Customer Mall Shopping Behavior: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

The present study attempts to bring together the observations and findings of research studies related to shopping behavior of mall customers. It is based on the review of existing literature and Bibliometric Analysis. It also gives details about the significance of the work done by researchers in this field. The study has two parts. In the first part, different types of factors, including the mall attributes, personal/individual factors and situational factors have been explained. The independent and dependent variables have been presented separately, where the dependent variables include time spent, money spent, out-shopping behavior and re-patronage intention. The second part of the paper contains citation analysis, which is a commonly used technique of bibliometric analysis. This section gives details regarding the most important research papers(based on the number of times they have been cited), details about journals referred and also regarding the author-wise citations(in order to find out the most influential authors).The paper not only evaluates, synthesizes and highlights the gaps in the existing literature, but also portrays the research directions for future studies.

Keywords: Mall attributes, personal factors, Situational factors, consumer shopping behavior, Bibliometrics.

1. Introduction

Over past decade, there has been a drastic change in the retailing sector in India. The number of malls in India has increased from just 50 in the year 2005 to 470 the in year 2013 and is further expected to increase to 720 by the year 2016 (Hindustan Times, Oct. 23, 2013).The mall culture has gifted people with a place where they can shop, eat, meet friends, watch movies and have fun. Visit to malls has actually become a sort of leisure activity.

The acceptability of malls as a shopping place can be attributed to various factors including convenience, increasing inclination of Indian shoppers towards lifestyle shopping, increased product variety and demand for improved service quality and so on. (Goswami & Nath, 2011). Customers consider malls as a place for entertainment, enjoyment and relaxation. They feel that malls not only fulfill their primary shopping needs, but also give them maximum cost, time and place utility (Khare, 2011). In a study by Trivedi, and Puri, (2013) more than 50% of the respondents thought of malls as their favorite shopping destination. The availability of various product categories under one roof, convenience, availability of entertainment facilities and the air-conditioned environment of the malls motivate consumers to prefer malls for shopping instead of other formats (Banerjee & Dasgupta, 2010).

However, despite a rapid increase in the number of malls and various efforts to attract customers, many of the Indian malls face problems of vacancies, reduced footfalls and increased losses. As per KPMG survey (2009), 2008 had been a very depressing year for the organized retailers as footfalls as well as the conversion ratio declined to a great extent due to global financial crisis. As per survey findings, most of the malls failed due to poor retail space allotment to the retailers, inadequate design and poor mall location.

Thus, just establishing a building and having multiple retail stores in it, may not give profits to the mall owners or even to the retail stores. A serious thought has to be given as to what affects a customer's decision of choosing a retail store and what factors ultimately affects their buying behavior. The present study thus tries to highlight the significant research work relating to the factors affecting footfalls and shopping behavior of the mall customers, get an insight about the authors and research studies that have been most influential in shaping the direction of research work in this field.

2. Research Methodology

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, 36 articles and dissertations have been reviewed. Various online databases and search engines including Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Science Direct, Springer Link, Palgrave and Taylor and Francis have been surfed for the

purpose of review. A total of 20 journals, three thesis/ dissertations and one conference proceeding have been referred to. The citation analysis has been done by using 'Publish or Perish' citations software program that retrieves raw academic citations using Google Scholar and then analyze them and calculates a series of citation metrics. The h-index of the Journals has been taken from Google Scholar.

For the purpose of finding out the most influential authors in the given research field, a period from 1973 to 2013 has been chosen, since all the research papers referred to in this study lay within this time period. The key words 'mall atmospherics', 'mall attributes' and 'situational factors in shopping' were used in the software to get the details about all the research papers of the chosen author, related to the chosen field and within the chosen time period, along with the details of the total citations, citations per paper, citations per author and citations per author per year. Some of the analysis has also been done through e-views.

3. Review of the Pertinent Literature

Till now, a large number of research studies have been undertaken in the area of shopping behavior of mall customers. This section brings to light, a synthesis of these studies. It highlights the major factors that attract customers towards shopping malls and affect their buying decisions. The independent and dependent variables have been presented separately.

3.1 Independent variables

Based on the review, the following factors affecting customers' shopping behavior are identified.

