

Shopping Centers Attraction: Saudi Customers Perspective

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This study measures the attractiveness factors of the shopping centers based on the various demographics like age, education and marital status. It analyses the situation in the perspective of the Saudi Arabia market. By evaluating the three key factors including customer attractiveness, customers attraction to shopping malls and discovering the relationship between these factor and other demographics of age, education and marital status allows us to analyze the changes happening in the Saudi Market at a dramatic pace since last 10 years. This research has important applications in understanding the Saudi Arabia market for future investments, financing, brand acquisition, penetration in the Saudi Market for launch of new brand and exploring market opportunity in the growing industry of the shopping centers.

Keyword: Shopping Centers, Attractiveness, Customers, Saudi Arabia

Field of Research: Marketing

1. Introduction

Saudi Arabia underwent so many dramatic changes and reforms during the last ten years that affected the average consumer's behavior, everything from its unique ethnic mix to its shifting life style. One critical change was the increase of economic wealth which translated to a change in consumer shopping patterns from traditional shopping markets to the more modern one-stop shopping centers.

Currently, Saudi Arabia is witnessing an accelerated increase in retail business and shopping centers especially in main cities. The capital city Riyadh has around 150 shopping centers.

The increasing number of modern and sophisticated shopping centers, and the availability of all types of consumer goods will encourage the private sector to invest in building and maintaining modern facilities to better meet the demands of the consumers.

A highly competitive retail environment coupled with changing shopping behavior has negatively impacted shopping center productivity and encouraged center managers to develop innovative, customer-oriented strategies (LeHew *et al.* 2002). A recent strategy used by a few center developers promotes the center as a brand (Hazel,1999); (Talmadge,1999) through various marketing programs. Management used most of these programs to encourage customers to identify with a specific center property, and make patronage decisions based on a preference for the overall center (LeHew *et al.* 2002).

This research attempts to determine the relative importance of various attractiveness factors from the shopper's point of view for shopping as they relate to demographic variables.

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As a result of increasing number of shopping malls in Saudi Arabia throughout the last decade, the competition between shopping centers to attract customers has also increased.

Several studies have examined the attractiveness factors, but this research deals with shopping rather than with individual store attractiveness factors.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the customer attractiveness factors of shopping centers in the Saudi market.
2. To increase the ability of shopping centers to attract customers.
3. To discover the relationship between attractiveness factors and some consumers demographics such as age, education and marital status.

2. Literature Review

Shopping centers industry has faced several environmental challenges including consumer lifestyle changes, similar merchandise, marketplace saturation, department store consolidations (Field, 2006, Reda, 2009). Therefore, it is essential for mall managers to know the extent to which their malls are attractive to their shoppers (Wang *et al.* 2001). The rapid growth of retail shopping encouraged researchers to approach center patronage research from different angles. One of the most important factors was the location of the shopping centre. It has always been an important factor in attracting patrons to a shopping area (Craig *et al.* 1984). In general, shopping centers that offer higher-order goods and services draw customers from greater distance than neighborhood centers (El-Adly, 2007). Central place theory employs economic utilities models that incorporate factors such as distance or travel time and the size of a center to express the relationship between costs and benefits of shopping area choice (Louviere and Gaeth, 1987)(Ghosh, 1986).

The basic utilitarian premise of location models were reviewed by many researchers. They argued that the attraction of a retail facility has many dimensions other than distance and mass (square footage of retail space) (Shim and Eastlick, 1998). Bucklin (1976) argued that the drawing power of a retail site is also influenced by socio-economic and demographic consumer characteristics and by consumers' image perceptions of the store or shopping area. Nevin and Houston (1980), Gentry and Burns (1977-1978) and (Lotz *et al.* 2010) extended the research by incorporating other factors rather than location, such as image of the shopping centre. It displayed that image did not increase the predictive ability of utilitarian location models). As the popularity and choice of shopping grew, more subjective factors were considered, such as image attributes of a specific center and consumers' shopping motives (LeHew *et al.* 2002).

Customer patronage has been the focus of many theoretical and empirical writings. Researchers such as Stone (1954) developed gravitational models to predict patronage for shopping areas using a combination of objective measures, such as distance, and population density. (LeHew *et al.* 2002Sheth (1983)) developed a general theory of patronage behavior, integrating the knowledge base into two theoretical models: shopping preference and patronage behavior.

