

Attractive shopping malls influencing the purchase pattern of customers

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to investigate the role of mall culture and mall attractiveness affecting the lives of people today. This work was undertaken with a goal to find out the reason or reasons that attract and motivate customers to go to the shopping malls. The demarcating change that has led to the preference of shopping malls over high street was studied through detailed interview schedule. The sample size consisted of 120 research scholars from faculty of Arts and Sciences of Panjab University, Chandigarh. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators were used to analyze the data. For the present research work, data was collected through purposive sampling; in-depth interviews and observation method. The major findings showed that Malls nowadays follow a certain design strategy to achieve retail goals. The shopping scene is also changing. Malls are becoming wholesome entertainment centres for the peer group as well as a good place for family entertainment. High streets were once the only hallmarks of shopping but with the rise of mall culture the attraction of customers towards these shopping centres has increased manifolds. The output of the study unfolds that malls today not only provide a perfect shopping environment with a wide range of products but one gets to avail facilities of good eateries, cinema, playing area, place for sitting for senior citizens and all basic amenities like safety, security, parking, rest rooms, air conditioning; all under one roof thus saving a lot of time and money of customers.

Key Words : Customers, High street, Mall culture, Shopping malls

INTRODUCTION

As the standard of living has increased, the purchasing power of consumers have increased manifolds. According to India consumer spending (2004-2017). Consumer Spending in India has increased from 17809.14 billion INR (fourth quarter of 2016) to 18483 INR Billion in the first quarter of 2017 however, the average spending in 2004 was very low *i.e.* 9987.55 INR Billion which has reached a height of 18483 INR Billion in 2017.

Bureau of labour statistics US (2013) consumers under age 25 has the highest share of overall spending on food away from home *i.e.* 6.9 per cent. This age group also had the highest shares of total spending on education (6.8%), apparel and services (5.0%), Entertainment (4.1%) alcoholic beverages (1.2 %). The consumers aged 25 to 34 had the highest share of spending on housing (35.8 %) and transportation (19.1 %). However their spending on food away from home (5.5 %)

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and entertainment (4.6 %) was ranked third and fifth among all age groups. Moreover their spending on education was just 2.1%.

With the advent of liberalisation the Indian market has paved way for international brands and companies that showcase their products in noble, sophisticated and aristocratic manner; this has led to the emergence of new retail format known as Shopping malls.

According to Nichols *et al.* (2002), a shopping mall is a place where a variety of retail outlets are situated under one roof, and is usually anchored by one or more stores like departmental stores. Shopping malls have expanded over the years to include service outlets and entertainment providers (Ooi and Sim, 2007). In a study conducted by Yan and Eckman (2009), consumers evaluated shopping centre which have unique design or architecture, entertainment, and restaurants to be more attractive. Roulac (1994) concluded from his study that in shopping malls, consumers can shop without the problems of any traffic congestions or parking problems, or security concerns. Dodge and Summer (1986) found that store choice is a function of variables like socio economic background, the personality and the past purchase experiences of the consumers. Baker and Haytko (2000) have said that along with the number, the variety of different stores is also a decisive aspect for consumers to shop at shopping malls.

According to Assael (1987), shopping behavior is the most unique for behavior which the consumers exhibit. Gifts, clothing, groceries, gifts and household items are some of the most common type of shopping which consumers indulge in a highly frequent manner. But according to Dholakia (1999), occasion and motives are also some crucial points which influence the consumers shopping behavior. Underhill (1999) revealed that, shopping is very distinctive in nature, its more to just purchasing what one wants but it also includes the customer's acceptance of the product, brand or stores as well, using multiple senses like- seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing and even tasting (at times).

Swanson and Everett (2000) described 5 types of shoppers-

Eccentric shopper: The eccentric shopper compulsively shops, but never buys. They are not likely to purchase and find some excuse to put off the purchase.

