

Full Length Research Paper

Factors Shaping Consumer Loyalty: Insights from Shopping Mall Experiences

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The aim of the study is to identify the factors that affect the shoppers' loyalty towards shopping malls. Secondly, its objective is to establish a relationship between consumer loyalty factors and shopping malls performance. The literature concerning the features of shopping malls that significantly affect consumer loyalty towards shopping malls. A sample of 384 respondents was taken who are the visitors of shopping malls or their mostly purchases are from shopping malls. The data was collected through the questionnaire including 27 items on five-point likert scale. Statistical analysis was done using the software SPSS version 16 which indicated the correlation, and regression analysis of data. Three attributes those are relevant to the shopping malls were found: Environment, Image and Convenience of shopping malls that affect the consumer loyalty. All the three factors positively affect the consumer behavior or loyalty regarding shopping malls. And also influence the performance of the mall if any attribute is lacking in the mall. The results of the study will differ with the national context, size and the culture of the nation as it is relevant to the nation of Pakistan. And further research will include how image can be built in consumer's mind regarding shopping malls.

Key Words: Environment, Convenience, location, Image, consumer loyalty, Shopping malls.

INTRODUCTION

Several topics regarding retailing have captured the researchers focus. Various studies have been conducted in field of shopping malls and the consumer patronage behavior regarding malls. Most of the studies indicated the consumer behavior that they adopt while shopping in the malls or the super markets. Various authors have given the insights about what type of behaviors a consumer induce while making purchase decisions as well as determined the factors that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction in consumer perceptions or in some studies stated as the perceptions of consumers for a particular retail channel. Hence researches have been conducted considering malls that play major role in a consumer's daily decisions regarding needs and wants. And shopping malls as a result are striving to fulfill these

needs and behaviors. Malls have been important fixtures in the economic and societal framework of America for some decades; there is a scarcity of exploration on malls in the scholarly text (Haytko and Baker, 2004; Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998).

Various researches are undertaken in several countries some of which in Greece, Malaysia, Soweto, also in U.S Hispanics consumers regarding customer satisfaction, service quality, locational factors of the supermarkets, demographics that influence consumer patronage. But a little research is done in Pakistan. As Pakistan is becoming a developing country various developments have occurred in retail sector as establishing larger shopping malls and super markets that are striving for the consumer who are the king of retail businesses. However there arise a need of research in Pakistan in order to identify the factors that influence the consumer purchase decisions while shopping in the malls and what factors cause consumers intent to switch the mall. In what particular manner the consumer behave towards the mall

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in Pakistan, and what makes them to be loyal to the particular mall.

In this study some of the factors are determined to play a major role in consumer loyalty. Although, some researches illustrated various factors as location, customer satisfaction, service quality, creativity in malls etc. Prior research indicated nine features of mall as significant for the consumer to be loyal that include mall atmosphere, convenience, quality and assortment of products promotions, after sale service, brochures and pamphlets, communication, expected behaviors and rewards as discounts etc (Wang & Ha, 2011). This proceeding study will indicate the factors as image of the shopping mall, environment or surroundings of the mall and the third factor will be the convenience that a consumer can access in a shopping mall during a shopping trip. How these factors effect the consumer behavior or loyalty towards particular shopping malls that can be local or super regional. As one study stated the mall in words, "Basically the ordinary design approach for local and super local centres is named as shopping mall that is usually environment controlled and lighted, lined on one or both sides by storefronts and entrances" (ISA, 2008).

Hence the further portions of the study will explore the literature regarding the consumer behavior and factors affecting the consumer loyalty for shopping malls. Consumer loyalty will be defined and then the factors of consumer loyalty will be illustrated through previous studies proving the hypothesis. The relationship among the factors and the shopping malls performance will be explained. Further sections will describe the methodology adopted to prove the studies and hypothesis, analysis of the results through data collected. Finally conclusion and finding of the study will be demonstrated in the study.