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Hunter (2006) found that desire (i.e. motivation), intention, and positive anticipated emotions intervene between shopping center image and frequency of shopping center visits. (Sit *et al.*(2003)) reveals four dominant attributes in shopping center image studies: merchandising, accessibility, services, and atmospherics. They also found three neglected attributes of shopping centers images: (entertainment, food, and security).

Since the early 1950s researchers have paid a great deal of attention to the issue of why people shop in a given retail outlet? (Karande and Ganesh, 2000). Typologies for studying retail format and products have been developed on the basis of shopping motivations (Bellenger *et al.*, 1977); (Reynolds *et al.*, 2002) shopping behavior (Stephenson, and Ronald, 1969) , shopping motivation (Moschis, 1976).

Personal values found to the ground for most behavioral decisions in consumption behavior (Kropp *et al.*, 1999) (Doran, 2009). It was viewed as a mean to achieve desired and states or values (Reynolds and Gutman. 1988)(Michon and Chebat, 2004).

Swinyard (1998) described those who seek a safe environment in shopping malls as "a nesting place" while they may be seen as a shoppers.

Bellenger *et al.*,(1977) found two segments of shoppers:

The first are recreational shoppers who wanted a high-quality center with extensive variety and a large number of related services, and for whom convenience and economic issues were not primary concerns.

The second are economic shoppers who are convenient and cost oriented, and for whom center quality, variety, and related services are of secondary importance.

Wang, et al. (2001) developed what they called "SCATTER" which include 21 attributes categorized into five factors (location, quality and variety, popularity, facilities, and sales incentives).

In an early attempt to understand consumers' patronage motives, (Bellenger *et al.*, 1977), and (Karande and Ganesh 2000) noted that past studies have concentrated on relating demographic, attitudinal and social class variables to the store patronized rather than to the relative importance of patronage motives. (Yavas and Babakus, 2009) suggest that center patronage behavior can be represented as a global construct with three viable components (utilitarian, hedonic and accessibility).

In response to changing consumer needs, shopping centers have grown larger and their one stop convenience has expanded to include service outlets and entertainment venues. Shopping centers have also become important meeting places, especially for young people and seniors. These services can be classified as personal service (Lovelock *et al.* 1998). Beside personal service, shopping centers also provide services such as lifts, escalators, restrooms (Berman and Evans, 2001) and in Islamic countries it provides prayer rooms. Shopping centers are now becoming a huge entertainment venue (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007).

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Entertainment as a distinctive attribute was identified by few studies. Entertainment items also differ from one environment to another. While for example having a movie theater is associated with attribute labelled "presence of related services" (Bellenger *et al*, 1977), it is illegal in countries such as Saudi Arabia. Sheth (1983) identified three antecedents for shopping preference among an evoked set of alternative outlets: *shopping motives, shopping options; and choice calculus*. These three factors establish a consumer's shopping predisposition (LeHew *et al*. 2002). However, center attributes that are attractive for some shoppers are not necessarily attractive for others (El-Adly, 2007).

This study represents the research for shopping centers attraction carried out by identifying the factors contributing to the attractive characteristics of shopping. Since last 10 years there has been dynamic changes in the shopper trends and there has been a need to conduct a research in identifying factors which attract shoppers. For such purpose, three wide groups and seven unique factors were identified to be the trait of the attractive shopping experience. The three wide groups are Age, Education, and marital status. The unique factors include Social Physical Comfort, Ease Comfort, Convenience Comfort, Conservative Environment, Entertainment Exhibition Diversity, Service Diversity, and Luxury. Past history and reference for the various novel research has been a key focus and consideration while the Saudi Customer perspective. The study has a limited role to the region of Riyadh only so it may not reflect the Saudi Market as a whole, further the luxury factor has not been examined. In this study, however the researcher has particularly tested the factors attracting the Saudi retail customers. This study help us in understanding that large shopping malls have a strong images and likeliness for the customers and can attract consumers based on the demographics of age, education and marital status. This study also attempts to bridge the gap between the shopping centers and the customers by proposing the factors which helps to understand why customer have a great tilt towards the changing shopping style. It represents a proposition and framework by conducting various tests and these are tested on the sample of Riyadh shopping centers. Major important research implications are discussed in the paper.

