

Impact of Entertainment events, Food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to bring out the importance of food courts and entertainment events in organized retail malls in Bangalore. Anyone who has visited malls in the recent times will be well aware of the increasing phenomenon of the ongoing, new and free entertainment events which have become a routine of the shopping malls. Along with the events another integral element of any shopping mall is the food court of the mall. A total of 466 responses were collected from few popular shopping malls and significance relationship was tested using T-test and correlation. Findings say that there is a significant relationship between the entertainment events, food courts and customers engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore*

Keywords: Entertainment events, Food courts, Customer engagement, Organized retail malls.

Introduction

In every evolving retail scenario, it is no longer viable for the retail malls to be the passive places to just go for shopping. In the wake of the competition from the e-commerce retailers are trying to adapt themselves to the changing needs of the customers. In past few years any person who has visited a mall will agree that malls are much more than a bunch of shops, they are destinations to hang around, have fun, eat great food, and socialize (Shan-Shan Wu, Siu-Ming L, 2017). Shopping malls are no longer passable as places to go to purchase goods but they have been converted into places where one can do things. The changes in the customers' shopping patterns have transformed the retail sector. Customers no longer just want to push their carts around the shopping aisles, they want to engage themselves, they want to enjoy, have a memorable shopping experience, which might be entertaining.

Generally, a trip to a mall is a happy, multifunctional task, it may include meeting up socially, visit a multiplex, watch live performances, fine dining and any other game or event which one can enjoy with the family. Customers expect much more from a particular visit than just buying, the time spent at a mall is looked upon as

a leisure activity. On the other hand, the retail shopping malls have a competitive edge over the online retail websites (G D Singh, 2017). The retail malls have the shopping assistants who assist shoppers by adding the human touch to the entire shopping experience. Yet another highlight of the retail shopping mall is the advantage of providing entertainment options, this factor acts like a wow factor in increasing the retail footfalls in the malls.

Mall culture in India is still in its nascent stage as compared to the western countries where it is thriving since past half a century. In India the retail malls have come of the age since the late 90's, retail malls in the western countries have been around for more than five decades and they have a very strong support from the materialistic consumption pattern of the west who indulged in heavy spending and lesser savings. The Indian consumer on the contrary has always preferred to spend judiciously within the affordable limits. The accelerated growth of the retail malls in India is can be attributed to factors like increase in disposable incomes, development of tier 2 & 3 cities, changing aspirations of Indian middle class and the advent of e commerce have all transformed the consumer behaviour

Literature Reviews

Jason Sit, Bill Merrilees, and Dawn Birch, (2003) have observed that there are four dominant attributes in shopping centre image studies: (1) merchandising; (2) accessibility, (3) service; and (4) atmospherics. Their study has also revealed three other attributes that are critical to shopping centre image, which are the 5) entertainment, 6) food and 7) security. Jason et.al , advocate that entertainment is an integral part of the marketing strategy used by shopping centers to attract consumers. Additionally entertainment is also a tool of differentiation for shopping centers.

Shan-Shan Wu, Siu-Ming Lo in their research paper in (2017) have studied the characteristics of events held in shopping centres of Hong Kong. The events held in the shopping centres improve community participation and it is the retail malls, which provide the space for the same.

Muhammad Ibrahim and Ng Wee (2002) have identified two dimensions, retail dimension and customer factors as important for the shopping centre experience. the shopping centre environment and the entertainment factors play a major role during the shopping experience of the customers. The study indicates availability of food courts and restaurants as a very important retail factor in drawing the crowds to the shopping centre. Whereas the entertainment and events are underlying factors which are based more on individual customers than the retail organisations.

Randy White (2010) states that retailers, shopping centres and organized retail malls are consciously trying newer means to reinvent themselves to attract customers. This has led to a new approach of “retailtainment” which is the approach of adding entertainment and experiences to the retail mix.

