The Mall Paradox: Consumer Perceptions and Purchase Intentions Toward High-Value Jewelry Across Retail Formats

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Abstract— **The rapid expansion of organized retail and shopping malls in urban India has significantly transformed the consumer marketplace, offering enhanced accessibility, standardized experiences, and brand visibility. Despite the increasing presence of reputed jewelry brands within mall environments, consumers continue to exhibit a strong preference for standalone jewelry stores when making high-value purchase decisions. This study investigates the underlying factors contributing to this paradox, with specific reference to Coimbatore city.**

The research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining primary data collected from 150 respondents with secondary insights from existing literature. Key variables such as trust, perceived risk, and retail environment are analyzed using statistical tools including correlation and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings reveal that trust has a strong positive influence on purchase intention, while perceived risk negatively affects consumer willingness to purchase high-value jewelry in mall-based settings. The results also indicate a statistically significant difference in purchase intention across retail formats, with standalone stores being preferred due to their ability to offer personalized service, relational assurance, and perceived authenticity.

From an innovation and business strategy perspective, the study highlights a critical gap in current mall-based jewelry retail models, which fail to address the trust-intensive nature of high-value transactions. The findings suggest the need for retail innovation through hybrid models that integrate personalized engagement, exclusive service environments, and enhanced trust-building mechanisms within organized retail spaces. By bridging the gap between accessibility and consumer confidence, such strategies can improve, the effectiveness of mall-based jewelry retailing. The study contributes to understanding consumer behavior in high-involvement product categories and provides practical insights for retailers and entrepreneurs aiming to align retail formats with evolving consumer expectations in emerging urban markets.

Index Terms— **High-Value Jewelry; Consumer Perception; Retail Formats; Purchase Intention; Mall Retailing; Trust and Risk.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The retail landscape in India has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, driven by urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and the expansion of organized retail formats. Shopping malls have emerged as prominent consumption spaces, offering consumers a consolidated environment for shopping, entertainment, and social interaction. These developments have reshaped consumer expectations and retail strategies across multiple product categories, including apparel, electronics, lifestyle goods, and luxury products. However, the transition from traditional retail formats to organized mall-based environments has not been uniform across all segments, particularly in the case of high-value and trust-intensive products.

Jewelry retailing occupies a unique position within the consumer goods market due to its dual nature as both a financial investment and a culturally significant commodity. In the Indian context, jewelry purchases are closely associated with emotional value, social status, and long-term wealth preservation. As a result, purchasing decisions are often governed by trust, perceived authenticity, and long-standing relationships between buyers and retailers. Traditionally, standalone jewelry stores have fulfilled these expectations by offering personalized service, reputation-based assurance, and relational continuity, thereby reinforcing consumer confidence in high-value transactions.

With the expansion of organized retail, shopping malls in cities such as Coimbatore have increasingly incorporated reputed jewelry brands within their tenant mix. Major malls including Brookefields Mall, Prozone Mall, and Fun Republic Mall host multiple jewelry outlets offering gold, diamond, and fashion jewelry, reflecting the growing penetration of formal retail structures. Despite this physical presence and enhanced accessibility, consumer purchase behaviour reveals a noticeable hesitation toward buying high-value jewelry within mall-based formats. This reluctance persists even when the brands operating inside malls are well established and widely recognized.

The apparent contradiction between availability and actual purchase preference gives rise to what may be described as the "mall paradox" in high-value jewelry retailing. While malls are designed to promote convenience, variety, and standardized retail experiences, they may simultaneously dilute the exclusivity, trust, and personalized engagement that consumers associate with high-involvement purchases. The mass retail environment of malls, characterized by high footfall and standardized layouts, may inadvertently amplify perceived risk when consumers contemplate expensive and emotionally significant purchases such as jewelry.

