

## SHOPPERS' PERCEPTIONS OF MALLS

Shopping malls or centres cater beyond the normal grocery and clothing purchasing of consumers. In most cases, shoppers visit a shopping mall to do more than just shopping for products and services; they also visit the mall for lifestyle and entertainment experiences. Through these experiences the shopper forms perceptions about a shopping mall. Perceptions are influenced by mall attributes such as, perceived human crowding, variety of stores, safety, accessibility, location, decor and entertainment offered at the mall, to name but a few. When shoppers visit a mall, they form general opinions about a mall based on their experiences at the mall. Attributes such as the variety of stores and entertainment offered contribute largely to the shoppers' perceptions.

Research conducted by [Dr Melanie Wiese](#), (a staff member in the [Department of Marketing Management](#)) aimed to investigate shoppers' mall perceptions of specific shopping centre attributes. More specifically, the study aimed to determine if there are significant gender and age differences with regards to the specific shopping centre attributes, shopper satisfaction and mall commitment, as well as to investigate the existence of possible relationships between the selected attributes, shopper satisfaction and mall commitment. A sample of 200 was realised.

The results of the study revealed that entertainment and the variety of stores have a weak effect on shoppers' commitment to the mall. Therefore, shoppers are unlikely to be committed to a mall based solely on the entertainment offerings or store variety of a mall. However, since entertainment links with overall shopper satisfaction as well as mall commitment, it is important for shopping mall management to create a pleasing environment for shopping by providing entertainment such as video games, cinemas, special events, window shopping and restaurants. Since commitment to a mall is a strong antecedent to mall loyalty, mall managers need to develop strategies to enhance mall commitment. A mall that can generate more traffic is one that can demand higher lease prices from its store tenants because more mall traffic usually translates into more store traffic and sales. Mall managers should therefore strive to develop strategies which will allow malls to produce a sustainable competitive advantage – something that is currently lacking as reflected in the low mall commitment in this study. The results confirm that mall attributes such as store variety and entertainment can induce satisfaction, and this suggests that the development and presentation of strong mall attributes relevant to the target market will help to satisfy customers. The results also suggest that mall developers and mall managers need to ensure variety and entertainment, but that these two attributes alone may not be enough to ensure mall commitment.

This paper was presented by [Dr Melanie Wiese](#) at the 2013 [Global Business and Technology Association](#) (GBATA) conference held on 2-6 July 2013 in Helsinki, Finland.

Wiese, M. 2013. *Shoppers' perceptions of mall attributes, shopping satisfaction and mall commitment*. Paper presented at the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Global Business and Technology Association (GBATA), Helsinki, Finland, 2-6 July: 1278-1285.