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EXPLORING THE TRENDS OF RETAIL FORMATS IN INDIA A STUDY OF SHOPPING MALLS

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Abstract

Retailing is one of the largest industries in India and one of the biggest sources of employmentin the country. Although the retailing industry has existed in our country for centuries, it is only in the recent past that it witnessed such tremendous growth. This has become possible due to the entry of corporates like - the Piramals (Cross Roads), the Tatas (Westside chain of stores), the Rahejas (Globus and Shoppers Stop), ITC (Wills Lifestyle), S Kumars, RPG enterprises (Food World Giant, Music World and Health n Glow). According to a study by CII the present value of the Indian retail market is US $ 180 billion. In response to changing consumer mood and increased competition, entrepreneurs have developed new formats forproviding merchandise and services ranging in apparel. Though shopping malls have been a significant fixture in foreign culture but very little research on malls in academic research is found in India. Keeping this in mind, the researchers have studied the stores located in malls with various attributes/indicators of apparel stores, whichinfluence the shoppers. The Study also infers the relationship between the retailers dealing in multi-brand retailoutlets and exclusive outlets. This study has included complete outfits in formals; semi-formals, ethnic, denim and designer wear with respect to all genders.This has witnessed a fast pace ofexperimentation in formats. For selecting an appropriateformat, retailers have taken recourse for careful segmentation at the geographic and demographic level.

INTRODUCTION

The shoppers today can shop for goods and services at a wide variety of stores. This study presents an overview of the present situation of organized retail formats with a special reference to shopping malls. It has been seen that organized retail sector is booming. The change that organized retail has brought about is evident from the following table:

SIZE OF THE ORGANIZED RETAIL MARKET IN INDIA

Types	2001-2002	2006-2007	CAGR (%)
Large Segments	8,850	23,109	21
Other Segments	6,050	12,169	15
Non -Store Retailing	1,100	1.939	12
Total Organized Retail	16,000	37,216	48

It has been identified as the cause responsible for the gap between the desired and available types ofstores. In response to changing consumer mood and increased competition, entrepreneurs have developed new formats forproviding merchandise and services ranging in apparel. Though shopping malls have been a significant fixture in foreign culture but very little research on malls in academic research is found in India. Keeping this in mind, the researchers have studied the stores located in malls with various attributes/indicators of apparel stores, whichinfluence the shoppers. The Study also infers the relationship between the retailers dealing in multi-brand retailoutlets and exclusive outlets. This has witnessed a fast pace ofexperimentation in formats. For selecting an appropriateformat, retailers have taken recourse for careful segmentation at the geographic and demographic level.

Classifications of retail stores overlap in many ways and experts often disagree onthe categorization ofstores. Over the years retailing has changed to reflect the varying needs ofconsumers. Newcategories of stores haveevolved and existing categories have combined which makesclassification difficult **(**Berman & Evans, 1995)**.** Most often retailers are categorized by their product strategy (i.e. merchandising assortment) and pricing strategies**.** However, with the success of specialty retailers, perhaps classifying these stores by target consumer is also necessary

Specialty stores target specific groups of consumers (e.g. Young Men. Ladies. Sports Enthusiast and Children, Big and Tall) that may or may not have a special need for products and services**.**

A Department store has several product lines, with each line operated as a separate departmentmanaged by specialist merchandisers.

Mass merchandisers target mass markets that are not segmented.

<u>Off Price Store:</u>Merchandise bought less than regular wholesale prices and sold at less than retail**:** often- leftover goods**,** overruns, and irregular obtains at reduced prices from manufactures and other retailers.Miscellaneous stores such as: Factory outlets, Independent price retailers, Wholesale clubs, Warehouse Stores, Supermarkets and Hypermarkets.

<u>Multibrand outlet</u>- A multi brand outlet sells broad merchandise assortment forconventional prices under one roof. The merchandise quality ranges from average to good. Prices can be low/moderate/aboveaverage.

<u>Exclusive outlet</u>- An exclusive retailer is located strategically with a medium sizedinteractive layout, selling a single focused category of products and is visited by brand conscious individuals-cluster groups ofsame class with high loyalty.

