

A Study of Customers' Perceptions Towards the Lulu Mall of Lucknow

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Abstract:

This paper aims to investigate the various aspects of customers' perception, which affect the impression and preferences of shoppers. It asserts that the level of customers' preferences determines the impact of the setting of the mall on its image. Researching customer perception enhances the knowledge of mall managers. Managers can use this knowledge in acquiring more trustable customers and meeting their requirements in terms of the mall's perception. This research identifies the factors that are considered to be the most extensively important by customers and provides managers with awareness regarding the psychological elements of customers that affect their perception. A survey was conducted on customers in Lulu Mall to identify the effect of the principal factors on customers' perceptions. This research used path analysis as the principal analytical tool for conducting casual evaluation and impacting the significant effects of customers' perception attributes (Mall atmosphere, Music, Merchandise Quality, Service, Price, and Convenience) on Customers' Perception. The result indicates that all the factors affect Customers' perceptions except Music.

Keywords: Mall atmosphere, Music, Merchandise Quality, Service, Price, Convenience and Customers' Perception.

Introduction:

Lulu Mall Lucknow is an international-level shopping mall situated on the Amar Shaheed Path via NH-27. Just about 15 km from Charbagh railway station, it takes 35 minutes. From Lucknow airport, Lulu Mall is only 13 km, which takes 20 minutes. The Mall has a total area of 185,800 square meters, with the credit of being the largest shopping mall in North India. This Mall has more than 300 national and international brands, along with 11 multiplex screens, a food court with almost 1600 seats, and more than 20 wide range of dining restaurants.

Lulu Mall Lucknow is a world-class mall that is becoming a huge charm for visitors from each corner of the state. In the state capital Lucknow, this mall has seen more than 1 million visitors within the first 10 days. The average number of people per day has been 1 million, and on weekends that number goes up to 2.5 million. As the best shopping mall, Lulu Mall Lucknow may be one of the top visiting spots also for entertainment.

The Lulu Mall is now famous as the biggest mall in India. Because it has so many unique things, this mall is popular not only in the country but also worldwide. This mall cost 2,000 crores to build, and it has 15 beautiful places to eat and shop along with some unique things to do at Lulu Mall. There is a food court with a seating capacity of 1600 people along with the best facilities.

Lulu Mall Lucknow Facilities:

Lulu mall at Lucknow was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday 10th of July. He inaugurated this along with other famed dignitaries. Mega hypermarkets and entertainment zone called furniture was opened.

The chairman of Lulu group declared that this mall is going to provide employment to thousands of youths directly and indirectly. This mall comprises of 15 dining restaurants and of 1600 people. It has 11 story parking facility for 300 vehicles. It has unique wedding shopping area with jewellery and fashion brands. To promote local products made by Uttar Pradesh artisans an area had been provided on the ground floor and will showcase popular ODOP products in other malls also.

Key Factor Which Affects the Customers' Perception:

- **Mall Atmosphere**

The customer experience is significantly influenced by the mall atmosphere. "Atmospherics" is a terminology used in describing the art of designing a mall, such that it increases the sensory feeling of customers. Atmospherics optimizes the spatial aesthetic characteristics in the mall and is the subtle and silent background language that affects customers (Kotler, 1973–1974). This background aesthetic flavour influences the emotions of customers and can cause them to evaluate the products differently. Koo (2003) suggested that customers with a positive experience would be highly satisfied, which in turn, would induce them to increasingly frequent the mall, thus boosting mall sales. Several researchers who examined mall atmosphere indicated that the ambience and design of the mall are critical factors that influence customer preference, service and product quality, price perception, and cost of shopping experience (Baker et al., 2002; Thang & Tan, 2003). Newman and Patel (2004) identified mall atmosphere as another critical determinant of the mall choice of customers. Meanwhile, Richardson et al. (1996) contended that mall aesthetics can enhance customer perception of the quality of the products in the mall. The interior décor of a mall is viewed differently by customers and management (Samli et al., 1998). Samli et al. reported that compared to the customers, the management regards mall image as less important, and suggested that the retailers can enhance this attribute easily to please the customers and increase their satisfaction and repurchase levels.

The smell inside a mall can be an effective trigger of emotions as well. A pleasant smell of fragrances tends to increase the behaviour of curiosity among customers (Orth & Bourrain, 2005). The affective expectations of consumers are important; thus, the feelings derived during shopping likewise convey an emotional experience (Wirtz, Mattila, & Tan, 2007).

Donovan et al. (1994) contended that purchasing intention and the actual purchasing process are affected by the emotional state of a customer. A soothing and welcoming mall atmosphere arouses a positive emotional state and induces customers to spend more time in the mall, thus increasing the opportunity to make additional purchases. To meet the needs of their target market, mall designers can use this concept by strategically designing their mall atmosphere to increase the in-mall experience of patrons (Hartman & Spiro, 2005). Thus, mall atmosphere is a prominent tool that retailers can use for enhancing the behaviour of customers toward their purchase decisions from the mall.