Browser: A browser is a shopper who will peruse merchandise in a leisurely and casual way. Browser may be considered bothersome or beneficial and enjoy shopping and interested in making a purchase if the merchandise is appealing.

Bargain Hunter: The bargain hunter can be identified as wanting the best quality for the least amount of money. Bargain hunters enjoy saving money and will purchase items on worth the price.

Serious Shopper: The serious shopper wants or need a specific item and will not be influenced by alternatives.

Pressured Shopper: The pressured shopper is always in a hurry and pressured to make an immediate purchase. They are often irritable and indecisive in their purchase decisions.

Evolution of shopping malls :

The Grand Bazaar of Istanbul and Isfahan were built in the 15th century and are still the largest covered markets with more than 58 streets and 4000 shops. The Oxford Covered Market in Oxford, England opened in 1744 and still runs today. Gostiny Dvor in Saint Peterburg opened in 1785. It consists of more than 100 shops covering an area of over 570,000 sq feet.

The Burlington Arcade in London has been there since 1819. The Arcade in Providence, Rhode Island introduced the concept of Shopping Malls to United States in 1828. The Galleria

Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, Italy followed in 1860s and is closer to large modern malls in spaciousness.

Arcade and Moscow's GUM was built in 1890, the first off -street parking was built in Baltimore neighbourhood in 1907

Country Club Plaza was built in suburban Kansas City; Missouri by J.C. Nichols in 1922. In 1931 Highland Park Shopping Village was developed by Hugh Prather in Dallas, Texas. It was the first group of stores having its own parking lot with the stores facing away from access road.

Southdale Centre was established in 1956. This was the first modern shopping mall in Edina, Minnesota. It was the first fully enclosed mall with two-level design. It had central air – conditioning and heating, a comfortable common area (atrium), and two competing department stores (ICSC, 2000)

India's entry into shopping malls :

In the year 1990, Spencer Plaza was inaugurated from old Spencer Commercial Complex in Chennai. The seven floor mall has mix of retail, office space and entertainment facilities. There is a complete absence of floor-wise retail concept of zoning as tenants and owners have set shops with all kinds of retail outlets everywhere.

In the year 1999, Ansal Plaza was launched as a joint venture of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO); a government corporation and the Ansal group in Delhi. It is a three-storey complex and encloses an amphitheatre. Although architecturally it looks different from modern shopping malls with enclosed corridors it scores well on parameters such as tenant mix and zoning.

In the year 1999, Crossroads was developed by Piramal Group of Industries in Mumbai. It is a three-storey construction dominated by retail, food and entertainment. Of the three pioneers, its construction is closest to the modern shopping malls (Singh and Srinivasan, 2012).

Convenience, variety-one stop shop, socialisation and entertainment :

Loudon and Bitta (1993) Consumers seek high convenience while visiting malls. They spend time and effort for finding parking space, department or particular product. They also found that convenience is an important criterion for customers who are visiting malls infrequently.

According to Kaufmann (1996) Consumers are getting more attracted towards 'one stop destination' for satisfying their shopping desires, thus complementing the emergence of mall culture.

Stores, restaurants, food courts, restaurants, kid play zones, places for relaxation, areas for social use, interaction, entertainment and promotions are major components for any mall (Terblanche, 1999). The shopping centre provides all facilities to the consumers ranging from having bookstores, beauty salons, food courts, medical aid and grocery stores. Malls also facilitates shoppers with numerous variety of branded clothes and shoes, beauty and fashion products, furniture and home furnishings and amusement centres for kids. Malls add a term 'fun' aspect to shopping (Berry *et al.*, 1997).

A study by (Tauber, 1972; Bloch *et al.*, 1994) mentioned that One visits malls in order to relieve stress, alleviate the negative mood and forget about their problems.