Malls can refer to shopping mall, which is a place where a collection of shops adjoins a pedestrian, or an exclusively pedestrian street, that allows shoppers to walk without interference from vehicle traffic. (Bloch et al_l994**).** Mall is generally used in North America and Australia to refer to large shopping areas, while the term arcade is more often used, especially in Britain, to refer to a narrow pedestrian -only street, often covered or between closely spaced buildings. (Sandikci and Holt 1996) .A shopping mall is a building or a set of buildings that contain stores having interconnecting walkways that makes it easier for people to walk from store to store. The walkways may or may not to be enclosed. In the United Kingdom and Australia these are called shopping centers or shopping arcades, (www. answer, com. 2004).

INDUSTRY PROFILE OF THE APPAREL MARKET

The word apparel is not just restricted to a shirt, a pant or rather to a beautiful dress but it extends far beyond that. And the wholesale dealers in apparel have understood this concept. Gone are the days when people in India used to shop for a simple shirt, pant, sari etc. But nowadays people look out for something more than that. They look for style; they look for trend and also for something unique yet fashionable. Now- a-days fashion clothing is not only limited to higher class with the forth-coming apparel collection but is available at all affordable costs to all segments of customers. This study has included complete outfits in formals; semi-formals, ethnic, denim and designer wear with respect to all genders.

Behavior in malls is described as a willingness or desire to stay, explore, work, or affiliate (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The study found that behaviors (i.e.shopping enjoyment, returning, attraction and friendliness toward others, spending money, time spent browsing, exploration of the store) influenced perceptions or responses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bell, Ho, and Tang (1998) found that location no longer explains most of the variance in store choice decisions. Rather, store choice decisions seem to be consistent with a model where consumers' optimize their total shopping costs, effort to access the store location being one component of their fixed cost of shopping. Today, suburban sprawl, greater driving distances, the appearance of new warehouse retail formats that are often located in large spaces away from residential areas, and online retailing have made location somewhat less central as a store choice criterion (Achahal, Gorr, and Mahajanl982). Consistent with this trend, Mehrabian and Russel (1974) the store atmosphere varies along three main dimensions: pleasantness, arousal, and dominance. This response, in turn, influences behavior, with greater likelihood of purchase in more pleasant settings and in settings of intermediate arousal level. Different elements of a retailer's in-store environment, e.g. color, music, and crowding, can influence consumers' perceptions of a store's atmosphere, whether or not they visit a store, how much time they spend in it, and how much money they spend there (Bellizzi, Crowley, and Henderson 1983); (Milliman 1982); (Eroglu and Machleit 1990; Grewal et al. 2003), (Baker et al. 2002) provide a good review of this research and categorize the elements of in-store atmosphere into physical features like design, lighting, and layout, ambient features like music and smell, and social features like type of clientele, employee availability and friendliness. They note that atmosphere can affect consumers' perceptions of the economic and psychological costs of shopping in a store and find that pleasing physical design lowers both economic and psychological costs while music lowers the latter. Store atmosphere mediates consumer perceptions of other dimensions of store image. For instance, (Baker et al. 2002) find that store environment factors, particularly physical design perceptions, significantly affect consumers' perceptions of merchandise price, merchandise quality, and employee service quality. (Schlosser 1998) argues that, since store atmosphere has a social identity appeal, a pleasing atmosphere in the store should influence perceptions of socially communicative products in the store, not so much intrinsically rewarding products. (Richardson, Jain, and Dick 1996)

Brown (1969) highlighted the difference between consumers' perceptions of price levels in various stores and reality, showing that consumers may use non-price related cues like service offerings and quality levels to form their price perceptions. That consumers may not form valid perceptions of actual prices in a store is supported by (Dickson and Sawyer'sl990) widely cited work, but consumers do develop some general price perceptions of products in a store, and can evaluate their expensiveness in relative terms (Monroe and Lee 1999) (Desai and Talukdar 2003) develop a product-price saliency framework to examine how consumers form an overall store price image (OSPI).

Kumar and Leone (1988) and Walters (1991) find a significant impact of promotions on store switching/traffic. However**,** it is unlikely that consumers would keep track ofweekly promotions on amultitude of categories in all thestores in their neighborhood. (Bucklin and

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Lattin 1992) show that retail promotions in any one category do not directly influence a consumer's store choice decision, but they indirectly affect where the category is purchased.

