Chapter VII

Summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion
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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction
As the city of Chennai sees more shopping malls opening up, it is becoming difficult for shopping malls to retain consumers. Sensing this issue some shopping mall developers have started relooking into their marketing efforts for gaining consumer loyalty. The need of the hour is to attract the consumer footfall, convert them into actual buyers and try to retain them in the long run. This study is an enquiry into these issues in the context of shopping mall consumers in the city of Chennai. However any research pertaining to consumer behaviour has certain inherent difficulties and constraints associated with it. Some of the difficulties relate to,

- Studying consumer behaviour is a very complex process as consumers are influenced by various factors – these factors can differ from one consumer to another consumer and from time to time for the same consumer.
- Characterization of consumers based on their decision making style is very dynamic and multi – faceted.
- The limited availability of standardized instruments / tests to measure consumer behaviour in the Indian context.

Despite these limitations, this study has yielded significant results. A summary of the findings of this study has been presented herewith.

7.2 Essence of the findings

7.2.1 Demographic profile of respondents

- The study revealed that a majority of 52.8% of respondents who frequented malls in Chennai were in the age group of 18 – 25 years. This phenomenon was also confirmed by mall tenants, as they responded that 48% of consumers who visit malls are in the age group of 18 – 25 years.
- Only 2% of respondents are above the age of 56 years. This reveals that consumers in this age group are not frequenting shopping malls.
In Chennai shopping malls, female consumers outnumbered male consumers as 61% of the respondents were female consumers.

48% of respondents are students, either studying in school or in college. The number of students frequenting malls is higher when compared to the other groups of consumers.

62.8% of respondents collectively have a monthly family income ranging from ₹70,000 to ₹1,30,000 and only 6.6% of respondents have a family income less than ₹30,000 per month. This divulges that a majority of consumers are having high disposable income.

48.6% of respondents do not have dependents and only 4.4% of respondents have more than three dependents.

7.2.2 Respondents’ shopping patterns in Chennai shopping malls

34.8% of respondents visit a shopping mall once a month, while 20.4% of them visit a mall once a week. 42.6% of respondents preferred to visit a shopping mall on weekends. A majority of 57.2% of respondents spend 3 to 4 hours in a shopping mall. Knowing the frequency of consumer visit to shopping malls will help mall managers to plan strategies to control mall traffic.

71.4% of respondents visit a shopping mall for the purpose of shopping. 69.2% of consumers visit a mall to watch a movie in a multiplex situated in a mall. 41.8% of respondents go to a shopping mall to visit an eatery / food court in the mall. These figures provide a huge opportunity for mall developers to plan their tenant mix.

32.2% of respondents go to a shopping mall to meet friends.

The study revealed that only 11.6% and 10.2% of respondents go to a shopping mall for the purpose of gaming and for comparison shopping respectively. It was also found that only 4.2% of respondents visit a shopping mall to attend events and shows at the mall.

19.4% of respondents go to a shopping mall for just get away. This reveals the fact that most mall visitors feel that a shopping mall should serve its basic purpose and reason of existence.
7.2.3 Identification of factors influencing the emergence of shopping mall culture in Chennai

- The study revealed that the following are the factors that have led to the emergence of shopping mall culture in the city of Chennai:
  - Retail development
  - Awareness
  - Competition
  - Disposable income
  - Mall browsing
  - Customer engagement
  - Innovation

- The respondents were grouped based on their perceptual differences and adaptations to the emergence of shopping mall culture in Chennai as follows:
  - Dynamic consumers consist of 38.4% of respondents. This consumer group enjoys the splurging up of malls in Chennai. They visit a shopping mall to get the best of both shopping and entertainment and are active participants in all mall events.
  - Idea consumers consist of 28.4% of the respondents. They have weak qualities of a mall browser. This consumer group goes to a shopping mall with the main purpose of shopping to keep up with the latest trends and buy new merchandise from a mall.
  - Intelligent consumers consist of 33.2% of the respondents. They don’t see a shopping mall as the only option to shop; they purchase products from standalone stores, supermarkets and hypermarkets. This cluster is not affected by the mall culture in Chennai.
7.2.4 Identification of factors influencing consumer’s preferences of shopping malls in Chennai

