

Management of attractiveness of shopping centres

Abstract

The attractiveness of the shopping centres or shopping malls is one of the fundamental factors that are responsible for the success of the retail agglomerations. Shopping centres of different sizes are apparent in almost all developed countries and emerging countries. The research is conducted to identify and assess the attributes that determine the attractiveness of the customers towards the shopping centres. The rise in number of retail brands and intensified competition of the shopping centres along with growing requirements of the consumers has led to the need for them to have some uniqueness so that they can stand out against their rivals. This study uses qualitative research approach in order to conclude an insightful conclusion with respect to the research topic. Customers play the most important role and their preference determines the success of the shopping centres. In this research, the management depends on the trusted relationship between retailers and authorities of the shopping centres. For the builders, their focus remains on the design of the shopping malls so that they ensure best utilisation of investors' money. The design provides the opportunity for the shopping centres authorities to provide maximum options to the customers.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The global retail sector has been witnessing a rapid growth and improvements for the past few decades due to rise in the number of number of retail chains, supermarket stores and clothing brands. Nowadays, shopping centres have become a group of retail businesses of different kinds, which are planned, designed, developed, owned and managed as a single unit (Ahmad, 2012). The idea of shopping centres was to create retail agglomerations that unite different types of retailers at one place, which makes it easier for the customers to purchase different items at once (Reimers and Clulow, 2009). Shopping centres are also known as one-stop centres because they can encompass 50 to 200 retail stores of different brands and different categories of products. There are many other factors of the shopping centres which raise the attractiveness of these shopping centres to customers (Dawson and Lord, 2012). They are not simply a place for shopping but also serve as recreational and social activities centres because of presence of food outlets, restaurants, cafeterias, cinemas, bowling spot, gyms etc (Pitt and Musa, 2009).

The attractiveness of the shopping centres or shopping malls is one of the fundamental factors that are responsible for the success of the retail agglomerations (Sebastian and Purwanegara, 2014). Shopping centres of different sizes are apparent in the cities and towns of almost all the developed and emerging countries and have been a significant part of the retail industry of those economies. However, what makes these one-stop shopping centres attractive to the people and pursues them to shop items from these places is a major question (Teller and Elms, 2012). This research attempts to identify and evaluate the factors of the attractiveness of the shopping

centres. This research study conducts the effective mechanisms and ideas that are needed to manage the attractiveness of the large retail agglomerations.

Shopping malls are important in determining the direction of consumers' lifestyle. It is a one stop solution for enjoying the essence of social and recreational life outside the daily struggle of meeting both ends of life (Teller, 2008). The growth in the number of shopping malls has made people more selective in their purchasing decisions. This selection is mostly based on the added attractiveness offered by particular malls while competing with others. People like variety and a particular mall that will be able to provide more in terms of variety will lead to attract more consumers. It is evident that the factors, which may seem to be attractive to one consumer may seem unattractive to other and this preferential distinction has increased the level of difficulty for the managers to identify and manage the factors that can bring more customers to a particular shopping centre to gain competitive advantage (Ismail El-Adly, 2007). This includes the relationship between the authority of shopping centres, the retailers and tenants.

1.2 Background of the Research topic

Large shopping centres or malls have become a common site in the urban landscape of most of the advance as well as developing countries, which are looked upon as the one-stop destination of shopping (Rajagopal, 2011). In other words, these centres have emerged as large retail hubs encompassing a large number of specialized retailers and departmental stores offering a variety of products that catering to the demands of the urban consumers (Ahmad, 2012). It was observed that the preferences of the consumers are becoming diversified due to the expansion of retail categories and emergence of large store formats that comprises of more than one retailer. There is large number of factors such as size, location, building-structure, design, facilities, etc. that

attracts the large customers towards these shopping centres. According to Kanoga, Njugana and Bett (2015) shopping centres have become a vital part of the retail industry, which are a modernized type of retail concentration in terms of space and structure. They integrate all types of retailers selling different categories of products and services, which suits the trend of consumer's preferences (Teller et al, 2010). Shopping centres came into existence due to the attempts of the retail shop owners to meet the diverse expectations of the consumers by selling a multiple categories or varieties of products. This eventually led to the idea of one-stop shopping centres where there was uniformity of all the shops with some distinctiveness in their product offerings (Sebastian and Purwanegara, 2014). Thus, most of these shopping centres have nearly same types of shops, offering a similar assortment of products at slightly competitive prices.

However, in most of the countries, shopping malls or centres have developed dynamically and are designed to attract the third generation (Kumar and Thakur, 2014). These large centres to differentiate themselves from usual supermarkets stores include multiplex cinemas, restaurants, bars, sports or games spot, spa, gyms etc. apart from just having retail stores of various types. There are numerous researches in this regard which studied the consumer behaviour in the shopping centres, factors resulting in satisfaction of the customers within shopping malls and the difference between street shops and shopping malls i.e. determination of agglomeration attractiveness to the consumers. However, these area still have several uncovered aspects which needs to be analyzed and the management of the features or attractive factors of these large sized shopping centres is one such area.

London is known as the fashion capital of the world and houses most prestigious brands in the world. UK has seen many changes over the year in terms of total number of malls and the way

through which they are managed since 1960. Shopping Centres form an important sector as a contributor to the economy of UK and possess some unique characteristics which distinguish it from the rest of the world. It has been observed that almost all major UK's Town projects contain the plan for building at least one shopping centre in it. According to estimates in the 2009, there were 387 shopping centres in UK, out of which 54 were there in London and over the years the number has only increased. This has attracted many investors in investing in the building of shopping centres (Musa and Pitt, 2009). However, most of the investors are interested in developing large shopping malls with the objective of accommodating maximum number of brands so that they can earn more in terms of revenue.

Over the past few decades, the market in United Kingdom (UK) has seen high growth in the numbers of shopping malls which has also brought forth the challenge of managing them. The challenge of management of a shopping centre involves different aspects and required clear understanding of changing demand pattern of the consumers, retailers and owners. The core business of a shopping centre is to earn profit by leasing retail space to retailers. On the other hand, the non-core business of shopping acts as the supporting mechanism for the tenants and retailers operating business within those shopping centres. This part of the business of the shopping malls deals with the cost of maintaining and managing the entire mall, so that the retailers and tenants can continue to operate their business without any structural and functional complexities. The management of the property falls under the responsibility of the shopping centre. The profit of the shopping centres is ensured when the centre managers are able to maintain optimality between the operational cost and revenue. They do not want to spend more than they receive from the tenants.

1.3 Problem Statement

The main attractiveness of the shopping malls or centres from the perspective of customers is the availability of a large number of shops at one place, which enables them to purchase the product of their own choice from a variety of items (Hira and Mehvish, 2012). These shopping centres tend to include grocery stores, apparel, electronics, books and various other retail shops. In addition to these, these centres included various other features for recreation and leisure activities such as multiplex cinemas, food restaurants, bars, clubs, gym centres, spa, sports, swimming centres etc (Mikołajczyk, Borusiak and Pierański, 2014). However, all the shopping centres or malls are not much differentiated from each other, in terms of their size, area, structure, interior design and types of shops they accommodate.

Although, there has been large number of studies regarding the factors attracting the customers to these shopping centres, there was need for further study to understand what makes the retailers to locate their stores in shopping centres rather than in the streets. There are numerous factors like location of the centre, retail mix, accessibility, interior and exterior, design and infrastructure, pricing, segmentation and value creation process. These factors are supposed to be the determinants of the attractiveness of the shopping centres, which will be primarily considered for the study. The research studies the chief factors of attractiveness to shopping centres and the influence of those factors on the behaviour of the consumers while they shop at shopping centres. As a result, the research will be extending the knowledge of consumer behaviour or purchase intentions while they shop in retail agglomerations, which will help the shopping centre authorities and the retailers in formulating strategies of marketing. In short, the research is conducted to identify and assess the attributes that determine the attractiveness of the customers towards the shopping centres. Consequently, the outcomes of the research will provide some sort

of valuable recommendations to enhance the attractiveness of the retail agglomerations or centres and their sales.

1.4 Research Questions

The research aims at addressing the following questions through the study:

- What are the factors of attractiveness of the shopping centres?
- How the factors of attractiveness for the retail agglomerations are determined by consumers' shopping behaviour?
- What are the promotional strategies, advertising, public relations influence the attractiveness of the shopping centres?

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the research is to recognize and evaluate the factors that influence the attractiveness of the retail agglomerations to the consumers and conduct a study on the concepts and measures of attractiveness management.

In order to fulfil the aim of the research, the researcher identified the following objectives of the research:

- To identify the factors of attractiveness of the shopping centres.
- To conduct a study on the types and subtypes of shopping centres.
- To evaluate and relate the theories of consumer behaviour, brand image of retailers and shopping centres to the contemporary situations.
- To analyse the promotional strategies, advertising, public relations, marketing strategies needed for enhancing attractiveness of the shopping centres.

- To conduct a comparative study of different retail agglomerations on the basis of the disparities in attractiveness strategies of the each retail agglomerations.
- To provide some recommendations based on the research to enhance the attractiveness of the shopping centres for facilitating the sales growth of shopping centres.

1.6 Structure of the Research

Chapter one presents a brief introduction of the research topic and its background, research questions, aims and objectives of the research. Second chapter is based on the review of the literature, which present the past studies and research works by various authors in the research are. It evaluates the various concepts and theoretical frameworks to relate them to the contemporary situations identified in the research. The third chapter will provide the research methodology, which explains the methods and techniques for collecting data and analysing them. The fourth chapter will include the findings from the data with detailed discussion of the reasons behind those observations. The last chapter present the summary of the research and recommendations in relation to the research topic based on the research outcomes.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review section will evaluate the various theoretical concepts and frameworks relevant to the research area proposed by the scholars and researchers. It presents a critical review of the different studies conducted earlier to identify the consumers shopping behaviour and factors of attractiveness in the shopping centres or large retail agglomerations. The review of past studies and contemporary researches in the field of the research will help in understanding the evolution of the subject matter with time. The literature review will lead to development of knowledge of consumers' perceptions about the features and facilities of the shopping centres, which makes them more attractive, inducing them to visit frequently. Apart from reflecting the factors, influencing the consumers' behaviour towards shopping centres, the literature review will also provide insights about the concepts of project management i.e. space, locations, design, site management that contributes to the attractiveness of the shopping centres. The purpose of literature review is to relate the various concepts and theories with the contemporary situation present identified in the research. It also helps in finding out any gaps in the existing literatures that can be addressed through the present research.

2.2 Evolution of Shopping centres

Shopping centres, also known as shopping malls have emerged as one form of real estate business existing as a place for trade (Prinsloo, 2010). Sebastian and Purwanegara (2014) defined shopping centres as a group of large and small retailers that are planned, developed, managed and operated as an unit. They are generally comprised of 40 to 200 retail shops along with recreational and leisure facilities (Scharoun, 2012). Dębek (2015) described shopping

centres as a place for shopping for third generation in which one or more than one buildings accommodating clusters of shops of retail merchandises and connected throughout with walkways to enable the buyers to move easily from shop to another. Scharoun (2012) mentioned that large retail agglomerations previously existed as shopping arcades in many developed countries. They are later on demolished or refurbished into large centres or shopping malls by infrastructural or technical renovations (such as escalators, elevators, designed interior). Sebastian and Purwanegara (2014) studied that entertainment features such as movie theatres, amusement spots, food restaurants, bars, gym centres, sports etc. are later on added to these centres so as to make them a centre for recreation for the customers along with shopping.

2.2.1 Structures of Shopping Centres

According to Hu and Jasper (2007), shopping centres are a kind of hierarchical arrangement classified into neighbourhood centre, community centre, regional centre and super-regional or metropolitan centre depending on the size and location. Dębek (2015) mentioned that the market characteristics of each type of shopping centres needs to be considered while planning or designing a particular shopping centre. The most important factors included the age, consumer behaviour, disposable income, life style of the consumers, socio-economic statuses of the consumers in a particular region. Rajagopal (2011) opined that apart from the local conditions of the markets, the demographic features of the area such as population are also the major factors that determine the structure of shopping centres. On the other hand, Kanoga, Njugana and Bett (2015) mentioned that the characteristics of these shopping centres reflect the size of the total centre, area covered, number of stores, types of stores, parking space, food outlets and recreation facilities etc.