Kang & Kim (2000) examined the cross-shopping in a large mall located Toronto, which had two megatheaters. Findings from that study included:

- Food-entertainment cross-shoppers generally spent up to two hours at both locations, with the entertainment centre showing slightly higher average times.
- Fast food accounted for 88% of food-related cross shopping at the mall while full-licensed restaurants were the most frequently reported form of food-related cross shopping at the power centre (55%).
- The entertainment centre was a major entertainment destination whereas the mall was more a shopping destination.

The above research studies clearly indicate that there is a positive relationship, on the overall impact of Family Entertainment Centres, cinemas or entertainment value in general on mall traffic and store sales.

Christiansen, et al. (1999) studied the effects of mall 'entertainment value' from the consumers' perspective on mall profitability. Consumers ideally defined entertainment as an activity, which provided a diversion or a relief from the routine activities which included the movies, theatre, people watching, entertainment-retail stores, shopping itself, restaurants, bars, and even the architecture and interior design of the mall itself. Based on the study strong evidence was observed to demonstrate a positive relationship between entertainment and mall profitability and value.

Entertain me, I'll stay longer! The influence of types of entertainment on mall shoppers' emotions and behaviour” Maher et al (2019) stated that the entertainment plays a significant role in consumer satisfaction. Entertainment clearly has a decisive impact on mall footfall and store sales.

The empirical findings of the studies conducted by Jason and Dawn Birch (2014) indicate that consumers with varied participation prefer passive or active participation and they behave differently after a retail experiential event. So the marketing and management of the event need to segment the customers based on their levels of participation to arrive at desired experiences, thus reiterating the fact that Events are important aspects of in mall entertainment.

Iksuk Kim et al (2005) in their research demonstrated that while entertaining the shopper is important, it does not necessarily have to include large amusement areas, or themes,. Shoppers just wanted a place to get away

from their day-to-day routine, a place to socialize with friends and family. There are a number of ways through which the malls engage the consumers by engaging them in activities, such as staying open at night, having food courts where multiple types of food are available, having special exhibits keyed to consumer interests and activities (e.g., music shows, fashion shows, bridal shows), and having seating areas where people can rest and visit. These activities and events are not expensive to create, but they provide great value and incentives for the consumers to visit the shopping mall.

Theoretical Construct

Retailtainment

The amalgamation of retail sector and entertainment is Retailtainment. The present age customers not only want to shop but also want to be entertained along with shopping. There are no more standalone shopping centres. Malls have now become entertainment destinations. According to retailer industry experts, F&B (food and beverage) entertainment, which includes music, movies, consumer engagement activities, is taking up more space in malls today. The contribution of this section of mall is expected to rise to around 30 per cent across the markets from almost 9 per cent as of now.

Online shopping over Brick & mortar As e-commerce continues to eat into traditional retail including modern trade, shopping malls are remodeling and rearranging themselves as recreation centers are offering a one of a kind 'shop entertainment' experience to its customers. Retail malls are going through considerable evolution currently due to the major shift of how the consumers are shopping. E-commerce is widening its scope also forcing retail malls to expand their existence beyond mere brick and mortar.

Shopping as an experience It has been observed that, food courts, entertainment which includes music, movies, and activities, is claiming more space in malls at present and its contribution is expected to increase from 8% to a staggering high of 30 % now. A study also observes that a customer may not have intention to shop, but if the mall engages them through various promotions, events and entertainment activities like food festivals and concerts, as well as other in house facilities they will visit the mall more often which can be latter be converted to a sales opportunity.

Malls as entertainment centers Organized retail malls are not only a shopping destination but have evolved into entertainment centers creating experience areas for consumers to relax, meet with friends and entertain. Today's consumer is always experimenting with taste and preferences and this change in their buying habits has led to a spike in the way malls engage them.

Retail destinations Technologically ahead millennial consumer prefers the online platform to satisfy their shopping needs; malls cannot let themselves be just a cluster of fancy stores. Retail malls need to evolve and reflect the changing expectations and standard of living of, if they have to survive.