Consumers' perception of the breadth of different products and services offered by a retailer under one roof significantly influence store image. The benefits of a wide assortment are clear, first, the greater the breadth of product assortment, the greater the range of different situations in which the retailer is recalled and considered by the consumer, and therefore the stronger its salience. (Keller 2003) salience is the most basic building block for a brand. Second, the" one-stop shopping convenience that a broad product assortment enables is becoming more important than ever for today's time-constrained consumer (Messinger and Narasimhan 1997) putting pressure on retailers to broaden their assortment. Third, consumers regularly shop at more than one store, and, asnoted earlier, they may purchase a category in the store that they are visiting based on in-store assortment and marketing mix activities whereas they would otherwise have purchased it in another store.

OBJECTIVES

1. To see the response of the shoppers towards malls which are now opening up in the metros and big cities as perceived by retailers.
2. To study the preferences of shoppers towards the different types of formats as perceived by retailers.
3. To study whether different retailers use their own branded items or manufacturers brands to give the better solutions to shoppers for shopping.

HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the review of literature and detailed discussions with various retailers dealing in the apparel stores in malls, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

I.There is no significant difference between retailers dealing in multi-brand outletsand exclusive outlets in context to following six indicators

1. Price Merchandise *2.* Quality Merchandise 3. Assortment ofMerchandise
4. Sales Personnel 5. Service6. Other Convenience Services

Research Methodology: The Retailers for understanding the shopper's preferences towards different retail formats. Price Merchandise, Quality Merchandise, Assortment of Merchandise, Sales Personnel, Service and Other Convenience Services, filled up a questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered to the retailers individually.

SAMPLE SIZE

A sample size of 100 retailers was taken. They were chosen from 10 malls by choosing 10 shops from each mall. Lists of all malls of Mumbai and Thane area were obtained so as to select 10 malls representing different zones of Mumbai and Thane to be included in the study and the number of respondents (retailers) to be surveyed from each of these places. Similarly, among all the malls covered, 10retailers from each of these stores dealing in apparel were chosen. The total numbers of malls studied were 10. The sample was drawn from Mumbai and Thane areas. It was found that thesize of the malls, which the researcher studied, was about 80000sq feet and above. Here the termstores refer to the shops located in those particular malls. The study also shows the stores having multi-brand outlets and exclusive outlets. The apparel stores dealing in full range of women wear, men wear and children were taken as the sample of study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

For analyzing data t-test, Duncan's test, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentages were computed. Seven indicators, which have been studied, areN1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6, and N7.

Nl - Price of Merchandise

N2 - Quality of Merchandise

N3 - Assortment of Merchandise

N4 - Sales Personnel

N5 - Service

N6 - Other Convenience Services

N7 - Advertising

In each indicator items were added and the total was divided by number of items in order to treat the indicator in to six-point scale. After computation they are shown in a descending order.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF INDICATORS IN DESCENDING ORDER

Indicators	Mean	SD
Sales personnel (N4)	5.31	4480
Quality of merchandise (N2)	5.13	.5739
Assortment of merchandise (N3)	4.89	0.5519
Advertising (N7)	4.83	0.9217
Services (N5)	4.7	0.8696
Other convenience services (N6)	4.4	0.8246

Comparison ofN2 toN7 between retailers dealing with Multibrand outlets & Exclusive outlets. Nl was not taken because in this, 95% gave preference for fair or competitive price. Therefore, this indicator has been left and remaining 6 indicators are taken.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY APPAREL

Type of Format	NO. OF RESPONDENTS *	PERCENTAGE *
MBO (Multi -brand outlets)	44	44
SIS (Shop-in-shop)	6	6
LFR (Large format retailer)	6	6
Exclusive Outlets	44	44
NR (No Responses)	0	0

'Total does not come to hundred because of multiple responses

The above table indicates that most preferred types of retail formats are multi-brand outlets and exclusive outlets.

