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The Role of Attraction Factors in Recreational Shopping Gratification: Case of Colombo, Sri Lanka

B.Sc. Veneka Logenthiran^{1*}, Dr. Susantha Amarawickrama²
Department of Town & Country Planning, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka^{1,2}
E-mail¹: venekalogenthiran@gmail.com, E-mail²: susanthaa@uom.lk

Abstract

This paper sets out to question: What attraction factors influence recreational shopping gratification. An online questionnaire survey was administered to 220 young adult consumers from two shopping malls in the city of Colombo. A narrative inquiry was employed by conducting 30 interviews from the same sample to light up the research question as to the second step. Exploratory Factor Analysis followed by correlation and regression analysis and content analysis were used as methods of analysis. The result of the research highlighted the importance of socialization, ambience and safety and security towards increasing recreational shopping gratification, while socialization plays the most important role in gratification. Meanwhile, as revealed from content analysis, fun and entertainment is an attractive factor in the Sri Lankan context. The outcomes of the study, using a mixed-methods approach, would enrich both the theory and practice of developing a consumer-friendly environment to increase gratification in recreational shopping.

Keywords: Recreational shopping; attraction factors; shopping malls; shopping gratification.

1. Introduction

According to many researchers, shopping is not only an activity for purchasing. "Shopping is a recreational activity" and choosing a particular shop depends on the value of "entertainment" (Woodside, Trappery & Randolph, 1992; Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007, Amen, 2022). Shopping seems to be the main cause for recreation and also a routine task for home linked to females in the Sri Lankan concept of shopping malls (Perera & Sutha, 2018). Shopping exemplifies a significant outage for social empathy, communication, and gives short-term release from day-to-day schedules primarily for residents in urban areas (Guiry et al., 2006; Stillerman & Salcedo, 2012; Shim, Santos, & Choi, 2013). Shopping has advanced from obtaining day-by-day necessities counting nourishment to a recreation activity. Other than the fundamental utilitarian work, the recreational aspect of shopping has been resuscitated (Jim & Chen, 2009). There has been a reform of open spaces to blend shopping with recreation (Abaza, 2001). The number of recreation-driven customers has expanded altogether in recent years (Bäckström, 2006). The traditional definition of recreational shopping can be explained as 'perceived enjoyment' from shopping. It is also labeled as an activity for leisure time (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980; Bäckström, 2006). Shopping can be explained as a form of recreation in case it is comparatively free from responsibilities and it is recognized for its values of gratification and preferred consequences (Bäckström, 2006). Miller, Jackson, Rowlands, Thrift, & Holbrook (1998) states that recreational shopping is described by the mental state of 'having the time to shop'. Most of the previous studies have taken into account the overall idea of shopping rather than a recreational shopping (Bäckström, 2006).

It is reported a considerable amount of time at malls is spent by recreational shoppers (Bäckström, 2006). Shopping malls are solid components of urban space, particularly in developing countries (Beiró et al., 2018). In Sri Lanka, shopping malls are likely to be the biggest marketplaces which are found generally in cities (Ratnayake, 2015). People utilize malls to gratify different kinds of requirements (Stillerman & Salcedo, 2012; Beiró et al., 2018). The Korean term "mallong" is adapted for explaining people visiting malls for more than the purpose of purchasing. Shim et al. (2013) suggest that the mallong experience extends beyond mere consumption, beyond the inspiration to shop, going by a shopping center may envelop numerous other inspirations, such as managing stress, feeling energized, calming down, and socializing. By itself, utilitarian or hedonic conceptualizations are limitedly capable of clarifying all perspectives of the mallong (Shim et al., 2013).

As Shim et al. (2013) mentioned, relatively limited research has been done on recreation activities in modern utilization of spaces, for example, shopping malls, even though these spaces are all-inclusive getting to be ever more well known as recreational spaces. The absence of literature on shopping malls in the discipline of recreation is particularly shocking, although the growing importance of "shopping centers as relaxation spaces" is recognized by (Shim et al., 2013). The lack of academic research on entertainment in retailing leads to the absence of information and it makes it marketers difficult to satisfy recreational shoppers' expectations (Perera & Sutha, 2018). Although there is some research available for other countries such as the United States, Thailand, India, and South Korea (Kowinski, 1985; Shim et al., 2013; Vinoditha & Sreeya, 2019), research from Sri Lanka has not yet been aimed to

recognize the shopping malls as a place for recreation. Although one can discover homogeneity anywhere in the world for certain, a diverse setting can be provided by local differences and economic circumstances (Abaza, 2001). Spotting out the dissimilarity in the utilization of shopping malls in a few parts of the world will add value. While technological advancements provide online shopping opportunities, it is worth identifying what makes people attracted to recreational shopping for gratification in malls.

The key idea of undertaking this research came from the instinct of observing that people are likely to go to shopping malls more often than in the previous era, and people living in the city of Colombo are engaging in recreational shopping which is more than mere shopping for purchasing goods. This culture has adapted very recently with the rise of new shopping centers in the city of Colombo. The city of Colombo, which has high adaptation to new trends as it is the largest city by population and the commercial capital of Sri Lanka is selected as the case study area.

The objective of the study is to examine the role of attraction factors in recreational shopping gratification. The research attempts to answer the question: What are the attraction factors that influence recreational shopping gratification?

