A STUDY ON POST COVID TREND OF VISITING SHOPPING MALL AMONGST RAJKOT CITIZENS

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ABSTRACT

The tremendous hit of COVID-19 pandemic has drastically affected many sectors of the Indian economy and the organized retail sector is one of them. During lockdown physical stores and shopping malls were closed to prevent the COVID outburst. This research study emphasizes on the post COVID trend of visiting shopping malls amongst Rajkot Citizens. To assess the trend mainly three criteria are taken into consideration namely: 1) the average time spent per visit, 2) the number of shops visited and 3) monthly frequency of visiting a shopping mall. It is found that still the young generation compared to old age is very insistent to visit shopping malls even after the big hit of pandemic and eventually it can be observed that post COVID trend of visiting shopping mall is thriving once again. After the immense strike of COVID-19 pandemic, the perspective of consumers on the way to shopping mall is quite impressive.

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Introduction

India is the world's fifth-largest global destination in the retail Industry. India ranked 63 in World Bank's Doing Business 2020. The Government of India has simplified the rules and regulations regarding Foreign Direct Investment in organized retail sector as well that's the reason behind the flourishing arisen of shopping culture in India. India will become a most encouraging market for organized retailers on the support of a large young consumer base, increasing disposable income and relaxed FDI norms. Though 2020 pandemic has affected the overall market of retail sector rigorously but people have again started living their life normally with utmost concern towards health. During lockdown physical stores and shopping malls were closed and shoppers were also instructed to maintain social distance as well as severe care to prevent the COVID from outburst. As retail is enormously a customer-centric industry, it is next to impossible to notice a drastic change towards trend of consumers and customers to visit shopping malls even after the big hit of the pandemic. A severe transformation was seen earlier in consumer behaviour towards retail sector due to COVID progression. During such critical condition the e-commerce trend was observed but since the situations have started becoming normalized it is observed that consumers have taken U-turn towards retail sector just like before. E-commerce is evergreen industry since its inception but retail sector is the most ancient industry.

Rajkot City is one of the largest cities of Gujarat State. Rajkot is considered as the heart of Saurashtra region. Rajkot is the midpoint for societal, cultural, commercial, educational, political and industrial activities for the entire Saurashtra region. The City is popularly known as "*Rangiloo Rajkot"* that means "Colourful Rajkot". This depicts the nature of Rajkot Citizens who actually enjoy the each and every moment of their life with full of excitement. For any city the overall notion towards shopping mall is quite enthusiastic and optimistic. Consumers usually emphasize on shopping mall rather than small retailers as they can get advantage of attention-grabbing ambience, accessibility of delicious food, variety of products to shop and entertainment alternatives at one place are the main factors that has drastically changed the opinion of consumers towards shopping malls. There are five big shopping malls in Rajkot city which are renowned amongst citizens.

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Importance of the Study

The core beneficiary aspect of shopping mall for consumers is convenience. The ultimate aim is to provide all products and services under one roof where consumers can have a choice of wide range of products, quality and various offers and discounts in prices. Shopping Malls come under the organized retail sector which has transformed the image of whole retail sector extremely. During lockdown, boost in e-commerce sector was found. Consumers were found making online purchases more often than earlier. This led to boom to online players where they were also assuring consumers safety and convenience. When everything is on track to normalize again therefore consumers have headed towards retail sector as before. In this study, the post COVID trend towards shopping mall is observed. The main purpose of the study is to understand the consumer behaviour towards visiting shopping mall after the tremendous knock of pandemic. It's a human tendency to always look for such place where they can enjoy their life or can entertain themselves. The reason why people most often visit shopping malls is that they not only make purchases but also can have access to prestigious brands, food courts, multiplexes for entertainment purpose, and game zones for children etc. There are many such big shopping malls in Rajkot City like Crystal Mall, Reliance Mall, Big Bazar, and so on. Hence, this is the fundamental motivation why shopping malls can attract more consumers than unorganized retailers.

Literature Review

- **P. Karthika and P. Devika, February 2017, A Study on Consumer Attitude towards Shopping Malls in Coimbatore City, Journal of Exclusive Management Science, Volume 6 (2), ISSN 2277-5684**

    Here, researchers stated that majority of customers like to purchase from shopping malls because they found it the most convenient place from where they can purchase whatever they like. Majority of customers found happier as shopping malls facilitates them not only necessary products but also provides various facilities such as excellent parking facilities, offers & discounts, credit / debit card facilities, etc.

