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INVESTIGATION THE EFFECTIVE FACTORS ON MALLS PATRONAGE: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

INVESTIGACIÓN DE LOS FACTORES EFECTIVOS EN EL MECENAZGO DE LOS CENTROS COMERCIALES: UN ENFOQUE DE INVESTIGACIÓN CUALITATIVA

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ABSTRACT

An important issue of shopping malls and shopping centers brands, attracting more visitors and customers to these multi-purpose shopping malls and centers sales more in order to receive more success for brands beyond the multipurpose shopping malls or shopping centers. Also, more profitability of investors in investing in this area, lead us to the purpose of this study by investigating the factors affecting more on the patronage of multipurpose shopping malls and shopping centers. The methodology of this research is qualitative research by phenomenology approach, via depth interviews on 15 participants who have at least, one shopping mall and shopping center visiting and purchasing their FMCG needs there. In this study, shopping malls customers lived experience from multi-purpose shopping malls and centers explored and the factors affecting shopping mall and shopping centers patronage intention investigated. Also, we analyzed the finding of depth interview by using three-stage of the phenomenological approach of qualitative coding such as open coding, axial coding as well as selective coding. Finally, in this study, we found that independent variables such as shopping mall and shopping center value and the other independents variable as shopping mall and shopping center perception have the greatest impact on multi-purpose shopping malls customer patronage.

Keywords:

Mall patronage intention, mall perception, shopping value, mall environment, mall recognition.

RESUMEN

Una cuestión importante de las marcas de centros comerciales y centros comerciales, que atrae a más visitantes y clientes a

estos centros comerciales y centros de usos múltiples es más ventas para recibir más éxito para las marcas más allá de los centros comerciales o centros comerciales de usos múltiples. Además, una mayor rentabilidad de los inversores al invertir en esta área, nos lleva al propósito de este estudio al investigar los factores que afectan más el patrocinio de los centros comerciales y centros comerciales de usos múltiples. La metodología de esta investigación es la investigación cualitativa por enfoque fenomenológico, a través de entrevistas en profundidad a 15 participantes que tienen al menos un centro comercial y un centro comercial visitando y comprando sus necesidades de FMCG allí. En este estudio, los clientes de los centros comerciales vivieron la experiencia de los centros comerciales y centros de usos múltiples explorados y se investigaron los factores que afectan la intención de patrocinio de los centros comerciales y centros comerciales. Además, analizamos el hallazgo de la entrevista en profundidad mediante el uso del enfoque fenomenológico en tres etapas de la codificación cualitativa, como la codificación abierta, la codificación axial y la codificación selectiva. Finalmente, en este estudio, descubrimos que las variables independientes como el valor de compras de centros comerciales y centros comerciales y las otras variables independientes como la percepción de centros comerciales y centros comerciales tienen el mayor impacto en el patrocinio de clientes de centros comerciales de usos múltiples.

Palabras clave:

Intención de patrocinio del centro comercial, percepción del centro comercial, valor de compra, entorno del centro comercial, reconocimiento del centro comercial.

