

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS SHOPPING MALLS AT CHENNAI CITY - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract: Chennai is an active metropolitan city and is counted between the largest cities in India. Chennai was a vital trade center in the British rule and has been growing ever since. After the concepts of globalization and liberalization invaded the Indian markets, there has been a deluge of international brands here. Chennai is one among the popular shopping destinations in south India. Malls in Chennai do not insulate in providing the similar experience and the experience is also exceptional when you see the locals, foreigners and tourists all having a fine time under the equivalent roof. These malls afford an entirely unrivaled shopping experience. The main advantage and luring part is that these malls offer an enormous variety at a fascinating deal. There are a number of malls in the diverse corners of the city, each of which has its own specialty. In addition, these malls believe in the mantra of providing the customers with everything under one roof. Protected from the harsh weather, these malls offer a peaceful and relaxed shopping experience in a friendly environment. In this circumstance, it assumes significance to study the buying behavior of consumers in Chennai, particularly with changes taking place in India's marketing situation to assess the overall customer satisfaction, response of customers with regard to the availability, quality of goods and services offered at shopping malls and the comfort level of the respondents towards shopping in the shopping malls in Chennai.

Keywords: Chennai malls, Shopping malls, Chennai City, customer satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Chennai is one among the popular shopping destinations in South India. The city has a huge number of new shopping malls for shopping lovers. Each year, these shopping malls create a center of attention, a huge number of visitors, from all parts of the state. There are a huge number of shopping malls that have been built in the city. With this, the shopping mall culture is scattering at a pace not known before. Shopping Malls are growing with the speed of fire and have totally changed the face of the city. Whether you are with your family or friends, experience in shopping malls is regarding expenses, some quality time while you are shopping for articles that could range from apparels to ration. Customer satisfaction is the significant key factor to the success of any marketing stores and shopping malls;

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therefore it is very essential to assess it and to find the factors that affect customer satisfaction. Customers will realize goods and services they buy, provided if they are made to experience special. In this circumstance it assumes significance to study the buying behaviour of consumers in chennai particularly with changes taking place in India's marketing situation to assess the overall customer satisfaction, response of customers with regard to the availability, quality of goods and services accessible at shopping malls and the satisfaction level of the respondents towards shopping in the shopping malls in chennai.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today's customers have too little time to spend but more intelligent than ever before. This has boosted the pace of competition for the retail stores to think about innovative and user friendly driven spaces to attract customers and also to retain them. The top tier retail store chains & shopping malls that have increased their size of their store base are highly competing against the low-cost operators to reinvest themselves and to find a sustainable stand in today's market (Jenifer, 2014).

Hekman *et al.* (2009), stated that in this research, found the result that, customer satisfaction surveys have become a frequent source of performance feedback for employees and organizations. Researchers had given some innovative aspects that customer satisfaction was main factor for the companies this time for intentional decision making and to find some factors for reward of employees. Customer satisfaction in most of cases were gender biased they had found because this mostly connect with the behavior of people and performance which is forever associated to gender wise.

Goyal & Aggarwal (2009), Ghosh Piyali, Tripathi Vibhuti & Kumar Anil (2010) Ha Hong-Youl and Muthaly Siva (2008), and lots of other researchers have done work on sales promotion mix, shopping malls and customer satisfaction.

Kamaladevi (2010) stated that to contend effectively in the business era, a trader must spotlight on the customer's buying experience. To manage a customer's experience, traders should understand what "customer experience" in reality.

Sengupta Anirban (2008) appearance of modern trade in India is not just a result of increasing customer buying control - manufacturers and unorganized traders also have a key role to play in this development at the macro-level.

With the help of these researches we have found to assess the overall customer satisfaction, response of customers with regard to the availability, quality of goods and services offered at shopping malls and the comfort level of the respondents towards shopping in the shopping malls in chennai city.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of research design includes the exploratory study consisting of literature survey and in-depth discussion. The sampling method selected for the

study is “convenience sample” in the non-probability category. As many as 200 customers were interviewed at the different shopping malls. The questionnaire has two parts highlighting on the demographic profiles of the respondents and various dimensions of shopping malls on customer satisfaction were measured through Likert scales. The sources of data collection consist of both primary and secondary sources. Data analysis was done by with SPSS 20.0 version. The data descriptive statistics frequency analysis, percentage analysis for categorical variables and the mean and S.D for continuous variables will applied. To find the reliability of the questionnaire will be verified with Cranbach Alpha Test. To find the significance difference between the bivariate samples in Independent groups Mann-Whitney U test and for the multivariate analysis the one way ANOVA (Kruskal Walli’s test) will be applied. In all the above statistical tools the probability value 0.05 is considered as significant level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency of visiting the shopping malls

Table 1
Frequency of visiting the shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Always	110	55
Often	52	26
Sometimes	38	19
Never	0	0
Total	200	100

In this 55% of the customers said that they are always frequently visiting the shopping mall, 26% of the customer said that often visiting the mall and 19% of them said that they are sometimes have visiting the shopping mall as shown in table 1 and figure 1.

