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A STUDY ON SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PREFERENCE OF CUSTOMERS SHOPPING IN RETAIL MALLS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

With the tastes and preferences of the consumers, Retail industry in India is getting more popular and getting organized in the current scenario. Great shift that ushered in the Indian Retail Revolution was the eruption of Malls across all regional markets. Now at its peak, the mall culture actually brought in the organized format for retailing in India which was absent earlier. Today's market is driven and dominated by consumers. It is not easy to predict the complex mind of the consumers as each individual is a unique product of genetics, environment and experience. For this reason, the buyer's mind has been categorized as a black box, which should be opened by the seller in his favour to be a successful marketer. Businesses often try to influence a consumer's behaviour with things they can control such as the layout of a store, music, grouping and availability of products, pricing, and advertising. Some of the factors results in a temporary influence and others are long lasting. This study considers many reasons—personal, situational, and social—why people shop for mall products, buy and use them, sometimes become loyal customers, and then dispose of them.

KEYWORDS
customers shopping, retail malls, coimbatore city.

INTRODUCTION

Retailing which is one of the pillars of the Indian economy is now beginning to evolve transformation that has swept other large economies. There is a vast change in Indian retailing after the liberalization of the consumer goods industry initiated in the mid-80's and accelerated through the 90's. The concept retail, which includes the shopkeeper to customer interaction, has taken many forms and dimensions, from the traditional retail outlet and street local market shops to upscale multi brand outlets, especially stores or departmental stores. The general benefits of organized retail also include improved supply-chain, improved marketability of farmer's produce and it is also expected that it will contribute to heightened economic activity. Organized retail food and grocery stores make constant efforts to induce customers to visit the store by discount offers. Most of these stores believe in creating not just a marketing activity with its customers, but rather favor relationship building with him so as to convert first time customers into a client. They provide better parking facilities to customers and the facility to examine the product. They also offer a wide range of payment options to customers. However, whether consumers are able to perceive newer service dimensions and getting affected for store patronage in new store formats or not remains to be found out.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India is one of the largest emerging markets, with a huge population. Comparatively it is evident that India is one of the largest economies in terms of its purchasing power. Merchandising categories had shown tremendous growth in the purchasing power of apparels, cosmetics, electronics and also the luxury items are also becoming lifestyle products that are widely accepted among the Indian consumers. The population profile and the influence among the young people have significant impact in spending. The attitude of the Indian consumers has undergone transformation over the last few years and the consumers today want to lead a life full of luxury and comfort. Hence, retail sector started flourishing in elevating the growth of Indian Economy. The present trend is expected to continue decades. Therefore, it becomes important to assess the situational factors existing in the retail outlets that have significantly influenced the preference, motives and satisfaction during shopping in the retail malls. The study examines whether the factors nature of the retail sector is attractive in all aspects to the customers to visit the malls.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors influencing customers shopping in retail malls. A comprehensive examination in finding those differentiating parameters may help mall owners to make a best decision and can be proved as value to money proposition for them. The scope and outcome of this study will be immensely useful for the policy makers for the improvement of the service aspects and make the malls more user friendly in the years to come.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ismail El-Adly (2007), in his paper aims to determine the attractive factors of UAE shopping malls from the shoppers' perspective and then to segment shoppers according to these attractiveness factors. This study revealed six mall attractiveness factors from the shoppers' perspective viz., comfort, entertainment, diversity, mall essence, convenience, and luxury. This study also shows that convenience factor is not just ease of reaching mall, but also late working hours and existence of supermarket within mall.

Binti and Moula (2009), in their study reveals that as users of shopping malls, people's needs play an important role in designing shopping malls, as it is not only for the quality of its shops and hospitality that matter, but also the interior public space it provides. They suggested that the interior public spaces at shopping malls must be designed according to people's needs and preferences. The analysis also revealed that seating places, public clocks, plants and water features are perceived as important interior landscape elements at the public spaces provided while artificial plants and business entities are perceived as less important than other interior landscape elements involved in this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the factors influenced to prefer shopping in the malls in Coimbatore.
2. To know the frequency of shopping by the customers in the malls.
3. To analyze the overall satisfaction of the customers in mall shopping.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Primary Data collected from the respondents have been used in the study for the analysis. Questionnaire has been prepared in such a way that it is easy to understand and taken extra care that no unethical questions surface in the survey forms. For the purpose of the research 540 respondents were considered who make frequent visit to the shopping malls. The selection of samples was based on the foot fall of the customers to the retail shopping malls. The surveys were conducted in two large mega shopping malls in Coimbatore city (Brook fields and Fun Mall) to assess the perception of the customers. The respondents were selected using convenient sampling method. Statistical tools used to analyze the collected data are Garrett Ranking Technique and Chi-Square Test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

