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Consumer Decision Making Styles in Chennai Shopping Malls: An Empirical Study

***Dr.Lalitha Balakrishnan, **Ms. Nisha.U**

*Vice Principal & Professor, M.O.P.Vaishnav College for Women (Autonomous),20, IV Lane, Nungambakkam High Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600034, Email id – doctorlalitha@gmail.com

**Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, M.O.P.Vaishnav College for Women (Autonomous),20, IV Lane, Nungambakkam High Road,Nungambakkam,Chennai – 600034 Ph – 9840096372Email id – nishaudayshankar@yahoo.co.in

Abstract

“I don't go to the malls to shop. Sure I might buy something, but it's not opportunity or need that brings me to a mall- it's the glitter and glitz, the chance to mingle. A good mall is like a good man: it offers entertainment, excitement and enlightenment.” - (Gershman 1988, p. 43).

Gone are the days when people had to buy different things at different places. Those were the days when there were separate markets for various things. People used to visit general stores for purchasing daily-required household materials. Now, almost everything is available for all of us under just one roof. Thanks to the numerous shopping malls that have opened across the country in last ten years. The shopping malls have made shopping an easy activity for people now. This paper discusses the emergence of mall culture in Chennai that has grown with an incredible pace. Just a few years back, people had to make a choice among shopping, movies or hanging out on a holiday but thanks to our malls, all these jobs can be performed at the same time, under the same roof and all this results in a wonderful experience. And it is basically the experience and not the intention that counts when it comes to shopping malls. Consumer decision making process is a complex phenomenon. The purchase of goods or services includes a number of factors that could affect each decision. Decision making is more complex and even more important for consumers today than in the past. This paper studies the decision making style of consumers in Chennai shopping malls. This study will be of high relevance to modern retailers as the choice of a shopping mall is in essence a lifestyle decision for many consumers.

Key words: Chennai, Consumers, Consumer Decision Making Styles, Consumer Style Inventory, Mall, Mall Culture, Satisfaction, Shopping, Shoppers, Shopping malls

Introduction

Chennai enjoys a unique place among the bustling metropolitan cities of India. The fourth largest city in India, right from the days of the British, Chennai

continues to be an important trade centre. The most common developments coming up in most of the prime commercial areas of the city are the large, swanky shopping malls. A large-hearted city, the pulse of

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Chennai is its ability to adapt to changes without losing its identity. After the concepts of globalization and liberalization invaded the Indian markets, there has been a flood of international brands here. With this, the shopping mall culture is spreading at a speed not known before. Shopping Malls are mushrooming with the speed of fire and have completely changed the face of the city. Shopping malls are the battlegrounds where the brands, small, medium and big, the known, the not-so-well-known and the wannabe ones, fight it out for the consumer's attention. And the consumer is 'loving it' and asking for more. Yes, this is one culture that consumers are happy about – "The Shopping Mall Culture". Given the rate at which malls are coming up, the commercial as well as residential real estate business is spiraling upwards.

Let's not stereotype the shopping mall culture as an 'invasion' by the western marauders. It's not crossover also. It's actually a makeover – that is happening in most of the countries of the world and waiting to happen to others – a makeover that is happening on both the sides of the cultural equator of the globe. And Chennai is ready for the makeover now.

Shopping malls in Chennai in prime locations are being developed to satisfy the business space requirements of the people here. A shopping mall in Chennai can be referred as a place or complex occupied with various kinds of retail shops. This is a modern, indoor version of traditional marketplace that facilitates for easy shopping of different products of use at the same place.

Shopping malls in Chennai generally offer a wide range of items under one single roof at reasonable rates so that consumers can shop, save and enjoy at the

same time. Numerous products manufactured by several companies and leading brands are usually put in stock in these malls for the consumers to compare and select according to their requirements, choice and budget. Traditional artwork, handicrafts, antiques, jewellery, saris, electronic goods, toys, books, footwear, music accessories, toiletries, garments, stationery, decoration items, electronic appliances, gift items, leather articles, food items and cosmetics are some of the popular items you can find in best varieties at shopping malls.