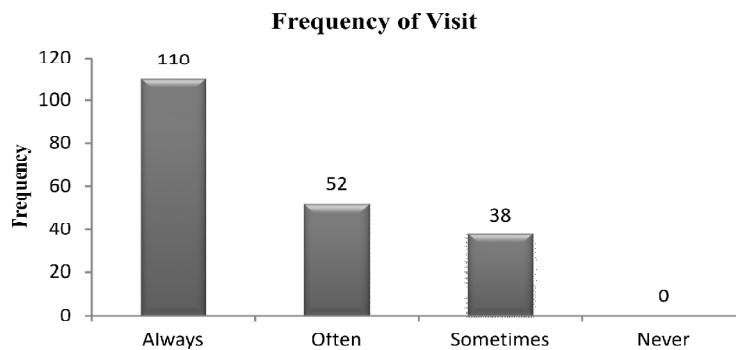


Figure 1: Frequency of visiting the shopping malls

Monthly Income to spend per month in shopping mall

Table 2
Monthly Income to spend per month in shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Below Rs. 20,000	18	9
Rs. 20,000 - Rs. 30,000	40	20
Rs. 30,000 - Rs. 40,000	54	27
Rs. 40,000 and Above	88	44
Total	200	100

In this 44% of the respondents were Rs 40,000 and above, 27% of the respondents were Rs. 30,000 – Rs 40,000 the majority of the respondents belongs to the higher income group per month. The respondents belonging to lower income group is as low as 9%. This clearly shows that the tendency to visit a shopping mall is higher in cases of the higher income group as shown in table 2 and figure 2.

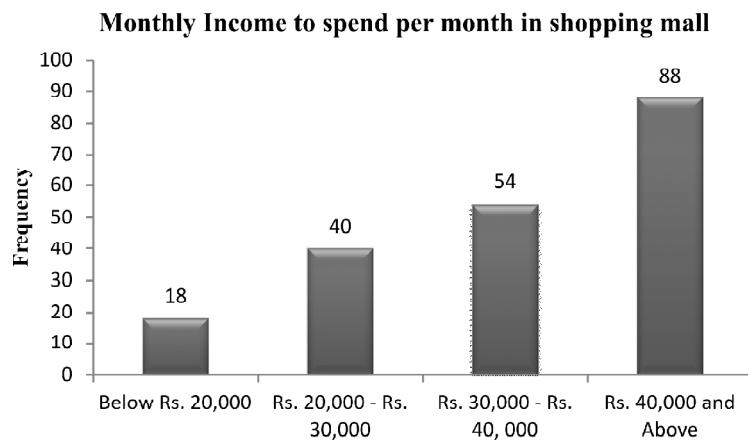


Figure 2: Monthly Income to spend per month in shopping malls

Quality of Products offered at shopping malls

Table 3
Quality of Products offered at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Excellent	89	44.5
Good	58	29
Satisfactory	39	19.5
Not Satisfactory	14	7
Total	200	100

The respondents were asked to rate the quality of products available at shopping malls. In this 44.5% of the respondents stated that the quality of products offered at shopping malls is excellent, only as low as 7% of respondents have reported a 'not satisfactory' response towards shopping malls as shown in table 3 and figure 3.



Figure 3: Quality of Products offered at shopping malls

Services offered at shopping malls

Table 4
Services offered at shopping malls

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	104	52
Good	46	23
Satisfactory	38	19
Not Satisfactory	12	6
Total	200	100



Figure 4: Services offered at shopping malls

As high as 52% of the respondents feel that the services of shopping malls are "excellent" while 23% of the respondents rate the services as "good", 19%

respondents rate as “satisfactory” and only 6% tag the services as “non satisfactory” this shown a positive response with consider to the quality of services offered at shopping malls as shown in table 4 and figure 4.

