



## Customer Perception Towards Fun Republic Mall in Coimbatore City

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### ABSTRACT

Shopping has become an integral part of our everyday life in our society. It is not merely utilitarian shopping, but often also hedonic shopping. It is a necessity and at the same time, shopping puts forth of joy and pleasure. People shop for various underlying reasons. Some merely go to shops to purchase goods, whilst others use it as a means of socialization and for an emotional boost. Shopping malls contribute to business more significantly than traditional markets, which are viewed as a simple convergence of supply and demand. Shopping malls attract buyers and sellers, and attract customers, providing enough time to make choices as well as a recreational means of shopping. However, competition between malls, congestion of markets and traditional shopping centers has led mall developers and management to consider alternative methods to build excitement in customers. The study also arrived at characteristics of a mall that people consider while visiting the mall which are Overall Attractiveness, Amenities & Atmospherics, Personnel, Shopping Ease and Convenience. The present study covers customers' perception towards fun republic mall in Coimbatore. The study reveals that the customers' perception towards their purchasing pattern and their perception towards fun republic mall and to give suggestion to improve the satisfaction level of fun republic mall in future.

### KEYWORDS

Shopping, society, entertainment, hedonic, traditional markets, customers' perception

### INTRODUCTION

The first shopping center was built in 1896 at Roland Park, Baltimore, Maryland. One of the world's largest shopping centers is the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta (Canada) which covers 5.2 million square feet (480 thousand square meters) on a 121 acre (49 hectares) site. It has 828 stores and services with parking for 20 thousand vehicles.

One of the earliest examples of public shopping malls comes from Ancient Rome where shopping markets were located. One of the earliest public shopping centers is Trajan's Market in Rome located in Trajan's Forum. Trajan's Market was probably built around 100-110 AD by Apollodorus of Damascus and is thought to be the world's oldest shopping center and a forerunner for the shopping mall.

The first Shopping Mall in India is the Spencer Plaza (Chennai, TN), the modern Mall started operations as early as 1991, when much bigger cities like Mumbai and Delhi did not have a modern mall. The name comes from an old Chennai landmark, the Spencer Store, which was razed to the ground (in a fire accident) after 150 years of operations in Mount Road. The Plaza was opened for business in 1991, and it was named after the Spencer bookstore.

The Fun Republic is located in Prime Location of Coimbatore at Avinashi Road in Peelamedu with 300 feet wide Frontage. This place was earlier owned by National Textile Corporation (NTC). Construction began in March 2008 and completed in August 2012. Fun Republic Mall/Cinema Theatre Complex, promoted by E-City Ventures. It is located on the arterial Avinashi Road on a 3.5-acre site. The mall has 6 levels with a total area of 5.25 lakh sq.ft. Shoppers Stop is its anchor store and occupies over 79,000 sq. ft. The mall also features a five-screen multiplex operated by Fun Cinemas with a capacity of 1,119 seats and a McDonald's restaurant spread over 3,470 sq. ft on two floors in addition to its food court.

Coimbatore is bracing itself for the formal opening of the second mall in the city — Fun Republic — from E-City Ven-

tures of the Essel Group. The mall brings together some of the hottest names in the retail sector — Shoppers Stop, Reliance group, a host of other retail brands like Lee, Anita Dongre, Gocolors and fast food giant McDonald's, KFC etc., from different business segments.

The young adults today are traveled, discerning and demanding when it comes to their lifestyle needs. The Fun Republic is focused on serving these needs - be it entertainment, fine-dining and shopping mall at one point. The Fun Republic consists of multiple cinema screens with varied capacities, departmental stores, food courts, fine dining restaurants, music and gift shops, gaming, boutique business hotel and other lifestyle retail options.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's environment, many shopping complexes came into existence and plays a vital role in marketing strategy. Fun Republic Mall being modern shopping complex having everything under one roof may attract the customers easily and make them buy. They are selling the products like grocery items, clothes, fruits and vegetables, cosmetic items, sports items, kitchen items and consumer durables etc.

People have to spend more time if they have to visit a different retail outlet for buying various types of products. Since they are busy they wish to spend their money effectively. Coming to the shopping mall is not only for a shopping, it's also a place for an entertainment to the children's and now in this stressful environment, people mostly like to spend their time in malls for their relaxation and at the mean time take to make a purchase in malls. So this study is aimed to know the customer attitude towards the products and service offered by Fun Republic Mall in Coimbatore city.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the purchasing pattern of respondents and their perception towards shops in Fun Republic Mall.
- To identify the factors that influence customers to visit Fun Republic Mall.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Recently, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of shopping malls in Coimbatore. Normally people prefer a sophisticated environment and a number of shops with so many international brands under one roof. It has created the way for the establishment of the shopping malls. The concept of shopping malls in India is largely gaining popularity as it attracts customers by way of excellent ambiance, style and elegance having the potential to make one shop and enjoy the experience as well. Fun Republic Mall, Big Bazaar, Brooke Fields are the big players today in Coimbatore. This study focuses mainly the respondents' perception toward Fun Republic Mall operating in the Coimbatore city.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The researcher has undertaken a descriptive type of research. It describes the characteristics of population or presentation of answers for the question like whom, what, where, when and how it is relating to a field or matter. This study will present the state of affairs that exists. This type of study mainly helps to know the present and to predict the future.