TABLE 1: PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Demographics	Frequency(540)	Percentage (100%)
01.	**Age**		
	Below 25 Years	220	40.74
	25 to 40 years	136	25.19
	40 to 55 years	88	16.30
	Above 55 years	96	17.78
02.	**Gender**		
	Male	339	62.78
	Female	201	37.22
03.	**Marital Status**		
	Married	356	65.93
	Unmarried	184	34.07
04.	**Educational Qualification**		
	Upto H.Sc.	150	27.78
	Under Graduate	169	31.30
	Post Graduate	131	24.26
	Others (Diploma/ITI/M.Phil., etc.)	90	16.67
05.	**Occupation**		
	Government Sector	46	8.52
	Private Sector	190	35.19
	Self-Employed	160	29.63
	Others (Home maker/Unemployed)	144	26.67

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from the table 1 that maximum (40.74%) of the respondents belong to the age below 25 years, 25.19% of the respondents are in the age between 25 and 40 years, 17.78% of the respondents fall in the age above 55 years and the remaining 16.30% of the respondents are in the age of 40 to 55 years. Most (62.78%) of the respondents are male and 37.22% of the respondents are female. Most (65.93%) of the respondents are married and 34.07% of the respondents are unmarried. Maximum (31.3%) of the respondents are under graduates, 27.78% of the respondents are qualified with higher secondary, 24.26% of the respondents are post graduates and the remaining 16.67% of the respondents having other qualifications such as Diploma / ITI / M.Phil., etc. Greater (35.19%) numbers of respondents are working in private sector, while 29.63% of the respondents are self-employed, 26.67% of the respondents are having other occupations such as home maker / unemployed, etc. and the remaining 8.52% of the respondents are working in Government sector.

TABLE 2: FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING

Sl. No.	Demographics	Frequency(540)	Percentage (100%)
1	Less frequent	377	69.81
2	Moderately frequent	113	20.93
3	Much Frequent	50	9.26
TOTAL		**540**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 clearly reveals that Majority (69.81%) of the respondents shop less frequently, while 20.93% of the respondents indicated moderate frequency in shopping and the remaining 9.26% of the respondents opined that they shop much frequently.

TABLE 3: OVERALL SATISFACTION IN MALL SHOPPING

Sl. No.	Demographics	Frequency(540)	Percentage (100%)
1	Highly Satisfied	301	55.74
2	Slightly Satisfied	88	16.30
3	Moderately Satisfied	96	17.78
4	Least Satisfied	55	10.19
TOTAL		**540**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from the Table 3 that More than half (55.74%) of the respondents are highly satisfied towards shopping in the retail malls, while 17.78% of the respondents moderately satisfied, 16.3% of the respondents are slightly satisfied and the remaining 10.19% of the respondents are least satisfied towards shopping in retail malls.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND INFLUENCE

It is observed that the relationship between selected demographics of the respondents such as Age, Occupation, Monthly Income and Shopping satisfaction in retail malls has been measured to find the level of relationship based on the factors influencing preference, motives and satisfaction towards shopping in malls in Coimbatore City. The dependent factors selected are such as Utilitarian attributes, hedonic attributes, pleasure motives, role shopping, service quality and patronage of shopping.

HYPOTHESIS

H_0: There is no significant relationship between selected demographics of the respondents and factor influencing shopping in retail malls.

TABLE 4: SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RESPONDENTS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING SHOPPING IN RETAIL MALLS
(df : Degree of Freedom, TV : Table Value, Sig. : Significance)

Organic Influence	Age (df=12, TV=21.026)	Occupation (df=6, TV=21.026)	Monthly Income (df=12, TV=21.026)	Shopping Satisfaction (df=12, TV=21.026)
Utilitarian attributes	18.384 (Sig.0.105)	18.809 (Sig.0.093)	16.110 (Sig.0.1868)	**24.654* (Sig.0.017)**
Hedonic Attributes	12.139 (Sig.0.435)	17.735 (Sig.0.124)	**26.036* (Sig.0.011)**	**23.839* (Sig.0.021)**
Pleasure Motives	18.835 (Sig.0.093)	**21.125* (Sig.0.049)**	9.190 (Sig.0.687)	**21.334* (Sig.0.046)**
Role Shopping	14.654 (Sig.0.261)	19.242 (Sig.0.083)	14.556 (Sig.0.267)	8.591 (Sig.0.737)
Service Quality	20.475 (Sig.0.059)	18.822 (Sig.0.093)	13.803 (Sig.0.313)	8.899 (Sig.0.712)
Patronage	**23.404* (Sig.0.024)**	**23.506* (Sig.0.024)**	13.362 (Sig.0.343)	**27.976 (Sig.0.006)**

Source: Computed

* Significant @ 5%,
** Significant @ 1%

CHI-SQUARE RESULTS

Age of the respondents was first measured to find the relationship with the factors influencing respondents shopping in retail malls.

It is found that the chi-square value (23.404, Sig.0.024) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level, therefore, the relationship between age of the respondents and patronage factor influencing respondents shopping in retail malls is found to be significantly associated and the null hypothesis is rejected. Whereas the other five factors such as Utilitarian Attributes, Hedonic Attributes, Pleasure motives, role shopping and service quality were found not significantly associated with age and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Occupation of the respondents was next measured to find the relationship with the factors influencing respondents shopping in retail malls.