In the opinion of Teller and Schnedlitz (2012), shopping centre is primarily a retail concentration supported with various services and entertainment facilities, designed to be a shopping and recreation centres for the surrounding region. However, in the opinion of Zulqarnain, Zafar, Shahzad (2015) modern shopping centres differs widely from the earlier form of retail agglomerations like supermarkets and bazaars, which a considerable number of shops are amalgamated to form one single encompassing structure. The so-called shopping malls appeared in early 1990s in developed economies like the United States and accounted for a substantial proportion of the non-automotive retail revenue in those countries (Eppli and Benjamin, 2009).

Teller and Dennis (2012), mentioned that most of shopping centres existed as enclosed malls or regional malls, which contains at least departmental stores. The size of the regional malls differs with region based on the population size. Further studies showed that shopping centres of extremely large sized are called as superregional malls with at least 300 shops and five to ten retail departments (Pitt and Musa, 2009). On the contrary, Teller (2008) opined that shopping malls are categorised into large-sized open-air shopping centres and mini sized enclosed malls. Open-air centres are the ones that are anchored by a vast number of retail grocery stores and small-enclosed malls featured small number of stores in an indoor concourse. Another peculiar distinction of shopping centres made by Kanoga, Njugana and Bett (2015) based on location i.e. suburban centres or downtown centres. Teller and Elms (2012) rightly remarked that in attempt to revitalize the retail segment in the central commercial districts, many cities of the developed countries started building festival marketplaces, which are combination of shopping, food, amusement and entertainment. These marketplaces later on came to be known a shopping centres or malls.

2.3 Factors of attractiveness in shopping centres influencing customers' satisfaction

The rise in number of retail brands and intensified competition of the shopping centres along with growing requirements of the consumers has led to the need for the shopping centres to have some uniqueness to stand out the rivals (Chithralega, 2016). For this, there is the need for identifying the factors that determine attraction of the consumers of all age groups to these shopping centres. Rajagopal (2011) listed the major attractiveness factors to be retail environment, socialization spots, leisure opportunities and accessibility. On the other hand, Kanoga, Njugana and Bett (2015) opined that attractiveness of the shopping centres are due to the aesthetics, exploration, socialization, convenience, professionalism, shopping environment, comfort conditions etc. Further, Tiwari (2012) identified the ambience, marketing and promotion focus, security, interiors and physical infrastructure as the factors of attractiveness. Some of most relevant factors of attractiveness of the shopping centres identified in the literature by different authors and researchers in the area of consumer behaviour are discussed below.

2.3.1 Aesthetic

Many studies by researchers explained the influence of service in retail agglomerations on the consumers buying behaviour, perceived service expectations, and decision making while they shop in a retail agglomeration or a centre (Ahmed and Mayya, 2015). In the words of Pitt and Musa (2009), the impact of the ambience factors is of one crucial interest to the researchers of consumer behaviour such as light, music and smell which are experimentally controlled for testing the cause and effect relation. In other way, Teller and Elms (2010) explained that an experimental product have attributes are produced by the marketer to make the experience of the buying to the customers pleasurable, memorable and meaningful. According to Dębek (2015), the most common atmospheric or aesthetic items in a shopping environment are the ambience,

space, layout, music and décor. The atmospherics are most crucial as the consumers use them as cues of shopping centre's quality before they visit (Hu and Jasper, 2007). They are also reported as the factors stimulating excitement in the consumers at the shopping mall. Sebastia and Purwanegara (2014) mentioned that while ambient, layout and social factors are exterior attributes of the shopping centres, interior displays of items, behaviour of sellers or human stimulus etc are the interior attributes of the shopping centres.

Thus, according to the literature, the ambient or aesthetic factor that influence the attractiveness of the shopping centres are intangible elements of any retail environment like music, lights, smell and services of the salesmen as well as tangible components like design, décor, layout, signs symbol or artefacts.

2.3.2 Accessibility and Convenience

According to van Dijck, Tu and Tu (2014), accessibility to the shopping centre is one of the prime attributes determining the attractiveness of the shopping centres. It can be of two types i.e. macro accessibility and micro accessibility. While macro accessibility is concerned with access of proper roads and transport to the centre and its proximity to the place of residence or work of the customers, micro accessibility implies their parking access, ease of navigation within the centre (Thomas and Pathak, 2011).

Dawson and Lord (2012) concluded that the prime reason for the consumers to select malls for shopping is the convenience, the existence of a large number of stores and services at one place. The concept of one-stop shopping which implies the fulfilment of a number of needs in one shopping centre at one time emerged after the shopping centres. Furthermore, Dawson and Lord

(2012) opined that convenience of shopping also comprised of trading hours, which is another most influential factors for consumer's satisfaction and the frequency of their visit to the malls.

2.3.3 Product Varieties

The brand image of the consumers goods offered in the shopping centres is one of the factors influencing their visit rate and attractiveness to the shopping centres. In this context, Zulqarnainn, Zafar and Shahzad (2015) opined that measures of brand image are used for assessing the customer satisfaction during the visit and success of the malls.

It was suggested that preferences of the customers are largely influenced by the varieties of product available within a category, which indirectly depends on the distinct collection by the sellers. It was supposed by many in the literature that more the number of established brands of the products in the stores of the shopping centres, more the attraction of the shoppers to those centres.

2.3.4 Pricing and Discounts

The utilitarian value or the benefits to the consumers are based on the assumptions that they are rational consumers. They seek for value-oriented products and prefer utility shopping with their income or budget. According to Eppli and Benjamin (2009) convenience and savings is the two simultaneous factors that any consumers look for. Hence, it is evident that they will be attracted towards the products or services that are available at low prices or discounts. This utilitarian preferences of the consumers make the shopping malls or centres attractive to the consumers as these centres comprises of large number of stores. These stores mostly contain products of similar categories and compete over prices and quality. For attracting the customers, most of the retailers provide exclusive discounts or offers on their products. In other words, shopping centres

are looked upon as place where the products are available at lower rates and the consumers could shop with more convenience (Hu and Jasper, 2007). Moreover, much less time and efforts are needed to search for the stores, look for products of their choices and gather information about the other products or services in such centres. Thus, the shoppers who did not like to spend more effort, time or money while shopping, patronise these shopping centres as they are able to get high utility from the low priced or discounted items (Hu and Jasper, 2007). The criteria of prices offered is one of the crucial characteristics influencing the purchase intention of the shoppers. Hence, the managers of the malls are required to consider this aspect while strategising and merchandising the shops.

2.3.5 Entertainment

Teller and Dennis (2012) while studying the impact of physical environment of shopping centres on psychology of the consumers, it was observed that the consumers look at these centres as a place for entertainment too. Today's shoppers are more leisure driven than those of the early 1990s for which mall owners or developers tend to make the environment in way that raises their desire to stay in the mall for a long time (Heij, 2012). Some environmental items like exhibitions, events, movie theatres, etc are associated with the leisure attributes of the shopping centres (Choudhury, Alam and Islam, 2014).

Rajagopal (2011) offered explanations about the association of the entertainment with the consumer's visit rate to shopping centres. There was a huge shift in the aspect of entertainment in shopping centres, initially from being a part of the services offered to be a whole core service or a product. This was most prominent in the late 1990s when malls started having cinemas and multiplexes, clubs, restaurants, bars, sports, etc. In the words of Sebastian and Purwanegara

(2014), entertainment has become a pivotal in most shopping centres as it leads to an extra experience of fun and excitement in the customers and raises their intention to visit more.

2.3.6 Quality of Services

Various researches have showed that service available and the perceptions of the customers about the quality of the services in the malls, acts as the influential factors of attractiveness to the shopping centres. Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar (2010) studied that there is a positive association between the perceived quality of services and customers' willingness to buy. Yarimoglu (2014) stated that there are dimensions known as SERVQUAL dimensions which measure the functional service quality of the malls or shopping centres.

Yarimoglu (2014) also established that perceived service quality about malls directly influences the purchase intentions of the customers on the basis of the SERVQUAL dimensions which is a multiple aspect scale for assessing the consumers' perceptions of the service quality. The dimensions are design, reliability, accessibility, competence, credibility, communication, responsiveness and security (Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar, 2010). It was studied that the malls or shopping centres seek to enhance their service quality according to customers' preference. The authorities also prioritise the interactions between the customers and employees of the malls in order to increase the rate of visit of the customers to their establishment (Teller and Elms, 2012).

2.3.7 Tenant Mix

Tenant-mix is an established term, with respect to retail agglomerations or shopping centres, which is another identified factor influencing the visit intention of the consumers to the shopping centres (Garg and Steyn, 2014). As per the views of Ojuok (2010), optimal tenant mix is the

presence of a variety of compatible retailers or services providers along with proper allocation of space and tenant placement, which enhances trade and exchanges between the customers and the retailers. From the broader perspective, Carter and Allen (2012) evaluated that tenant mix include the adequate services or facilities at the retail agglomerations in terms of quantity and quality which meet the demand expectations of the customers.

Teller et al. (2010) reported that, there is a substantial influence of the characteristics of the anchor stores on the image of the shopping centres. Ojuok (2010) opined that tenant-mix is one of the most significant factors that influence the attractiveness of the shopping centres. However, Teller and Dennis (2012) mentioned that marketing which includes aspect of tenant mix comes as the third component of attractiveness to the shopping centres after the other two components i.e., aesthetic and convenience. Abghari and Hanzae (2011) further discovered that tenant mix is also included in the functionality component of service quality of the shopping centres.

2.4 Concepts of Project Management for Shopping malls' attractiveness

2.4.1 Shopping Location

Retail attraction has emerged as one of the most crucial factors for ensuring the success of the shopping centres and malls. The location of the retail is the foremost factor that determines the tendency of the customers to visit. Kanoga, Njugana and Bett (2015) opined that retail agglomerations can develop competitive advantage through the location strategy which involves the decision where to locate the centre and how many shops should it have for the convenience of shopping. In this context, Rajagopal (2011) mentioned that strategic location of the shopping centres could draw many customers and raise the potential sales of the centres by enhancing the accessibility to the people. Mikołajczyk, Borusiak and Pierański (2014) supporting this stated

that accessibility to the shopping malls affects the catchment population of the malls as per the spatial interaction theory. The theory explains the relation between the customers' perception of utility from the products or services they want to purchase and the features of the destination from where they purchase them.

The Spatial Interaction Theory

Spatial interaction theory is related to the way any competing retail area affect the intention of the buyer in the intermediate areas (Dolega, Pavlis and Singleton, 2016). Shimp and Andrews (2012) proposed that the theory is based on the assumptions that buyers did not always go to the nearest store that offer all the products they want. Instead, they can even travel long distances to large shopping centres that offers a more variety.

Prinsloo (2010) further opined that the distance a shopper is willing to travel is directly proportional to the size of the centre irrespective of the distance from his or her location, as long as the centre is accessible. The relevance of the theory is found to underrate the role marketing on the performance and attractiveness of the shopping centres. Thus, according to the theory, travelling a long distance is often justified by shoppers because of the availability of a wide range of products, different prices, brands and availability of other recreational facilities at the shopping centres.

2.4.2 Design

Amongst all the factors influencing the attractiveness of the shopping centres, design of them is an ambiguous factor that drives the perception of shoppers. Earlier studies by many market researchers had showed that attractive interior or decor has significant positive relation with the shopping mall patronage. Mikołajczyk, Borusiak and Pierański (2014) observed that the exterior

design and interior decor are highly valued aspect of the shopping for the consumers, especially for the recreational shoppers.