- The study revealed the following to be influencing factors for a consumer’s preferences towards shopping malls in Chennai:
  - Mall loyalty
  - Mall environment
  - Mall affect
  - Tenant mix
  - Customer experience
  - Convenience
  - Mall layout

- The respondents were grouped based on their perceptual differences regarding their preference of shopping malls in Chennai as follows:
  - Specialist consumers consist of 15.8% of the respondents. They do not seek any kind of extra customer service from mall tenants and mall assistants as they exactly know what they want to purchase when they enter a mall. Distance and discounts do not affect them as they will purchase a product or avail a service if it satisfies their needs and wants.
  - Affiliated consumers consist of 34.2% of the respondents. This consumer group is highly loyal towards their favorite shopping mall. This cluster is emotionally attached to a particular mall or a store in a mall due to its ambience, brands and comfortable layout. These consumers feel happy and safe when they visit a particular mall.
  - Detached consumers consist of 50% of the respondents. They are moderate consumers as they do not have any preference towards a particular mall. They are not emotionally attached to a mall and make rational decisions. A shopping mall to them is just a place to shop.
7.2.5 Identification of Consumer Decision Making Styles exhibited by consumers in Chennai shopping malls

- The study identified 12 Consumer Decision Making Styles exhibited by Chennai mall consumers. They are,
  - Confused by over choice
  - Habitual / Store loyal
  - Brand conscious
  - Recreational
  - Novelty
  - Irrational
  - Perfectionist
  - Price conscious
  - Impulsive
  - Variety seeking
  - Shopping avoidance
  - Undemanding

- The Consumer Decision Making Style “irrational” has been identified among Chennai mall consumers for the first time in this study.

- The respondents were grouped based on their Consumer Decision Making Styles as follows:
  - Recreational quality seekers consist of 35.2% of respondents. They are highly recreational in nature. This consumer group mixes shopping trip with fun as they look forward for entertainment in a mall. They are highly interested in new and fashionable products to which may not be the best brand but at the same time they are extremely quality conscious.
  - Pragmatic rationalists consist of 17.6% of respondents. This consumer group exhibits weak characteristics of emotional buying
behaviour. Consumers falling under this cluster are highly practical and rational in their purchase decision in a shopping mall. They do not believe that high prices are equal to high quality products.

- Explorers consist of 47.2% of respondents. This consumer group exhibits very weak characteristics of shopping avoidance. These Consumers spend a lot of time in a shopping mall. They take a lot of effort to explore almost every store in a mall before making a purchase decision.

### 7.2.6 Relationship among shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles

The study empirically proved that there is a relationship among shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles. The following associations are revealed:

- There is an association between shopping mall culture and shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 33.696, p = .000$).
  - A large majority of 60.24% intelligent consumers are detached consumers.
  - 46.35% of dynamic consumers are affiliated to a shopping mall.
  - 23.94% idea consumers are specialists when they shop at a mall.

- There is an association between shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 78.092, p = .000$).
  - A majority of 56% of detached consumers are explorers
  - 55.6% of affiliated consumers are recreational quality seekers.
  - 41.8% of specialist consumers are pragmatic rationalists.

- There is an association between shopping mall culture and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 47.875, p = .000$).
  - 49% of dynamic consumers are recreational quality seekers
  - 23.2% of idea consumers are pragmatic rationalists.
7.2.7 **Collective influence of shopping mall culture and shopping mall preference on a particular Consumer Decision Making Style**

- Consumers who are “confused by over choice” are collectively influenced by awareness, disposable income, consumer engagement, mall loyalty, mall environment, mall affect, customer experience and mall layout. This indicates that Chennai consumers are “confused by over choice” when they shop at malls.