The significance of this research is viewing recreational shopping and shopping malls with a spatial dimension window, by relating mainly the attraction factors such as ambience, convenience, physical environment, socialization, facilities, etc. (Singh, Prashar, Agarwal, & Sharma, 2014; Khare, 2012; Tandon, Gupta, & Tripathi, 2016; El-Adly, 2007). Since shopping malls are viewed as public places, it is important to understand what attracts people to go to them. With a developing trend in the recreational field, this research will be helpful for planners, policymakers, and mall managers. Because of the limited research available in the country, the findings of this research will serve as a national research area.

2. Mall Attraction Factors and Shopping Gratification

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is adapted for this study. CCT research is commonly an in-depth investigation of consumption that by itself can inspire future studies that strive for a general understanding of particular phenomena. In CCT, it is frequently discussed that consumers create perceptions of the world about meanings, symbols, and experiences (Bäckström, 2006). So, it can serve the purpose of achieving the research objective. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) proposed two perceptions of consumption that can fluctuate with time and consumers: utilitarian and hedonic. The value of hedonic is more biased toward personal instincts which provide more fun and liveliness rather than its complement utilitarian, which is towards an accomplishment of a task (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). According to most of the studies, it is evident that recreational shopping shows hedonic perception (Babin et al., 1994; Kesari & Atulkar, 2016). Some studies interpreted recreational shopping as an activity that cannot be merely explained by utilitarian and hedonic concepts and it should be accepted irrespective of whether the initial purpose was utilitarian or hedonic (Shim et al., 2013; Bäckström, 2006).

Modern-day malls are converting themselves using contended architecture, and with extravagantly rich substances, tenant blends, and complicated design aspects (Han, Sahito, Thi Nguyen, Hwang, & Asif, 2019). Design elements encompass interior structure, high ceilings, landscaping, sunlight, floors, elevators, and washrooms. Also, these kinds of characteristics are naturally pleasant, and they are vital functions of urban form (Lewicka, 2008; Jones et al., 2006). More commonly, malls serve as group-level get-together spots letting individuals meet and recreate with companions, as is popular amongst teenagers. Contrasting with many leisure spots, shopping malls are also welcoming to unaccompanied people. Although there are embarrassments involved in going to eating out or movies unaccompanied, going to a mall alone is usual (Bloch et al., 1991).

Nevertheless, malls are regarded employing several attributes that cannot be brought by separate retail shops; and for that reason, they offer greater values as opposed to simply utilitarian and hedonic values. So, it can be expected that the attraction factors of malls should influence each hedonic and utilitarian purchasing value. Furthermore, shopping malls can also contribute to shoppers' contentment or gratification through leisure and social activities, with the aid of providing a meeting spot for shoppers to hang out (Calvo-Porrall & Lévy-Mangín, 2018).

2.1 Attraction Factors of Shopping Malls

Many studies are available identifying the attraction factors (Han et al., 2019; Ahmed, Dash, Mahmud, & Sahel, 2019; Singh & Prashar, 2013), in other terms: determinants (Singh & Sahay, 2012; Mittal & Jhamb, 2016); the dimensions of attractiveness (Wong, 2018; Tandon et al., 2016). Mehrabian & Russell (1974) states that the mall affects the interactive responses of shoppers, such as emotional, physiological, and cognitive, from the view of environmental psychology. The scholars tested the role of factors such as functionality, convenience, atmospherics, safety, socialization, self-identification, and amusement in the happiness of shopping and determined that consumers' happiness increases when shoppers recognize that the malls are functioning well, safe, accessible, enjoyable, desirable and draws different consumers that the shopper can become aware of with (Wong, 2018).

On the other hand, the attributes of the mall which are eye-catching for some customers are not always appealing to others (El-Adly, 2007). Besides the influence of malls' inside characteristics on benefaction, additional attributes for instance travel factors including trustworthiness in the mode of transport, distance, effort, tension, value, and comfort were significant in affecting shopping centers' patronage (Ibrahim, 2002). Han et al. (2019) in their study tested numerous features of urban form, which stimulate sustainable development and initiate buyers towards shopping malls. The assemble ambience, entertainment, built environment, and consumption are used in studies with factors followed from the literature review.

The tangible nature of the retail environment is studied about numerous factors, for instance: signage (Bitner, 1992); orientating factors; spatial factors, and the ambience of the environment (Davies & Ward, 2002), which Kotler labeled as "atmospherics". Ahmed et al. (2019) discovered that atmospherics is progressively gaining momentum in improving mall shopping involvement in Bangladesh. A summary of the attraction factors is presented in the Table 1 (a detailed review of the attributes is given in the Annexure 1).

