

A STUDY ON THE ATTRACTIVENESS DIMENSIONS OF SHOPPING MALLS – AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**Dr. Neelotpaul Banerjee**

Assistant Professor

Department of Management Studies

National Institute of Technology

Durgapur-713209, West Bengal

India.

Abstract

In India with the rapid economic development, socio-cultural and demographic changes, the lifestyle and consumption behaviour of the consumers have changed. This has ushered in a plethora of opportunity for the retail sector. The frenetic pace of retail development has triggered the mushrooming of shopping malls across the country. The concept of shopping has changed from a necessity to an experience. The Indian Retail Sector is booming and the shopping malls are fast becoming shopping cum entertainment hotspots. Shopping malls have become a part of a shopper's hedonic purchase activity. This study is undertaken to identify the attractiveness dimensions of shopping malls in the Indian context. To conduct an empirical investigation a survey of 563 consumers was conducted, using a questionnaire. This study tried to attain the objective by applying the statistical technique of factor analysis and extracted nine important dimensions determining the attractiveness of shopping malls. The study revealed that shopping mall image is the most important attractiveness dimension of shopping mall to consumers in India.

Keywords: Attractiveness, consumers, dimension, India, shopping mall.

1. INTRODUCTION

India is a late starter in comparison to the western world in the development of shopping malls. The first Indian shopping mall was Spencer Plaza, built in Chennai in 1990, followed by Ansal Plaza in Delhi (1999) and Crossroads in Mumbai (1999) (Singh, Bose, and Sahay, 2010). The retail sector in India, which was dominated by stand alone stores, and *kirana* stores, has radically changed its face, and the retail landscape has experienced explosive growth in the new millennium. As the population in the country has increased, retail space has expanded and retail sales per capita have also increased. The frenetic pace of retail development has triggered the mushrooming of shopping malls across the country. These developments are the result of a number of changes that has taken place in India like socio- cultural changes, changes in the demographic profile, increasing literacy levels, growth in the Indian GDP, per capita income, and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

The Indian retail industry has witnessed rampant growth over the last decade. At present the Indian market is bursting with opportunity and the frontrunner for the global retailers to invest. The A.T. Kearney Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) 2011, ranks India 4th among the top 30 emerging countries in the world for retail development. The Business Monitor International (BMI) India Retail Report for the fourth-quarter of 2011 forecasts that the total retail sales will grow from US\$ 411.28 billion in 2011 to US\$ 804.06 billion by 2015. Indian retail sector accounts for 22% of the country's GDP and contributes to 8% of total employment.

The emergence of malls, as an important destination for shopping, recreation and socialization hotspots has turned the face of the retail industry in India. In this scenario there remains a need among the Mall managers to judiciously understand ways of attracting the consumers. With the advent of major shopping malls in India, retail patronage decisions by consumers have emerged as an important domain of study. This study is conducted to identify the attractiveness dimensions of shopping malls in the Indian context, as these dimensions are the determinants of retail patronage decisions among the consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years researchers have been trying to identify the attractiveness dimensions of shopping malls. The following section presents a comprehensive analysis of existing literature on these dimensions. According to Nichols et al. (2002), a shopping mall is a place where a variety of retail outlets are situated under one roof, and is usually anchored by one or more stores like departmental stores. Shopping malls have expanded over the years to include service outlets and entertainment providers (Ooi and Sim, 2007).

Wakefield and Baker (1998) found out that the architectural design of the mall was the dimension which contributed the most to the mall excitement, while a mall's interior design had a strong influence on consumers' desire to extend their stay in the mall. In a study conducted by Yan and Eckman (2009), consumers evaluated shopping centre which have unique design or architecture, entertainment, and restaurants to be more attractive. Fiore and Ogle (2000) opined that store's formal, expressive and symbolic qualities affect consumers' aesthetic and instrumental value. The use of serene music along with warm colors help malls to increasing the customers desire to stay (Solomon, 1994; Peter and Olson, 1994). Greg et al. (2008) concluded that happy or sad music directly influences the purpose of consumer shopping.

