



Customer Behaviour in Shopping Malls - A Study in Kolkata District

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ABSTRACT

The thriving retail sector in India has caused a shift in consumer behavior. Nowadays, buying is its own distinct subject; it's a completely other ballgame. Shoppers no longer visit malls for the same reasons they did in the past. These days, many people like spending time at shopping malls. Malls are stealing customers away from mom-and-pop stores across India. The average Indian consumer's interests, attitudes, values, and ethics have seen a dramatic transformation, with the transition from mom-and-pop shops to malls. The retail landscape of India is undergoing a gradual but discernible transformation as a result of the proliferation of high-tech shopping malls across the nation. The number of shopping malls in India has increased dramatically during the past few decades. With the recent changes in India's marketing strategy, studying consumer behaviour becomes even more important in this context. Customers' overall satisfaction with shopping malls, their perceptions of the mall's accessibility and product and service quality, and their level of comfort when shopping are the primary outcomes of this study. Several potential variables impacting a consumer's choice to purchase at a shopping mall were investigated in this research. Clients' socioeconomic position, income, frequency of visits, duration of respondents' relationship with the mall, purpose of visit, and event for visiting the mall were all examined. This article examines the malls' appealing aspects from the perspective of consumers in Kolkata, West Bengal, using data from a poll of those individuals. This study aims to examine the allure of shopping malls by observing shoppers' emotions and actions at these establishments.

Keywords: *Booming, Professional, Upheaval, Proliferation, Emerged.*

INTRODUCTION

The word "Mall" evokes what thoughts in us? Entertainment, dining, shopping, or simply passing the time. The word certainly denotes more than just these things; however, its precise meaning may vary from person to person. People who live in major cities and metro areas now practically live at shopping malls. Indian retail has come a long way from Haat and Weekly Bazar to Pose and upscale malls. The Indian retail sector is booming right now thanks to changing shopping habits and a fundamental upheaval in the way people buy things. Those incredible shopping malls have spread

across India, from big cities to little towns. Big format shops that are professionally run and provide appealing goods and services in an inviting setting characterize the modern retail format, sometimes called a shopping mall. The proliferation of shopping malls in recent years has altered customers' buying patterns.

Consumers nowadays expect nothing less than the best when they visit shopping centres; this includes amenities like in-house parking, entertainment, coffee shops, food courts, and children's play areas, among many more. It's not just about eating, shopping, or going to the movies; it's a whole new way of life, and these malls are constructing this familiarity as their USP. An incredible amount of mall culture has emerged in India, particularly in the state of West Bengal. Shopping, going to the movies, and relaxing on vacation were formerly mutually exclusive activities, but now, all three can be enjoyed in one convenient location, all thanks to our malls.

Consumers have found it a handy experience to be able to buy for clothing, shoes, groceries, and entertainment options like movie theatres and video game parlours all in one place. Compared to the heat, humidity, and noise that come with shopping on the street, the air-conditioned, pollution-free mall environment is far more appealing. In terms of altering Indian lifestyles, specifically shopping habits and entertainment preferences, mall culture has emerged as a major phenomenon. There have been many possibilities and more encounters established for retailers as a result of consumers' shifting lives, robust income growth, and favourable demographic trends. People no longer have as much free time as they formerly did due to the rise of two-income households and closely packed work schedules. Retail Centres Both "shopping" and "mall" are used interchangeably to describe a shopping centre. Shopping can be defined as the process of exchanging goods and services for money. In this transaction, both the seller and the buyer are active participants. By combining the two terms, we can say that a mall is any building or collection of buildings that allows the general public to go from one unit to another within the same building or set of buildings before they continue on to exchange goods and services for money.

Consumer Attitude Towards Shopping Malls

Traditional stand-alone Indian stores, which lack refrigeration, organized stops, and other open methods, have lost favour with middle-class Indians. More and more, specialist's state malls are being positioned as a one-stop-shop for shopping, entertainment, recreation, and dining-out necessities rather than merely a place to hunt for style and luxury products. This has led to their rapid expansion across the country. Major forces propelling interest in retail during the decade included a rapidly expanding middle class, an increase in the number of women in the workforce, and rampant consumerism. Traditional markets are giving way to new formats including hypermarkets, department stores, supermarkets, and specialized stores in India's retail industry.