INTRODUCTION

As consumers want better shopping experiences, this has led to the growth of numerous shopping centers (Sadachar, 2014). Sometimes consumers visit multipurpose shopping centers because they can access a wide collection of brands under one roof. Various factors may affect store customers' revisiting behavior, and in particular the influence of these factors on customers' satisfaction with store, word of mouth (WOM), and revisiting willingness and behavior are also observable. Environmental conditions inside the shopping centers as well as perceived purchase value are effective in determining behavioral responses. Other environmental factors such as music and color are effective on consumer feelings towards shopping centers and their satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, various aspects of marketing and shopping centers' management can also increase their brand satisfaction and loyalty to the brand of shopping center. Some of their advantages to the shopping center are offering better services to customers (Kursunluoglu, 2014), management of facilities in the shopping center (Hui, Zhang & Zheng, 2013), controlling shopping centers' population and improving the sale of shopping center kiosks (Runyan, et al., 2011) in the current economic situation and conditions, despite the restrictions on the entry of brands into the country. Investigating the relationship between organizations reveals that organizations cooperate with each other in a business and in a chain on the basis of their own interests and the compensation of shortage of resources and access to their goals (Shirkhodaie et al., 2014). However, customers' shopping and visiting experiences have a more important role than specific variables such as product price or quality, which have a significant impact on the perceived value of the shopping center and purchasing its brands. Shopping center managers have used this opportunity by providing spaces for interaction, organizing exhibitions, fashion shows, live music, and so on, so that they may even feel that the retailer is a secondary place for the entertainment (Wong & Nair, 2018). Therefore, the main issue of the present research was to investigate the factors affecting multipurpose shopping centers revisiting as one of the most effective factors in the profitability of this type of shopping centers and the brands and retailers' business prosperity inside multipurpose shopping centers (Khong & Ong, 2014). Regarding the theoretical vacuum existing about the factors affecting customers' revisiting multipurpose shopping centers can be stated in the way that considering the difficulty of entering internationally popular brands into the country as well as the lack of needed researches about managing customers' revisiting these shopping centers with the aim of retailers' profitability within these centers and making

customers and visitors loyal along with the return on the investment of users, as one of the emerging challenges for researchers on the one hand, and the investors and managers of these multipurpose shopping centers in the industry and the need to accurately recognize and investigate the various dimensions of factors affecting revisiting shopping centers on the other hand, as well as the grievance of stores inside the shopping centers due to the lack of customers inside the shopping centers and the continuous bankruptcies of this group of stores and returning their stores to the owners and users, the managers and owners of these multipurpose shopping centers continually seek to increase customers' presence and their repeated and frequent visits.

Mall Patronage is a comprehensive scale to calculate the likelihood and willingness to buy from multipurpose shopping centers and the willingness to suggest it to others (Sadachar, 2014). It also describes the close and lasting relationship between a shopping center and the customer. In general, the concept of revisiting in the retailer is specified by the interactions between the partners in this relationship, thus the shopping center provides its services to its visitor and in turn, the visitor exhibits a positive behavior towards the shopping center. In addition to behavioral aspects, numerous variables, including customer satisfaction, are considered to measure revisiting in the retail literature (Blut, Teller & Floh, 2018). In this research, it was sought to answer the questions: "How does positive verbal advertising of the shopping center influence the revisiting increase of the multipurpose shopping centers? How does the perceived value of the customer influence revisiting the shopping centers? How does the mental image affect the revisiting increase of the multipurpose shopping centers?, How does store diversity affect revisiting increase of multipurpose shopping centers? How does customers' satisfaction impact revisiting increase of shopping centers?"; the main question of the research was: "What are the factors affecting the revisiting increase of multipurpose shopping centers?"

By answering the above questions, the researcher could analyze and present a comprehensive model of factors affecting the revisiting of multipurpose shopping centers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study was a qualitative research and had a phenomenological approach; it aimed to investigate the meaning of a phenomenon or concept under study in terms of a group of individuals (Van Manen, 1982). In phenomenology, the phenomenon under study is investigated based on an interpretative epistemological approach and according to the subjectivity of the individuals and

the meaning they have about the phenomenon in their lived experience. Therefore, regarding the phenomenological nature of this research in the qualitative section, it can be pursued that how do the customers of shopping centers narrate their lived experience of revisiting these multipurpose shopping centers and how do they narrate this experience?