Tauber (1972) further mentioned that Malls attracts shoppers by offering an opportunity to learn new trends. Wakefield and Baker (1998) Socialisation is an important factor relating to shopping experience. Loudon and Bitta (1993) examined that most of the people prefer to shop at locations where employee's behaviour was kind and courteous. Now consumers can shop without worrying

about parking problems and security issues (Ooi and Sim, 2007; Nicholls *et al.*, 2002)

Tenant mix/ variety of stores :

Academic research has revealed that many consumers make decision regarding where to shop on the basis of their attitude towards variety of stores and shopping centre environment (Finn and Louviere, 1990; Gentry and Burns, 1977)

Customers take time and often reach destination malls that offer best variety of stores and merchandise (Ashley, 1997). Ontario Mills (A California mall) and West Edmonton Mall (world largest mall) offer an exciting shopping environment, as they provide large variety of stores (214 stores and 800 stores, respectively) (Bird, 1997; Carlisle, 1997).

Wakefield and Baker (1998) discussed that variety of stores in a malls generates positive emotions and excitement. The impression of the mall is based upon entertainment facilities, a combination of functional and psychological factors (Hook, 1989; Babin, Darden and Giffith, 1994; Holbrook, 1999; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

Howard (1993) mentioned that consumers' also look for convenient access, good tenant mix *i.e.* Variety of stores, parking facilities and shopping centre size while preferring a mall. The challenge lies in creating an mall environment that influences consumers' shopping behaviour (Babin and Attaway, 2000)

Wakefield and Baker (1998) discussed that consumers accumulate information by exploring various products or stores. Consumers always look for new and upgraded products, so it is important for malls to offer a variety of products for an improved mall performance (Kaufmann, 1996).

Berman and Evans (1995) discussed tenant mix, malls that offers store balance and tenant variety are likely to attract more shoppers it generates excitement, as one-stop shop allows shoppers to compare product offerings .

Mall aesthetics/ ambience :

The ambience factors in the malls comprised of interiors, colours, lightning, temperature, music, crowd and cleanliness (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Donovan *et al.*, 1994) and this in turn affects consumer's moods and emotions and influences their purchase behaviour.

Loudon and Britta (1993) opined that a better Interior design would actually helps to enhance the image of the mall. Lui (1997) complemented his findings and revealed that Malls have seen a radical change in the interiors, consumers prefer a mall which provides a relaxed environment along architecturally lavish and sophisticated environment.

Wakefield and Baker (1998) found mall's interior design had strong influence on customers desire to stay longer in the mall. The researcher also found a positive and strong relationship between the mall's layout and desire to stay in the mall. They mentioned that customers not only evaluate the product assortments inside the mall but they also considered colors, ambience, fragrance, lighting and music as important factors that enhances buyer's mood and enhances mall image.

Wilhelm and Mottner (2005) mentioned that teenagers preferred going to a shopping mall whose atmosphere was friendly. They preferred a mall which provided cool stores, entertainment options, attractive designing and a good place to spend time with friends and an overall shopping experience.

High street trend :

A Strip mall/ High street is an open air shopping plaza in which the stores are arranged in a

row with a wide parking and side walkways in front. Sector -17 market is the best example of strip mall. This biggest shopping plaza is imbued with shopping, eating outlets, multiplex, office space in one place. Connaught place in Delhi is another good example.

Sharma (2010) believes that High streets are more preferred as the average sales in high streets are more as compared to malls and even the conversion rates are high.

Valsan, Lalka and Kakkar (2015) discussed that India's traditional bazaars have turned into High streets today, they must adapt to the changes taking place in the city as well and should underline the customer preferences. In every city, one would find two or more high street that has become prominent retail destinations.

Anand (2016) mentioned "Retailers prefer new outlets in shopping malls over high street." The researcher mentioned the views of various retailers. Kachana Krishnan, Knight Frank India, Director, Chennai said that a retailer's decision to be whether in a mall or highstreet will depend upon various factors such as footfalls, location, parking and nature of products. They presumed Malls and high street equally. Malls are well organised and provides a number of choices while high streets provides more personalised service.