Food courts as epicenters of malls Mostly, when consumers visit shopping malls, they search for experiences, which go well beyond the conventional shopping. A customer is the focus of all the engagements and advancements at a retail mall. The ever changing mall culture has brought in changes from the traditional ways. A food -court is one such area which is observed as an experiential retail strategy which is broadly accepted by the mall developers as well as the customers.

Organized malls in the cities malls are allotting up to 50 per cent of the mall space for food courts, pop-up stores, essential services store and entertainment. To increase the footfalls, engage the customers in a hope that maybe they customers will turn out to be potential buyers.

Over a period of few years it has been observed that a consumer might not want to shop, but if the mall engages them enough through promotional activities and events it may be converted into sales. Retail malls are also creating more space for holding events like food festivals and concerts; they will be able to attract more footfalls.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to analyse the Impact of Entertainment events, Food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: H_{0A}: There is no significant Influence of Entertainment events and food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore.

Alternative Hypothesis: H_{1A}: There is a significant Influence of Entertainment events and food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore.

Null Hypothesis H_{0B}: There is no significant relationship between the entertainment attributes and customer engagement in retail malls.

Alternative Hypothesis H_{1B}: There is a significant relationship between the entertainment attributes and customer engagement in retail malls.

Research Methodology

The present study is both descriptive and empirical in nature. The data was collected from 466 respondents through a structured questionnaire, by using survey method. The researcher initially identified the research problem, hypothesis, independent and dependent parameters. Subsequently, developed and administered questionnaires to the respondents. The collected data have been analysed. The research results are noted down in

relation to mall atmospheric prevailing at sample mall. The researcher critically analysed the existing mall atmospheric and customer engagement behaviour in the select mall of Bangalore.

The study justifies the use one of the convenient sampling technique based on the following literature study - convenient samples are not recommended for descriptive or causal research, but they can be used in exploratory research for generating ideas, insights and hypothesis. This technique is used for pilot studies also (Malhotra K. Naresh, 2004).

Data Analysis

In order to analyse the objective in finding the Impact of Entertainment events, Food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore, T-Test has been used to test the hypothesis, which is mentioned below;

Null Hypothesis: H_{0A}: There is no significant Influence of Entertainment events and food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore.

Alternative Hypothesis: H_{1A}: There is a significant Influence of Entertainment events and food courts on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore

For this study, 12 entertaining attributes were identified as factors those influence in customer engagement in organised retail malls. These variables were measured using five point Likert scale (1= Not at all preferred, 2 = Least preferred, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Preferred and 5 = The most preferred).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and T-Test

Descriptive Statistics and T-Test						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	t- test	Sig. (2 Tailed)
1. The mall is conveniently located.	466	3.97	.785	.616	111.11	0.00
2. The mall is overall clean & tidy.	466	4.01	.803	.645	81.310	0.00
3. I like the variety of food sections at the food court	466	3.71	.962	.925	59.99	0.00
4. I visit the food court so that I can stay longer at the mall	466	3.07	1.259	1.584	89.15	0.00
5. It is convenient to shop & dine at the same place	466	3.92	.945	.893	113.83	0.00
6. Food court is a place for me to meet & hang out with friends & family	466	3.57	1.157	1.338	84.71	0.00
7. I come to the mall just to visit the food court / restaurants in the mall	466	2.66	1.238	1.532	114.02	0.00
8. I enjoy free entertainment of the events at the mall	466	3.17	1.146	1.314	92.60	0.00
9. The Events at the mall are new or interesting	466	3.13	1.063	1.130	83.44	0.00
10. The Events at the mall help me take a break from shopping	466	3.02	1.120	1.255	103.54	0.00

11. I engage myself in an activity/ event at the mall with family /friends	466	2.77	1.163	1.353	89.12	0.00
12. I would come back to a similar event/more events in the future	466	2.81	1.152	1.328	103.38	0.00

From the above table, of twelve entertainment events and food court attributes influencing customer engagement, it is found that the most influencing factor would be cleanliness and tidiness of the mall followed by shopping and dining at same place and the respondents have also said that the location of the mall also matter a lot. The analysis also show that the food courts and regular entertaining events influence a lot on customers engagement for a longer time in organised malls. However, it is observed that all the 12 attributes selected for the study have a significant influence on customer engagement in organized retail malls in Bangalore.