- **Muhamed Yasir A K, May 2017, A Study on the Consumer Behaviour towards Shopping Mall in Kozhikode City, Global Jornal for Research Analysis, Volume 6 (5), ISSN 2277-8160**

    Here, it is found that customers are quite happy with the shopping malls as it is "One Stop Shop" for availability of wide range of brands. The study was conducted in Kozikode city where at that time inception stage of mall culture was observed therefore customers were found generous towards shopping malls.

- **Mr. M. Mohanraj and Dr. A.T. Jaganathan, July 2018, Consumer Behaviour towards Shopping Malls with Special reference to Salem District, International Journal of Scientific Development and Research, Volume 3 (7), ISSN 2455-2631**

    Here, the researchers have stated that promotional activities have their impact on consumers' satisfaction level and for these purpose shopping malls have to focus on the consumer expectations by considering factors like price, offers, and vouchers etc. Researchers also suggested that effective advertising is the key to attract more customers.

- **Dr. C. Vijay and P. Nivetha, June 2020, International Conference on COVID-19 Studies**

    Here, researchers have concluded that COVID-19 pandemic have changed the way of living of people all over the world. Majority of respondents admitted that COVID have affected their buying behaviour and they strongly agreed that pandemic has entirely changed their life.

- **Anupam Sharma, 2020, Changing Consumer Behaviours towards Online Shopping – An Impact of COVID-19, Academy of Marketing Studies Journal, Volume 24 (3)**

    Here, the researcher has found that many online players were committed to ensure safety of their consumers during the pandemic situation. Critical condition of recession in various economies of world arose due to pandemic led to a long-run impact on consumers' shopping trends, perceptions and preference behaviour.

Conceptual Framework

There are several factors determines the consumer buying behaviour in any particular manner. Since the emergence of shopping mall culture it is always found that consumers love to visit shopping malls normally. Continuous effective and attractive advertising cycle used by shopping malls never fails to reinforce the demand of products at a great level. Consumers also visits shopping mall to obtain a range of benefits offered rather granted by various brands.

It is essential to be aware of some basic criteria such as:

- The average time spent per visit,
- The number of shops visited and
- Monthly frequency of visiting a shopping mall

These can help to understand the post COVID trend of visiting shopping malls amongst consumers. For this purpose the conceptual framework is developed as follows:

Conceptual Framework Diagram of the Study

Research Methodology

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Statement of Problem	Due to COVID-19 many consumers have shifted towards online shopping which has reduced the footfalls of organized retail sector. This study is done to discover the post COVID trend towards shopping mall amongst citizen of Rajkot city.
Objectives of Study	• To understand the trend of consumers towards shopping mall. • To discover the gender differences in terms of average time of visiting shopping malls. • To identify the age group dissimilarity towards frequent visits of a shopping mall.
Research Design	Descriptive and Analytical Research
Data Collection Tool	Structured Questionnaire through Google Form
Significance of the Study	It facilitates to understand the trend of visiting shopping malls amongst Rajkot citizens.
Scope of Study	Rajkot City of Gujarat State
Sample Size	83
Sampling Method	Convenience Sampling

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Here, the percentage analysis and chi-square test is performed to statistically evaluate the collected data.