Shopping malls in Chennai have revolutionized the way the people shop in Chennai. They have made shopping easier and more enjoyable. Shopping in present day multi-faceted Chennai shopping malls is truly a delightful and fascinating experience where you will have an opportunity to do other things too rather than just shopping. For example some shopping malls are also equipped with food courts, ice cream shops, entertainment facilities and cold drink shops where consumers can munch on their favorite food items and have pleasure with cool ice creams, drinks and have a great time shopping out.

Shopping mall development in Chennai

Both traditional shopping spaces as well as large shopping malls facilitate for shopping in Chennai. In order to cope up with the increasing demand for shopping spaces that facilitate for a luxurious shopping experience, the international style, multi-facilitated shopping malls are sprouting up in prime areas of the city. The city has already got some of the best shopping malls of South India and still is witnessing new upcoming developments in this field.

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From the days when Spencer Plaza alone attracted shoppers to its stride, the crowd is now more distributed across the city. Chennai is a little behind its other southern counterparts in terms of mall development. Compared to Bangalore and Hyderabad, the quality supply in terms of malls is lower; but the city is warming up to the whole mall culture with the entry of new malls in various locations in the city. On the flipside, the city has a huge potential and is going to continue as a preferred retail location.

Chennai can boost of the legacy of housing India's first full fledged organised retail mall Spence Plaza that was launched in 1989 at Egmore. And the city saw the next full fledged mall – Citi Centre, located in Mylapore – only after sixteen years.

In keeping with the international demands where customers look for an altogether different shopping experience, the shopping mall culture is fast gaining popularity. So happy that no consumer seems to mind the 'unplanned expenditure' incurred by an outing to such an enticing place. They enjoy air-conditioned comfort, availability of a range of merchandise just under one roof, and a one-stop family entertainment arena. The range and scope of the economic activity generated from mall culture promises many things to many people. Other than offering shoppers more value for money, the scale of operations generates employment opportunities, direct and indirect, for thousands of people.

Express Avenue, Forum Vijaya mall, Pheonix Market City, Ampa Skywalk are some of the state-of-the-art shopping malls once can find for an over-whelming shopping experience in Chennai. Most of the shopping mall development in Chennai is coming in and around the prime business areas of the city like Purasawalkam High

Road, Mylapore, Nungambakkam High Road and the Old Mahabalipuram Road stretch. With so many competitors in the market, developers are also trying to make sure that a differentiation factor exists for them to bring in more footfalls. Considering the way in which malls are proliferating in the city, it might just be the beginning of the story as there is a lot more expected to happen in this space in the coming years.

While some metros have already started facing issues of mall occupancy, Chennai still seems to be basking in the glory of its mall story. The occupancy levels in malls in the city are around 85 – 90%. Overall vacancy across the country is around 18%, whereas Chennai hovers at around 12%, which is significantly lower than the national average. The current stock of mall space in Chennai is approximately 4 million sq ft and is expected to rise to about 5 million sq ft based on the proposed launches of new malls this year.

The older malls need to spend on maintenance and work on retaining existing customers and involve them in greater participation. Besides loyalty benefits in areas like parking, convenience shopping and value added services from anchor tenants also need to be brought in. A story that comes up in this juncture is of Spencer Plaza, which was one of the most happening places in the city, before the proliferation actually began. Spencer is a different story. The retailers here own the shops and hence save on exorbitant rents charged by other malls. Malls give a controlled retail atmosphere and customers get all under one roof. It is a natural process that when something new comes in town, people will flock around it. There are customers who would go to an older mall because it is a familiar space for them. While Spencer was in its peak till 2010,

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business is still happening there. Most malls have the same kind of store everywhere. Why Spencer stands out even now is because it is an Indianised mall. The foreign tourists and NRI's still come here for the ethnic wear, handicrafts, pashmina shawls and many Indian brands.

Research objectives

- To study the emergence of shopping mall culture in Chennai.
- To examine the consumer decision making styles adopted by consumers in Chennai shopping malls.

Literature review

An extensive review of literature was undertaken to identify theoretical and empirical work done. A review of concepts and previous studies is useful to define precisely the concepts used in the present study, place the research problem in the proper perspective and decide the frame work for analysis.

