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Investigate the Customer Perceptions towards Mall Culture: Special Reference to Ludhiana City

*1Simranjeet Singh

*1Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce & Management, Guru Nanak College, Budhlada, Mansa, Punjab, India.

Abstract

Ludhiana, view as an Economic-Capital of Punjab and categorised as a Tier II city in experiencing mall culture in recent years. Shopping malls have been quite famous in India from last two decades, as a vital and significant destination for shopping, recreation and socialization. Metro Cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore etc. have obtained significant importance from Mall culture, not only in India but around the globe as well. There are numerous variables that are quite responsible to enhance the growth of Mall culture in India, such as facilities offers by particular mall, discount offers, diversity of qualitative products etc. Moreover, diverse perception has been observed among society towards Mall culture, no doubt younger generation very attractive from Malls. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to investigate the customer perception towards Malls, with special reference to Ludhiana city. The paper also acts as a beneficiary to Mall owners, managers and operators to build a strong relationship with customers. To fulfil this particular objective, 105 samples have taken from Ludhiana through questionnaire and analysis has done with the help of various statistical tools like, AVOVA, Chi-Square test. Study found that, there is no significant difference between gender perceptions towards different variables, as quite less number of variables has had significant differs. The same kind of result has been found among different age-groups.

Keywords: Shopping Malls, Customer Perception, Gender.

Introduction

Mall culture has been growing at an intense pace in India, it has been observed that malls space is increase from 2 million square feet in 2002, and estimated 90 million square feet at the end of 2015 and India has more than 570 operational shopping malls as compare to 225 malls running five years ago. Therefore it is quite significant for Indian businessman to observed and understand the changing behaviour of Indian customer towards shopping malls and an in-depth study of customer perception in context of shopping malls is need of the hour. It is quite significant for mall developers to understand that how the customer evaluate the malls relatively effects on their purchasing decision. There are numerous reasons that are responsible to shift the customer from traditional shops (kirana) to modern stores (malls) such as, convenience, available discount offers, lager option to purchase etc. In malls customer can enjoy value-for-money along with better quality choices under one roof. Also there are number of variables that are quite responsible to enhance the growth of Mall culture in India, such as facilities offers by particular mall, discount offers, diversity of qualitative products etc. Moreover, diverse perception has been observed among society towards mall culture, no doubt younger generation very attractive from malls. In this context, it is significance to study the perceptions of customers in Ludhiana city especially in fast changing retail scenario. This study could used to observe the perception of customer towards mall culture of Ludhiana city. It will help to mall owners and managers to adjust their potential to provide better quality of services to large number of customers.

Review of Literature

Rajagopal (2009) [3] examined the impact of growing congestion of shopping malls in urban areas on shopping convenience and shopping behaviour. Based on the survey of urban shoppers, the study analyses the cognitive attributes of the shoppers towards attractiveness of shopping malls and intensity of shopping. The results of the study reveal that the ambience of shopping malls, assortment of stores, sales promotions and comparative economic gains in the malls attract higher customer traffic to the malls. Patel & Sharma (2009) [2] in this study, an attempt was made to study the motivations that people go shopping in mall. A small intercept survey was conducted to study the shopping motivation of India shoppers. This study identified three utilitarian (i.e., convenient shopping, economic shopping and achievement shopping) and six hedonic shopping motivations (i.e. shopping enjoyment, gratification shopping, idea shopping, shopping for aesthetic ambiance, roll shopping, and social shopping.

*Corresponding Author: Simranjeet Singh

In the paper of "Customer attitude towards Shopping Malls in Mumbai" by Sharma (2012) [4] the author tried to show the relationship between the people and their preference when they go to malls, as the customers are changing from time to time. The Indian customer seems to be undergoing a shift in terms of personality, buying motives, interests, attitudes, beliefs and values when he or she is making a shift from 'kirana' stores towards shopping malls. This study is restricted to 5 shopping malls in Mumbai. Factors influencing the customer to shop in the shopping malls of Mumbai such as socioeconomic profiles, income, frequency of visit, period of relationship between the respondents and shopping malls, purpose of visit, occasion to visit shopping malls are some of the aspects studied in the present study. In another study, Sharma (2012) [5] found the relationship between Customer's choice of traditional kirana shops vs modern organised retailer in Mall and Super store environment. The objective of this study is to analyze customer shopping behaviour in different retail format. Data was collected by visiting different retail formats like hyper markets, discount stores, department stores and small kirana stores. The result indicate, the economic growth, changing lifestyles, urbanization, women's participation in economic activities and the spread of IT are the some of the key factors for the growth of the retail sector in India. With Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization and modernization, a modern competitive business is based on understanding the mind of the customer.

