Ensuring satisfied, committed shoppers – Store variety or entertainment?

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ABSTRACT

In the competitive retail environment, attracting and retaining shoppers is imperative for the success of shopping malls. Therefore, creating satisfied, committed shoppers is essential for mall survival. The study aims to determine the extent to which store variety and entertainment contribute to shopper satisfaction; to identify which variable most strongly predicts shopper commitment, as well as to investigate these variables in a gendered context. Two hundred shoppers completed self-administered questionnaires during a mall intercept study. The results, using multiple regression and discriminate analysis, identified store variety as the most important predictor of shopper satisfaction; while shopper satisfaction, in turn, was the most powerful discriminator of mall commitment. MANOVA testing revealed support for the blurred-gender role argument. Mall managers and developers should ensure a tenant mix that would provide variety, but also entertainment, regardless of the gender of their shoppers, to ensure shopper satisfaction that would ultimately lead to commitment.

Keywords: mall commitment, shoppers' satisfaction, shopping mall attributes, variety of stores, entertainment, gender

"If shopping doesn't make you happy, then you're in the wrong shop," or are you? In the last five years, there has been an increase in new shopping mall developments, as well as the renovation of existing malls. This is mainly due to the ever-growing number of middle-class shoppers (Hirsch, 2012) that are supported by a boost in the economy and the backing from retail developments (SA Propnews, 2013). Hirsch (2012) also posits that South Africa is the 'gateway to Africa' and as such is very attractive for international corporations and retailers. The increasing number of mall developers who want to capitalise on these opportunities is creating intense competition among newly developed shopping malls, and forcing older malls to renovate in order to remain competitive.

Mall managers and developers are not only challenged by the highly competitive retail environment. Retail customers are more empowered as the increasing availability of technology and information is shifting the balance-of-power towards consumers. Shoppers utilise information from multiple sources before making decisions, many of which are made online. Furthermore, new shopping malls are likely to cannibalise smaller, as well as older malls, which will need to invest in refurbishments and to reposition themselves, in order to stay competitive. It is not only cannibalism and well-informed shoppers that are putting shopping malls under pressure to stay competitive in the

prevailing economic environment; there are other factors, such as the growing on-line shopping trend and high operating costs. Mall developers and retailers alike are faced with an increase in property taxes and electricity tariffs, as well as changing consumption and shopping patterns.

Watson (in Greeff and Mfuni, 2010), identified trends, such as people 'creating and consuming' at home and 'cheap is cool' – as being significant changes in consumer shopping behaviour. Given the challenging environment, it is difficult to keep current shoppers satisfied and to attract new shoppers (Im & Ha, 2011). Greeff and Mfuni (2010) argue that the strategic issue for retailers in South Africa is to navigate their way through these challenges.

According to Babin and Attaway (2000), a mall manager's primary goal in a competitive environment is to retain his current shoppers. Loyal shoppers are often the cornerstone of gaining market share and developing a competitive advantage (Wright & Sparks, 1999). According to Gustafsson, Johnson and Ross (2005), customer satisfaction is an antecedent of positive outcomes, while Machleit, Eroglu and Mantel (2000: 30) found that future shopping decisions are influenced by satisfaction with previous shopping experiences. Exceeding customer expectations with, amongst others, a good retail mix, which includes entertainment, could lead to satisfied shoppers (Im & Ha, 2011).

Thus, if shoppers are satisfied with their shopping experience, they are more inclined to be positive and to remain committed to the mall (Hedhli, Chebat & Sirgy, 2013). Committed shoppers have the possibility of becoming loyal shoppers, and even spreading positive feedback by word-of-mouth about the mall. Commitment predicts mall loyalty and it is thus essential for long-term success (Chebat, Hedhli & Sirgy, 2009; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Studies investigating various aspects of shopping patronage have been done, some investigating the attractiveness factors (Zafar, Chingold & Dahari, 2007; Lindquist, 1974; Nevin & Houston, 1980; Budkin & Lord, 1997; Wong, Yu & Yuan, 2001; Eroglu, Machleit & Barr, 2005; El-Adly, 2007; Allard, Babin & Chebat, 2009); mall image (Finn & Louviere, 1996; Sit, Merrilees & Birch, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2005; Seock, 2009) and segmenting shoppers (Frasquet, Gil & Moll'a, 2001; Suarez, Del Bosque, Rodriguez-Poo & Moral, 2004), as well as the demographic and psychographic characteristics of shoppers (Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977; Roy, 1994; Martin & Turley, 2004), often with conflicting results.