The design of the shopping centre is one of the important predictor of the excitement of the shoppers visiting there and decor is the driver of their intention to stay long. Abghari and Hanzaee (2011) further opined that design of the malls is a type of environmental factor evaluating emotional attachment of shoppers to the shopping mall. However, in the recent context, most of the authors did not consider the design of the centre as the explicit factor of attractiveness to the customers. Rajagopal (2011) did partially considered the design criteria as a layout related attribute of the centres, design and interior has still not turned out to be an important factor influencing the perception of the customers to the malls.

2.4.3 Site management

Due to the vastness of the shopping centres or malls, many problems arise especially in the form of dissatisfaction of the tenants and inconvenience to the shoppers. This is due to the weakness in the management of shopping centres, which comprises management of property and facilities as well as management of tenant mix. According to Teller and Elms (2010), inclusion of signposting is very essential in large shopping malls and hence its design and direction needs to be clear to the shoppers. Over designing, outdated signage, confusing information in the signposting etc can increase the inconvenience of the shoppers to visit from shop to shop. Teller and Dennis (2012) mentioned that there is a need for the shopping centres to ensure that operational as well as directional signposting used in different locations of the shopping centres is effective enough to enhance the accessibility of the shoppers.

The developers should consider safety and security of the tenants or retailers and customers when they design the shopping centre. Shimp and Andrews (2012) mentioned in this regard that the shopping centres have evolved as large town centres or place of gatherings for the different types of people and of different age groups. Researches from the past has revealed that shopping centres have been a hub of social activities by young corrupted individuals for which incidents of disorderly conduct such as theft, carjacking, arson, trespassing, kidnaps common in the malls (Shimp and Andrews, 2012). This indicates that security is one of major concern in these large shopping centres, for which modern shopping malls and entertainment centres are constructed, by ensuring the security not only for the safety of the facility but more importantly for the shoppers and tenants. Nowadays, closed-circuit television technology (CCTV) is used by a shopping malls as an effective security management tool to ensure a safe environment for the tenants and the visitors.

According to van Dijck, and Tu (2014), mechanical or electrical equipment installations are an important concern for management at the shopping centres to assure that the centres have a pleasant ambience with good lighting and efficient ventilation. Moreover, due to the enormous size of the shopping centres, it had become a challenge for the owners and managers of shopping centres to optimize the costs involved in supplying electrical energy. Apart from management of facilities at the shopping centres, studies in this regard have showed that the organisations of the tenant mix are also a major concern for the shopping centres (Shimp and Andrews, 2012). The managers need to ensure that the varieties of stores that are present in the centre are arranged in a way that they can work together for performance of the shopping centre as a whole.

2.5 Consumer shopping behaviour towards Retail agglomerations

The literatures and research studies on the urban consumers reflected the differences in their perceptions to the street side retailers and large retail agglomerations. Hira and Mehvish (2012) opined that the structural differences between them are in the aspect of distribution (infrastructure, accessibility, and orientation), variety or collection of products and pricing (tenant mix, retail environment, and merchandise value) and communication (promotional, public relations). In the words of Kumar and Thakur (2014), convenience of shopping in retail agglomerations due to their accessibility, facilities, variety and large number of stores, parking etc. are the main attributes that induce the customers to purchase from shopping centres instead of street retailers. The atmospheric stimuli in the shopping centres, which include smell, decoration, layout, lightening, temperature etc., are the major factor that influences the decision of the consumers and their purchasing intentions (Zulqarnain, Zafar and. Shahzad, 2015).

Several studies in this context have been conducted to specify the nature of behaviour of the consumers in the shopping centres and the factors that results in high attractiveness to this centre. Attractiveness of the consumers to the shopping centres are evaluated by different dimensions i.e., satisfaction, patronage intention and loyalty. Teller and Schnedlitz (2012) further argued in this context that any shopping centre needs to be more attractive and favourable to the customers at the different stages of their purchasing so that they are satisfied to choose a retail agglomeration as their shopping destination.

Pitt and Musa (2009) mentioned that the willingness of the customers to stay at the shopping centre for long when they visit is increased when they have a preferable atmosphere and shopping experience. This in turn makes them loyal customers by inducing them to visit again

and recommend others. Teller (2008) provided evidence through studies that the attractiveness of the shopping centres largely affects the perception of the customers and their satisfaction, which can be assessed by their retention time, spending per visits and number of visits.

2.5.1 Demographic attributes

Gender is found to be one of the important demographic factors of consumer behaviour in the shopping centres. Most of the studies revealed that men and women have different perceptions and reasons for shopping. Abghari and Hanzae (2011) observed that the purchase intentions are driven by various environmental cues, experience shopping in a different way and have different expectations during shopping. Dębek (2015) further studied that men and women vary in the frequency of shopping, amount spend in shopping trips and in the items they spend for. Kumar and Thakur (2014) argued that women are likely to bear positive attitudes to shopping trips which are generally time consuming than the men. Studies by Ismail El-Adly (2007) revealed that men are more inclined to inevitable needs when they go for shopping while shopping is a recreational desire for the women. This is further supported by the utilitarian approach of consumer behaviour, which found women to be recreational shoppers while men to be rational shoppers (Ismail El-Adly, 2007).

According to Dębek (2015), the motive behind shopping for men and women are largely different. Although women go for shopping for household necessity, a majority of them also go for shopping for pleasure and relieving stress. It was observed by studies on consumer behaviour that women seek for more uniqueness in whatever they purchases and hence, have the tendency to choose from a wide range of options. On the other hand, men are indeed purpose oriented shoppers and most of them shop from whatever options are easily available nearby instead of

craving for more varieties and product ranges. This perception thus establishes that shopping centres are likely to be dominated by women customers.

Contemporary studies in this aspect further revealed that there are utilitarian differences in shopping purposes of the individuals. While women frequently visit malls for purchasing items of grocery, clothing and accessories, men generally visit malls for electronic products and household appliances. Mohan and Tandon (2015) reported that women tend to be more responsive to different stimuli compared to men and are hence allured more by the attractive features and environment of the shopping centres. Further, women are more sensitive to factors like employee behaviour at the store, store attributes, hygiene and ambience of the stores apart from product assortment and convenience factor. Another aspect that draws more women to shopping centres that there is something for their families as well, such as games store, amusement rides for kids, and theatres for multidimensional shows, bookstore and play stations etc. for men. The availability of such separate sections for recreation or engagement of children attracts the mothers to these shopping centres than the general retailers who could not leave their children in the house when they go out (Reimers and Clulow, 2009).

However, some recent studies have illustrated that inclusion of entertainment facilities and recreational spots within the centres are alluring more men to shop from the large shopping centres rather than small retail outlets. The perceptions of the men have changed considerably and studies have revealed that men equally seek to enrich their shopping experience and satisfaction. Teller and Elms (2012) observed that with emergence of shopping centres as places for recreation and social interaction, both men and women are prone to patronise these centres.

General findings after the study of consumer behaviour in relation to demographic attributes is that men and women have different perceptions and expectations of shopping which makes their attitude to shopping centres somewhat different. However, the trend in the behaviour of men towards shopping with retail agglomerations has been shifting as the retail agglomeration are evolving as perfect place for entertainment and social interactions. The study of influence of demographic attributes in shopping behaviour of the individuals suggested that gender difference is a strong influential factor that should be taken into account by the developers and retailers of the shopping malls.

2.6 Marketing, promotions and public relations management in shopping centres

Shimp and Andrews (2012) opined that management of the malls have expectations from tenants of the shopping centres for enhancing the popularity and competitiveness of their centres in the region. This includes adequate level of marketing and promotion of their brands, quality products and regular communications, good store presence etc (Ka-wai, 2009). The marketing strategies of the shopping centres are effective when the commitment of the owners and all the tenants are equally supportive to enhance and promote the image of the centre. As per the views of Swoboda et al. (2013), marketing strategy of the whole centre has to be easily accessible by its retailers, monitored timely and evaluated in order to improvise the same with time and make the centre more attractive compared to rivals in the region.

According to the views of Dawson and Lord (2012), promotions are required in the shopping centres for directly stimulating the shoppers' footfall and sales. However, promotional strategy needed depends on the size, location region and speciality of the centres. For instance, while making marketing plans for any retail agglomeration, it is essential to consider the religious

holidays and festivals in the region in order to estimate the footfalls or visit rate in the shopping centres and plan simultaneously for drawing more customers on those shopping centres (Dahlén, Lange and Smith, 2010). Abghari and Hanzae (2011) opined that promotional strategies proposed by the marketing manager is based on advertisements and public relations to enhance brand awareness and to educate the consumers regarding the quality of the products offered. Advertisement about the location, number of stores in the centre, exclusive facilities and presence of any special retail brands can be made through traditional marketing media such as radio, magazines, televisions, newspapers (Choudhury, Alam and Islam, 2014). On the contrary, Teller and Elms (2010) opined that advertising promotes the goods, services, specialities, facilities, issues, people and every other valuable aspects of the centre that are actually needed to be communicated to the consumers to attract them to the centre.

Further studies by Teller and Schnedlitz (2012) revealed that there are two kinds of advertisements i.e. institutional and product advertisements. While institutional advertisement is needed to promote the cultural aspects, corporate image and ideas of the shopping centres, product advertisements are done in different ways to stimulate the demand of the customers for the retail brands present in the shopping centres (Kanny, 2014). The importance of publicity through mass media is required to enhance the attractiveness of the shopping centres at free of cost. However, Dahlén, Lange and Smith (2010) contradicted that publicity is needed to be supported by an effective public relations strategy. The public relations which is publicity based can be used for promoting shopping centres are the news release, feature articles, editorials, etc., through which the features of the shopping centres can be communicated to the consumers (Dahlén, Lange and Smith, 2010). In this context, Shimp and Andrews (2012) opined that the different form of public relations strategy can reach the consumers more easily and draw to the

shopping centres which have the advantages of word of mouth (WOM) communications, media endorsements, news value and high credibility. Thus, in short, advertisements, promotions and management of public relations are the crucial aspects, which determine the success of shopping centres and their competitiveness. These aspects are integral to the marketing managers for effective marketing and operation of the shopping malls.

2.7 Branding

A shopping centre or a mall is similar to any product or service and owners or managers of the mall need to work for creating, maintaining and promoting the brand image of the malls. Hira and Mehvish (2012) mentioned that in order to successfully create and maintain the brand of a shopping that can even act as a factor for outcompeting the rival shopping centres in the region, the marketing professionals of the malls need to be consistent and clear in their brand advertising. With large range of options of retailers and channels available to the modern day consumers, it is a challenge for the shopping centre owners to remain as the first preference of the consumers. Branding of shopping malls are essential since branded centre can effectively dominate the market by providing better sales opportunity for their retailers or tenants and also attracting some of the most popular retail brands (Keller, Parameswaran and Jacob, 2011). According to the studies by Kanny (2014), shopping malls' marketing managers should be concerned about how to enhance the brand image of their shopping centres. Ka-wai (2009) opined that marketing professionals of the malls need to search for specific materials and aspects from their tenants which would prove to be valuable information to the consumers such as new products, discounts, sales, store specific events etc. This information will largely help the mall developers to reinforce the brand of their malls to the consumers.

Haque (2013) opined that two main aspects of brand representation of shopping malls to the customers are communicating the brand essence to the shoppers and maintenance of the brand image. Keller, Parameswaran and Jacob (2011) rightly argued that brand image loses its relevance with time until it is refreshed or reinforced with newer aspects. The brand message needs to be updated with time and communicated to the consumers through different channels. The shopping centre management should know the specialisations and positioning compared to its competitive centres and constantly communicates them through their brand message to the customers. However, Mohan and Tandon (2015) mentioned that the brand image cannot be only communicated to the consumers through marketing or promotional efforts but also through the way visitors or customers in the centre are treated, efficiency of customer services, ambiance, services of the employees, etc., are also important factors contributing to the brand image of a shopping mall. All these together affect the perception of the brand to the customers and determine their loyalty to the brand.