Objectives :

The present work endeavours to study the mall culture and find out the role of attractive malls on shopping pattern of customers today. The research has been planned to identify the factors that motivate and influence a customer to visit a mall; to find out the transformation of malls into a place for socialisation, relaxation and spending time with family and friends. The paper further aims to find out the preference for purchasing from shopping malls over high street. High street was once the only preference of customers but due to growing number of malls there has been a verge of preference towards shopping malls.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data was collected by administering a detailed interview schedule. Personal interviews were taken and observations were also made. The sample size consisted of 120 research scholars from faculties of Sciences and Arts of Panjab University, Chandigarh. Sciences included departments of Anthropology, Physics, Botany, Chemistry, Zoology, Geology and Nano-science and Arts covered departments of History, Psychology, Geography, Economics, Political science and Education. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators were used to analyze the data. In-depth interviews were conducted where questions asked related to the factors motivating customers towards shopping malls, the changing shopping patterns and preference of malls over high street for shopping and whether malls were really becoming places of wholesome entertainment for families today. Pretesting was followed by reframing of certain questions for added clarity. There were no rejected questionnaires as the field investigator personally filled the answers to all the questions asked. Chandigarh was chosen as locale of the study, as it is one of the most planned cities in India. It is an important commercial hub of the state of Punjab. The shopping malls in Chandigarh brilliantly cater to the needs of the shopaholics and the fashion lovers. The shopping centres in Chandigarh would surely take one through a unique shopping experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preference of customers for shopping at malls or open spaces is presented in Table 1.

The result showed that the malls have become a common place for leisure, family get together and entertainment. High street is still popular among shoppers but changing needs of customers has given rise to Mall Culture. 83.3 % of the respondents said they preferred going to malls whereas 72.5% said they liked to shop at high street markets. However, a major group of people (40.8%) expressed that they liked going to middle rung markets like Sector – 22. They said that although they wanted varieties in styles they still desired to remain within a pre determined price range. Middle rung markets usually stock stylish products at reasonable prices. A small percentage (8.3%) of respondents preferred other markets for shopping.

Table 1 : Customers preference for shopping at Malls/High Street Open Markets

Preferred shopping environment	Number of respondents (Total 120)	Percentage
Malls	100	83.3%
Shopping Plaza – Sec. 17 (High Street Market)	87	72.5%
Sector – 22 (Middle rung Market)	49	40.8%
Any other market	10	8.3%

Table 2 represents the number of visits made by customers to Malls or High street for shopping. It can be seen from the data that the Indian customer has begun his journey on the “Mall road”. Malls are flourishing as a natural course of this action. Sector 17, once the only high street market, is facing fierce competition from Shopping malls. Due to changing shopping needs, the pattern of shopping has received a swift change. The figures show that 35.8 % of the people prefer going to malls for shopping whereas 25.8 % prefer going to High street market. However, on week days 3.3 % of the respondents prefer going to malls for shopping as against 21.6 % of people who prefer going to High street markets. One of the respondents who preferred ‘ Malls over highstreets’

(Aanchal Batra, age 27, Sciences, Hindu Khatri, Married, Punjab) mentioned

“Malls are for enjoyment ,shopping, fun and are stress busters, One gets all facilities under one roof. Sector 17 is just for shopping and there is no entertainment in sector 17, so we don’t take our guests to 17 now, we rather take them to malls”

Table 2 : Frequency of visits made by customers to Malls and High Street Markets for Shopping

Frequency of Visits	Frequency of Visits to Malls	Percentage (%)	Frequency of Visits to High Street Markets	Percentage (%)
Once a week	4	3.3	26	21.6
Once in 2 weeks	20	16.6	34	28.3
Once in 3 weeks	12	10	2	1.66
Once in a month	43	35.8	31	25.8
Once in 2 months	21	17.5	14	11.6
Once in 3 months	11	9.1	4	3.33
Once in 4 months	4	3.3	5	4.16
Any other, Specify	5	4.1	4	3.33

When respondents were interviewed, Some respondents rated malls and 17 equally.