Table 1: Summary of Attraction Factors from Previous studies (Compiled by Author)

No.	Factors	Authors
1.	Ambiance, Consumption, Entertainment, Built environment	Han et al., (2019)
2.	Atmospherics, Entertainment, Tenant management, Facilities management	Tripathi & Tandon (2014)
3.	Ambiance, Amenities, Safety	Ahmed et al., (2019).
4.	Merchandising, Variety & selection, Milieu and facilities, Convenience	Mittal & Jhamb, (2016)
5.	Ambiance, Convenience, Physical infrastructure, Marketing focus, Safety and security	Singh & Prashar, (2013)
7.	Ambiance, Design, Interiors, Service, Assortment, Socializing, Entertainment	Khare, (2012)
8.	Dimensions- Design and convenience, Children safety environment, Parking facilities, Tenant/ Service offering, Ladies/ elderly safety and convenience, Mall marketing activities	Wong & Nair, (2018).
9.	Comfort, Entertainment, Diversity, Mall essence, Convenience, Luxury	El-Adly, (2007).
10.	Ambient, Design, Layout, Variety	Wakefield & Baker, (1998)
11.	Convenience, Tenant variety, Internal environment, Leisure mix, Promotions	Calvo-Porrá & Lévy-Mangín, (2018)
12.	Physical variables (Logistics related-9 and Ambiance related-12), Economic variables (Comparative-6 and Promotion based-8)	Rajagopal, (2008)
13.	Atmospherics, Entertainment, Tenant management, Facilities management	Tandon et al., (2016)
14.	Variety, quality, supply, and status, Eco-natural environment and design, Mobility and accessibility, Additional services and entertainment, Physical environment, maintenance, Security & information	Ortegón-Cortázar & Royo-Vela, (2017)
15.	Location, Quality and variety, Popularity, Facilities, Sales incentives	Wong et al., (2001)

2.2 Gratification in Recreational Shopping

The term gratification (Guiry & Lutz, 2000; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Singh & Prashar, 2013) is recognised in different terms: satisfaction (Bäckström, 2006; El-Adly, 2007); excitement (Tripathi & Tandon, 2014; Rajagopal, 2009); shopping experience (Tandon et al., 2016; Singh & Sahay, 2012). Scholars consider that nearly all of the visitors of shopping malls, specifically benefit from the value of emotional and sensual fulfillment during shopping (Lee & Hwang, 2018). Shoppers with a gratifying purchasing motivation described their shopping journeys as worthwhile, escaping, getting rid of depression, and taking their minds free from stress (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). Gratification in this study means personal satisfaction acquired from recreational shopping in shopping malls.

According to Arnold & Reynolds (2003), "gratification shopping" entails searching for strain alleviation, shopping to relieve a negative temper. Nevertheless, Fung (2010) shows that a shopper's subjective values, expectations, perceptions and motivations in the process can intensely influence the shopping involvements as well as leisure participation. Diverse cultures, geographies and financial systems would possibly pick out distinctive ways or solutions to gratify similar central needs (Singh & Prashar, 2013). Research in leisure shopping usually highlights the empirical worth of shopping and the fulfillment recognized from the doings (Bäckström, 2006).

It is assumed that consumers' happiness in malls motivates their objective to revisit, encouraging the frequency of trips, and automatically, their purchase intention (Calvo-Porrá & Lévy-Mangín, 2018). Steen (2016) checked the subsequent

hypothesis: A gratification shopping motive is positively interconnected to sensed design. The atmospherics of a shopping mall can make a contribution to the satisfaction or the dissatisfaction of a patron by influencing his/her perceptions (Sabrina, 2014).

3. Materials and Methods

The study followed explanatory sequential mixed methods research design (quantitative followed by qualitative equals explanation) where a quantitative survey followed by a qualitative interview is employed with more emphasis to the quantitative part (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2012). The aim of conducting the initial quantitative stage is to identify the mall attraction factors and their attributes. The aim of conducting the follow-up qualitative phase is to help to further understand the real meaning of the attraction factors, attributes and recreational shopping gratification perceived by the consumers. The combination of quantitative survey results and qualitative interviews has given an in depth understanding of the role of attraction factors in recreational shopping gratification. Two recreation shopping malls, namely One Galle Face and Colombo City Centre, located in Colombo, Sri Lanka are taken to examine the phenomena based on the popularity, product variety and the extent of leisure orientation (Figure 1).