- “Habitual/store loyal” consumers are influenced by retail development, awareness, mall loyalty, mall affect, tenant mix, convenience and mall layout. Chennai consumers are habitual as they tend to stick to their favorite mall and store in mall that is convenient and has an impressive tenant mix and mall layout.

- “Brand conscious” consumers are influenced by awareness, mall browsing, convenience and mall layout. They prefer a comfortable mall layout which makes it easy for them to choose from the wide range of brands in a mall.

- “Recreational” consumers are influenced by retail development, awareness, competition, mall browsing, consumer engagement, mall loyalty and tenant mix. Shopping malls that conduct recreational activities and engagement programs attract consumers towards them. Giving the consumer a lot of variety in the tenant mix can make a mall better than its competitors.

- “Novelty” seeking consumers are influenced by retail development, awareness, disposable income and mall affect. They prefer to shop at malls that sell new and fashionable merchandise.

- The Consumer Decision Making Style “irrational” was identified among Chennai mall consumers in this study. Consumers with this decision making style are influenced by awareness, disposable income, mall browsing, customer experience, convenience and mall layout. Consumers indulge in irrational shopping behaviour because of their increased level
of awareness and high disposable income which leads them into over indulgence of shopping. They are carried away by a mall’s impressive layout.

- Consumers who are “perfectionist” are influenced by awareness, mall browsing, mall affect, customer experience, convenience and mall layout. Perfectionist mall consumers in Chennai shop at a mall that offers only best quality products.

- “Price conscious” consumers are influenced by awareness, competition, innovation, mall loyalty and customer experience. Price conscious consumers are looking for malls which offer them merchandise with discounts and other offers.

- “Impulsive” consumers are influenced by competition, mall browsing, consumer engagement and the tenant mix. When the tenant mix of a mall has a mix of merchandise, entertainment and leisure an impulsive consumer tends to spend a lot of time in a mall.

- A “variety seeking” consumer is always a boon to any mall as they are the group of consumers who browse through all the stores in a mall to get variety in their shopping trips. Consumers who are variety seeking are collectively influenced by retail development, competition, mall browsing, innovation, mall loyalty, mall affect, tenant mix and mall layout. They tend to frequent malls that have variety and offer the best combination of shopping and entertainment under one roof.

- “Shopping avoidance” is a decision style of consumers who tend to finish their shopping trips fast in a mall which is due to mall fatigue. “Shopping avoidance” consumers are influenced by awareness, consumer engagement and innovation. The study also revealed that factors of shopping mall preference do not have an influence on the Consumer Decision Making Style “Shopping avoidance”.

- “Undemanding” consumers are influenced by awareness and mall loyalty. Undemanding consumers do not look for the best brand to satisfy their needs and wants, they look for products that meet their demands.
7.2.8 Variations in mall culture, mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles across different consumer demographic variables

7.2.8.1 Association between consumers’ demographic variables and the clusters of shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles

- Age of the respondents has an association with shopping mall culture ($\chi^2 = 36.484, p = .000$), shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 31.530, p = .000$) and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 29.997, p = .001$).
  
  o 56.8% of dynamic consumers, 48% of detached consumers and 46.2% of explorers are in the age group of 18 – 25 years. These figures stand as testimony to the fact that the most active consumer group in the city of Chennai are the consumers in the age group of 18 – 25 years.

- Gender of the respondents does not have an association with shopping mall culture ($\chi^2 = .155, p = .926$), shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 3.396, p = .183$) and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 3.553, p = .169$) as the Chi – square values are not significant at 5% level.

- Marital status of the respondents does not have an association with shopping mall culture ($\chi^2 = 5.967, p = .202$), shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 7.485, p = .112$) and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 5.728, p = .220$) as the Chi – square values are not significant at 5% level.