The desired statistical population in this research included visitors and high visiting customers (with at least visiting once and Flâneur) of multipurpose shopping centers in the metropolis of Tehran due to the existence of numerous multipurpose shopping centers and having the highest feature and facilities being exploited, and choosing the type of shopping center based on the highest visit of shopping centers (having highest visit daily) in Tehran. Sampling was performed using multiple purposeful as snowball method until the “theoretical saturation” stage of the data, which occurred with 15 in-depth theoretical saturation interviews. Protocol questions (Table 1) were designed using theoretical literature. The main approach for analyzing data in this method is coding, which is done during a three-step process that are open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. These steps are not mechanically separated, but are merely described as three distinctive steps for further explanation of the process. In this (nonlinear) three-step process, the basic themes of data are referred as titles, and then among those concepts, categories are derived, and finally in the selective coding stage, out of the relationship of these categories, a core category is created, and a theory is made to explain the phenomenon (Farasatkah, 2008). In this research, while collecting the data, its analysis was simultaneously performed. Open coding is an analytical process by which the concepts are identified and their features and dimensions in the data are discovered. There are various ways to do open coding, one of which is line by line method. This method is performed by careful and close examination of the data, phrase by phrase and sometimes word by word (Iman, 2014). In this research, open coding has been performed through line by line method. The data was collected in the research field and was analyzed outside it. Finally in selective coding, the researcher may feel that among the categories, there is one main and core category to which all other categories are somehow related. In this research, by analyzing and putting the categories extracted from primary concepts derived from research data along each other, it was tried to obtain the core categories of qualitative research.

Table 1. In-Depth Interview Protocol Questions.

<p>How do you get acquainted with shopping malls and centers?</p> <p>How do you evaluate prices in shopping centers?</p> <p>What is your opinion about value added on customer purchase receipts?</p> <p>What are your solutions for adjusting prices in shopping centers and malls?</p> <p>What do you usually hear about shopping centers and malls from others?</p> <p>How do you usually choose shopping centers and malls and what are your reasons and criteria for selection?</p> <p>For doing what work do you usually go to shopping centers and malls, and how much time do you spend inside shopping centers and malls?</p> <p>How is the relationship of the employees of shopping centers and malls with you?</p> <p>Describe the facilities you expect to surly exist in shopping centers and malls?</p> <p>How do you evaluate people’s class levels in shopping centers and malls?</p>
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Each of the interviews was conducted at highly visiting shopping centers including Kourosh, Arg, Palladium, Sana and Megamall in Tehran, along with three shopping centers of the City Center of Isfahan, the Persian Gulf of Shiraz and the Laleh Park of Tabriz, which have the highest daily visits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The assessment of research tool reliability was performed using analytical comparisons and audit technique. To confirm the research reliability, it was referred to raw data to compare and evaluate the construct of the theory with the raw data. The auditing technique by exploiting several experts in the field of phenomenological theory, coding steps were supervised, and while working, the difficulties were removed, and also for improving the working process in coding steps, the points were declared and necessary edits were done. Triangulation method was used to evaluate the validity. The extracted categories and themes were provided to the participants in a narrative description way. Along with it, a form was also provided to them to declare their agreement or disagreement about the concepts in the form of four options of “I completely agree / I agree / I somewhat agree / I completely disagree”. Choosing “I completely agree and I agree” options were considered

as the validity of the concept from the participant's point of view. The ratio of the number of people who chose these two options as their answer to the total number, has been considered as an indicator for evaluating the extracted categories and themes. The results indicated the validity of all the extracted categories and themes (Table 2).

Table 2. Validation Results of Qualitative Data.

Theme	Validation (Percent)	Category	Validation (Percent)
Factors affecting revisiting Malls and shopping centers	100	Mall Recognition	100
		Tenant Mix	100
		Mall Personality	100
		Mall Perception	85.71
		Mall Environment	100
		Mall Shopping Value	85.71