- **Music**

Music that is played in the background directly influences the moods of shoppers, and it induces them to form an opinion regarding the mall and its service (Herrington & Capella, 1994). This type of music functions as a major atmospheric influence in conveying the overall image of the mall; at the same time, it works on the cognitive and behavioural responses of shoppers. Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between music and its influence on shoppers under various conditions. In his study on the effects of music, Bruner (1990) classified music within several marketing contexts, such as how music influences the purchase intention and the recall factor, and how it could change behaviour. Bruner likewise investigated other factors, such as the influence

of music on shopping duration, product selection, and overall sales, and revealed that music is capable of eliciting the powerful affective responses of customers.

Oakes and North (2008) pointed out the positive significant results of music and demonstrated its role in the service landscape to generate the desired customer responses. Oakes and North assigned various variables to music (i.e., volume, tempo, and type of music) and indicated that changing some of these variables triggers the desired positive outcomes, such as the shopping amount and time spent and affective customer responses. The music factor has been investigated extensively in the past two decades, but only a few studies focused on the critical factor of the impact of music on shoppers. Areni (2003) distinguished between the findings of scholars and retailers, and revealed that when the proper atmospheric music is played, shoppers linger longer in the mall, are drawn to or repelled by the mall, and are encouraged to purchase or discouraged from shopping. Morin et al. (2007) asserted that soothing music generates a positive outcome in terms of service evaluation and purchasing decisions.

- **Merchandise Quality**

Quality denotes the intrinsic and extrinsic values attached to a brand or product based on customer perception (Zeithaml, 1988). Intrinsic value includes the performance and durability of a product, whereas extrinsic value incorporates the brand name and warranty of the product. Verbeke (2000) argued that a key criterion of quality is the brand name, and brands with an international stature provide the notion of high quality. This intrinsic quality is used by consumers in valuing foreign brands as products of higher quality.

For an existing strong brand, the perceived quality further enhances its success; meanwhile, for a weak or new brand, the perceived quality decreases its opportunity to succeed (Aaker, 2000). Laroche and Tffoli (1999) reported that the price and quality of a brand are critical factors that affect purchasing decisions. They explained that quality is associated with the price of popular brands. Customers who perceive quality and price positively typically believe that high price implies high quality, whereas low price suggests low quality. Several studies (e.g., Netemeyer et al., 1993) indicated that quality and price are critical in the selection of products, and perceived quality is an important factor in the purchase and perusal of products for personal use. Intrinsic cues such as physical quality are associated with guaranteed superiority or the assumed standard of a product (Zeithaml, 1988). Familiar brands are more attractive to customers compared to less famous or new brands (Burrow, 2006). Purchasing a product from an unfamiliar brand is a risk that consumers avoid. From the customer perspective, perceived quality is closely related to brand loyalty, especially when product quality cannot be ascertained beforehand. Perceived quality is an important element for marketing into new regions or when fixing premium prices (Amine, 1996). Product quality is associated with customer decision making. Consumers commonly purchase popular brands that have a strong quality and good reputation in the market. Among the product qualities that appeal to consumers are the style, materials, and design of products. Thang and Tan (2003) and Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003) cited merchandise as the most critical attribute of mall selection preference. Customers typically assume that international brands have a higher quality, which in turn, provide them with a good perception of the mall that carries these brands. Vahie and Paswan (2006) reported that the congruence of mall quality and product quality of the international brand appeals to the emotions of customers. Customer perception of mall image is based on certain situations, and having the proper merchandise is more important than other attributes.

Customers can decide on the mall image after only one visit to a mall that does not carry their preferred style (Newman & Patel, 2004). Hu and Jasper (2006) indicated that malls that convey social cues could impart a highly favorable product perception toward customers. These cues include the lifestyle quality of customers.

This idea reiterates the importance of having merchandise that is suitable for the targeted customer segment. Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) concurred with this concept and further explained that malls whose marketing strategies are not aligned with customer wishes (e.g., not displaying the merchandise that customers prefer) would ultimately lose their customers.

- **Service**

The service factor, which incorporates the interaction between the employees of a business and its customers, is an essential brand criterion (Newman & Patel, 2004). Members of the sales staff directly interact with customers.

Newman and Patel (2004) argued that customers evaluate the service rendered; good service induces customers to share their positive experience with others through word-of-mouth marketing and increases customer loyalty to the mall.

