



OPTIMIZING THE MALL, AS A CONSUMER HABITAT

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Abstract

In this study, the term "habitat" is employed metaphorically. Shopping complexes are transforming becoming leisure destinations. Various leisure components are being introduced into retail and shopping areas in order to attract more customers and increase customer retention. Concurrently, recreational activities became one of the most popular leisure activities among many social groups as a result of consumer culture's influence. Malls' internal spaces are designed to resemble a city street and a city lifestyle, creating the appearance of shopping arcades. According to recent studies, shopping malls are now closely associated with recreation. People are becoming increasingly interested in recreational shopping, attending various leisure venues and events, and browsing through shopping malls. Although, in the case of industrialized countries, this uniqueness is frequently discussed. In the mall, customers engage in a variety of behaviors, the most common of which is the purchase of goods and/or services, resulting in a wide range of requirements. The vast majority of retail malls do not cater to these diverse client needs. Based on the idea of living space developed from ecological sciences, case studies, and evaluation of existing shopping malls, the interrelationships of consumers with shopping malls as locations of consumption are investigated in this study. Data was gathered from primary sources, such as field investigations, case studies, and appraisals of existing malls, as well as secondary sources, such as online sites, documentations and journals, surveys, and other sources. Consumers have a variety of demands outside shopping, according to the findings of the study, including leisure. This study looks at disparities in mall habitat activity patterns and identifies mall-related shopping orientations that can help explain them, as well as the mall's effectiveness as a consumer habitat.

Keywords: Habitat, shopping mall, Consumer Behavior, Services.

1.0 Introduction

Habitat is a phrase used in ecology to describe the collection of resources, physical and biotic characteristics that exist in a given area to aid the survival and reproduction of specific species. Both biotic and abiotic elements contribute to habitats. Living entities are referred to as biotic factors. Those you live with, for example, would be biotic variables in your home: your relatives, even pets. Abiotic variables, on the other hand, are nonliving components of a home's structure. This includes your bed, refrigerator, food, and other personal items. Consumers, goods and service providers, and how they interact with one another are the biotic factors of shopping malls, while retail outlets, facilities (such as recreational facilities), shopping streets, and other abiotic factors are the retail outlets, facilities (such as recreational facilities), and shopping streets are the abiotic factors. As a result, when the biotic and abiotic

components work together successfully, shopping malls will become a consumer habitat (PH Bloch, 1994). Shopping malls, which have been around for more than 90 years, play a significant role in the retail industry. To fulfill the changing wants, desires, values, and lives of consumers, they've adapted to new designs and tenant varieties (Telci, 2013). Shopping malls are defined as locations that offer a pleasant shopping experience and have evolved into social gathering places as well as leisure and entertainment venues for a variety of activities (Telci, 2013). The primary purpose of this research is to determine how beneficial a shopping mall is as a customer environment. The study begins with a review of the literature on consumer habitats, which is divided into two sections: habitat activities and advantages that motivate habitat occupancy and activity. As a result, in order to benefit from improvements in mature and developing shopping malls, it is critical to understand visitors' reasons for visiting shopping malls as well as the activities they engage in while there.

1.1 Definition of Terms

Optimize according to Collins' definition, optimizing a situation or opportunity means gaining as much advantage or benefit as possible.

Shopping Mall according to Nicholls et al. (2002), is an avenue with a mix of retail items under one roof that is anchored by many retail businesses in order to attract a large number of visitors.

Consumer refers to someone who buys and uses items from the market (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

Habitat (which is Latin for "inhabits") is an ecological or ecological place inhabited by specific animals, plants, or other organisms (Biology definition).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The Mall and The Society

Despite the importance of shopping malls, the focus has been on the store rather than the mall as the unit of analysis. Malls, according to sociologists and urban planners, have played a crucial role in the suburbanization of modern America, as they have become major components of consumers' lifestyles (Stockil 1972). Developers have traditionally enticed shoppers to malls by guaranteeing a diverse selection of retailers and items in a one area. Malls have grown in size and extended to incorporate service businesses and entertainment providers over time. Food courts, art exhibits, restaurants, video arcades, movies, spas, pharmacies, and other amenities can now be found in even the smallest retail malls. Customers buy things and services in a variety of ways, but the mall itself provides

consumable experiences. Enclosed malls have provided greater climatic comfort and protection from road noise, which has a significant impact on other shopping locations such as markets.