In terms of demographic characteristics by gender, the number of women was 10 and the number of men was 5, the total interview time with each one of the 15 people has been 566.22 minutes in total, and the average interview time of each participant was also 37.48 minutes; the age classification included 15 to 55 years, in which the highest age range included 20 to 25 years with 8 individuals.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, 217 open codes were specified, which were the categories for the theme of revisiting multipurpose shopping centers (Figure 1) including environment, purchase value, perception, personality, cognition and store layout of the multipurpose shopping centers. In other words, the category of multipurpose shopping centers` cognition included 9 main concepts, and contained the following cases: advertising banner, billboards, verbal advertising, and people around, family, friends, monitoring multipurpose shopping centers, internet search, and social networks. Purchasing value category included 12 main concepts and contained: proper parking, good environment, indoor space, relaxation feeling in multipurpose shopping centers, good roof garden, good stores, inaugurating stores in multipurpose shopping centers, luxury brands, brands discounts, satisfaction with coffee shops, satisfaction with restaurants, and good food. The category of multipurpose shopping centers` perception including 22 main concepts contained: big stores, the availability of customer purchase preservation section, favorite brands in multipurpose shopping centers, the availability of cafes in multipurpose shopping centers, security, the availability of food courts, the availability of cinema, the availability of hyper, localization of foreign multipurpose shopping centers in the country, modern architecture, luxury brands,

easy car parking, ease of access, amusement, trust in multipurpose shopping centers, the possibility of public presence in the events, the availability of routers in multipurpose shopping centers, customer respect, the availability of full facilities in multipurpose shopping centers, trained employees, easy access to the floors, and attractive ideas in multipurpose shopping centers. The shopping center personality category included 17 main concepts and the shopping center environment category included 4 main concepts of: disadvantages of building multipurpose shopping centers, foreign multipurpose shopping centers, selecting multipurpose shopping centers, and visitors` class level. Shopping center store layout category included 16 main concepts of: coffee shop, restaurant, beauty salon, pool, hyper, bookstore, gold and jewelries, cinema, food court, clothing, perfume, cosmetics, home appliances, food store, children`s play space and visa services.

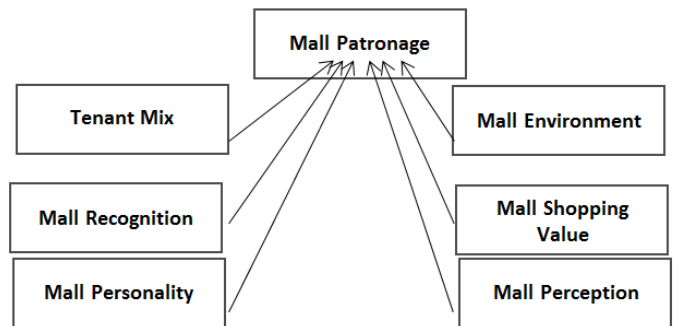


Figure 1. Qualitative Research Model.

The segmentation of buyers` purchase willingness may provide an accurate understanding of why and how a buyer purchases. This can clarify the revisiting reasons of buyers from a specific shopping center. The shopping center is considered as a place that provides convenience for buyers, including various services in the field of retail, leisure time and entertainment in a clean, covered, and secured space. The success of a shopping center depends on how it can enjoy the buyer from the moment of entrance to the time of exiting from the parking. Understanding buyers` expectations and their desired advantages when visiting shopping centers, impacts the management of shopping centers to provide appropriate strategies to meet buyers` needs and lead to their frequent revisits; since revisiting multipurpose shopping centers involves the repetition of travel and purchasing from one or several specific shopping centers that are of particular value according to the customers and visitors, and regard it deserving their support and loyalty. For example: in this respect Mohsen has stated that: *“just coming and sitting in a cafe or coming and sitting in his restaurant. Doing so, I can talk*

with somebody or even I can make an appointment there. These are very important to me”

In describing what has been named multipurpose shopping centers cognition, people regard it as creating the first information encounter with customers and individuals, and includes acquiring information and news about shopping centers, whether constructed or under construction, which leads to initial acquaintance with the shopping center. For example: in this respect Ali has said: *“I hear through friends and acquaintances and people around. Or, many times, when going through, one sees that here is being constructed. That is, I mean, most of the time it is accidental”*.

