pop-up stores ...</b>		2.58	6.33	0.94
revive my opinion of the brand	0.59			
provide a pleasant experience	0.67			
direct my perception of what the brand is about	0.79			
give me pleasant ideas about how to wear the brand	0.66			
refresh my idea about traditional retail	0.57			
help me understand the brand concept	0.63			
create enjoyment for those who visit them	0.60			
are a fun way to see what the brand is all about	0.69			
create a great shopping experience	0.62			
<b>Factor 3: Patronage intention After experiencing the brand's pop-up store, I would...</b>		1.46	4.82	0.95
recommend that others visit this pop-up store	0.71			
revisit this pop-up store	0.73			
visit stores that stock the brand	0.71			
want to experience this brand's future pop-up stores	0.68			
recommend that a friend buy this brand	0.74			
<b>Factor 4: Edutainment</b>		1.22	3.81	0.88
Pop-up stores provide some exciting activities for consumers	0.61			
Pop-up stores offer me an opportunity to learn about new products	0.69			
Pop-up stores are located in interesting venues	0.72			
Pop-up stores satisfy my senses	0.65			
<b>Factor 5: Esthetic</b>		1.09	3.77	0.93
I would visit a pop-up store because it looks interesting	0.50			
I would visit a pop-up store because it is eye-catching	0.55			
Pop-up stores create a pleasing impression	0.50			
I would visit a pop-up store because it has unusual exterior looks	0.63			
I would visit a pop-up store because it has its products visually displayed	0.66			
<b>Factor 6: Emotional pleasure</b>		0.90	1.85	0.58 *
I would visit a pop-up store because it would not have any effect on my mood	0.85			
The pop-up store was boring to me	0.70			

Note: \* Spearman's rho correlation 0.45 at  $p < 0.0001$

enjoyment for those who visit them) and one education item (*are a fun way to see what the brand is all about*). The eigenvalue was 2.58, and it explained 6.33% of the variance. Factor 3: *patronage intention* retained all five patronage intention items with an eigenvalue of 1.46. This factor explained 4.82% of the variance. The EFA supported the collapse of education and entertainment into Factor 4: *edutainment experience*, with an eigenvalue of 1.22 and 3.81% of the explained variance. Items from entertainment and education experience merged into this factor. Factor 5: *esthetic experience* retained four of the original seven items and one item from sensory pleasure (i.e., *pop-up stores create a pleasing impression*). It had an eigenvalue of 1.09 and explained 3.77% of the variance. Factor 6: *emotional pleasure* retained only two reverse-coded items and explained 1.85% of the variance. Emotional pleasure was initially measured with five items. Three items (*lift my mood; make me feel happy; make me cheerful*) loaded on the Escapist factor. The only item retained from the initial measurement scale was the reverse-coded item (*not have any effect on my mood*). The other reverse-coded item, which was retained for emotional pleasure (*the pop-up store was boring to me*), originated from the Escapist factor. Even though the construct had an eigenvalue of almost 1 (0.9), the construct had very high factor loadings for both items (see Table 1). According to Mazzocchi (2008) the value of the factor loadings (between -1 and 1) indicate the importance of the item in relation to the factor – high values (above 0.5) indicate that the link between the factor and item is very strong. The two items were subsequently subjected to the Spearman's  $\rho$  correlation and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  to assess the internal validity of the factor (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The Spearman's  $\rho$  had a significant correlation of 0.45 at  $p <$

0.0001 level, and the Cronbach  $\alpha$  yielded a value of 0.58. The low alpha value could be because of the reverse coded statements and that the factor had only two measurement items. Hair *et al.* (2014) suggest that with exploratory research like the present study, the recommended alpha value can be decreased to 0.60. The  $\alpha$  value of almost 0.60 was accepted on the basis that this was an exploratory study.

Moreover, research suggests a significant relationship between emotions and pop-up retail (Retief 2012, Retief *et al.*, 2018). The promise of experiencing emotional pleasure such as delight or joy and upliftment of one's mood encourage consumers to visit and enjoy pop-up stores (Robertson *et al.*, 2018; Russo Spina *et al.*, 2012; Zogaj, Olk, & Tscheulin, 2019). Based on strong theoretical evidence that emotional pleasure is derived from visiting pop-up stores and that the study was exploratory emotional pleasure was retained as a factor.

