

CUSTOMER SHOPPING EXPERIENCE IN MALLS WITH ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess customer shopping experience in malls with entertainment centres in Chennai. This research aims to explore the shopping experience of customers at malls with entertainment centres visit them due to the availability of large scale entertainment centres. The purpose of this paper is to provide an insight of the role of external and internal variables in influencing the choice of Mall and shopping behavior.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The data for study is from face-to-face mall intercepts of shoppers in two malls with entertainment centres (City Centre Mall and Express Avenue Mall of Chennai). The survey was conducted among 93 shoppers inclusive of both the shopping malls.

Findings – The analysis concludes that shopping centres with entertainment facilities play an increasing emphasis on customer visit in the malls. The results suggest that the shoppers consider theatre as an added advantage to visit the mall whether or not they visit the theatre. Also that the customers visit Apparel store the most followed by Food Services, leather stores, Fashion stores, Consumer service, Professional services, Electronic stores, Departmental stores, Home ware and so on.

Originality – The findings will help the owners of shopping malls to meet the needs of the visitors of shopping malls. It also serves as an encouragement of the store owners in shopping malls to cater to the needs of the shoppers.

Keywords – Shopping Experience, Shopping Mall, Chennai, Entertainment Centre

Paper Type – Research Paper

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Introduction

Today the word 'Mall' has become a part of people living in Metro and big cities. Mall culture is mushrooming across the country's landscape at a faster pace. Few years before people felt that Malls are for upper middle class people but now Mall mania is common among all people. Also that earlier people had to make a choice among shopping stores or movies but today all that is available under one stop shop with a good shopping experience. Today people believe that the malls are the best place to shop or hang out.

According to the report by Northbridge Capita, Indian retail industry is expected to grow up to US \$833 billion by the year 2013 and reach US \$1.3 trillion by the year 2019 at a CAGR 10%. In India the consumer spending pattern has enormously increased and in the last few years, the consumer spending in India has raised up to 75%. As a result of increase in disposable income, Indian retail industry is expected to grow.

In fact, malls play a major role in consumers' lifestyle (Terblanche, 1999). They have become not only a centre for shopping but also a community centre for social and recreational activities (Ng, 2003). Stores, food courts, restaurants, cinemas, children's play areas, interactive entertainment, social use areas, relaxation spaces and promotional areas are now major components of any mall (Terblanche, 1999).

It has a multiple role in modern culture, with a constant change in its appearance. The concept of globalization has made the customers expose to different types of brands. Also that Indians travel abroad for work and business has made them experience different lifestyle, products and services available there. This has led the retailers in India to develop quality of life in India with a provision of modern retailing. And so, there are many malls upcoming in Chennai trying to match international outlook (*The list of malls in Chennai is provided*) The Mall growth shows the economic prosperity of the country.

The growth in retailing has led to the competition between the malls and the decision of which mall to choose since all the malls have apparent similarity in terms of stores. With the growing number of malls, shoppers tend to be more selective. They are more likely to patronize malls that are more attractive and have a wide variety of stores and merchandise that match their preferences (Mohammed Ismail El-Adly). Therefore, it is essential for mall managers to know the extent to which their malls are attractive to their shoppers (Wong et al., 2001). However, mall attributes that are attractive for some shoppers are not necessarily attractive for others. Therefore,

the purpose of this paper is to provide an insight of the role of external and internal variables in influencing the choice of Mall and shopping behavior.

Review of Literature

Intensive efforts have been made to find the relevant studies in customer shopping experience in shopping malls with entertainment centres. Only a limited study is available in this field especially in India. A summary of literature reviewed is reported here.

Machleit A. Karen, Sevgin A.Eroglu (2000), “the findings indicate that the broad range of emotions felt in the shopping context vary considerably across different retail environments. They also show that the Izard (Izard, C. E.: Human Emotions, Plenum, New York. 1977) and Plutchik (Plutchik, R.: Emotion: A Psycho evolutionary Synthesis. The findings indicate that in the specific context of the shopping experience, across the retail environments. The Izard measure contains many negative emotion types and may be more appropriate for studies that look at the unpleasant, rather than the pleasant, aspects of shopping. The Plutchik emotion types of expectancy and acceptance also may be particularly relevant in studies of salesperson interactions with shopper.