The Research Hypothesis are

Hypothesis 1: *Social physical comfort (SPcomf), Ease Comfort (Ecomfort), Convenience Comfort,(Ccomf), Conservative Environment, Entertainment Exhibition Diversity (Exb. Div.), Service Diversity (Ser. Div.), and Luxury has a positive effect on choosing a shopping center among the shoppers in Saudi Arabia.*

Hypothesis 2: *The factor that most effects shopping center performance in the Saudi market is Diversity.*

Hypothesis 3: *There is a positive relationship between the eight domains and Age, Education, and Marital Status of the respondents.*

3. Research Methodology

The study is mainly based on a questionnaire survey, which was developed to test the three hypotheses of the research. It was a closed question format. Pilot study was conducted to serve as a guide for this research. Two important questions were

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explored through the center sample (30 Persons) distributed and collected by the researcher:

1. What are the shopping centers you prefer in each of the five regions in Riyadh (center, north, south, east and west)?
2. What are your basic motives of preference?

The first question gave the researcher the ability to determine the most preferred shopping region in Riyadh to determine where to distribute the questionnaire.

The second question helped the researcher gain some knowledge of the basic motives of preference when it came to choosing a shopping center. These motives were included in the statements with some that have been harvested from several previous studies.

The sample: The population are Saudi and non Saudis residents of the city of Riyadh. Riyadh has been divided into five regions (Center, North, South, East and West) and questionnaires were distributed in two or three preferred shopping centers in each region (Table 1). A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed depending on the number of shopping malls in each region, using center intercept interviews approach with a systematic sampling. This was done by taking one sample every 10 entrants at the entrance of the shopping center; this approach has a major problem that individuals usually are in a hurry to shop, so the incidence refusal and non response is around 48%.

Table 1: The Participated Shopping in the Survey

Region	Shopping Center	No. Of Dist. questionnaires	No. Of Ret. questionnaires
Center	Al- Taamer, Al-Mouqlia	100	51
North	Al-Mamlakah, Al- Fysaliah, And Sahara	200	125
South	City, Al- Oadah	100	45
East	Al-Othem , Al-Riyadh	100	45
West	Al-Rajhi, Riyadh Int.	100	44
TOTAL		600	310

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section covered shopping behavior, and a five-point likert scale was used for 27 factors for shopping. The list was harvested from related studies (Bellenger *et al.*, 1977); (Hunter, 2006); (LeHew *et al.* 2002); (Sit *et al.*, 2003) and scanner sample conducted through pilot study.

4. Results and Findings

Table (2) presents the demographics for survey respondents. 300 replies were analyzed. The respondents were mostly female (57.3%). Saudis represent (94). The Majority of the respondents (42%) were between 31-40 years old. (66.7%) or respondent were mostly college graduates, and (46.7%) were government employees. Monthly income for Saudis' in this study was between SR 10.001 to less than SR15.000 representing (35.7%) of the sample. (71.3%) of the respondents were married, and the size of Saudi families between 5-7 individuals was (63.7%).

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Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographics	NO.	%	Demographics	NO.	%
Gender			Monthly Income		
Male	128	42.7	Less than SR 5000	19	6.3
Female	172	57.3	SR ,5001-Less than SR 10,000	63	21
Total	300	100	SR 10,001-Less than SR 15,000	107	35.7
Nationality			SR 15,001-Less than SR 20,000	74	24.7
Saudi	282	94	SR 20,001 and up	37	12.3
Non Saudi	18	6	Total	300	100
Total	300	100	Occupation		
Age Group			Government employees	140	46.7
20-30	98	32.7	Private sector employees	47	15.7
31-40	126	42	Housewives	51	17
41-50	57	19	Student	36	12
50 and up	19	6.3	Businesses	26	8.7
Total	300	100	Total	300	100
Education Level			Family size		
Less than high school	10	3.3	2-4	75	25
High school	67	22.3	5-7	191	63.7
College degree	200	66.7	More than 7	34	11.3
Master/Ph.D.	23	7.7	Total	300	100
Total	300	100			
Marital Status					
Married	214	71.3			
Single	86	28.7			

71% prefer to go shopping at night, and the majority of the respondents (49%) believes that the decision to choose the place for shopping is made by the wife always.