- Education qualification of the respondents has an association with shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 28.690, p = .001$) and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 22.115, p = .015$).
  
  o 60.8% of detached consumers and 57.9% of explorers possess a bachelor’s degree.

  o Education qualification of the respondents does not have an association with shopping mall culture.

- Profession of the respondents has an association with shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 18.890, p = .041$).
o 44% of detached consumers are students.

- Profession of the respondents does not have an association with shopping mall culture ($\chi^2 = 15.411$, $p = .118$) and Consumer Decision Making Styles ($\chi^2 = 12.797$, $p = .235$)

- Monthly family income of the dependents has an association with shopping mall culture ($\chi^2 = 30.644$, $p = .235$) and shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 32.983$, $p = .003$).

- 54.9% of idea consumers and 40.3% of affiliated consumers have a monthly family income of ₹ 90,000 – ₹ 1,10,000.

- Monthly family income of the dependents does not have an association with Consumer Decision making Styles ($\chi^2 = 22.150$, $p = .076$)

- The numbers of dependents of the respondents have an association with shopping mall culture ($\chi^2 = 23.338$, $p = .010$) and shopping mall preference ($\chi^2 = 30.077$, $p = .001$).

- 49% of dynamic consumers and 45.2% of detached consumers do not have dependants.

- The numbers of dependents of the respondents does not have an association with Consumer Decision making Styles ($\chi^2 = 15.647$, $p = .110$).

- Chi – Square analysis and the cross tabulations revealed the profile of mall consumers based on their adaptation to the shopping mall culture in Chennai, shopping mall preference & Consumer Decision Making Styles. The profile of consumers visiting malls in accordance to their demographic variables is depicted in table no.7.1:
Table no. 7.1 – Profile of mall consumers based on their adaptation to the shopping mall culture in Chennai, shopping mall preference & Consumer Decision Making Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clusters of mall culture, mall preference &amp; CDMS</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Monthly family income</th>
<th>Number of dependents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic consumer</td>
<td>18 – 25 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>₹1,30,000 – above</td>
<td>No dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea consumer</td>
<td>36 – 45 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>₹90,000 – ₹1,10,000</td>
<td>3 dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent consumer</td>
<td>25 – 36 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>₹1,10,000 – ₹1,30,000</td>
<td>2 dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist consumer</td>
<td>36 – 45 years</td>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>₹1,30,000 – above</td>
<td>More than 3 dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated consumer</td>
<td>26 – 35 years</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>₹90,000 – ₹1,10,000</td>
<td>2 dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached consumer</td>
<td>18 – 25 years</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>₹1,10,000 – ₹1,30,000</td>
<td>No dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational quality seeker</td>
<td>26 – 35 years</td>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic rationalist</td>
<td>46 – 55 years</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>18 – 25 years</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled data

(Note: The blank cells indicate that there is no association between the cluster and the particular demographic variable. The demographic variables gender and marital status are not mentioned in the table as Chi – Square test revealed that the two variables did not have an association with the clusters of shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles).
Influence of consumer’s demographic variables on the factors of shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles

- Consumers in the age group of 16 – 18 years have high disposable income, indulge in mall browsing and customer engagement programs. They are influenced by the mall environment, tenant mix and mall layout. They seek convenience and exhibit characteristics of mall affect. These consumers are confused by over choice, brand conscious, recreational, novelty seeking, undemanding and have shopping avoidance traits.

- Consumers in the age group of 18 – 25 years are influenced by awareness and innovation. They are loyal to a mall and are variety seeking consumers and on the other hand consumers above 56 years are impulsive consumers.

- Female consumers are influenced by competition and are variety seeking, while male consumers are irrational in their shopping behaviour in a mall.

- Married consumers seek convenience while shopping in a mall. On the other hand, single / unmarried consumers have high awareness level of the retail scene in Chennai, have disposable income and indulge in mall browsing. Single consumers are also confused by over choice, habitual, novelty seeking, irrational and impulsive in their shopping behaviour.

