

Investigates How Mall Basics Change Shopping Behaviour of Local Community in Small City Towards Growing Shopping Mall in Semenyih

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the transformative impact of fundamental mall characteristics on local community shopping behavior in small cities, specifically in response to the expansion of shopping malls. Using a qualitative research technique, this examination identifies key elements impacting consumer preferences and decision-making processes. Mall location, accessibility, product diversity, store ambiance, and promotional tactics have all been cited as important factors influencing consumer decisions. The findings of this study show that the arrival of a new shopping mall reshapes the local retail sector, luring customers with its various offerings and modern amenities. As a result, this shift affects the patronage patterns of traditional retail outlets. This study not only improves our awareness of changing shopping habits, but it also makes strategic recommendations for local shops and mall developers to establish mutually beneficial ties with the community. The researcher conducted the study in the town of Semenyih, with the penghulu and the village head serving as respondents as representatives of the population who visited the shopping centre and answered the questionnaire via interviews, resulting in a representative sample with a response rate. The data demonstrate that the establishment of shopping malls has resulted in a shift in the shopping habits of local communities in small towns toward increased shopping.

Keywords: *Shopping Mall, Small Cities Behavior*

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INTRODUCTION

Shopping malls are not just physical spaces for retail transactions; they serve as dynamic environments that significantly influence consumer behavior and societal interactions. In small cities like Semenyih, the emergence of shopping malls can have profound effects on the local community's shopping habits and overall lifestyle. Understanding the impact of mall basics on consumer behavior is crucial for businesses and policymakers to create sustainable and engaging spaces that cater to the needs of the community Man & Qiu (2021) Xu et al., 2022).

The significance of studying how shopping malls influence shopping behavior extends beyond mere commercial transactions. Shopping malls have become central hubs for social interactions, leisure activities, and community engagement. In today's environment, these spaces are viewed as more than just places to shop; they are seen as social and cultural centers that reflect the values and preferences of the society (Peterson & Urban, 2022). The evolution of shopping malls from traditional retail spaces to multifunctional complexes underscores their importance in shaping modern urban lifestyles (Gómez, 2021).

The concept of shopping malls as influential spaces in the community is further accentuated by their role in shaping consumer preferences, social dynamics, and economic activities. The design, tenant mix, and overall ambiance of malls can impact how people engage with these spaces and make purchasing decisions (Pathirana, 2023; Alnuman & Altaweel, 2020). Moreover, the integration of recreational areas, dining options, and entertainment facilities within malls contributes to creating a holistic shopping experience that goes beyond mere transactions (Pal, 2023).

Understanding the factors that influence shopping behavior within malls is essential for optimizing the design and management of these spaces. Factors such as the tenant mix, marketing strategies, accessibility, and overall shopping experience play a crucial role in attracting and retaining visitors (Joshi & Gupta, 2020; Wonggor, 2024).

Previous studies have delved into various aspects of shopping mall dynamics, including consumer attitudes, purchasing behaviors, and the impact of mall features on visitor experiences (Manandhar, 2020; Manandhar, 2020). These studies provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between consumer behavior and mall characteristics, highlighting the need for further research to explore the evolving nature of shopping habits in response to changing societal trends and preferences.

The objective of this study is to investigate how the basics of shopping malls influence the shopping behavior of the local community in Semenyih. By examining the role of mall design, tenant mix, and overall shopping experience, this research aims to provide actionable insights for mall management to enhance customer satisfaction, optimize marketing strategies, and create a vibrant shopping environment that resonates with the needs and preferences of the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mall Basic

According to Ailawadi and Keller (2004), the mall's location and closeness to buyers are the most influential elements in customers' decisions. The selection of the best site has piqued researchers' interest (Donthu and Rust, 1989; Cheng et al., 2005, 2007) using gravity models (Huff, 1966). Customers are more likely to favour a shopping mall that is easily accessible to them (Chebat et al., 2010). According to the positivist paradigm, a consumer can respond to an atmosphere in three ways: arousal, dominance, and pleasantness. This method is called the stimulus-organization-response (S-O-R) strategy (Ayadi and Cao, 2016).