The main purpose for going to a shopping center according to about (41%) of the selected sample is for shopping and purchasing, followed by (25%) shop and enjoy entertainment, while (16%) declared they go to the shopping center for food or drink.

Table (3) displays the means and the mean rank of importance for each variable of the twenty seven statements of the scale which clearly shows there is no dispersion in the data and it is acceptable. Table (3) shows that the Variable "Social & Physical Comfort (SPcomf)" is ranked first as the indicators identified and factors have a higher mean value. The top most identifier in this category is "Personal Safety inside the center". The Variable "Ease Comfort (Ecomf)" is ranked second as the indicators identified and factors have a higher mean value as well. The top most identifier in this category is "Availability of the car parking space". The Variable "Luxury" is ranked last with a mean of 3.2.

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Table 3: Means and Mean Rank of Factors

Variables	Factors	Mean	Mean Rank	Rank	
Social & Physical Comfort (SPcomf)	q4-2	Personal safety inside the center	4.16		
	q4-3	Shopping center cleanliness	4.72		1
	q4-4	Availability of service facilities (rest rooms, sitting area ...etc) in good condition	4.56	4.26	
	q4-5	Close to other S.C	3.6		
Ease Comfort (Ecomf)	q4-20	Easy to get around within the center	4.2		
	q4-21	Ease of reaching to the S.C	4.12	4.19	2
	q4-23	Availability of car parking space	4.24		
Convenience Comfort (Ccomf)	q4-14	Internal design and decoration of the S.C	3.34	3.39	7
	q4-27	Late working hours in the S.C	3.44		
Conservative Environment	q4-26	Existence of prayer spaces (Male , Female)	4.3		
	q4-24	Only families allowed	3.46	3.76	4
	q4-19	Separate section for women only	2.74		
	q4-22	Psychological comfort inside the S.C	4.52		
Entertainment	q4-11	Availability of entertainment programs	4.01		
	q4-10	Availability of sales promotion	3.15	3.48	6
	q4-13	Existence of play spaces for kids	3.28		
Exb. Div.	Q4-15	Appropriate prices	3.9		
	Q4-18	Having kiosks	4.34	3.68	5
Ser. Div.	Q4-12	Existence of food court	2.8		
	Q4-7	Availability of int'l stores branches	3.93		
	Q4-9	Variety of merchandise	4.64	3.92	3
Luxury	Q4-17	Existence supermarket in the S.C	3.2		
	q4-25	External appearance of the S.C	3.17	3.2	8
	q4-1	Quality of shoppers (social class)	3.22		

A reliability analyses was conducted to each variable of the instrument. The reliability of the measures was examined through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Gliem & Gliem (2003) indicated that Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the Likert-type scale For scale acceptability. George & Mallery (2003, pp 231) provided rules of thumb for Cronbach's alpha coefficient ([alpha]): "[alpha] > 0.9--Excellent, to less than 0.5 Unacceptable."

In order to extract the center attractiveness factors, principal component factor analysis on the 27 attractiveness attributes was performed. It yielded total Cronbach's alpha value of 0.71, as table (4) shows.

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Table 4: The Cronbach's Alpha Test

Test for the sample	Reliability
Cronbach's alpha	0.71

(Table 5) shows Bartlett's test of sphericity, which shows that it is significant for all domains. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is greater than 0.6 for all domains with a value of 0.63 for Comfort, 0.65 for Conservative Environment, 0.56 for Entertainment, 0.65 for Diversity, and 0.5 for Luxury. The validity of measurements was tested by running factor analysis. Since the domain of the measurements had been identified, the aims of performing factor analysis were to determine whether items tapping into the same construct and measuring the construct (Coakes, 2005).