3.1.1 Mall attributes

Physical facilities: The physical appearance of a mall may be the first thing that attracts customers. A study by Khare and Rakesh (2010) showed that the most important factors leading to increased footfalls in malls are its physical ambience, entertainment facilities, services like parking, and amusement centers for kids, etc. Also, the variety of stores and presence of multiplexes and anchor stores are very important factors. Taneja (2007) has observed that the presence of an anchor store or a magnet store in a mall can be a major source of customer attraction. Ghosh, Tripathi, and Kumar, (2010) observed that mall's location and layout, number of brands offered, clean physical facilities, use of modern equipments, convenience,

discounts offered and superior customer services help in increasing footfalls. Although, location plays an important role in the mall's choice decision, but it is not necessary that people always tend to visit nearby malls, rather attractive malls may catch more footfalls even when they are at a greater distance from customers' home or their workplaces as compared to unattractive malls (Drezner, 2006).

Visual merchandising: Once a customer has entered a mall, many factors simultaneously work to create an impression on him. Out of these factors, visual display plays a very dominating role. Kim (2003) studied the impact of various dimensions of visual merchandising on impulsive buying and found that form/mannequin display and promotional signage had a significant impact on impulse buying, whereas, window display and floor merchandising did not appear to be significant factors. Pillai, et al. (2011) observed that within the visual merchandising, orderly arrangement of products, graphics and signage and illumination, etc. play a vital role in motivating customers to purchase products from any store. Researchers like Sadeghi, and Bijandi, (2011) have opined that the mall environment and the quality, appearance and packaging of the products to gether result in increased sales. Brand availability, quality of products, advertisement, promotional offers and facilities at the mall, influence the buying decision of the customers (Bansal& Bansal, 2012). Madhavi, and Leelavati, (2013) found that the merchandise colors, presentation style and lighting, etc. strongly influence the buying decision.

Atmospherics: The review shows that Kotler, (1973) has been the pioneer in stressing on the importance of atmospherics on shopping behavior of customers. Kotler, (1973) explained the importance of atmospherics in different industries and designed a causal chain showing the effect of atmosphere on the purchase probability. Many studies have been done specifically on the role of music and scent on the shoppers. Michon, Chebat, and Turley, (2003) checked the interaction effect of scent and density level on perception of mall attributes and observed that ambient scent had a positive impact on perception of mall attributes only at medium retail density level, whereas at low or high density levels, the moderating effects became negative. Morrin, and Chebat, (2005) found that impulsive shoppers were more positively affected by the presence of background music, whereas presence of a pleasant ambient scent had a more positive impact on

contemplative shoppers. Turley, and Milliman, (2000) did a review of sixty studies and observed that most of the researchers had focused on the internal atmospheric cues only and not much work had been done in the field of exterior variables. The researchers used the Berman and Evans (1995) model as a base and added up one new dimension of human variables to it.

Entertainment facilities: Many researchers worked on the importance of entertainment facilities in enhanc- ing the shopping experience of shoppers. Haynes, and Talpade, (1996) found that family entertainment centers play a vital role in attracting those customers who visit malls with their families and whose primary objective is entertainment. They also added that these customers tend to spend extra time in food courts and other mall stores. However, Christianse, Comer, Feinberg, and Rinne, (1999) found that although mall entertainment value had positive relation with the fre- quency of visit, with percentage of shopping and time spent on browsing, but it had no significant relation with number of items purchased and sales per square foot. Thus, it follows that availability of entertainment facilities may lead to increased foot- falls, but may not necessarily guarantee increased sales.

Crowding: Crowding has also been found to have an impact on the customers. Researchers have dis- tinguished between human crowding and spatial crowding. It has been observed that human crowd- ing mostly has a positive impact on the customers and they are more attracted towards those retail stores which one more crowded. On the other hand, spatial crowding has a negative impact on the customers because shopping becomes somewhat inconvenient (Graa, & Dani-elKebir, 2011).

Other Mall related Factors: Apart from the above, other factors, including discounts, staff attitude, store design, in-store promotions and retail services cape too have been found to have significant positive relation with impulsive buying (Chaturvedi, 2013). Wai,(2009) found that the top three reasons affecting customers' revisit intention include: Tenant mix and leisure attractions, location /accessibility and cus- tomer services. The researcher also found a positive relation between marketing strategy and customer satisfaction and retention.

3.1.2   *Personal characteristics and shopping motives*

A mall may offer a lot of services, entertainment facilities or product offerings, etc. However, the extent to which these factors influence the customers what? shall depend upon their personal characteristics, shopping motives and other situational factors. The researchers have not only tried to list out the factors influencing customers' decision making process, but have also tried to differentiate among these customers on the basis of their demographics or psychographics etc.