- Consumers with a high school degree are undemanding consumers. Consumers with a bachelor’s degree are influenced by competition between malls in the city, tenant mix of a mall, customer engagement programs, customer experience in a mall and convenience during shopping trips to a mall. Consumers with a master’s degree have high disposable income and indulge in mall browsing. Consumers with a doctoral degree are very brand conscious and perfectionist consumers.

- Students have high disposable income, indulge in mall browsing activities and are confused by over choice. Homemakers are influenced by the tenant mix of a mall. Retired consumers are influenced by their awareness of malls in the city, the mall’s environment, customer experience and seek convenience during their shopping trips to a mall.
• Consumers with a monthly family income less than ₹ 30,000 indulge in mall browsing and seek innovation in a mall. Consumers having a monthly family income of ₹ 30,000 – ₹ 50,000 are influenced by the mall environment and are variety seeking. Consumers with a monthly family income of ₹ 50,000 – ₹ 70,000 are influenced by the mall layout and are mall loyal. Consumers in the monthly family income bracket of ₹ 70,000 – ₹ 90,000 are influenced by retail development, customer engagement programs and convenience. They are confused by over choice, brand conscious, recreational and impulsive consumers. On the other hand consumers having a monthly family income of ₹ 1,10,000 – ₹ 1,30,000 are influenced by awareness, disposable income and customer experience. They are also perfectionist consumers.

• Consumers who have more than three dependents are influenced by retail development, awareness of Chennai’s retail scenario, customer engagement programs and the mall environment. They are mall loyal and exhibit characteristics of mall affect. These consumers are confused by over choice, habitual, brand conscious, recreational, novelty seeking, irrational, impulsive and variety seeking consumers. Consumers who have two dependents are influenced by innovation in malls. Consumers who do not have any dependents have high disposable income and indulge in mall browsing.

• None of the consumer demographic variables have an influence on the Consumer Decision Making Style – “Price Consciousness”.

7.2.9 Expectations of an ideal shopping mall – from the perspective of shopping mall tenants

7.2.9.1 Profile of consumers visiting shopping malls

• A majority of 42.7% and 35.3% of customers who visit a shopping mall are in the age group of 18 – 25 years and 26 – 35 years respectively.

• 54.7% and 42% of customers visiting shopping malls in Chennai are from the urban background and semi – urban background respectively.

• 33.3% of customers visiting malls in Chennai belong to the upper middle
• A majority of 42.7% and 44% of customers visit shopping malls with their family and friends respectively.

7.2.9.2 Shopping mall requirements

• A large majority of 98% of mall tenants feel that shopping malls in Chennai require professional mall management services to run it effectively.

• 45.3% of mall tenants want shopping malls in Chennai to operate from 10 am – 11 pm.

• A majority of 90.7% and 91.3% of retail tenants prefer a shopping mall to have 3 and 4 floors respectively.

• A majority of 98.7% and 99.3% of retail tenants prefer parking lots in a shopping mall to be situated in the basement first level and second level respectively.

• 68.7% of mall tenants feel that the food court should be in any of the middle floors of the shopping mall.

• 58% of mall tenants feel that a multiplex should be in the top floor of a shopping mall.

• 54.7% of mall tenants feel that a shopping mall should ideally have 2 pairs of escalators (Pairs refers to a combination of one upward and one downward escalator) for each floor.

• 82.7% of mall tenants feel that an ideal mall should have a combination of stairs, escalators and elevators.

• 61.3% of mall tenants want a shopping mall to have more number of anchor tenants than regular tenants.

• Only 24.7% of mall tenants want theme malls to come up in the city of Chennai.

• A majority of 68.7% and 66.7% of retail tenants feel that the popularity of a mall is due to its variety in the retail outlets and availability of
entertainment options respectively.

- 86.7% of retail tenants feel that a mall should have adequate fire safety provisions which are extremely important.