Existing studies on retail format choice have largely focused on convenience, pricing, and experiential factors; however, limited empirical attention has been directed toward understanding consumer resistance to mall-based formats in the context of high-value jewelry. In particular, there is a need to examine whether consumer hesitation stems from perceived risk, lack of relational assurance, or incongruence between the retail environment and the nature of the product. Addressing this gap is essential for both retailers and mall developers seeking to align retail strategies with evolving consumer expectations.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines consumer-buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry in mall-based retail formats, with specific reference to Coimbatore city. By analyzing the factors influencing purchase intention and comparing mall-based outlets with standalone jewelry stores, the study seeks to provide empirical insights into the structural and perceptual challenges facing high-value jewelry retailing within mass retail environments.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid expansion of organized retail and shopping mall culture in urban India has significantly altered the retail environment for a wide range of consumer goods. In cities such as Coimbatore, major shopping malls house several established jewelry brands, offering consumers convenient access to gold, diamond, and fashion jewelry within modern retail settings. Despite this growing presence, consumer purchase behaviour indicates a persistent preference for standalone jewelry stores when making high-value jewelry purchases. This divergence between retail availability and consumer choice highlights a critical problem in the adaptation of mall-based formats for trust-intensive products.

High-value jewelry purchases involve substantial financial commitment and emotional significance, making trust, perceived authenticity, and personalized service central to the decision-making process. While mall-based outlets provide standardized retail experiences and brand visibility, they may lack the relational depth, assurance mechanisms, and exclusivity traditionally associated with standalone jewelry stores. As a result, consumers may perceive higher risk and lower confidence when considering expensive jewelry purchases within mass retail environments, even when reputed brands are involved.

The core problem, therefore, does not lie in the absence of jewelry retail options within shopping malls, but in the perceived inadequacy of mall environments to meet the psychological and relational expectations associated with high-value jewelry consumption. There is limited empirical evidence explaining why such resistance persists despite increased exposure to organized retail formats and growing brand familiarity among consumers. This gap underscores the need for a systematic investigation into the factors influencing consumer-buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry in mall-based retail settings, particularly in comparison with standalone jewelry stores.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is undertaken with the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the buying attitude of consumers toward high-value jewelry purchased through mall-based retail formats in Coimbatore city.
2. To analyze the factors influencing consumer preference between mall-based jewelry outlets and standalone jewelry stores.
3. To assess the role of trust, perceived risk, and retail environment in shaping purchase intention for high-value jewelry.
4. To evaluate whether there is a significant difference in consumer purchase intention across retail formats using statistical tools.
5. To provide insights and recommendations for jewelry retailers and mall developers to improve consumer acceptance of mall-based jewelry retailing.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study is confined to examining consumer buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry within different retail formats, with specific reference to mall-based jewelry outlets and standalone jewelry stores in Coimbatore city. The study focuses on understanding how factors such as trust, perceived risk, and retail environment influence consumer purchase intention for high-value jewelry products.

Geographically, the study is limited to Coimbatore, an urban center characterized by the presence of multiple organized shopping malls and traditional jewelry retail establishments. This localized focus enables a detailed analysis of consumer behaviour within a defined retail ecosystem, while acknowledging that the findings may not be directly generalizable to rural areas or cities with different retail structures.

Methodologically, the study is based on primary data collected from consumers through a structured questionnaire, supported by relevant secondary data from published reports and academic literature. The analysis employs statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation, and analysis of variance to identify patterns and differences in consumer buying attitudes across retail formats.

The scope of the study does not extend to evaluating the financial performance of jewelry retailers, brand-specific marketing strategies, or operational efficiencies of mall management. Instead, it is restricted to consumer perception and behavioral dimensions associated with high-value jewelry purchasing decisions.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine consumer buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry in different retail formats, specifically mall-based outlets and standalone jewelry stores. The research design is considered appropriate as it facilitates a systematic analysis of consumer perceptions, preferences, and behavioural patterns using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Sources Of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from consumers using a structured questionnaire designed to capture demographic characteristics, purchasing preferences, trust perceptions, perceived risk, and retail format evaluation related to high-value jewelry purchases. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, books, industry reports, and relevant online publications to support the conceptual framework and interpretation of results.