It is found that the chi-square value (21.125, Sig.0.049) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level, therefore, the relationship between occupation of the respondents and factors with respect to pleasure motives are significantly associated, followed by the chi-square value (23.506) is more than the table value with respect to the relationship between occupation and patronage are significantly associated and the null hypothesis is rejected. Whereas the other five factors such as Utilitarian Attributes, Hedonic Attributes, Role shopping and service quality were found not significantly associated with occupation and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Monthly Family Income of the respondents was third measured to find the relationship with the factors influencing respondents shopping in retail malls.

It is found that the chi-square value (26.036, Sig.0.011) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level, therefore, the relationship between monthly income of the respondents and factors with respect to hedonic attributes are significantly associated and the null hypothesis is rejected. Whereas the other five factors such as Utilitarian Attributes, Pleasure Motives, Role shopping, Service Quality and Patronage were found not significantly associated with monthly income and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Shopping satisfaction of the respondents was finally measured to find the relationship with the factors influencing respondents shopping in retail malls.

It is found that the chi-square value (24.654, Sig.0.017) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level, therefore, the relationship between shopping satisfaction of the respondents and factors with respect to Utilitarian attributes are significantly associated, followed by the chi-square value (23.839, Sig.0.021) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level are significantly related with shopping satisfaction and hedonic values, the chi-square value (21.334, Sig.0.046) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level are significantly related with shopping satisfaction and pleasure motives, and finally, the chi-square value (27.976, Sig.0.006) is more than the table value (21.026) at 5% level are significantly related with shopping satisfaction and patronage, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Whereas the other two factors such as Role shopping and Service Quality were found not significantly associated with monthly income and the null hypothesis is accepted.

GARRETT RANKING

Rating of the respondents for different attributes considered as priority during shopping in retail malls are presented in the Table 5.

TABLE 5: RANKING SHOWING THE FACTORS CONSIDERED ON PRIORITY DURING SHOPPING

Sl. No.	Attributes	Garrett Score	Garrett Mean	Rank
1	Convenience and Ambience	32450.00	60.09	1
2	Décor, Style and reach of the mall	31200.00	57.78	2
3	Selection of products	23675.00	43.84	7
4	Range of products with price factor	24325.00	45.05	6
5	Product Quality and value for money	29562.50	54.75	3
6	Service Quality of Mall Personnel	21762.50	40.30	8
7	Entertainment aspects	26050.00	48.24	5
8	Delicious recipes and varieties in food court	26975.00	49.95	4

Source: Computed

From Table 5 it is observed that the level of rating based on the priority attributes considered by the respondents during shopping are analyzed which shows that the highest rating was towards convenience and ambiance of the mall (M=60.09), followed by Décor, Style, and reach of the mall (M=57.78), third rank was towards product quality and value for money (M=54.75), fourth rank towards delicious recip0es and varieties in food court (M=49.95), 5th Entertainment Aspects (M=48.24), 6th, Range of products with price factors (M=45.05), 7th selection of products (M=43.84) and finally, the least rank was achieved towards service quality of mall personnel during shopping (M=40.30).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Maximum (40.74%) of the respondents belong to the age below 25 years,
- Most (62.78%) of the respondents are male.
- Most (65.93%) of the respondents are married.
- Maximum (31.3%) of the respondents are under graduates.
- Greater (35.19%) numbers of respondents are working in private sector.
- Majority (69.81%) of the respondents stated they shop less frequently.
- More than half (55.74%) of the respondents are highly satisfied towards shopping in the retail malls.

VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESES

While measuring the selected demographics, comparing the level of satisfaction with regards to factors influencing shopping in retail outlets, the results shows that,

❖ There is significant relationship between age of the respondents and patronage factor influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and pleasure motive factor influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and patronage factor influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between monthly income of the respondents and hedonic attributes influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between shopping satisfaction of the respondents and utilitarian attributes influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between shopping satisfaction of the respondents and hedonic attributes influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between shopping satisfaction of the respondents and pleasure motives influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.
❖ There is significant relationship between shopping satisfaction of the respondents and patronage influencing satisfaction in retail shopping.

RANK ATTRIBUTES

• From the level of rating based on the priority attributes considered by the respondents during shopping it is inferred that the highest rating was towards convenience and ambiance of the mall and the least rank was achieved towards service quality of mall personnel during shopping.

SUGGESTIONS

✓ Maximum number of the respondents felt that the mall personnel's response was sometimes not much impressive that needs to be significantly improved and also the service quality needs significant improvement.
✓ The hypothesis results also reveals that the service quality was not associated when compared with the shopping satisfaction among respondents. It is recommended that the service quality, display of products in the selves of the retail stores and also hospitality of the retail outlet personnel's' need to be well improved. Special attention towards customers will bring in more business and help the malls to achieve more profits in the years to come.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the study concludes that the overall satisfaction of the customers shopping in malls of the retail outlets had influenced their preference and motivated them significantly to do shopping. Majority of the respondents had opined that they are satisfied and they found it a pleasure to shop in the malls and therefore, it is clear that the factors nature of the retail sector is attractive in all aspects to the customers to visit the malls and also the customers are satisfied towards the services provided by the retail stores in the mall.

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