Various personal factors include:

- Personal values: Some of the researchers have ob- served that the perception about retail attributes is dependent upon various factors, including personal values which directly affects customers' attitude and further their shopping behavior. In this direction, Shim, and Eastlick, (1998) found that customers who give more importance to social affiliation and self- actualization are more likely to have a positive attitude towards mall attributes.

- Shopping motives: The effect of atmospherics may also depend upon the shoppers' type and their motives. Babin, Darden, and Griffin,(1994) have explained both the "dark side" and the "fun side" of shopping through two types of perceived shop- ping values i.e. utilitarian and hedonic shopping.Patel, and Sharma, (2009) listed nine types of shopping moti- vations under the main heads of hedonic and utili- tarian shopping. Arnold, and Reynolds, (2003) used cluster analysis to segment the adult shoppers into five shopper segments named as Minimalists, the Gatherers, the Providers, the Enthusiasts, and the Traditionalists, based on their hedonic shopping motivations.

- Demographics: Massicotte, et al., (2011) have ob- served that adults and youngsters do not interpret the atmospheric cues in the same manner. Thus, two different sections i.e. 'teen friendly' and 'adult' sec- tions can be developed by the malls to deal with the differing needs of these customers and to form a positive impression on their minds. Massicotte, Michon, and Chebat (2008) found that youngsters are usually more influenced by the attractive dis- plays and product offers, whereas experienced adults give more importance to the functional attributes like quality of products, etc. Trivedi and Puri (2013) have found that men are more influenced by the entertainment aspects, whereas women form a positive attitude towards shopping if they get

value and services. Tiwari, and Abraham, (2010) found the dimensions of aesthetics and exploration to be most influential reasons in a customer's decision to visit a mall. They found that youngster's visited malls more for escape and socialization as compared to older people.

3.1.3   Situational variables

Situational factors are the factors that exist at that point of time when a customer is actually into the act of shopping. Belk, (1974, 1975) categorized the situational variables into five types: physical surroundings, social surroundings, temporal perspective, task definition and antecedent state and focused on the role of these factors on shopping behavior of customers. It has also been observed by researchers that the presence of others (companions) may significantly affect the time and money spent on shopping. Customers who come with children, early shoppers, shoppers who visit on weekends, shoppers do without make shopping lists and take impulsive shoppers are likely to spend more money and time on shopping (Anic & Radas, 2006).

3.2 Variables of the study

Researchers have tried to find out the impact of the above factors on various components of consumer behavior including time spend in the mall, money spent, out-shopping behavior, subsequent mall choice etc. According to Wakefield and Baker, (1998), the variables including tenant variety, design and décor factors, level of shopping involvement etc. significantly affect the customers' excitement and desire to stay. Where on one hand, mall attributes help in creating an enjoyable shopping experience, it has been found that shopping enjoyment further leads to re-patronage intentions and negatively effects out-shopping behavior (Hart, Ferrell, Stachow, Reed, & Cadogan, 2007). Haytko and Baker, (2004) framed a conceptual model showing the effect of individual characteristics (including education and trend consciousness), mall characteristics (including comfort, safety, retail mix, accessibility and atmosphere) and the situational influences (companion and buying motive) on the mall experiences. They found that all these factors affect time spent, purchase intentions, out- shopping as well as subsequent mall choice.

4.   Bibliometric Analysis (Citation Analysis)

According to Berger and Baker, (2014), bibliometric analysis is a very useful tool to evaluate and assess the impact of a published research work within a discipline and citation analysis is one of the most commonly used tools within Bibliometric Analysis.

The second objective of this paper has been met with the help of the analysis presented in this section. It shows the citation details of major research papers along with the details of the journals referred and the author impact analysis.

4.1 Citation details of research papers referred

Citation counts of any research article is considered as an objective means to measure the impact and value of that particular article in the research field (http: / / www.editage.com). Thus, it has been used in this study to find out the most important works form the various articles referred to. The citation data for all the articles has been collected from 'Publish or Perish' citation software. Then, by using e-views, it has been arranged in descending order of the citations per year. Also, in the e-views, simple descriptive have been calculated to find out the total number of citations and the maximum and minimum number of citations.

The top five papers as per the citations per year include those by Babin et al. (1994) (139.70 citations), Arnold and Reynolds (2003) (76.73 cites), Turley and Milliman (2000) (70 cites), Wakefield and Baker (1998) (42 cites) and Kotler (1973) (41 cites). Also, the research paper by Turley and Milliman (2000) has the highest h-index or 3.