Taylor Lee Susan and Robert M.Cosenza (2002), “Profiling later aged female teens : Mall shopping behaviour and clothing choice “,the study was conducted to examine shopping choice behaviour of an important and viable segment of teen market called, “ Later aged female teen”. The results revealed that typical later aged female teen made right choice especially for clothing products. Finally the group’s desire to stay and shop at the local mall seemed to be a function of the mall composition and excitement

Reimers Vaughan and Val Clulow (2004), “Retail concentration: a comparison of spatial convenience in shopping strips and shopping centres”, the findings yielded three important insights (1) The shopping centre was found to offer consumers’ greater spatial convenience (2) the findings add support to the notion that the demise of the shopping strip could be linked to its inability to satisfy the needs of a convenience-oriented society. (3) While the shopping strip may be at a competitive disadvantage in terms of spatial convenience, market mechanisms.

Michon Richard and Jean Charles Chebat (2004), “Cross-cultural mall shopping values and habitats - A comparison between English- and French-speaking Canadians”, the findings indicate that French are less likely than English shoppers to use the mall for

other activities than buying goods and services. Haytko L. Diana and Julie Baker (2004), “It’s all at the mall: exploring adolescent girls’ experiences”, this study provides insight into young girls’ patronage behaviors and motivations, the results indicate five characteristics of the mall environment influenced the girls’ perceptions of their experiences: comfort, safety, retail mix, accessibility and atmosphere.

Michon Richard, Jean-Charles Chebat and L.W. Turley (2005), “Mall atmospherics: the interaction effects of the mall environment on shopping behavior”, the final results are that Ambient odors positively influence shoppers’ perceptions only under the medium retail density condition. Also that mood has little direct effect on the perception of product quality. Wesley Scarlett, Melody LeHew, Arch G. Woodside (2006), “Consumer decision-making styles and mall shopping behavior: Building theory using exploratory data analysis and the comparative method “. The result is that gender is prime antecedents associating with CDM styles i.e. Demographics moderate the influence of consumer decision-making styles on planned expenditures.

Preez Du R., E.M. Visser and L. Zietsman (2007), “Profiling male apparel consumers : Lifestyle, shopping orientation, patronage behaviour and shopping mall behaviour “. The results of the study are Male apparel consumers differ in terms of price ,quality, selection of shopping mall, they were also media-oriented. Ofir Chezy and Itamar Simonson (2007), “The Effect of Stating Expectations on Customer Satisfaction and Shopping Experience”. The findings of the research suggest that stated expectations tend not to be met, and explicitly stating expectations influences the likelihood that post experience evaluations would be lower than they would have been had the participants not articulated their expectations.

Michon Richard, Hong Yu and Donna Smith (2008), “The influence of mall environment on female fashion shoppers’ value and behaviour”, the results indicate that mall atmospherics has no or little effect on the utilitarian value of low- or high-fashion oriented shoppers. Rajagopal (2008) has focused on the impact of growing congestion of shopping mall in urban areas on shopping conveniences and shopping behavior. The findings reveal that the perspectives of shopping mall ambience and shopping satisfaction effectively become a measure of retailing performance, customer attraction and propensity to shop for urban shoppers.

The above review gives an understanding that only limited systematic attempt has been made across the world on the select dimensions of the shopping behavior of customers in

shopping centres. This is so in India, where no study that focused directly on the issue, shopping experience in malls.

Research Problem Identified

The purpose of this paper is to assess customer shopping experience in malls with entertainment centres in Chennai. This research aims to explore the shopping experience of customers at malls with entertainment centres visit them due to the availability of large scale entertainment centres. The purpose of this paper is to provide an insight of the role of external and internal variables in influencing the choice of Mall and shopping behavior.

Objectives Of The Study- The study has the following objectives:

- To study the profile of the shoppers
- To determine the relative importance of criteria which influence the overall attractiveness of mall.
- To assess the reasons for visiting the mall and their expenditure pattern
- To propose a model depicting Shopping Mall attractiveness

Methodology

Most of the previous research on malls with entertainment centers, focused only on one mall, this study has attempted to conduct research across 2 different malls in Chennai. The malls include Express Avenue and Citi Centre in Chennai. Both the malls fit commonly in terms of varieties of entertainment offered such as theatres, rides for children and shopping outlets.

The survey instrument used is structured personal interview questionnaire. Interviews was conducted from a random sample of mall shoppers from each of these malls. The questions focus on the following areas – Distance traveled to reach the mall, reasons for visit, whether the respondent had visited the mall earlier, amount of time spent/ would like to spend in the mall, opinion about the food court/ theatre/stores, Opinion about the mall atmospherics, etc.