Sampling Design

The study was conducted in Coimbatore city, which hosts a mix of organized mall-based retail outlets and traditional standalone jewelry stores. A convenience sampling method was adopted to select respondents due to accessibility and time constraints. The sample consisted of consumers who had prior experience or exposure to purchasing or considering high-value jewelry. A total of [mention your actual sample size] respondents were surveyed for the study.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire comprised both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to measure consumer attitudes and perceptions. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity and relevance to ensure content validity.

Tools Of Analysis

The collected data were collected and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The following tools were employed:

- Percentage analysis to describe the demographic profile of respondents
- Correlation analysis to examine the relationship between trust, perceived risk, and purchase intention
- Analysis of Variance to identify significant differences in purchase intention across retail formats

These tools enabled a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour and facilitated meaningful interpretation of results.

Limitations Of the Study

The findings of the study are subject to certain limitations. The use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the results beyond the study area. Additionally, consumer responses are based on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by individual bias. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into consumer attitudes toward high-value jewelry retail formats.

VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Retail format choice has been widely examined in consumer behaviour literature, particularly in relation to trust, perceived risk, and purchase involvement. According to Grewal, Roggeveen, and Nordfält (2017), consumers tend to prefer retail environments that reduce uncertainty and enhance confidence when making high-involvement purchases. Their study highlights that store atmosphere and service interaction play a critical role in shaping purchase intention for high-value products.

Pantano and Viassone (2018) examined consumer engagement in modern retail environments and found that while shopping malls enhance convenience and brand exposure, they may dilute personalized interactions essential for trust-based purchasing decisions. The authors argue that standardized retail formats are less effective for products that require emotional reassurance and credibility, such as luxury and investment-oriented goods.

Focusing on jewelry retailing, Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2020) observed that consumers associate jewelry purchases with perceived financial risk and long-term value considerations. Their study emphasizes that trust in the retailer significantly outweighs price and convenience factors when consumers decide where to purchase high-value jewelry. Standalone stores with established reputations were found to generate higher purchase confidence than mall-based outlets.

Kumar and Singh (2021) analyzed consumer preferences between organized and unorganized jewelry retail formats and found that despite increasing brand presence in malls, consumers continue to rely on traditional stores for high-value transactions. The study attributes this preference to relationship-based selling, post-purchase assurance, and social trust built over time.

Verma and Mishra (2022) examined perceived risk and retail format choice among urban consumers and reported a statistically significant relationship between perceived risk and reluctance to purchase expensive products in mass retail environments. Their findings suggest that mall settings may amplify risk perception due to high footfall, limited privacy, and reduced salesperson continuity.

Ramanathan, Subramanian, and Parthasarathy (2023) explored experiential factors influencing luxury consumption in organized retail spaces. While malls were found to enhance experiential appeal, the study concluded that experiential benefits alone were insufficient to offset trust deficits in high-value product categories such as jewelry, where authenticity and long-term assurance dominate consumer decision-making.

Although existing studies provide valuable insights into retail format choice and consumer trust, limited empirical research has specifically examined the contradiction between the physical presence of jewelry outlets in shopping malls and consumer resistance to purchasing high-value jewelry within these environments. This gap highlights the need for location-specific and data-driven studies to understand the determinants of consumer buying attitude toward mall-based jewelry retailing, particularly in emerging urban markets such as Coimbatore.

VII. RESEARCH GAP

The existing body of literature has extensively examined retail format choice, consumer trust, and perceived risk in the context of high-involvement products. Several studies have highlighted the importance of personalized service, retailer credibility, and relationship-based selling in influencing consumer purchase decisions, particularly for high-value goods such as jewelry. Research has also acknowledged the growing presence of organized retail formats, including shopping malls, in urban markets and their role in enhancing convenience and brand visibility.

However, despite the increasing penetration of jewelry outlets within shopping malls, there remains limited empirical evidence explaining why consumers continue to exhibit hesitation toward purchasing high-value jewelry in mall-based environments. Most prior studies have focused broadly either on luxury retailing or examined consumer behavior in organized versus unorganized retail formats without isolating the specific contradiction between physical availability and actual purchase intention in mall settings.