The rapid urbanisation, rising family incomes, increasing exposure to faraway lifestyles, higher consumer aspirations, and convenience of one-stop shopping are all contributing factors. Indian consumers' perspectives have evolved in the last several years. Not only do customers buy products at stores, but they also do so for the fun, the personal service, and the ambiance. All of these things

have contributed to the growth of shopping malls, where customers can find a wide variety of stores, as well as entertainment options, all under one roof. So, in addition to providing necessities like food and clothing, malls also provide opportunities for leisure, socializing, pleasure, and enjoyment. One may argue that malls have accomplished their long-standing goal of serving as community centres where individuals could gather for shopping, cultural events, and social interaction (Gruen & Smith, 1960). Therefore, the "Mall" is the pinnacle of modern consumer society.

Consumer Behaviour

Several factors contribute to the complex consumer behaviour observed in Kolkata's shopping malls. Like in other major cities, malls in Kolkata are great places to dine, shop, and have fun. Customers consider a number of factors, not just one, when deciding which retail mall to frequent. Getting to surrounding residential areas is a big deal. Typically, consumers prefer shopping centres that are close to their homes. Location isn't the only thing that matters; a wide variety of restaurants, stores, entertainment options (such movie theatres), and a pleasant ambience are also major factors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The way people in Kolkata shop is being influenced by mall culture. People are increasingly spending more money in malls and are breaking out of their zone-based buying habits, all while showing a growing tolerance for organized retail setups. Examining how mall culture affects shoppers' actions and choices is the main goal of this paper. Within this framework, the current investigation has commenced with the following particular goals:

- To identify the key factors influencing consumers' choice of shopping malls, such as product variety, price, promotional offers, convenience, ambience, and accessibility.
- To study the role of lifestyle, social status, and cultural background in shaping consumer behaviour in shopping malls.
- To assess consumer preferences and satisfaction levels regarding facilities and services provided by shopping malls in Kolkata.
- To explore the influence of psychological factors (motivation, perception, attitude, and personality) on shopping behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research process, including the technological underpinning, is referred to as research methodology. Data collecting and analysis are crucial to the research's validity and success, therefore methodology demands careful planning. This research aims to uncover new information. The survey method is the basis of the research study. The perspective of Kolkata city shoppers is investigated in this research study.

Data Collection Methods

As the study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, interviews with help of Questionnaires method were applied to collect the primary data. Primary data refers to the information obtained firsthand by the researcher on the variables of interest for the specific purpose of the research.

Primary data is obtained from structured questionnaires and interviews with the mall visitors. The primary data has been randomly collected from the respondents who are regular customers of South City mall, Metropolis Mall, etc. The information like gender, income, mode of commuting to go shopping mall, time of shopping, price of product, quality of the product and preference of consumer etc. were collected through questionnaires.

DATA ANALYSIS

Shopping Habits

The following categories were used to further categorize respondents based on their shopping or mall visiting habits:

1. FREQUENCY OF MALL VISIT

Table 1: Frequency of Mall Visit by The Respondents

Frequency of Visit	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Once a month or less	120	50
2-3 times a month	60	20
Once a week or more	180	30
Total	600	100

The data in the table above reveals that 30% of visitors come at least once a week, 50% come once a month or less, and just 20% come twice or thrice a month. A large number of working-age adults visit a mall in Kolkata at least once a month, according to the statistics.