The reliability of the other five factors that emerged through the EFA was assessed by evaluating the internal consistency of each factor. The five factors returned Cronbach  $\alpha$  values of above the suggested 0.7 level (Mazzocchi, 2008). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  values for the five factors ranged between 0.88 and 0.96 (Table 1), indicating that the factors are reliable and have high internal consistency (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

### Correlations

Table 2 presents the Pearson's correlations which measure the association or correlation between the variables. Except for brand image, the inter-correlations between the variables were

**TABLE 2: PEARSON CORRELATIONS MATRIX**

	Edutainment	Emotional pleasure	Esthetic	Intellectual pleasure	Escapist	Patronage intention	Positive brand image
Edutainment experience	1						
Emotional pleasure	0.33**	1					
Esthetic experience	0.84**	0.78**	1				
Intellectual pleasure	0.78**	0.30**	0.82**	1			
Escapist experience	0.65**	0.30**	0.69**	0.71**	1		
Patronage intention	0.72**	0.34**	0.78**	0.78**	0.71**	1	
Positive brand image	-0.03	0.07	-0.06	-0.00	0.08	0.11	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level (2-tailed)

**TABLE 3: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

Independent variable	Standardised <i>b</i> coefficients	Std. Error	<i>t</i> -value	Sig.
Edutainment experience	0.034	0.077	0.434	0.665
Esthetic experience	0.323	0.080	3.893	0.000
Escapist experience	0.245	0.053	4.151	0.000
Emotional pleasure	0.025	0.034	0.595	0.552
Intellectual pleasure	0.306	0.081	4.135	0.000

Note: Dependent Variable - Patronage intention; significant at  $p < 0.001$

significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level and were positively correlated, ranging between 0.30 and 0.84. Edutainment experience had the strongest correlation with esthetic experience ( $r = 0.84$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These correlations established no multicollinearity problems exist among the variables (i.e., edutainment experience, esthetic experience, escapist experience, emotional pleasure, intellectual pleasure, and patronage intention). However, correlations between positive brand image and the other variables were not significant, indicating multicollinearity between these variables.

#### Multiple regression model

Multiple regression analysis was employed to predict the relative contribution of the independent variables (i.e., edutainment experience, esthetic experience, escapist experience, emotional pleasure, and intellectual pleasure) retained from the EFA and the dependent variable, patronage intention of a pop-up store. A multiple linear regression analysis indicates which independent variables are statistically significant and how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The multiple regression output is presented in Table 3. The goodness-of-fit test for the model was good, with an  $R^2$  of 0.70. The relatively high  $R^2$  indicated that the combination of independent variables explained about 70% of the variance of the dependent variable (patronage intention) (Mazzocchi, 2008). The associated  $F$ -value confirmed the model is appropriate and fitted the collected data well ( $F(5;196) = 91.27$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ).

The results from the multiple regression analysis supported some of the hypotheses. The effects of the remaining realms of experiences and the remaining pleasurable experiences of pop-up retail were examined with standardised

regression coefficients ( $b$ -values),  $t$ -values and  $p$ -values (Table 3).

