

An Empirical Investigation Of Consumer Perception And Behavioral Intentions Toward Retail Shopping Malls In Tiruchirappalli

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is empirical research of consumer perception and behavioral intentions of shopping malls as a retailing place in Tiruchirappalli (Trichy), a fast growing Tier-II city in Tamil Nadu state of India. As the organized retail has grown, shopping malls have been able to reshape consumer shopping experiences through convenience, variety, entertainment and contemporary atmosphere. Nonetheless, it is important that developers of malls and retailers understand how local consumers perceive these malls and make intentions to visit, shop and refer them to others. The study follows a descriptive and analytical design, where primary data is gathered using a structured questionnaire of 300 people who visited the mall as a result of convenience sampling. Some of the crucial variables to be considered are mall atmospherics (ambience, layout and facilities), quality of services, assortment of products, prices, entertainment facilities, and accessibility. Behavioral intentions were assessed in the form of revisit intention, purchase intention and word of mouth recommendation. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation, and multiple regression were used as statistical tools to analyze the data. Results show that the quality of service and mall atmosphere has a strong impact on consumer satisfaction, which positively impact behavioral intentions. These relationships are moderated by demographic variables such as age, income and occupation to some degree. The research points out that as much as consumers love the one-stop shopping convenience, issues of crowd management and value-for-money offerings should be enhanced. The findings add value to the current body of research on retail consumer behavior in the emerging Indian markets and provide applied value to the managers of malls on ways to improve customer experience and loyalty in competitive urban environments...

Keywords: Consumer Perception, Behavioral Intentions, Shopping Malls, Retail Atmospherics, Tiruchirappalli

INTRODUCTION:

Indian retail sector has already seen a phenomenal change in the last twenty years as the organized retail format, especially the shopping malls have sprung up at a rapid pace Kumar (2023). The shopping experience in India has been changing drastically; the traditional kirana outlets have been replaced with the more contemporary air-conditioned malls. This has been more pronounced in urban and semi-urban settings where consumers have been attracted towards organized retail spaces that are convenient, diverse and experiential shopping Adhikari (2025). Trichy or also known as Tiruchirappalli is one of the leading Tier-II cities in Tamil Nadu. As the number of people increases, the number of disposable incomes as well as urbanization are on the rise and in the recent years, the city has experienced the emergence of several retail shopping malls. These malls have also emerged as a major shopping center as well as entertainment, dining and socializing center among locals. Shopping malls in India are not just a store, but a lifestyle centre that can shape consumer behaviour and tastes. Mall features such as the ambience, layout, amenities, and tenant mix are important factors influencing consumer perceptions and reactions to

these retail spaces Xu et al., (2022). The knowledge of such perceptions is crucial in the sustainable development of the retail sector in the emerging markets.

Consumer perception of shopping malls is a multi-dimensional concept including physical atmosphere, service quality, product variety, pricing strategies and shopping experience in general Shaila (2025). These perceptions have direct influence on the satisfaction levels and consequently impact behavioral intentions such as revisit intention, purchase intention and word of mouth to others. Although there is an increasing trend of the malls in Tier-II cities such as Tiruchirappalli, a few empirical studies have been carried out to know the exact factors that impact the perception and behavioral intentions of the local consumers Khanna et al., (2025). The available literature has concentrated on major cities like Chennai, Bangalore or Mumbai, and there is a research gap in smaller cities.

Behavioral intentions are the probability of the consumer to take future activities like returning to visit the mall, buying products and creating positive word-of-mouth Mirza et al., (2025). Researching such intentions assists the developers of malls and retailers to plan their strategies

