CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN MALLS – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO HYDERABAD CITY

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INTRODUCTION

Retail is the sale of goods to end users, not for resale, but for use and consumption by the purchaser. The word retail is derived from the French word retailer, meaning to cut a piece off or to break bulk. In simple terms, it implies a first –hand transaction with the customer. Retailing can be defines as the buying and selling of goods and services. Thus retailing can be said to be the interface between the producer and the individual consumer buying for personal consumption. This excludes direct interface between the manufacturers and institutional buyers such as the government and other bulk customers. Retailing is gradually inching its way towards becoming the next boom industry. The customer satisfaction process is a complex phenomenon. The purchase of goods or services includes a number of factors that could affect each decision. Customer satisfaction is more complex and even more important for retailers today than in past. The retailing sector in India has undergone significant transformation in the past ten years. Retailing is gradually inching its way towards becoming the next boom industry. The customer satisfaction process is a complex phenomenon. The purchase of goods or services includes a number of factors that could affect each decision. Customer satisfaction is more complex and even more important for retailers today than in past

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction measures how well the expectations of a customer concerning a product or service provided by your company have been met. **Customer satisfaction** is important because it provides marketers and business owners with a metric that they can use to manage and improve their businesses. Customer satisfaction is essential for business success in today's market place. **Customer satisfaction** is a marketing term that measures how products or services supplied by a company meet or surpass a **customer's** expectation.

Shopping Mall

A large retail complex containing a variety of stores and often restaurants and other business establishments housed in a series of connected or adjacent buildings or in a single large building. From the late 20th century, entertainment venues such as movie theaters and restaurants began to be added . In North America, Gulf countries, and India, the term shopping **mall** is usually applied to enclosed retail structures (and is generally abbreviated to simply **mall**), while shopping **centre** usually refers to open-air retail complexes; both **types** of facilities usually have large parking lots, face major traffic arterials, ...

TYPES OF MALLS - Neighborhood Center:

This center is designed to provide convenience shopping for the day-to-day needs of consumers in the immediate neighbourhood. A neighborhood center is typically a straight-line strip with no enclosed walkway or mall area.

Community Center

Community centers (or community malls) are larger than neighborhood centers, and offer a wider range of goods. They usually feature two anchor stores which are larger than that of a neighborhood center's, e.g. a discount department store. They may also follow a strip configuration, or may be L- or U-shaped. Community centers usually feature a retail area of 100,000 to 350,000 square feet (9,300 to 33,000 m2) and serve a primary area of 3 to 6 miles (4.8 to 9.7 km).

Regional Center

This center sells a full variety of general merchandise, mostly apparel. Its main attractions are its anchors; they are typically enclosed malls.

Superregional Center

This center is similar to the regional center, but it is larger with more anchors and carries a deeper selection of merchandise. Superregional centers draw from a larger population base. Typical configuration is enclosed with multilevel.

Fashion/Specialty Center

Fashion or specialty centers feature upscale apparel shops and boutiques and cater to customers with higher incomes. They

usually have a retail area ranging from 80,000 to 250,000 square feet (7,400 to 23,000 m2) and serve an area of 5 to 15 miles (8.0 to 24 km).

Power Center
Several large anchors, including discount department stores, off-price stores, warehouse clubs or "category killers" (stores that offer huge selection in particular merchandise categories at low prices) dominate. The center consists of several freestanding anchors and only a few, small specialty tenants.

Theme/Festival Center:
Theme or festival centers have distinct unifying themes that are followed by their individual shops as well as their architecture. They are usually located in urban areas and cater to tourists. They typically feature a retail area of 80,000 to 250,000 square feet (7,400 to 23,000 m2).

Outlet center
Outlet centers usually consist of manufacturers' outlet stores selling their own brands at a discount. They are found in rural or tourist locations. Typical outlet center designs include enclosed malls, a "village" cluster or a strip configuration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To identify the general profile and the buying habit of the customers of Malls in Hyderabad city.
2. To examine the expectations of the customers from the malls and find out how far they are satisfied.
3. To enquire into the various dimensions of service quality rendered by these malls
4. To measure the satisfaction level of the customer with regard to the various dimensions of service and to rank them.
5. To suggest suitable measures to augment the service quality of the malls.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK
The Retail Sector of Indian Economy is going through the phase of tremendous transformation. The retail sector of Indian economy is categorized into two segments such as organized retail sector and unorganized retail sector with the latter holding the larger share of the retail market. At present the organized retail sector is catching up very fast. The impact of the alterations in the format of the retail sector changed the lifestyle of the Indian consumers drastically. The evident increase in consumerist activity is colossal which has already chipped out a money making recess for the retail sector of Indian economy. With the onset of a globalized economy in India, the Indian consumer's psyche has been changed. People have become aware of the value of money. Nowadays the Indian consumers are well versed with the concepts about quality of products and services. These demands are the visible impacts of the Retail Sector of Indian Economy. Since the liberalization policy of 1990, the Indian economy, and its consumers are getting whiff of the latest national and international products, the with help of print and electronic media. The social changes with the rapid economic growth due to trained personnel's, fast modernization; enhanced availableness of retail space is the positive effects of liberalization.

