Shopping Malls as Lifestyle Hubs: An Analytical Study of Consumer Behavior in Calicut City

Dr. Jayaprakasan P.P.
Assistant Professor
TM Government College, Tirur
University of Calicut

Abstract

Shopping mall offered customers far more than variety of stores under one roof, it is a place for entertainment and enjoyment. The emergence of shopping malls has evolved a new shopping culture for the Indian consumer, that provides clean, secured, and enjoyable shopping experience for the whole family. Today the life style and shopping culture of people have been changed a lot. Now they don't like to search for their required products throughout the traditional retail stores. They want to shop all the items from a single roof. This paper examines the recent growth of mall culture in Calicut (Kozhikode), Kerala, and its socio-economic implications. This study traces the recent expansion of formal retail (notably new entrants such as LuLu Mall Kozhikode), summarizes existing empirical findings on consumer preferences and impulse buying in the state, and develops a conceptual framework explaining how malls are reshaping consumption, leisure and urban public space in Calicut. The Study has conducted and collected data with the help of questionnaire from 200 samples of customers. The result of the study revealed that customers are going to shipping mall mainly for the purchase something for their needs and at the same time they want to enjoy leisure with their friends or family.

Introduction

India's retail sector has been dominated by traditional retail stores owned and managed by families. Traditional retailers did not provide all the required products for their customers. But they gave credit facilities and customized services to them. After liberalization, there was a big change in Indian economy and it gave a new life to modern or organized retailing. The emergence of shopping malls has evolved a new shopping culture for the Indian consumer, that provides clean, secured, and enjoyable shopping experience for the whole family. Today the life style and shopping culture of people have been changed a lot. Now they don't like to search for their required products throughout the traditional retail stores. They want to shop all the items from a single roof.

Now a days people prefer to shop from shopping malls sometimes for the sake of purchasing modern and rare products and for enjoyment and socialization. Some customers take the visit as shopping cum entertainment. It provides place where visitors can shop at variety of stores, enjoy entertainments, and socialize with family and friends. Customers feel that shopping malls not only fulfill their shopping needs but also satisfy their social needs by providing a place for entertainment and relaxation. The availability of various products under one roof with high quality, entertainment facilities, restaurants and the air-conditioned environment of the shopping malls motivate public to prefer malls for shopping instead of other retail formats.

Over the last decade Kerala's retail landscape has shifted from traditional bazaars and standalone stores toward organized shopping centres that combine retail, food and entertainment. Calicut (Kozhikode), historically a trading city on Kerala's Malabar coast, has seen a notable acceleration in mall development in recent years — including large format centres such as HiLITE Mall and the more recent opening of LuLu Mall Kozhikode in September 2024. These developments have implications for consumption patterns, youth leisure, small retail viability and urban public life.

Review of Literature

Gunasekharan et.al (2009) analyzed the shopping mall buying behavior of older generation. This study based on 262 samples from 5 shopping malls in Bangalore. This study revealed that most of the customers visits malls with family or companion for the purpose of socialization. The main drivers of the mall visit of older generation include value shopping, idea and role shopping, gratification and adventure shopping. The findings of the study that older generation are visiting

shopping malls for various motivational reasons and their spending pattern changes with their demographic variables.

Sharma & Shivakumar (2012) assessed the customer satisfaction and attitude of customers towards the shopping malls in Mumbai. This study identified the factors affecting the buyers to shop from the malls in Mumbai like socio economic profile of customers, monthly income, purpose of visit, frequency of visit, time and amount spend per visit, occasion to visit shopping malls etc. Majority of customers prefers shopping malls for shopping which provides a place to purchase anything they want. They concluded that most of the selected customers opinioned that malls accommodate everyone irrespective of the age, sex and income.

Astono & Cynthia (2014) analyzed the effects of shopping mall attributes towards customer satisfaction in the Surabaya city which is the second biggest city in Indonesia. In this study shopping mall attributes classified in to five namely convenience, tenant presence, mall's environment, marketing process and service quality. The study concluded with the findings that the shopping mall attributes individually and simultaneously had significant effects on customer satisfaction of the malls.