According to this notion, the environment serves as the stimulus (S), impacting the consumer's internal reactions (organism) and resulting in the behavioural response (R) (Ayadi and Cao, 2016). A store's interior atmosphere, which includes colour, noise, and music, can also influence how customers perceive it (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Three internal criteria can be utilized to describe the store's atmosphere: ambient features like aroma and music, physical categories like lighting, layout, and design, and social categories like employee presence, customer type, and proximity (Baker et al., 2002).

The ambiance of a store influences many other aspects of its image. For example, buyers' judgments of physical features have a significant impact on the quality of products, prices, and services (Baker et al., 2002). All aspects of retail image and mall atmosphere can be classified as mall image, aesthetics, and ambient variables. claim Chebat et al. (2010). Regardless of the consumer's attributes, price acts as a moderator in decision-making processes. Shoppers' views of a retailer's price are influenced by a variety of elements, including price changes over time, average prices, the retailer's positioning as either HILO or EDLP, and the frequency and intensity of promotional activity.

Shoppers' behavioural responses and the mall's image are heavily influenced by their impressions of the shopping centres' low prices and promotional offers (Heung and Cheng, 2000; Léo and Philippe, 2002; Biswas et al., 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 1993). According to a literature review, one of the most commonly used managerial tactics in mall image mix is price/promotion (Downs, 1970; Finn and Louviere, 1996).

Mall Image

In most cases, there have been two approaches in previous studies of mall image. Some researchers focused on non-spatial (store mix, environment and retail image), while others focused on spatial factors (accessibility, geographical position or design) (Allard et al., 2009; Eckert et al., 2015). For spatial factors, image is a summary of what individuals interpret about the spatial environment and location as well as how to gain access to the mall (Downs, 1970; McGoldrick and Thompson, 1992). Conversely, according to a non-spatial view, Ailawadi and Keller (2004), mall image is based on its brand equity in the consumers' mind. The concept of retailer image was first defined by Martineau (1958). A retailer has psychological traits and functional qualities that could be interpreted by others (shopper, Previous mall image studies have typically taken two approaches. Some researchers focused on non-spatial characteristics (store mix, environment, and retail image), while others focused on spatial elements (accessibility, geographical location, or design) (Allard et al., 2009; Eckert et al., 2015). For spatial components, image is a description of how people perceive the spatial environment and location, as well as how to get to the mall (Downs, 1970; McGoldrick and Thompson, 1992). In contrast, Ailawadi and Keller (2004) argue that mall image is dependent on brand equity in the minds of consumers. Martineau (1958) originally articulated the notion of store image. A retailer's psychological features and

functional qualities may be viewed by others (shopper, rival, competitor, suppliers, etc.). This interpretation remains in their minds and will change over time.

According to four different types of brand paradigms regarding mall image, as measured by brand measurements (Dennis et al., 2002; Louro and Cunha, 2001), shopping mall image or mall image according to adaptive paradigm definition (which emphasizes the role of consumers' interpretations as a central constructor of image meaning) is reflecting the overall value of a mall's favourable and unique impression in a shopper's mind. This offers a long-term competitive advantage that competitors cannot replicate (Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991). It is also detailed how a shopping mall is perceived by the shopper in terms of a set of functions (tangible qualities) and psychological features (intangible) (Darden and Babin, 1994; Sit et al., 2003; Lee Taylor and Cosenza, 2002).

A mall's image stands out in the minds of shoppers and is considered a competitive advantage. As a result, excellent management will increase mall patronage, positive word-of-mouth, and, more recently, shopping satisfaction (Hart et al., 2007; El Hedhli and Chebat, 2009; Chebat et al., 2010; El Hedhli et al., 2013). Some scholars believe that mall image is synonymous with mall retail environment or attractiveness (Ismail El-Adly, 2007; El Hedhli et al., 2013), and that it transfers from malls to retailers within the mall (Chebat et al., 2006). Simply described, mall image is a collection of qualities (Ismail El-Adly, 2007).