Roulac (1994) concluded from his study that in shopping malls, consumers can shop without the problems of any traffic congestions or parking problems, or security concerns. Dodge and Summer (1986) found that store choice is a function of variables like socio economic background, the personality and the past purchase experiences of the consumers. Baker and Haytko (2000) have said that along with the number, the variety of different stores is also a decisive aspect for consumers to shop at shopping malls. Variety types of tenant in shopping mall create excitement in shoppers (Cockerham, 1995). In relation to the location of the shopping mall, accessibility and visibility are the two determinants which are important for shopping at malls (Simmons, 1992; Ownbey et al., 1994; Forgey et al., 1995). Kaufman, (1996) stated that operating hours and time taken to reach the retail outlet are one of the main criteria which the consumers look for while selecting a shopping outlet. He also stated that consumers are getting more and more inclined towards a "one stop destination" for their shopping purpose. Berman and Evans (1995) stated that shopping mall is a one stop station which allows consumers to make comparison on goods and services offered.

Tauber (1972) has pointed out that the opportunity of socialization is an important factor related to shopping experience. Ahmed et al. (2007) stated that shopping mall is a place for socialization and recreation. According to Ng (2003) shopping malls are not only a centre for shopping but also a community centre for social and recreational activities. Terblanche (1999) stated that features like entertainment, relaxation and spending good time with friends draw consumers toward shopping malls. Having a cinema in a shopping centre, and specific areas for holding special events add to the entertainment factor in a shopping mall (Bellenger et al., 1997). Michon and Chebat (2004) suggested that social need and value such as entertainment and comfort will influence consumers' decision making in shopping at a mall. Entertainment facility is also endorsed by Bloch et al. (1994). Food court can also attract and can enhance consumers visit to shopping malls (Sirpal and Peng, 1995; Wong and Yu, 2003).

Loudon and Bitta (1993) have found out from their study that most of the consumers prefer to shop at location where sales personnel behavior towards them is cordial and courteous. Bodkin and Lord (1997) had stated the main reason of consumer choosing a shopping mall is because of attractive service and pricing. Shah and Mrudula (2005) found quality, variety, operating time, attitude of salesmen, location and stock replenishment to be major factors influencing consumers' decision toward choosing a particular store. Although, the entire body of literature has not been studied for the present purpose, yet it gives a sense of direction for the present work. The existing gap in available literature in the oriental context motivates for conducting the study to identify the various attractiveness dimensions of shopping malls in the Indian context.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To collect data for this research study, both primary and secondary sources were used. Secondary data can be quite versatile and is used for many purposes (Neelankavil, 2007). To collect secondary data, at first, the researcher reviewed articles related to research objective that appeared in the scholarly literature. Key journals and proceedings were systematically scanned for any articles related to the research topic. To conduct an empirical investigation, a survey was conducted, using a questionnaire. The researcher developed a questionnaire based on the literature, deriving issues pertinent to the research objectives. The questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot study to fine tune the questionnaire. The pilot study was conducted among a convenience sample of fifteen people consisting of neighbours, friends and colleagues, to evaluate how well the questionnaire was framed and understood. Based on the pilot study and feedback from the participants some items were reworded to improve clarity. Next the survey was conducted to collect the data and then the data were analyzed and interpreted. SPSS version 16.0 was used to carry out the analysis of data. The respondents were randomly selected to remove the biasness in samples. The samples consisted of consumers living in one major city in India. Random people were chosen from households who are a part of the consumer group.