Balakrishnan & Geetha (2015) analyzed the different shopping experience and satisfaction of visitors in malls in selected towns in Tamil Nadu. The total samples of the study were 200. This study pointed out that youth preferred to visit malls as means of socialization and to hang out with friends. They concluded this study with pointed out the suggestions that the mall managers should offer better family entertainment facilities along with great shopping experience in order to attract all age group customers.

Rathod Rajkumar (2017) analyzed the attitude towards mall culture in India. This study was based on 250 samples selected through systematic random sampling method. People visit malls for shopping, fun and many other activities. Most of the respondents enjoy the malls regularly with their family and friends. In India, shopping mall culture has already been developed and shopping malls are much more than a shopping destination to the society. Mall culture makes a notable change in the life style of people in India especially in cities.

Sreeya & Rukmani (2019) found out the customer perception towards shopping in malls belongs to Chennai. Age and gender were the main independent variables for the study. The dependent variables used for this research were the variety of stores, discount and offers, mall ambience and quality etc. The results showed that majority of the customers preferred to shop from malls due to the variety of shops and air conditioning in the shopping mall. This study indicated that there is no

significant difference among gender of the respondents regarding the preferences of shopping from malls.

Oliandes & Gunawan Hananie (2022) studied about the mall strategy to attract customers and impact of health protocol on mall visitation during pandemic period. This research covers sample of 205 customers of malls in Surabaya – Indonesia. This study considered four shopping topologies namely selection, entertainment, exploration and place attachment. The results disclosed that there is a high correlation between these four topologies towards mall visitation. During the pandemic period, among the four shopping topologies, only entertainment and place attachment have a significant effect on mall visitation while others have no significant effect.

Significance of the study

Shopping mall is one of the best retail formats which attract a greater number of people from all segments irrespective of the gender, age, education, occupation and income level etc., by delivering maximum customer satisfaction. Consumers are now showing a strong attachment to shopping malls which provides a wide variety of all the required products under one roof.

The present study holds significant importance in understanding the evolving mall culture in Calicut, a city that has witnessed rapid urbanization and lifestyle transformation in recent years. Shopping malls have emerged not only as retail spaces but also as centers for social interaction, leisure, and entertainment.

Scope of the study

Organized retailing has a tremendous growth in Kerala as seen in increasing number of malls, super markets, hypermarkets, retail chain stores, entertainment centers and food courts in various districts of the State. The scope of mall buying is spreading in Kerala due to high income and more consumption of different products. Shopping malls are developing in almost all districts of Kerala providing shopping, food and entertainment etc. all under one roof. We can see huge rush at shopping malls on weekends or holidays and on offer or special discount days. The scope of the study is restricted to shopping malls in Calicut and it covers the shopping behavior of consumers while visiting or making purchases from malls.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the shopping behavior of customers towards shopping malls in Calicut.

2. To identify the major reasons for visiting shopping malls in Calicut.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference between male and female customers with respect to factors of reasons for visiting shopping malls.

2. There is no significant difference between different age group of customers with respect to factors of reasons for visiting shopping malls.

Methodology

The study has been done through descriptive questionnaire survey, the data required for this research is collected from primary and secondary sources. A self-administered questionnaire was constructed to know the shopping behavior and customer satisfaction towards shopping malls in Calicut. The sample for the present study includes the customers of shopping malls. Samples of 200 respondents were selected by using convenience sampling.

Analysis and Findings

Shopping behavior analysis refers to the process of gathering data on the actions of customers in a retail environment, and then using that data to identify their buying preferences and patterns. The study of shopping behavior of mall customers contains the occasions when they go to the malls, reasons of their visit to the shopping mall, shopping day and time preferences, numbers of stores used to visit, average time spent in malls, mode of payment etc.