Some studies found support for gender differences based on gender-role theory; while others (Hart, Farrell, Stachow, Reed & Cadogan, 2007; Otnes & McGrath, 2001; Severiens & Ten Dam, 1998) reported no gender difference in a shopping context and they support the blurred-gender role argument. Moreover, most of the research has been done in developed countries. Furthermore, according to Morgan and Hunt (1994), there is a lack of research on the concept of mall commitment, which is still evident today. It is thus vital for mall managers to know which attributes attract shoppers and lead to satisfaction, as well as to what extent they influence commitment and loyalty towards a mall.

Clarity is needed about the role of gender, as well as the possible relationship amongst mall attributes, such as store variety and entertainment, satisfaction and commitment in a South African retail environment. The study contributes to the limited knowledge about shoppers in developing countries with emerging markets and it aims to shed light on the blurred-gender role argument underlying reported gender differences. On a more practical note, many shopping mall developers in South Africa utilise similar tenant mixes and marketing strategies, as seen in their international counterparts; so it is vital to establish whether these international results hold true for the typical South African metropolitan shopper. For the purpose of this paper the focus are on shoppers in the Centurion metropolis. Furthermore, in a competitive market and subdued economy, such as South Africa is currently experiencing, every shopping mall development must guarantee its financial feasibility by ensuring it is utilising the most effective strategies to increase its market share, while retaining its customers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to determine whether store variety and entertainment are statistically significant predictors of satisfaction and, if so, which is the more important predictor. In addition, the aim is to determine to what degree the selected shopping variables (store variety, entertainment and satisfaction) lead to discrimination between highly-committed and less-committed shoppers. The reason is that once this can be identified, some intervention measures can be put in place to enhance commitment. Finally, the role of gender in a shopping context is investigated. Although numerous mall attributes exist, the focus of this paper is on store variety and entertainment, as these two attributes address the initial reason for shopping centre development (variety of stores under one roof), and the more recent trend of 'shoppertainment' or 'retail-tainment', whereby malls are viewed as places for social interaction and entertainment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature section will highlight store variety and entertainment as two important mall attributes, as well as explaining the relationship between these two variables and shopper satisfaction. Thereafter, satisfaction and commitment will be defined and the relationship between the two will be explained – before concluding with shopping in a gender context.

SELECTED PULL FACTORS OR MALL ATTRIBUTES

Malls play an important role in the lives of consumers and they also influence peoples' lifestyles (Terblanche, 1999). The first malls were built in the late 1940s in the United States; and it soon became apparent that this concentration of retail activities proved to be very successful. Initially, mall developers focused mainly on the utility aspect of shopping. However, in a highly competitive retail environment, the recreational or hedonic aspect, as it related to retailing, became increasingly important. Some authors argue that in a competitive environment, it is not enough for malls to operate in a conventional manner by enticing shoppers with an assortment of stores and brands, together with special pricing or convenience, as is evident in extended store hours or location.

Consumers are seeking value, choice, a good customer experience (Keng, Huang, Zheng & Hsu, 2007: 351) and convenience (Ahmed, Ghingold and Dahari, 2007). The provision of entertainment or 'shoppertainment', is increasingly being used as a competitive tool by malls (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003) and although malls are used for shopping, they have also become a place for "social and recreational activities" (Ng, 2003).

Customer patronage is influenced by the 'gravity-pull model' and according to Yadav, Siraj and Arora (2012), the 'gravity-pull model' consists of the various factors or variables that influence the patronage of the mall, such as accessibility, parking, retail tenant mix, product range, trading hours and entertainment.

Mall attributes or pull variables that are attractive for one shopper may not necessarily be attractive for another and shoppers may have different motives that explain their attraction to certain malls (Bodkin & Lord, 1997; Ruiz, 1999). One viewpoint is that shoppers are attracted to shopping centres purely for economic reasons, or for purchasing factors, such as convenience, services, variety or prices (Ahmed et al., 2007; Nicholls, Kranendonk & Roslow, 2002). However, with the large number of malls and a highly competitive landscape, the recreational aspect of retailing is increasingly becoming a powerful competitive tool.

The idea of pleasurable and entertaining shopping experiences was introduced by Jones (1999) and this present a second viewpoint, largely revolving around malls as 'entertainment-centres'. This study focuses on two of these pull factors or attributes (Gupta & Randhawa, 2008: 190-196), namely, store variety and entertainment, broadly addressing the two streams of thought.

Store variety

Lusch, Dunne and Carver (2011:231) described a shopping mall or centre as "...a centrally owned

or managed shopping district that is planned, has balanced tenancy, and is surrounded by parking facilities". In essence, a shopping mall is the solution to the location problem, where a mall groups a variety of stores together for the convenience of shoppers. Thus, the main driving force behind the establishment of shopping malls is to provide a variety of stores under one roof. Ensuring a variety in the tenant mix is a way of encouraging shoppers to visit the various areas of a mall (Borgers, Brouwer, Kunen, Jessurun & Janssen, 2010: 379).