- **Age Group**

Table 1: Age Group

| Age	Count of Age
20 – 30	47
30 – 40	18
Above 40	2
Below 20	16
Grand Total	**83**
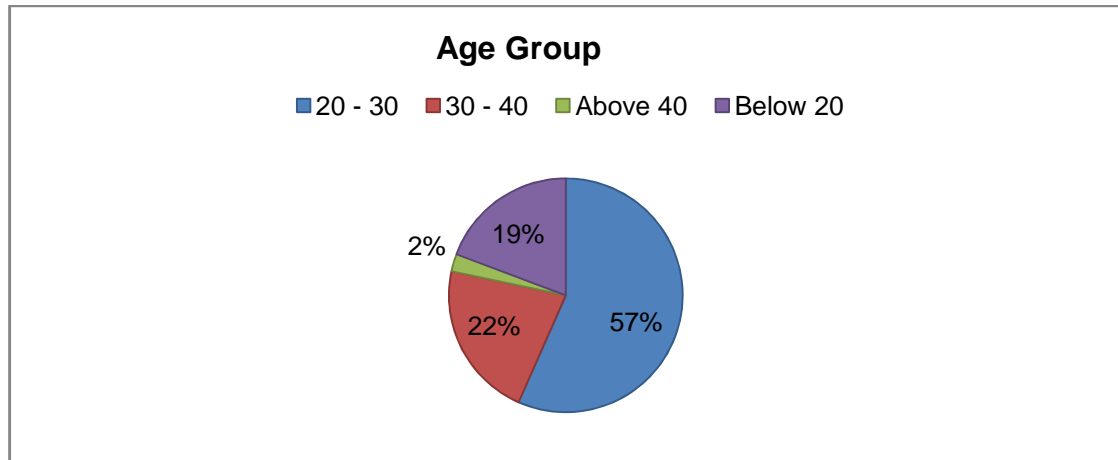
Age Group

Chart 1: Age Group

Interpretation: Most of the respondents belong to Age group of 20 to 30 years that is around 57% of total respondents. There are only 2% of the respondents are above the age of 40 years. So, It can be observed that the respondents belongs to young generation.

- **Academic Qualification**

Table 2: Academic Qualification

| Academic Qualification	Count of Academic Qualification
Graduate	47
Post Graduate	17
Under Graduate	19
Grand Total	**83**

Academic Qualification
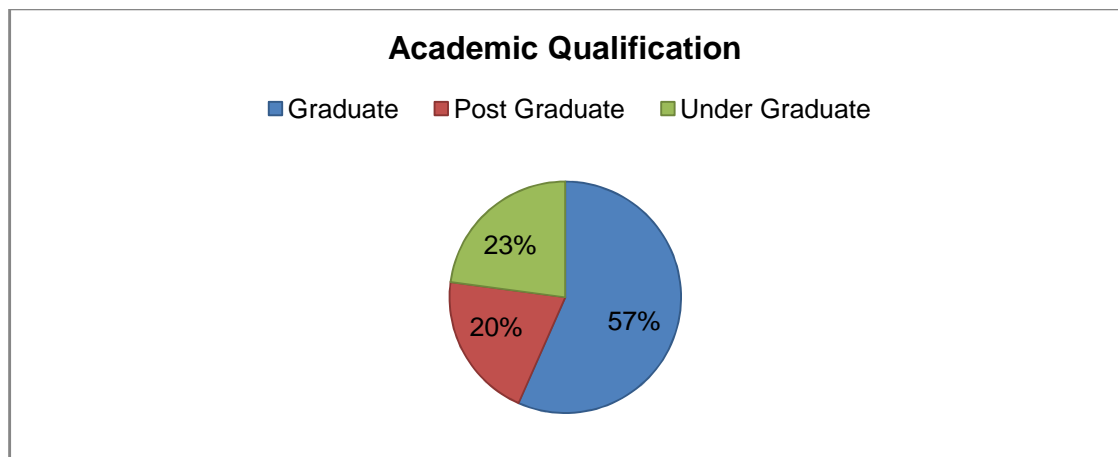
Chart 2: Academic Qualification

Interpretation: It can be observed that around 57% of the respondents are graduated people while only 20% have completed post graduation. 23% of the respondents belong to under graduate group.

