

Emerging Mall Culture and Shopping Behavior of Gen Z with Special Reference to Coimbatore

Dr. Gayathiry D¹, Dr. G. Ilakkia²

¹ Assistant Professor, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, India.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce CS CA

Dr. N. G. P. Arts and Science College, India.

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ABSTRACT

Rise of mall culture in India has profoundly transformed urban consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z a group recognized for its technological proficiency, brand awareness, and changing lifestyle choices. This research paper explores the emerging mall culture and shopping behavior of Gen Z consumers in Coimbatore, a rapidly developing urban hub in Tamil Nadu. This research intends to investigate the level of awareness among Generation Z concerning their shopping habits in malls and to evaluate the prevailing trends that influence their interactions with these retail environments. Additionally, it aims to measure the satisfaction levels of Generation Z consumers regarding mall services, which encompass ambiance, product variety, convenience, and customer support. Moreover, the study highlights significant obstacles that prevent Generation Z from fully participating in mall shopping, including pricing issues, overcrowding, a limited selection of brands, and insufficient digital integration. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires and interviews conducted with Generation Z individuals in Coimbatore, involving a sample size of 100 respondents. The findings offer essential insights for mall developers, retailers, and marketers aiming to connect with Gen Z consumers more effectively. This research enhances the understanding of consumer patterns and urban lifestyle changes in Tier-II cities across India.

Keywords: Mall, Online Shopping, Generation Z, Shopping Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The retail industry in India is experiencing rapid growth, transforming into a well-structured sector that provides modern shopping experiences. Shopping malls have emerged as a favored destination for young consumers aged 18 to 30, frequently replacing conventional retail outlets. Despite the increasing popularity of online shopping, the allure of mall shopping persists due to its social and experiential benefits. The emergence of mall culture in India can be traced back to the late 1990s, propelled by government tax incentives aimed at promoting the construction of malls and multiplexes. This initiative ignited a retail revolution, blending shopping with entertainment. The idea of 'window shopping' and the 'one-stop-shop' experience drew in both consumers and independent retailers, who modified their offerings to cater to a wider audience. The shopping mall concept, which originated in Paris, rapidly gained global traction, changing shopping from a mere transactional activity into a leisure pursuit. Presently, malls serve as hubs for consumption, social interaction, and lifestyle expression. Young individuals aged 13 to 24 exhibit significant engagement with malls, with 70% of those aged 18 to 24 favoring in-person shopping. For Generation Z, malls provide a platform for identity and self-expression through customized fashion, accessories, and experiences. Their buying choices are significantly shaped by their peers, physical displays, and mobile research, rather than social media. Additionally, email marketing is crucial in keeping them informed about brands and trends. In India, malls exist alongside traditional markets, often representing urban modernization. Nevertheless, customers often reminisce about the personalized service offered by local 'kirana' stores, where shopkeepers recognized them by name and understood their preferences. While malls provide convenience and variety, they frequently lack the personal touch and robust post-sale services. As shopping habits continue to evolve, Indian malls are adjusting to strike a balance between experience, affordability, and cultural significance, indicating a phase of self-correction within this retail expansion.

Statement of Problem

Shopping behaviors have experienced a notable change in contemporary times. Currently, shopping centers offer an extensive array of products and services, fulfilling almost every consumer requirement. As household incomes rise, individuals are allocating more funds towards shopping, resulting in an uptick in visits to malls and increased expectations from these venues. This research intends to explore the developing trends in mall culture and assess the shopping patterns of Generation Z in Coimbatore. By addressing this gap in research, the study aims to provide meaningful insights into how malls can adapt to align with the preferences of this

technologically adept generation, enhance customer engagement, and maintain competitiveness in light of the growing impact of online shopping platforms.

Objectives of the study

- 1 To analyze the current trends of shopping behaviors in emerging mall culture.
- 2 To assess the level of satisfaction among Gen Z towards the services provided by the shopping malls.
- 3 To analyze the barriers faced by Gen Z in shopping in malls.

Review of literature

Vinod Narayan Sayankar et al.,(2024) This research investigates the impact of the marketing mix elements on the consumer behavior in Pune city, specifically at shopping malls. It focuses on the 4 P's of marketing (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) and the extended 3 P's for services (People, Process, Physical evidence). Data was collected from 770 people across 35 malls using a scheduled questionnaire and convenient sampling method. The study finds a significant relationship between the marketing mix elements and buying behavior. It reveals that when considered together, these factors greatly influence purchasing decisions, leading to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Statistical methods like cross-tabulation, ANOVA, and correlation were used for analysis. The research emphasizes the importance of strategically blending marketing mix elements to effectively attract and retain customers. Mall management should focus on implementing these insights to enhance the shopping experience and drive consumer loyalty.