Parking Facility at shopping malls

Table 5
Parking Facility at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Excellent	109	54.5
Good	48	24
Satisfactory	28	14
Not Satisfactory	15	7.5
Total	200	100

Therefore, a majority 54.5% of the sample have a positive response about the parking facilities offered at shopping malls. Shopping malls are measured to be vehicle friendly as they provide excellent parking facilities. Only as low as 7.5% find the parking facility to be “poor” at shopping malls as shown in table 5 and figure 5.



Figure 5: Parking Facility at shopping malls

Association Shopping Malls

Table 6
Association Shopping Malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0 - 1 Year	18	9
1 - 3 Years	38	19
3 - 5 Years	58	29
More than 5 years	86	43
Total	200	100

The period of relationship between the respondents and shopping malls. While 9% of respondents are associated with shopping malls since the past one year, 19% of the respondents are associated from last 1 - 3 years, 29% of the respondents are associated since past 3 - 5 years and 43% of the respondents are associated with shopping malls for more than 5 years. The majority of the respondent's association with shopping malls is below 5 years because a majority of the shopping malls and thus mall culture came to survival in Chennai only in the past five years.



Figure 6: Association Shopping Malls

Availability of Products at shopping malls

Table 7
Availability of Products at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	124	62
No	76	38
Total	200	100

The availability of products in shopping malls, 62% of the respondents is satisfied and remaining 38% of the respondents are dissatisfied. Thus, the availability of a wide range and a variety of products is a main attraction of shopping malls.



Figure 7: Availability of Products at shopping malls

Comfort level at shopping mall

Table 8
Comfort level at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	137	68.5
No	63	31.5
Total	200	100

As high as 68.5% of the respondents are comfortable with shopping at the shopping malls as they serve as a one stop shop. The remaining 31.5% are dissatisfied in shopping malls.



Figure 8: Comfort level at shopping malls

Purpose of Visit at shopping malls

Table 9
Purpose of Visit at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Food and Beverages	78	39
Entertainment	64	32
Lifestyle Products	35	17.5
Durables	16	8
Others	7	3.5
Total	200	100

Food and beverages 39% attract customers the most towards shopping malls, especially women. Entertainment 32% is next as it is most favored by mostly the youth and children. It is only a very small percentage of customers who visit shopping malls for the durables 8%, lifestyle products 17.5% and other goods.

Purpose of visitng at shopping malls

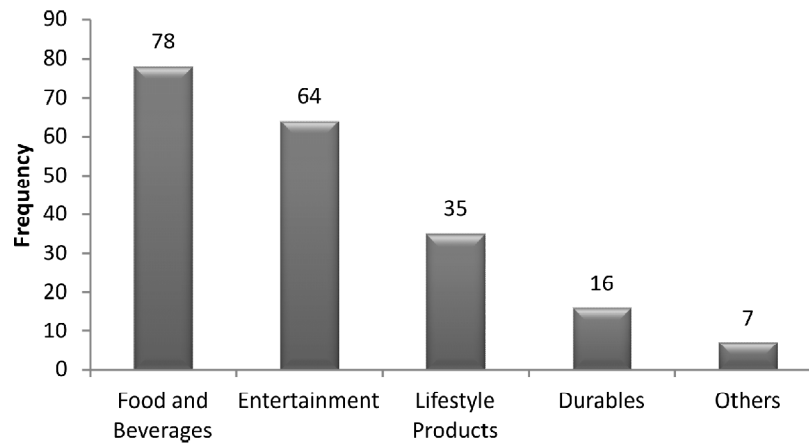


Figure 9: Purpose of Visit at shopping malls

Mode of Payment at shopping malls

Table 10
Mode of Payment at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
DEBIT / CREDIT CARD	58	29
CASH	142	71
Total	200	100

In this 71% of the respondents prefer payments by mode of cash rather than Debit / Credit card. Like most local vendors, shopping malls offer debit / credit card facilities to the consumer which makes shopping at shopping malls more attractive and convenient to shop.