Literature Review

Loyalty

Loyalty is stated by Dick and Basu (in Molina et al., 2008) as the combination of recurring patronage and encouraging attitude. However, behavior shown through continuous purchases is actually defined as loyalty (Molina et al., 2008; Manana, 2009). Strongly held dedication to further repurchase a chosen or favored product or service regardless of situational control and marketing strategies that have possibility to cause consumer switching activities, is defined as loyalty (Kotler and Keller, 2007; Manana, 2009).

Brunner et al., (2010) described, Repurchase likelihood, probability of long term choice, or switching manners are the measures of behavioral loyalty. Where as in attitudinal aspect, brand inclination or emotional commitment that is evaluated through repurchase intention, not considering other better choices, price

acceptance and plan to communicate product or service to others is loyalty (Szczepańska & Gawron, 2011).

Consumer Loyalty

Dick and Basu (1994), regarded the strength of association between relative attitude of individual and their continuous purchasing behavior as the consumer loyalty (Rittippant, Supradit, Viriyasirimongkol, & Skulareemit, 2009). Consumer loyalty is also a functional aspect as it is considered a reason for determining long term development and margin business. If it is evaluated, is taken as component of firm's wealth. Consumer loyalty is also a continuous and positive attitude regarding any object (Szczepańska & Gawron, 2011).

Gremler & Brown (1996) defined consumer loyalty as the extent of consumer's repeat procuring or buying behavior from a service supplier, having positive attitudinal nature toward the supplier and prefer this provider when require this service (Kheng, Mahamad, & Ramayah, 2010).

Factors Affecting Consumer loyalty towards Shopping Malls

Environment

With developing experiences, mall environment has become more important that provides interaction, socialization and coordination and such environment needs includes design, both as quality of the mall finished and guidance to reach that specific solution. Mall environment i.e. atmospherics induce a strong effect on the consumer attitudes and behaviors (Kotler, 1974; McGoldrick and Greenland, 1994; Ahn et al., 2006; Kent, 2007).

Promotion of idea is the key factor that is the feature of shopping malls. Colour can be used to fuel this factor and also can change the emotional situation of the consumer. Loe, (2002) stated that lighting not only communicates information regarding space but also give the significance. Diverse elements as music in mall, chosen fragrance, different surfaces and lighting methods, generate an exclusive environment within shopping mall (Kent, 2007).

Kotler argued that, in order to create an entertaining mall environment, retailers must find out ways to fulfill consumer's intentions and needs and also improve buying experiences (in Deip et al., 2008) as consumer's view of value and mall patronage decision is influenced by mall atmosphere (Grewal et al, in Pan and Zinkhan, 2006; Manana, 2009). Many atmospherics studies have shown the direct relationship between enhancing mall atmosphere and rising sales (as cited by Seock, 2009; Manana, 2009).

Consumer's evaluation is affected by design characteristics of mall as well as physical services. Mall design must be consistent with the consumers' expectations and experience at other malls (Burke, 2005). Howard (2007) described that music, color, intricacy of the mall layout and products arrangement are elements of mall environment that can be used by retailers to effect consumer behavior. He also discovered direct relationship of music and layout with consumer desire to stay (ISA, 2008). Hence all these studies indicate that;

H1: There is a significant relationship between environment of shopping mall and consumer loyalty.

Image

Actions and accomplishments of organization are perceived by individuals as organization's image that is comparatively constant, long term and combined opinion and this image tend consumers to consume products and services of this organization and be more dedicated to those retailers having positive image (Gioia et al. cited in Ou et al., 2006). Consumers will be willing to spend more wealth with that seller having more positive reputation; hence consumers patronizing behavior will decline (Ou et al., 2006; Manana, 2009).