Sharma, Sivakumaran and Marshall (2010: 277) define variety seeking as "a means of obtaining stimulation of purchase behaviour by alternating between familiar choice objects – such as stores – simply for the sake of change". Previous research has indicated that store variety positively influences mall choice, shopping frequency, as well as the mall image (Singh & Sahay, 2012:244; Rabbanee, Ramaseshan, Wu & Vinden, 2012: 271; Im & Ha, 2011: 271; Sharma et al., 2010: 277; Wakefield & Baker, 1998:521).

A balanced tenant mix also ensures that the stores in a shopping mall complement one another, with respect to quality and variety, making the mall an attractive one-stop shopping experience for shoppers (Berman & Evans, 2001). Wong, Yu and Yuan (2001) also found that shoppers are more inclined to patronise malls with a wider variety of stores and brands than malls that offer only a limited variety. Teller and Reutterer (2008:127) contend that shopping malls deliver utilitarian and hedonic shopping value to customers. Such an enrichment of the shopping experience is, inter alia, caused by a wide variety of stores.

Teller and Reutterer (2008: 137) also found that the tenant mix and merchandise variety influence the overall attractiveness of a mall. Furthermore, the variety of stores, as evident in the retail tenant mix and product ranges, make a mall an attractive place for shoppers to visit; and this in turn affects shoppers' patronage behaviour (Anselmson, 2006; Teller & Reutterer, 2008). Atulkar and Kesari (2014), as well as Ahmed et al. (2007), found that consumers show a preference for shopping malls, which provide convenience and enable consumers to shop for a variety of products under one roof while Massicote, Michon, Chebat, Sirgy and Borges (2011) reported that the functional congruity (e.g. selection and quality of products available in a mall) leads to positive mall evaluation.

From the above, it seems clear that malls should focus on their core functions and initial reasons for existence by utilising the 'gravity-pull model' to provide a well-balanced tenant mix, to thereby ensure store variety. However, is the core function of shopping malls still to provide a variety of products? Is store variety the best way to ensure shopper satisfaction and commitment in a competitive environment? These questions need to be answered.

Entertainment

Many retailers and malls respond to the highly competitive retail arena by focusing on, amongst other aspects, entertaining and a fun-retail environment (Tsai, 2010; Sands, Oppewal & Beverland, 2009; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Wakefield & Baker, 1998). The trend of 'shoppertainment' or 'retail-tainment' refers to the concept of adding entertainment experiences to the retail mix (White, 2010). Shopping malls are becoming giant entertainment malls – in a bid to make them a choice destination in the eyes of the consumer (Singh & Sahay, 2012; Sands et al., 2009; El-Adly, 2007: 946; Sit et al., 2003: 84).

Barnes (2002) argues that South African shopping malls are increasingly utilising entertainment to attract new customers to the mall, in order ultimately to build long-term relationships. According to Prinsloo (2005), developers are no longer concerned with just building retail centres to serve the basic shopping needs; but they also strive to appeal to consumers' changing lifestyles and the pursuit of entertainment.

Entertainment can also be used as a differentiating tool to increase mall competiveness (Tsai, 2010; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). Kim, Christiansen, Feinberg and Choi (2005: 490) argue that entertainment enhances a mall's image and by doing so, it provides the mall with a sustainable competitive advantage. Entertainment includes various aspects, such as art exhibitions, themed areas, opportunities to spend free time,

to meet friends, and to attend cinemas and live performances (Jones, 1999). The entertainment provided in a mall often motivates shoppers to spend more time in the mall (Wakefield & Baker, 1998), to frequent the mall more often (Ooi & Sim, 2007; Kim, Christiansen, Feinberg & Choi, 2005: 490) and this ultimately increases the mall patronage (Khare, 2011).

Berman and Evans (2001: 542) argue that creating and maintaining a retail image is a complex and ongoing process and because many people have limited time for shopping, 'retailers must work hard to entertain shoppers'. Allard et al. (2009) report that entertainment in a mall positively influences the shopping experience and it could also lead to a stronger attachment to the mall. However, the effects of entertainment are not all rosy. Christiansen, Comer, Feinberg and Rinne (1999) found that entertainment could negatively influence the percentage of time spent in actual shopping behaviour, and the number of products purchased. Mall managers and marketers realise that entertainment in a shopping mall is a very effective tool to entice consumers or to 'pull' customers to their specific mall, however, it also has its downside.