The service rendered by sales personnel significantly affects the mall preference of customers, especially their choice of a business that involves home delivery services (Teller, Kotzab, & Grant, 2006). Berman and Evans (1992) pointed out that the courtesy and knowledge demonstrated by the sales staff is an important factor for customers. Mall image is enhanced through the good service provided by the staff. Service induces customer loyalty to a mall (Miranda et al., 2005). Moreover, service plays a major role in increasing the repurchase intention of customers (Hellier et al., 2003). Emotional arousal functions as a moderator in the repurchase intention of customers who have obtained good service quality.

- **Price**

Value-for-money is an important factor of customer purchasing decisions. Considerable research has ascertained the effect of price on purchase decisions. Kotler and Bernard (2005) defined price as the monetary value attached to a product or service. Price denotes the total value that is paid by customers for a product or service. Price is controlled on the basis of the demand and supply curve in the market, and price fluctuates accordingly.

McDowell et al. (2006) argued that the fluctuation in product prices likewise occurs in conjunction with the income level of a society; as income increases, prices tend to increase as well, which may cause inflation in the absence of appropriate control mechanisms. Price elasticity is controlled by the type of product; variations in product demand is contingent upon the need for the product, the nature of the product (i.e., whether the product is complementary to another product or it replaces another product), and the impact that the product generates

(McDowell et al., 2006). Price sensitivity is intensified by price elasticity, and it changes according to the product features (Rao & Kent, 1989). Price and quality are closely related. Zeithaml (1988) indicated that customers associate price and quality very differently. Price is not the only indicator of quality because other factors are involved, such as the differences in prices and quality among similar types of products, information levels of customers, and customer knowledge in terms of differentiating these groups of products. The connection between price and quality merely assures customers that a high-value product connotes high quality. Elements such as customer emotions toward a product, brand reputation, quality, and price are related to the perceived value of the product (Zeithaml, 1988). The conceptual evaluation that is attached to a product denotes the integration of price and quality as reflected in the Profit Impact of Marketing Strategies (Bradley, 1995). This perceived value attached to a product creates a competitive advantage for the product and its brand. Zeithaml (1988) suggested that when customers receive the quality that they expect of a product, they subsequently bestow a high value on the product. The product price and quality of the received product are translated as the value given to the product. The external quality of a product is more evident to customers when they attach a value to it. Chan (2007) indicated that customers value a brand when they use externally derived information and knowledge. Chan further explained that a lesser supply of a product would increase the value attached to it by customers.

- **Convenience at the Mall**

Convenience is an important factor in the current fast-moving environment. A principal aspect of convenience is mall location and other related factors, such as parking and transportation. Retailers should consider location because this decision cannot be undone easily. Customers are heavily influenced by various factors, including time required to travel to the mall, transportation to arrive at the mall, location of the mall, and eventually, sales in the mall (Wood & Browne, 2007). Thang and Tan (2003) reported that customers choose a mall to visit based on its accessibility, ease of transportation, and time required to go to this mall. Accessibility was the second most important factor in selecting a mall; even malls on the same location were affected by the accessibility factor.

Another important consideration in terms of the convenience factor are mall hours, or the opening and closing time. Hyllegard et al. (2005) argued that older customers regarded mall hours as unimportant because these customers have more time available to them. Hyllegard et al. likewise indicated that both convenience and mall hours influenced customers patronizing a mall among different age groups. Retailers that have a younger target market should therefore consider this factor by extending their opening hours and increasing the convenience for the target market. Young people nowadays have busy lifestyles, and mall hours should accommodate this aspect of their lives (Hyllegard et al., 2005).

A small difference in terms of distance can have a principal effect on customers, and thus on the success of the mall (Wood & Browne, 2007). Miranda et al. (2005) confirmed this result, given that the issue of customer loyalty to a particular mall is contingent upon the distance travelled to reach the mall. Facilitating the customer shopping experience at a mall allows the retailers to create a competitive advantage for themselves (Newman & Patel, 2004). In Korea, Koo (2003) examined the correlations among factors, such as mall image, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in discount malls, and reported that convenience significantly affected loyalty but not satisfaction. By contrast, Chang and Tu (2005) argued that customer loyalty and satisfaction are directly linked to convenience and indirectly linked to satisfaction, and thus to loyalty. Hence, retailers that intend to increase their number of customers and enhance customer loyalty can work on convenience and related aspects to further grow their business.

Customer Perception:

The perception of customers is derived not only from their knowledge regarding the product alone, but also from their perceived images of the product (Lindquist, 1974–1975). Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) described perception as the stages that a customer or a person undergoes in selecting, rearranging, and interpreting external triggers into a cohesive picture. People generally interpret truth based on perception rather than the actual reality.