Items have been classified into five domains, (Comfort, Conservative Environment, Entertainment, Diversity, and Luxury), then Principle Component Analysis according to items in each domain across was run. Since this analysis would study whether items tapping into the domain itself. The extracted variables in this analysis will be identified based on the loading factor that was extracted by Component Matrix and Rotated Component Matrix. However, the researcher might make decision based until the Component Matrix Output if each variable gives acceptable factor loading towards a factor (Hinton *et al.*, 2004). The result of the factor analysis is enrolled as follows.(Table 5).which clear that items have been classified into eight domains after factor analysis Comfort have been divided to three domains and Diversity divided to two domains therefore eight domains namely Social physical comfort (SPcomf) , Ease Comfort (Ecomfort),Convenience Comfort (Ccomf), Conservative Environment, Entertainment, Exhibition Diversity (Exb. Div.), Service Diversity (Ser. Div.), and finally Luxury.

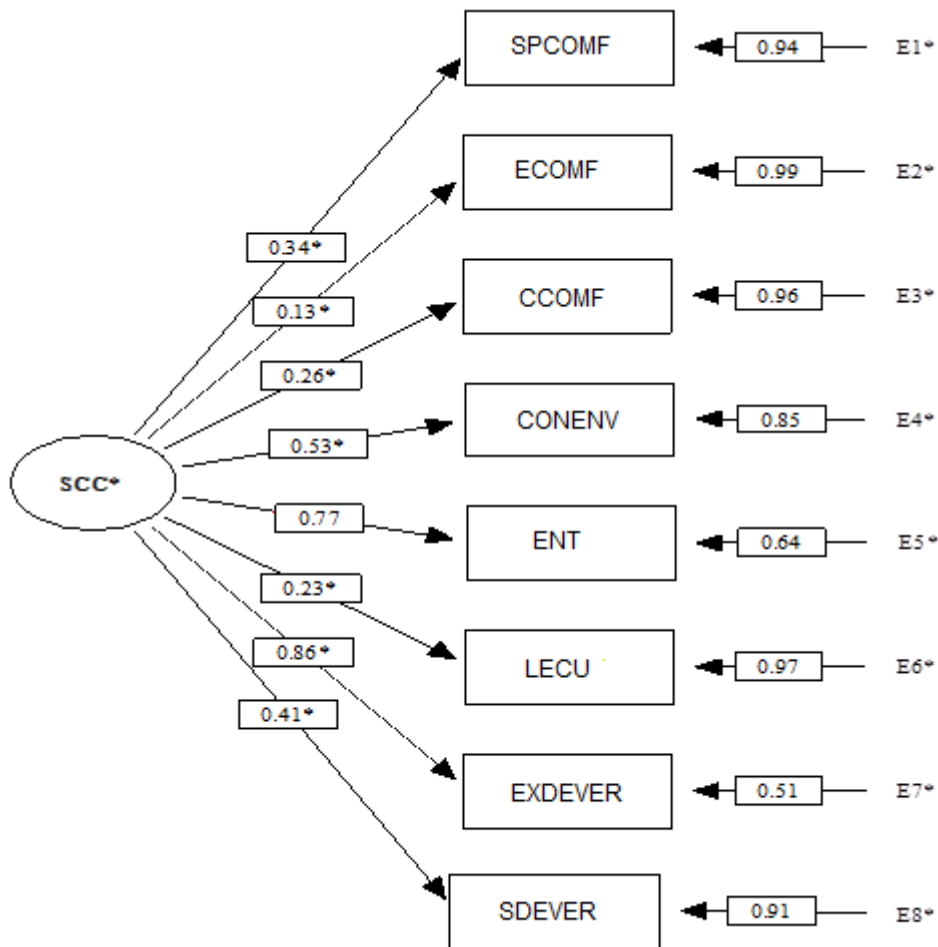
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Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's TEST

Variable			
Comfort	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.63
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	509.430
		df	36
		Sig.	0.000
Conservative Environment	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.65
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	136.438
		df	6
		Sig.	0.000
Entertainment	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.56
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	129.720
		df	3
		Sig.	0.000
Diversity	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.65
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	219.932
		df	15
		Sig.	0.000
Luxury	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.5
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	27.628
		df	1
		Sig.	0.000