SHOPPER SATISFACTION AND COMMITMENT

Customer satisfaction can be viewed as the outcome of a consumption activity, or an experience. It can also be viewed as a process (Parker & Mathews, 2001: 38). Although this paper is framed more in terms of the outcomes of the overall shopping experience, these two interpretations are complementary, rather than contradictory.

Customer satisfaction can be defined as "… a judgement that a product or service itself, is providing a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment" (Oliver, 1997: 3). Others, such as Westbrook and Reilly (1983), describe it as an "affective response to a specific consumption experience", or that satisfaction is the surprise element of a consumption experience (Oliver, 1981) and it reflects the general impressions of shoppers with an activity. Research by Parker and Mathews (2001: 42) found that consumers have a more holistic perception of satisfaction and that the service(s) provided by the store(s) was what they mainly used to determine their satisfaction.

It is evident that satisfaction has different meanings and interpretations; but it is clear that satisfaction can be described as a 'feeling' and some sort of 'evaluation process', be it satisfaction as a process, and/or satisfaction as an outcome (Parker & Mathews, 2001).

If a shopping experience provides qualities that are valued by the shopper, satisfaction with the mall is likely (Kwon, Ha & Im, 2015; Huddleston, Whipple, Mattick & Lee, 2009). Akroush and Abu-ElSamen (2011) report that shopper satisfaction is positively influenced by the mall environment or the mall attributes. Furthermore, Carpenter and Fairhurst (2005) found that utilitarian shopping benefits, such as store variety and hedonic shopping benefits, of which entertainment forms a part, have a positive impact on satisfaction. It is thus evident that mall attributes, such as store variety and entertainment, are both likely to impact shoppers' experience and ultimately influence shopper satisfaction (Kwon et al., 2015; Ahmad, 2012; Hart et al., 2007).

As such, it is hypothesised that:

H_1: Store variety and entertainment predict shopper satisfaction

However, given the latest and growing trend of 'shoppertainment' and increased hedonic motives for shopping, it seems as if store variety, the initial reason for developing malls (and a more task-oriented purchasing function), is not enough if a mall is to remain competitive. It is therefore hypothesised that:

H_2: Entertainment is a stronger predicator than store variety of shopper satisfaction

There is an increasing emphasis on shopper satisfaction, as a way of affecting store-choice or mall-choice behaviour (Weir, 2001) since satisfaction has a strong positive influence on post-purchase intentions. Satisfaction is a critical measure of a mall's success as the relationship marketing literature suggests, customer satisfaction is a ma-

jor determinant of commitment (Morgan & Hunt 1994; Oliver, 1997; Garbarino & Johnson 1999; Mahajar & Yunus, 2010).

Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande (1992) define commitment as "…the intention to continue a relationship because it is worthwhile"; while mall commitment is defined by Chebat et al. (2009: 51) as "the resistance to switch to other malls, due to the high levels of satisfaction". Geyskens, Jan-Benedict, Steenkamp, Kumar and Kumar (1996) propose that commitment should be influenced by satisfaction as it has both affective and cognitive components. Thus, if consumers have a positive experience shopping, they would be more likely to feel positive towards the shopping mall. These satisfied shoppers are also more interested in the mall, and are frequently more committed to that specific mall (Hedhli et al., 2013).

Wagner and Rydstrom (2001) agree that commitment to continue a relationship with online retailers is a positive function of satisfaction. Thus, if shoppers are satisfied with their shopping experience at a mall, they should find the relationship (to shop there in future even if other shopping options are available) pleasing and worth continuing. In general, satisfied customers tend to feel more commitment towards a business (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

However, Chebat et al. (2009:50), posit that shoppers who perceive a mall's attributes (e.g. entertainment and store variety) as positive, might consequently become committed shoppers. Furthermore, Allard et al. (2009) found that entertainment in a mall positively influences the shopping experience; and it could also lead to a stronger attachment or commitment to the mall. Solomon (2002) argues that malls try to ensure commitment and loyalty by appealing to both shoppers' social motives (entertainment) and their need for variety (Solomon, 2002). This study therefore endeavours to test the effects of the above-mentioned variables on shoppers' commitment levels. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H_3: The variety of stores in a mall is a predictor of mall commitment

H_4: Entertainment in a mall is a predictor of mall commitment

H_5: Shopper satisfaction is a predictor of mall commitment

The current economic climate creates many challenges for shopping malls. Existing customers need to be managed as assets, as it is more cost-effective to service existing customers than to acquire new customers (Zhang, Dixit & Friedmann, 2010: 128). For retailers and mall managers, committed shoppers are the ultimate goal; as Pritchard, Havits and Howard (1999) reported that commitment is a precursor to loyalty, and is essential for long-term success (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Chebat et al. 2009).