Consumer decision making process is a complex phenomenon. The purchase of goods or services includes a number of factors that could affect each decision. Decision making is more complex and even more important for consumers today than in the past. In recent years, lots of researchers were become more and more interested in purchase behavior of the consumer. In an attempt to learn how and why people shop, scholars categorize the consumers shopping behaviour based on their decision-making style.

A consumer decision-making style may be defined as "a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices" (Sproles and Kendall, 1986, p. 267). They developed a comprehensive instrument called Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) to measure consumer

decision making styles. The instrument was administered to 482 students in 29 home economics classes in five high schools in the Tucson, Arizona area. This instrument measured eight mental characteristics of consumer's decision making such as - perfectionism, brand consciousness, novelty-fashion consciousness, recreational, price-value consciousness, impulsiveness, confused by over choice, and brand-loyal/habitual.

The authors developed the instrument as the identification of these characteristics among consumers will help them to profile an individual consumer style, educate consumers about their specific decision making characteristics, and counsel families on financial management.

They believe that consumers engage in shopping with certain fundamental decision making modes or styles including rational shopping, consciousness regarding brand, price and quality among others. Sproles (1985) and Sproles and Kendall (1986) used data from samples of young consumers in the United States to measure basic characteristics of consumer decision making styles. Sproles and Kendall (1986) provide the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) to measure consumers' shopping behaviour using decision making orientation. They make an assumption about consumers' decision-making styles is that consumers have eight different decision-making characteristics that determine the shopping decision they make. The eight characteristics of consumers identified by Sproles and Kendall are as follows:-

- **Perfectionist / high quality-conscious consumer:** decision style of consumers who systematically search for the best quality products possible.

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- **Brand conscious / price equals quality:** decision style of consumers concerned with getting the most expensive, well-known brands.
- **Novelty and fashion conscious:** decision style of consumers who like new and innovative products and who gain excitement from seeking out new things.
- **Recreational and shopping conscious:** decision style of consumers who take pleasure in shopping and who shop just for fun of it.
- **Price conscious / value for the money:** decision style of consumers who are concerned with getting lower prices.
- **Impulsiveness / careless:** decision style of consumers who tend to buy spontaneously and who are unconcerned about how much money they spend.
- **Confused by over choice:** decision style of consumers who feel they have too many brands and stores to choose from and who likely experience information overload in the market.
- **Habitual / brand loyal:** decision style of consumers who shop at the same stores and tend to buy the same brands each time.

Jeanne J Hafstrom, Jung Sook Chae, and Young Sook Chung (1992), used the Consumer Style Inventory to identify the decision-making styles of Korean students. They confirmed seven of the eight factors using Sproles & Kendall's analytical methods and conceptual framework. The only factor that was not confirmed was 'novelty fashion consciousnesses. They attributed this to possible links between 'brand consciousnesses' and 'fashion consciousnesses among young Korean consumers.

Durvasula S, Lysonski S, and Andrews J C (1993) administered the Consumer Style Inventory on 210 undergraduate business students at a large university in New Zealand. They found eight consumer decision making styles. These styles are perfectionist, brand conscious, novelty-fashion conscious, recreational shopping conscious, price-value conscious, impulsive, confused by over-choice, and habitual/ brand loyal.

Jessie X Fan and Xiao Jing J. (1998) used a modified Consumer Style Inventory with Chinese students. They clearly identified five dimensions of consumer decision making styles: brand consciousness; time consciousness; price consciousness; quality consciousness; and information utilization.

Hui A, Siu N, Wang C and Chang L. (2001) administered the Consumer Style Inventory to 387 adult consumers in China. Their findings indicate that five decision-making styles are valid and reliable in Chinese culture. These styles were perfectionist, novelty-fashion conscious, recreational, price conscious, and confused by over choice.

Walsh G, Mitchell V W, and Thureau T H (2001) adopted the Consumer Style Inventory and confirmed seven factors of consumer decision-making styles for German consumers. These factors were brand consciousness, perfectionism, recreational/hedonism, confused by over choice, impulsiveness, novelty-fashion consciousness, variety seeking. Variety seeking was novel to Germany and replaced brand loyalty and price value consciousness factors.