Haque (2013) described more clearly the importance of maintenance of brand image by the shopping centres in order to enhance their competitiveness in the region. Retaining high brand image needs consistency, frequent up gradation and diligence in the promotional strategies by the marketing executives of the malls. It was suggested in the studies that over time, the advertisement or promotional stray way from the core aspects of the brand because of seasonality, changing trends and fashion, special events in the region etc. Thus, it is important for maintaining a consistent brand image and adjusting it accordingly when the shopping centre itself undergoes some changes such as inclusion of any retail brands or any facilities.

2.8 Aspects to the Property Owners

Lagin and Håkansson (2012) mentioned that planning and development of a shopping centre indulges the perspective of property as it involves handling and managing the entire centre as an asset. It was argued that property developers should be concerned about the place, people and profits while dealing with any shopping centre. The property owners or developers of the shopping centres are required to locate a suitable premise for the shopping centres, market effectively provisions for retailers and communicate the perception of mall as an urban centre. The property location, size, design, structure, and accessibility are vital aspects that provide competitive advantage to the owner of the property. Hence, Mohan and Tandon (2015) argued that property owners as the stakeholders of the shopping malls should understand the relevance of marketing as a way to enhance the attractiveness to the centre. Any shopping centre needs to have a symbolic value to the customers like that of any product or service which can be created by specifying the purpose of the centre in the minds of consumers.

Heij (2012) opined that by selecting an appropriate location accessible to all or renovating any large popular retail supermarket into malls, developers of the malls can attract large number of right retailers. Apart from the location, accessibility, structure and ambience with the centre, the natural environment around the shopping centres with a cohesive townscape also can enhance the attractiveness of the centres to the customers. However, Hira and Mehvish (2012) argued that the vastness of the shopping centre property has made them a place of disruptive social activities and crimes which makes it necessary to install surveillance cameras at each corners of the centres to ensure the safety and security of the shoppers.

2.9 Research Gap

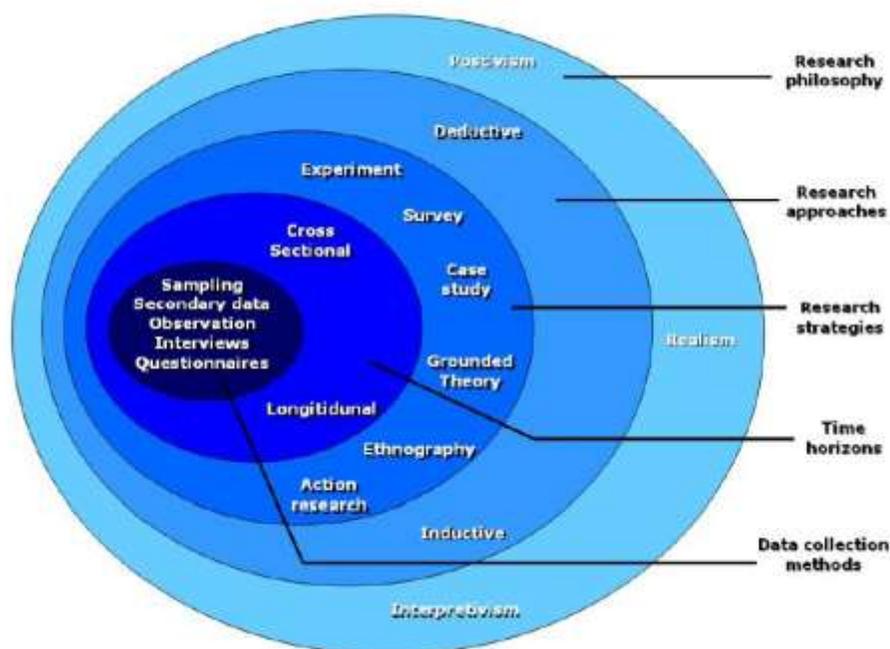
The literature review has explored the studies in the past in the area of retail agglomerations, their evolution in the urban landscape and the factors of attractiveness to those agglomerations. The studies have shown the behaviour, perception of the consumers when they visit the shopping centres and what induces them to choose these centres over high street retailers. The literature review reflected that the multiple aspects of the shopping centres apart from the assortment of a large range of retailers at one place is a factor behind the attractiveness of the shopping centres which includes food outlets and entertainment i.e. cinemas multiplex, recreation spots for gyms, games, swimming, sports etc. Apart from these, earlier researches have shown that the attractiveness of the shopping centres is also influenced by the ambience, services quality, location, tenant mix, safety and security at these shopping centres. However, there are no significant studies in the context of management of these attractiveness factors of the shopping malls. The developers or constructor, managers and owners of the shopping centres needs to incorporate the various factors of attractiveness in the development of the shopping centres and also consider each of the aspects while devising marketing strategies for the promotion and publicity of the centre. This research thus attempts to investigate how to manage and incorporate the major factors of attractiveness of the shopping in the marketing aspects of the shopping centres, to enhance the competitiveness of the centres.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the research will explain the methods or techniques used for collecting data from the subjects in the research area and analyse them to reach the objectives of the paper. The successive methods used by the researcher to follow the purpose of the research and address the questions described in detail in this chapter of research methodology. As proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2011), the different stages of research process are clearly depicted in the research onion, (refer to figure below)

Figure 1: Research Onion



(Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2011)

The research onion shows the systematic path through which the researcher proceeds to reach its purpose. The researcher chooses the appropriate method from amongst the range of options available at each stage or layers of the onion based on the research objectives (Saunders, 2011).

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is concerned about the source, type and evolution of knowledge through the conduct of the research (Kumar and Phrommathed, 2005). Any kind of research involves the creation of new knowledge even if the idea of creating knowledge is profound (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). The indulgence of research philosophy in this research paper is to become aware of the past knowledge in the research area and formulate different beliefs and postulations based on the contemporary situation in the research area (Matthews and Ross, 2014). The three primary categories of research philosophies are ontology, epistemology and axiology (Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005). While ontology deals with the study of reality and existence of being, the epistemology is concerned about what is constituted in the field of the research as acceptable knowledge (Bryman and Bell, 2015). On the other hand, axiology is the branch of research philosophy, which focuses on the judgement of values, which involve the evaluation of the ethical or moral aspects of the theoretical concepts applied in the research (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

The most commonly used philosophy for academic studies is epistemology, which is further segmented into positivism, realism, pragmatism and interpretivism (Kumar and Phrommathed, 2005). Patten and Bruce (2007) defined that positivism is used to reflect the current scenario in the research by stating the observable facts and providing justifications behind them. On the other way, Dörnyei (2007) opined that realism can be used when the researcher wants to

undertake a scientific approach towards the creation of knowledge through the research. Thus, realism underpins analysing of the collected data and understanding with scientific logics behind the observations from the data. Pragmatism is quite distinct from other philosophies, which deals with what interests the researcher in the research area and conduct the research in a way that deemed appropriate for the researcher (Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005). Matthews and Ross (2014) mentioned that a researcher that adopts interpretivism for providing psychological interpretations behind the observations in the research area. This research will be using the philosophy of interpretivism as it will take qualitative approach to observe the consumers' behavioural pattern towards shopping centres and provide explanations behind their discretion. Moreover, through interpretivism, the researcher can evaluate the perceptions of the developers, marketing and finance executives of the retail agglomerations about the attributes that can enhance the attractiveness of the shopping centres.

3.3 Research Approach

The research approach is the strategy adopted by the researcher to fulfil the purpose of the research and it can be either deductive or inductive (Punch, 2013). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2011) defined deductive approach as the effective approach of research through which researcher validates the existing theories or conceptual frameworks in the area of research through the current findings from the data. Burney (2008) described that inductive approach is adopted in the research when the researcher wants to contribute a new theory or framework to the research by studying the observations from the data.

According to Bryman (2015), deductive approach develops a broader perspective on the research topic and concludes with some specific findings or identification of any issues in the area of the

research. On the contrary, inductive approach begins with some specific facts or identification of issues in the area of research and then concludes with the establishment of a broader concept or theory in the area of research (Burney, 2008). The researcher will be employing the deductive approach for this research as it tries to confirm the pre-established theoretical concepts evaluated in the literature review of the research through the observations from the data collected in the research (Matthews and Ross, 2014). The researcher has evaluated the theories of consumer behaviour in retail agglomerations along with the marketing and site management aspects that need to be considered while developing or designing the malls or shopping centres by the developers. The data collected from a chosen sample size will be analysed to confirm whether the findings conform to the existing theories in the subject area of research.

3.4 Research Design

The research design comprises of the techniques or methods deployed by the researcher to collect relevant data for conducting the research and analyse the same (Creswell, 2013a). Research design is primarily of three types i.e. descriptive, experimental and explanatory (Davies and Hughes, 2014). Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) mentioned that descriptive research design is used for those studies where the data observations are presented in a systematic way for representing the core facts and problems identified in the area of the research. On the other hand, Creswell (2013a) appreciated the explanatory research design that explain the contemporary scenario in the area of the research through the data and provide valuable interpretations behind the observations from the data. Due to this aspect, explanatory research is mainly used for qualitative researches (Patton, 2005). In contrast to descriptive and explanatory research designs, which deal with the already established theories and concepts in the research area, experimental research is used for developing any new theory or concept through the present

research (Dörnyei, 2007). In other words, in an experimental research, the observations from the data collected through an experiment on the subjects relevant to the research area are used for generating a new theory or concept (Patten and Bruce, 2007).

This research is explanatory in nature as it seeks to understand the motives and preferences of the consumers to the shopping malls through qualitative research i.e. through face-to-face in-depth interviews. Apart from assessing the customer's perspective, the research also aims at evaluating the location choice, site management, strategies of retail mix, promotional and marketing strategies of the mall developers and marketing managers to enhance the attractiveness to the malls. The researcher will evaluate these aspects by conducting interviews with the commercial property developers and executives of marketing and financial departments. Thus, exploratory approach is reliable for this research as it can provide adequate justification and explanations behind the observations of the data.

3.5 Research Methods

The process of data collection and analysis that is best suitable for meeting the purpose of the research comes under research methods (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). Punch (2013) described that research methods can be either quantitative or qualitative depending on the approach of the research. Sometimes the researcher can also use a mixed method, which is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative method. Davies and Hughes (2014) stated that quantitative research method is used when data is required in the structured form i.e. in numeric form so that statistical analysis can be conducted on the data. The most common methods used for collecting quantitative data are questionnaires, online polls, online surveys, website interceptors, cell phone survey etc (Malhotra and Birks, 2007; Clark and Creswell, 2014).

On the contrary, qualitative research is purposely used in explanatory researches as it presents the views, perceptions or beliefs of the individuals from the targeted population of the research (Maxwell, 2012). It is thus used to identify the underlying opinions or motivations of the subjects of the research area and uncover the trend in their thoughts or opinions that will further help to analyse the problems in depth. The methods used for qualitative researches vary from unstructured to semi-structured methods of data collection (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). Some of the familiar methods for collecting qualitative data are individual interviews, group discussions, focus groups and participation or observations (Creswell, 2009). However, the sample size for qualitative research is generally very small and researcher needs to assure that the respondents selected are as per the requirements or criteria of the research (Maxwell, 2012). This research is qualitative in nature as it attempts to evaluate the perceptions and behaviour of the consumers during their visit to shopping centres. Through this, the researcher can identify the factors of attractiveness to the shopping centres to help the developers and marketing managers to enhance the attractiveness of their centres during stages of planning, designing, developing and promotion activities.

3.6 Data collection

The methods of data collection involve collecting either primary or secondary data by the researcher as per the purpose of the research. This particular research will be collecting primary data for the research by conducting semi-structured as well as structured interviews on a chosen sample size. The target population of the research constitute the customers visiting the shopping centres, marketing and financial executives and property developers of the shopping centres. For the convenience of the research, the researcher has chosen two popular shopping centres of London namely Boxpark and Brent Cross Shopping Centre for conducting the interviews. The

researcher has chosen a small sample of 15 customers visiting these two shopping centres. The sample of respondents from the customers is chosen amongst the visitors in the malls through simple random sampling. Apart from the customers in the shopping malls, the researcher will also interview two commercial property developers, marketing managers and financial managers respectively of the two chosen malls.