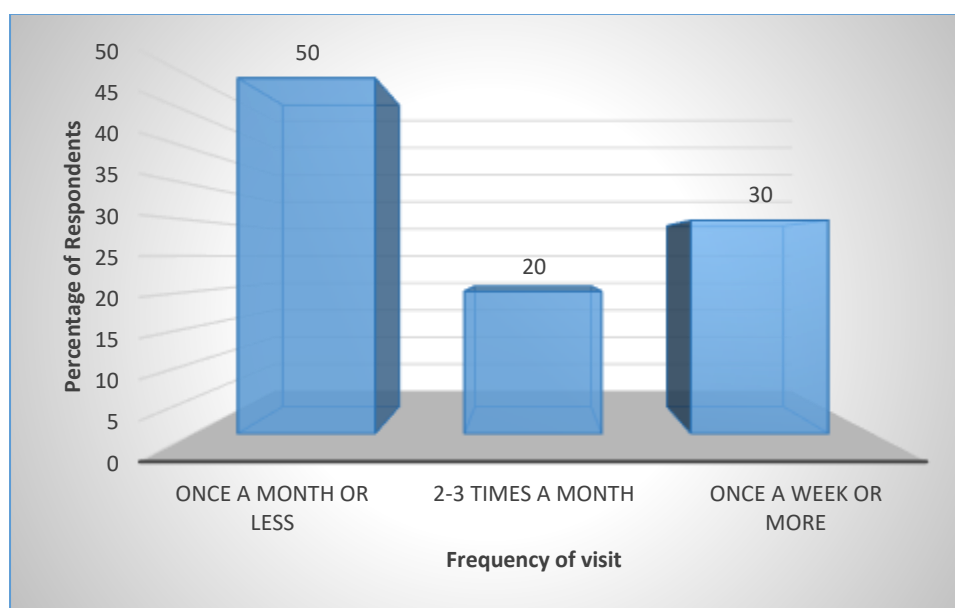


Fig 1: Bar Graph Showing Frequency of Mall Visits by The Respondents

2. PREFERRED DAYS OF VISIT IN SHOPPING MALLS

Table 2: Preferred Days of Visit in Shopping Malls

Preferred days	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Weekdays	120	20
Weekends	180	30
Holidays	90	15
Festivals	150	25
No specific days	60	10
Total	600	100

The table shows that maximum respondents visit shopping malls during weekends and the percentage is 30%, 25% visits during festivals, 15% visits in holidays, 20% during weekdays and 10 % visits no specific days.

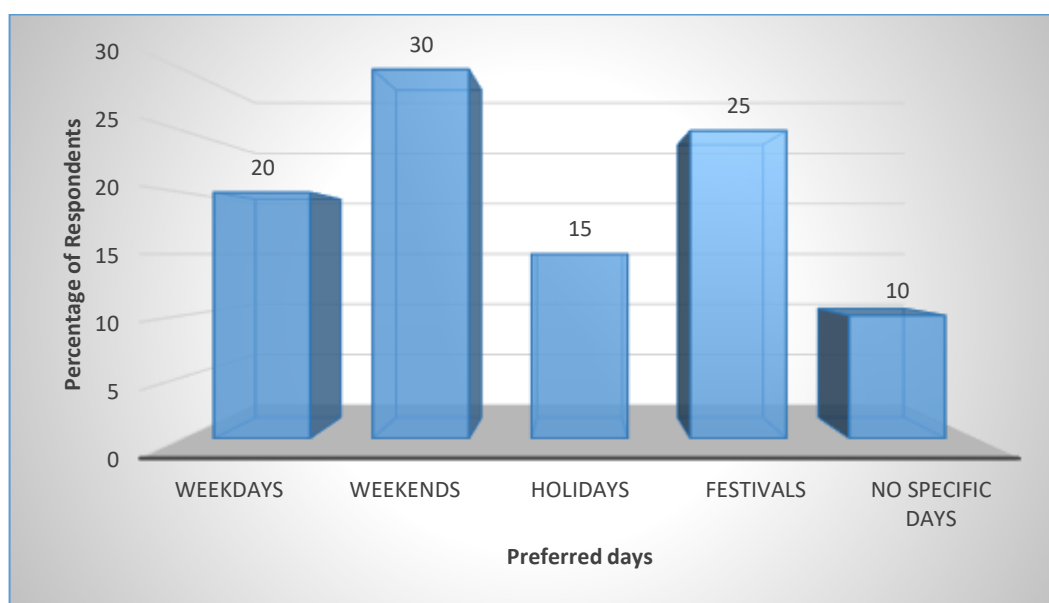


Fig 2: Bar Graph Showing Preferred Days of Mall Visits by The Respondents

3. REASON OF VISITING SHOPPING MALLS

Table 3: Main Reason to Visit Shopping Mall

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Necessities	120	20
Leisure/Entertainment	180	30
Meeting friends/family	90	15
Dining	150	25
Other	60	10
Total	600	100

Thirty percent of respondents frequent shopping malls, as shown in the table above. for leisure/entertainment, 25 % for dining in restaurants, 20 % for necessities, 15 % for meeting friends/family and 10 % for other reasons. The results depicts that respondents go to shopping mall mainly for leisure /entertainment purpose.