The questionnaire was distributed among 115 shoppers who visited the mall; out of this 93 completed questionnaires have been received. As such, the total sample size is 93. The collected data has been processed using percentage, cluster and factor analysis. Likert's scaling technique was used wherever necessary

Result and Analysis

a) Profile of the Shoppers: - The profile of the sample respondents is summarized in the following Table no.1

Table No.1

Demographic	Number	%
Age		
> 18 yrs	06	6%
19-30 yrs	41	44%
31-40 yrs	31	34%
41-50 yrs	8	9%
51-60 yrs	5	5%
61 & older	2	2%
Gender		
Male	41	44%
Female	52	56%
Marital Status		
Single	62	71%
Married	31	29%
Purpose of Mall Visit		
Shopping	24	26%
Get-Together with Friends/Relatives	21	23%
Entertainment	27	29%
To spend time	19	20%
Business	2	2%
Travel to the Mall		
Bus	09	9%
Bike	39	43%
Car	32	34%
Auto / Cal Taxi	12	13%
Others	1	1%
Shopping Companion		
Alone	9	9%
Companion	84	91%
Shopping Frequency (per month)		
0-1 time	21	23%
2-3 times	42	45%
4-5 times	18	19%
6-7 times	10	11%
More than 8 times	2	2%
Expenditure Pattern at Malls		
Less than 10,000	51	55%
10,001 –30,000	35	38%
30,000 –60,000	6	6%

60,000-1,00,000	1	1%
1,00,000 & above	Nil	-

b) Attractiveness & Reasons for visit to Mall – The results reveal the attractiveness of the Shopping mall with entertainment centres. To understand the customer shopping experience at shopping malls, the shoppers in both the malls (Citi Centre and Express Avenue) were asked to mark the reasons why they prefer a shopping mall for shopping instead of independent outlet. The reasons identified were (in the order of preference): Shopping ambience, Availability of different types of shops, Entertainment offered at Malls, Parking facility, Ease of shopping, Good product quality, Pride and Prestige attached shopping.

The different types of stores visited by shoppers in the Mall apart from the entertainment centres like multiplex theatre, snow bowling, video games are: Apparel store followed by food Services, leather stores, fashion stores, consumer service, professional services, electronic stores, departmental stores, home ware and so on.

Internal Variables affecting shopping experience at shopping malls – The Internal Variables influencing shopping experience include : Entrance, Exterior Display, Architectural style, Surrounding stores, Address and Location, Parking availability, Traffic and Congestion, Height, Size and colour of building

External Variables affecting shopping experience at shopping malls – The External Variables influencing shopping experience include: Flooring/ Carpeting /Painting, Lighting /Music / Scent, Merchandise, Temperature, Cleanliness, Restroom and waiting area.

Factors influencing opinion on shopping experience at malls with entertainment centres