- 83.3% and 82% of retail tenants feel that parking organization and preventive maintenance is essential for the infrastructure of a mall.

- 96.7%, 90% and 89.3% of mall tenants feel that a shopping mall should have a multiplex, food court and restaurants (other than food courts) respectively in its premises to increase the duration of a shopper’s stay in a mall.

- 86.7 % and 86% of mall tenants want a mall to essentially have ATM’s and wi – fi facility respectively.

- Only 14% and 29.3% of retail tenants feel that a mall should have a museum and a library respectively.

- 65.3% of mall tenants do not feel that standalone stores are giving them stiff competition as shopping malls in the city have their own group of loyal consumers.

7.2.9.3 Identification of shopping mall footfall drivers responsible for attracting consumers to a shopping mall

The study revealed 13 footfall drivers responsible for attracting consumers to shopping malls. The are:

- Atmosphere
- Mall uniqueness
- Traffic management
- Customer retention strategies
- Location
- Customer Experience Management (CEM)
- Comfort
- Mall marketing
With shopping mall tenants in Chennai constantly competing with each other to attract consumers, the footfall drivers identified in this study will facilitate mall developers and mall tenants to keep the consumer footfall raising.

7.2.9.4 Expectations of an ideal shopping mall – from the perspective of the consumer

The study revealed a plethora of 57 various services and amenities that consumer’s want an ideal shopping mall to provide them. The consumers have responded as to what are their expectations of an ideal shopping mall, and what kind of features, facilities and services they wish to be included in a shopping mall, which would make it perfect.

7.2.10 Identification of gaps between shopping mall footfall drivers and consumer’s expectations of an ideal shopping mall

It was revealed that total average percentage of the shopping mall footfall drivers responsible to attract consumers worked out to be 49.2 % and the percentage of the consumer’s expectations of an ideal shopping mall worked up to 50.8%.

This clearly shows that to reach the point of saturation and consumer expectations, Chennai shopping malls will have to provide 50.8% of the consumers’ expectations to be successful and increase their footfall. Given the high future supply of malls and increasing competitiveness within the Chennai retail market, shopping mall developers must meticulously address these gaps to ensure success in the long run.

7.2.11 Structural Equation Model (SEM) to develop the ideal shopping mall

The Structural Equation Model developed by the researcher represents three diverse dimensions as follows:

- Recreation
- Complementary services
- Customer service
- Safety
- Value additions
**Dimension 1** – Relationship among shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles.

**Dimension 2** – Variations in shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles across consumer demographic variables.

**Dimension 3** – Influence of shopping mall culture and shopping mall preference on Consumer Decision Making Styles.

The results of the Structural Equation Model revealed the following regarding the three dimensions:

- The model empirically proved the existence of the relationship among shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles.

- The model revealed that the consumer’s age is the most influencing factor to decide the consumer perception regarding shopping mall culture, shopping mall preference and Consumer Decision Making Styles. On the other hand gender and marital status of the consumer are the least influencing demographic variables. The consumer’s monthly family income, education, profession and number of dependents are the moderately influencing variables.

- It was also found that shopping mall culture and shopping mall preference collectively influenced Consumer Decision Making Styles. The model further revealed that awareness, mall browsing, mall loyalty, mall layout, mall affect had the most influence on a consumer’s decision making style. On the other hand retail development, competition, consumer engagement, tenant mix, customer experience and convenience moderately influenced a consumer’s decision, while mall environment, disposable income and innovation had the least influence on a consumer’s decision making style.

The findings of this study and the Structural Equation Model put forth several suggestions for stakeholders. The suggestions are as follows:
7.3 Suggestions

The present study has produced some significant suggestions for shopping mall developers, mall managers and mall tenants who are responsible for the success and smooth operations of shopping malls.