Table 1. Shopping behavior of customers

Sl. No	Statements (when customers are going for shopping)	Percentage	Ranks
1	When I need to buy something	29.8%	I
2	When I have extra money	14.0%	III
3	When I accompany friends	22.0%	II
4	When I am free	12.6%	IV
5	When I feel lonely	4.5%	VI
6	When I am in a down mood, I go shopping to make me feel better	3.7%	VII
7	When I feel shopping is a pleasant activity	10.1%	V
8	When I want to relieve stress	3.2%	VIII

Based on weighted average scores, the item one that 'When I need to buy something' is the most important time/occasion for customers going to purchase in shopping malls in Kerala followed by the items such as item number three that 'When I accompany friends', item two 'When I have extra money', item four 'When I am free', item seven 'When I feel shopping is a pleasant activity', item five 'When I feel lonely', item six 'When I am in a down mood, I go shopping to make me feel better', and item eight 'When I want to relieve stress'. It reveals that customers are going to purchase in shipping mall mainly for purchase something for their needs, at the same time they want to enjoy leisure with their friends or family.

Reasons for Visiting to the Shopping mall

Based on mean rank, 'Shopping' is the most important reason for customers going to shopping malls in Kerala followed by 'Spend leisure time', 'Meet friends', 'Watch movies from Multiplexes and other entertainment facilities', 'Visit an Eatery', 'Family outing', 'Attend parties or socialization' and 'Seeking status'. It reveals that customers are going to purchase in shopping mall mainly for shopping purpose and spend their leisure time.

Hypothesis I: There is no significant difference between male and female customers with respect to factors of reasons for visiting shopping malls.

Table 2 Gender of the customers and Reasons for visiting shopping malls

SI. No	Factors of 'Reasons for visiting shopping malls'	Gender of the customers		Mann Whiteny U test	P value
		Male	Female		
		Mean Rank	Mean Rank		
1.	Shopping	130.76	230.14	8344.0	<0.001
2.	Visit an Eatery	185.91	195.79	1645.5	0.382
3.	Meet friends	236.63	164.20	10786.0	<0.001
4.	Seeking status	205.05	183.87	15427.5	<0.001
5.	Attend parties or socialization	191.20	192.50	17228.0	0.904
6.	Family outing	143.21	222.39	10173.5	<0.001
7.	Spend leisure time	213.79	178.43	14143.0	<0.001
8.	Watch movies from Multiplexes and other entertainment facilities	235.51	164.90	10950.5	<0.001

Since P value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to the factors of 'why customers are going for shopping' that shopping, meet friends, seeking status, family outing, spend leisure time and watch movies from multiplexes and other entertainment facilities. Hence, there is significance difference between male and female customers with regard to the factors of 'why customers are going for shopping' that shopping, meet friends, seeking status, family outing, spend leisure time and watch movies from multiplexes and other entertainment facilities. Based on mean rank, shopping and family outing are more enjoyed by female customers. Meeting friends, seeking status, spending more leisure time and Watch movies from Multiplexes and other entertainment facilities are more enjoyed by male customers.

There is no significance difference between male and female customers with regard to the factors that Visit an Eatery and Attend parties or socialization, since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis accepted with regard to the factors that Visit an Eatery and Attend parties or socialization.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant difference between different age group of customers with respect to factors of reasons for visiting shopping malls.

Table 3 Age group of respondents and Reasons for visiting shopping malls

SI. No	Factors of 'Reasons for visiting shopping malls'	Age group of respondents			Kruskal Wallis test	P value
		Below 25	Between 25 to 40	Above 40		
		Mean & SD	Mean & SD	Mean & SD		
1.	Shopping	254.82	185.96	121.49	115.69	<0.001
2.	Visit an Eatery	208.14	217.04	147.29	30.252	<0.001
3.	Meet friends	133.11	171.13	284.63	131.90	<0.001
4.	Seeking status	183.07	191.21	203.68	5.222	0.073
5.	Attend parties or socialization	208.37	190.12	173.12	10.657	0.022
6.	Family outing	226.56	205.02	136.87	47.280	<0.001
7.	Spend leisure time	186.82	180.42	209.89	4.862	0.088
8.	Watch movies from Multiplexes and other entertainment facilities	138.33	197.04	252.35	71.938	<0.001

Since P value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to dimensions that Shopping, Visit an Eatery, Meet friends and Family outing and Watch movies from Multiplexes and other entertainment facilities. Hence there is significance difference between the different age group of mall customers with regard to the dimensions that Shopping, Visit an Eatery, Meet friends and Family outing and Watch movies from Multiplexes.