Committed customers have high repurchase intentions (Seiders, Voss, Grewal & Godfrey, 2012) and ultimately, commitment leads to increased profits, customer retention and a willingness on the part of shoppers to recommend that mall.

SHOPPING IN A GENDERED CONTEXT

Do you like shopping? The answer may partly depend on one factor: whether you are male or female. Males and females often prefer different products and services and they utilise different ways of thinking, when acquiring those products and services (Mitchell & Walsh, 2004). These differences can be ascribed to gender roles. Anselmi and Law (1998:195) define gender roles as "socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behaviour and emotions of men and women". Prominent psychological theories of gender roles and gender-identity development provide a possible explanation for these differences. Buss's evolutionary theory (1995) argues that men and women have faced different challenges throughout human history and these have shaped their behavioural differences.

The object-relations theory suggests that "the way people relate to others and situations in their adult lives are shaped by [their] family experiences during infancy" (Chodorow, 2003). Similarly, the gender-schema theory posits that young children are influenced by society's ideas about what it means to be a male or a female in their culture (Bern, 1993); while the social-role

theory recognizes the "historical division of labour between women and men" (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000).

Several studies have found that male and female shoppers exhibit differences in their shopping behaviour, which is evident in their enjoyment of shopping, their reasons for shopping, perceptions and the time spent in shopping malls (Wesley, LeHew & Woodside, 2006; Hu & Jasper, 2004; Grewal, Baker, Levy & Voss, 2003; Darley & Smith, 1995).

The gender theory does imply, however, that gender differences are flexible, because they are dependent on the immediate social roles of individuals. Societies can and do change; and consequently, gender roles also rapidly change. The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles, for many reasons, such as new family structures, education, the media, as well as gender equality, which allows gender roles to become less distinct (Pompper, 2010). However, Hart et al. (2007) found that men and women are not very different in their shopping behaviours. These authors speculate that the changes in traditional shopping roles could possibly contribute to these results.

Ozdamar, Ertekin, Bayraktaroglu and Gurkaynak (2014) also reported that for shoppers with hedonic motives, gender does not affect the evaluation of atmospheric cues. Severiens and Ten Dam (1998) proposed that the approaches of men and women to shopping are becoming more homogenous, due to the socialisation aspect of shopping. In a study by Ou, Abratt and Dion (2006: 228), this notion was confirmed. Further reasons for these apparent gender similarities in shopping activities may be the generation gap, because younger male shoppers are more accustomed to shopping as they have grown up with malls, they are more comfortable with and accustomed to shopping environments (Minahan & Beverland, 2005).

Another explanation could be the changing roles of men and women in the workplace, as a result of the empowerment in the 2000s that led to advances for women in the formal sector (Ndhlovu & Spring, 2009), with the effect of dual-income families, resulting in men acting as the purchasing agent, exposing men more and more to shopping and shopping malls (North & Kotze, 2004). It could also be that the old shopping gender roles are outdated or incorrect (Stern, 1998). Thus, while some research confirms well-defined gender roles in the shopping context, others appear to be in favour of relaxed or blurred gender roles (Otnes & McGrath, 2001; Hart et al., 2007). It is therefore hypothesised that:

H_6: There is a significant gender difference between shoppers' perceptions of store variety and entertainment, satisfaction and mall commitment

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample comprised adult (18+) urban metropolitan patrons at a mall in the Centurion area, Gauteng, South Africa. Since no sample frame of shoppers was available, non-probability convenience sampling, to fill the gender quotas, was used similar to the approach of previous studies (Ahmed et al., 2007; Keng et al., 2007; Singh & Sahay, 2012). A sample size of 200 respondents was utilised. Gender quotas were employed to ensure a more-balanced sample. Questionnaires were administered during shopping hours on weekdays and over weekends – in order to avoid any potential bias.

Questionnaire

Section A of the questionnaire that was compiled measured the entertainment, store variety, satisfaction and commitment. All the items were measured using a five-point Likert scales, with labelled scale points ranging from 1 ('Strongly disagree') to 5 ('Strongly agree'). Entertainment was measured with a three-item scale, as used by Kim et al., (2005: 489) and reported a Cronbach alpha co-efficient of 0.68; while Wakefield and Baker's (1998: 523-524) store variety scale was used ($\alpha = 0.65$). Im and Ha's (2011: 2278-2280) scale consisting of four items was used to measure shoppers' satisfaction and it showed an acceptable internal consistency

reliability (0.84).

A six-item commitment scale of Chebat et al. (2009: 55) was used to measure the shoppers' commitment to the mall; and the Cronbach alpha co-efficient for all five items was 0.93. According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998:118), reliability coefficients above 0.60 are satisfactory for exploratory research; those above 0.70 are acceptable; and those above 0.80 are good. It is also important to remember that Cronbach's alpha increases, as the number of items in the scale increases and this needs to be taken into consideration for the two- and three-item scales used in the study.