7.3.1 Suggestions for shopping mall developers

With the Chennai retail scene booming, mall developers in Chennai have a huge opportunity to invest in retail space. They have to use innovative strategies to attract retailers to occupy tenant spaces in their malls. Increase in the occupancy rates is always an added advantage to mall developers. Keeping this in mind the researcher puts forth the following suggestions:

- It is a known fact that when a new shopping mall is launched in the city, people will flock around it. In today’s high velocity environment and with shopping malls in the city involved in hyper competition amongst them, shopping mall developers need to strategize and implement universal panaceas for the challenges they face. They have to see a mall as a product rather than a real estate investment – a product that serves the purpose of consumer satisfaction.

- Location of a shopping mall plays a very vital role in its success. Shopping mall developers need to understand and analyse the catchment area before investing in a mall.

- Shopping mall developers need to invest in professional mall management services offered by experts to run a mall effectively.

- The right tenant mix can positively tilt the fortunes of a shopping mall and keep it pulsating. Mall developers have to work out a winning combination of an exceptionally innovative tenant mix and a strong retail proposition. In most cases the tenant mix steals the limelight in a shopping mall. An intelligent combination of stores is a sure crowd puller in malls and will satisfy the consumer cluster – Recreational quality seekers. The study revealed that consumers in Chennai prefer and patronize malls which have the following tenant mix components:
• Entertainment centres
• Multiplex with 4D/5D viewing theatres
• Sprawling food court with variety in cuisine and stand alone restaurants
• Gaming arcades – Indoor games, Billiards lounge and Snow bowling
• Adventure rides
• Unique stores like – bridal studios, yoga studios, diet stores, beauty / fitness centres

Mall developers need to focus on women shoppers, and rent out spaces to unique stores for women as a shopping mall is a women’s paradise. They shop for the whole family and also bring the kids along with them to the mall.

Anchor tenants are a great source of crowd pullers to a mall as mall consumers are loyal to anchor tenants. Mall tenants need to plan strategies to rope in more anchor tenants as at times, anchor tenants serve as an identity to a mall.

Shopping mall developers need to provide consumers with world class amenities and ambience in a mall to keep up with international competition. Few malls in the city have invested hugely by roping in international architects and interior designers to design the mall interiors and décor.

Mall developers need to plan out an exceptional mall layout as it is a very important for consumers to be comfortable to shop around in a mall. Shoppers should not have any difficulty in getting access to a particular store or service in a mall as a mall’s layout motivates a consumer to stay longer. A shopping mall might be the most posh one with extraordinary state of the art architecture and infrastructure, but if consumers are not able to easily access the stores they want to shop at, the mall’s appeal can be lost.
• Older malls in the city need to take a cue from their other counterparts and need to invest on maintenance and infrastructure to retain their existing customers and to attract new consumers.

• In a city like Chennai where traffic congestions are a very common sight, mall developers have to meticulously plan the parking layout of the mall.

• The results of this study revealed a contrasting finding as consumers preferred to shop at theme malls but mall tenants were not keen on the idea of having theme malls in Chennai. So, shopping mall developers can think on the lines of investing in theme malls in the future in the city of Chennai to satisfy consumers.

7.3.2 Suggestions for shopping mall managers

The change in the retail landscape of Chennai has made new age mall managers to relook into their existing managerial roles. A mall manager’s efficacy lies in his/her meticulous way of implementing the mall developer’s ideas, managing the tenants and satisfying the consumers. Keeping this mind the researcher puts forth the following suggestions:

• Since the consumer is constantly looking for entertainment and experiences in his shopping trips, mall managers need to employ ‘experiential marketing’ strategies and provide memorable customer experiences to keep the footfall raising – this is also a strategy to prevent mall fatigue among consumers.

• Mall managers should make mall marketing and promotion an integral part of their mall management strategy. With most malls in Chennai having a mixture of national and international brands, mall promotion will increase the level of consumer awareness of the mall’s tenant mix. By making mall advertising, promotions and placements at every consumer contact point, shopping malls should strive to become central to a consumer’s everyday existence.