Access

The mall's location and distance from purchasers are the most crucial factors for consumers (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). According to gravity models (Huff, 1966), selecting the best position has piqued the interest of researchers. A retail mall that is easily accessible to customers is more likely to be regarded positively (Chebat et al., 2010). Other scholars have explored this idea under the same term (Chebat et al., 2010) or under different titles, such as convenience (El Hedhli et al., 2013; Chebat et al., 2009; El Hedhli and Chebat, 2009).

Atmosphere

According to the positivist paradigm, which focuses on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) approach (Ayadi and Cao, 2016), a consumer may respond in three ways: arousal, dominance, and pleasantness. According to this theory, the atmosphere is the stimulus (S), which influences consumer internal responses (organisms) and leads to the behavioural response (R) (Ayadi and Cao, 2016). In addition, several components of a retailer's indoor ambiance, such as noise, music, and colour, influence shoppers' opinion of a store (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). In reality, the ambiance of the business may be classified into three internal elements: social categories (for example, personnel presence, type of customer, and intimacy), physical categories (e.g., lighting, layout, and design), and ambient aspects (such as, smell and music) (Baker et al., 2002). The atmosphere of the store also influences other aspects of store image, for example, perception of physical attributes by shoppers significantly affects product quality, price, and service quality (Baker et al., 2002). According to Chebat et al. (2010), all dimensions of store image and mall environment can be generalized to mall image and aesthetics/ambient characteristics. Other researchers have also investigated the atmosphere, including El Hedhli et al. (2013), Chebat et al. (2010), and Downs (1970). Other researchers have examined this topic under the headings Environment, Structure, and Design (Chebat et al., 2009; El Hedhli and Chebat, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study aims to investigate The Change Shopping Behaviour of Local Community Small City Towards Growing Shopping Mall, with the goal of providing a comprehensive understanding of the changes in shopping behaviour caused by the growth of shopping malls in small cities, the challenges these changes present, and potential strategies to address these challenges. In-depth interviews and focus groups will be employed as qualitative research approaches in this project to collect rich, contextually integrated data on participant experiences and perspectives. Purposive sampling will be utilized to choose participants with the purpose of including persons from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and geographical places.

Thematic analysis will be performed during the data analysis process to identify recurring themes, patterns, and narratives. To ensure the results' authenticity and depth, interpretations will be based on respondents' voices and perspectives. To capture the dynamic nature of participants' engagement with our themes, we record the interview session using a phone and a microphone. Throughout the research, ethical factors such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being will be prioritized.

In general, the purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the roles that contribute to the changes in shopping behaviour of local communities in small cities towards growing shopping malls, to understand the challenges that contribute to the changes in shopping behaviour of local communities in small cities towards growing shopping malls, and to investigate future recommendations for the changes in shopping behaviour of local communities in small cities towards growing shopping malls.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