In describing what was named the multipurpose shopping center environment, people know it as a kind of word-of-mouth advertising that is verbally transmitted from an individual to another individual and includes some kind of advertising activity of shopping centers. For example: in this respect Samira has mentioned: *“they had their music program with fountains celebration, and everybody was present there at one specific time, and then everybody was trying to perform his/her purchase, and be present at one specific time there. Or for example, the aquarium is very attractive; so many people came because of it”*.

In describing what the multipurpose shopping centers perception is named, people know it as meaning the shopping center to be attractive that includes an understanding of the attractive and essential and important features of the shopping centers that can attract a large number of visitors and customers to the shopping center, and can be effective in returning them to the shopping center and their repurchases. For example: in this respect Vahideh has stated: *“shopping is not to purchase clothes and shoes and bags and watches and so on from stores and brands. If someone goes to the shopping center and just buys an ice cream, he has helped the customers’ revisiting”*.

Therefore, in describing what is named multipurpose shopping center purchase value, people mean to understand the outstanding features of shopping centers that are viewed by visitors and customers in terms of profit and loss or the enjoyment and the lack of enjoyment of the desirable features of shopping center that are understandable from the point of view of customers and visitors (Sadachar, 2014). For example: in this respect Samira has said: *“some of the places are so cool. Some of the places have big shops or have all brands. Most of these things about its stores and shopping centers may seem stylish and delightful”*.

Therefore, the advantage of the utilitarianism of purchase value results from the conscious pursuit of an optimal outcome, and the purchase is often described by consumers as a task or a process. From the consumer’s point of view, profitability is satisfaction obtained from the achievement of a specific goal during a shopping trip. The purchase value of utilitarian for buying location decisions include the place, product categorization, price, and sales promotions. There is a positive route between the utilitarianism value and revisiting retailers (Sullivan, Kang & Heitmeyer, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

In respect of comparing previous researches with the present research, the researcher considered the variable of revisiting multipurpose shopping centers as a factor to repeat visiting one or several multipurpose shopping centers, which can be formed due to a kind of attachment or loyalty. The results of present research were in line with Jaafaru (2018), research in 2018 concluding that factors affecting revisiting shopping centers variable include shopping centers features, store layout, sales promotions, and earnings status inside shopping center, regarding which, various levels of customers select shopping centers variously. The researcher in the present research by conducting in-depth interviews and extracting themes, categories and concepts and by exploiting the coding steps of the texts obtained from the research interviews, identified 7 categories including acquaintance with shopping centers, positive verbal advertising, shopping center attractiveness, customer perceived value, mental image of multipurpose shopping center, the diversity of multipurpose shopping center stores, customers’ satisfaction with the shopping center, which can be considered about revisiting the shopping centers. Also, Mittal & Jhamb (2016), could classify 16 features in the form of four main factors that are stated as shopping center attractiveness factors, including marketability, diversity and selection, facilities and environment, which affected revisiting shopping center increase, which was in line with the present research.

Concerning suggestions for future researches, it can be stated that as the purpose of this research has been to investigate and find factors that affect revisiting shopping centers, it is suggested to conduct other researchers in this field regarding the factors affecting revisiting shopping centers such as various classes of the groups of community and various age groups. In addition, the present research has focused on the factors that affect revisiting shopping centers as a whole, while considering the construction of shopping centers under construction in the country that have specific locations such as sport fields,

skate runways, and family recreational spaces and cultural, artistic and commercial places. Other researchers in this field can consider factors that affect revisiting specific parts of the multipurpose shopping centers and investigate and study the principles and practices of businesses' prosperity within the shopping centers separately. Since this research has been conducted about the multipurpose shopping centers in Tehran, other researchers can study multipurpose shopping centers in other cities of the country or can compare them with foreign multipurpose shopping centers in other countries.

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