Semi-structured interviews are used in this research as it an open framework for collecting an in depth information from the participants through focused and two-way communication (Brinkmann, 2014). Semi-structured interviews with customers visiting the malls will help the researcher in capturing the perceptions of the consumers and their behavioural traits while they shop in large retail agglomerations (H.R. Bernard and H.R. Bernard, 2012). Moreover, semi-structured interview is best suitable for collecting reliable and comparable data and allows the researcher to develop keen knowledge of the consumers' behavioural aspect in shopping centres (Brinkmann, 2014). On the other hand, unstructured interviews are conducted on the mall developers and marketing and financial managers through open-end questions. Unstructured interviews are used, as the researcher has flexibility to frame the questions as per the purpose of the research (Smith, 2015). Moreover, unstructured interviews will help the respondent to provide their in-depth views regarding the research problems in their own words (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Thus, the researcher can precisely analyse the responses of the interviewees. In addition, unstructured interviews will enhance the validity of the research by providing opportunity to the researcher to explore more areas and problems in the research area (Creswell, 2013b). However, one limitation of the research is that it is time consuming and researcher needs to have specific skills to interpret the responses and body language of the respondents (Sekaran, 2006).

3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected from the participants will be analysed to relate the findings of the data with literature studies and theories evaluated in the field of the research. The responses or answers of the customers are presented as elaborative text and consecutively their interpretations are provided to validate their responses. More precisely, the responses of the customers in the semi-structured interviews are evaluated in the analysis segment of the research in relation to the consumer behaviour theories. The responses of different individuals will be also analysed to study the differences in the purchase intention of the customers in the shopping centres according to the demographic attributes. On the other hand, the responses of the marketing and financial managers in the interview are analysed to reflect their opinions regarding choice of location, site management and promotional or marketing strategies required to raise the attractiveness quotient of shopping malls.

Conducting interviews of the customers as well as the shopping mall developers, marketing and financial professionals will provide opportunities to the researcher to develop constructive knowledge about the consumers' buying behaviour and evaluate how their behaviour and attitudes influence the decisions of the professionals or managers of the shopping centres.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher has complied with the code of ethics while conducting the research and assured that the data collected are only for academic purpose. The researcher has ensured that the data collected from the responses is not altered or misinterpreted to serve the purpose of the research. The researcher has also assured during the interviews that none of the participants are forced to take part in the research and their participation is purely on voluntary basis. Further, the

researcher has carefully designed the interview questions and has not included questions that can harm the emotions or sentiments of the participants or has refrained for asking any questions purposely to manipulate the data.

3.9 Research Limitations

The research methodology adopted by the researcher has some limitations that have restricted the scope of the research. The researcher has only used qualitative data to identify the factors of attractiveness of the shopping centres to the customers and how their behaviour motivates the mall developers, marketing and financial supervisors to make strategies for enhancing the attractiveness of the malls. However, use of quantitative research would have further enhanced the scope of the research as the structured responses of the participants can be used as numeric data and eventually the association between the variables of the research can be established. With quantitative research, the researcher could have analysed the relation between the various factors of the attractiveness and the buying intention of the consumers. Apart from these, the researcher uses semi-structured and unstructured interviews, which are time consuming and hence, the sample size chosen for interviews is small (Smith, 2015). Moreover, the interviewer needs to acquire certain skills for interviewing which include the capability to present the question to the participants in an apparent way and interpret their responses appropriately (Sekaran, 2006). There were some monetary and time constraints as well which limited the selection of interview participants by the researcher only from two shopping centres.

3.10 Time Line

The table below represent the Gantt chart, which shows the total time required for conducting the entire research. It is used to show how the different activities of the research are planned accordingly to complete the entire study within the given time period.

Table 1: Gantt chart

Main Activities	1-2 Weeks	3-4 Weeks	5-6 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	9-10 Weeks	10-11 Weeks	12-13 Weeks	14-15 Weeks	15-16 Weeks	16-17 Weeks
Topic Selection										
Review of Literature										
Research Methodology										
Data collection										
Analysis of Data										
Discussion										
Conclusion										
Draft Preparation										
Final Submission										

(Source: Author's creation)

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Why Boxpark?

Boxpark is known as the world's first pop-up mall that opened in the fashion city of London. The entire mall has been built from the shipping containers after being recycled offering a unique shopping experience to the consumers (Daily mail, 2011). The most attractive feature of this mall is its design. Occupying one of the prime locations in Shoreditch High Street, Boxpark is built from the 60 standard-sized shipping containers which give the entire mall a total area of 4.7 hectare.

The owner of Boxpark, Roger Wade had contacted developers Hammerson and Ballymore so that he could offer something fresh and innovative to the people beside renowned brands. Although small in size compared to average malls located in London, yet Boxpark is not far behind in housing a wide variety of label known in the fashion world like, Nike, Dockers. Boxpark also consist of reputed book publishers like Phaidon, for interiors Marmeiko and the food section is high on indie brands like, Bukowski Grill and café Foxcroft & Ginge (Time out London, 2011).

Although its unique set-up provides a fresh perspective from design's point of view, yet it has gained high popularity among consumers and also among celebrities. In one of the interviews, the owner had said, in the beginning of his business, he desired that one day his business will be large enough requiring containers in order to be shipped to Hong Kong. Finally, when he attained the required height in his business Wade's desire was materialised in designing the shopping centre called Boxpark.

Wade claims that Boxpark is one of the most environment friendly shopping mall and had a lease of five years since its launch which ends this year. The entire structure of Boxpark is mobile and can be shifted to any part of the city without making any major changes in Boxpark setup, that is, it will not be required to be dismantled to change its location. It will need only a piece of vacant land to place the containers. However, the popularity of Boxpark shows that customers support is with it and might help in making Boxpark a permanent setting for shopping lovers.

4.2 Why Brent Cross Shopping Centre?

The popularity of Brent Cross is due to the success of Brent Cross Shopping Centre and on the extension of the shopping centre Hammerson and Standard Life has taken the step of developing a township which is expected to take around 20 years since the acceptance of its proposal in 2014. Brent Cross Shopping Centre was opened in the year 1976 and was the shopping centre in UK. It was the first enclosed mall to have existed. People at that time were not accustomed with the culture of shopping centre but 40 years has already passed and the business of the shopping centre is thriving (Time out London, 2015).

The shopping centre was expanded in 1995 when the open parking was replaced with multi-storey parking (Brent Cross Shopping Centre, 2016). The development of Brent Cross Shopping Centre was directed towards reducing the pressure of West End while not inflicting any damage to local centres. Although the establishment of Brent Cross Shopping Centre was highly resented by the traders of Hendon, yet it was built with an argument that the area on which it had been built was underdeveloped and was away from the traditional town centre; hence, it was not a threat to the local traders at Hendon. The location of the shopping centre is central to many flyovers making it an attractive place for relaxation. Brent Cross Shopping Centre consists of a

glamorous indoor fountain which attracts many day-trippers all over London. The structural design of the mall has been criticised by many researchers but all had been unanimous in stating that the interiors of the mall has a feminine touch and is easy on the eyes which has made it a popular shopping centre in London. The development of new township only promises more customers in the coming years (Travers, 2015).

Brent Cross Shopping Centre houses 2000 leading and designer brands alongside 120 stylist stores like, Fenwick, M&S, John Lewis and other high street brands (Brent Cross Shopping Centre, 2016). It also consists of specialist shops of Apple, Kate Kuba and Havianna's flip flops. It is a treat for shopping lovers to get all the fashionable brands under one roof. The shopping centre also offers free parking which acts as an added advantage for both, that is, the shopping mall gets more visitors as they do not have to worry about charges if they stay in the mall for long period of time (Time out London, 2015).

4.3 Hammerson Property

Hammerson is a European developer which has been in the business of real estate for over 70 years and has been behind many concrete structures where according to the company “more happens”. Hammerson property developers has been the creator of many uniquely designed structures either working independently or jointly. The name of Hammerson has been associated with 58 shopping centres and retails parks which are spread across UK and France (Hammerson, 2016a).

4.4 Attractiveness Based on Interview Results

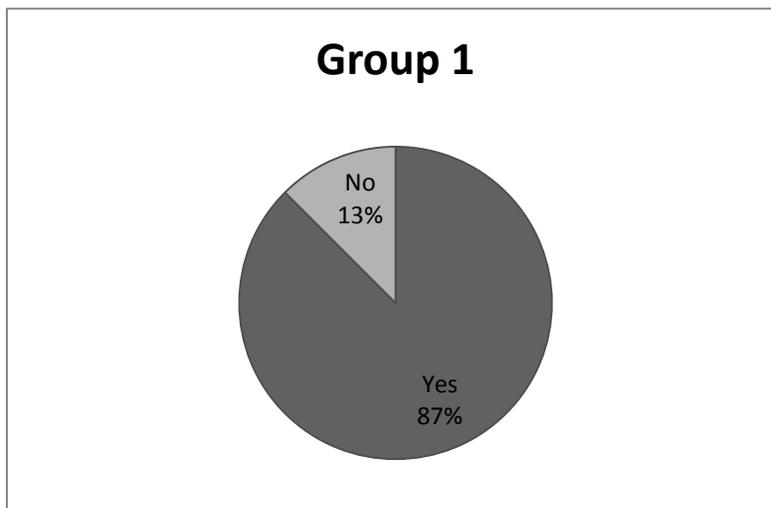
Attractiveness is an intangible concept and it is a different meaning to different consumers. While conducting the interviews, there was one common thing all the respondents is that they

love shopping and visits a shopping centre instead of any particular brand outlet because of the variety that they can get in shopping mall cannot be compared with that of a single outlet. In order to carry out the interviews in a systematic manner, two groups were organised and were assured that their responses would be utilised only for the study of management of attractiveness of shopping centres and it will not create any inconvenience for them in their shopping experiences in future. In this research, the identities of the respondents have been kept anonymous in order to avoid future complexities. Two groups of customers were formed in this research “group 1” for the customer at Boxpark consisting 8 members and “group 2” for the customers at Brent Cross Shopping Centre consisting 7 members. In order to get a clear understanding of the management structure from each mall, the responses of 2 of its managers were recorded. In order to understand the financial aspect of shopping malls, the researcher has also interviewed two of the financial executives to clearly understand the way each of the shopping malls are managed. Finally, the researcher has also recorded the response of the two executives at Hammerson Property, so that this research can provide a clear picture of the idea behind building of a shopping mall and which aspects play the most important role in deciding the attractive features that every shopping mall wanted to present to its visitors.

4.5 Customers’ perspective:

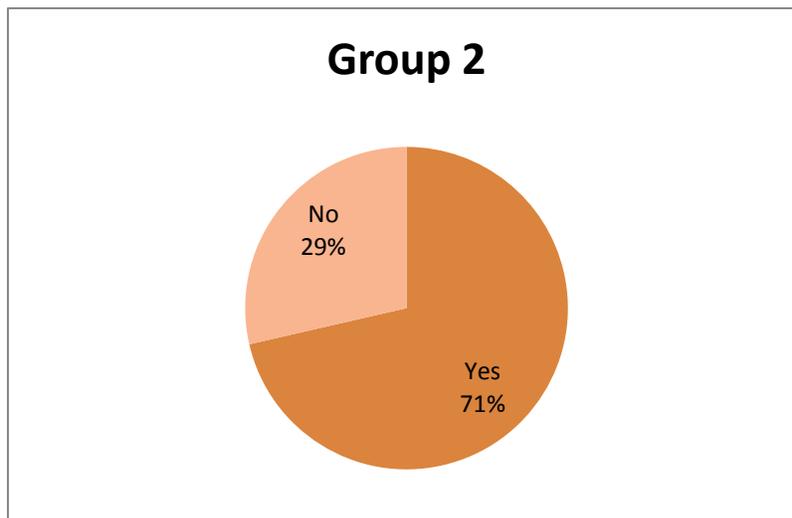
Q.1. Do you feel that shopping malls are necessary for the society?