2.2 Consumer Habitats

Habitat Activities

Consumer habitats are used here to describe a physically confined space where consumers are normally found, based on the definition of Hickman, Roberts, and Hickman (1984). Malls and other major markets would be considered habitats since they draw large crowds of people who stay for an extended period of time. However, implying that the mall is an important consumer habitat is only the start. Various patterns and levels of activity can be observed between species, and even within species, in a natural ecosystem such as a lake (Smith 1974). Some species in a habitat occupy a broad niche, engaging in a variety of activities and interacting with a wide range of environmental variables. Others may be more specialized, with a smaller range of activities and interactions. The primary purpose for researchers, according to Hanson (1964), is to learn about the behavioral niches of species in the habitat. Individuals in a consumer habitat can be divided into groups based on their browsing, shopping, or buying habits. Differences in consumption and disposal activities are also possible. A number of actions observed in a consumer environment could be characterized as experiencing consumption, in addition to activities focused on the purchase of goods and services. Several scholars have claimed that the primary goal of much consumption is to obtain pleasurable experiences rather than things (Belk 1982; Hirschman 1984; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). As a result, in the context of consumer habitats, a location could be a source of delightful experiences for visitors to consume. Similarly, leisure browsing at opulent, "Galleria-class" malls may reflect non-merchandise-focused activity such as experiencing the physical habitat itself. In a more practical sense, some customers use climate-controlled shopping malls as exercise sites when the weather is terrible.

Consumption Activities by Shopping Mall Visitors

Visits to coffee shops and restaurants, learning about new products and trends, and window shopping are all examples of consumption activities (Gilboa, 2009). Kuruvilla and Joshi (2010) went on to say that visitors to a shopping mall can be divided into categories based on their shopping goals, such as browsing, buying clothes, shoes, accessories, and presents. Kuruvilla and Joshi (2010) noted that different shopping mall visitors frequent the mall and have varying levels of interest in various product categories. Some people go shopping with a

specific aim in mind, such as getting refreshments or attending a movie, whereas others go window shopping with no specific purchase in mind. Window shopping, according to Farrag et al. (2010), is a circumstance in which a visitor to a shopping mall browse or goes through window displays in order to feel a part of the shopping mall culture and atmosphere. Visitors to shopping malls may keep up with the newest trends and changes in the retail business by looking at window displays. Visitors to the shopping mall also stop by the restaurants and coffee shops for a cup of coffee or a meal. Furthermore, family members can go to these eateries together for family bonding purposes (Farrag et al., 2010).

Participation In Shopping Mall-Initiated Activities by Shopping Mall Visitors

Shopping mall visitors, according to Gilboa (2009), can go to the mall for entertainment and participate in mall-sponsored activities. Children's programs and cultural events are some of the entertainment options. Farrag et al. (2010) support this by stating that shoppers can attend fashion displays at shopping malls. Furthermore, when family members visit these shopping malls, youngsters may be able to engage in numerous forms of amusement. Visitors to the retail mall can use the gym, post office, and banks to access the shopping complex's core services (Gilboa, 2009).

Social Activities and Entertainment

Strolling, social meetings, sitting in public locations, conversing with strangers, and watching other people shop are all examples of social activities (Gilboa, 2009). Visitors to shopping malls consume experiences, and shopping malls have evolved into important gathering places, particularly for young people (Kuruville and Joshi, 2010). Visitors to shopping malls can go to movie theaters and eateries to watch soccer matches (Farrag et al., 2010; Gilboa, 2009; Kim et al., 2011). The following section is a review of prior shopping center studies.