Canabal M E (2002) investigated the decision making styles of South Indian Consumers utilizing Customer Style Inventory. Using data collected from 173

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college students from two institutions of higher education in the city of Coimbatore, South India, the author identified five decision making styles of South Indian. These styles are (1) Brand Conscious Style, (2) High Quality Conscious / Perfectionist Style, (3) Confused by Overchoice Style, (4) Impulsive / Brand Indifferent Style, and (5) Recreational Shopper Style.

Safiek Mokhlis (2011) has examined the cross-cultural applicability of the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) of young Chinese consumers in Malaysia and has compared the identified factors with those of previous similar studies. Data for this study were collected from 115 Chinese students from one public university in Malaysia. As a result of exploratory factor analysis, the following six reliable factors of decision-making styles were identified by the author: (1) brand conscious, (2) recreational, hedonistic, (3) novelty-fashion conscious, (4) confused by overchoice, (5) quality conscious, and (6) shopping avoidance. To identify differences and similarities of consumer style factor structures across different cultural settings, comparisons were made with those of previous studies on Chinese consumers conducted in China and South Africa. The findings provide some support for the generalizability of decision-making traits of Chinese consumers across these countries.

The CSI has been applied to nine countries: the U.S., Korea, New Zealand, Greece, India, Iran, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and China. There is evidence that decision-making styles can vary across cultures, but it is not known how they vary across all cultures.

Sample size and scope of the study

The data was collected from various parts of Chennai, especially from consumers in the age group of 18 – 55 years as they are active shoppers and frequent shopping malls. A total of 115 respondents participated in the survey. The survey was undertaken during March – May 2013.

Research design

The present study is based on an innovative and analytical research design. This research will be a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to identify consumers' decision making styles in shopping malls. Descriptive research design will be used to examine the current condition of shopping mall culture and its impact of consumer purchase patterns. The descriptive research will involve human observation and responses that will be collected, organised and presented in a clear and systematic manner to provide accurate conclusions.

Research instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument in this study. The questionnaires are used to collect information on the shopping mall culture in Chennai, Consumer Decision Making Style, shopping value, perceived shopping mall image and socio-demographic variable.

The questionnaire consisted of 2 major sections which total 47 items of questions. The categorical variables are measured based on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree" to "strongly disagree". Subjects are asked to express agreement or disagreement of a five point scale.

Table 1: Questionnaire Sections

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SECTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE	VARIABLES	SOURCES
Section A	Demographic Details Of Respondents	Authors
Section B	Consumer Decision Making Styles	George P Sproles & Elizabeth L Kendall (1986) Hee Chii Chyuan (2009)

Demographic profile of the sample

A total of 115 respondents participated in the survey. Selected demographic characteristics of the sample

including gender, age, education, marital status and monthly income are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Demographic profile of the sample

VARIABLES		FREQUENCY	%
Gender	Male	46	40.00
	Female	69	60.00
Age	18 – 25	64	55.65
	26 – 35	23	20.00
	36 – 45	13	11.30
	46 – 55	11	9.57
	Above 56	3	2.61
Education	Lower than High School	0	0.00
	High School or Equivalent	13	11.30
	Bachelor degree	93	80.87
	Master degree	8	6.96
	Doctoral degree	1	0.87

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	Others	0	0.00
Marital status	Single	82	71.30
	Married	33	28.70
Monthly income	Less than Rs.20,000	0	0.00
	Rs.20,000 to Rs.40,000	21	18.26
	Rs.40,000 to Rs.60,000	76	66.09
	Rs.60,000 to Rs.80,000	13	11.30
	More than Rs.80,000	5	4.35

Exploratory principal components analysis using a Varimax rotation was used to summarize the items into an underlying set of Consumer Decision Making Styles characteristics. All factor loadings of 0.4 or above were identified in the factor matrix, the same level used by Sproles and Kendall (1986).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been used to identify the various CDMS of consumers in Chennai shopping malls. Principal Component Analysis method is applied and the following results are obtained:

Table 3: Kaiser – Meyer - Olkin and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.805
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7443.552
	Df	861
	Significance	.000

Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity give information about the factorability of the data. As a measure of sampling adequacy KMO is a test of the amount of variance within the data that could be explained by factors. The Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy value is 0.805 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with

approximate Chi – Square value is 7443.552 and these values are statistically significant at 5% level.