4.2 Details of Journals Referred

The following table gives the list of the journals and the number of articles referred from each of that journal. A separate column for the h-index of the journal has also been added. (Table 1)

*h5-index is the h-index for the articles published in the last five complete years. It is the largest number of h such that h articles published in 2009-13 have at least h citations each (www.scholar.google.com, retrieved as on July 25, 2014).

The table 1 shows that maximum number of research papers i.e. five, have been taken from the Journal of Retailing. From all the other journals, either one or two papers each have been consulted for the review. Journal of Business Research has the highest h5-index of 62, followed by Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Retailing and others.

Table 1: List of journals, number of articles referred and journal's h-index

	Journal	Number of Articles	H5-index
1.	Journal of Retailing	5	34
2.	Journal of Consumer Research	2	51
3.	Journal of Shopping Center Research	2	-
4.	Journal of Business Research	2	62
5.	Journal of Retail and Leisure Property	3	-
6.	Journal of Marketing Research	1	50
7.	Advances in Consumer Research	1	9
8.	Journal of Service Research	1	32
9.	IMA Journal of Management Mathematics	1	12
10.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	1	30
11.	International Journal of Management and Strategy	1	-
12.	The IUP Journal of Marketing Management	1	-
13.	Middle East Journal of Scientific Research	1	6
14.	International Journal of Marketing and Technology	1	-
15.	Serbian Journal of Managemnet	1	9
16.	International Journal of Marketing Research and Business Strategy	1	-
17.	Indian Journal of Marketing	1	-
18.	EkonomskiPregled	1	6
19.	Adhayan	1	-
20.	The Service Industries Journal	1	30

Source: Google Scholar (2014)

4.3 Authors Impact Analysis

This section gives all the details about the most influential 10 authors, whose works have been highly cited by other researchers. The ranking has been done on the basis of the citations per author per year. The reason for finding per author per year citations is that few papers have been written by single author, some by two authors and still others by more than two authors. Similarly, the years in which particular papers have been published also vary a lot. Thus, ranking on this basis becomes comparable more meaningful. The table 2 covers the details for the number of research papers of the particular author in this field, within the time frame of the year 1973- 2014. The information covered includes: the total number of papers of the author relating the research area, the total citations, citations per year, citations per author, citations per author per year and the h-index. (Table 2)

5. Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

Understanding customer behavior has never been an easy task, be it in the case of traditional unorganized market or today's organized market. with the inception of malls, this scene also has become more complex.

Though malls attract footfalls, they are not able to generate the revenues at par with the increasing footfalls. Thus, there is a need to understand that factors that affect footfalls and the factors that affect the final buying decision may not be the same

e.g. availability of entertainment facilities may attract customers to visit malls but cannot guarantee increased sales. It may be the product quality, visual display, affordable prices, etc., which may help in furthering the sales. The existing literature lacks this type of distinction. Thus, there exists a need for some theory development for the same. For this, three categories of variables may be formed: factors affecting footfalls, factors affecting sales, and factors affecting both footfalls as well as sales.

It has been further observed that there is a need for a clear conceptualization of certain factors. Researchers have conceptualized taken situational factors differently. Some have taken them as all the factors that exist at the time of visiting and shoping from malls including the physical factors, the layout, personnel behavior, time available etc., whereas, others have taken physical factors and other malls attributes

Table 2: Details of work of top ten authors as per cites per year per author

Author	Papers	Citations	Years	Cites Per Paper	Cites Per Author	Cites Per Author Per Year	H-index
1. Babin	6	3851	20	641.83	1407.83	70.39	6
2. Reynolds, K. E.	4	1243	12	310.75	554.58	46.21	4
3. Chebat	21	1299	12	61.86	545.89	45.49	14
4. Arnold, M. J.	2	1021	11	510.5	466.25	42.38	2
5. Turley	6	1612	20	268.67	770.5	38.52	6
6. Baker, J.	7	2371	20	338.71	729.5	36.47	6
7. Michon	19	976	11	51.37	399.48	36.31	10
8. Morin	4	158	9	39.5	75.16	8.35	4
9. Kim, J.	3	147	11	49	84	7.63	3
10. Haytko	2	196	14	98	98	7	2

Source: Publish or Perish software

separately and have considered situational factors as only comprising of variables such as time available, money available, antecedent state etc. Thus, there needs to be a single criterion for defining such type of variables.

This study is a review based study and the observations are based upon the findings of other researchers and not on the basis of any primary data. In future, some empirical research can be taken up to find out as to what extent a combination of these variables affects the shopping behavior.

The citation analysis has further helped to find out the importance of research papers in the field of mall attraction and shopping behavior.

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