Finn and Louviere, (1996) scrutinized the significance of shopping mall image as a vital factor of consumer switching decisions (Sit et al., 2003). Terblanche (1999) deliberated the effect of functional, entertainment and socializing factors on shopping mall's image that are based on benefits that a consumer perceive for a shopping mall. Kupke (2004) stated that it is a matter to identify that mall image can be administered, promoted and enhanced (El-Adly, 2007).

Anselmsson, (2006) illustrated that mall image and satisfaction with the mall is affected by consumer's opinion of a large product range while Juhl et al. (2002) identified the product quality as a significant feature of mall image. Hansen and Solgaard (2004) (cited in Carpenter and Moore, 2006) determined the only major factor, the product assortment, affecting selection of a mall layout among other discount stores, hypermarkets and conventional supermarkets. Baltas and papastahtopoulou (2003) in Greece, identified product variety and quality as major factors affecting consumer's choice (Theodoridis & Chatzipanagiotou, 2009). So the various studies prove that:

H2: There is a significant relationship between image of shopping mall on consumer loyalty.

Convenience

Seock (2009) argued, though shopping is done for varied reasons, in some studies particular significance is stated

for convenience of locational factor or repeated visits to the malls. He also stated that consumers, instead of individual store, are likely to make patronage choices based on shopping complex. Closeness of other service facilities is a significant factor of mall selection as signified by the findings (Manana, 2009).

Satisfaction that consumers get from the service in mall is directly affected by the consumer's view regarding convenience i.e. mall hours, location, parking space etc (Pan and Zinkhan, 2006). For convenience oriented consumers, who think shopping as a coherent problem solving method, it is significant to purchase wished products with least consumption of time, physical and mental endeavour (Schroder and Zaharia, 2008; Manana, 2009). Consumer judgment of shopping behavior is negatively affected by perceived crowd in malls, and many other social factors affect insights about service standards in shopping malls (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Manana, 2009).

Reardon et al. (2001) demonstrated that suitable sites close to home, working place, high traffic places is more preferable to one stop shoppers. Kures and Ryan (2002) also indicated the significance of ease of access wants of convenience-based malls. Hence customers want to swiftly enter and exit the malls instead of walking long distances of shopping corridors (ISA, 2008). Differed levels of product assortment affect consumer purchasing behavior more than prices (Fox, Motgimery, and Lodish, 2002). Pan and Zinkhan (2006) indicated the size and intensity of assortment in a mall as important to fulfill the dynamic tastes of the consumers and also reduce the perceived cost related to single trip as well as offers convenient shopping. Great product assortment is significant in attracting consumers and also to influence them on buying decision while in the mall (Skalledrud et al., 2009; Manana, 2009). These studies illustrate that:

H3: There is a significant relationship between convenience of shopping mall and consumer loyalty.

Relationship of Consumer Loyalty and Shopping Malls: Basically the ordinary design approach for local and super local centres is named as shopping mall that is usually environment controlled and lighted, lined on one or both sides by storefronts and entrances (ISA, 2008). Inclined behavioral response articulated over time by administrative entity about an organization as compared to other malls, as a result of psychological resolution and assessment methods resulting in the commitment to the mall, is stated as loyalty towards mall (Knox and Walker (in Molina et al., 2008:307). Diep et al., (2008) Consumers evaluate the malls on the basis of their contact with the products and different features of mall e.g. location, employees and atmosphere (Manana, 2009). Retail businesses are spending on getting and sustaining locations appropriate for their products and consumers, as mall location is vital factor of retail business (Hernandez and Bennison, 2000; Theodoridis & Priporas, 2009).