Inference theory states that evaluations are made based on knowledge received from cues that exist externally. Fisk (1961–1962) explained that opinions or judgments are created through experiences that are related to inferences, which in turn, induce certain perceptions. In terms of a new product, customers rely on their past experiences of the brand in evaluating the product. Baker et al. (2002) suggested that customers use the environment as the place from which to obtain information regarding a product. Moye and Kincade (2002) argued that customers rely on mall image factors, and these factors form their perception on how to react to the products. Thompson and Chen (1998) indicated that perception is not always reliable and is highly contingent upon the lifestyle and age of customers. They pointed out the importance of using mall image to influence customer behaviour and obtaining customer views on the mall image. Gaining a sense of customer views on the mall image and then designing the mall accordingly are essential. Being different will attract customers and is an important element for customer retention. Assael (1992) reiterated this aspect by suggesting that mall selection is critically important because it decides the purchase of products in the first place.

Conceptualization And Theoretical Development:

Research Hypotheses

After critically reviewing the existing literature, several hypotheses are proposed to justify the objectives of the current study.

Donovan et al. (1994) contended that purchase intention and the actual purchasing process are affected by the emotional state of a customer. A soothing and welcoming mall atmosphere arouses a positive emotional state and induces customers to spend more time in the mall. Therefore, the current study posits the following hypothesis:

H01: A positive and significant relationship exists between Mall Atmosphere and Customers' Perception.

Areni (2003) distinguished between the findings of scholars and retailers, and revealed that when the proper atmospheric music is played, shoppers linger longer in the mall, are drawn to or repelled by the mall, and are encouraged to purchase or discouraged from shopping. Morin et al. (2007) pointed out that soothing music

generates a positive outcome in terms of service evaluation and purchasing decisions. Therefore, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H02: A positive and significant relationship exists between Music and Customers' Perception.

H03: A positive and significant relationship exists between Music and Mall Atmosphere.

Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) explained that malls whose marketing strategies are not aligned with the wishes of their customers (e.g., not displaying the merchandise that customers prefer) would ultimately lose their customers. Thang and Tan (2003) and Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003) cited merchandise as the most critical attribute of mall selection preference. Therefore, the current study puts forward the following hypothesis:

H04: A positive and significant relationship exists between Merchandise Quality and Customers' Perception.

Newman and Patel (2004) argued that customers evaluate the service rendered; good service induces customers to share their positive experience with others through word-of-mouth marketing and increases customer loyalty to the mall. Hu and Jasper (2006) indicated that good customer service induces customers to obtain a good perception of the mall and its products. Therefore, the current study posits the following hypothesis:

H05: A positive and significant relationship exists between Service and Customers' Perception.

H06: A positive and significant relationship exists between Service and Mall Atmosphere.

Zeithaml (1988) suggested that when customers receive the quality that they expect of a product, they subsequently bestow a high value on the product. The product price and quality of the received product are translated as the value given to the product. Kalyanaram and Winer (1995) pointed out that customers compare prices when deciding on a product. Therefore, the current study suggests the following hypothesis:

H07: A positive and significant relationship exists between Price and Customers' Perception.

H08: A positive and significant relationship exists between Merchandise Quality and Price.

Kim and Jin (2001) contended that convenience is one of the reasons for customer preference for multinational discount malls over national malls. Another important consideration in terms of convenience are mall hours, or the opening and closing time. Chang and Tu (2005) argued that customer loyalty and satisfaction are directly linked to convenience. Therefore, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H09: A positive and significant relationship exists between Convenience and Customer Perception.

H10: A positive and significant relationship exists between Service and Convenience.

Research Methodology:

This study aims to explore the impact of various independent variables on Mall Image, with a particular focus on Mall Atmosphere, Music, Merchandise Quality, Price, Service, and Convenience at the Mall. The dependent variable under examination is Customer Perception. To gather data for analysis, a survey was administered to customers at Lulu Mall Lucknow.

Lulu Mall Lucknow was selected as the research site due to its reputation for offering a wide range of brands and products. The shopping complex is renowned for its collection of fashionable clothing and footwear for both men and women. Additionally, luxury garment products are highly sought after by shoppers frequenting these shopping complexes.

By examining the aforementioned independent variables and their influence on Mall Image, this study aims to understand how factors such as Mall Atmosphere, Music, Merchandise Quality, Price, Service, and Convenience contribute to customers' overall perception of the mall. The findings of this research can provide valuable insights for businesses operating in the retail industry, enabling them to make informed decisions to enhance their mall image and improve customer perception.

Questionnaires were distributed to the customers one of the famous malls in Uttar Pradesh that is Lulu Mall. The estimate of population size was derived according to the information obtained from the Lulu mall. The obtained estimation was divided by the sample size, and the resulting number became the basis for selecting the sample members through random systematic sampling. Prior to conducting the survey, we had a discussion with the manager of the selected Lulu Mall and obtained authorization to stand in the Lulu Mall and request customers to participate in the survey. Random sampling method was utilized because identifying specific persons as samples for this research was unnecessary. A total of 250 people were approached, 54% percent of the respondents were women and 46% were men, and most of the respondents were between the ages of 21 to 30 years (46%) and 31 to 40 years (38%).