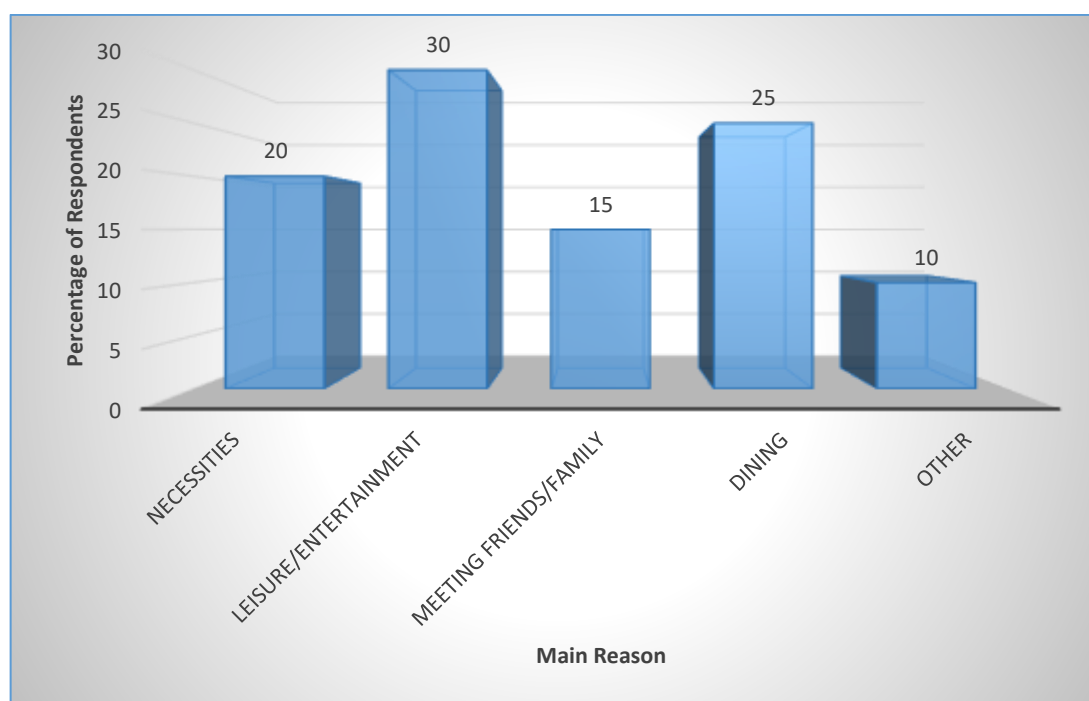


Fig 3: Bar Graph Showing Main Reasons of Visiting Shopping Malls

4. TYPE OF PRODUCTS/SERVICES PURCHASE AT MALLS

Table 4: Products Purchase/ Services During Visit Shopping Mall

Products	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Clothing/Apparel	120	20
Electronics	180	30
Food/Beverages	84	14
Cosmetics/Personal care	90	15
Home Furnishings	60	10
Other	66	11
Total	600	100

The vast majority of those surveyed were shopping for electronics at malls. 30% of consumers are for clothing purchases, 20% are for cosmetics and personal care, and 14% are for food and drink. 10% goes to house furnishings, while the remaining 11% goes to other products. The data indicates that the primary reason people visited shopping malls was to purchase electronic devices.