to increase customer loyalty and competitive edge within the local market Junaid et al., (2024). This research will empirically examine consumer perception and consumer behavior intentions with retail shopping malls in Tiruchirappalli. It aims at establishing the major determinants of consumer satisfaction and determining how they will affect their future behavioral reactions within the context of an emerging Tier-II city retail setting. The results of this study are anticipated to offer meaningful information to the mall management, retailers and policymakers to enhance the shopping experience and help in the sustainable growth of the organized retail in such emerging urban markets in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As it is confirmed in Elamkalidasan et al., (2025) with the help of S-O-R model and services cape theory, the mall managers in Tamil Nadu need to create an environment that fulfils the emotional and sensory needs by having a better control of light, crowding, staff behaviour, temperature, seating and mall layout to raise emotional involvement and consumer satisfaction in developing countries. Natarajan et al., (2024) revealed that the three dimensions of omnichannel customer experience (cognitive, affective, and relational) have a positive mediating role between integrated store-service quality and psychological ownership, which subsequently influences the face-to-face, online, and social media word-of-mouth behaviours, with perceived value and relationship investment mediating the relationships. According to Baghel, et al., (2026), entertainment in shopping malls has a great impact on the increase of revisit intention through the increase of escapism and leisure relaxation satisfaction which enables consumers to relieve stress and attain emotional satisfaction. Veera Raghavan et al, (2025) demonstrated that cognitive, affective, and relational aspects of robotic restaurant experiences have a differentiating implication on psychological ownership, positively affecting competitive resistance, word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay more, but where alternative attractiveness has a negative moderating effect. Murali et al., (2022), investigated the impact of visual merchandising strategies on impulsive purchasing behaviour among apparel buyers in Tiruchirappalli, incorporating the concept of corporate identity as a novel variable that enhances trust and longevity, which will be important in future green apparel stores. Praveenraj et al., (2022) noted that the rising middle-class economic status in Tamil Nadu is influencing the rise in mall shopping behaviour and retailers should invest heavily on infrastructure and always be sensitive to market changes in order to cater to frequent shoppers. Tamilselvi et al., (2023) showed that consumer perception and purchasing behaviour are highly influenced by the festive sales within Chennai, and discounts, product variety, brand attractiveness, demographic factors, and shopping convenience are the key elements of satisfaction and purchase intention. Lastly, Sakkthivel et al., (2025) discovered that women who shop in India and the UAE have similar mall shopping behaviour which is mainly leisure, social interaction and purchasing where ambience, product variety, promotions and convenience affect preferences

but cross-cultural differences exist in spending patterns and motivations because of the socio-economic and cultural contexts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Modern shopping malls have risen in the country and the Indian retail industry has registered a tremendous growth. The level of development of organized retail space in Tier-II cities such as Tiruchirappalli has been on the rise in recent years. Such malls are set up as an all-in-one shopping center, dining, entertainment, and social experience malls Kulkarni et al., (2023). Nevertheless, even with their increasing popularity, the very consumer attitude to these retail shopping malls in Tiruchirappalli is not clearly comprehended Praveenraj et al., (2022). Most mall developers and retailers invest a lot in the infrastructure and facilities, but they are usually unable to maintain a steady flow of customers and customer loyalty Bahar (2025). The atmospherics of the malls, quality of the service, availability of products, the price policies, the entertainment service and accessibility are crucial factors that influence consumer perception Wagh et al., (2025). Regrettably, there is limited empirical studies, which have been carried out to investigate the impact of these factors on local consumers in this region. The majority of the past research on the consumer behavior in the malls has been done in metropolitan cities like Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi, leaving a gap in research on Tier-II urban markets. As a result, attributes such as consumer perception and behavioral intentions such as revisit intention, purchase intention and word-of-mouth recommendations have not been explored in depth within the Tiruchirappalli setting Rajadurai et al., (2025). Lack of clear understanding of these dynamics may prevent the mall management to develop effective customer-centric strategies. Such deficiency in localized knowledge becomes an obstacle to optimizing mall performance and customer satisfaction. Additionally, shifting consumer tastes, increased competition and shifting patterns in shopping also make the situation worse. The necessity thus exists to empirically investigate the perception of the consumers and its influence on behavioral intentions toward shopping malls retailing in Tiruchirappalli. Resolving this issue will give useful contributions to retailers, developers and policymakers to improve the shopping experience in the emerging urban centers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the different facets of consumer perception with respect to the shopping malls in the retail shopping in Tiruchirappalli.