The results indicated that the factors that are most predictive of patronage intention are Esthetic experiences ( $H1c$ ), escapist experiences ( $H1d$ ), and intellectual pleasure ( $H2d$ ). The positive effects of aesthetic experience ( $\beta = 0.323$ ;  $t = 3.893$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), escapist experience ( $\beta = 0.245$ ;  $t = 4.151$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and intellectual pleasure ( $\beta = 0.306$ ;  $t = 4.135$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) on consumers' patronage intentions of pop-up stores were supported and statistically significant. The multiple regression analysis provided support for hypotheses  $H1c$ ,  $H1d$ , and  $H2d$ . However, edutainment experiences ( $\beta = 0.034$ ;  $t = 0.434$ ,  $p = 0.665$ ), and emotional pleasure ( $\beta = 0.025$ ;  $t = 0.595$ ,  $p = 0.552$ ) were not significant in predicting consumers' patronage intention of pop-up stores.  $H1a$ ,  $H1b$  and  $H2b$  were not supported. Regarding  $H3$ , consumers' intention to patronage a pop-up store will be positively associated with a positive brand image; a Spearman's rho test was executed between the two variables. The correlation coefficient was significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). A strong association between two variables is when the value of  $r = 0.50$  to  $1.0$  or  $r = -0.50$  to  $-1.0$  (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Patronage intention of pop-up stores was moderately associated with a positive brand image ( $r = 0.200$ ,  $p = 0.039$ ), which supports  $H3$ . The predicting factors which will have a significant effect on consumers' intention to patronise a pop-up store are illustrated in Figure 3.

In Table 4, the hypotheses set for the multiple regression model are accepted or rejected.

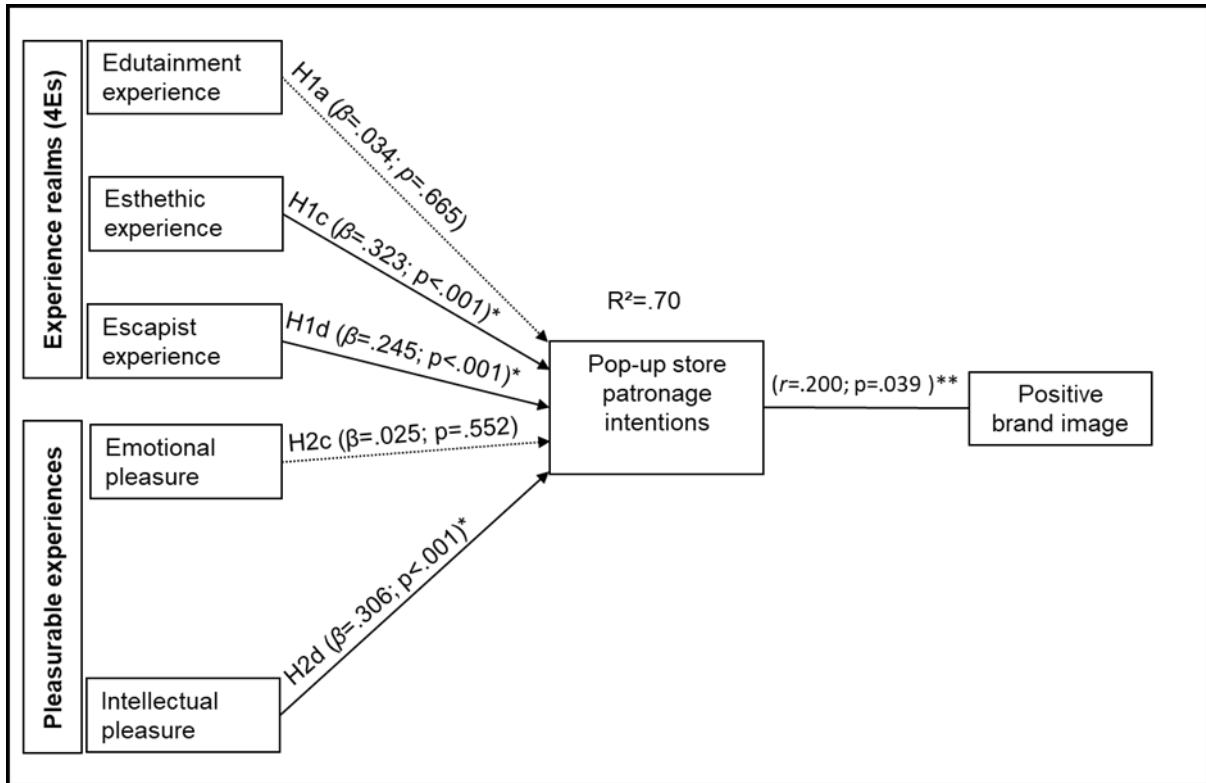


FIGURE 3: RESULTS OF THE MULTIPLE REGRESSION (NOTE:  $P < 0.001$ \*;  $P = 0.039$ \*\*)