A cross-sectional study was used as the research structure. A five-point Likert scale was assigned to the independent variables, namely, Mall Atmosphere, Music, Merchandise Quality, Price, Service, and Convenience at the Mall, and the dependent variable, Customer Perception of the Lulu Mall. A pilot test was conducted to justify that the questions used in the questionnaire would achieve the research objectives. Validity and reliability tests were likewise conducted to ascertain that the questions were valid and reliable. Analysis of the answers in the questionnaires was conducted using IBM SPSS 22 and SmartPLS-4.

Results:

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the seven main variables in this study. The mean of all of the variables exceeds 4, whereas the mean of Atmosphere slightly differs from those of the other variables. Moreover, less heterogeneity is observed in all of the variables based on the standard deviation column.

Table.1. Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE Mean	Min	Max
Atmosphere	3.4000	.71832	.04543	1.40	5.00
Music	3.1468	.83801	.05300	1.00	5.00
Merchandise Quality	3.0872	.86238	.05454	1.00	5.00
Price	3.1580	.82921	.05244	1.00	5.00
Service	3.4856	.75636	.04784	1.40	5.00
Convenience	3.3876	.77814	.04921	1.00	5.00
Customer perception	3.7144	.81583	.05160	1.00	5.00

Table 1 shows that the mean score value of Atmosphere is (3.4). Based on the questionnaires, the respondents' level of understanding and importance for the Atmosphere variable is high, which indicates the effective and significant state of the judgment capability of the respondents. The mean score value of Music is (3.1468), which indicates an impressive and significant state of customer feedback on this variable. The mean value score of Merchandise Quality (3.0872) demonstrates the significant mood of customer judgment capability. Moreover, the mean score for Price is (3.1580), which is at a high level. The results imply that the respondents attach more importance to the price of each item sold in the shops, which establishes an image of the shop in their minds. The customers are extremely price-sensitive when shopping at the mall, which highlights the importance of pricing strategy in encouraging the customers to repurchase at the shops. Service is another important variable used in this study. The mean score of Service is (3.4856). The customers at the shop have acknowledged that the

importance of service in the mall is inevitable. The delivery of services both before and after the purchase is regarded as among the most important criteria from the perspective of respondents. This result is significant because it demonstrates the sensitivity of respondents toward the services at the shop. Moreover, from the mean score value of Convenience (3.3876), this variable cannot be ignored because it constitutes the image of the mall in the minds of customers. Finally, Customer Perception, which is the dependent variable in this study, denotes a high level of significance with a mean score of (3.7144). The respondent feedback on Customer Perception suggests the highest level of agreeableness. The level of agreeableness of the respondents implies that their perception of the Lulu Mall is outstanding.

Measurement Model

Quality of the constructs in the study is assessed based on the evaluation of the measurement model. The assessment of the quality criteria starts with evaluation of the factor loadings which is followed by establishing the construct reliability and construct validity.

Factor Loadings

Factor loading refers to the "The extent to which each of the items in the correlation matrix correlates with the given principal component. Factor loadings can range from -1.0 to +1.0, with higher absolute values indicating a higher correlation of the item with the underlying factor" (Pett et al., 2003, P. 299). None of the items in the study had factor loading less than the recommended value of .50 (Hair et al., 2016). Hence, no items were further removed. Factor loadings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor Loading:

	Convenience	Customers' Perception	Mall Atmosphere	Merchandise Quality	Music	Price	Service
AT1			0.782				
AT2			0.802				
AT3			0.804				
AT4			0.675				
AT5			0.616				
CO1	0.701						
CO2	0.727						
CO3	0.757						
CO4	0.719						
CO5	0.808						
CP1		0.854					
CP2		0.847					
CP3		0.838					
CP4		0.824					
CP5		0.789					
MQ1				0.827			
MQ2				0.607			

MQ3				0.681			
MQ4				0.829			
MQ5				0.852			
MU1					0.761		
MU2					0.831		
MU3					0.635		
MU4					0.814		
MU5					0.841		
PR1						0.692	
PR2						0.822	
PR3						0.692	
PR4						0.836	
PR5						0.836	
SR1							0.712
SR2							0.781
SR3							0.748
SR4							0.820
SR5							0.814

Indicator Multicollinearity

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic is utilized to assess multicollinearity in the indicators (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). According to Hair et al (2016) multicollinearity is not a serious issue if the value for VIF is below Table 3 presents the VIF values for the indicators in the study and reveals that VIF for each of the indicators is below the recommended threshold.

Table 3. Multi collinearity Statistics (TF) for indicators.