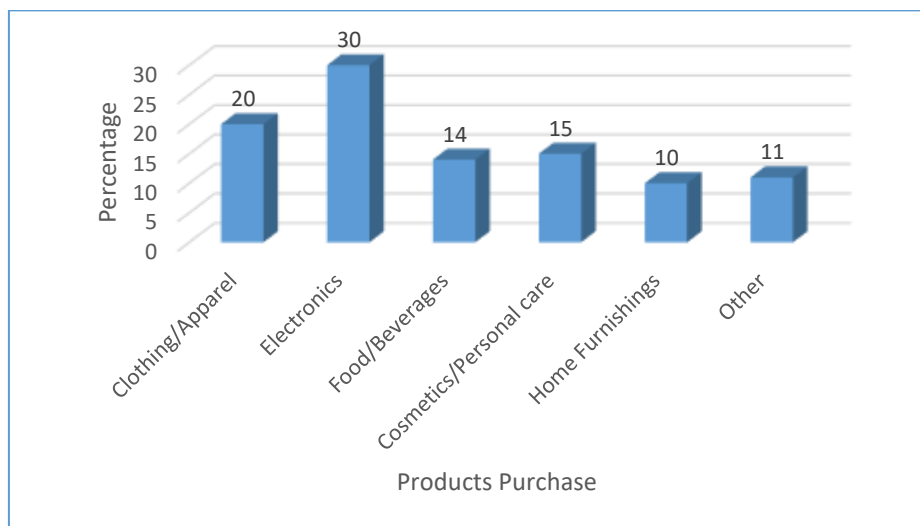


Fig 4: Products Purchase/ Services During Visit Shopping Mall

5. DURATION OF TIME

Table 5: Duration of Time Spend at Shopping Mall

Time	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Less than 1 hour	240	40
1-2 hours	150	25
2-3 hours	90	15
More than 3 hours	120	20
Total	600	100

The vast majority of those surveyed were shopping for less than 1 hours and percentage is 40% of consumers, 25% stayed for 1-2 hours, 15 % for 2-3 hours, and 20% stayed more than 3 hours. The data indicates majority stayed not even 1 hour. They were serious buyers and they practically went for shopping rather than spending time in the mall.

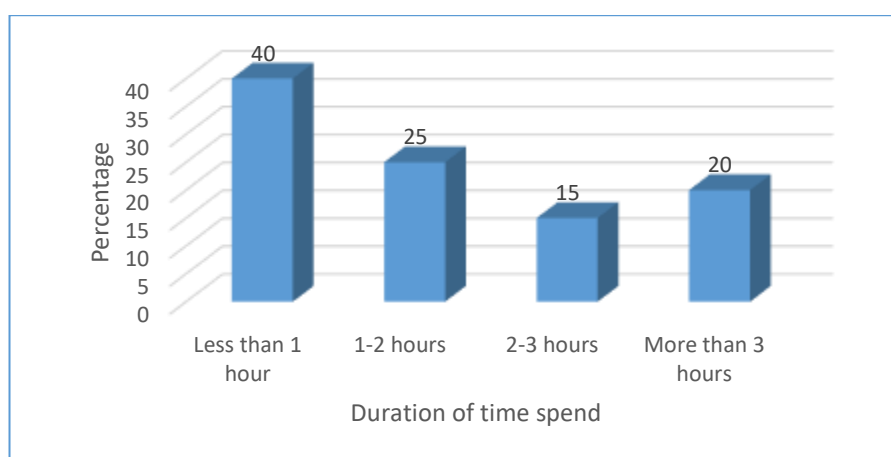


Fig 5: Bar Graph Showing Duration of Time Spend in Shopping Malls

6. PREFERRED ACTIVITIES DONE

Table 6: Preferred Activities Done at Shopping Mall

Activities done	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Browsing stores	240	40
Eating at food court/restaurants	150	25
Watching movies	60	10
Relaxing with friends or family	120	20
Other	30	5
Total	600	100

The majority of the respondent was visiting mall for browsing stores and they are 40 %, 25 % for eating food in restaurants/food courts, 10 % for watching movies, 20 % for relaxing with friends or family, 5 % for other. The browsing consumer are more than any other consumer.