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES FORMED FROM EFA FACTORS

Hypothesis no.	Hypothesis	Accept	Reject
<i>H1a</i>	Edutainment experience will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.		Reject
<i>H1c</i>	Esthetic experience will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.	Accept	
<i>H1d</i>	Escapist experience will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.	Accept	
<i>H2c</i>	Emotional pleasure will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.		Reject
<i>H2d</i>	Intellectual pleasure will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to patronise pop-up retail.	Accept	
<i>H3</i>	Intention to patronise a pop-up store will be positively associated with a positive brand image.	Accept	

**DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study suggest that the factors most predictive of patronage intention of pop-up stores are esthetic experience, escapist experience, and intellectual pleasure. It also demonstrates that the intention to patronise pop-up stores is positively associated with a positive brand image, hypothesised in *H3*. However, this study doesn't confirm the positive effects of the edutainment experience or social and emotional pleasurable experiences on consumers'

intention to patronage pop-up stores. The edutainment, social, and emotional experience might relate to the hedonic benefits of pop-up stores underlying escapist experience (Chen & Fiore, 2017). To increase consumer patronage of pop-up stores, retailers should highlight the esthetic and escapist experiences and intellectual pleasure.

Designing esthetic appealing pop-up stores that can immerse and engage consumers are critical. Unique and unusual pop-up environments have

the power to incite and sway a consumer to patronise the brand (Niehm *et al.*, 2007). The importance of esthetic experience in this study corroborates the findings of other studies (e.g., Picot-Coupey, 2014; Retief, 2012; Robertson *et al.*, 2018). Retief (2012) specifically found that the exterior design of pop-up stores had the strongest influence on consumers' intention to visit the pop-up store. As the store environment is an essential part of the consumer's esthetic retail experience (Fiore, 2010), the look and feel of the pop-up store are critical and needs to be eye-catching and unusual. Retailers can, for example, include exciting exterior designs that emulate the packaging of the brand or use interesting venues and containers as a pop-up store (e.g., busses, boats or refurbished shipping containers). In addition, atmospheric elements (e.g., music, brand colours, layout, and lighting fixtures) and attractive decorations (e.g., fixtures that fit with brand image) can help to create stimulating interior store designs.

Incorporating escapist experience will address hedonic benefits and distractions of every day within the pop-up retail environment (Chen & Fiore, 2017). The findings indicated that consumers exhibited a high tendency to 'escape' from everyday reality by immersing themselves in pop-up retail environments and actively participating in activities the pop-up store offers. These findings align with previous retail studies that found the hedonic benefits from escapist experience to strongly influence store patronage (De Lassus & Anido Freire, 2014; Retief *et al.*, 2018, Sadachar & Fiore, 2018). Experiential retail environments can provide a world of fantasy and address consumers' desires for involved and dynamic shopping experiences (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Pop-up retail can also take on thematic retailing as this retailing identifies and develops a storyline that promotes brand identity while creating a break from reality (Fiore & Ogle, 2000). In this study, escapist experience also pertained to social involvement (e.g., something to enjoy with friends, fun place to go/hang out with friends) and mood-altering elements (e.g., lift mood; feelings of happiness). Pop-up retail stores can be purposefully designed to create escapist experiences for consumers by including spaces for interactivity, socialisation, and emotional communication (Taube & Warnaby, 2017; Warnaby *et al.*, 2015); as well as functional areas to actively connect with the

brand (Surchi, 2011). For example, pop-up stores can add restaurants, bars or coffee shops where family or friends can meet. They can host music festivals with live musicians, cultural exhibitions or social events (e.g., movie nights under the stars) (Picot-Coupey, 2014). For more active participation, interactive technology can be employed, such as virtual reality for dressing rooms and mirrors that consumers can play around with (Sadachar & Fiore, 2018). When consumers are immersed and actively participate in this make-believe experience, it will become enjoyable and memorable. Pop-up retail is an effective format to make consumers forget about their daily routine.