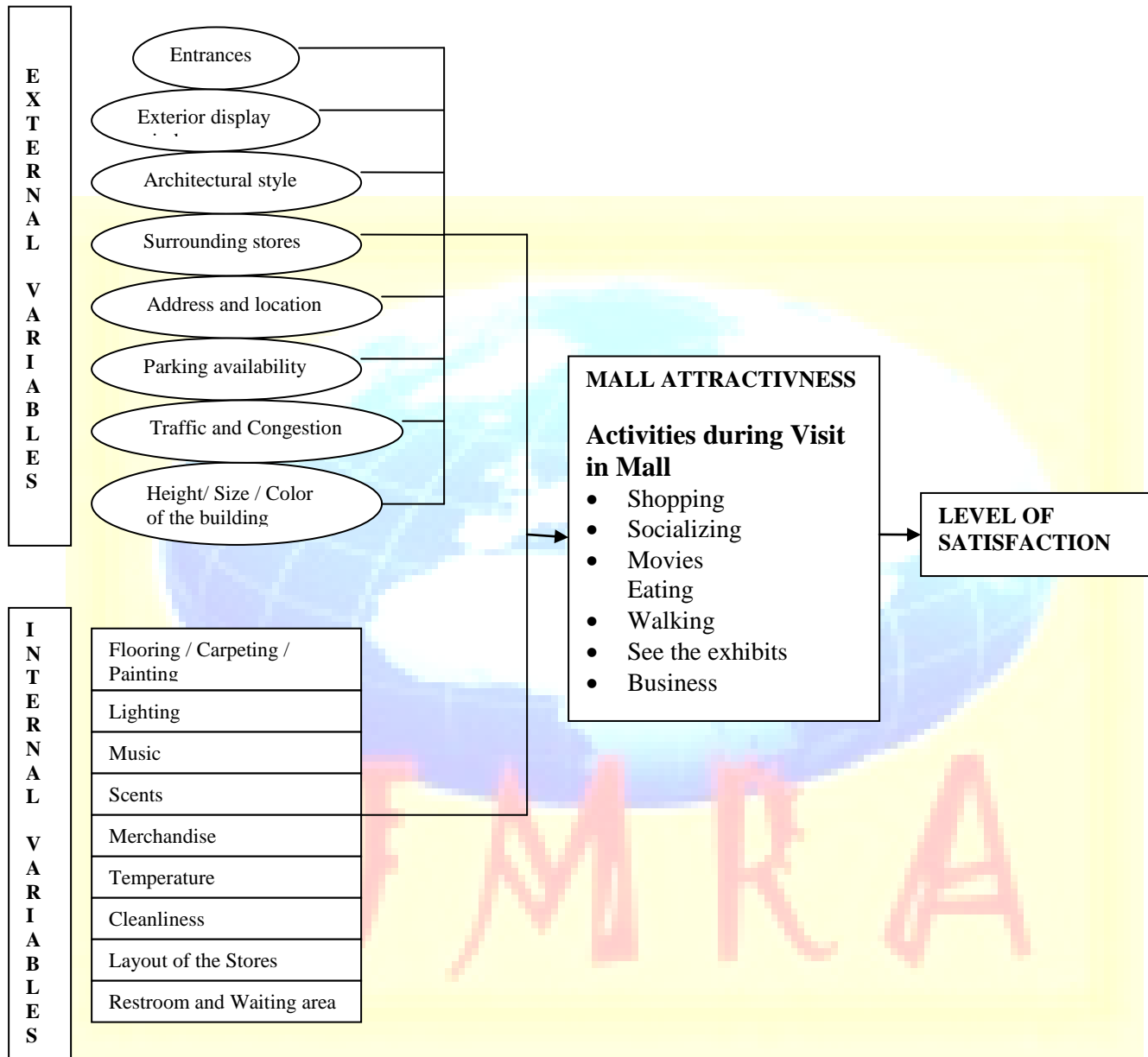
Table no.2

Factors and Items	Loadings
Factor 1 : Shopping Ambience	
1. Pleasant Atmosphere Of This Mall	0.78
2. Parking Facility	0.84
3. Cleanliness, Lighting and Temperature	0.61

4. Address and Location of the Mall	0.91
5. Restroom and Waiting area	0.80
6. Lift and other Facilities	0.61
Factor 2 : Layout of Store	
1. Ease Of Locating The Mall	0.65
2. Overall Convenience Of The Mall	0.75
3. Ease of locating the stores	0.84
4. Easy access to restrooms	0.68
5. Easy access to food court	0.61
6. Easy to get around and shop	0.71
Factor 3 : Variety of Shops	
1. Number Of Stores In This Mall	0.81
2. Quality of stores	0.84
3. Price offered by retailers in the store	0.62
4. Fashionability of merchandise	0.60
Factor 4 : Service offered at Mall	
1. ATM , Banking And Other FOREX Facilities	0.92
2. Quality of Multiplex Theatre	0.90
3. Children's Play area	0.61
Factor 5 : Design	
1. Architecture is attractive	0.60
2. Attractively decorated	0.62
Factor 5 : Desire to Stay in Mall	
1. Enjoy spending time in this mall	0.86
2. Felt a sense of adventure	0.81

The dimensions according to which the consumers evaluate the shopping experience at shopping malls with entertainment centres are: Shopping Ambience, Layout of Store, Variety of shops, Service offered at Mall, Design, Desire to stay in Mall, if any. These dimensions describe the factors to which the shoppers evaluate their shopping experience at large shopping malls such as Citi Centre Mall and Express Avenue Mall with entertainment centres in Chennai.

Shopping Model



Conclusion, limitations and directions for future study

The study enables to conclude that the shoppers visit shopping malls with entertainment centres for making use of all facilities under one roof. This indicates that shoppers visit the malls for social and entertainment purpose, and they spend additional time at food court, stores in the mall (Salil, 1997). The findings are in supportive of the similar studies across the world. The marketing strategists has to concentrate on the five factors identified in this study such as : Shopping ambience, Layout of the store, Variety of shops, Service offered at Mall, Design, Desire to stay in Mall.

The study has the following limitations in terms of one location considered for the study that too with a limited sample size. Therefore generalization of the findings requires enough caution. The researcher recommends that the study may be extended in the following lines: by including large number of samples; covering all the major cities in India; The comparative number of malls may be increased.

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