- **Gender**

Table 3: Gender

| Gender	Count of Gender
Female	66
Male	17
Grand Total	**83**
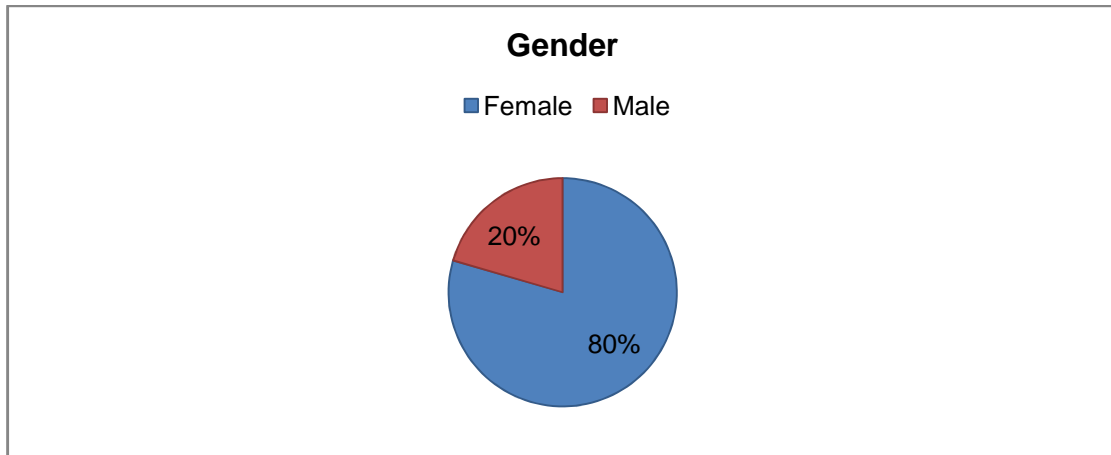
Gender

Chart 3: Gender

Interpretation: This table shows that around 80% of the respondents are female and 20% respondents are male. So it is observed that majority of respondents are females.

- **Monthly Income**

Table 4: Monthly Income

| Monthly Income	Count of Monthly Income
15000 - 30000	44
30000 - 50000	11
Above 50000	6
Below 15000	22
Grand Total	**83**
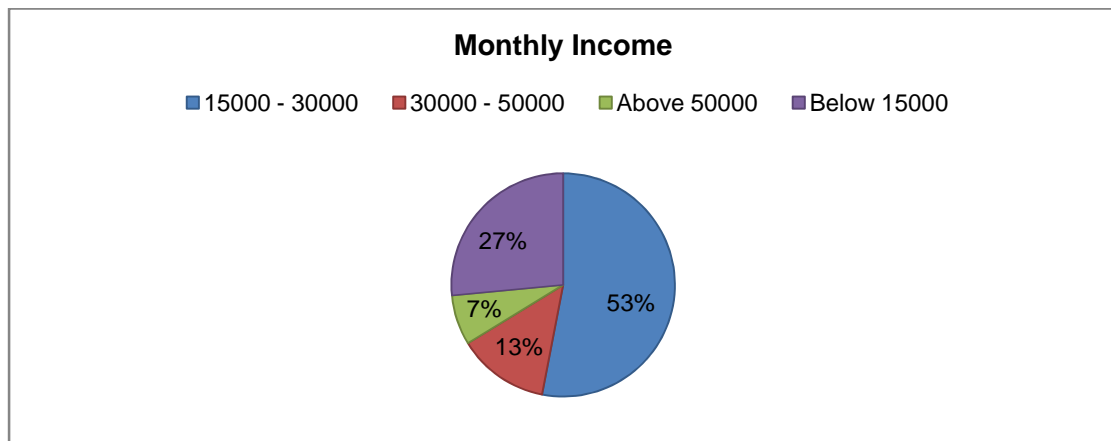
Monthly Income

Chart 4: Monthly Income

Interpretation: Here, 53% of the respondents are having income of 15000 to 30000 while only 7% of the respondents are having monthly income more than 50000. So, it can be observed that majority of respondents fall under middle class.

- **Marital Status**

Table 5: Marital Status

Marital Status	Count of Marital Status
Married	30
Unmarried	53
Grand Total	**83**