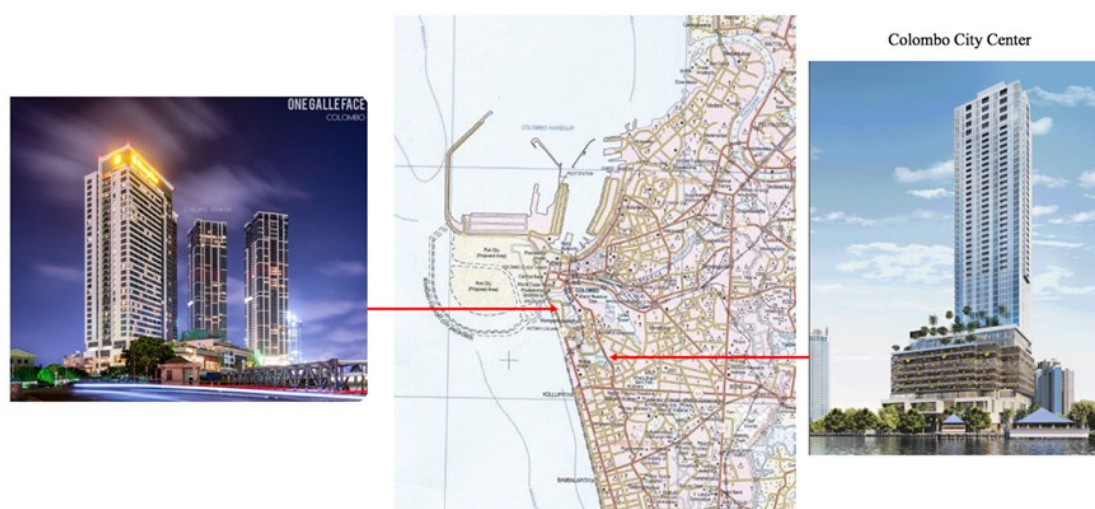


Figure 1: Locations of two shopping malls

3.1 Variables

Attraction attributes: The selection of attraction attributes for this study includes primary and secondary methods of field reconnaissance namely, observation and the frequent and recent usage of attributes in previous studies. A detailed literature review was done to select the attributes of mall attraction from previous studies. As a result, 42 attributes from 8 recent articles were identified. The previous factor reduction was done based on the semi-structured interview with 20 shoppers. From the frequency of the attributes as well as with the observation, 32 attributes were finalized as the attributes which are most commonly considered by Sri Lankan shoppers. The questionnaire survey included those 32 attributes (Table 2) of mall attraction on a 5-point Likert scale where 5 indicates very important and 1 indicates not important at all.

Gratification: For the dependent variable, five items from previous studies and one item from the shopping experience of shoppers who were involved in the narrative storytelling were taken. Accordingly, six items were included in the questionnaire survey.

Table 2: Naming of Variables (Compiled by Author based on literature review)

Attribute/ Item	Variable Name	Attribute/ Item	Variable Name
Mall lighting	VAR1	Availability of parking space.	VAR20
Mall temperature	VAR2	Cleanliness and maintenance.	VAR21
Ambient odour	VAR3	Facilities for elderly and differently-abled	VAR22
Mall decoration	VAR4	Convenient location	VAR23
Interior wall and floor colour schemes	VAR5	Availability of Lifts and escalators	VAR24
Integrating natural elements in design	VAR6	Proper floor plan/ layout	VAR25

Overall design	VAR7	Availability of Related services	VAR26
Availability of cinema theatres	VAR8	Availability of open space/ recreational place inside	VAR27
Availability of Fun and entertainment programs	VAR9	Space for walking inside.	VAR28
Availability of play area for children	VAR10	Availability of Seats / relaxing benches.	VAR29
Availability of good variety of food items.	VAR11	Availability of Security against act of terror	VAR30
Promotional events	VAR12	Safety for children.	VAR31
Opportunity to see different people.	VAR13	Safety for ladies/elderly.	VAR32
Opportunity to relax and spend time.	VAR14	Feel better.	DEP1
Opportunity meets friends in the malls.	VAR15	Treat one's self	DEP2
Opportunity to do window shopping.	VAR16	Enjoyment or deep-down satisfaction.	DEP3
Availability lot of product variety/ well known stores.	VAR17	Stress relieves	DEP4
Product quality	VAR18	Relaxation	DEP5
Quality/price relationship	VAR19	Escape from routine works.	DEP6

3.2 Sample Selection

Quantitative phase: As the total number of attributes is nearly 32, the number of questionnaires needed to be taken for the validation of variables has to be at least five times of the number items to be tested (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995; Hair, Blake, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Thus, the sample size should be at least 160. However, in order to eliminate errors and to get a decent sample, 220 representatives were examined through questionnaires. The age category of 18 to 40 is targeted for the questionnaire survey since this age category is more recreational according to the field observation. Online questionnaire (Google forms) surveys were carried out to collect data. The sampling method used was snowball sampling. Initially, one hundred and twenty potential mall shoppers were identified and the links for the questionnaire survey were sent to them through email and other social media. The recipients were asked to send the survey link to their known mall shoppers. The basic information collected from the questionnaire survey is the demographic profile of participants, level of interest towards attraction factors, and gratification level from attraction factors of recreational shopping.

Qualitative phase: After completing the quantitative analysis, 30 consumers (15 from each mall) participated in the face-to-face narrative inquiry.

3.3 Analytic Strategy

Quantitative phase: First, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was done with the extraction method of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) in SPSS. The objectives of PCA in this research are data reduction, interpretation and verification of their factorial structure. PCA is the common method used by previous studies for the identification of attraction factors/mall determinants. After that, the bivariate correlation was tested. Bivariate correlation explains the level of significance, direction and strength of the causal relationship between attraction factors and gratification. After that, by assuming the relationship is linear, a multiple regression analysis was done. This is to show the prediction mentioned in the hypothesis. SPSS software was used to analyze the data quantitatively.

Qualitative phase: To further understand the reason for being attracted by the factors, narrative inquiries were held with a number of 30 interviewees. Narrative inquiry considers the focal point of the contributors' tale like an interview, communication, and a story that supports and lights up the research question (Burke & Soffa, 2018). Using this method, the subjective experiences of recreational shoppers regarding the meaning of attraction factors were examined manually. This may give a better explanation of the real interest of people in addition to Factor Analysis.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Factors

Of the 220 responses to the questionnaire survey, 49.5% were from Colombo City Centre and 50.5% were from One Galle Face. It shows a fair distribution of respondents and there are no biases based on the cases. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) were male. The frequency is somewhat equal and there are no gender biases. The frequency of 18-30 age group respondents was high at 85%. About three-fourths of the respondents (72%) were unmarried. In terms of occupation, around 46% were students, 27% worked in the private sector and 19% worked in the public sector. More than half of the respondents (56%) spend an average time of 2 to 4 hours during a shopping visit. Half of the participants visit the malls at least once a month.