Benefits Motivating Habitat Occupancy and Activity

Individuals will be most abundant when conditions are less favorable, according to ecological study (Nebel 1990). In general, animals migrate or transfer habitats in search of better conditions. The consumer situation appears to be influenced by habitual preferences and optimality. In fact, the body of literature on retail patronage can be understood as the discovery and selection of more ideal consumption habitats. When a new retail center opens in an existing trade area, for example, consumers who perceive larger benefits from the new center are more inclined to migrate there. The advantages that a customer seeks serve as a foundation for determining the appropriate environment and, as a result, lead habitat selection. Variations in the orientations that a consumer takes to the site are thought to impact varied patterns of behavior within a habitat. In other words, consumers who seek benefits

from a habitat are expected to act differently while there. Consumers who are more recreationally focused, for example, should purchase in different ways than those who are more functional or economically driven (Bellenger and Korgoankar 1980). In the same way, people seeking social benefits in a retail context should engage in more interpersonal interactions (Darden and Reynolds 1971). Although there have been several research on the benefits and orientation of shopping, the most of them have focused on shopping in general or single establishments. Shopping benefits in the setting of large-scale retail establishments like malls have not been thoroughly addressed in research. Because shopping malls have expanded into more than just a collection of stores, the development of shopping malls should include a study of additional mall-related shopping advantages.

Research Questions

It is difficult to deny that the shopping mall serves as an important customer habitat. Three research topics arising from the previous description are addressed in order to provide a better understanding of consumer behavior within this habitat:

- i. What are the different types of behavior patterns that can be found in a mall environment?
- ii. What benefits entice customers to visit a mall, and
- iii. How do these benefits affect mall activity?

Malls have evolved into places where a diverse range of consumer activities can be found. Case studies were used to help answer these problems.

3.0 Methodology

The research method is described in this chapter. The goal of this research is to find out how useful a shopping mall is as a customer environment. It investigates the benefits of habitat activities in the shopping mall, as well as the factors that influence habitat occupancy and activity. The research looked at case studies of well-known malls around the world to determine their effectiveness and success as a customer habitat. The information was gathered through a survey of current literature and research on the usefulness of the shopping mall as a consumer habitat through the incorporation and adaptation of new designs and tenant variety in developed and developing shopping malls.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

This chapter focused on the architecture of consumption of shopping space in two well-known malls in order to determine their effectiveness and success as a customer habitat.

DUBAI MALL



Figure 4.1: Dubai Mall Exterior View
(Source: coutrips.com, 2022)



Figure 4.2: Dubai Mall Exterior View
(Source: coutrips.com, 2022)

The Dubai Mall combines world-class dining, entertainment, and leisure attractions with an unrivaled shopping mix. Downtown Dubai is Emaar Properties' flagship mega-project, and the Dubai Mall is a key element of it. The mall's total space is similar to 200 soccer fields, with a total area of 12 million square feet. The Dubai Mall has 3.77 million sq ft of gross leasable space, over 1,200 retail businesses, two anchor department stores, and over 200 food and beverage outlets. It has a total internal floor area of 5.9 million sq ft.



The Address Dubai Mall, 3 Dubai Mall, 5-star luxury hotel with 244 rooms and 449 serviced homes, as well as 14,000 undercover parking spaces split over three levels, is also nearby. The Dubai Mall's dedicated Fashion Avenue, covering an area of 440,000 sq ft, pays attention to high fashion with more than 70 signature retailers. The mall's anchor stores are Galleries Lafayette, France's largest lifestyle retailer, and Bloomingdale's, America's largest department store. Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo, one of the world's largest aquariums, is a major attraction in the mall. The Dubai Aquarium, which can store 10 million liters of water, spotlights the wonders of the ocean floor and houses one of the world's most diversified collections of marine species. The promenade of the mall is flanked with a variety

of themed cafés and restaurants, each offering al fresco dining with views of the Dubai Fountain and Burj Khalifa.

