



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Commerce

A STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN SHOPPING MALLS

KEY WORDS: Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Shopping Malls

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ABSTRACT

In a mall shopping environment, customers are not only evaluating product quality, but also service quality and its effective delivery. With an increasing degree of homogeneity between product and service offerings, shopping malls are concentrating on the delivery of effective services to customers that make malls competitive. The results show that there is significant difference between socio-economic profile of customers and their perception on service quality of shopping malls. The physical aspects, personal interaction and reliability dimensions have positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction at one per cent level, while, policy dimension has positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction at five per cent level. The proper trainings should be given to employees for updating their knowledge about products, brands and services of shopping malls and they must be consistently courteous with customers. The shopping malls must be clean, attractive and convenient public areas. The shopping malls must ensure error-free sales transactions and records and availability of merchandise.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, customers prefer shopping malls that give a different experience in terms of their physical features and value addition to products and services of retailers. Shopping mall must create shopping experience that is suitable to customers for both economic benefit and emotional benefit created by the customers (Williams, 2006). Therefore, shopping malls have to adopt efficient marketing strategies and they have to meet and give attention towards all the features of shopping malls that provide unique shopping experience to their customers (Singh and Prashar, 2013). With the shifting idea of shopping mall itself, shopping mall at present is not just a market place for customer to purchase products and services, but it is expected to be the place for social interactions. Therefore, shopping mall needs to meet the expectations of new customers in shopping environment in order to be competitive (Kim et al, 2005). There are various features within the shopping malls that should be taken care of and those will influence the mall image and performance of shopping malls.

In a mall shopping environment, customers are not only evaluating product quality, but also service quality and its effective delivery. With an increasing degree of homogeneity between product and service offerings, shopping malls are concentrating on the delivery of effective services to customers that make malls competitive (Ellram et al, 1999). Keeping satisfaction of customers is the critical aspect for shopping malls as they function in a stiff competitive retailing environment. Hence, the present research is made to study service quality and customer satisfaction in shopping malls in Chennai city.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Chennai city has been selected for the present study. The customers of shopping malls are chosen through convenience sampling method. The data are collected from 775 customers of shopping malls through structured questionnaire. To know the socio-economic profile customers of shopping malls, the frequency and percentage analysis have been worked out. The mean and standard deviation have been worked out for service quality dimensions of shopping malls. To examine the difference between socio-economic profile of customers and their perception on service quality of shopping malls, the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) has been done. To study the impact of service quality dimensions of shopping malls on customer satisfaction, the multiple regression analysis has been carried out.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF CUSTOMERS OF SHOPPING MALLS

The socio-economic profile customers of shopping malls was

analyzed and the results of are presented in Table-1. The results show that 55.87 per cent of customers of shopping malls are males and the remaining of 45.29 per cent of customers of shopping malls are females. It is observed that 24.52 per cent of customers of shopping malls are in the age group of 31 – 40 years followed by 21 – 30 years (20.77 per cent), 41 – 50 years (17.81 per cent), below 20 years (16.13 per cent), 51 – 60 years (12.26 per cent) and above 60 years (8.51 per cent). It is clear that 26.19 per cent of customers of shopping malls have the educational qualification of graduation followed by post graduation (21.16 per cent), diploma (17.68 per cent), higher secondary (13.81 per cent), upto secondary (12.00 per cent) and illiterate (9.16 per cent). The results indicate that that 35.48 per cent of customers of shopping malls are employed in private sector followed by government service (32.78 per cent), professional (18.19 per cent), business (7.74 per cent) and retired (5.81 per cent). It is seen that 31.74 per cent of customers of shopping malls are in the monthly income group of Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000 followed by Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000 (22.58 per cent), Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000 (16.52 per cent), below Rs.20,000 (16.26 per cent), Rs.50,001 – Rs.60,000 (10.32 per cent) and above Rs.60,000 (2.58 per cent). The results reveal that 68.13 per cent of customers of shopping malls are married and the remaining of 31.87 per cent of customers of shopping malls is unmarried.