Correlation Analysis

Null Hypothesis H_{0B} : There is no significant relationship between the entertainment attributes and customer engagement in retail malls.

Alternative Hypothesis H_{1B} : There is significant relationship between the entertainment attributes and customer engagement in retail malls.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. The mall is conveniently located.	1.000	.549	.399	.200	.470	.309	.074	.177	.234	.169	.104	.158
2. The mall is overall clean & tidy.	.549	1.000	.463	.336	.389	.354	.126	.211	.303	.220	.172	.209
3. I like the variety of food sections at the food court	.399	.463	1.000	.479	.524	.404	.321	.257	.358	.285	.231	.257
4. I visit the food court so that I can stay longer at the mall	.200	.336	.479	1.000	.370	.544	.552	.488	.487	.470	.413	.411
5. It is convenient to shop & dine at the same place	.470	.389	.524	.370	1.000	.387	.239	.222	.275	.223	.148	.170
6. Food court is a place for me to meet & hang out with friends & family	.309	.354	.404	.544	.387	1.000	.435	.390	.396	.460	.344	.354
7. I come to the mall just to visit the food court / restaurants in the mall	.074	.126	.321	.552	.239	.435	1.000	.439	.391	.438	.417	.386
8. I enjoy free entertainment of the events at the mall	.177	.211	.257	.488	.222	.390	.439	1.000	.664	.665	.536	.609
9. The Events at the mall are new or interesting	.234	.303	.358	.487	.275	.396	.391	.664	1.000	.678	.593	.615
10. The Events at the mall help me take a break from shopping	.169	.220	.285	.470	.223	.460	.438	.665	.678	1.000	.604	.704
11. I engage myself in an activity/ event at	.104	.172	.231	.413	.148	.344	.417	.536	.593	.604	1.000	.748

the mall with family /friends												
12. I would come back to a similar event/more events in the future	.158	.209	.257	.411	.170	.354	.386	.609	.615	.704	.748	1.000

From the above table it can be noted that all the selected attributes for the study are positively correlated showing a positive significant relationship between the entertainment attribute and customer engagement in the retail malls.

Findings

1. From T Test analysis it is very much clear that all the entertaining events and food court attributes selected for the study are positively related and since the p values are less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted stating that there is a positive influence of all the 12 attributes and the customer engagement in organised retail malls in Bangalore.
2. From table 2, it is observed that all the variables selected have a positive correlation and hence we reject Null Hypothesis accepting Alternative Hypothesis H_{1B}: which states that there is significant relationship between the entertainments activates and customer engagement in retail malls.
3. The finding also suggest that additional facilities help in bringing more footfalls to the retail malls and also endure that the shoppers spend more time at the retail malls .
4. It is found that the cleanliness and tidiness of the mall is the most influencing factor for the customers
5. It is also observed that shopping and dining at same place and the location of the mall matter a lot to the retail shoppers.
6. The variety of sections available at the food courts, having a place to shop and dine, socialize at the same place are all-important to the modern day customers visiting the retail malls in Bangalore.
7. The customers are also ready to return to the retail mall for special events in the future based on the study conducted.
8. The findings conferred in this paper are exploratory in nature and consequently will offer several opportunities for further development with respect to planning special events at the retail malls to engage the customers

Conclusion

While this research explores the Retail malls attributes and the customer engagement in an organised urban mall scenario. There are many areas, which are left unexplored, further research can be done on the exact facilities that the shoppers look for in a mall. Customers are attracted to the seasonal and special events which generally take place around the festive season at the malls .This opportunity can be used by the civic authorities to pass on important civic and social messages to the public at large so retail malls can become platforms for such events in future . This type of research will also help the retail mall operators in allocating space and

design of the malls in future. This study is based in Bangalore more such exploratory studies can be done in other metro cities of India to gauge the nerve of the Indian retail customers. **References**

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