**Source of data and Tools for analysis**

The primary data for the study have been collected through structured questionnaire. Likert scaling questions close ended questions and multiple choice questions were incorporated in the questionnaire. The data has been collected from 100 sample respondents of Coimbatore city who are visiting Fun Republic Mall. The collected data had been properly tabulated and the data has been analyzed with simple percentage analysis, chi-square and ranking analysis.

**LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

The study is limited to the customers' expectations and perceptions towards their purchasing pattern and the samples are collected only from Fun Republic Mall, and hence preference of mall cannot be generalized.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Wakefield and Baker (2004)** found in the study that architectural design of the mall was the dimension which contributed the most to the mall excitement, while a mall's interior design had the strong influence on customers' desires to stay longer in the mall. The study also found a positive and strong relationship between the mall's layout and desire to stay/mall excitement. This tells us that customers not only evaluate the product assortments inside the mall but they also do look for the intangibles that the mall offers like colors, ambiance, fragrance, lighting and music.

**Turley and Milliman (2008)** demonstrated the existence to a strong link between the retail atmosphere and sales the various atmosphere stimuli including product display, shelf space, and music seems to have conjured positive perception of product range and quality, which will ultimately increase sales.

**Purns (2012)** in his article pointed out that a number of dilemmas for consumers are create shopping companions like additional definition (encouragement, discouragement, and distractions) of products money, users as well as their concerns with the identities and ensuring relationships implied by the presence of their companies.

From the above reviews it has been studied about the shopping mall environment, eclipse, retail atmosphere towards their motive on increasing the sales, and also describes retailers organized sectors in order to attract the foreign investments. This study reveals about the customers' perception towards their brand preference with pricing level, and overall decades of Fun Republic Mall in Coimbatore city.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**CUSTOMERS PURCHASING PATTERN**

Demographic factor	Characteristics	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
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Visit of Fun Republic Mall	Once in a Week	11	11
	Twice in a Week	22	22
	Once in a Month	45	45
	Occasionally	22	22
Reason for coming to Fun Republic Mall	Shopping	33	33
	Entertainment	56	56
	Party/ Celebration	11	11
Time spend in Fun Republic Mall	1 Hour	12	12
	1-2 Hour	42	42
	2-3 Hour	33	33
	More than 3 Hours	13	13
Purchase of product	On the basis of brand	20	20
	Price	21	21
	Quality	24	24
	Offers	34	34
	Others	1	1
Amount spend	Up to Rs.500	8	8
	Rs. 501-1000	36	36
	Rs. 1001-2000	42	42
	Rs. 2001-5000	10	10
	Above Rs.5000	4	4
Mode of payment	Cash	60	60
	Credit	13	13
	Both	27	27
Purchase on	Apparels	18	18
	Electronics	6	6
	Gift Items	30	30
	Food Items	42	42
	Others	4	4

From this table out of 100 respondents, 45% of the respondents visit mall in once a month, it could be inferred that 56% of the respondents are coming to Fun Republic Mall for the purpose of entertainment, 42% of the respondents spend their time on per visit is 1-2 hour, 34% of the respondents purchased a product based upon offers, 42% of the respondents spent their amount on per visit is Rs.1001-2000, 60% of the respondents made a payment on cash, 42% of the respondents normally purchased food items,

**TABLE SHOWING LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ABOUT FUN REPUBLIC MALL**

S. No	FACTORS	No. OF RESPONDENTS					TOTAL
		HS	S	NSNDS	DS	HDS	
1	Price	6	39	42	7	6	100
2	Quantity	16	59	18	7	0	100
3	Availability	11	68	17	4	0	100
4	Service	13	42	39	6	0	100
5	Customer treatment	11	50	35	4	0	100
6	Shopping space	28	44	23	3	2	100
7	Atmosphere	44	31	17	6	2	100
8	Uniformity	23	52	20	3	2	100
9	Parking space	30	45	18	6	1	100
10	Special offers	13	42	34	7	4	100
11	Ambiance	6	40	46	8	0	100
12	Display of the product	16	62	17	4	1	100

13	Billing method	18	55	21	5	1	100
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From the above table out of 100 respondents it is clearly understood that 42% of the respondents are neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied with the price, 59% of the respondents are satisfied with the quantity, 68% of the respondents are satisfied with the availability, 42% of the respondents are satisfied with the service, 50% of the respondents are satisfied with customer treatment, 44% of the respondents are satisfied with shopping space, 44% of the respondents are satisfied with atmosphere, 52% of the respondents are satisfied with uniformity, 45% of the respondents are satisfied with parking space, 42% of the respondents are satisfied with special offer, 46% of the respondents are neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied with the ambiance, 62% the respondents are satisfied with the display of product, 55% of the respondents are satisfied with the billing method.