Figure 1: Response of group 1 at Boxpark



(Source: Author's creation)

Figure 2: Response of group 2 at Brent Cross Shopping Centre

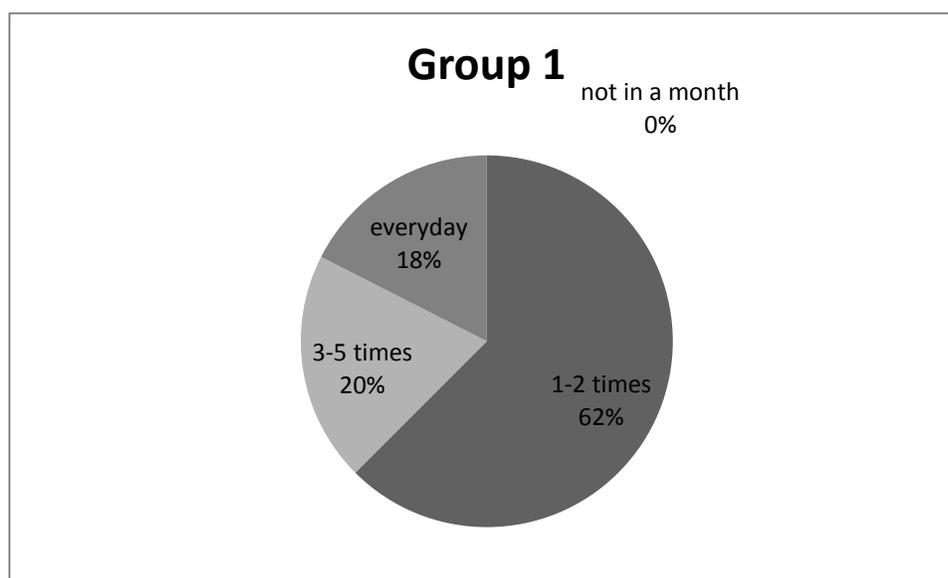


(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: When this question was asked to the two separate group majority of the respondents reported that having a shopping mall nearby is definitely beneficial. 87.5% from group 1 said that it helps them a lot in many ways and they are benefitted that some as unique as Boxpark is there. On the other hand, 71% respondents were supporting the presence of Brent Cross shopping centre. One of the respondents from group 1 shared, “I get everything from here, shopping, relaxation, quality time with friends and great food and this is my favourite place to buy the latest fashion”. However, one of the respondents expressed, “It has been the cause of closure of small retailers and we have no other option but to purchase from here”.

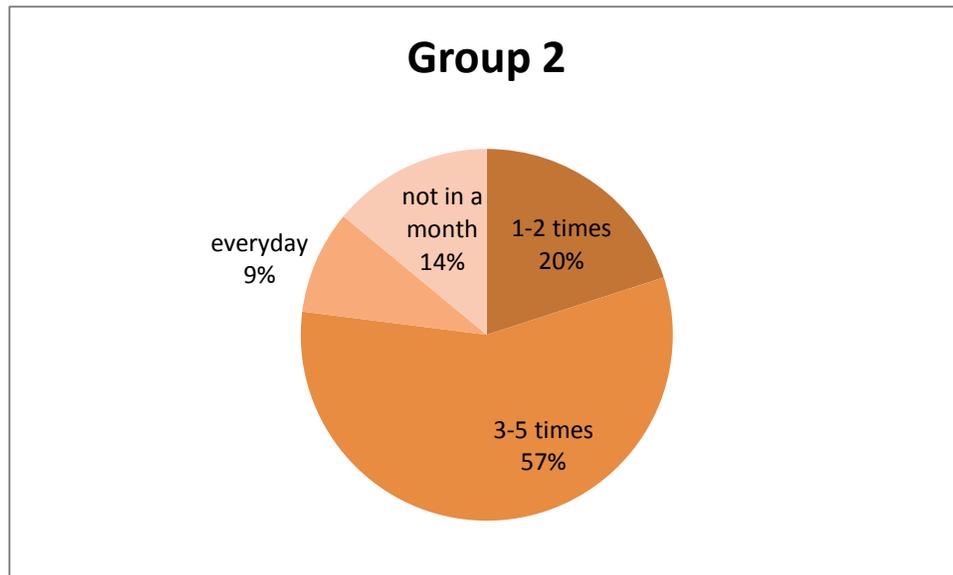
Q. 2. How often do you visit a mall in a month?

Figure 3: Percentage of people going to Boxpark in a month



(Source: Author's creation)

Figure 4: Percentage of people going to Brent Cross Shopping Centre in a month

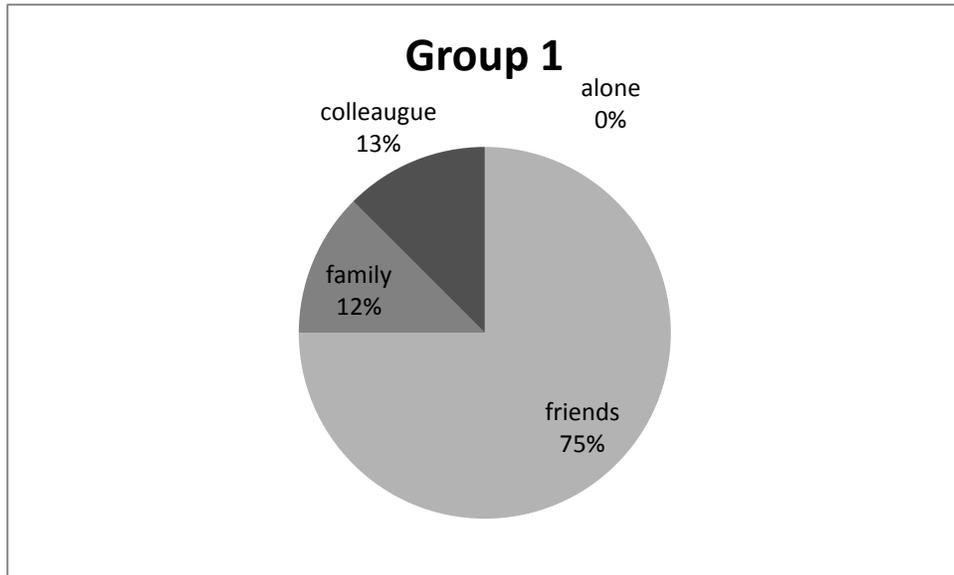


(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: Majority of the customers in group 1 said that they visit 1-2 times to Boxpark, while the majority of customers at Brent Cross Shopping Centre said they like to visit 3-5 times. This showed that the shopping mall culture has penetrated deep within the customers and they now turn to shopping malls instead of small retail shops.

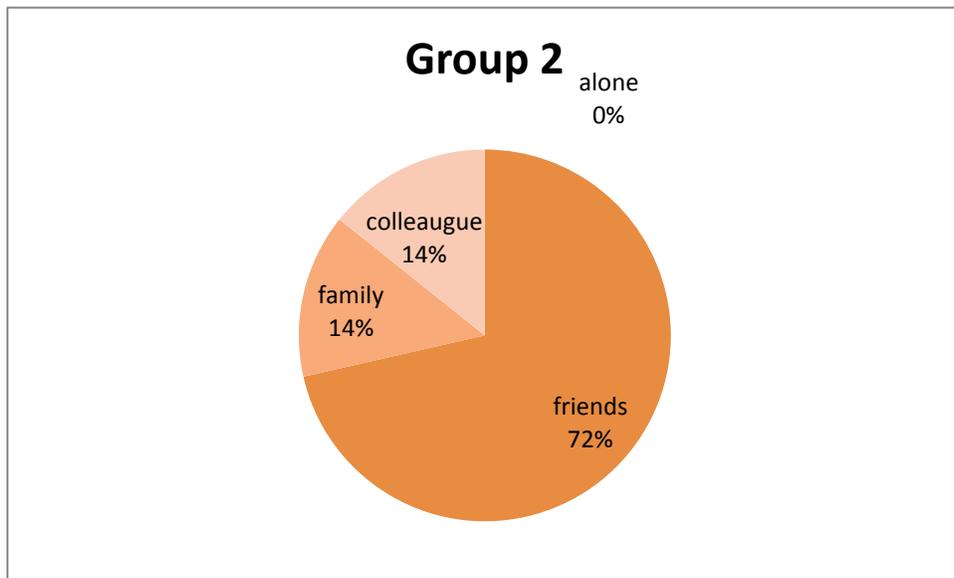
Q. 3. With whom do you visit a shopping mall?

Figure 5: With whom customers at Boxpark like to visit



(Source: Author's creation)

Figure 6: With whom customers at Brent Cross Shopping Centre like to visit

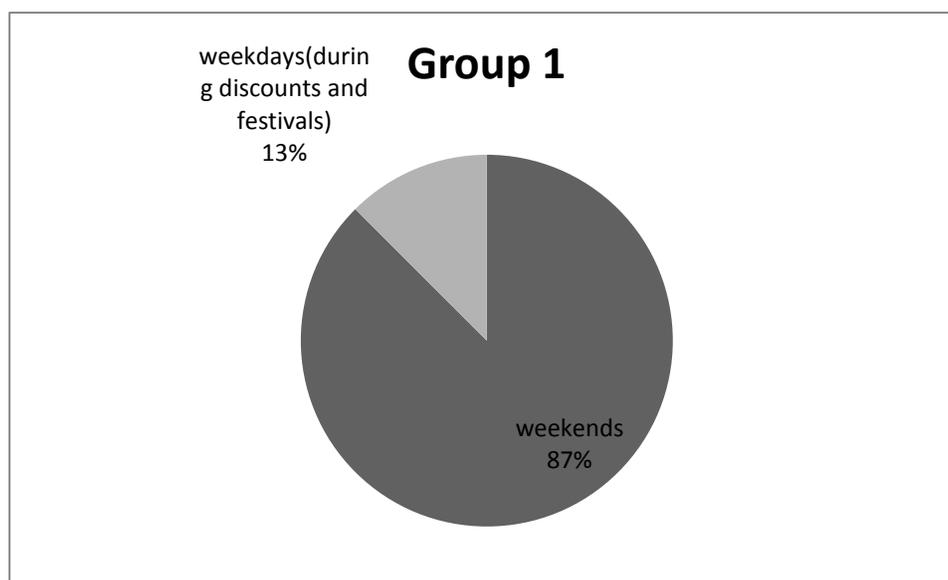


(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: It has been noticed that the majority of the population visiting shopping malls belong to the young generation i.e., between the age group of 19 to 29 years of age. Hence, the majority response from both the groups reflected that they visit their preferred shopping mall with their friends. Whereas, married and middle aged people expressed that they take their family out to shopping malls. One of the married men said, “I have to accompany my wife to shopping mall because both of us work and on weekends we stroll around the mall so or spend some quality time watching movies at the multiplex”. On the other hand, a college student at Brent Cross Shopping Center reported, “This is our hangout place plus we get the coolest and latest fashion stuff here”. The other male at the Boxpark said “Many times I visit Boxpark in order to have lunch with my colleagues since it is close to our office”.