(Ankita, age 28, Unmarried, Rajput, Hindu, Himachal Pradesh, non hostler, Science) stated that

“Elante and Sector 17, both are very spacious and sell a variety of brands, I don’t understand

the reason why people have shifted from 17 to Elante”

The reason for this is attributed to nearby accessibility and convenience of shopping. The overall visits to malls and preference for malls over High street market by the shoppers is credited to the convenience of getting all facilities under one roof with an advantage of a comfortable weather conditions at the Malls which is still an issue in High street markets.

Data distribution related to factors motivating customers to go inside a mall is presented in Table 3. Convenience of shopping under one roof (61.1 %) was considered the most important motivating factor by the shoppers. Cleanliness (25.8 %) and watching cinema (23.3%) were considered almost equally important factors for visiting a mall. However, Visual merchandising displays were the third most important reason that influenced customers to visit malls and check what is new at every store. Furthermore, Food (10.8%), Aesthetic (10 %) and Window shopping (10 %) were given equal weight-age by the customers. The figures clearly showed that shopping under one roof not only provides all brands at one place but also has provision for air conditioning, play area for kids, washrooms, availability of food, beverage and basic daily products, all within one area thus saving a lot of time and money. The entire family has a place where they can spend the whole day- shopping, eating, watching movies and getting wholesome entertainment.

Motivating factors	Number of respondents (Total 120)	Percentage (%)
Aesthetics	12	10
Cleanliness	31	25.8
Coffee and Bakery	5	4.1
Convenience of shopping under one roof	74	61.1
Food	13	10.8
Movies	28	23.3
Socialization	3	2.5
Window shopping	12	10
Visual merchandising displays	16	13.3

The preference of customers for visiting the mall with Peer groups or with / Families is presented in Table 4. Mall culture is the rise of new era; people rather than roaming alone have found a place for entertainment for the whole family. The data clearly shows that about 63.3 % people prefer going to malls with both friends and family and a very small percentage prefer going alone to a mall. Malls have become a big place for socialisation and entertainment.

Accompanying preferences	No. of customers (Total respondents 120)	Percentage (%)
Family	13	10.8
Friends	28	23.3
Both family and friends	76	63.3
Alone	4	3.3
Any other	1	83

Conclusion :

It is often said that “change is the only factor which is sure to come”. Advancement in technology and economic liberalisation has brought a major change in the lifestyle and consumption

behaviour of customers. Connaught Place in Delhi, MG road in Bangalore, Mount road in Chennai, Linking road in Mumbai, Sector – 17 market in Chandigarh were the hall marks of retailing till 1990s. High-street markets were the only places for shopping. The rising urban population and increasing demand for open spaces have lead to mushrooming of multi-storeyed shopping malls across the country. The concept of shopping has changed. Expectations of customers have increased. They want a pleasurable shopping experience with active purchasing. The Indian Retail Sector is booming and the shopping malls are fast becoming shopping cum entertainment centres.

The results of the present study reveal that Shopping malls (Fig.1) have gained maximum popularity and preference among visitors/ shopper. Research indicates that majority of the consumers prefer visiting shopping malls (Fig. 2) over High street markets or for that matter any other market. While High street markets might still be popular among some shoppers but due to the availability of comfort and amenities in malls the latter prove to be more attractive destinations for shoppers. The main purpose for visiting a mall is shopping followed by wholesome entertainment. From the data of this study, (Fig. 3) it can be seen that convenience of shopping under one roof is the most important dimension that attracts customers to malls. The other dimensions are cinema shows, cleanliness, eateries, coffee houses and no weather worries. Visual merchandising display is also