Table 3: Comparison of Indicator between Retailer respondents of Multi-Brand Outlets & Exclusive Outlets

Indicators	MBO (N= 44)		Exclusive (N=44)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SO	
Quality of merchandise	5.33	0.29	4.86	0.66	4.35"
Assortment of merchandise	5.21	0.55	4.7	0.85	3.41"
Sales personnel	5.47	0.32	5.14	0.5	3.41"
Services	5	0.87	4.5	0.86	2.00-
Other convenience services	4.48	0.87	4.2	0.8	1.20"
Advertising	5.18	0.63	4.3	0.96	4.56"

The significant difference is found in multi-brand outlet and exclusive outlet so far as the all indicators are concerned for shopping in stores in the malls. But the mean value is more in case of MBO, which reveals retailer: dealing in multi-brand outlets are more concerned towards all the indicators. Hence, hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4: Footfalls Observed Per Day in the Malls

No. Of Footfalls	NO.OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
LESS THAN 1000	29	29
BETWEEN 1000 TO	39	39

5000		
ABOVE 5000	32	32

The table indicates that the number of footfalls in the malls lies between 1000-5000.

Table 5: Retailers preference in stocking-branded vs. non- Branded Apparel

	MEN APPAREL		WOMEN APPAREL		CHILDREN APPAREL	
	Retailers	Manufacture	Retailers	Manufacture	Retailers	Manufacture
UPTO 10%	5	2	0	0	6	6
11-20 %	*4*	0	10	a	12	12
21-30%	19	20	16	*7*	11	17
31-40%	15	11	15	8	3	6
41-50 %	21	12	24	18	6	0
51-60%	9	16	3	15	o	0
61-70%	9	14	2	14	3	0
71-80%	0	7	0	5	0	0
81-90%	0	0	0	0	0	0
91-100%	6	6	0	0	0	0
NR (no response)	12	12	30	27	59	15

The above table clearly indicates that retailers are targeting towards middle segment than premium segment. Therefore, retailers are keeping maximum private brands than manufacturer's brand. It is justified from above analysis that private labels are more famous in women apparel as compared to men and children. The percentage of the private label contribution is more in women apparel as compared to men and children wear. Whereas as maximum percentage contribution in children and men apparel lies for manufacturer’s brand.

TABLE 6 - CHOICE OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING: RETAILERS PERSPECTIVE

	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	Percentage
Symmetry	29	29
Color Coordination	24	24
Color Blocking	13	13
Window Display	33	33
Any other	1	1
Total	100	100

The above table describes that 33 percent of respondents opine that window display is one of the best methods of visual merchandising.

DISCUSSION

MALLS CHARACTERISTICS PERCEIVED AS SIGNIFICANT BY RETAILERS IN BUYING DECISION OF SHOPPERS

The study reveals that among the different indicators, important indicators perceived by the retailers are sales staff. Price, promotion and quality of merchandise. Sales personnel staff surprisingly**,** has significant effect on shoppers according to the retailers. Therefore the retailers are giving a lot of emphasis on the skills of sales staff to create store image in the minds of the customers. Price & promotionhas been found from the study is the weakest indicator of shopping & spending. This may seem surprising but the reason is they are more brands conscious & looking for more variety. This factor is similar as identified by Shim and Kotsiopulos in 1993, Hoch et al (1999). Store location -The findings further support the positive impact of store location on store traffic and sales. Baker, Julie, et.al (2002). No doubt, it has further been observed that Consumers' store choice may be based on different criteria depending upon the nature of the trip.

Retailers Perspective towards Malls Characteristics /Indicators With Respect To Different Formats

Our result provides strong evidence that for (refer 2) out of 100 retailer respondents the most preferred retail outlets are multi-brand outlets and exclusive outlets. While testing the hypotheses with the application oft-test, the significant difference has been found in multi-brand outlets so far as quality of merchandise, assortment of merchandise, sales personnel convenience services and advertising is concerned. The study has found the significant difference in all the indicators and hypotheses has not been supported.

Retailers' Perspective to Private Labels Vs. Manufactures Labels

The result provides strong evidence that branding perspective, an appealing in-store atmosphere offers much potential in terms of crafting a unique store image and establishing differentiation. The table reveals (see table no 5) that normally 41-50 percent of private labels have been contributed in the stores. The stores have more retail brands in women apparel as compared to men wear and children wear. Karen Gednek, and Scott Neslin (2001).

Footfalls of the Shoppers Perceived Important By the Retailers

It is found that (see table 4) the response of the shoppers is increasing towards shopping malls. The pattern of findings state that average number of footfalls per day is more than 1000 in the stores of shopping malls. This shows that every type of shopper wants to visit the stores, they may buy or not but curiosity is there for visiting the malls. It is further observed that footfalls have been increasing due to better services provided to the shoppers.