Therefore it can be concluded that the sample size of the research is adequate for the factors and all the 42 variables considered for the research process intrinsic correlation among themselves. These values give high reliability for all the 42 variables

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and also justify the extraction of the factors.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.565	18.012	18.012	7.565	18.012	18.012
2	3.055	7.273	25.285	3.055	7.273	25.285
3	2.521	6.003	31.289	2.521	6.003	31.289
4	2.422	5.766	37.055	2.422	5.766	37.055
5	2.001	4.764	41.819	2.001	4.764	41.819
6	1.733	4.126	45.945	1.733	4.126	45.945
7	1.477	3.515	49.460	1.477	3.515	49.460
8	1.402	3.338	52.798	1.402	3.338	52.798
9	1.202	2.862	55.660	1.202	2.862	55.660
10	1.188	2.830	58.490	1.188	2.830	58.490
11	1.131	2.692	61.182	1.131	2.692	61.182
12	1.043	2.483	63.665	1.043	2.483	63.665
13	.915	2.180	65.844			
14	.896	2.133	67.978			
15	.865	2.059	70.036			
16	.795	1.893	71.929			
17	.764	1.818	73.747			
18	.722	1.720	75.467			
19	.706	1.682	77.149			
20	.676	1.609	78.758			
21	.651	1.549	80.307			
22	.602	1.433	81.740			
23	.580	1.380	83.120			
24	.555	1.321	84.441			
25	.552	1.315	85.756			
26	.503	1.199	86.954			
27	.470	1.118	88.072			
28	.455	1.083	89.155			
29	.420	1.001	90.156			
30	.417	.992	91.148			
31	.397	.945	92.093			
32	.392	.933	93.027			
33	.378	.901	93.927			
34	.350	.833	94.760			

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35	.334	.794	95.555			
36	.319	.759	96.313			
37	.310	.737	97.050			
38	.284	.677	97.727			
39	.272	.647	98.374			
40	.244	.580	98.954			
41	.224	.533	99.487			
42	.215	.513	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From table 4 it is found that 42 variables are reduced into 12 predominant factors with total variance 63.665%. These factors also possess the individual variances 18.012%, 7.273%, 6.003%, 5.766%, 4.764%, 4.126%, 3.515%, 3.338%, 2.862%, 2.830%, 2.692% and 2.483%.

The Eigen values above 1 are noticed for the 12 factors in the following order: 7.565, 3.055, 2.521, 2.422, 2.001, 1.733, 1.477, 1.402, 1.202, 1.188, 1.131 and 1.043

The variable loadings for each factor are measured using Rotated Component Matrix. The Rotated Component Matrix shows the 42 variables that measure the Consumer Decision making Styles of consumers in Chennai shopping malls extracted into 12 factors. These factors are explained below with the respective variables with the factor loadings:

FACTOR 1 - CONFUSED BY OVER CHOICE CONSUMER: This is decision style of consumers who feel they have too many brands and stores to choose from and who likely experience information overload in the market and have difficulty making decisions. They are often confused shoppers. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best (.783)*
- *All the information I get on different products confuse me (.775)*
- *A mall has so many brands to choose from that I often feel confused (.747)*
- *Sometimes it is hard to choose what to shop for in a mall (.732)*

FACTOR 2 - HABITUAL / STORE LOYAL: This is a decision style of consumers who shop at the same stores and tend to buy the same brands each time they visit a shopping mall. They are very brand and store loyal. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *I often purchase from the same store in a mall (.779)*
- *Even though other brands may be better choices, I still tend to stick to my favorite brands (.726)*
- *I go to the same shopping mall each time I shop (.726)*
- *Once I find a shopping mall I like, I stick with it (.698)*
- *Most of the clothes that I buy are of the same brand name (.646)*

FACTOR 3 - BRAND CONSCIOUS / "PRICE EQUALS QUALITY"