Thus, two scales demonstrated satisfactory levels of reliability; while the other two reported good levels of reliability.

Section B of the questionnaire included demographic questions. The questionnaire was pre-tested amongst a number of shoppers – and no problems or concerns were evident.

Data Collection

A mall intercept survey was utilised to interview shoppers at a shopping mall in Centurion, Gauteng. The mall offers a variety of fashion, restaurants, services and speciality shops with a 'village-street' retail theme comprising a total floor area of 44,000m^2. With a prime location that places it within close proximity to Centurion, Pretoria and Midrand. The mall caters for individuals as well as families in the average to more affluent income groups. Ethical clearance was obtained as well as permission to approach shoppers from the mall manager and informed consent was provided by the shoppers.

The survey was conducted at different times during the week and at the weekend to avoid potential bias. Two fieldworkers approached individual shoppers entering, lingering or exiting the mall (whilst filling gender quotas) and respondents were asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire. The researcher was available for assistance should a participant require any help with regard to completing the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary and no incentives were provided.

RESULTS

Demographic profile of the respondents

The majority (86, 43%) of the respondents, were aged between 18-30 years, followed by 57(28%) who were between 31-40 years, 40(20%) between 41-50 years, and only a limited number were older than 50 years (9%). Quota sampling ensures an almost equal distribution between male and female shoppers.

Descriptive statistics

Shoppers' perceptions of the two mall attributes, their commitment to the mall, and their satisfaction therewith is presented in Table 1 below. The highest perception that shoppers associate with the mall was with entertainment. It seems as if shoppers perceive the entertainment (M=3.64, SD=0.79) provided by the mall as slightly more positive than the variety of stores (M=3.24, SD=0.97). It is of concern that respondents indicated a low overall commitment to the mall (M=2.89, SD=1.04), ranging between disagree and neutral. On average, shoppers' satisfaction with the mall is higher (M=3.45, SD=0.80) than shoppers' commitment (M=2.89, SD=1.04) to the mall.

Hypotheses testing

An analysis was first conducted, in order to ensure that the four major assumptions of multiple regression analysis (normality, linearity, multi-collinearity and homoscedasticity) were adhered to (Pallant, 2010). Thereafter, a standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent that 'store variety' and 'entertainment' contributed to shopper satisfaction and which one was the more important predictor of shopper satisfaction.

H_1: Store variety and entertainment predicts shopper satisfaction

H_2: Entertainment is a more powerful predicator than store variety of shopper satisfaction

TABLE 1:
Shoppers perceptions of the mall, satisfaction and commitment (N = 200)

	M	SD
Variety of stores	3.24	0.97
Entertainment	3.64	0.79
Shoppers' satisfaction	3.45	0.80
Commitment	2.89	1.04

Notes: Scale values range from 1 ('Strongly disagree') to 5 ('Strongly agree'); the lower the mean score, the more the shoppers disagree.

The correlations were all statistically significant, and are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2:
Correlation coefficients (n=200)

	Shopper satisfaction	Store variety	Entertainment
Shopper satisfaction	1.000		
Store variety	0.647	1.000	
Entertainment	0.442	0.246	1.000

It is evident from the table, that both independent variables (store variety and entertainment) show at least some relationship, [and preferably above 0.30], with the dependent variable (shopper satisfaction) (Pallant, 2010: 158). It is also evident that the bivariate correlation between the independent variables is not higher than 0.70, as suggested by Pallant (2010), which would have demonstrated multi-collinearity.

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3:
Coefficients

Model	Standardized coefficients	T	F	Sig
(Constant)		3.825	100.25	0.000
Store variety	0.573	11.076		0.000
Entertainment	0.301	5.823		0.000

The regression model explained 50.4% of the variance in shopper satisfaction (R2 = 0.504, Adjusted R2 = 0.499) and was statistically significant, F (2,197) = 100.25, $p < 0.001$.

From Table 3, one can deduce that 'store variety' makes the largest contribution (beta = 0.573) to explain shopper satisfaction, although 'entertainment' also made a statistically significant contribution (beta = 0.301).

The findings indicate that store variety and entertainment are significant predictors of shopper satisfaction. Furthermore, store variety is a better predictor of satisfaction than entertainment. The results show support for H1, however H2 was not supported, as store variety made a larger contribution to explain shopper satisfaction than did entertainment.

A stepwise discriminant-function analysis was performed to identify which of the three independent variables most strongly predicts shoppers' commitment.