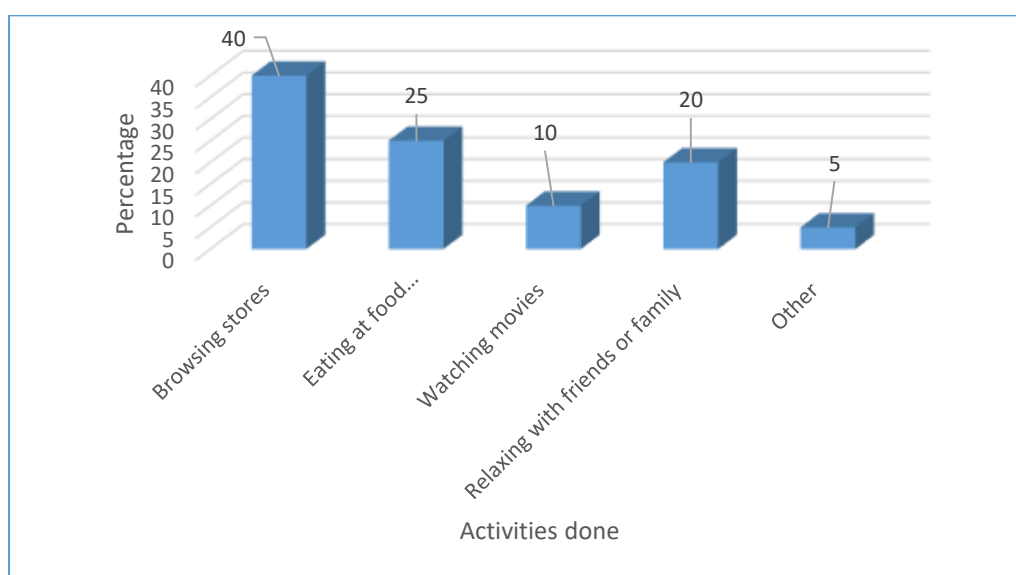


Fig 6: Bar Graph Showing Various Activities Done in Shopping Malls

7. MODE OF TRANSPORT TO VISIT SHOPPING MALL

Table 7: Preferred Transport to Visit Shopping Mall

Transport medium	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Public transport	120	20
Own vehicle	300	50
Taxi/Ride-sharing	120	20
Other	60	10
Total	600	100

The majority of the respondent was visiting mall in their own vehicle and they are 50 %, both public transport and taxi/ride sharing respondents are 20 % each and others are only 10%. The table shows that those who have their own vehicle are frequent visitors of the shopping mall. They feel safe to keep their car in the parking area and so they visit shopping malls.

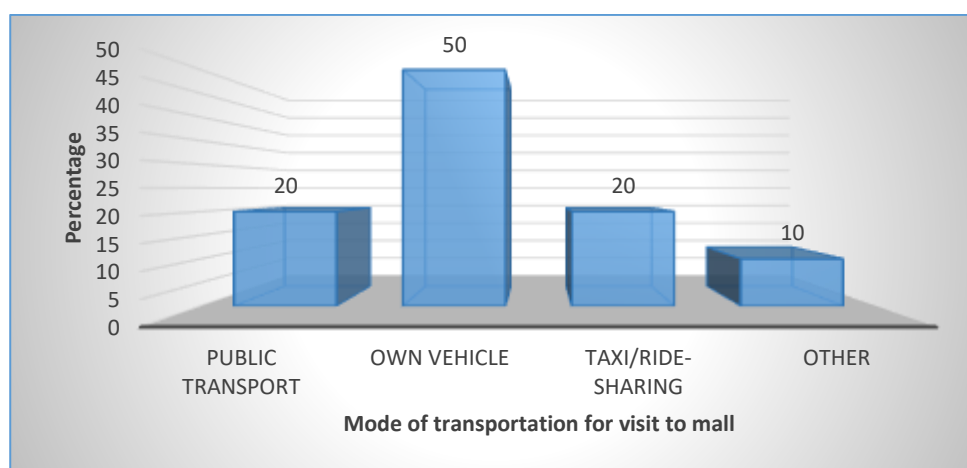


Fig 7: Bar Graph Showing Different Mode of Transportation to Visit Shopping Malls

8. COMPETITIVE PRICES OF PRODUCTS

Table 8: Product Prices are Competitive Behaviour in Shopping Mall

Options	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Yes	360	60
No	60	10
Sometimes	180	30
Total	600	100

The majority of the respondent said that they visit shopping malls for comparing the prices of the product and they can judge their buying accordingly. The percentage is 60 %, 30 % respondents told that sometimes they compare prices of the product and 10% just does not agree to that. The competitive pricing plays a major role to drag the customers towards shopping malls.