**FACTORS INFLUENCING RESPONDENTS TO VISIT FUN REPUBLIC MALL**

S. No	FACTORS	MEAN	RANK
1	Attracted by advertisement	10.231	III
2	Availability of all goods under one roof	9.616	IX
3	Quality of goods	9.851	IV
4	Reasonable price	8.529	X
5	Exposure to new trends and fashion	9.724	VII
6	Special offers	11.680	I
7	Large choice	9.815	V
8	Fun and entertainment	11.064	II
9	Better service and facilities	9.797	VI
10	Good place for family shopping	9.688	VIII

While ranking the factors which influenced the respondents for their visit to Fun Republic Mall, offering special offers is the factors ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, fun and entertainment is the factor ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, attracted by advertisement is the factor ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, quality of goods is the factor ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, large choice is the factors ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, better service and facilities is the factors ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, exposure to new trends and fashion is the factors ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, good place for family shopping is the factors ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, availability of all goods under one roof is the factors ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, and reasonable price is the factors ranked 10<sup>th</sup>.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST -AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR VISIT TO FUN REPUBLIC MALL**

**Hypothesis:** H<sub>0</sub> There is no significant association between age of the respondents and their visit to Fun Republic Mall.

S. No	FACTOR	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DEGREE OF FREEDOM	TABLE VALUE	ACCEPTED/ REJECTED
1	Age/visit to Fun Republic Mall	1.66	6	12.59	Accepted

**Significant value-0.05**

**Inference**

The table value is greater than the chi-square value. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant association between age of the respondents and their visit to Fun Republic Mall.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST -INCOME LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS AND PURCHASING PATTERN**

**Hypothesis:** H<sub>0</sub> There is no significant association between income level of the respondents and their influence on purchasing the pattern in Fun Republic Mall.

S. NO	FACTORS	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DEGREE OF FREEDOM	TABLE VALUE	ACCEPTED/ REJECTED
1	Income/purchasing pattern	1.758	12	21.03	Accepted

S. NO	FACTOR	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DEGREE OF FREEDOM	TABLE VALUE	ACCEPTED/ REJECTED
1	Income/purchasing pattern	1.758	12	21.03	Accepted

**Significant value-0.05**

**Inference**

The table value is greater than the chi-square value. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant association between income level of the respondents and their influence on purchasing the pattern in Fun Republic Mall.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST - EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ON QUALITY**

**Hypothesis:** H<sub>0</sub> There is no significant association between education qualifications of the respondents and the level of satisfaction on the quality of the products purchased.

S. NO	FACTOR	CHI-SQUARE VALUE	DEGREE OF FREEDOM	TABLE VALUE	ACCEPTED/ REJECTED
1	Educational qualification/quality	1.884	9	16.92	Accepted

**Significant value-0.05**

**Inference**

The table value is greater than the chi-square value. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant association between education qualifications of the respondents and the level of satisfaction on the quality of the products purchased.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the customer's perception towards Fun Republic Mall, the customers preference towards the availability of brands in the retail market. The customer's brand preference may vary from one person to another person. Since the customers do not prefer same brands of products, they need a variance. So, different branded outlets can be opened to offer a wider choice to the customers. The study reveals the most of the customers stay for a long time in the shop and make a purchase. This will enable the customers to visit the shop frequently, make a continuous purchase. Hence, it is suggested to the Fun Republic Mall to make use of the opportunities in an efficient manner by motivating them future. It is found that customers considered the high pricing as the important problems in the purchase. It is suggested to reduce the price and meet the affordability of customers; otherwise, it will have varied impact on customers.

**CONCLUSION**

Going to a mall is also a social event that offers entertainment and leisure. When visited in shopping malls, it offers enjoyment. Attractive window displays, customer greetings, and special mall sales all plays a part in luring customers into spending money. The influence of consumer culture, peoples' attitude, and lifestyle has changed dramatically over the last decades. They want to lead a comfort/cozy life at any cost. Consequently, they visit shopping malls very frequently.

It is concluded that presently there is a trend of considerable increase of shopping malls in all the metro cities, small towns and a large section of the middle-class, upper-middle-class people are coming for shopping because of the customers' convenience for shopping. Items from food to clothing, grocery to electronics are available under one roof, better environment and improved customer service, competitive price with seasonal discount various gift scheme, various options to the customer for choosing brand and variety, ample scope of promoting sales and enhance brand image, availability of parking space for their car and the scope of employment at local area for various segment.

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