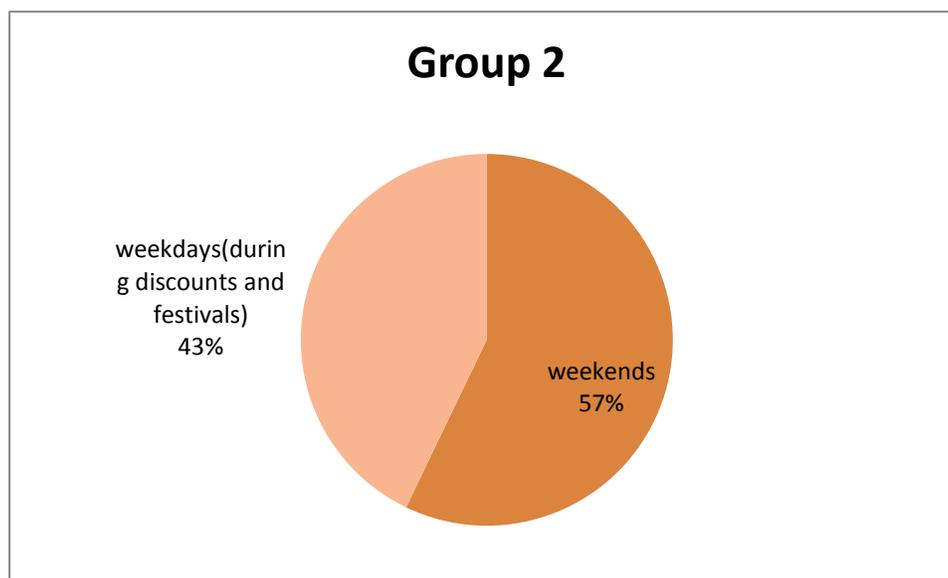
Q. 4. When does you like to visit shopping malls?

Figure 7: Customers prefer to visit Boxpark during weekends



(Source: Author's creation)

Figure 8: Customers prefer to visit Brent Cross Shopping Centre during weekends



(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: Majority of the respondents in either group said that they prefer to visit their preferred shopping mall during weekends. The young respondents said “we have college or part-time jobs during weekdays hence we only can come during the weekends”, one of the girls in group 2 said, “I agree that we have free time during the holidays but if there are discounts, I definitely try to avail it”. One of the respondents in group 1 said, “Besides weekends we have to visit more often during festivals as not only great discounts are available but also we have to buy lots of gifts for friends and family”.

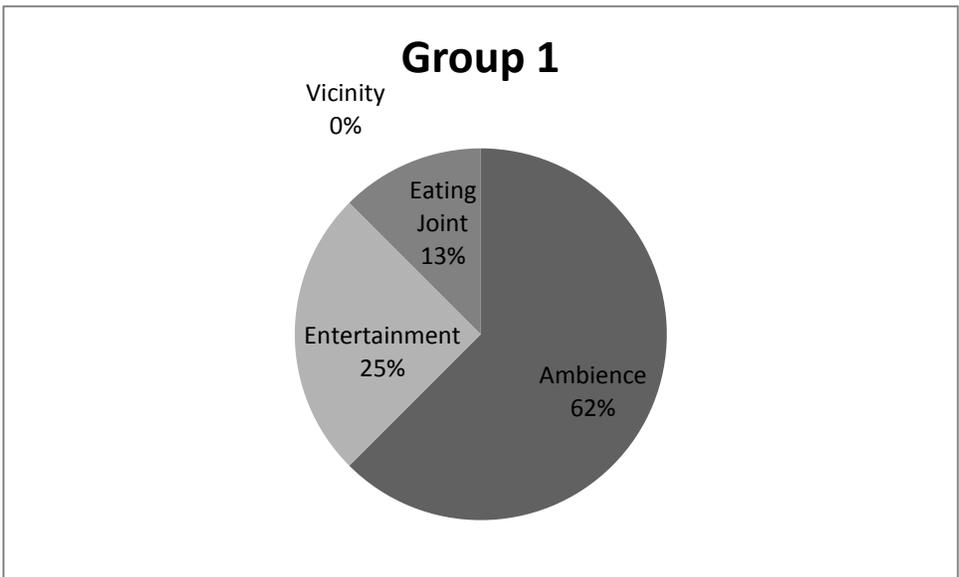
Q. 5. What does the word “mall” signify in your life?

Answer: Since majority of the respondents in both the groups were youth they chose that visiting a shopping mall is not always for the purpose of shopping it is mainly to spend time with friends. Occasionally, they visit their preferred shopping mall for trying different variety of cuisines and

watching movies at the multiplex. However, to the married and middle aged customers, mall is either a place for buying variety of things or a place to spend some relax time with family. One of the respondent in group 1 said, “I love the look of Boxpark and me and my friends find it really cool to hangout here”. The married gentleman in group 2 expressed, “our weekends are spent here while watching movie with my wife and kids”. This represents that a shopping mall is much more than just a magnified retail store; it has social values attached to it and brings families and friends together.

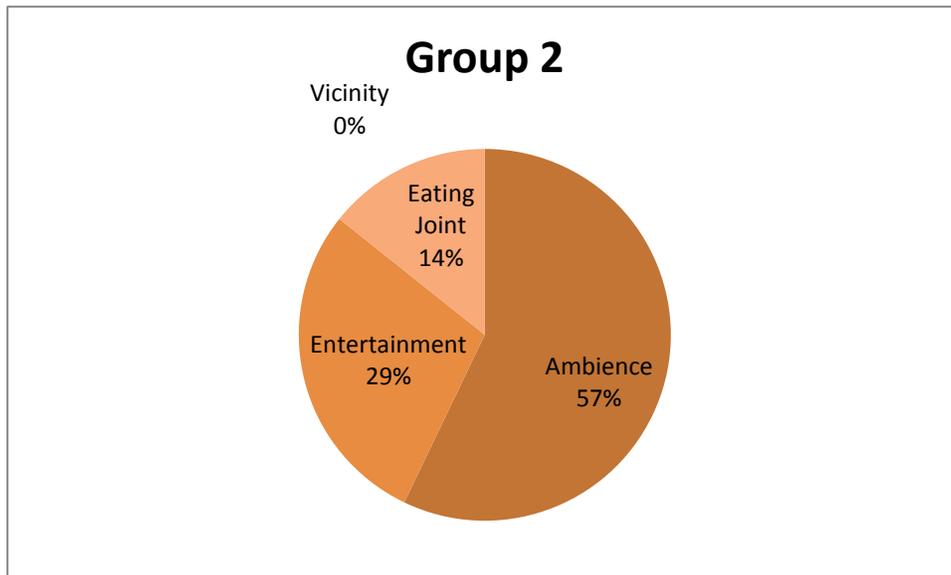
Q. 6. Which factors do you feel as the most important ones that make you return to your selected store again and again?

Figure 9: Factors pulling customer back at Boxpark



(Source: Author’s creation)

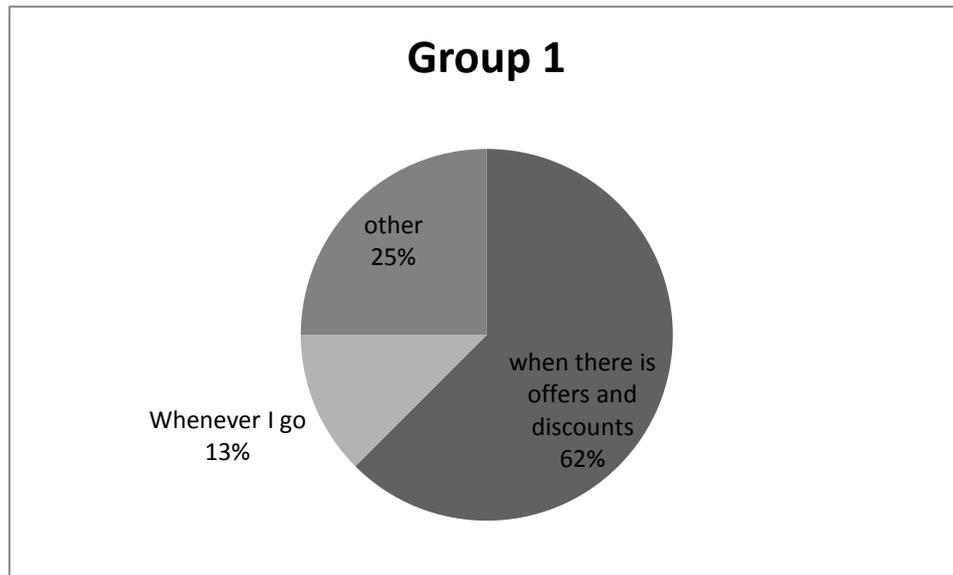
Figure 10: Figure 9: Factors pulling customer back at Brent Cross Shopping Center



(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: According to the customers, it is very crucial for them that a shopping mall provide a great ambience. Although, providing a wide variety of shopping is the main idea behind building a shopping mall, yet it is not always the main purpose for the customers for visiting a shopping mall. It has been found that most of the customers visiting shopping mall are youth and their main objective is to spend quality time with friends; hence, they expect an ambience which is conducive to this purpose. In the next rank comes entertainment and eating joints and finally comes the factor distance. According to a college goer in group 1, “this place has a fresh feeling and love the design of the place” while to a working women in group 2 said, “I visit Brent Cross shopping Centre because they offer the perfect mix of fashion and entertainment with parking without any payment. It allows me to shop and spent time with my husband without any worry”.

Q. 7. How often do you buy from a shopping mall?

Figure 11: Reason to shop at Boxpark

(Source: Author's creation)

Figure 12: Reason to shop at Brent Cross Shopping Centre

(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: Discounts and offers attract people which have been proven once again through this research. Since majority of the visitors to a mall belong to the young generation, they prefer to have affordable fashion. Hence, most of their purchase depends on the availability of offers and discounts. Although there are people who love to have branded products, yet they also prefer that merchandise from their favourite brand at an affordable price. One of the respondent from group 1 said, “I have college then my part-time job to sustain my expenses hence it only makes sense for me to buy products from the affordable range and discounts and offers provides me to buy more within my budget ”. On the other hand, a working lady responded from group 2, “I have to dress professional everyday so I need a little more than average hence it is best for me to buy during offers when I can buy branded products without making a dent in my monthly expenses”. The other respondent from group 1 said, “It does not matter if there is any offer or discounts if I want to buy something I buy it but firstly I need to see something I like”.

Q. 8. What are the difficulties faced by you when you shop in a mall?

Answer: On this question, the answers revealed a number of factors made it inconvenient for customers and hence, the researcher was unable to conclude any particular reason to be the only factor restricting further popularity of the respective shopping mall. The reasons of inconvenience are presented below:

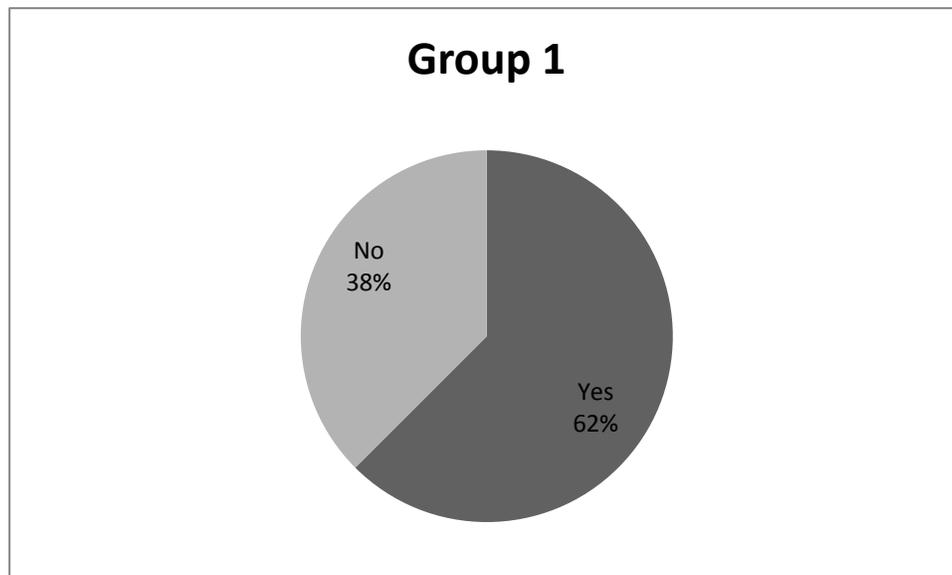
- Parking
- Crowd
- limited option of eating outlets
- No place to keep children while shopping
- Pricing differential for daily necessities.