	VIF
AT1	1.700
AT2	2.118
AT3	1.912
AT4	1.639
AT5	1.608
CO1	1.459
CO2	1.729
CO3	1.887

CO4	1.369
CO5	1.829
CP1	2.580
CP2	2.423
CP3	2.192
CP4	2.148
CP5	1.847
MQ1	2.109
MQ2	1.413
MQ3	1.604
MQ4	2.153
MQ5	2.192
MU1	1.504
MU2	2.026
MU3	1.620
MU4	2.390
MU5	2.084
PR1	1.455
PR2	1.986
PR3	1.624
PR4	2.315
PR5	2.019
SR1	1.463
SR2	1.712
SR3	1.613
SR4	2.123
SR5	2.004

Reliability Analysis

According to Mark (1996) "Reliability is defined as the extent to which a measuring instrument is stable and consistent. The essence of reliability is repeatability. If an instrument is administered over and over again, will it yield the same results" (P. 285). The two most commonly used methods for establishing reliability include Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). The results for both Cronbach alpha and composite reliability results are presented in Table 4. The Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .798 to .887 whereas Composite Reliability

statistics ranged from 0.803 to 0.888. Both indicators of reliability have reliability statistic over the required threshold of .70 (Hair et al., 2011). Hence, construct reliability is established.

Table 4. Construct Reliability Analysis (Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Convenience	0.798	0.803
Customers' Perception	0.887	0.888
Mall Atmosphere	0.793	0.812
Merchandise Quality	0.818	0.843
Music	0.841	0.864
Price	0.836	0.847
Service	0.834	0.834

Construct Validity

Statistically using PLS-SEM, construct validity is established when there is convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Convergent Validity

"Convergent validity is the degree to which multiple attempts to measure the same concept are in agreement. The idea is that two or more measures of the same thing should covary highly if they are valid measures of the concept" (Bagozzi et al., 1991, p. 425). When the AVE value is greater than or equal to the recommended value of .50, items converge to measure the underlying construct and hence convergent validity is established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Convergent validity results based on the AVE statistics in the current study show that all the constructs have slightly higher AVE. However, the CR values for all the constructs was greater than .50. Hence, convergent validity is not an issue. Table 5 shows the AVE value for each of the constructs.

Table 5. Construct Convergent Validity (AVE)

Constructs	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Convenience	0.553
Customers' Perception	0.690
Mall Atmosphere	0.547
Merchandise Quality	0.586
Music	0.608
Price	0.607
Service	0.602

Discriminant Validity

"Discriminant validity is the degree to which measures of different concepts are distinct. The notion is that if two or more concepts are unique, then valid measures of each should not correlate too highly" (Bagozzi et al., 1991, P. 425).

Fornell and Larcker Criterion

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of AVE for a construct is greater than its correlation with all other constructs. In this study, square root of AVE (in Bold and Italics) for a construct was found greater than its correlation with other constructs (Table 6). Hence, providing strong support for establishment of discriminant validity.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity-Fornell Larker Criterion

	Convenience	Customers' Perception	Mall Atmosphere	Merchandise Quality	Music	Price	Service
Convenience	<i>0.743</i>						
Customers' Perception	0.655	<i>0.831</i>					
Mall Atmosphere	0.786	0.574	<i>0.740</i>				
Merchandise Quality	0.820	0.568	0.694	<i>0.766</i>			
Music	0.423	0.253	0.372	0.313	<i>0.780</i>		
Price	0.843	0.619	0.686	0.933	0.374	<i>0.779</i>	
Service	0.738	0.613	0.930	0.735	0.321	0.714	<i>0.776</i>

Note: Bold and Italics represent the Square-root of AVE.

Structural Model Assessment:

Following the assessment of the measurement model, the next step is the evaluation of structural path for the evaluation of path coefficients (relationships amongst study constructs) and their statistical significance:

H1 evaluates whether Mall Atmosphere significantly and positively affects Customers' Perception. The results revealed that Mall Atmosphere has a significant and positive impact on Customers' Perception ($B = -0.354$, $t = 2.428$, $P < 0.015$). Hence, H1 was supported.

H2 evaluates whether Music significantly and positively affects Customers' Perception. The results revealed that Music has an insignificant impact on Customers' Perception ($B = -0.043$, $t = 0.828$, $P = 0.408$). Hence, H2 was not supported.

H3 evaluates whether Music significantly and positively affects Mall Atmosphere. The results revealed that Music has a significant impact on Mall Atmosphere ($B = 0.081$, $t = 3.484$, $P < 0.000$). Hence, H3 was supported.

H4 evaluates whether Merchandise Quality significantly and positively affects Customers' Perception. The results revealed that Merchandise Quality has a significant impact on Customers' Perception ($B = -0.377$, $t = 2.432$, $P < 0.015$). Hence, H4 was supported.