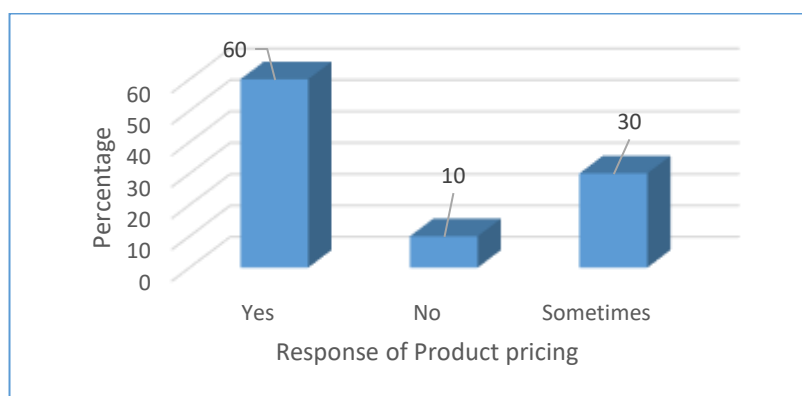


Fig 8: Bar Graph Showing Response of Product Pricing to Visit Shopping Malls

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SHOPPING

Table 9: Suggestions for Improvement in Shopping

Options	No. of Respondents	Response in Percentage
Yes	360	60
No	240	40
Total	600	100

The table shows that 60 % respondents gave suggestions and were spontaneous to give improvement tips but 40 % ignored and did not give any suggestions. The satisfied customer will always try to give suggestions for improvement. Some may ignore as they don't want any controversies and not want to get highlighted for any of the suggestions in the survey.

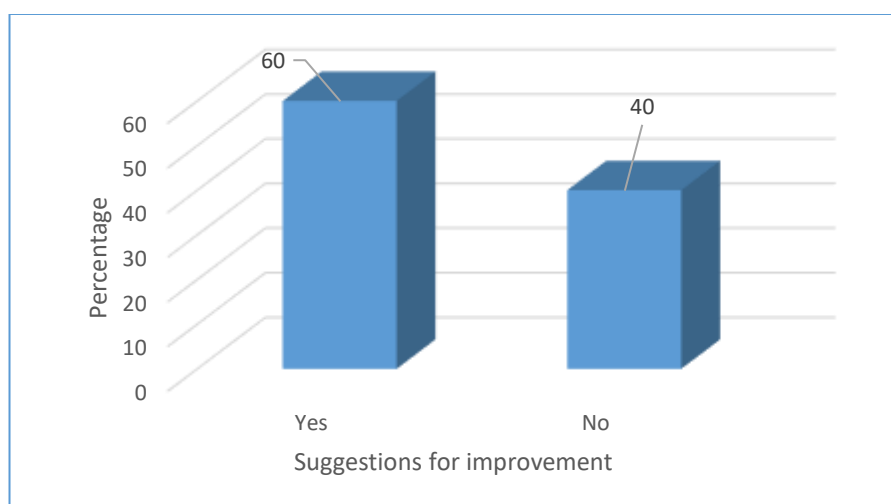


Fig 9: Bar Graph Showing Response of Suggestions for Improvement of Shopping Malls

CONCLUSION

India is a country with approx. 12.5 billion population. Organized retail can be most prominent key driver for Indian economy. We saw that consumers are moving towards shopping malls due to their different reasons. But there is a significant increase in shopping malls in major metros as well as small cities. The proportion of sales made by organized retailers to the whole retail industry is growing as a result of this. However, there is still a great deal of room for growth for businesses in the retail, real estate, and development industries. Most important challenge is for developers & retailers are to cope up with the less occupancy levels & converting footfalls to sales. This research study was conducted with the intention to help developers and retailers in a capital-intensive sector to avoid the mistakes of the past and benefit from being a part of the booming retail sector.

As a conclusion of study, we find out the factors which influence the consumer's attitude towards shopping malls. One way to look at it is as determinants for shopping mall choice:

Location & Accessibility

In order for a shopping mall to be successful, its location is the most important component. Better sites bring in an increasing number of customers. The term "good location" can refer to a shopping mall that is placed in close proximity to the home, or it can refer to a shopping mall that is situated in a convenient position that is easily accessible by either private or public transportation.