To examine the effects of consumer perception on behavioral intentions (revisit intention, purchase intention and word-of-mouth recommendation) to retail shopping mall in Tiruchirappalli. When presented with different shopping malls in Tiruchirappalli

To determine the major factors that play a significant role in consumer satisfaction and loyalty. □

METHODOLOGY

The research design used was descriptive and analytical. In Tiruchirappalli, a structured questionnaire was used to

gather primary data by administering the questionnaire to 300 people visiting the mall using the convenience sampling method. Key variables that were measured in the questionnaire were mall atmospherics, service quality, product assortment, pricing, entertainment facilities, accessibility, consumer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Statistical software like SPSS was utilized to analyze data in terms of descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument, and internal consistency of the scales was ensured.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The study population consisted of all visitors and shoppers in the retail shopping malls that were in operation in the period of the study in the city of Tiruchirappalli. The shopping malls were the major malls like MG Metropolitan, V-City, and other shopping malls in Trichy that were considered. The overall number of the mall visitors was high and unknown and thus it was practically hard to use probability sampling methods. Thus, non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to pick the respondents. A total sample size of 300 mall visitors was chosen for the study based on the guidelines suggested for exploratory and descriptive research. The respondents were contacted at various times of the day and during the weekdays and weekends to have a more representative sample of the various shoppers. The survey was restricted to those visitors who had either shopped or spent some decent amount of time in the mall. To get the different perceptions the sample included various age groups, gender, income groups, and occupational groups of respondents. This sampling method allowed the

researcher to gather primary data effectively due to the constraints of time and resources available in the research.

DATA COLLECTION AND SOURCES

The study used a structured questionnaire to the visitors of the malls in Tiruchirappalli as the primary data. The questionnaire was comprised of statements that were described based on the five-point Likert scale that addressed the mall atmospherics, service quality, product assortment, pricing, entertainment facilities, accessibility, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Secondary data was collected through different sources such as published research articles, journals, books, government reports on retail industry and official websites of shopping malls in Trichy. The data collection was conducted in two months through direct personal approach of the respondents both within and outside the shopping malls that were chosen. The survey included only those visitors who volunteered to participate in it. The answers were transcribed word-to-word and tabulated eventually to be analyzed using SPSS program.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation and multiple regression methods were employed to analyze the collected data with the aid of SPSS software. The results showed that mall atmosphere and service quality became the most significant predictors of consumer satisfaction which subsequently had a considerable impact on behavioral intentions like revisit intention, purchase intention and word of mouth recommendation. Demographic variables such as age and income were identified to moderate the perception and behavioral intentions relationship to a certain degree.

Table - 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	162	54
	Female	138	46
Age Group	18-25 years	98	32.7
	26-35 years	112	37.3
	Above 35 years	90	30
Monthly Income	Below ₹ 30,000	85	28.3
	₹ 30,001 - ₹ 60,000	125	41.7
	Above ₹ 60,000	90	30

Source: Primary Data

The demographics show that 54 % of the total number of respondents (300) are males and 46 % females. Age-wise analysis shows that most of the respondents (37.3%) were from 26-35 years age bracket while 32.7% were from 18-25 years age group. It shows that a majority population

comprises youth as well as working class people who visit malls at Tiruchirappalli city area. In terms of income, 41.7% of respondents had monthly income between ₹30,001 to ₹60,000, indicating that most mall shoppers belong to the middle class. It is fairly representative for its cross-section on sex ratio, age group & income level. In

general terms demographics show that shoppers at Trichy are varied but mostly younger people with medium income levels.

Table – 2 Mean Scores of Key Variables

Variable	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Mall Atmospherics	4.12	0.68
Service Quality	3.98	0.72
Product Assortment	3.85	0.79
Pricing & Value	3.67	0.81
Entertainment Facilities	3.94	0.7
Accessibility	4.05	0.65
Consumer Satisfaction	3.92	0.74
Behavioral Intentions	3.88	0.76

Source: Output generated from SPSS 25

The mall atmospherics received the highest mean score of 4.12, indicating that consumers in Tiruchirappalli highly value the ambiance, layout, and physical setting of the shopping malls. Service quality and accessibility also scored well with means of 3.98 and 4.05 respectively, indicating a positive perception on these aspects. Entertainment facilities scored an average of 3.94 on satisfaction ratings from customers. However, pricing and

value for money received the lowest mean score of 3.67, indicating that consumers feel malls are relatively expensive. Mean consumer satisfaction and behavior intention were 3.92 and 3.88, respectively, indicating that consumers had positive but not high expectations for their shopping experience. Clearly these averages indicate that although there is strength of both physical & service quality, price factor has to be addressed by mall shoppers at Tiruchirappalli.