Model:

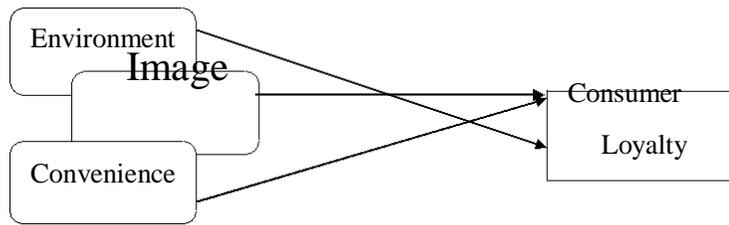


Figure 1. Factors Affecting Consumer Loyalty Towards Shopping Malls

Besides, providing desired products, to increase consumer loyalty malls need to attract consumers' social intentions and empirical needs. Service channels and entertainment suppliers (fast-food areas, video arcades, beauty salons, and dental clinics) are incorporated in one stop access of malls as a result of consumer dynamic needs (Ahmed, Ghingold, & Dahari, 2007). Enhancing Retail policies are the major players in controlling consumer loyalty and averting consumers from switching malls (Knox and Denison, 2000) as mall performance i.e. no of consumers is mainly affected by mall patronage actions, mall visits, average spending per visit (Tang et al., 2001). Mall location, mall access parking spaces, product assortment, pricing level, service quality and promotional activities are the elements that affect mall image positively (Ou & Abratt, 2006).

The factors of shopping place selection behavior fall in five groups i.e. Features of price, accessibility, environment, mall image, regarding the consumer buying behavior (Dawar and Parker, 1994; Tang et al., 2001; Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ou & Abratt, 2006). Along with other factors, Newberry et al., (2003) determined other dimensions, decoration, atmosphere, exterior and cleanliness of mall whereas El-Adly (2007) indicated comfort, entertainment, assortment, mall theme, and convenience as mall attractiveness features (Yavas & Babakus, 2009). Prior research indicated nine features of mall as significant for the consumer to be loyal that include mall atmosphere, convenience, quality and assortment of products promotions, after sale service, brochures and pamphlets, communication, expected behaviors and rewards as discounts etc (Wang & Ha, 2011). Consequently all the studies are expressing the that:

H4: There is a significant relationship between consumer loyalty and shopping malls. Fig 1

Methodology and Research Design:

Data and Analysis

This study is being done to determine the factors that

influence consumer loyalty towards shopping malls. And the relationship between the factors of consumer loyalty and shopping malls. So the respondents of this study include the visitors of the shopping malls.

Sample Size

The sample of respondents who do their daily routine purchasing and shopping from the shopping malls in Pakistan are included in the study. Sample size of 384 respondents was taken from the population of shoppers as indicated in the study of sample selection (Krejcie et al., 1970).

Survey Instrument

A questionnaire containing 27 items for the three factors of consumer loyalty that comprised of image, environment and convenience, on a five-point likert scale was developed. The statements were the result of a literature review of relevant studies and adapted from these studies (ISA, 2008; Huddleston, Whipple, Mattick, & Lee, 2009; Wang & Ha, 2011; Goswami & Mishra, 2009). 384 questionnaires were distributed through e-mail, online URL, and face to face, to the respondents out of which 365 responses were received i.e. 95 percent of respondents participated in the study. The indicated factors comprising on 27 items were analyzed using SPSS statistical software version 16 was used to give findings of the study.

Hypothesis Development

H1: There is a significant relationship between environment of shopping mall and consumer loyalty.

H2: There is a significant relationship between image of shopping mall on consumer loyalty.

H3: There is a significant relationship between convenience of shopping mall and consumer loyalty.

H4: There is a significant relationship between consumer

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.920	27

Table 2. Correlation Metrics

	Image	Environment	Convenience
DV Pearson Correlation	0.660	.660	0.748
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
N	365	365	365

Table 3. Regression Results

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.782 ^a	0.612	0.606	45188

loyalty and shopping malls.