The respondents were randomly picked from those who are 18 years of age and above, of both sexes, either earning or with access to expendable income, and visiting shopping malls at least once a month. In this study random sampling method using Kish method of sampling is done. The Kish grid (Kish, 1949) is commonly used by those conducting large scale surveys. In total 563 respondents completed the questionnaire. No replacement was made for households which refused to be a part of the survey or where the selected family member did not match with the defined population. The Kish method (Kish, 1965) involves some sequential steps in which, a) the interviewer is to record the name, gender, age of all the eligible persons & their relation to the housewife (because she is the one who is mostly available), b) then the candidates are arranged according to their increasing age, and c) using a random number table the respondent is chosen.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic data of the samples are given in *Table 1*, and data related to consumers visit to shopping malls are given in *Table 2*.

Factor analysis attempts to identify underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. Factor analysis is often used in data reduction to identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance observed in a much larger number of manifest variables. To test the sampling adequacy, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was computed. Kaiser (1974) recommends values greater than 0.5 as acceptable. Kaiser had refined the index further and suggested that anything in the .90s was 'marvelous', in the .80s 'meritorious', in the .70s 'middling', in the .60s 'mediocre', in the .50s 'miserable' and below .5 'unacceptable'. In this study, as given in *Table 3*, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was found to be 0.814. This indicates that the factor analysis is appropriate for these data.

Bartlett's measure tests the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix. A significant test tells us that the R-matrix is not an identity matrix; therefore, there are some relationships between the variables that are to be included in the analysis. For this study, Bartlett's test is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), and therefore factor analysis is appropriate. Communalities are designed to show the proportion of variance that the factors contribute to explaining a particular variable. Principal Component Analysis works on the initial assumption that all variance is common, therefore, before extraction the communalities are all 1. The amount of variance in each variable that can be explained by the retained factors is represented by the communalities, as shown in *Table 4*, after extraction.

Table 5, lists the eigen values associated with each factor before extraction, after extraction and after rotation. Eigen values are designed to show the proportion of variance accounted for by each factor (George and Mallery, 2010). Before extraction there are thirty components in the data set. The eigen values associated with each component represent the variance explained by that particular component. Next all components with eigen value greater than 1 are extracted, which leaves us with 9 factors. In the final part of the table (*Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings*), the eigen values of the factors after rotation are displayed. Rotation has the effect of optimizing the factor structure. Before rotation Factor 1 accounted for considerably more variance than the remaining eight (28.6% compared to 7.749%, 6.433%, 5.954%, 5.255%, 4.605%, 4.212%, 3.986%, and 3.552%), however after extraction it accounts for only 18.095% of variance (compared to 10.795%, 7.165, 6.832%, 6.55%, 6.037%, 5.355%, 5.221%, and 4.301%).

The percentage of total variance is used as an index to determine how well the total factor solution accounts for what the variables together represent. The index for the present study accounts for 70.346% of the total variance for choosing shopping malls for buying. This is a very good extraction as it can economize on a number of factors (from thirty, it has reduced to nine factors), while we have lost only 29.654% information content. *Table 6*, shows the Rotated Component Matrix which is a matrix of factor loadings for each variable onto each factor. Loading on factors can be positive or negative. Comrey (1973) suggested that loadings of 0.55 are good, those of 0.63 very good, and those of 0.71 are excellent. He also agreed with Child (1970) that a reasonable cut-off point would be 0.3, with loadings below that figure being ignored in explanation of a factor. Comrey (1973) suggested that anything above 0.44 could be considered salient, with increased loading becoming more vital in determining the factor. Factor loadings less than 0.4 have not been displayed as the criterion value has been selected as 0.4. The variable *proximity to other shopping malls (VAR 30)* does not load onto any factor as the entire factor loading values of this variable is less than 0.4.

From *Table 6*, the nine dimensions of shopping mall attractiveness have been discussed below.

Factor 1: MALL IMAGE

This is the most important attractiveness dimension of shopping malls. Image reflects the identity of the shopping malls as perceived by the consumers. There are seven loads to this dimension. It contains the variables which represent the store features inside the shopping malls that make the shopping malls being increasingly attractive to the consumers. The variables namely, *variety of international brands* (0.858), *variety of national brands* (0.853), *high quality products* (0.852), *excellent services provided at the stores* (0.64), *affordable prices* (0.558), *sales personnel behaviour nice & cordial* (0.527), and *continuous stocks* (0.496) create a positive image in the minds of the consumers and result in making a shopping mall an attractive place for shopping.