Talreja & Jain (2013) [6] investigated the factors influencing the perception towards organized retailing from unorganized retailers. The primary data was gathered by administering a prearranged questionnaire with 100 customers selected purposively from Udaipur District. The data analysis of customer attitude towards unorganized and organized retailers shows that there is a difference between the customers‟ perception towards both organized retailers and unorganized retailers regarding their store image, range of products, brand choices, price, store atmosphere, credit availability, and shop proximity. The data has been collected with the help of structured questionnaire containing close and open ended questions. Statistical software and MS excel were extensively used for analyzing the data collected. The rationale of the study is twofold: First, to examine the shift in perception in the retail sector taking place due to organized form of retailing. Secondly, the area has remained largely an unexplored part of research till date especially in Udaipur. Choudhury (2014) [1] in his study shown the customers attitude towards shopping malls and provides suggestion for improving the service of the shopping mall. The sample of 100 respondents had been selected based on judgmental sampling for the study. Frequency, multiple regression analysis, cross tabulation and discriminate analysis have been conducted for the purpose of the analysis. The findings of the research suggest that convenience, quality and availability of product, price, facility to socialize, food facility, entertainment and overall service are the factors that affect the customer's attitude towards shopping mall.

Research Methodology

A self-constructed questionnaire was use to investigate the perception of customers of Ludhiana city. A total 105 respondents were selected and online questionnaire was filled from them to measure the response regarding 16 perceptions. The questionnaire divided into two parts, first part consist questions to measure the necessary demographic details of respondents. In second part, questionnaire used question to capture the perception of customer towards shopping malls in Ludhiana city. Each question was measured using five Likert scale, ranged 1 to 5, where 1 represent the response as "strongly disagree" while 5 represent "strongly agree".

Objective & Hypothesis

The prime objective of this study is to observe the behaviour of customer in respect of developed mall culture in India. Therefore, study focused on two prime aspects, one is investigate the perception among different age groups of customer and second is observed perception of customers in respect of gender groups. The study set two hypotheses to complete these four objectives:

a) **H0:** There is no difference between age groups of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.
b) **Ha:** There is significant difference between age groups of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.
c) **H0:** There is no difference between gender of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.
d) **Ha:** There is significant difference between gender of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.

The hypotheses have been analysed by using ANOVA and Ch-square test on 5% significant level.

Limitation of Study

As this study is based on primary data, the core limitation of this paper is about narrow sample taking, only 105 respondents filled the questionnaire. Furthermore, the perception of customer is effected by many other factors and it's hard to make conclusion regarding the perception of Ludhiana city with lower sample. Time and resource shortage is also a limitation, as perception data was collected from limited sources, it is not possible to use various static tools and techniques for analyse the perception of customer towards mall in Ludhiana city.

Analysis & Results

Demographic Details (Part I)

There were 105 questionnaire found completed and usable for the purpose of the study. The frequency and percentage of the respondents were constructed in Table I, depicting their gender, age, education level, occupation and income status. Out of total 105 samples, 64 percent were female and 36 percent were male respondents. The largest age group was found between the age of 20-30 years (70%) following by less than 20 years (12%). In respect of occupation, 41 percent respondents were student, 39 percent were involved in government or private service sector and very less percentage of respondents were doing business (9%).

According to the statistics in term of education level, Post-Graduates were at top (52%) followed by Graduation (37%). With respect of income status, the major proportion of respondent were earning a monthly income ranging from less than 20,000 (66%), the respondent who had a monthly income 20,001-40,000 INR accounting for 24% of total sample.