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CONSUMER: This is a decision style of consumers who are concerned with getting the most expensive and well-known brands. They have a positive attitude towards popular brands and high priced brands. They also prefer best – selling and advertised brands. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *The higher the price of the product, the better its quality (.733)*
- *The more expensive brands are usually my choice (.694)*
- *The most advertised brands are usually very good choices (.669)*
- *The well-known national brands are best for me (.502)*
- *I prefer to purchase at a mall because they have the best-selling brands(.486)*

FACTOR 4 - RECREATIONAL, HEDONISTIC AND SHOPPING CONSCIOUS CONSUMER: This is a decision style of consumers who take pleasure in shopping and who shops just for fun of it. Shopping is a pleasure activity for these consumers. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *Shopping malls with entertainment options attract me (.731)*
- *Going shopping in a mall is one of the enjoyable activities of my life (.719)*
- *I enjoy shopping at a mall just for the fun of it (.711)*
- *I prefer to eat at a food court after shopping at a mall (.533)*

FACTOR 5 - NOVELTY AND FASHION CONSCIOUS CONSUMER: This is a decision style of consumers who like new and innovative products and who gain excitement from seeking out new

things. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *I keep my wardrobe up to date with the changing fashion (.743)*
- *I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style (.736)*
- *Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me (.724)*
- *It is fun to buy something new and exciting from a mall (.492)*

FACTOR 6 – COMPULSIVE CONSUMER: This is a decision style of consumers who go on a spending streak and purchases and spends money in mall due to pressure of materialist values and the urge to satisfy peers. Compulsive buying is seen as an exaggerated form of a more normal search for validation through purchasing. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *I would like to buy the costly goods from a mall that I like even though I have borrowed money from others. (.716)*
- *I prefer to watch a movie after shopping at a mall (.564)*
- *When shopping with friends or other people, I am more willing to pay higher prices (.524)*

FACTOR 7 – PERFECTIONIST / HIGH QUALITY-CONSCIOUS CONSUMER: This is a decision style of consumers who carefully and systematically search for the best quality products possible. They search for only high quality products. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *Product quality is the most important factor when I am purchasing at a mall (.780)*
- *I am willing to pay higher prices to buy better quality products (.692)*

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- *My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high and so purchase from a mall (.559)*
- *When buying daily consumables, I tend to choose those of better quality (.538)*

FACTOR 8 - PRICE CONSCIOUS / "VALUE FOR THE MONEY"

CONSUMER: This is decision style of consumers who are concerned with getting lower prices for the products they purchase. They are likely to be comparison shoppers and want value for their money. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *I am conscious about my economic condition when making purchase decisions at a mall (.766)*
- *I always buy goods which are useful to me and are reasonable price (.722)*
- *I am willing to spend time to compare prices among shops in a mall in order to buy some lower priced products (.634)*
- *I often wait until a store has a sale to shop (.548)*

FACTOR 9 - IMPULSIVENESS / CARELESS CONSUMER:

This is a decision style of consumers who tend to buy spontaneously and who are unconcerned about how much money they spend. They never plan their shopping trips and are careless shoppers. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *I really do not give my purchases much thought or care (.571)*
- *I lose track of time when I am in the mall (.570)*
- *When I leave the mall I am sometimes surprised to see that it is dark outside [or raining heavily] (.450)*

- *Often I make careless purchase at a mall , I later wish I had not (.400)*

FACTOR 10 – VARIETY SEEKING:

This is a decision style of consumers who look for variety during their shopping trips to the mall. They browse for different products and stores in a mall to get variety in their purchase. This factor encompasses the following variables:

- *Shopping in many stores wastes my time (- .663)*
- *To get variety, I shop in different stores in a mall and choose different brands (.607)*
- *I like shopping at a mall that has more international brands than national brands (.441)*

FACTOR 11 – SHOPPING AVOIDANCE:

This is a decision style of consumers who dislike shopping and thus shop around very little because they make shopping trips fast. This factor approximates to an opposite of the recreational, hedonistic consumer trait. This factor encompasses the following variable:

- *I make shopping trips fast (.787)*

FACTOR 12 – TREND SETTING:

This is a decision style of consumers who perceive products and possessions as an extension of their personalities. They follow the latest trends and set the tone for others to follow. They do not look for the best brand or label but purchase products which show their personality. They look for satisfaction in a product. This factor encompasses the following variable:

- *A product does not have to be perfect, or the best , to satisfy me (.486)*

Findings

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- This study identified 12 Decision Making styles of Chennai shoppers in malls. Two new factors were identified in this study – “Compulsive” shoppers and “Trend setting” shoppers.
- The study reveals that Chennai consumers are confused with the various choices that they have before them when it comes to visiting a shopping mall. The invention of international brands and well known national brands has left the shopper both happy and confused to choose the best mall and store.
- Chennai consumers are very price sensitive. They want value for the money that they pay for a commodity. They spend a lot of time in comparing goods and bargaining for it.
- Young consumers in Chennai claimed that the quality of the goods will be the first elements when they making decision making in order to get the best choice. They are willing to pay higher price to buy better quality goods.
- 67% of consumers were not very brand conscience. They prefer goods, which are good in quality but are not very brand conscious. These consumers were found to switch brands, even if their current brand satisfies their needs, as they wanted to experience new goods.
- Consumers shop for different purposes and shopping is both work and fun. It was found that shopping malls that carried out events and activities to ensure consumer engagements had higher footfall. Live entertainment shows, exhibitions, children's activities, puppet shows, art and craft fairs, flash mobs are a few of the activities.
- Shopping malls with multiplexes and food courts are seen as the most sought after mall destination for the teenage shoppers and families.
- Children have emerged as major influencing power during shopping. From pester power; kids have changed their role to becoming influencers. In the older age group, they have actually become consultants, whom parents turn to for advice during the shopping decision process.
- Young and middle aged consumers between the age group of 18 – 35 tend to over spend during their shopping trips to a mall as they get attracted to the various options and stores that are available for them.

Limitations

- The study is limited to shopping malls in the city of Chennai only. The study cannot be generalized to other parts of Tamil Nadu and India.
- 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.
- When the study was commenced in March 2013 there were 15 established malls in Chennai, but after the data collection few malls cropped up in the city making it difficult to consolidate the data.

Ethical considerations

This study is based on studying consumer groups and their decision making styles in shopping malls. The consumers' right of confidentiality and privacy will be important, as will the sensitivity to making demands on their time. We intend to approach these issues through informed consent, through explanations of the

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research, guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity in the thesis and acceptance of reluctance or refusals in interviews. We also think it is important to recognize the assistance of mall assistants, scholars and also be mindful of our own positionality.

Conclusion

The objectives of this study to investigate the emergence of shopping mall culture in Chennai and the consumer decision making styles adopted by consumers in shopping malls. Information gathered and analysed on decision making styles of consumers in Chennai will be useful for retailers targeting the Indian markets. Indian retail industry is in a state of boom today and more national and international players are interested in the emerging retail market in India. In this scenario an understanding of Consumers' shopping behaviour, especially their decision making styles, is crucial. This paper addressing that need is therefore timely and adding value.

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AUTHORS' PROFILE



Dr.Lalitha Balakrishnan.
M.Com.,M.Phil.,MBA., Ph.D. Vice
Principal and Professor, M.O.P Vaishnav
College for Women, Chennai. Dr.Lalitha

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Balakrishnan currently serves as vice principal and professor at M.O.P Vaishnav College for Women. She has authored two books - Human Resources Development and Organisational Development and has 24 Publications in National level business journals and 6 Publications in International Monographs. She has served as resource person at various international and national forums. Dr.Lalitha has produced two doctorates and is currently guiding eight doctoral scholars.



Nisha.U. M.Com., PGDMM, Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, M.O.P Vaishnav College for Women. Ms. Nisha is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in Commerce from the University of Madras under the guidance of Dr.Lalitha Balakrishnan. She has served as resource person at The Southern India Regional Council - Institute Of Cost And Works Accountants Of India and has delivered guest lectures on various topics of Advertising, Sales promotion, Management Principles of Accountancy to the graduate and post graduate students Commerce. She has authored publications and paper presentations in the field of Retail Marketing, Consumer behaviour, Management, Entrepreneurial development, Services marketing and Quality assurance.

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