1. Shopping Mall Design & Image

When selecting a shopping mall to visit, one of the most important factors to consider is the mall's design and image. This is something that is experienced by the tourists themselves, and it also spreads through word of mouth since customers feel connected to the particular societal group that they are exploring through their visits. This is something that appeals to the audience that we are trying to reach. This element is taken into consideration when the implementation of specialty or theme malls takes place. An example of this would be the South City mall in Kolkata, which has the reputation of being a luxury mall and attracts consumers from the premium income bracket. The Quest mall in Kolkata, which is located in the same city, attracts customers from upper income groups. There is a presence of multinational brands in both of the shopping malls, according to the specific market sector.

2. Parking Facilities

The most common mode of transportation for those who go to shopping malls is their own modes of transportation. In light of the growing number of people who own their own vehicles, the availability of ample and well-planned parking spaces has become an important factor in the choosing of a shopping mall. The South City Mall, the Quest Mall, and the Forum Mall all offer a substantial amount of space for parking lots beneath the basement zone of the mall.

3. Balanced Tenant Mix

One of the aspects that affects consumers' opinion towards shopping malls is the perfect and balanced mix of tenants. The ideal tenant mix for a shopping mall would be one that embodies a lifestyle and invites customers to unwind. Attracting customers to the shopping center is the job of the stores and services offered there. If the mall has the ideal combination of well-known brands for retail therapy, restaurants, and entertainment, then it will cater to a wide range of customers.

4. Management of Customer Experience Management

This is the overarching component that determines how customers feel about shopping centres, since it allows them to have an experience in addition to just buying the products or services. This is how the buyer gets value out of the product or service they're buying. Beyond just shopping, customers enjoy the pleasant atmosphere of the mall and stores, which provides them with opportunities for entertainment. Customer experience management encompasses a wide range of activities, such as;

- (i) **Experience of entertainment for Movies, Food Courts, Gaming Zones etc:** The primary determinants of mall choice are entertainment amenities and multiplexes. Because of the many benefits, including shopping, entertainment, and convenience, consumers are increasingly choosing to shop in malls. The mall's calming ambiance inspires good vibes and excitement, which in turn encourages customers to make more purchases, even if they weren't originally planning to.

When members of the visiting family realize that the decision maker is delighted, they are more likely to go on and visit the stores, which usually results in a purchase. Customers, especially those shopping with families, prefer malls that offer entertainment options, such as multiplexes. As a matter of fact, entertainment venues and nice atmospheres stimulate consumers, which in turn motivates them to buy new products. We can therefore draw the further conclusion that entertainment venues and multiplexes encourage customers to visit a mall, which in turn leads to sales decisions. Therefore, shopping centers with sufficient entertainment options tend to be more profitable.

- (ii) **The Service Mix Experience:** For a shopping mall to be successful, it is essential that customers are happy with all of the amenities, products, and services offered. All the additional products, services, and dimensions needed for a successful mall are combined in this. In order to retain a high level of customer influence and urge them to make a purchase at a particular mall, it is important to plan ahead and provide a comprehensive mix of services to visitors and consumers. We can incorporate more fresh and creative concepts into this experience.

- (iii) **The Supply Chain Experience:** While the front end of retail shop management receives most of the attention, the back end of supply chain management is actually rather important. The significance of managing supply chain management operations is now understood by retail companies and owners of retail outlets. Paying close attention to supply chain management tasks is essential for improving pricing, quality, originality, and variety. Now this element also plays a role in the customer's decision-making process when it comes to completing a purchase. Successful businesses and organizations exploit this as a competitive edge.

- (iv) **The Packaging & Labelling Experience:** Before deciding to buy a product, consumers pay close attention to its packaging and labelling. Something like this captures the eye of the buyer and makes him want to acquire it right away. Consequently, stores in shopping centres need to improve their packaging and labelling practices for the benefit of their customers.

- (v) **The Product Quality Experience:** Nowadays, buyers care more about a product's quality. Customers are willing to shell out cash if they see a good return on investment. Customers choose to shop at malls because of the convenience and high quality of the products there. Retailers in malls should also consider this element while providing products to customers. The product's quality also needs to match the needs of the demographic you're trying to reach.



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