Shopping Behaviour (Part II)

In respect of how frequently respondents were prefer to go shop, study found that 63 respondents like to shop on monthly basis, followed by 21 respondent were prefer to go weekly and fortnight. Study also found that, out of total 105 respondents, most of respondents (60%) were like to shop from organised and unorganised stores and 24 percent respondents use organised system for shopping.

Table 1: Demographic details of respondents.

Demographic		No. of Respondents	
		Frequency	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	38	36
	Female	67	64
	Total	105	100
Age-Group	Less than 20 yr	13	12
	20-30 yr	73	70
	30-40 yr	11	10
	40-50 yr	2	2
	50-60 yr	5	5
	More than 60 yr	1	1
	Total	105	100
Occupation	Student	43	41
	Service	41	39
	Business	9	9
	Any Other	12	11
	Total	105	100
Education	12th	11	10
	Graduation	39	37
	Post-Graduation	55	52
	Total	105	100
Monthly Income	0-20,000 INR	69	66
	20,001-40,000 INR	25	24
	40,001-60000 INR	11	10
	Total	105	100

Table 2: Shopping Behaviour of respondents.

1. Where do you prefer to shop from?		2. How frequently do you shop?	
Organised	15	Fortnight (14 days)	21
Unorganised	26	Weekly	21
Both	64	Monthly	63
Total	105	Total	105

Perception of Different Age-Group towards Shopping Malls (Part III)

In Table II, the perceptions of respondents against shopping malls of Ludhiana city were measured on *5 point Likert scale.* The figure in the Table II are means score based on *5 point Likert scale*, as higher the mean score, the more respondents agree to the various dimensions. The response of each age group was measured and compared by using a one-way ANOVA.

The result revealed that the highest mean score 3.84 on *5 point Likert scale* was observed regarding "Good parking facilities of shopping malls, followed by 3.65 to Shopping Mall have "Wide range of Merchandise variety". However, most of respondents were not agreed that they are being enjoyed whole family entertainment along with shopping, as mean score on *5 point Likert scale* was 3.44. On the flip side, respondents revealed that shopping malls charged high price of goods as relatively to local shops. Moreover, major proportion of respondents were disagree with the statement of "Unapproachable to Shopping Malls" as, mean score was 2.49. Theoretically, when we talk about the customers of different age groups, it is common belief that different age groups have same kind of perception towards shopping malls. To investigate this, we studied customers belonging to four different age groups namely less than 20 years, 20-30 years, 31-40 years and more than 40 years. Table II shows one way ANOVA score of 16 different perceptions given by respondents of various above mentioned age groups. The result from given table shows that out of 16 perception items, only 3 perceptions have found to vary significant difference between different age groups as, p value > 0.05.

Table 3: ANOVA score by *Age-Group.*

Perception of Customers	< 20	20-30	31-40	> 40	Total	*P-value*
1. Shopping Mall is a "One Stop Shopping Place"	2.90	3.08	3.91	4.25	3.53	*0.008*
2. Shopping Mall have "Wide range of Merchandise variety"	3.50	3.25	3.73	4.13	3.65	0.171
3. Shopping Mall provided "Sales Promotion Schemes like special offers, discounts on bulk buying etc"	3.20	3.38	3.55	4.00	3.53	0.380
4. Whole family entertainment along with shopping	3.50	3.41	3.36	3.50	3.44	0.989
5. Shopping from an organized retail outlet/Mall is a Status symbol	3.50	3.38	4.09	3.00	3.49	0.321
6. Shopping Malls "Located in prime locations thus easy to approach"	3.50	3.39	3.91	3.38	3.54	0.518
7. Shopping Malls have "Displays to attract customer attention"	3.90	3.63	4.00	3.38	3.73	0.462
8. Shopping Malls have "Good parking facilities"	3.80	3.57	3.64	4.38	3.84	0.224
9. Excellent Customer Services by Professionally qualified sales people	3.70	3.33	3.55	3.88	3.61	0.359
10. Shopping Malls "Promotes immediate buying without thinking"	2.60	2.79	3.55	4.00	3.23	*0.009*
11. Low Quality products in Shopping Malls	2.00	2.24	2.27	3.13	2.41	0.208
12. High Price of Products in Shopping Malls	3.40	3.47	4.27	3.38	3.63	0.102
13. Shopping Malls are not offer any Credit Facility	2.40	2.46	2.45	2.63	2.49	0.985
14. Unapproachable to Shopping Malls	2.80	2.46	2.18	2.50	2.49	0.633
15. Your Loyalty to the Traditional Outlet (Local Shops), stops you to visit Shopping Malls	2.90	2.72	2.64	4.13	3.10	*0.008*
16. In Shopping Malls "Self-Service" is drawback	2.90	2.22	2.27	2.50	2.47	0.336
*Level of significance is calculated by using one-way ANOVA test, significance value is 0.05.						