Research Methodology

Research methodology pertains to the organized approach employed to tackle the research issue, encompassing the design and techniques utilized in the investigation. This research is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was gathered directly from participants in Coimbatore through a structured questionnaire, whereas secondary data was sourced from books, journals, articles, newspapers, and credible websites. The scope of the study is limited to the city of Coimbatore. A convenient random sampling method was applied, resulting in a sample size of 100 respondents. The sampling design aims to examine consumer satisfaction and shopping behavior among Generation Z in relation to the emerging mall culture. To analyze the collected data, various statistical methods were employed, including Simple Percentage Analysis, Average Score and Chi-Square Test.

Data & Analysis

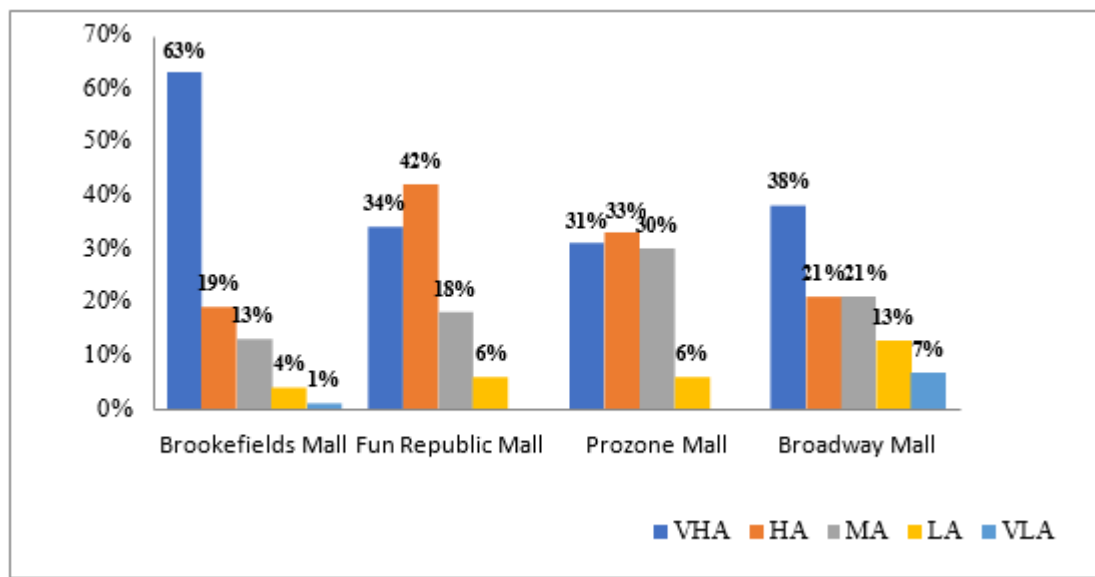
Table No : 1 LEVEL OF AWARENESS MALLS IN COIMBATORE

S.No	Malls		VHA	HA	MA	LA	VLA
1.	Brookefields Mall	No	63	19	13	4	1
		%	63%	19%	13%	4%	1%
2.	Fun Republic Mall	No	34	42	18	6	-
		%	34%	42%	18%	6%	-
3.	Prozone Mall	No	31	33	30	6	-
		%	31%	33%	30%	6%	-
4.	Broadway Mall	No	38	21	21	13	7
		%	38%	21%	21%	13%	7%

(Source: Primary data)

CHART NO: 1

AWARENESS MALLS IN COIMBATORE



(VHA-Very High Awareness, HA-High Awareness, MA-Moderate Awareness, LA-Low Awareness, VLA-Very Low Awareness)

Interpretation: The table 4.1.4 highlights the level of awareness of malls in Coimbatore among respondents. Brookefields Mall has the highest level of awareness, with 63% of respondents indicating very high awareness, followed by 19% with high awareness and only 1% reporting very low awareness. Fun Republic Mall has 34% of respondents with very high awareness and 42% with high awareness, with no respondents reporting very low awareness. Prozone Mall shows a more balanced distribution, with 31% each for very high and moderate awareness, and 33% for high awareness. Broadway Mall has the lowest overall awareness, with only 38% indicating very high awareness and 7% reporting very low awareness, the highest among all malls.