H_3: Variety of stores in a mall is a predictor of mall commitment

H_4: Entertainment offered in a mall is a predictor of mall commitment

H_5: Shopper satisfaction is a predictor of mall commitment

Two mutually exclusive groups were established: low and high commitment. The eigenvalue was 0.354 and the canonical correlation associated was 0.511, indicating that 26 per cent of the variance in the dependent variable (high and low commitment) was explained or accounted for by this discriminant function. The Wilks' lambda value was 0.739, thereby implying that the discriminant functions explain 26.1% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Table 4 summarises the three standardised canonical-discriminant coefficients. These coefficients describe the relative contribution of each construct in determining the commitment level (High vs Low) of shoppers. The larger the standardised coefficients, the greater the discriminatory ability of the respective variables.

The findings from Table 4 indicate that satisfaction (1.000) is the most powerful discriminator among the three constructs.

However, it is interesting to note that 'variety of stores' (0.613) is a more powerful discriminator than 'entertainment' (0.366).

TABLE 4:
Standard canonical discriminant function coefficients (2 groups)

Construct	Coefficients
Satisfaction	1.000
Variety of stores	0.613
Entertainment	0.366

The final criterion for assessing the value of the discrimination function is the percentage share of cases that would be classified correctly on the basis of the discrimination function. Table 5 shows the results in a classification matrix.

TABLE 5:
Classification matrix for two group prediction

Actual group	Predicted Low Commitment (%)	Predicted High Commitment (%)
Low Commitment (n=83)	57	26
High Commitment (n=117)	23	94

The results from Table 5 indicate that for Low Commitment, 57% of the variables were correctly classified, and for High Commitment, 94%. The variables indicate a relatively high degree of successful prediction, with these groups being accurately classified 75.5% of the time.

According to Malhotra (2004), the classification accuracy achieved by discriminant analysis should be approximately 25% greater than that obtained by chance. And it is evident from Table 5, that the overall classification accuracy was higher than the proportional-chance criterion value (75.5% > 24.5%), which was above the 25% margin.

The findings thus support H3, H4 and H5 and are in line with the results of Chebat et al. (2009: 50) that a positive perception of a mall's image (of which store variety and entertainment are two elements) may lead to commitment to the mall. It is clear that satisfaction is the most important predictor and this is thus in line with previous research that reported a relationship between satisfaction and commitment in the shopping context (Akroush & Abu-ElSamen, 2011; Hedhli et al., 2013).

MANOVA testing, which assesses the differences between groups collectively rather than individually, was used to test hypothesis six. The researcher relied on a 95% level of confidence, and a subsequent significance level of 5% (p-value ≤ 0.05), to interpret the results of the hypothesis testing.

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, and homogeneity of variance; and no serious violations were noted.

H_6: There is a significant gender difference between shoppers' perceptions of store variety and entertainment, satisfaction and mall commitment.

The Wilks' lambda value indicates no significant differences between male and female shoppers and their various shopping perceptions, shopper satisfaction or mall commitment, $F(4,195) = 2.31$, $p = 0.59$; Wilks' Lambda= 0.96; partial eta square = 0.045.

The null hypothesis was thus not rejected, as there is no support for H_6. The non-significant result of H_6 thus supports the blurred gender-role argument. The findings of this study are consistent with those of other studies that support a more relaxed view of gender roles (Minahan & Beverland, 2005; Hart et al., 2007).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Malls are not only places to shop but they have also become places for societal and entertaining activities (Ng, 2003). Shoppers prefer malls, which enable them to shop for a variety of products in a central location, and which offer a pleasant shopping experience in terms of entertainment.

The main aim of the paper was to determine the possible relationship between selected mall attributes (variety of stores and entertainment), shopper satisfaction and mall commitment, as well as investigating the role of gender in the

shopping context.

The results of the regression analyses indicate that shoppers' perceptions of mall attributes are important drivers of shoppers' satisfaction. The results confirmed that mall store variety and entertainment can predict satisfaction and this suggests that the development and positioning of strong mall attributes relevant to the target market would help to satisfy shoppers. These results emphasise the importance for mall developers and mall managers to actively manage the tenant mix, rather than leaving it to chance. Since store variety makes the largest contribution to explain shopper satisfaction, mall management should focus on providing a well-balanced tenant mix that provides variety in terms of stores and the variety of merchandise carried by individual retailers.

It is important for mall developers and managers to offer a mix of products and services at their malls, appropriate to the market area in which they are located. This means that a one-size-fits-all tenant mix approach will not work. This is due to the fact that different products and services often have different trade areas and minimum purchasing requirements (Anikeeff, 1996) and this must be borne in mind when selecting tenants. Selecting the optimum tenant mix often starts with an anchor tenant and then managers need to identify the appropriate variety of tenants or stores to create an image and to differentiate the mall from all the others.