Since P value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regard to dimension that 'attend parties or socialization'. Hence there is significance difference between the different age group of mall customers with regard to the factor that attend parties or socialization. There is no significance difference between different age group of mall customers with regard to the factors that seeking status and spend leisure time, since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis accepted with regard to the factors that seeking status and spends leisure time.

Conclusion

A strong trend in favour of organized retail format is being witnessed in Kerala. The Kerala retail sector is undergoing through a transition phase. More and more players are venturing into the retail business in Kerala to introduce new attractive retail formats like malls, supermarkets, discount stores, departmental stores and even changing the traditional look of the bookstores, chemist shops and furnishing stores. Mall culture is growing in Kerala which accommodate every taste, style and pocket. Shopping malls with its major attractions like one stop destination, quality products with discounts and offers, multiplexes, food courts and other entertainment facilities etc. bring a new dimension to the shopping culture of Kerala.

Calicut is undergoing a transition characteristic of "mall-ification" seen in other Indian cities — a mix of opportunity (jobs, modern retail choices, leisure venues) and challenge (competitive pressure on small retailers, traffic, cultural shifts in public space use). The timing of LuLu's entry in Calicut indicates migration of large national players into tier-2 cities, accelerating the pace of change. Effective municipal planning and partnership between malls and local traders could mitigate negative externalities while capturing benefits for employment and urban vibrancy.

Reference

Books and journals
- Gibson G vedamani.(2011). Retail management. Mumbai: Jaico publishing, Fourth Edition.
- Deepak Chawla and Neena Sondhi. (2016). Reasearch Methodology. New Delhi: Vikas

publishing house Pvt. Ltd, Second edition.

- Philip Kotler.(2009). Marketing Management. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersely (India) Pvt . Ltd Pearson Education in South Africa,3'rd Edition.

- Astono, & Cynthia. (2014). The effect of Shopping mall'S Attributes towards Customer Satisfaction of ABC mall and XYZ mall. iBuss Management, 2(2), 99-106.

- Balakrishnan, & Geetha, R. (2015). Shopping Experience and Satisfaction of Out shoppers in Shopping malls in selected cities in Tamilnad. Inter continental Journal of Marketing Research Review, 3(5), 33-38.

- Chithralega, J. (2013). A Study on Influence of Shopping Motivation, Mall Atmoshere and Value Relationship with reference to Mega malls in Chennai. International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services and Management Research, 2(6), 145-150

- Gunasekharan, K. M., Hemalatha, K., & Ravichandran, K. (2009). Mall Visit Behavior of Older Generation - Y consumers. Serbian Journal of Management, 4(2), 169-182

- Khare, A. (2011). Mall Shopping Behaviour of Indian Small Town Consumers. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 18(1), 110-118.

- Oliandes, S., & Gunawan Hananie, M. (2022). Creating value for Mall customer : Analyzing mall strategy to attract visitation during Pandemic. European Journal of Business and Management Research, 103-107.

- Rathod Rajkumar, R. (2017). Attitude towards Mall Culture : An Empirical study. KAAV International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Business Management, 4(3), 70-76.

- Sharma, & Shivakumar, R. (2012). Customer Attitude Towards Shopping Malls in Mumbai. International Journal of Trade and Commerce, 1(2), 269-280.

- Sreeya, & Rukmani, B. (2019). Customer Perception towards Shopping in Malls in Chennai. International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering, 8(11), 3195-3197.

- Tripathi, S. K. (2023). The Rise of Indian Mall Culture and The Shopping Habits of the Middle Class. RR International Journal of Management, 2023.

Websites:

- www.wikipedia.org,
- Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in,
- www.tripadvisor.in,
- www.keralatourism.org