Factor 2: ENTERTAINMENT

This dimension consists of variables that could be labeled as value added features in the shopping mall. This attractiveness dimension has five significant variables, namely, *children amusement corner* (0.415), *rest place availability* (0.449), *presence of movie theatre* (0.885), *presence of restaurants* (0.804), and *presence of anchor stores* (0.695) indicate that consumers visit shopping malls not only for purchasing but also for fun and excitement. This is related to hedonic shopping value that is derived from the perceived fun of the shopping.

Factor 3: CONVENIENCE

This dimension has four variables. They are, *location with good transportation facilities* (0.72), *parking facility available* (0.66), *convenient operating hours* (0.457), and *not crowded* (0.419). This signify that shopping malls located in places which are well connected to the rest of the city, having operating hours suitable to the consumers, offering parking facilities and where consumers do not have to jostle for space will increase the attractiveness of the mall. This saves times, eases the shopping activity, and makes the consumers feel more comfortable to shop in the malls.

Factor 4: AMBIENCE

In a shopping mall the environment or surrounding influence to a great extent in making the consumers feel nice and generating the desire to visit again. *Nice music* (0.859), *nice fragrance* (0.635), and *bright lighting inside the mall* (0.414) are the variables that load this dimension. The effect of the mall ambience enhances the attractiveness of shopping malls in the minds of the shoppers and induces them to visit and stay longer in shopping mall.

Factor 5: SECURITY

Security is the protection against danger, loss, and crime. Security in shopping malls is the structures and processes that provide security inside the malls. There are two loads to this attractiveness dimension. This dimension includes the variables, *evacuation path* (0.587), and *security checks at entrance* (0.79) which generate a sense of safety and assurance in the consumers. Shopping in an anxiety free and risk free environment enhances the attractiveness of shopping malls to consumers.

Factor 6: LIFESTYLE

Lifestyles may be understood as a focus of group or individual identity, in so far as the individual expresses him or herself through the meaningful choice of items or patterns of behaviour (Edgar and Sedgwick, 1999). There are two loads to this dimension. The dimension consists of the variables, *shopping in malls is a status symbol* (0.774), and *visiting a shopping mall makes me feel good* (0.682). Visiting and shopping at malls may reflect the attitudes and values of an individual, and motivate consumers to sustainable patterns of consumption.

Factor 7: TIME SAVING

The variables that load this dimension are *no queue* (0.49), and *automated billing system in the all the stores* (0.796). Time saving is an important attractiveness dimension as consumers can spend quality time on the entertainment aspect of shopping.

Factor 8 – ARCHITECTURE

This dimension of attractiveness of shopping malls consists of the variables *attractive outer design & structure of the shopping mall* (0.75), and *inside of shopping mall nicely decorated* (0.687). Modern shopping malls have architecture which integrates luxurious structure with sophisticated decoration to make the malls more attractive. Magnificent architectural display affects consumer evaluation of the shopping mall attractiveness while they indulge in taking a decision to shop at a mall.

Factor 9: REWARD

The last dimension has the variables, *loyalty programs/cards* (0.711) and *samples & free gifts* (0.628) which are related to the rewards associated with shopping. Loyalty programs/cards offer a range of benefits including discounts and special offers, largely supplied by the tenants of the shopping malls. Consumers consider themselves entitled to special treatment and are always happy when some incentives are attached to the shopping which makes the shopping malls more attractive to them.