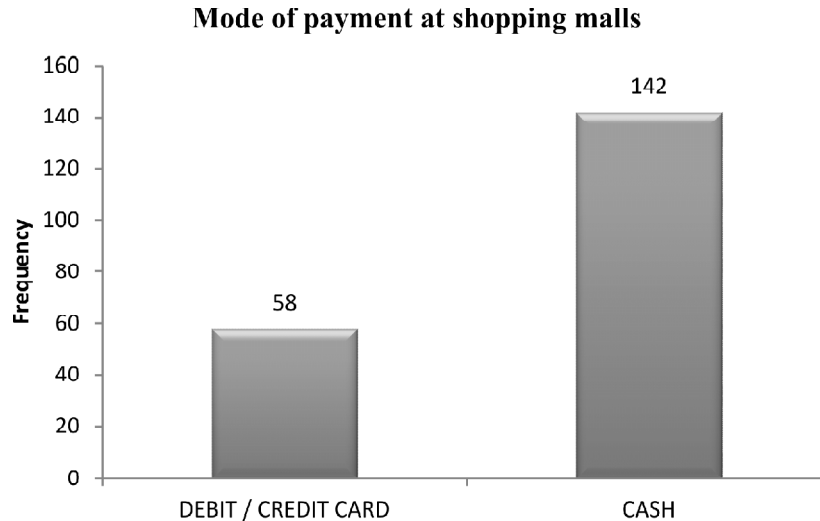


Figure 10: Mode of Payment at shopping malls

Value for Money at shopping malls

Table 11
Value for Money at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Excellent	86	43
Good	62	31
Satisfactory	34	17
Not Satisfactory	18	9
Total	200	100

Most customers (43%) are of the opinion that shopping malls give excellent value for money. This is because most products are sold directly by the manufacturers to the ultimate customers through their own marketing outlets which thereby reduce the cost incurred on middlemen and / or shopping malls pass a percentage of the profits to customers by way of discounts and schemes to ensure customer loyalty.

Value for money at shopping malls

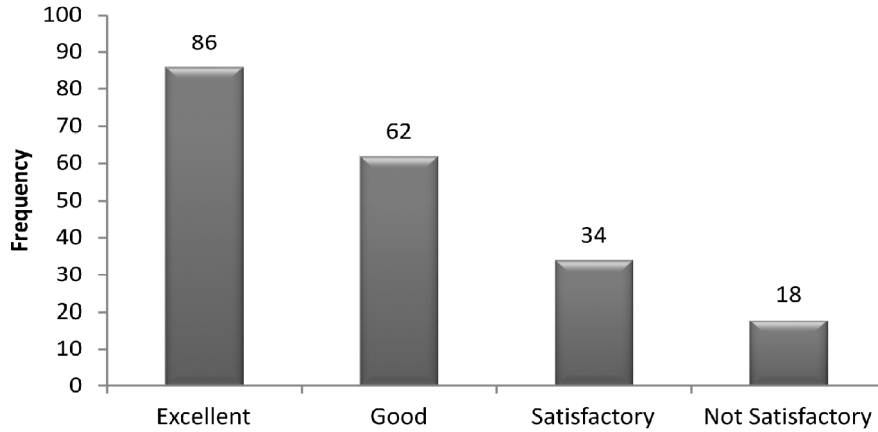


Figure 11: Value for Money at shopping malls

Reason for Buying from Shopping Malls

**Table 12
Reason for Buying from Shopping Malls**

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Nearness to House and Locality	83	41.5
Good range availability	49	24.5
Friendly shopping environment	42	21
Good Ambience	26	13
Total	200	100

In this 41.5% of respondents favor ‘near to the house’ which makes shopping malls more convenient and attractive for the shoppers. Apart from that, few customers are also attracted to other features of shopping malls like good range availability 24.5%, friendly shopping environment 21% and good ambience 13%.

Reason for Buying from Shopping Malls

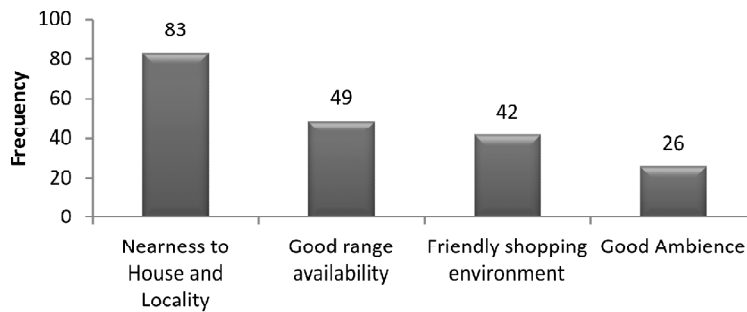


Figure 12: Reason for Buying from Shopping Malls

Occasion to Visit Shopping Malls

Table 13
Occasion to Visit Shopping Malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Festivals	90	45
Weekends	40	20
Offer time	60	30
No Specific reason	10	5
Total	200	100

During the festive season 45%, that the majority of the respondents visit shopping malls to buy clothes, sweets and so on. Apart from that, during offer time to avail of discounts 30% and weekends 20% consumers visit shopping malls for purchasing routine items and for socializing. Very small percentages 5% of the respondents come to the malls to shop with no specific reason.