H5 evaluates whether Service significantly and positively affects Customers' Perception. The results revealed that Service has a significant impact on Customers' Perception ($B = 0.585$, $t = 4.403$, $P < 0.000$). Hence, H5 was supported.

H6 evaluates whether Service significantly and positively affects Mall Atmosphere. The results revealed that Service has a significant impact on Mall Atmosphere ($B = 0.904$, $t = 74.894$, $P < 0.000$). Hence, H6 was supported.

H7 evaluates whether Price significantly and positively affects Customers' Perception. The results revealed that Price has a significant impact on Customers' Perception ($B = 0.390$, $t = 2.336$, $P < 0.020$). Hence, H7 was supported.

H8 evaluates whether Merchandise Quality significantly and positively affects Price. The results revealed that Merchandise Quality has a significant impact on Price ($B = 0.933$, $t = 95.751$, $P < 0.000$). Hence, H8 was supported.

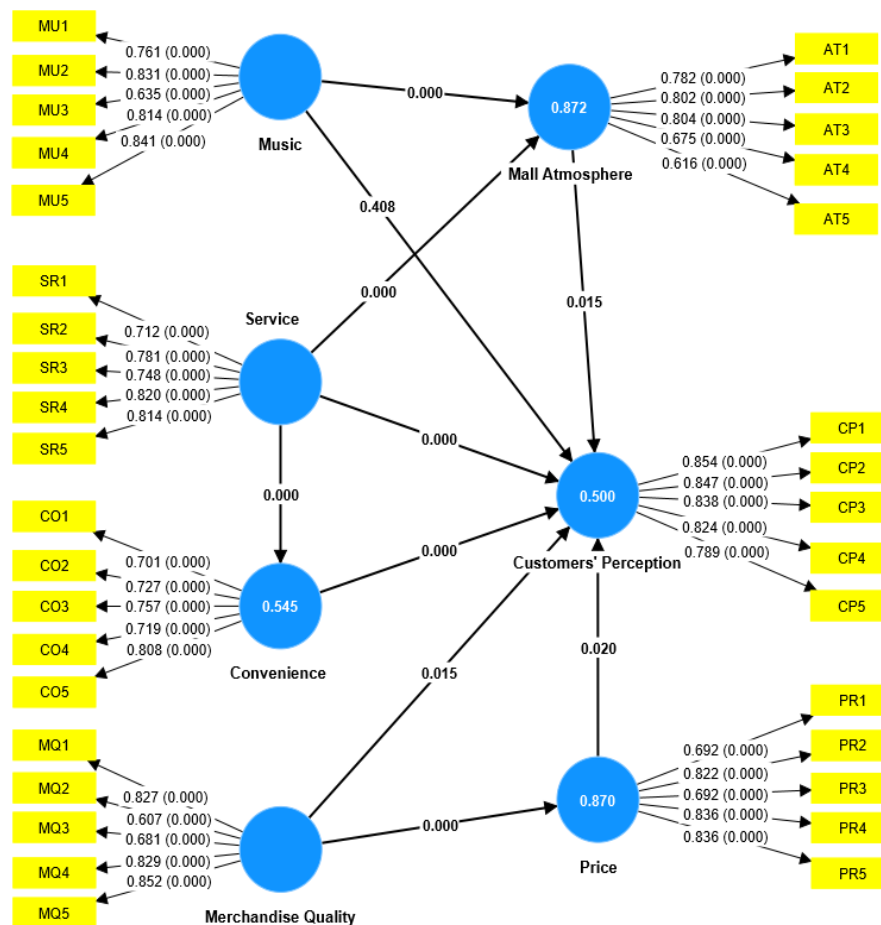
H9 evaluates whether Convenience significantly and positively affects Customers' Perception. The results revealed that Convenience has a significant impact on Customers' Perception ($B = 0.501$, $t = 3.828$, $P < 0.000$). Hence, H9 was supported.

H10 evaluates whether Service significantly and positively affects Convenience. The results revealed that Service has a significant impact on Convenience ($B = 0.738$, $t = 22.731$, $P < 0.000$). Hence, H10 was supported.

Table 7. Result of Hypothesis.

	Beta Coefficient	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Convenience -> Customers' Perception	0.501	0.131	3.828	0.000
Mall Atmosphere -> Customers' Perception	-0.354	0.146	2.428	0.015
Merchandise Quality -> Customers' Perception	-0.377	0.155	2.432	0.015
Merchandise Quality -> Price	0.933	0.010	95.751	0.000
Music -> Customers' Perception	-0.043	0.052	0.828	0.408
Music -> Mall Atmosphere	0.081	0.023	3.484	0.000
Price -> Customers' Perception	0.390	0.167	2.336	0.020
Service -> Convenience	0.738	0.032	22.731	0.000
Service -> Customers' Perception	0.585	0.133	4.403	0.000
Service -> Mall Atmosphere	0.904	0.012	74.894	0.000

Figure 1. Structural Model



Discussion And Conclusion:

This study aimed to investigate the impact of the key dimension of Lulu mall (Mall atmosphere, Music, Merchandise Quality, Service, Price, and Convenience) on Customers' perception.