Marital Status

■ Married ■ Unmarried

36%

64%
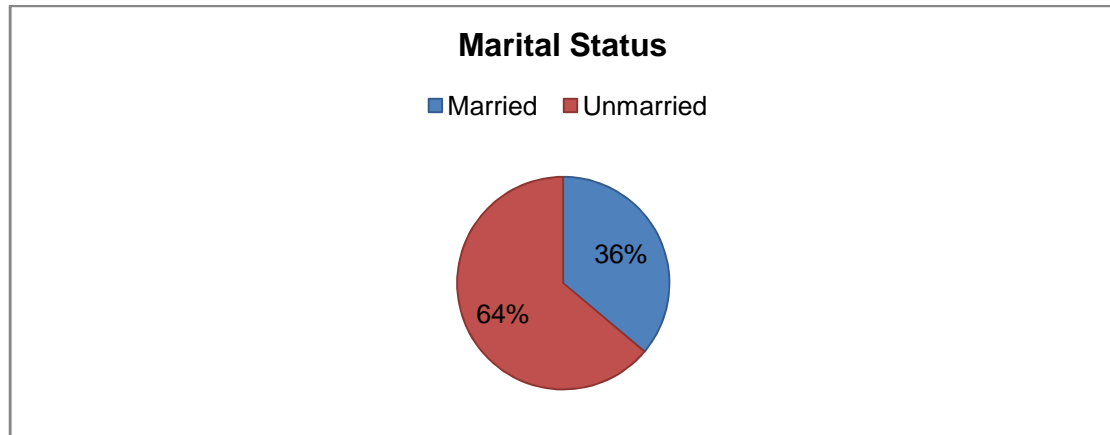
Chart 5: Marital Status

Interpretation: Unmarried respondents are higher than married respondents that are around 64%.

Hypothesis Testing

Here, the Chi-Square Testis performed through MS Excel on the collected data.

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

Sr. No.	Null Hypothesis	P Value	Result
1	There is no significant relationship between Gender and average time spent in shopping mall per visit.	0.106830289	**Accepted**
2	There is no significant relationship between Marital Status and number of shops visited per visit.	0.01925672	**Rejected**
3	There is no significant relationship between Age group and frequent visits of a shopping mall.	0.001217937	**Rejected**
4	There is no significant relationship between Monthly Income and frequent visits of a shopping mall.	0.021169433	**Rejected**
5	There is no significant relationship between Academic Qualification and number of shops visited per visit.	0.003363585	**Rejected**

Interpretation

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.106. As here it is more than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% of level of significance. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between Gender and average time spent in shopping mall per visit.

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.019. As here it is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% of level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Marital Status and number of shops visited per visit.

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.001. As here it is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% of level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Age group and frequent visits of a shopping mall.

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.021. As here it is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% of level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Monthly Income and frequent visits of a shopping mall.

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.003. As here it is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% of level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Academic Qualification and number of shops visited per visit.

Findings of the Study

The consumers' trend towards shopping mall is always found the dynamic. In Rajkot City, after the immense strike of COVID-19, the perspective of consumers on the way to shopping mall is quite impressive. It was really unattainable that in such a small period of time consumers would again start heading towards organized retail sector.

- There is no significant change is found in the consumer behaviour before and post pandemic towards shopping malls amongst Rajkot citizens.
- Majority of the consumers are females who actually spend more time in shopping malls than males.
- Only 2% of the respondents are having age more than 40 years that shows that youth is more active in terms of visiting shopping malls post COVID.
- It is observed that most of the graduated people visits more number of shops in shopping mall compared to under graduated people.
- Hence, the overall study shows that still the young generation is very insistent to visit shopping malls even after the big hit of pandemic. Ultimately it can be observed that post COVID trend of visiting shopping mall is thriving once again.

Recommendations

Consumers should become more concerned of the prevailing issue of pandemic and be careful towards hygiene aspect. It is essential that consumers should understand the criticality of the situation and try to cultivate the habit of visiting shopping malls with utmost care. The shopping malls should also implement various tactics to attract the consumers and enrich their shopping experience with optimum satisfaction. The recurring trend towards shopping mall hints to implement the paramount decisions for the betterment of consumers to attract, retain and make them connected with the organized retail sectors.

Conclusion

This study prominently proves that even after the big hit of COVID pandemic the consumers' trend towards visiting shopping mall is prospering once again. It is found that young generation is more active than old people in terms of visiting shopping malls. There are various big shopping malls in Rajkot which have successfully regained the interest of its consumers post pandemic. It is observed that females are frequently visiting shopping malls rather than males. To assess the trend mainly three criteria are taken into consideration namely: 1) the average time spent per visit, 2) the number of shops visited and 3) monthly frequency of visiting a shopping mall. People have become insistent to visit shopping malls even after the big hit of pandemic and eventually it can be observed that post COVID trend of visiting shopping mall is thriving once again.

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