- Difficulty in locating shops.

One of the respondents in group 1 said, “We cannot wait for long because Boxpark is a small place compared to other shopping malls hence we have to be quick”. On the other hand, the working lady in group 2 said, “I cannot visit whenever I want because I have a daughter who is only 4 months and it is very difficult for me to bring her and shop so first I have to arrange for someone who would look after her while I would not be there”. Another respondent in group 1 said, “It gets too crowded on weekends and makes it very difficult for many to get their favourite products and because of the sizes of shops, the options are limited but in order to get them we have to wait in long queues to get them”.

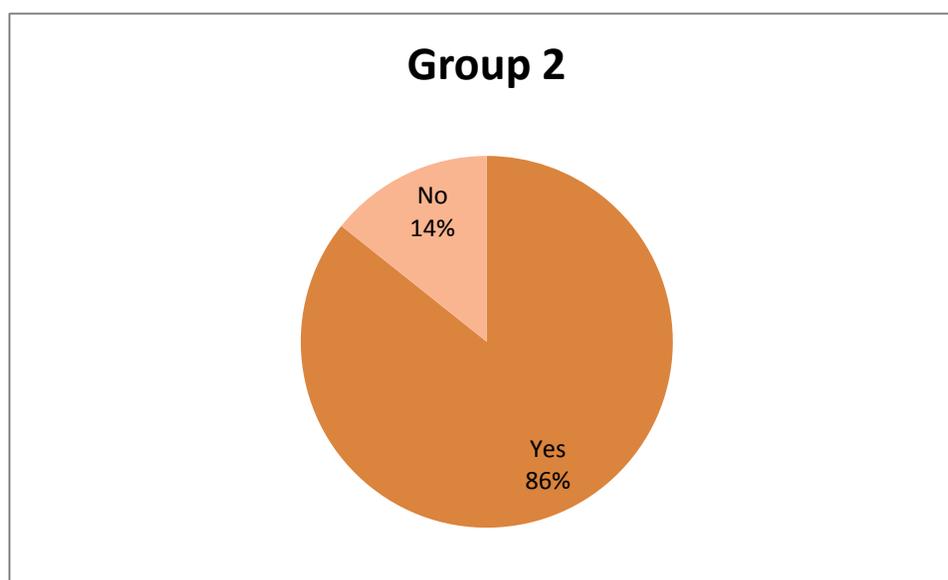
Q. 9. Do you wish to change your shopping destination?

Figure 13: Opinion of Customer showing their loyalty to Boxpark



(Source: Author's creation)

Figure 14: Opinion of Customer showing their loyalty to Brent Cross Shopping Centre



(Source: Author's creation)

Answer: 5 out of 8 respondents in Boxpark said that they are satisfied with the service and would not change their shopping destination. On the other hand, 6 out of 7 interviewees said that they would not change their shopping destination. Brent Cross Shopping Centre offers everything that a shopping lover needs. One of the six respondents in group said, "We find everything at one place with great ambience hence we would not like change."

4.6 Interview Results from Hammerson property

Hammerson Property is an age old name in the real estate business and they are well known for their exquisite designs and grandeur (Hammerson, 2016b). The researcher has interviewed two of the managers in the company to understand how they have been associated with most popular shopping centres at London. Manager 1 said, "We always keep in mind that quality is everything because the structure will remain even after the price gets forgotten. We have attained the great height because we prove quality service at a reasonable price earning a fair profit". Manager 2

said “We are a believer that we can only provide what is been paid to us. Our business is build upon the service we render in exchange of the price that we receive”.

Q. 1. What is the basic factor in building a shopping centre?

Answer: Manager 1, “Price plays a really important role but it is not the only factor. For example, investors need to understand why they are paying the money and on which aspects the money is getting used up. We have come across many structures that look very ordinary because the resources applied here are not of very good quality since investors were hesitant in spending. In rest of the times, it can also be observed that even after spending so much in ensuring strength that the focus may shift from customers’ preference making it not totally suitable as a whole”.

Q. 2. What is the main factor beside price that you feel and implement while building a shopping mall?

Answer: Manger 2, “Design and incorporation of all the basic requirements is our main aim while building a shopping mall. We cannot expect customer to visit a place which has limited options and is devoid of amenities like, proper source drinking water, gas stations, etc. we believe that parking is an important aspect because a large shopping mall will be expected to welcome many people and they should be able to park their vehicles; hence, our architects and engineers are provided with reminders so that they can incorporate enough space for parking”.

Manager 1, “Our designs try to keep the aesthetic value of a particular place and respect the community values. Currently, we are trying to align environmental objectives while building a place which will house a great deal of economic activities”.

4.7 Interview Results from Interview of Managers and Financial Executives at the Shopping Centres

When managers at the shopping centres were asked to provide their opinion on efficient management of their respective employment following responses were received:

- Manager 1 at Boxpark: “We are trying to offer a unique shopping experience with a fresh look. Conservation of environment has been the prime concern of the world we have brought about a way to minimise wastage while attracting customers to various brands that are most preferred by them. We have selected all the brands very carefully and always ask our retailers to keep updated fashion because it not only benefits retailers since customers are able to get the latest fashion making the profit go higher for them but also benefits Boxpark since retailers continue their association to the shopping centre ensuring steady flow of revenue for Boxpark”.
- Manager 2 at Boxpark: “we are not some run-off- the-mall shopping centre. Boxpark is the perfect amalgamation of community values, talent, innovation and positive attitude that has brought fashion and creativity together. Since we have to compromise in terms of volume of product we compensate the same in terms of variety”.
- Manager 3 at Brent Cross Shopping Centre: “We are providing everything that a customer can ask in a shopping centre; whether it is brands, specialist stores, range of products in an ambiance which is ideal for families and friends.”
- Manager 4 at Brent Cross Shopping Centre: “We are one of the oldest shopping centres in UK and hence can be regarded as the trend setters. People know our name so it becomes easier for retailers to attract customer here and they continue to keep their

association with us. We provide all the assistance while setting up a store and any complaints regarding any infrastructural deficiency is taken as a high priority”.

4.8 Results from the Interview with Financial Executives

When financial executives at the respective malls were consulted, they were unanimous saying that the steady flows of revenues are dependent on the trusted relationship of the retailers and shopping centre authorities. If retailers are earning their share of profit then they will be staying with the shopping centre ensuring the latter’s continuous revenue. The authorities at Boxpark increase their rent at a rate of 20 % every year while the rate is 15.5% at Brent Cross Shopping Centre.

Customers play the most important role and their preference determines the success of the shopping centres. Here in this research, the management depends on the trusted relationship between retailers and authorities of the shopping centres. For the builders, their focus remains on the design of the shopping malls so that they ensure best utilisation of investors’ money. The design provides the opportunity for the shopping centres authorities to provide maximum options to the customers.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

Shopping centres have now evolved as a prominent feature in the urban landscape of the countries. The idea of creation of shopping centre was to unite a large number of retailers at one place, which can serve the multiple needs of the consumers at one time. Besides providing the convenience to shop from more than one store or retailers, shopping centres are also a place for entertainment and recreational activities. The increase in the number of shopping centres at one region has made the consumers more selective while making decisions to purchase. Moreover, most of shopping malls or centres exist in similar form offering similar type of products and facilities at competitive prices. Thus, there is a need for evaluating the factors of attractiveness of these shopping centres to the consumers, which influence their purchase intentions. Although numerous studies conducted in this aspect revealed many factors of attractiveness to the customers, some of them prominent factors identified are location, aesthetic or ambience, accessibility, tenant mix, product varieties, entertainment and recreational services, services quality, pricing and security. Hence, these are the aspects that are should be considered and appraised by the mall developers and managers while designing and marketing the centre to the customers.

The interviews of the customers of two shopping centres reflected that primary factor of attractiveness of shopping centres to customers is the availability of a large number of varied stores at one place which allures the one who loves shopping. Moreover, the responses of the customers interviewed depicted that majority of consumers considers it as a necessity in their region and they visit more than one time a month because of their convenience and accessibility.

This was supported by the literature where convenience and accessibility of the malls are observed as primary factors of attractiveness to the shopping centres.

Moreover, all the interviewees are found to be visiting the malls with companions, which reflect that these centres are looked upon as entertainment hub and place for social interaction apart from shopping. The responses of the shopping centres customers also reflected that they prefer to visit the shopping centres during weekends rather than weekdays, which shows that these centres are a place for refreshment to the people in between their hectic schedules apart from shopping. This proves the inclusion of entertainment aspect is also an attractive feature of these shopping centres that draws the customers. The interviews with the customers visiting shopping centres reflected the significance of the malls to them. A substantial majority of them were young aged and stated that they look at these centres as a place for socialising with friends and family because of the presence of food restaurants, cafeterias, movie halls, gaming and other recreation activities. Thus, the responses of the consumers in the semi-structured interviews were compatible with the established concepts mentioned in the literature of consumer behaviour in retail agglomerations.

The interviews with the property developers and professionals of the selected malls reflected that they seek to create the mall as a place for enriching the shopping customers. The right combination stores and a safe peaceful environment are the two important aspects they consider while developing the centres. On the other hand, marketing professional of the malls agreed they use promotional and advertisements, to communicate to the customers the variety of retail brands, specialist stores, exclusive services and recreation activities available at their centres.

However, the interviews with the malls' financial executives showed that the consistent flow of revenues of these shopping centres are based on the trust and relationship of the retailers with the shopping centre authorities. Even though the customers and their perceptions are at pivotal position in determining the success and growth prospects of the shopping centres, there research showed that there are many other factors influencing the competitiveness of the shopping centres.

5.2 Research Implications

The research outcomes are supposed to have positive impact on the management of the retail agglomerations by extending their knowledge of the consumer behaviour and attitudes while shopping. It has also contributed towards understanding the main attributes and features that makes these shopping centres more attractive than simple retail agglomerations. The results of the research are hence a valuable source of providing recommendations to the management and marketing professionals of the shopping centres for enhancing the attractiveness of the shopping centres and the revenues. Moreover, the study of consumer behavioural attributes in the shopping centres will be useful for the marketing managers of shopping malls to create a brand image of their centre according to their perceptions. The brand image of the shopping centres needs to be communicated to the people through marketing or promotional efforts, which would also reflect the ambience, retailer mix, quality of customer services, services of the employees and any other special features of the malls.

5.3 Recommendations

Interviews with the consumers reflected well the factors of attractiveness to the customers, which induces them to visit the shopping centres often. The consumers seek for a group of branded

retailers offering varieties of products at competitive prices. This implied that the mall owners or managers are required to choose an optimal tenant mix for their centres that will not only provide wide range of options to the customers but will also serve the expectations of all age groups. Moreover, looking at the difficulties encountered by the visitors in the form of lack of parking space, congestion in festive and holidays, limited food outlets, locating shops etc. there is a need for shopping centres developers to incorporate effective site management at the designing stage and put signage posts everywhere for convenience of the shoppers.

The research study also showed that management of the shopping centres should be concerned about development of trust between retailers and authorities of the shopping centres. The developers need to focus more on designing of the shopping malls in a way that they ensure greatest utilisation of the money invested by the owner and at the same time are at par with the preferences and convenience of the visitors. Adequate parking space, ease of locating the shops, 24*7 surveillance for security are some of the critical aspects that are more important than the exterior outlook and interior of the malls.

5.4 Limitations and Future Scope of Study

The research was limited in the aspect of sample size chosen for the analysing the perceptions of the consumer and the management executives of the malls. The researcher considered only two shopping centres and solicited very small size of respondents from each due to the lengthy procedure involved in semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The research can be further expanded in future by studying the consumer behaviour and their perception towards shopping centres in some other city of UK or in some other countries. Moreover, the researcher can

conduct a further study to explore how evolution of shopping centres in the urban landscape has reduced the scope of profits and growth of retail outlets and large retail chains in the streets.

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