Table – 3 Multiple Regression Results (Predictors of Behavioral Intentions)

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
Mall Atmospherics	0.412	6.85	0	Significant
Service Quality	0.378	5.92	0	Significant
Product Assortment	0.215	3.14	0.002	Significant
Pricing & Value	0.128	2.05	0.041	Significant
Entertainment Facilities	0.167	2.68	0.008	Significant

Source: Output generated from SPSS 25

The multiple regression analysis shows that mall atmospherics has the highest beta coefficient value of 0.412 and is a strong predictor of behavioral intention. Both variables are highly significant at $p < 0.001$ level, indicating their important role in influencing consumers' revisit, purchase, and recommendation intentions. The product variety, leisure amenities as well as price-value were positively influential for behavior intention. The model accounts for 68.2% of the variation in behavioral intentions ($R^2 = .682$), which is an impressive amount of explained variance in social science research. Predictor variable values were found to be statically important; hence it can conclusively state that all elements of consumers' perceptions have a direct impact on their behavior towards shopping malls at Tiruchi city

(Tamilnadu). The results indicate that enhancing ambiance as well as services is a paramount concern of malls' owners with regard to increasing customers' loyalty'.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on findings from this research, it is concluded that mall atmosphere/service quality have a significant impact over consumers' perceptions towards shopping experience at malls as well their behavior intention to shop again after visiting such places for first time. The regression results show strong correlations between both variables for revisiting intentions (high betas), purchasing decisions ($p < 0$). Consumer perceptions were favorable regarding ambiance, convenience of access to services as well as amenities. From this conversation it is clear to me

how much importance people give on experience rather than variety at tier 2 cities such as trichi. This research supports previous studies on shopping environments and their impact on consumers' behaviors. Nevertheless, a more modestly satisfactory price point indicates that shopping centers should offer both luxury and value options so as not alienate their main target audience of upper-middle-class consumers. In general, it is observed from this research paper to maintain high quality atmosphere as well providing better services would help increase customers' satisfaction which will resultantly contribute towards maintaining higher levels of business success for shopping centers located within developing metropolitan areas.

SUGGESTIONS

From these results it is recommended that mall management at tiruchi must concentrate upon bettering their atmosphere through enhanced illumination, comfortable seats, cleanliness etc so as to provide an agreeable place for shoppers. Quality of services may also be enhanced by conducting periodic workshops for employees so as they could offer polite, quick clientele assistance. The mall owners should resolve this problem through regular discounts campaigns as well as offer special deals for cost-conscious customers from low-middle income group of people. Facilities for entertainment must also include many kid-friendly programs as well as various types of culture-related attractions so that people spend longer at these places thereby attracting a larger number of visitors too. Effective traffic control measures as well as improved car parks will help enhance convenience for visitors when they visit us at busy times of day. The mall owners can work together with retail outlets for providing an extensive as well as appealing variety of products that are popular among people here. Customer surveys need to be conducted regularly for monitoring their level of satisfaction on a regular basis. The above recommendations would definitely assist shops located at tiruchirappalli malls for improving customer's perception of value as well strengthening their behavioural intention towards purchasing from them thereby ensuring a healthy long term business expansion within this highly dynamic sector known as retailing.

CONCLUSION

This is concluded by stating a fact, which consumers' attitude plays an important role in deciding their behavior towards visiting of retail shopping malls at Tiruchi city area. The mall ambiance, along with its customer care services were considered to be key elements influencing consumers' level of happiness and commitment towards shopping at that place within a small-town area. Although customers enjoy shopping at mall because it is trendy with access to convenience as well as entertainment; however prices are still too high compared against what they get from other places. This confirms a correlation between favorable perceptions leading towards increased intent for repeat visits as well as buying behavior along with more likely referrals through mouth of others too. These findings emphasize that organised retail is gaining significance and influencing consumer behaviour patterns

especially among young people residing in developing cities such as Tiruchirappalli, India. Nevertheless, for sustained development malls need to tackle issues of cost-effectiveness as well as quality services. This paper makes important contributions towards filling an information gap about consumers' behaviour patterns within second-tier towns and urban areas, India. In general, there is a lot of scope for transforming Tiruchi's commercial complexes (shopping mall) as desired living spaces by focusing on consumer satisfaction and enhancement efforts. These findings offer actionable advice on how retail businesses as well as real estate companies can improve customer convenience at stores, malls etc. Therefore, balancing ambiance, services as well as cost is important to achieve high levels of consumer delight and commitment within an intensely competing industry like e-commerce business model.

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