• With a majority of mall consumers willing to spend 3 to 4 hours in a mall, mall managers need to chalk out a detailed plan for various customer engagement programs to be conducted in their mall. Planning too many
programs without proper agenda will cause overcrowding inside the mall premises, thereby making it difficult for traffic management.

- The mall manager’s foremost duty is to deploy exceptional support service staff to handle all kinds of shoppers in a mall, as service encounters serve as a benchmark of a mall’s image. Consumers will not return to mall if they are not treated well.

- Safety of consumers inside a mall is a vital issue to be handled by mall managers. Mall managers have to deploy special security personnel and bouncers to protect and prevent the harassment of women consumers. In the past two years the city has witnessed three suicides inside shopping malls.

7.3.3 Suggestions for shopping mall tenants

- The most important facet of every tenant in a shopping mall is to get noticed and create positive experience for their consumers. The consumer cluster “explorers” indulges in heavy mall browsing and spend a lot of time in a shopping mall. They take a lot of effort to explore almost every store in a mall before making a purchase decision. Attractive displays will make shoppers spend more time in the store. Mall browsing has a huge influence on the consumer’s decision making style. By investing in professional visual merchandising displays for their stores mall tenants can impress and attract explorers to their stores.

- Detached and intelligent consumers are always a challenge to mall tenants. Mall tenants can undertake customer retention strategies and implement “loyalty programs” to sustain and attract this customer group. Consumers and shoppers who are given recognition will have a sense of belonging to the store/mall.

- Mall tenants can provide complimentary services to their customers like free home delivery services, gift wrapping, instant photo processing, child pram services, etc., to make them emotionally attached to their store.

- Every mall tenant should work towards the following aspects to be successful than their competitors:
- Be noticeable
- Perform to the core
- Be novel and exciting in the product offering
- Become valuable to the mall developer and consumer

7.4 Shopping mall culture in Chennai – What does the future hold?
As shopping malls are becoming consumer habitats, the ‘mall culture’ in Chennai is here to stay. Mall developers can also introduce the concept of theme malls in Chennai where a wide range of similar merchandise and price ranges are offered to a consumer. When innovation is injected in a mall, shoppers tend to turn into actual consumers. The ultimate challenge lying before every shopping mall developer, manager and tenant is to convert mall hoppers/ browsers into actual consumers. However, the malls that would survive in the future would be the ones, that are run well and that which understands the consumer’s expectations.

7.5 Conclusion
Even while Chennai is a little behind its southern counterparts in terms of mall development, the city has adapted itself to the ‘mall culture’ and the shopping mall culture has brought a refreshing change in the way Chennai consumers shop. Shopping malls aren’t just places to shop, they are attraction centers for people to come together, to socialize, see new developments, do the shopping and serve as employment hubs. Changing dynamics of consumer behaviour and enormous brand choices has made the consumer to settle for nothing less than the best. Understanding what the consumer wants is the key to survive in the long run.

An ideal shopping mall is the reflection of the amiable relationship among the stakeholders – mall developers, mall managers, mall tenants and the consumers. In conclusion, the researcher proposes that an ideal and successful shopping mall should be a manifestation of the following components:

M – Mall itself
A – Awareness
L – Layout
L – Loyalty
7. 6 Agenda for further research

This study will serve as a threshold for many innovative research ideas and investigations. The agenda for further research is listed as follows:

- This study can be extended to the tier – 2 and tier – 3 cities of Tamil Nadu as they have a huge potential for modern retail formats.

- This study can be extended to the other metros of India and a comparative analysis can be performed.

- An in – depth and comprehensive study of the Indian shopping mall industry and its impact on the Indian economy and consumerism can be studied.

- Studies can be conducted for materializing effective shopping mall management strategies.

- Consumer Decision Making Styles can be studied for other modern retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets.

- Global comparisons of Consumer Decision Making Styles can be studied to understand the dynamics of consumer decision making across continents and cultures.