Occasion to visit shopping malls

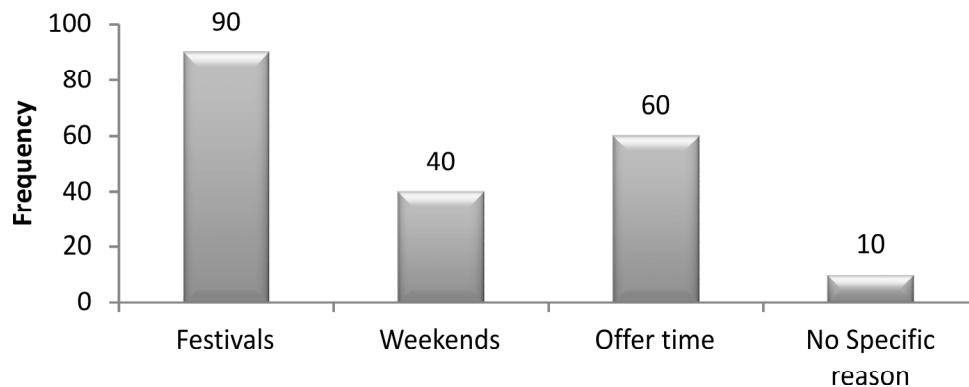


Figure 13. Occasion to Visit Shopping Malls

Customer overall satisfaction at shopping malls

Table 14
Customer overall satisfaction at shopping malls

<i>Details</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
very satisfied	94	47
Satisfied	54	27
Neutral	36	18
Dissatisfied	16	8
Total	200	100

Around 40% of the respondents are overall very satisfied with the shopping malls, 20% indicate ordinary satisfaction towards shopping malls while 20% of the respondents preferred to be neutral - they could not determine whether they were satisfied or not and lastly only 10% were dissatisfied and these 10% are mainly housewives who are tradition bound.

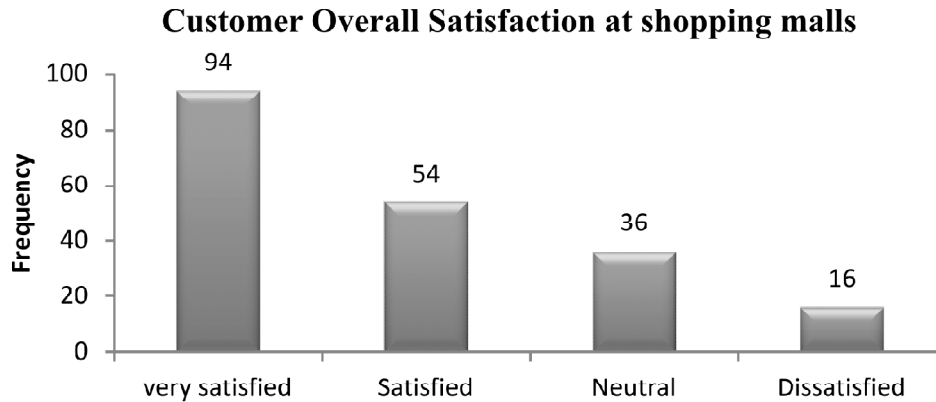


Figure 14: Customer overall satisfaction at shopping malls

Table 15
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for overall satisfaction at shopping malls

Name of the Domain	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Significant value
Overall satisfaction	0.981	14	0.977	0.985	0.001**

** denotes Highly Significant at P<=01 level

The reliability of the overall satisfaction questionnaire was verified with Cronbach's Alpha is shown that $\alpha = 0.981$ with the number of items is 14. The 95% confidence interval for the lower bound is 0.977 and upper bound is 0.985. The significant level is P = 0.001 level, which is highly significant

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the respondents were quite satisfied with the malls. Most respondents expressed that the shopping malls are just not a place to shop owed to its regular availability, but has also created an ideal environment for social interaction for people of all ages. Also shopping malls offer excellent parking facilities, generate value for money, credit / debitcard facilities, and so on. As a result, higher customer traffic is attracted towards shopping malls.

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