Successes: It has established itself as a destination for entertainment, rather than shopping, that people actively seek out. The sheer scale of the mall (13 million square feet, or 50 football fields) and the variety of programs available make it a spectacle. Year after year, the number of visitors grows (2014: 80 million).

BEAUGRENELLE PARIS SHOPPING MALL



Figure 4.4: Beaugrenelle Paris Shopping Mall Exterior View

(Source: archilovers.com, 2013)



Figure 4.5: Beaugrenelle Paris Shopping Mall Exterior View

(Source: archilovers.com, 2013)

Beaugrenelle Paris is a shopping mall in the 15th arrondissement of Paris, adjacent to the Seine River and only a 10-minute walk from the Eiffel Tower. It's one of the city's largest shopping malls. Beaugrenelle is a hybrid of a department store and a shopping mall with 120 stores and eateries. The 50,000 m² of fashion retail space is divided into three buildings: Magnetic, Panoramic, and City, with a total of 120 retailers and eateries. A covered pedestrian bridge connects the Magnetic and Panoramic buildings, providing a gateway from the Seine to the 15th arrondissement. The exoskeleton walkway, which is a steel skeleton wrapped around a glass tube, is one of the mall's unique architectural characteristics. Its shape is similar to those of its famous neighbors, the Eiffel Tower and the Bir-Hakeim Bridge.



Figure 4.6: Beaugrenelle Paris Shopping Mall Interior View (Source: archilovers.com, 2013)

Skylights illuminate the two atria, allowing natural light to flood the six-story commercial center. Each atrium has a metallic glass roof that changes color depending on the time of day and light conditions, ranging from colder to warmer tones during the day and night. One of the most important considerations in the building's development was sustainability. The architects developed a green roof after considering the threats to biodiversity in cities. It is Paris' largest green roof, measuring 7,000 square meters. The roof is home to 40,000 rain-fed plant varieties, bees, and birds, who benefit from a relationship with the French League for Bird Protection (LPO). Six hives on the roof house the bees, who produce 50–100 kg of honey each year. Local residents can take care of their own output thanks to a 700-square-meter community garden. Beaugrenelle is the world's first shopping mall to receive two environmental certifications: HQE1 and Level 2 BREEAM ('Very Good').

Successes: A competition design where the architects purposefully addressed current mall concerns. Responds to a growing emphasis on 'branding' a mall in order to create a unique experience. The goal is to improve the mall's competitiveness. Other activities in the mall other than just the retail shops contribute to the mall's effectiveness as a consumer habitat.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study had two goals: first, to establish the mall's effectiveness and success as a consumer habitat, and second, to determine the shopping mall visitors' consumption activities that result in the mall being maximized as a consumer habitat. Surprisingly, despite the fact that shopping malls have changed the physical landscape of cities and resulted in massive retail sales, study on them is extremely limited. Furthermore, the mall has become an integral component of modern lifestyles, fostering a growing variety of mall activities and providing a diverse range of attractions. The enormous enclosed mall has been portrayed as society's major consumer environment in an attempt to capture its significance. Consumer behavior in

the mall, as with any major habitat, was expected to vary, as were the perceived benefits that drew them to the location. The presence of other spaces in the mall, such as cinemas, children's play areas, and food courts, rather than just retail stores, has been recognized as making the malls a consumer habitat, according to the case studies.

In a nutshell, this study attempted to "elaborate" a shopping mall habitat and its users as a unit to study in the hopes of producing a clearer picture of the environment and its many purposes, influences, and attractions. Scholars are encouraged to keep a broad view of what constitutes consumption activity in the marketplace in future research. As demonstrated in this study, many consumers seek to experience a habitat in a variety of ways in addition to purchasing goods, so malls should be designed to be more user friendly, meeting a variety of consumer needs while also being comfortable for the movement of many people and creating positive feelings through aesthetics.

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