Intellectual pleasurable experience in this research is related to stimulating the consumer's mind and incorporating expertise and knowledge into the experience (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003). Shopping experiences are also about the practical benefits it provides. The findings revealed that pleasurable intellectual experiences influence the patronage intention of pop-up stores. This aligns with Niehm *et al.* (2007), who found that pop-up retail provides a pleasant experience while simultaneously stimulating learning and testing of the brand. Pop-up stores can, for example, include a workshop that will promote consumers' interest and awareness of the brand.

Similarly, Surchi (2011) confirmed that pop-up retail offers a pleasant shopping experience that connects the consumer with knowledgeable brand representatives and is a fun way to revive opinions and perceptions of a brand. Brand representatives can also provide information on the brand's social and sustainability policy or highlight how the products were manufactured. Pop-up retailers need to challenge consumers' opinions and stimulate their thoughts by providing inspirational brand information, expert advice from knowledgeable representatives, and interactive opportunities with the brand (Taube & Warnaby, 2017).

This study found that patronage intention is positively associated with brand image, which agrees with Surchi's (2011), who found that pop-up retail functions as a brand communication tool and directs consumers' attention towards the brand. It can be concluded that after consumers experience the brand in a pop-up

retail environment, they would be more likely to purchase the brand and, in the long term, be brand loyal (Zogaj et al., 2019) as product experiences influence brand experiences (Brakus et al., 2009). Experiential retail environments can strengthen brand identity and communicate the brand effectively to consumers (Russo Spena et al., 2012). Consumers should be able to tell which brand is hosting the pop-up retail environment so that consumers can build a positive brand image within their minds. Thus, a positive experiential retailing environment such as pop-up retail, plus consumer engagement within the pop-up retail store, can lead to patronage intention. It is vital to create experience and connection with the brand (Hanson-Moore, 2010; Zogaj et al., 2019). If consumers can actively participate and be immersed in their own experiences, they will find the experience more enjoyable.

This study contributes to a better understanding of how incorporating specific experiential elements in a pop-up store could direct consumers' patronage intentions. The most effective experiential elements should be based on the esthetic realm, escapist realm, and intellectual pleasure. Retailers can purposely incorporate these manageable factors into their experiential retail and marketing strategies to generate patronage and brand loyalty within the current competitive economic climate. As consumers are becoming more resistant to traditional retailing and marketing strategy, retailers could benefit by incorporating experiential marketing techniques into their mix of business strategies (Alexander et al., 2018). Including pop-up stores designed around the experiential elements found significant in this study could set retailers apart from other retailers in the South African retail landscape. The retailers that will continue to succeed in the future are the ones that provide memorable and enjoyable shopping experiences combined with interactive, recreational activities and educational opportunities for their customers (Warnaby et al., 2015; Zogaj et al., 2019). Knowing how to use the four realms of experiences (4Es) and pleasurable experiences in pop-up stores will be invaluable to the long-term survival of South African retailers.

Although this study was conducted pre-COVID-19, the findings can still be relevant to South

African retailers. Currently, many retailers offer bricks-and-mortar and online shopping channels. Implementing appealing experiential elements focused on esthetics, escapism, and intellectual experiences throughout all channels can create memorable offerings for customers, translating to patronage intention and a positive brand image.

## LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has some limitations that point to interesting opportunities for further research. The sample demographics were relatively homogenous as the majority of the sample were White females. The sample is therefore not representative of all South Africans. For future research, a more diverse sample could provide multiple group analysis about consumers' perceptual responses based on different demographics like gender, age, education, income and geographical area to reflect a more representative sample of South Africa. Second, the questionnaire measured patronage intention and not actual behaviour. Therefore, respondents' responses only reflect what they intended to do and not existing behaviour. In future, it is recommended that research takes place at a pop-up retail store or directly after consumers have experienced a pop-up store. Third, more research is needed to explore the relationship between the four realms of experiences and pleasurable experience and experiential retail directed towards specific product categories (e.g., accessories, shoes, luxury brands, or lifestyle brands). Finally, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods is recommended for future research because experiences are unique and personal. An in-depth investigation via individual interviews can uncover rich data that can be triangulated with survey responses in real-time.

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