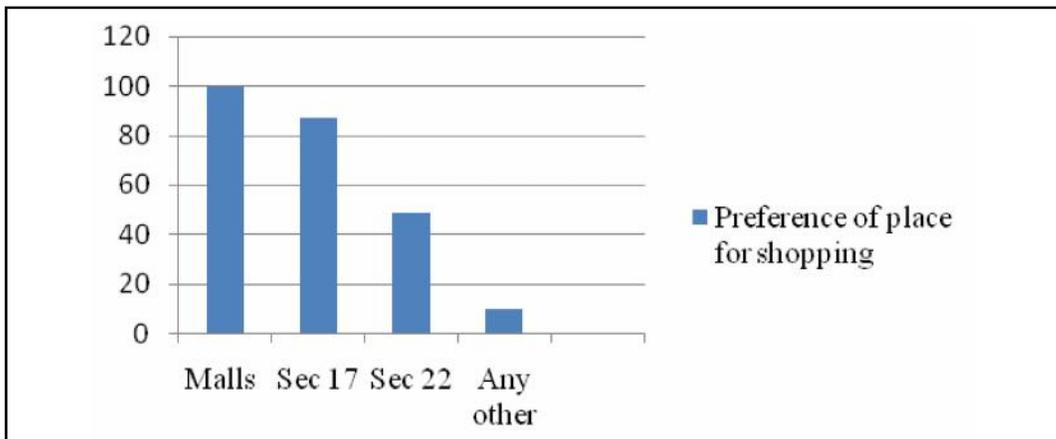


Fig. 1 : Customers preference for shopping at Malls/High street open markets

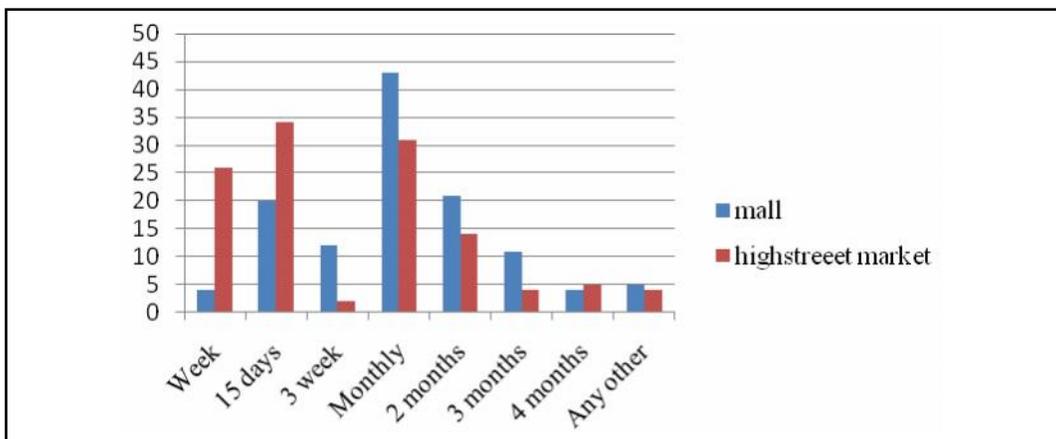


Fig. 2 : Frequency of visits made by customers to Malls and High street markets for shopping

an important motivating dimension affecting footfall and sales in mall. Shopping malls not only provide suitable place for the visitors to rest but also add an element of fun and excitement in their shopping activity. The ambience, security, safety, architecture, parking, reduced shopping time, are other factors that attract shoppers to malls. Due to change in shopping and lifestyle patterns, malls have been transformed into a place for socializing, relaxing, entertainment for the entire families (Fig. 4). Consumers perceive malls as a one stop destination for fulfilling their various daily needs. It is a one common place for hanging out with friends, having food with family, catching up with a movie and updating oneself about brands and their product ranges.