Data Analysis and Results: table 1

As indicated in the previous research (ISA, 2008) the value of Chronbach's alpha is 0.681 or 68.1 % and it stated that questionnaire is reliable for the study. So considering this finding value of Chronbach's alpha for my results calculated is 0.92 (92%), that can be demonstrated as excellent and shows that the items selected for the study are reliable to evaluate the factors that influence consumer loyalty for shopping malls. And also shows that the questions selected will give the precise and accurate results in order to evaluate the loyalty for shopping malls. As questions are adapted so these are pretested and reliable for the study. table 2

Table 2 is indicating the relationship among the dependent and independent variables. The Pearson (p) value for image and consumer loyalty is 0.660 and the significance value is 0.000. Significance value less than 0.05 and p-value greater than 0.5, shows the strong and positive relationship among variables. So the relationship between dependent variable i.e. image which includes promotions, entertainment, consumer retention efforts, security, product quality, interior of a shopping mall and consumer behavior is positive and strong. Result suggests that if image of mall is enhanced in consumers mind then they become more loyal. So the hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Pearson (p) correlation between environment and consumer loyalty that is dependent variable, is also 0.660 and significance value is 0.000 which shows a strong and positive relationship between environment of a mall which

comprised of employees friendliness, availability of employees, color and decoration of the mall. So consumers rate these variables in a mall to be loyal. If a mall environment will be well established then consumers will be more willing to stay. So the 2nd hypothesis of relationship between mall environment and consumer loyalty is accepted.

The last variable is showing the p-value of 0.748 and significance level is 0.000 denoting a strong and positive relationship between convenience of shopping mall including items as good assortment, one stop shopping, and convenient hours, less waiting time, location etc. and consumer loyalty. It means a consumer feeling more convenient with a specific shopping mall will be more willing to make purchases in future. Hence the 3rd hypothesis of relationship between mall convenience and consumer loyalty is accepted.

Table 3 represents the regression summary of the variables in the study. Value of R ranges from -1 to 1. The table is indicating the value of R= 0.782 which shows the positive and strong relationship between the variables that is predictor variables and dependent variable. We can describe it as the predictor variables convenience, environment and image induce a strong effect on consumer loyalty regarding shopping malls. Malls featuring these aspects can achieve consumer loyalty. Secondly value of R square represents the fitness of model that ranges from 0 to 1. Values greater than 0.5 indicates that model is a good fit whereas values closer to zero denotes that model is not a good fit for data. As the tables is showing the value of R²= 0.612 which illustrate that model is a good fit and is explaining the variation in dependent variable. And predictor variables are giving the complete explanation of dependent

variable.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was two folded, firstly to determine the factors that affect consumer loyalty towards shopping malls. Secondly to explore the relationship between consumer loyalty and the shopping mall performance through these factors. Regarding the determinants of consumer loyalty three factors can be considered significant that mostly affect the consumer purchase behaviors for the shopping malls are environment of the mall, image or in other words reputation of the mall and the most important is the convenience. Mall environment includes color of the mall, its lighting and decoration, no of employees to assist and their helpfulness, security in the mall can explain the environment of the mall and its effect. Study indicates that a mall fulfilling these preferences can generate consumer loyalty that will increase the mall traffic. Mall image comprises of promotional campaigns, entertainment programs, customer retaining efforts, quality of products etc that are major players in building consumer loyalty. Study also illuminated the convenience regarding a shopping mall as a valuable factor in the consumer's mind in a sense of locational convenience, access in a single trip, working hour's convenience, less waiting time etc. these all have a strong impact on consumers preference of shopping mall.

As per the findings of the statistical results, explained through the correlation metrics, the P-values and the significance values are denoting a strong and positive relationship among the variables. Image of the mall and environment are showing the same values, hence, any development in mall environment and image will moderately enhance the consumer loyalty. Convenience factor is showing the most stronger relationship, as its P-value is 0.748, it describes that to build consumer loyalty a mall need to consider the ease of access for consumers, which means more convenient is the consumer with the particular mall more he will be loyal. Hence, the proposed hypotheses were proved to be accepted by the statistical interpretation.

However, some studies can further be done in this field for the Mall shoppers. A study on the image factor can be conducted to investigate how the retailers can improve their image or reputation of the Malls or retail markets in order to build consumer loyalty.

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