The correct tenant mix would create a mall synergy, which is beneficial not only for the mall, but also for the individual stores that help one another to increase sales by maximising the traffic. This is especially true when malls find themselves in a very competitive environment. It is important not to focus solely on maximising rentals when selecting tenants, and by doing so to overlook the benefits of a diverse tenant mix.

Shopping today is much more than just buying – it is an experience in itself. Mall developers should bear this in mind when deciding on their tenant mix by choosing retailers that provide an in-store experience as well. By doing so, malls could also indirectly increase the entertainment aspect of shopping in their mall, without the added expense of upgrading or adding new entertainment facilities. However, it is important to ensure that individual stores do not just enhance their own store experience and image, but are also reinforcing the overall image and position of the mall. A variety of stores could thus also provide entertainment.

It is interesting to note that although the shoppers have a positive perception of the entertainment offered in the mall, and this does contribute to shoppers' satisfaction, it does so to a lesser extent than store variety. This does not imply that entertainment is not needed as part of a well-balanced tenant mix. The challenge for mall managers is to balance the active experiences of interacting with the brand/entertainment, with the more passive experiences of buying products. It is, however, a possible indication that the growing trend of malls as 'entertainment centres' should be viewed with caution; and that more research is needed to ensure that added entertainment, often at huge expense, leads to more positive shopping and to desirable post-purchase behaviour.

Although entertainment could be used very effectively as a positioning strategy, and to increase the competitiveness of a shopping mall, it is important to remember that it might not be the most effective way to increase shopper satisfaction or commitment. It is important to note that expensive entertainment areas, such as movie theatres, or theme parks, do not necessarily need to be added to a mall to increase its entertainment value. 'Shoppertainment' can also be provided through existing stores increasing their in-store entertainment experience, or by a mall utilising the social media (Twitter, Facebook) or providing free Wi-Fi.

Mall managers should take note that mall entertainment can either facilitate or impair mall productivity as argued by Christiansen et al. (1999). The question is thus not as simple as: Does entertainment draw shoppers? Or do shoppers like the entertainment that the mall provides? But rather, does it increase mall satisfaction or commitment? It may be worthwhile to consider the findings of Haynes and Talpade (1996), that entertainment often redirects consumer time, effort and money away from their core business of shopping.

The results of the discriminant analysis also suggest that mall developers and mall managers need to ensure variety and entertainment. However, these two variables alone may not be sufficient to ensure mall commitment. Since a variety of stores is the most important predictor of shoppers' satisfaction, it seems that to support the belief of Kaufman and Lane (1996) that if a mall delivers a well-positioned mix of outlets, it would stand a better chance of success. Thus, managing store variety could contribute to satisfaction that predicts commitment; and in so doing, this ensures the long-term success of the shopping mall. However, it should be noted that as overall satisfaction is a process, and an outcome of a shopping experience, mall managers should continuously measure the satisfaction level of shoppers; since focusing only on tenant mix could ultimately have a detrimental effect.

The study also investigated gender in a shopping context; and support was found for a more-relaxed gender-role theory. Although only a limited number of constructs were investigated, there is no doubt that men's and women's roles have become less-strictly defined in the shopping environment. Thus, while it might be true that 'men buy and women shop', the results have implications for mall managers that a less-differentiated, instead of a segmented approach, could be used to ensure satisfaction and maintain commitment among male and female shoppers.

It seems as if shopping malls should focus on their main reason for existence: providing a variety of stores close to people. Although consumers' lifestyles are changing and malls are more and more becoming providers of 'shoppertainment' or 'retail-tainment', it seems that store variety is still the heartbeat of a mall. Since commitment to the mall is a strong antecedent to mall loyalty, malls should develop strategies to augment shoppers' mall commitment. They could strengthen shopper commitment by maximizing mall satisfaction and ensuring a balanced tenant mix of local and international retailers. Malls must not only ensure satisfaction; but they must also differentiate themselves, by satisfying shoppers better than their competitors.

One may conclude that mall managements' primary efforts should be directed to improving shoppers' commitment to the mall.

The academic contributions of this study does not only pertain to adding to the general field of marketing and consumer behaviour in a shopping context but also more specifically adding to the limited research on mall commitment, especially from a developing country perspective. Furthermore the study adds to the academic debate surrounding blurred-gender roles.

No study is without its limitations and in this study, the main limitations relate to the non-probability sampling approach, the single-mall context and focusing on selected mall attributes. The survey is thus not representative of Gauteng, nor of all consumer segments. Future studies could focus on additional mall attributes, and include several shopping malls.

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