Hypothesis 1: Social physical comfort (SPcomf), Ease Comfort (Ecomfort), Convenience Comfort,(Ccomf),Conservative Environment, Entertainment Exhibition Diversity (Exb. Div.), Service Diversity (Ser. Div.), and Luxury has a positive effect on choosing a shopping center among the shoppers in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model with Standardized Beta Measure



Using EQS 6.1 Program to test the relationship between Shopping Center Choice and the eight domains by conducting test statistics significant at 5% level, Figure (1) shows that all eight domains has a positive effect for choosing a shopping center. The findings of this study were consistent with the findings of many researchers such as (El-Adly, 2007)(Wong *et al.* 2002)(Sit *et al.* 2003) and (Lotz *et al.* 2010). The comfort factor in this study is in harmony of (El-Adly, 2007)(Wong *et al.* 2002). Exhibition oriented Diversity (ExDiver) has a significant influence on the choice of a Shopping Center where Beta (Slope) is equal to (86%), this was followed by Entertainment (77%) then Conservative Environment (53%) then Service Diversity (41%) then Social physical comfort (SPcomf) (34%) then Convenience Comfort (Ccomf) (26%) then Luxury (23%) and Ease Comfort (Ecomfort) considered as the lowest effect in eight domains for choice a Shopping Center (13%). Table (6) displays the value of beta, t-test and R^2 (coefficient of determination) for all eight domains. Thus, we determined the first hypothesis of the research is true.

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Table 6: Value of Beta, T-Test and R²

Item	Beta	t-test	R ²
SPCOMF	0.34	5.41	0.116
ECOMF	0.13	1.99	0.16
CCOMF	0.26	4.16	0.69
CONENV	0.53	8.4	0.278
ENT	0.77	4.2	0.586
LUXU	0.23	3.59	0.52
EXDIVER	0.86	11.46	0.736
SDIVER	0.41	6.44	0.164

Hypothesis 2: The factor that most affects shopping center preference in the Saudi market is Diversity. According to first hypothesis results, Exhibition oriented Diversity (ExDiver) is the factor the mostly affects the preference of shopping center selection (86%). Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the eight domains and Age, Education, and Marital Status of the respondents. A series of One-way ANOVA were performed on the eight factors to assess the differences in respondents' demographics. Table (7) displays the results of these analyses, which show that age differ significantly regarding all factors except (CONEN, EXDIVER.). That means that the consumer's age has a positive effect to all factors except these two.

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Table 7: Anova Results for Age

AGE		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SPCOMF	Between Groups	13.21	4	3.30	7.324	0.000
	Within Groups	132.98	295	0.45		
	Total	146.18	299			
ECOMF	Between Groups	13.30	4	3.33	6.797	0.000
	Within Groups	144.36	295	0.49		
	Total	157.66	299			
CCOMF	Between Groups	27.09	4	6.77	10.903	0.000
	Within Groups	183.28	295	0.62		
	Total	210.37	299			
CONENV	Between Groups	2.73	4	0.68	1.268	0.283
	Within Groups	159.13	295	0.54		
	Total	161.86	299			
ENT	Between Groups	19.25	4	4.81	5.566	0.000
	Within Groups	255.00	295	0.86		
	Total	274.25	299			
LECU	Between Groups	12.82	4	3.21	2.744	0.029
	Within Groups	344.57	295	1.17		
	Total	357.40	299			
EXdiver	Between Groups	3.00	4	0.75	1.168	0.325
	Within Groups	189.61	295	0.64		
	Total	192.61	299			
Sdevir	Between Groups	18.67	4	4.67	7.439	0.000
	Within Groups	185.11	295	0.63		
	Total	203.78	299			

Table (8) displays the results of a one-way ANOVA analysis, which show that level of education; differ significantly according to all factors. That means the consumer's level of education has a positive effect on all eight factors.