Table-1. Socio-Economic Profile of Customers of Shopping Malls

Socio-Economic Profile	Number of Customers	Percentage
Gender		
Male	433	55.87
Female	342	44.13
Age Group		
Below 20 years	125	16.13
21 – 30 years	161	20.77
31 – 40 years	190	24.52
41 – 50 years	138	17.81
51 – 60 years	95	12.26
Above 60 years	66	8.51
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	71	9.16
Upto Secondary	93	12.00
Higher Secondary	107	13.81
Diploma	137	17.68
Graduation	203	26.19

Post Graduation	164	21.16
Occupation		
Business	60	7.74
Government Service	254	32.78
Private Sector	275	35.48
Professional	141	18.19
Retired	45	5.81
Monthly Income		
Below Rs.20,000	126	16.26
Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000	175	22.58
Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	246	31.74
Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000	128	16.52
Rs.50,001 – Rs.60,000	80	10.32
Above Rs.60,000	20	2.58
Marital Status		
Married	528	68.13
Unmarried	247	31.87

3.2. CUSTOMER'S PERCEPTION ON SERVICE QUALITY OF SHOPPING MALLS

The customer's perception on service quality of shopping malls was analyzed and the results are hereunder presented.

3.2.1. PERSONAL INTERACTION DIMENSION

The customer's perception on personal interaction dimension of shopping malls was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-2.

Table-2. Personal Interaction Dimension

Personal Interaction	Mean	Standard Deviation
The mall gives customers individual attention	4.67	0.29
Employees in the mall tell customers exactly when services will be performed	4.18	0.50
Employees in the mall give prompt service to customers	4.66	0.30
Employees in the mall have the knowledge to answer customers' questions	3.27	0.87
The behaviour of employees in the mall instill confidence in customers	4.14	0.63
Employees in the mall are consistently courteous with customers	3.29	0.81
Employees in the mall are never too busy to respond to customer's requests	3.83	0.90
Customers feel safe in their transactions with mall	3.66	0.71

The results show that the customers of shopping malls are strongly agreed with the mall gives customers individual attention and employees in the mall give prompt service to customers, while, they are agreed with employees in the mall tell customers exactly when services will be performed, the behaviour of employees in the mall instill confidence in customers, employees in the mall are never too busy to respond to customer's requests and customers feel safe in their transactions with mall. Besides, they are neutral with employees in the mall have the knowledge to answer customers' questions and employees in the mall are consistently courteous with customers.

3.2.2. PHYSICAL ASPECTS DIMENSION

The customer's perception on physical aspects dimension of shopping malls was analyzed and the results are presented in Table -3.

Table-3. Physical Aspects Dimension

Physical Aspects	Mean	Standard Deviation
The mall has modern-looking equipment and fixtures	4.42	0.41

The layout at the mall makes it easy for customers to move around in the store	4.69	0.26
The physical facilities at the mall are visually appealing	3.98	0.26
The mall has clean, attractive and convenient public areas	3.35	0.79
The mall layout makes it easy for customers to find what they need	3.72	0.76
Materials associated with this mall's service (such as shopping bags, catalogs, or statements) are visually appealing	4.17	0.79

The results indicate that the customers of shopping malls are strongly agreed with the layout at the mall makes it easy for customers to move around in the store, while, they are neutral with the mall has clean, attractive and convenient public areas. Besides, they are agreed with the mall has modern-looking equipment and fixtures, the physical facilities at the mall are visually appealing, the mall layout makes it easy for customers to find what they need and materials associated with this mall's service (such as shopping bags, catalogs, or statements) are visually appealing.

3.2.3. RELIABILITY DIMENSION

The customer's perception on reliability dimension of shopping malls was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-4.

Table-4. Reliability Dimension

Reliability	Mean	Standard Deviation
The mall performs the service right the first time	4.05	0.71
The mall provides its services at the time it promises to do so	3.89	0.66
The mall insists on error-free sales transactions and records	3.17	0.84
The mall has merchandise available when the customers want it	3.24	0.87
When the mall promises to do something by a certain time, it will do so	4.44	0.38

It is clear that the customers of shopping malls are agreed with the mall performs the service right the first time, the mall provides its services at the time it promises to do so and when the mall promises to do something by a certain time, it will do so, while, they are neutral with the mall insists on error-free sales transactions and records and the mall has merchandise available when the customers want it.

3.2.4. POLICY DIMENSION

The customer's perception on policy dimension of shopping malls was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-5.