5. CONCLUSION

From the present study it is revealed that in India, consumers who shop at malls are mostly young people comprising of students and people in services within the age group of 21-40 years. The study also indicates that most of the consumers who shop at malls have a graduate or post graduate degree and financially well off. The majority of the consumers visits shopping malls once a month, and spent around 1-2 hours in the mall. The main purpose for visiting a mall is shopping for most of the consumers in India is shopping followed by entertainment. From the result of this study, it is found that *shopping mall image* is the most important attractiveness dimension of shopping mall to consumers. Stores in shopping malls must offer a variety of international and national brands, quality products at affordable prices, provide excellent services through well behaved and mannered staff, and keep a continuous supply of stocks. This will enhance the attractiveness and may build a positive brand image of the mall among the consumers which will lead to consumers' patronizing the mall.

The other attractiveness dimension of significance is *entertainment*. Shopping malls can provide suitable place for the visitors to rest, fun corners for children, movie theatres, and restaurant. This will help the consumers to add an element of fun and excitement in their shopping activity and make the shopping mall more attractive. The other dimension that makes shopping malls attractive to consumers are convenience of shopping, ambience of the mall, security at the mall, lifestyle of consumers, reduced shopping time, architecture of the mall, and rewards associated with the purchase at malls.

Apart from shopping, malls have been transformed into a place for socializing, relaxing, entertainment and a symbol of status for consumers. Due to change in lifestyles and increasing purchasing power, Indian consumers have a lot of expectations from the modern multistoried malls. Mall managers should understand that consumers perceive malls as a one stop destination for fulfilling their various activities like hanging out with friends, having food with family, catching up with a movie, knowing about new brands and products, making others aware of their lifestyles, and shopping. To increase the shopping mall attractiveness to the consumers, shopping malls should have stores with popular brands and high quality merchandises, a good number of entertainment options, sophisticated ambience with display of modern architecture, facilities that make the shopping convenient for consumers, and adequate security for consumers to feel safe and secure. The reduced attractiveness scale, developed by reducing the initial thirty variables into nine dimensions, can be used in future studies to relate it to shopping mall visiting intentions among consumers in India or other relevant measures in India.

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TABLES:

GENDER		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
male	329	58.4
female	234	41.6
Total	563	100.0
STATUS		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
student	330	58.6
housewife	36	6.4
service	142	25.2
business / self employed	23	4.1
retired	32	5.7
Total	563	100.0
AGE (in years)		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
16-20	17	3.0
21-30	330	58.6
31-40	140	24.9
41-50	23	4.1
Above 50	53	9.4
Total	563	100.0
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME (in Indian Rupees)		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 10000	16	2.8
10000-20000	33	5.9
20001-30000	98	17.4
30001-40000	292	51.9
40001-50000	102	18.1
More than 50000	22	3.9
Total	563	100.0
ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
post graduate	311	55.2
graduate	178	31.6
higher secondary	55	9.8
secondary	19	3.4
Total	563	100.0

Table 1: Demographic Data

FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO SHOPPING MALLS		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
once a month	475	84.4
once a fortnight	36	6.4
once a week	52	9.2
Total	563	100.0
TIME SPENT IN SHOPPING MALLS PER TRIP		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 1hr	24	4.3
1hr-2hr	488	86.7
More than 2hr	51	9.1
Total	563	100.0
MAIN PURPOSE FOR VISITING SHOPPING MALLS		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
For entertainment	107	19.0
For shopping	364	64.7
To have a good time out with friends/families	66	11.7
To know and examine new products	26	4.6
Total	563	100.0

Table 2: Data related to visit to shopping malls

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.814
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10130
	df	435
	Sig.	.000

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

	Initial	Extraction
Variety of international brands (VAR 1)	1	0.839
Variety of national brands (VAR 2)	1	0.601
High quality products (VAR 3)	1	0.838
Children amusement corner (VAR 4)	1	0.567
Excellent services provided at the stores (VAR 5)	1	0.667
Rest place available (VAR 6)	1	0.892
Affordable prices (VAR 7)	1	0.566
Sales personnel behaviour nice & cordial (VAR 8)	1	0.783
Presence of movie theatre (VAR 9)	1	0.622
Presence of restaurants (VAR 10)	1	0.623
Presence of anchor stores (VAR 11)	1	0.779
Bright lighting inside (VAR 12)	1	0.786
Location with good transportation facilities (VAR 13)	1	0.712
No queues (VAR 14)	1	0.791
Continuous stocks (VAR 15)	1	0.705
Nice music (VAR 16)	1	0.715
Nice fragrance (VAR 17)	1	0.607
Security checks at entrance (VAR 18)	1	0.686
Evacuation paths (VAR 19)	1	0.670
Parking facility available (VAR 20)	1	0.488