4.2 Factor Output

The attributes of mall attraction and the items considered under gratification were given names for considering them as variables for the factor analysis. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure for sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test for sphericity were checked. The KMO statistic is 0.897, which is greater than the minimum criterion of 0.5 and comes under the range of 'marvelous', thus the sample size is adequate for factor analysis. According to Bartlett's measure test, the sample size is significant at 1% ($p < 0.001$). An EFA using the extraction method of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was conducted in SPSS to comprise the variables (attributes) which have similar pattern/characteristic under several factors. The variables for further analysis were selected by removing attributes which cannot support factoring and attributes contributing to high levels of cross loading under more than 2 components. By doing the factor analysis iteratively, 16 attributes were excluded resulting in 16 attributes remaining for factoring.

Number of factors that need to be extracted was determined based on the Scree plot. The scree plot is thoroughly checked and identified that there can be five factors extracted. The total variance accounted for those five components was 72.635%. The components were named respectively, Ambience, Convenience, Facilities and Management, Socialization and Safety and Security (Table 3).

Table 3: Consolidated Factor Output

Factor No.	Factor Title	Attributes	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha Value
F1	Ambience	Interior wall and floor color schemes	0.844	0.764
		Mall Lighting	0.694	
		Mall Temperature	0.583	
F2	Convenience	Convenient mall location	0.808	0.834
		Inside open space/ recreational space	0.674	
		Cleanliness	0.648	
		Seats/ relaxing benches	0.618	
F3	Facilities & Management	Lifts and escalators	0.813	0.802
		Floor plan/layout	0.798	
		Facilities for elderly/ differently abled	0.767	
F4	Safety & security	Safety for children	0.824	0.817
		Safety for ladies/elderly	0.720	
		Security against act of terror	0.669	
F5	Socialization	Enjoy meeting friends	0.871	0.759
		Good place for spending time	0.706	
		Good place for window shopping	0.692	

Scored on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1= not important at all and 5= very important

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The dependent variable is labeled as "Gratification". Cronbach's Alpha test was applied to check the internal consistency and it resulted that all factors and items under gratification (Cronbach's Alpha Value= 0.776) are reliable according to Nunnally's recommended level of 0.6 (Table 4).

Table 4: Items under dependent variable

Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
1. When I am in a down mood, I go shopping to make myself feel better.	0.776
2. I go shopping when I want to treat myself to something special.	
3. For me, it is an enjoyment or deep-down satisfaction.	
4. To me, shopping is a way to relieve stress.	
5. I feel relaxed.	
6. It is a kind of escape from routine work.	

4.3 Bivariate Correlation

Table 5 shows the correlation of each attraction factor with gratification. Facilities and management show insignificant but positive relationship with gratification, indicating there is no evidence to support the relationship. Yet, other four factors show a significant positive relationship with gratification.

Table 5: Interpretation of correlation with gratification

Factor	Correlation	Significance level	Interpretation of the relationship
Ambience	.319**	.000	Positive weak
Convenience	.322**	.000	Positive weak
Facilities & management	.124	.066	Positive weak
Socialization	.603**	.000	Positive moderate
Safety & security	.347**	.000	Positive weak

** $p < 0.01$

4.4 Regression Results

To see the influence of each factor on gratification, regression analysis was done. Each attraction factor and gratification were saved as variables for the following analysis by computing the statistical mean of the attributes/items under the factor.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Results (N=220)

	R	Adjusted R ²	β	t test	Sig.	VIF
Full model	0.629	0.382				
Ambience			.154	2.119	.035	1.873
Convenience			-.129	-1.624	.106	2.239
Facilities & Management			-.112	-1.715	.088	1.507
Socialization			.574	9.061	.000	1.420
Safety and security			.162	2.171	.031	1.979

 $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis. The VIF values of each independent variable is less than 4. Thus, multicollinearity will not be a potential drawback here. The predictor variables ambience ($\beta = 0.154$, $p = 0.035$), safety and security ($\beta = 0.162$, $p = 0.031$) and socialization ($\beta = 0.574$, $p = 0.000$) reached the standards of statistical significance in the regression analysis. These are the factors influencing gratification. These results indicate general support for the hypothesis that attraction factors are related to shoppers' recreational shopping gratification.

4.5 Qualitative Data Analysis and Results

The influence of mall attraction factors on shopping gratification is further explored through the responses to qualitative data. Results of the qualitative data analysis show the link between attraction attributes and items under gratification such as feeling relaxed, enjoyment, or deep-down satisfaction and escape.

4.5.1 Ambience and Gratification

This factor includes attributes related to lighting, temperature, and interiors. The meaning of lighting is interesting and it includes visual attractiveness. Temperature means not so cool and not so hot but a mid-range is favourable. It is usual to get attracted to the appropriate temperature in a tropical country like Sri Lanka. Interiors attracting people is expected because the aesthetic aspect is an important element in recreation (Figure 2). As responded commented:

"Since the lighting is the same for all day, you never know how much time you spent inside" (O-6).

"It's raining outside but we don't need to worry about that because we are in a closed safe place. The temperature is always nice inside whatever the climate outside" (C-1).

"Because it is aesthetic and beautiful. You can take nice photos because the background is attractive" (C-4).