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
- **Meenakshi Choudhary (2013)**[79] studied the growth of the retail sector in India with special study on the recently commissioned mall at Tier II city, Bhopal to know the consumers' sensitivity on the kind of shopping; to know the behaviour of customers on mall culture of Bhopal; to find out the adaptability of mall culture; and to analyze the consumer behaviour in the city of Bhopal. The data were collected from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data were collected by means of a questionnaire from 200 respondents. The findings of the study reveal that when customers' expectations are greater than their perceptions of the delivered service, they are dissatisfied and feel the quality of the retailer service is poor.
- **John William and Prabakar (2012)**[76] made an attempt to understand the factors influencing the shoppers' buying at the organized retailers; to study the customer perceptions on organized retailers; to study the promotional activities taken by the organized retailers; to provide suggestions to improve the services provided by the organized retailers. The primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and the consumers who visited the organized retail shop. The survey was carried out in the organized retail outlets in Coimbatore and a sample of 20 each from five retail outlets and totally of 100 respondents from the population selected randomly. The study reveals the perception of service quality influenced by the various natures with various customers even some of the general factors like personal interaction. Physical aspects are the dimensions on customer perception, which remains constant and is common to all customers on a majority basis. Hence, the retail outlets have to frame their own strategies in order to attract the customers on a longer basis
- **Verma and Madan (2011)** in a study conducted in Indian context highlighted that retailers are offering newer service dimensions to create unique shopping experiences for the customers. However, whether consumers are able to perceive newer service dimensions and getting affected for store patronage in new store formats or not, remains to be found out. They emphasized the fact that Indian retail environment is going through a sea change due to the introduction of new formats and opening up of retail industry, it becomes important to understand the store image perceptions of consumers here. The study attempted to find out the key factors that are perceived as important to Indian consumer in evaluation of a retail format.

- **Vipul Jain (2010)**62 explored the retail revolution in the Delhi Region. Some specific objectives of the study are: to identify the factors in revolution of retail; to identify the gender preference of retail departments; to find the existing customers of retail; and to explore the reasons behind attracting customers toward retail stores. Shoppers' Stop, Pantaloons, Westside, Ebony, Globus, Big Bazaar and Lifestyle are targeted through the survey by open ended and closed ended questionnaire. The method used for the collection of data was exploratory research and conclusive research which consists of secondary research and questionnaire design.It was realized that there can be various motivational factors that act as a driving force in the preference of retail stores. It was also realized that customer service is the strongest factor for both men and women. Customers of various age groups are also a deciding variable in customer services. They suggest that all retail activities and promotions should therefore aid the customers to make a decision. Hence, retailers needs to provide information, guarantees and after sales services to reduce the perception of risk.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study under the title, "Customer Satisfaction with regard to the service quality of Malls in Hyderabad city is an attempt to understand the various factors influencing the satisfaction level of the customer with regard to the various dimensions of service quality such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. A perfect parity between the services offered by seller and the services expected by the buyers is visit to make the transaction smooth and hassle free.so the services offered become an integral part of the marketing strategy of the firm. In this context it is imperative to make study on the satisfaction of customers towards malls in Hyderabad city .

3. METHODOLOGY

Both Primary data and Secondary data have been used for the study purpose. The primary data will be collected from the customers of shopping mall with the help of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared in such a way that they are simple and understandable so as to enable the respondents to express their views and opinions freely.

The secondary data has been collected by referring to journals, articles and magazines and various relevant websites.

4. STATISTICAL TOOLS

ANOVA and t-test, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, correlation and regression analysis , chi square test and Z test are the statistical tools that would be apply apart from the structure equation model

5. HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses were formulated
1. Satisfaction level varies with the age group of the respondents.
2. Higher the satisfaction level higher is the frequency of visit.
3. Higher the income, higher the satisfaction level of shoppers in the departmental stores.
4. Satisfaction level varies with the amount spent on purchase.
5. Satisfaction level varies with the persons/media through which the respondents got introduced to the shop.
6. The level of satisfaction in each of the dimensions varies with the respondent's reason for selecting a particular shop.
7. The attitude of customers towards shopping malls and overall customer satisfaction is positive.

6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study covers the extent of customer satisfaction regarding various service dimensions rendered by the Malls in Hyderabad city .In the prevailing globalized economic scenario the consumers have ample opportunities to select any shop for buying good quality products. In an acutely competitive atmosphere it is important and challenging for the retailers to attract the customers to sustain and to promote their business. Among the various aspects that build the rapport with the buyers and keep them in their fold , service quality is much more important than the technical or product quality . Hence the present study aims at bringing out the various aspects concerned with customer satisfaction which would surely serve a purpose for retailers to work out their service quality with regard to the various dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy .

7. PERIOD OF THE STUDY

Meaningful analysis cannot be undertaken unless data is available for atleast 5 to 10 years Hence attempt would be made to cover for the years 2010-2015

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- As the study is confined to the respondents of Hyderabad district, this research is applicable to Hyderabad district only and therefore the findings of this research study cannot be extended to other areas.
- Primary Data have been collected using the questionnaire and therefore study is limited to the data collected.
- Time and cost are the factors which have limited the size of sample

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