Table-5. Policy Dimension

Policy	Mean	Standard Deviation
The mall has operating hours convenient to all their customers	3.94	0.83
The mall provides plenty of convenient parking for customers	3.21	0.74
The mall offers its own credit card	3.13	0.64
The mall accepts most major credit cards	4.29	0.27
The mall offers high quality merchandise	4.16	0.39

It is observed that the customers of shopping malls are agreed with the mall has operating hours convenient to all their customers, the mall accepts most major credit cards and the mall offers high quality merchandise, while, they are neutral with the mall provides plenty of convenient parking for customers and the mall offers its own credit card.

3.2.5. PROBLEM SOLVING DIMENSION

The customer's perception on problem solving dimension of shopping malls was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-6.

Table-6. Problem Solving Dimension

Problem Solving	Mean	Standard Deviation
When a customer has a problem, the mall shows a sincere interest in solving it	4.08	0.70
The mall willingly handles returns and exchanges	3.94	0.48
Employees of the mall are able to handle customer complaints directly and immediately	3.20	0.65

It is apparent that the customers of shopping malls are agreed with when a customer has a problem, the mall shows a sincere interest in solving it and the mall willingly handles returns and exchanges, while, they are neutral with employees of the mall are able to handle customer complaints directly and immediately.

3.3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF CUSTOMERS AND THEIR PERCEPTION ON SERVICE QUALITY OF SHOPPING MALLS

To examine the difference between socio-economic profile of customers and their perception on service quality of shopping malls, the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) has been done and the results are presented in Table-7.

Table-7. Difference between Socio-Economic Profile of Customers and Their Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls

Particulars	F-Value	Sig.
Gender and Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls	54.116**	.000
Age Group and Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls	13.049**	.000
Educational Qualification and Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls	21.617**	.000
Occupation and Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls	17.752**	.000
Monthly Income and Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls	7.501**	.000
Marital Status and Perception on Service Quality of Shopping Malls	4.329*	.038

** Significant at one per cent level * Significant at five per cent level

The results indicate that the F-values are significant indicating that there is significant difference between socio-economic profile of customers and their perception on service quality of shopping malls. Hence, the null hypothesis of there is no significant difference between socio-economic profile of customers and their perception on service quality of shopping malls is rejected.

3.4. IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS OF SHOPPING MALLS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

To study the impact of service quality dimensions of shopping malls on customer satisfaction, the multiple regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table-8.

The coefficient of multiple determination (R2) is 0.58 and adjusted R2 is 0.57 indicating that the regression model is good fit. It reveals that about 57.00 per cent of variation in dependent variable (Customer Satisfaction) is explained by the independent variables (Service Quality Dimensions). The F-value of 212.175 is statistically significant at one per cent level indicating that the model is significant.

Table-8. Impact of Service Quality Dimensions of Shopping Malls on Customer Satisfaction

Service Quality Dimensions	Regression Co-efficients	t-Value	Sig.
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Intercept	3.554*	2.188	.029
Personal Interaction (X ₁)	.621**	21.395	.000
Physical Aspects (X ₂)	.883**	19.084	.000
Reliability (X ₃)	.351**	9.422	.000
Policy (X ₄)	.173*	2.477	.013
Problem Solving (X ₅)	.161	1.247	.213
R ²	0.58	-	-
Adjusted R ²	0.57	-	-
F	212.175	-	.000

** Significant at one per cent level * Significant at five per cent level

The results show that physical aspects, personal interaction and reliability dimensions have positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction at one per cent level, while, policy dimension has positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction at five per cent level. So, the null hypothesis of there is no significant impact of service quality dimensions of shopping malls on customer satisfaction is rejected.

4. CONCLUSION

Majority of customers of shopping malls are males and most of the customers of shopping malls are in the age group of 31 – 40 years. Majority of customers of shopping malls have the educational qualification of graduation and most of the customers of shopping malls are employed in private sector. Majority of customers of shopping malls are in the monthly income group of Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000 and most of the customers of shopping malls are married.

The results show that there is significant difference between socio-economic profile of customers and their perception on service quality of shopping malls. The physical aspects, personal interaction and reliability dimensions have positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction at one per cent level, while, policy dimension has positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction at five per cent level.

The proper trainings should be given to employees for updating their knowledge about products, brands and services of shopping malls and they must be consistently courteous with customers. The shopping malls must be clean, attractive and convenient public areas. The shopping malls must ensure error-free sales transactions and records and availability of merchandise. The shopping malls should provide convenient parking area and its own credit card to their customers. In addition, the employees of shopping malls must address complaints of customer immediately.

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