Responded agreed that *"When we enter from the hot outside, we can immediately feel the difference. It makes us relax" (O-3): "The art in the walls is attractive. It is suitable for a photoshoot. The walls only are enough to feel relaxed and spend our time smoothly" (O-6)*, drawing a link between ambience and the feeling of relaxation.

4.5.2 Safety and Security and Gratification

Safety and security are considered all the shoppers whether they come alone or with a companion. Security, as well as safety for children, ladies, and the elderly, is expressed through this factor. Respondents believe that:

"It is important because we don't need to bother about any crime while shopping. The security guards will take care of it" (O-2).

"If the place is not safe for my children, then we won't come right" (C-4).

"It is really important. For girls who come alone like me, it is a major concern" (O-1).

Safety and security were highly linked with enjoyment.

Vast majority of respondents expressed that *"shopping malls are also for family enjoyment. So, it should be safe for kids as well"* (O-7, highlighting Safety and security has a link with enjoyment.



Seats/ Relaxing benches



Variety of food items



Availability of Open Space



Mall Lighting

Figure 2: Examples of Attraction Factors

4.5.3 Socialization and Gratification

Similar to the regression analysis results, most of the respondents have linked socialization with items of gratification such as enjoyment, relaxation, and escape.

"Yes, of course. Being with friends in malls is a different kind of enjoyment" (O-14).

"Relaxation is important. You can just sit there and watch people" (O-10).

"I don't do much shopping but I like to window shop. When you see different products in the same place, it is kind of taking your mind focusing on those products and other than that nothing else in your mind" (O-12).

In addition to the five factors identified from the Exploratory Factor Analysis, qualitative data analysis results show that there is another possible factor which can be named 'Fun and Entertainment. Even though the EFA does not reveal this factor, a considerable amount of people who participated in the interview responded that attributes such as malls offering a good variety of food items and fun and entertainment programs in the mall are interesting. As respondents appreciated:

"No matter whether you come with your friends or family or alone. You'll have something to entertain and have fun" (C-7).

"Food and entertainment are the topmost things when your purpose is leisure" (O-8).

As identified from the literature, preliminary interview, and the outputs of an online survey, it is apparent that all six items under gratification are considered by Sri Lankan shoppers. The same meaning has arrived as expected in the narrative inquiry as well. As respondents expressed:

"After coming here, you'll forget everything and you feel like you are in a world of fantasy" (C-10).

"This is a good place for stress release. You don't know how much time you spend here. People who go for leisure purposes only also can have so much fun here with these leisure spaces" (O-12).

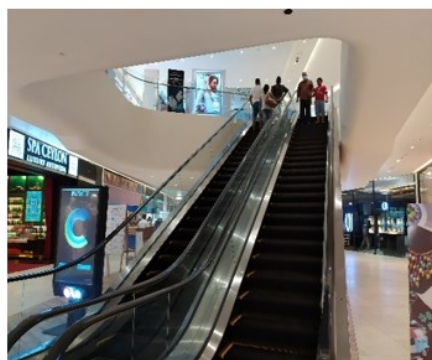
"You have a variety of shops, food, and vast space for leisure. After coming inside, I feel positive and relaxed. They have tried their best to make us feel good like you don't feel that we are inside a man-made place. It is comfortable" (O-15).



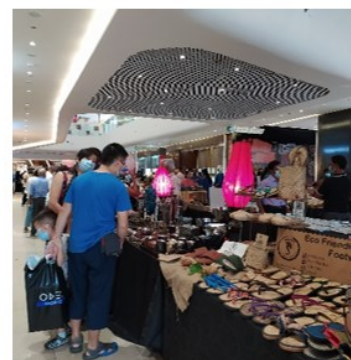
Floor plan/ Layout



Interiors



Lifts and Escalators



Promotional Events

Figure 3: Examples of Attraction Factors

In addition to the five factors identified from the Exploratory Factor Analysis, the second interview results show that there is another possible factor which can be named as 'Fun and Entertainment'. Even though the EFA does not reveal this factor, a considerable amount of people participated in the interview rated the attributes such as malls offer a good variety of food items and fun and entertainment programs in mall are interesting as five in a 5-point Likert scale (Figure 3).

"No matter whether you come with your friends or family or alone. You'll have something to entertain and have fun" (C-7).

"I love the games here using new VR technology" (O-6).

"Food and entertainment are the top most things, when your purpose is leisure" (O-8).

And also, the attributes related to product such as **Quality and Variety** is revealed in the interview. Promotional events and seasonal decoration also attracted a considerable amount of people.

"We get to know about the things we never know in our regular life. Some innovative kind of things, I would say" (O-8).

"When you see quality products you are automatically induced to buy it. You may not buy immediately, but when you come again you buy it. That's the logic behind having quality products" (C-7).

"Even a small thing will look great if it is from an international brand" (C-10).

"In festival season, we come just to watch the way they decorated the mall" (O-11).

As identified from the literature, preliminary interview, and from the outputs of online survey, it is apparent that all six items under gratification are considered by Sri Lankan shoppers. The same meaning has arrived as expected in the narrative inquiry as well.

"After coming here, you'll forget everything and you feel like you are in a world of fantasy" (C-10).

"This is a good place for stress release. You don't know how much time you spend here. People who go for leisure purposes only also can have so much fun here with these leisure spaces" (O-12).