Perception of Gender-Group towards Shopping Malls (Part IV)

Table IV, depicts the perception of genders towards shopping malls, for the purpose of this study set a Hypothesis and we used *Chi-Square test* to test the significance difference between gender of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no difference between gender of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.

Ha: There is significant difference between gender of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.

On the basis of test result as shown in Table IV, study found that in respect of three perceptions: "Shopping Mall provided Sales Promotion Schemes like special offers, discounts on bulk buying etc." *(Ch-square value 0.003),* "Shopping Malls have Displays to attract customer attention" *(Ch-square value 0.049),* and "Your Loyalty to the Traditional Outlet (Local Shops), stops you to visit Shopping Malls" *(Ch-square value 0.031)* we reject the Null hypothesis as, there is a significant difference between Gender-Group. However, in respect of remaining items study accept the Null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls.

Table 4: Chi-Square score by *Gender-Group.*

Perception of Gender Group	*P-Value*
1. Shopping Mall is a "One Stop Shopping Place".	0.277
2. Shopping Mall have "Wide range of Merchandise variety"	0.697
3. Shopping Mall provided "Sales Promotion Schemes like special offers, discounts on bulk buying etc".	*0.003*
4. Whole family entertainment along with shopping	0.942
5. Shopping from an organized retail outlet/Mall is a Status symbol	0.101
6. Shopping Malls "Located in prime locations thus easy to approach"	0.064
7. Shopping Malls have "Displays to attract customer attention"	*0.049*
8. Shopping Malls have "Good parking facilities"	0.987
9. Excellent Customer Services by Professionally qualified sales people	0.907
10. Shopping Malls "Promotes immediate buying without thinking"	0.252
11. Low Quality products in Shopping Malls	0.052
12. High Price of Products in Shopping Malls	0.830
13. Shopping Malls are not offer any Credit Facility	0.100
14. Unapproachable to Shopping Malls	0.207
15. Your Loyalty to the Traditional Outlet (Local Shops), stops you to visit Shopping Malls	*0.031*
16. In Shopping Malls "Self-Service" is drawback	0.137
*Level of significance is calculated by using one-way Ch-Square test, significance value is 0.05.	

Findings

a) Almost 60% of respondents prefer to shop from organised and unorganised sector; there were only 15% respondents who shop from only organised (malls) shops.
b) More than 50% of respondents were shop on monthly basis, and weekly shop frequency was only 34%.
c) 40% of respondents agreed that organised retail sector provide special offers and discounts, however 28% of

respondents also agreed that there is a high price of products in shopping malls.

d) In respect of displays to attract the customer in shopping malls, more than 45% of respondents agreed this fact.
e) There were controversial response have been observed in respect of approachability of shopping malls in Ludhiana city.
f) Study accept the null hypotheses in respect of significant difference between age groups of the respondents and their perception towards shopping malls, as the result shows that out of 16 perception items, only 3 perceptions (Shopping Mall is a "One Stop Shopping Place", Shopping Malls "Promotes immediate buying without thinking" and Your Loyalty to the Traditional Outlet (Local Shops), stops you to visit Shopping Malls) have found to vary significant difference between different age groups, p value > 0.05.
g) As far as gender groups, study found that in respect of three perceptions: "Shopping Mall provided Sales Promotion Schemes like special offers, discounts on bulk buying etc." *(Ch-square value 0.003),* "Shopping Malls have Displays to attract customer attention" *(Ch-square value 0.049),* and "Your Loyalty to the Traditional Outlet (Local Shops), stops you to visit Shopping Malls" *(Ch-square value 0.031)* we reject the Null hypothesis as, there is a significant difference between Gender-Group.

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