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Table 8: Anova Results for the Education

EDUCATION		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SPCOMF	Between Groups	5.85	3	1.95	4.111	0.007
	Within Groups	140.34	296	0.47		
	Total	146.18	299			
ECOMF	Between Groups	6.08	3	2.03	3.958	0.009
	Within Groups	151.58	296	0.51		
	Total	157.66	299			
CCOMF	Between Groups	20.74	3	6.91	10.79 1	0.000
	Within Groups	189.63	296	0.64		
	Total	210.37	299			
CONENV	Between Groups	18.72	3	6.24	12.90 4	0.000
	Within Groups	143.14	296	0.48		
	Total	161.86	299			
ENT	Between Groups	7.90	3	2.63	2.927	0.034
	Within Groups	266.35	296	0.90		
	Total	274.25	299			
LECU	Between Groups	23.44	3	7.81	6.927	0.000
	Within Groups	333.95	296	1.13		
	Total	357.40	299			
EXdever	Between Groups	10.69	3	3.56	5.797	0.001
	Within Groups	181.92	296	0.61		
	Total	192.61	299			
Sdever	Between Groups	5.88	3	1.96	2.930	0.034
	Within Groups	197.90	296	0.67		
	Total	203.78	299			

A t-test was conducted for respondents' marital status between single and married for the eight factors. Significant differences were found between the two groups regarding Entertainment and Ser.Div. So, we can conclude that the Entertainment has a positive effect to the Married respondents for choosing the Shopping Center, in addition, Ser.Div has a positive effect to the single respondents for choosing the Shopping Center as Table (9) signifies.

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Table 9: Individual Significant Differences Based on Marital Status

Factor	Marital Status	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	sign	t
Sp comfort	Single	86	4.262	0.7774	298	0.327	-1.62
	Married	214	4.416	0.6621			
Ecomfort	Single	86	4.163	0.8288	298	0.167	-0.26
	Married	214	4.188	0.6543			
Ccomfort	Single	86	3.680	0.7472	298	0.281	4.10
	Married	214	3.273	0.8469			
Conservative Environment	Single	86	3.831	0.8002	298	0.062	1.06
	Married	214	3.727	0.7080			
Entertainment	Single	86	3.306	1.1651	298	0	-1.79
	Married	214	3.555	0.8533			
Exb.Div	Single	86	3.632	0.8871	298	0.111	-0.62
	Married	214	3.699	0.7674			
Ser.Div	Single	86	4.174	0.6462	298	0.013	3.81
	Married	214	3.826	0.8689			
Luxury	Single	86	3.209	1.1020	298	0.915	0.13
	Married	214	3.192	1.0923			

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

We believe that the first contribution of this research concerns the design of a scale to measure shopping center attractiveness factors and the analysis of its dimensionality. This construct comprises eight dimensions that refer to different type of values provided by a shopping center. A second contribution of the research is the behavior, obtained by consumer choice of the preferred time of shopping, who takes the decision of choosing the shopping center, and the purpose of going to the center. Shopping centers must meet the needs of the consumers in terms of comfort of the center (safety, cleanliness, attractive decor and attempt to create an attractive environment for the shoppers). It entails creating a conservative environment of shopping for the consumers of the center (separate section for women only, existence of prayer spaces) and developing the entertainment of the center (sales promotion, entertainment programs). Also, by attempting to achieve diversity (brand name stores, availability of all family members' needs, and variety of merchandise and stores).

Recommendations of this research include:

Shopping center managers should go beyond the tactical aspects of shopping-center operation and adopt a strategic approach to business, in which customers' needs and competitors' actions are monitored in the process of achieving customer preferences. An understanding of the different shopping motivations of customers, combined with knowledge of their patronage behavior can be very useful for shopping center developers. Shopping center management should continue to pay attention to maintenance and improvements to parking, security, decor, and overall cleanliness.

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Entertainment is a fundamental factor to the success of many organizations. In this increasingly competitive climate Entertainment will become even more relevant for the shopping center. Positioning in the marketplace involves the creation of a clear differential advantage in the shoppers, which can be achieved for example through image, service and design. Shopping center management should use customer reward programs to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Future research should determine (Is there a significant difference between center shoppers and managers in regard to these attractiveness factors?). In closing it should be noted that this research was conducted in one community. Hence, the result and the recommendations based on them are specific to the setting studied.

Two constraints of the research are acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in a major city in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the findings might not be representative of Saudi Arabia in general. Hence, research in other cities is required to examine the validity, reliability and generalization of the identified factors to attractiveness factors. Second, the low reliability for the "LUXURY" factor represents another limitation that needs further research to explore the psychometric basis of these factors.

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