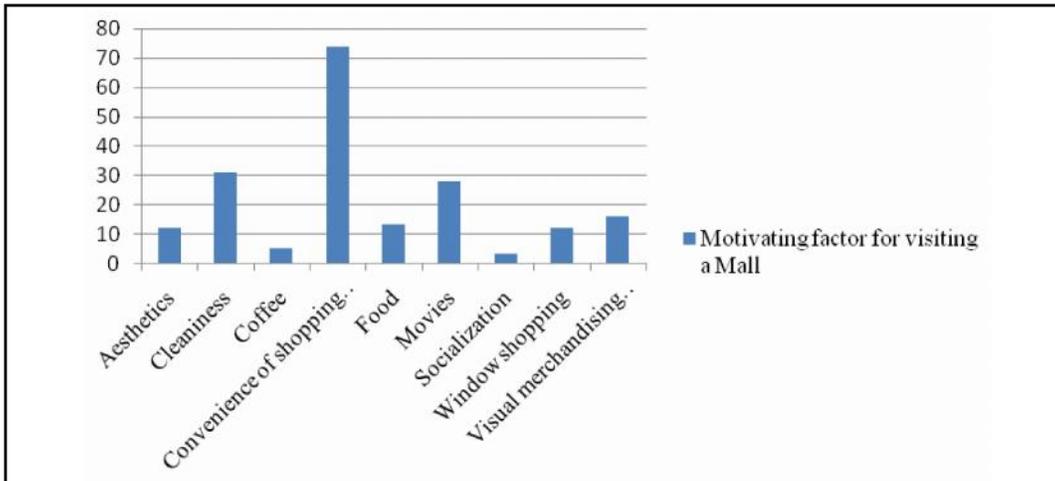


Fig. 3 : Factors that motivate customers to go inside a mall

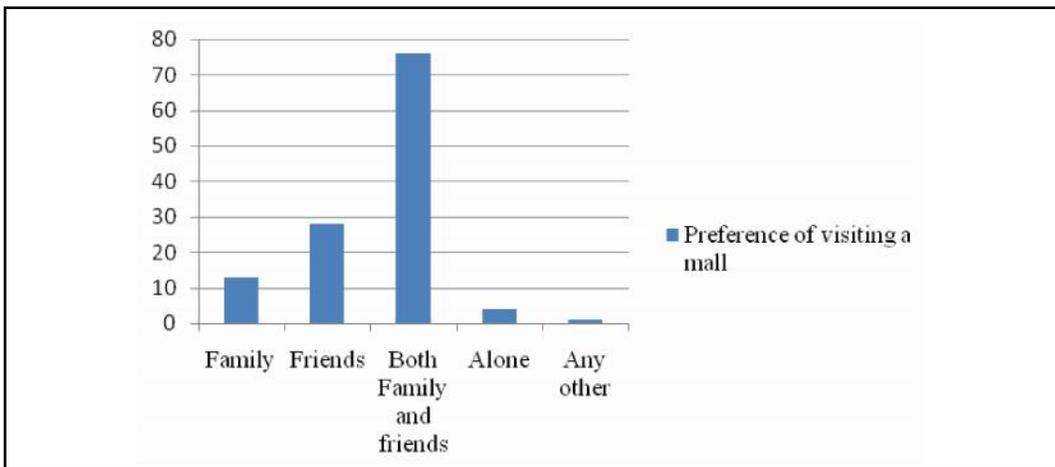


Fig. 4 : Preference of respondents to visit a mall in the company of peers or members of the family

A well planned and implemented strategic positioning is critical for the success of malls in India. Also well designed mall with appealing aesthetics may not be sufficient to ensure a mall's success. Hence there is a need to differentiate a mall from its competitors. To ensure that a mall attracts retailers and consumers, professional mall management is a necessity. The mall market is an extremely competitive one, having a high degree of internal and external competition. To lure

retailers and consumers to its premises a developer has to ensure that the property follows the best practices in the market especially in terms of mall management.

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