"You have variety of shops, food and vast space for leisure. After coming inside, I feel positive and relaxed. They have tried their best to make us feel good, like you don't feel that you are inside the man-made place. It is comfortable" (O-15).

The results of the narrative inquiry clearly show that Sri Lankan people consider many attributes to gratify their recreational needs. And also, they think about the climate and seasonal changes all over the year while responding.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Consumer behavior towards going to shopping malls has been changed to include more recreational aspects. This research attempted to understand the mall attraction factors-spatial aspects of shopping malls, and their influence on consumers' gratification in recreational shopping. This phenomenon is understudied in different contexts. This study found some important associations. Among the factors, ambience, convenience, socialization and safety and security showed a positive correlation with shopping gratification.

The predictors of gratification also show complements and contradictions with the previous studies. A previous study by Singh and Prashar, (2013) regarding the factors defining shopping experience in the Dubai malls identified marketing focus (which includes promotional events, mall facade, and tenant-mix) as the most significant factor in terms of shopping experience among identified five factors ambience, convenience, physical infrastructure, marketing focus, and safety and security. It is explained by the fact that Dubai has more world-class malls and the shoppers are from all over the world. However, it was found that ambience (which includes illumination, temperature control, background music, general hygiene, ambient odor, and landscaping) is also considered the next significant factor among shoppers. A similar study by Singh & Sahay, (2012) in the shopping malls of the national capital region (NCR) of India found that ambience is the most significant factor followed by convenience (which includes a distance of the mall from home, lifts, and escalators, and utilities inside the mall) to shoppers among the same five factors. Another study by Tandon et al., (2016) in the shopping malls of Indian metro cities shows that tenant management (includes play areas for children, a variety of brands, space management, tenant variety, tenant directory, store space, and prestige of brands), facilities management (parking, seating arrangement, elevators and escalators, maintenance of flooring and clean washroom) and atmospherics (lighting, facilities for elderly and differently-abled, temperature control, attractive interior décor, pleasant odor, landscaping, background music, crowd management, external façade, ventilation) are the significant predictors of shopping experience. It further suggests that Indian shoppers are naturally showing more significance to accomplishing their utilitarian needs. There are differences in the predictors of gratification with the changing geographic context. However, these studies considered shopping as a whole and are not limited to recreational shopping.

The findings of the study reveal the unique nature and taste of Sri Lankan people by contradicting some factors from previous studies of different contexts. It supports the notion that consumers from different geographic settings, cultures, and economy will choose different ways to gratify their needs.

Since modern-day shopping malls serve as places for shopping, recreation, entertainment, and gratification, it is important to learn from these findings in designing and maintaining recreational shopping places in terms of sustaining the urban economy and the socio-physical aspects of the general public in the future. The findings of the research will be helpful while developing a public space or a recreational place in the urban context in the future. In this connection, study findings are useful for many professionals such as investors in shopping malls, developers, policymakers, and urban planners.

This is the time to rethink and redesign the urban public spaces as well as the old shopping malls with the attraction factors that people are demanding. Town planners and mall managers need to address future needs by considering the findings of this study. The additional services provided by shopping malls will add value to upgrade the city's standards. Developing world-class malls will be more profitable for the countries which are high potential tourism destinations. Since this study has only focused on the consumers of the young age group, expanding the research area by focusing on different age categories of consumers. Further research is needed to identify specific factors and specifics and the relationships concerning gender and different income categories. Further, research focusing on the behavior of foreign and local tourists visiting malls would be more helpful in designing world-class malls.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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ANNEXURE-01

Table 2: Factors identified from previous studies

No.	Factor	Measurement	Authors
1.	Ambiance	Light, Colour, Aesthetics, Temperature	Han et al., (2019)
	Consumption	Brand, Trained staff, new fashion style, Price	
	Entertainment	Food courts, Activities for youth, Games, Cinemas, Children's play areas, Crowds	
	Built environment	Sitting areas, Signage, Lifts and elevators, Layouts, Architecture, Accessibility, Parking spaces	
2.	Atmospherics	Lighting, Facilities for elderly/ differently-abled, Temperature control, Attractive interior décor, pleasant scent (odor), Landscaping, Music, Crowd management, External façade, Parking, Ventilation	Tripathi & Tandon (2014)
	Entertainment	Mall popularity, Experience of accompanying person, Theme based events, Promotional events, Socialization opportunities, Play area for children	
	Tenant management	Variety of brands, Space management, Tenant variety, Tenant directory, Store space, Prestige of brands	
	Facilities management	Arrangements for water, Seating arrangement, Maintenance of facilities, Maintenance of flooring, clean washroom	
3.	Ambience	Store layout, Interiors, Lighting, Colour, Aisle, Heating/ in-store, temperature, Store size, Crowd, Music, Cleanliness	Ahmed et al., (2019).
	Amenities	Variety of stores, Number of stores, Design, Parking facilities	
	Safety	Vehicle, Lift/escalator, Restroom	
4.	Merchandising	Assortment and quality of Merchandise, Packaging of Products, Price	Mittal & Jhamb, (2016)
	Variety & selection	Availability of Brands and products, Exchange Facilities	
	Milieu and facilities	Parking Facility, Adequate Dressing Rooms, In-Store Promotions, Pleasant Ambience, Children Play Area	
	Convenience	Trained Sales Personnel, Convenient Shopping Hours, Suitable Location	
5.	Ambience	Illumination, Temperature control, Background music, General hygiene, Ambient odour, Landscaping	Singh & Prashar, (2013)
	Convenience	Utilities, Distance of mall from home, Lifts and escalators, Floor plan	
	Physical infrastructure	Size of the mall, Parking space, Open space, Size of atrium	
	Marketing focus	Promotional events, Mall façade, Tenant mix	
	Safety and security	Compliance with construction laws, Security against act of terror	
7.	Ambience	Music, lighting, temperature	Khare, (2012)
	Design	Good facilities, architecture, decoration	
	Interiors	Interior wall and floor color schemes, overall design, spacious and clean	
	Service	Good restrooms, service staff are helpful	