Overall, Brookefields Mall emerges as the most recognized, while Broadway Mall shows the least awareness levels.

AVERAGE SCORE ANALYSIS FOR THE EVALUATION OF SHOPPING MALL EXPERIENCE

Table No : 2

S.No	Satisfaction Level	Level	HS	S	N	DS	HDS	Total	Mean
		Score	5	4	3	2	1		
1.	Overall mall ambiance	No	52	38	9	-	1	100	4.40
		Score	260	152	27	-	1	440	
2.	Cleanliness of the mall	No	37	46	14	-	3	100	4.14
		Score	185	184	42	-	3	414	
3.	Variety of stores	No	25	47	26	-	2	100	3.93
		Score	125	188	78	-	2	393	
4.	Quality of products available	No	28	46	20	-	6	100	3.90
		Score	140	184	60	-	6	390	
5.	Availability of parking space	No	27	38	27	7	1	100	3.83
		Score	135	152	81	14	1	383	
6.	Customer services	No	16	43	32	4	5	100	3.61
		Score	80	172	96	8	5	361	
7.	Security and safety	No	28	40	26	3	3	100	3.87
		Score	140	160	78	6	3	387	

(HS-Highly Satisfied, S-Satisfied, N-Neutral, DS-Dissatisfied, HDS-Highly Dissatisfied)

Interpretation: The above table 4.2.2 average score analysis reveals the evolution of shopping mall experience across various parameters. The overall mall ambiance received the highest mean score of (4.40), indicating that malls have been successful in creating an appealing atmosphere for shoppers. Cleanliness of the mall also scored high with a mean of (4.14), suggesting that malls prioritize maintenance and hygiene. However, other aspects such as variety of stores (3.93), quality of products available (3.90), and availability of parking space (3.83) received relatively lower scores, indicating room for improvement. Customer service scored a mean of (3.61), which is the lowest among all parameters, highlighting the need for malls to focus on enhancing customer experience. Security and safety received a mean score of (3.87), which is satisfactory but can be further improved.

Majority of overall mall ambiance with the mean (4.40) achieved the highest level of satisfaction among respondents.

Chi – Square

SOURCE OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE SHOPPING PREFERENCE IN THE MALLS

NULL HYPOTHESIS (H0)

There is no significant relationship between personal factors and source of awareness about the shopping preference in the malls.

The table represents the results of chi-square analysis in terms of personal factors, chi-square value, p values and their significant on source of awareness about the shopping preference in the malls.

SHOWING THE COMPARISON BETWEEN PERSONAL FACTORS AND SOURCE OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE SHOPPING PREFERENCE IN THE MALLS

TABLE 3

S.No	Personal Factors	Chi-square value	Significant value	S/NS
1.	Gender	1.203	0.752	NS
2.	Age group	5.255	0.042	S
3.	Occupation	5.200	0.817	NS
4.	Education Qualification	10.456	0.315	NS
5.	Family income	6.781	0.660	NS
6.	Marital status	1.570	0.666	NS

(Note: S-Significant @5% level (p-value<0.05), NS- Not significant @5% level (p-value>0.05)

Interpretation: The above table 4.4.1 shows that the results of the Chi-square test for the personal factors listed in the table suggest that five of these factors show a statistically not significant relationship with the outcome variable. Specifically, the age group is significant with 0.042. The Chi-square values for all factors, including gender, occupation, education qualification, family income, and marital status are accompanied by p-values greater than the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05. Specifically, the p-values range from 0.133 to 0.817, indicating that there is no significant association between these personal factors and the outcome being measured.

Conclusion

The evolving mall culture in Coimbatore is being significantly influenced by the shopping behavior of Gen Z, who prioritize digital convenience, experiential shopping, sustainability, and affordability. To meet their expectations, malls must integrate advanced technology, enhance entertainment options, and adopt eco-friendly initiatives. Additionally, offering personalized shopping experiences, leveraging social media engagement, and improving accessibility will help retain and attract younger consumers.

By addressing these recommendations, malls in Coimbatore can transform into vibrant lifestyle hubs that cater to the dynamic needs of Gen Z, ensuring long-term growth and customer loyalty in an increasingly competitive retail landscape.

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