The results supported the significant and positive relationship between Mall Atmosphere, Merchandise Quality, Price, Service, and Convenience on Customer Perception. Interestingly, a significant and slightly negative relationship was observed between Music and Customer Perception. According to Richardson et al. (1996), the Mall atmosphere significantly enhances the perception of customers regarding the store they visit. Similarly, Samli et al. (1998) argued that the atmosphere strongly and significantly contributes to customer perception regarding the mall. About the effect of music, Bruner (1990) reported that music influences customer perception, with the intent of changing customer behavior toward the mall. Based on the results of the current study, although service has a direct significant relationship with customer perception, these factors likewise indirectly influence customer perception by contributing to the mall atmosphere. Thus, creating outstanding features such as a specific interior design, great product presentation, and high quality of service, as well as playing music at the mall enhance the attractiveness of the mall. Accordingly, having pleasant and differentiated surroundings helps the retail store to compete with others to ensure the satisfaction and continued patronage of customers. Berman and Evans (1992) indicated that courtesy and knowledge demonstrated by the sales staff are important factors for customers. The results of the current study implied that the quality of service offered to shoppers (i.e., available expertise and knowledgeable sales personnel) positively affects customer perception. Moreover, service is an important feature

of customers perception that affects the impression of customers directly and customer perception indirectly by influencing two other attributes namely, atmosphere and convenience. Chang and Tu (2005) indicated that customer perception, as well as customer loyalty and satisfaction, are directly linked to convenience. Regarding convenience dimensions (i.e., store opening hours, store location, and ease of finding merchandise at the mall), the results of the current study supported the identical findings of previous research by Wood and Browne (2007) and Chang and Tu (2005). Hence, shopping comfort is another considerable component of customers' perception that significantly and positively affects mall choice. Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) concurred with the previous findings and further explained that merchandise quality significantly influences customer perception. Moreover, they argued that mall risk losing their customers if the quality of their merchandise is not aligned with the wishes of customers (i.e., not displaying the merchandise according to customer preference). The findings of the current study implied that the quality of merchandise significantly influences customer perception and affects product price. Shoppers perceive a high brand when they purchase a product with a high quality and reasonable price. Therefore, merchandise quality is a critical element of customers' perception that is consistently assessed by customers. Possessing this feature, along with a sensible price, can become a sustainable advantage in the long run and maintain the position of the mall in the market. Compared with the other components of the mall, the impact of price is remarkable and slightly positive, which may indicate that customers sensitively evaluate product value. Regarding merchandise quality (i.e., variety of product designs, longevity, and quality of product relative to price) in similar types of products and at nearly the same level of design and quality, a good price is perceived as reasonable by shoppers, which increases customer perception to some extent. Consequently, setting a price that is reasonable and compatible with the brand and the product is strongly influential on customer perception. Bradley (1995) reported that the price attached to a product creates a competitive advantage for the product in the mall and induces a strong impression in the minds of customers. Zeithaml (1988) argued that price is influential and significant in customer perception; when customers receive the quality that they expect of a product, they willingly attach high value to the product. Overall, customer perception integrates all of the cues and messages that customers have received and experienced in the mall, in addition to their impressions of the significance of perception dimensions. Retailers in the globally competitive retail industry should have knowledge and information on customer perception, which can be used as a strategic tool for acquiring new customers and retaining existing customers. Mall managers nowadays should have complete knowledge of the components of customer perception to allow them to plan the appropriate marketing strategies for their businesses and their malls. Using this knowledge as a strategic tool can increase the market share of a mall and enhance its market performance in general. Although the factors for creating a successful customer perception are known, implementing an appropriate marketing communication strategy is relatively difficult because the market requirements can be uncertain. Thus, managers should ensure that what they believe is essential is in line with the perception of customers. A lack of knowledge about customer views can increase inaccuracy in marketing and communication strategies. The views of both customers and the mall should be considered in designing customers' perceptions. Customer viewpoint is derived from subtle cues that customers perceive when visiting the mall and their impression of its features. By contrast, the viewpoint of retailers is based on their strategic goals, their corporate image, and the factors they believe would be appreciated by customers. An ideal view of the experience of customers in a mall develops their expectations of a particular mall. Thus, the alignment of the views of management and customers should be contingent upon this ideal view, and management should aim to achieve this ideal.

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