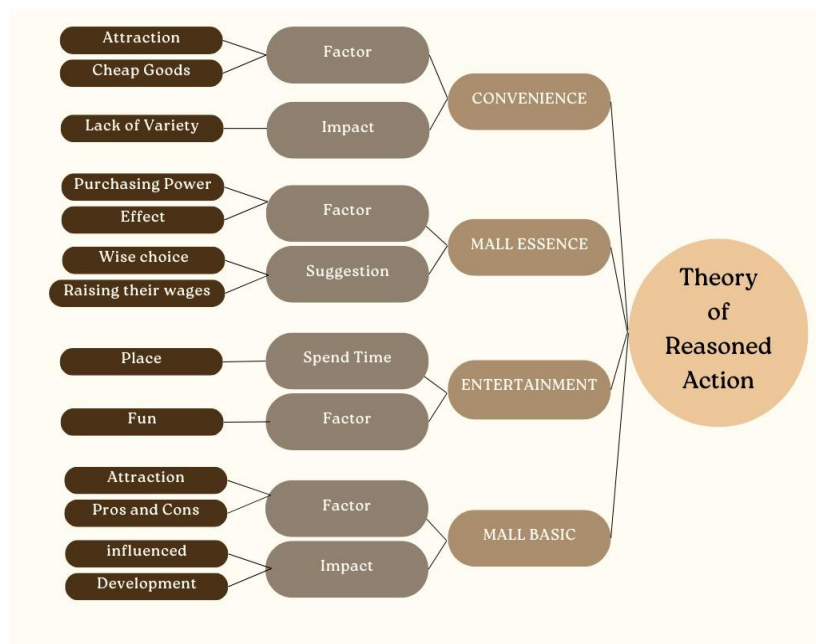


Figure 1:
Theory of Reasoned Action

The dynamics of consumer behaviour in urban and rural settings, particularly in the context of shopping preferences and decision-making processes, are influenced by a multitude of factors. The allure of city centres, characterized by a variety of attractions such as shopping, entertainment, dining, and events, acts as a magnet drawing individuals despite the inconvenience of travel. This attraction is driven by the promise of excitement and fulfilment, motivating people to overcome the effort required to reach these bustling hubs.

Within the realm of consumer behaviour, factors like goods variety, quality, and convenience play a significant role in influencing visits to shopping destinations. While some individuals may browse without making purchases, buying decisions are ultimately shaped by personal choices and financial capability. It is crucial for businesses to cater to diverse preferences as not all visits result in immediate sales, highlighting the importance of understanding and adapting to consumer needs.

Purchasing power emerges as a key determinant of villagers' buying behaviour, with affordability playing a crucial role in shaping selective purchases. The impact of financial constraints on shopping decisions underscores the significance of economic factors in consumer behaviour. Moreover, the transformation of demographic landscapes, such as the shift from low-income villagers to a more diverse population post-2010 in areas like Semenyih, reflects the evolving nature of development and its implications on local communities.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) provides a structured framework for understanding and predicting human behaviour within decision-making contexts. By emphasizing the influence of attitudes and subjective norms on individuals' intentions and subsequent actions, TRA offers insights into the intricate interplay between attitudes, intentions, and behaviours. Through qualitative data analysis and coding, researchers can identify and interpret statements reflective of consumer attitudes, shedding light on the underlying factors that shape shopping choices and behaviours.

In conclusion, the interplay of factors such as attraction, purchasing power, demographic shifts, and theoretical frameworks like TRA contributes to a nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour in diverse settings. By recognizing the complexities of consumer decision-making processes, businesses and policymakers can better tailor their strategies to meet the evolving needs and preferences of individuals within urban and rural communities

CONCLUSION

The study's qualitative data analysis was aimed at evaluating the impact of major shopping malls on the shopping behavior of local communities in small cities. The investigation's major findings offered several significant insights. The transcript, codes, categories, topics, familiarization, thematic analysis, and story creation are all used to structure qualitative data for analysis. Each phase contributes to the data's structure, pattern discovery, and insight extraction from qualitative data. Researchers use manual ways to organize and manage data efficiently, including manual coding, which entails analyzing data, finding important themes, and assigning codes to data segments based on these themes.

Based on the findings, future study could concentrate on applying theoretical concepts to the analysis, developing a theme framework, and investigating linkages to produce grounded interpretations. Furthermore, the study proposed the use of peer review as a mechanism for ensuring the validity of research findings and increasing its reputation. Future research should also look into the potential biases in qualitative data processing and how to overcome them effectively. Furthermore, the study advocated presenting examples of how theoretical concepts were applied to the analysis, as well as developing a theme framework to guide data coding and interpretation.

Finally, the qualitative data analysis provided useful insights into the influence of shopping malls on local communities in small cities, adding to our understanding of shopping behavior and suggesting avenues for future research and practice.

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