Effects of Merchandise Presentation Perceived Important By Retailers

Merchandise presentation is a key issue in store management (Levy &Weitz 1998). Although retailers use various methods to present their merchandise, the study reveals that most preferred method is Window Display, followed by Symmetry, i.e. to place all items of a product category in the same section to facilitate consumer choice.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above discussion, it is important to conclude that this research adds to our understanding of shopper's attitudes towards the different characteristics of the stores and retailer's response towards the shopper's mood. The information thus collected from hundred (100) retailers as per the objectives of the study has presented an overview on the present situation of organized retail formats with special reference to shopping malls, because of changing consumer moods, increasing purchasing power and more frequent visits of teenagers, entrepreneurs have developed new formats for providing merchandise and services ranging in apparel, through shopping malls. Keeping this, the researcher has studied the malls and established the relationship between the shoppers' behavior and various attributes/indicators of apparel stores in the malls, which influence them. The relationships between the retailers (dealing in multi-brand retail outlets and exclusive outlets) and indicators, which retailers feel important in selecting target customers have been analysed. The hypotheses tested for differences in different formats revealed that significant difference is found in all the indicators dealing in multi brand outlets of apparel or exclusive brands of apparel.

It has been observed that there are big players sharing the youth fashion pie, and have carved themselves as a one -stop provider for the customers. Whatever clothing or style they want, whatever accessories to go over, being hip-hop, or just playing casual, good retailer will provide them all. Several consumer-oriented attributes have also contributed to challenges in apparel retailing. Some of them include changes in consumer demographic and lifestyle profiles. Based on what is known about the industry, retailers will continue to encounter changes in their environment in the future. One of the most important tasks of store retailers will be how to attract and retain consumers.

It has been observed from study that most of our customers do not look at pricing alone. They are looking for a sense of belonging, a brand of quality and innovation that they can trust. A brand that is always ahead in whatever fashion they are looking for and knowing that they have to look no further for small stores.

Small retailers no longer remain the primary source for the basic monthly shopping basket: the consumer normally gets better prices, quality selection and convenience for these purchases at organized retailing chains. In fact, the small retailers have to downgrade him by giving up his position of being a monthly shopping stop. But the chance of close down of small stores is impossible in case of daily need products.

Further, among the different indicators, Sales personnel staff is the most preferred criteria for customers to choose among the different stores (refer table 1). Therefore the retailers are giving lot of emphasis to sales staff as their behavior influence the customers and retailers can create store image in the minds of the customer. Customer Service, Advertising by store and various other marketing policies at each store like shelf price, promotional discounts, product assortment etc. Compared to the competition, the Westside business model was different. Most other chains have gone for the multi - label format, but the Tatas is selling its own labels (see table 5) Ninety per cent of the products mixes at Westside consisting of apparel and are sold under the Westside brand name i.e. private label and the other 10 per cent comprises manufactures brands. The stores have more retail brands in women apparel as compared to men wear and children wear. This is one of the explanations for objective 3. More specifically, the objectives were to predict apparel patronage behavior, to predict store attributes, which impact shopping orientations. Overall results revealed that all seven variables had some degree of predictability in choosing among different types of store formats.

IMPLICATIONS

Several of my findings have implications for mall designers and managers and also provide opportunities for researchers to develop and examine new constructs. The study also examined alternatives to discounts when negative quality inference was likely to occur, and it was found that free gifts were effective in increasing sales and market share, When a free gift offer was made, consumers based their quality judgments on the full price of the item without accounting for the value of gift, which mentioned perception of quality, and led to higher perception of store indicators. The results are also helpful for the retailers for product categorization, merchandise co-ordination and market segmentation which has an effect on shoppers for buying the apparel. The results also suggested that if proper window display and other proper methods of presentation of merchandising are done, the retailers are able to attract more shoppers.

LIMITATIONS

1. The focus of the study is on consumers preferences towards the different retail store formats, liking for the stores is not only because of the factors discussed in the study, other factors like percentage availability of their favorite brands, store ambience, incentives on frequent visits, spending per trip, the interval between shopping trip etc, the impact of such variables has not been considered in this study.
2. This study involved only one product category (i.e. apparel) and the results may not apply to shopping for other products.

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