	Assortment	Good bargains, product variety, product quality	
	Socializing	Good place to see different people, relax and spend time, to do window Shopping, enjoy meeting friends in the malls, walking in the malls without buying	
	Entertainment	Cinema theaters, entertainment facilities, food courts, good variety of food items	
8.	Dimensions	Design and convenience, Children safety environment, Parking facilities, Tenant / Service offering, Mall marketing activities, Ladies/ elderly safety & convenience	Wong & Nair, (2018).
9.	Comfort	Security, Availability of parking space, has all the family needs, Comfortable seats during shopping, Mall width, Cleanness, Comfortable interior design	El-Adly, (2007).
	Entertainment	Promotional campaigns, Presence of fun and entertainment programs, Existence of fun spaces for kids, Entertainment places for youth, Availability of loyalty programs	
	Diversity	Plurality and variety of restaurants, int'l stores branches, large food court, cinemas	
	Mall essence	Products' quality, appropriate level of prices, Plurality and variety of stores, Availability of after sale services	
	Convenience	Supermarket existence, Ease of reaching, Late working hours	
	Luxury	External appearance, Popularity of the mall	
10.	Ambient	Music, appropriate volume, lighting, temperature	Wakefield & Baker, (1998)
	Design	Architecture, decoration, interior wall and floor color schemes, overall design	
	Layout	Easy to get to the stores, food areas, and restrooms, Overall, the layout makes it easy to get around.	
	Variety	Variety of food, variety of stores, entertainment alternatives	
11.	Convenience	easy and convenient accessibility, good customer services, free parking	Calvo-Porrall & Lévy-Mangín, (2018)
	Tenant variety	having renowned retailers and franchises, supermarket, presence of related services (banks, mobile companies, etc.)	
	Internal environment	attractiveness of facilities and internal environment, rest/comfortable areas, convenient signposting in commercial area	
	Leisure mix	having movie theatres, cinemas, restaurants, cafes, coffee shops and snack bars	
	Promotions	have good/attractive sales, promotions, frequent communication, activities and promotions	
12.	Physical variables (Logistics related-9 and ambience related-12)	Distance, Public transport, Feeder roads to shopping mall, Car parking, Convenience for disabled and senior citizens, public phone booths, Security standards, Information booth, Evacuation path, Peripheral mall ambience, Inside mall ambience, Flowers and vegetation, Air conditioning, Lighting, Public audio-video system, Recreational place, Ethnicity, Hallway and shopping space, Relaxing benches, Terrace attractions, social status	Rajagopal, (2008)
	Economic variables (Comparative-6 and promotion based-8)	Value for money, Price sensitivity, Quality difference, Customer service, Cross promotion, Competitiveness, Promotional attractions, Product display, In-store ambience, Availability, Length of promotion, Responsiveness, Value added benefits, Partners of promotion	
13.	Atmospherics	Lighting, Facilities for elderly and differently abled, Temperature control, Attractive interior décor, pleasant scent (odour), Landscaping, Music (plying in the background), Crowd management, External façade, Ventilation	Tandon et al., (2016)
	Entertainment	Mall popularity, Experience of accompanying person, Theme-based events, Promotional events, Socialization	

	Tenant management	Play area for children, Variety of brands, Space management, Tenant variety, Tenant directory, Store space, Prestige of brands	
	Facilities management	Parking, Seating arrangement, Elevators and escalators, Maintenance of flooring, clean washroom	
14.	Variety, quality, supply, and status	Well-known stores, Exclusive clothing, Variety of stores, Variety of the offer and merchandise, Quality of exhibited products, Sensation of status	Ortegón-Cortázar & Royo-Vela, (2017)
	Eco-natural environment and design	Natural spaces or scenarios, Environments with vegetation, Eco-environmental design, Architecture integrating natural elements	
	Mobility and accessibility	Easy access and movement within the shopping center, Space for walking, Easy access to the Shopping Center, Suitable orientations, Comfortable stores	
	Additional services and entertainment	Availability of restaurants and cafes, food areas, movies, good quality/price relationship of products and services	
	Physical environment, maintenance, Security & information	Air quality, Bathroom maintenance, Perceived level of security, Cleanliness and maintenance	
15.	Location	Convenient location, Located at retail belt	Wong et al., (2001)
	Quality and variety	Owner's reputation, Merchandise quality, Service quality, Merchandise variety, Service variety, General price level	
	Popularity	Uniqueness, Fashion	
	Facilities	Parking facilities, Adequate and well-organized entrances, Vertical transportation, Store atmosphere, Layout, Resting seats	
	Sales incentives	Availability of supermarket, Sales promotion, Food court, Special events, Late closing hours	

Source: Compiled by Authors