Visiting a shopping mall makes me feel good (VAR 21)	1	0.701
Shopping in malls is a status symbol (VAR 22)	1	0.553
Convenient operating hours (VAR 23)	1	0.827
Automated billing system in all the stores (VAR 24)	1	0.763
Not crowded (VAR 25)	1	0.834
Attractive outer design and structure of the shopping mall (VAR 26)	1	0.881
Inside of shopping mall nicely decorated (VAR 27)	1	0.827
Loyalty programs / cards (VAR 28)	1	0.825
Samples & free gifts (VAR 29)	1	0.575
Proximity to other shopping malls (VAR 30)	1	0.381
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>		

Table 4: Communalities

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
VAR 1	8.58	28.6	28.6	8.58	28.6	28.6	5.429	18.095	18.095
VAR 2	2.325	7.749	36.349	2.325	7.749	36.349	3.239	10.795	28.89
VAR 3	1.93	6.433	42.8	1.93	6.433	42.782	2.148	7.16	36.051
VAR 4	1.786	5.954	48.7	1.786	5.954	48.736	2.05	6.832	42.882
VAR 5	1.576	5.255	53.990	1.576	5.255	53.99	1.965	6.55	49.432
VAR 6	1.382	4.605	58.6	1.382	4.605	58.596	1.811	6.037	55.469
VAR 7	1.264	4.212	62.8	1.264	4.212	62.808	1.607	5.355	60.824
VAR 8	1.196	3.986	66.8	1.196	3.986	66.794	1.566	5.221	66.045
VAR 9	1.066	3.552	70.3	1.066	3.552	70.346	1.29	4.301	70.346
VAR 10	0.974	3.248	73.6						
VAR 11	0.919	3.062	76.7						
VAR 12	0.774	2.58	79.2						
VAR 13	0.693	2.311	81.5						
VAR 14	0.667	2.222	83.8						
VAR 15	0.612	2.04	85.8						
VAR 16	0.597	1.991	87.8						
VAR 17	0.544	1.815	89.6						
VAR 18	0.473	1.577	91.2						
VAR 19	0.428	1.426	92.6						
VAR 20	0.375	1.249	93.9						
VAR 21	0.3	0.999	94.9						
VAR 22	0.279	0.93	95.8						
VAR 23	0.257	0.857	96.7						
VAR 24	0.233	0.776	97.4						
VAR 25	0.212	0.708	98.1						
VAR 26	0.169	0.565	98.7						
VAR 27	0.145	0.483	99.2						
VAR 28	0.128	0.425	99.6						
VAR 29	0.086	0.288	99.9						
VAR 30	0.031	0.103	100						
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.</i>									

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
VAR 1	0.858								
VAR 2	0.853								
VAR 3	0.852								
VAR 4		0.415							
VAR 5	0.64								
VAR 6		0.449							
VAR 7	0.558								
VAR 8	0.527								
VAR 9		0.885							
VAR 10		0.804							
VAR 11		0.695							
VAR 12				0.414					
VAR 13			0.72						
VAR 14							0.49		
VAR 15	0.496								
VAR 16				0.859					
VAR 17				0.635					
VAR 18					0.79				
VAR 19					0.587				
VAR 20			0.66						
VAR 21						0.682			
VAR 22						0.774			
VAR 23			0.457						
VAR 24							0.796		
VAR 25			0.419						
VAR 26								0.75	
VAR 27								0.687	
VAR 28									0.711
VAR 29									0.628
VAR 30									
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.									

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix^a