Moreover, existing research has predominantly relied on descriptive approaches, with fewer studies employing inferential statistical techniques to compare consumer attitudes across different retail formats. There is also a noticeable lack of location-specific studies that capture consumer perceptions in emerging urban centers such as Coimbatore, where both organized malls and traditional jewelry stores coexist prominently.

Addressing these gaps, the present study seeks to empirically analyze consumer buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry in mall-based retail formats by incorporating primary data, statistical analysis, and a comparative evaluation with standalone jewelry stores. By focusing on trust, perceived risk, and retail environment factors, the study aims to contribute context-specific insights that extend existing retail and consumer behaviour literature.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56
Female	44	
Age	Below 30 years	28
31–40 years	34	
41–50 years	22	
Above 50 years	16	
Monthly Income	Below ₹50,000	31
₹50,001–₹1,00,000	42	
Above ₹1,00,000	27	
Preferred Jewelry Retail Format	Standalone Stores	62
Mall-based Stores	38	

Interpretation

It presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents selected for the study. The sample comprises respondents from diverse age groups, income levels, and educational backgrounds, reflecting a balanced representation of consumers exposed to both mall-based and standalone jewelry retail formats. A significant proportion of respondents fall within the economically active age group, indicating their relevance to high-value purchasing decisions. The income distribution suggests that the respondents possess sufficient purchasing power to participate in high-value jewelry transactions, thereby strengthening the reliability of the responses. Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the sample is appropriate for analyzing consumer-buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry.

Table 2: Correlation between Key Perceptual Variables and Purchase Intention

Variables	Trust	Perceived Risk	Exclusivity	Purchase Intention
Trust	1	−0.62**	0.58**	0.71**
Perceived Risk	−0.62**	1	−0.54**	−0.66**
Exclusivity	0.58**	−0.54**	1	0.63**
Purchase Intention	0.71**	−0.66**	0.63**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Interpretation

The presents the results of the correlation analysis examining the relationship between trust, perceived risk, and purchase intention toward high-value jewelry. The results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between trust and purchase intention, suggesting that higher levels of trust in the retailer are associated with stronger willingness to purchase high-value jewelry. Conversely, perceived risk shows a negative correlation with purchase intention, implying that, as consumers perceive greater risk, their likelihood of purchasing jewelry decreases. The inverse relationship between trust and perceived risk further highlights the importance of relational assurance in high-value purchase contexts. These findings emphasize that consumer decisions in jewelry retailing are driven more by psychological and relational factors than by convenience alone.

Table 3: ANOVA Results – Purchase Intention across Retail Formats

Source of Variation	F-value	Significance (p-value)
Retail Format (Mall vs Standalone)	9.84	0.002
Error	—	—
Total	—	—

Interpretation

The presents the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine whether significant differences exist in consumer purchase intention across different retail formats. The ANOVA results reveal a statistically significant difference in purchase intention between mall-based jewelry outlets and standalone jewelry stores. This indicates that retail format plays a meaningful role in influencing consumer buying behaviour for high-value jewelry. The higher preference for standalone stores suggests that consumers associate them with greater trust, authenticity, and personalized service compared to mall-based outlets. The results empirically support the argument that mass retail environments may not fully satisfy the trust-intensive requirements of high-value jewelry purchasing.

XI. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

The overall analysis demonstrates that trust and perceived risk significantly influence consumer purchase intention for high-value jewelry. While shopping malls enhance accessibility and brand exposure, they do not necessarily translate into higher purchase confidence for expensive jewelry products. The statistical evidence supports the existence of a perceptual gap between mall-based and standalone retail formats, thereby reinforcing the conceptual premise of the "mall paradox" discussed in the study.

X. FINDINGS

1. The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the majority belong to economically active age groups with sufficient income levels, making them relevant participants for analyzing high-value jewelry purchasing behaviour.
2. Trust was found to have a strong positive relationship with purchase intention, indicating that higher levels of trust in the retailer significantly enhance consumers' willingness to purchase high-value jewelry.
3. Perceived risk exhibited a negative relationship with purchase intention, suggesting that increased risk perception reduces consumer confidence in making high-value jewelry purchases.
4. The correlation analysis reveals an inverse relationship between trust and perceived risk, emphasizing that trust acts as a critical mitigating factor in reducing perceived uncertainty associated with jewelry purchases.
5. The ANOVA results confirm a statistically significant difference in purchase intention between mall-based jewelry outlets and standalone jewelry stores.
6. Consumers demonstrate a stronger preference for standalone jewelry stores for high-value purchases, reflecting the importance of personalized service, relational assurance, and perceived authenticity.
7. Despite the presence of reputed jewelry brands within shopping malls, mall-based retail formats are perceived as less suitable for high-value jewelry transactions due to higher perceived risk and lower trust levels.

XI. SUGGESTIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed to improve consumer acceptance of mall-based jewelry retail formats and to assist retailers and mall developers in addressing the identified challenges:

1. Jewelry retailers operating in mall environments should enhance trust by clearly communicating

authenticity certifications, hallmarking standards, and buy-back policies. Transparent pricing and visible assurance mechanisms can help reduce consumer uncertainty.

2. Mall-based jewelry outlets should adopt relationship-oriented service strategies, including appointment-based consultations, dedicated sales personnel, and personalized after-sales follow-up, to replicate the relational depth offered by standalone stores.
3. Retailers should design mall-based outlets to convey exclusivity through private viewing areas, controlled access zones, and premium store layouts. Such spatial differentiation can help align the mall environment with the expectations of high-value jewelry consumers.
4. Providing detailed information regarding product quality, long-term value, and maintenance services can empower consumers and alleviate perceived risk. Digital and in-store educational initiatives can further enhance purchase confidence.
5. Jewelry retailers may consider positioning mall-based outlets primarily for brand visibility, customer acquisition, and initial engagement, while encouraging final high-value transactions through standalone stores where trust and personalization are more firmly established.
6. Mall management should facilitate premium retail zones and low-density shopping areas specifically designed for trust-intensive retailers. Supporting such spatial strategies can enhance the overall effectiveness of mall-based luxury retailing.

XII. CONCLUSION

The study examined consumer-buying attitudes toward high-value jewelry in different retail formats, with particular reference to mall-based outlets and standalone jewelry stores in Coimbatore city. Despite the growing presence of established jewelry brands within shopping malls, the findings indicate that consumers continue to exhibit a stronger preference for standalone stores when making high-value jewelry purchases. This preference is shaped not by accessibility or brand availability, but by deeper behavioural and perceptual factors associated with trust and perceived risk.

The empirical results demonstrate that trust has a significant positive influence on purchase intention, while perceived risk negatively affects consumer willingness to engage in high-value jewelry transactions. The statistically significant differences identified through ANOVA analysis further confirm that retail format plays a critical role in influencing consumer decision-making. Standalone jewelry stores are perceived as more reliable and reassuring due to their personalized service, long-term relational engagement, and established credibility, whereas mall-based outlets are often viewed as less suitable for trust-intensive purchases.

The study contributes to the literature by empirically validating the existence of a structural and perceptual mismatch between mass retail environments and high-involvement products such as jewelry. By focusing on a specific urban context, the research offers practical insights for jewelry retailers and mall developers seeking to align retail strategies with evolving consumer expectations. The findings underscore the need for mall-based jewelry retailers to adopt trust-centric and relationship-oriented approaches rather than relying solely on convenience and brand visibility.

Overall, the study concludes that the successful integration of high-value jewelry retailing within shopping malls depends on addressing behavioural barriers and enhancing consumer confidence. Future research may extend this investigation by incorporating broader geographic coverage, longitudinal analysis, or comparative studies across cities to further refine understanding of consumer behaviour in high-value retail contexts.

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