

Original Research Article

EFFECT OF LANDSCAPE ON CONSUMERS BEHAVIOUR IN SHOPPING MALLS: AN EMPERICAL STUDY OF SHOPRITE MALLS AT AKURE, NIGERIA

Abstract

Consumer behaviors has become prominent in business platform and related discipline from past to present. Being able to understand consumer behaviors and identify strategies in this direction has become the most important condition for survival in competitive conditions. In this study, it is aimed to determine the relationship between consumption concept and architectural discipline. Design criteria that increase and decrease consumption preference and quantity have been investigated by determining the extent to which the interior and exterior architecture via landscape affected the consumption habits. Relevant literature, observations, and conceptual survey of the daily shopping malls were conducted at Shoprite Mall Akure. The Data was analyzed using Structural Equation Model (SEM) via AMOS to measure the architectural impacts on consumer shopping patterns. Thus, the findings shown that desirable landscape improve customer patronages tendency in shopping malls. This implies that architectural training and practice is sacrosanct in human shopping tendency.

Keywords: Architectural training, Consumer behavior, Consumption concept, Landscape, shopping mall.

INTRODUCTION

A shopping mall can be regarded as several shops, one or more buildings forming a commercial complex of stores and shops representing merchandisers that encompass pedestrian circulation which connects various units such as the restaurants, bars, movie theaters. The needs for shopping in towns and cities necessitate the development of shopping malls for people's business comforts and other social economic activities.

Thus, the early shopping malls and business centers planning and design often adopt the inward facing. The shops and stores following the idea of encouraging customers to shop within controlled business environment. Big shops are attached with a store to cater for the storage of goods in most of European cities; departmental stores of big sizes have become Institutions and good tourist attractions. Shopping malls in the present time has been high-tech commercial complex that offer good out-door that provide micro-climatic environs for the users and showcase natural elements in supporting human behavioral pattern in relation to their shopping activities. It

encourages the shoppers to spend more time to visit and involved in variety of activities in the shopping mall.

In Nigeria, the shopping mall has become a commercial hub in the big town and cities. However, the ancient market shops is the exit but the shopping complex and plaza engaged more patronages due to the availabilities of various activities, amenities, security and accessibility factors accompanying with the shopping malls.

Therefore, shopping mall has become very significant and a necessity for cities and urban social-economic growth that requires stakeholder's attention for its development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the advent of the democracy in the year 1999, Nigeria has witnessed reasonable level of economic development not withstanding other socio-cultural challenges experienced in the recent time. The development of big township into cities and establishment of higher institutions, good road networks and hospitals in villages and township support the rise of middle class that requires daily shopping and social interactions. Therefore, the affirmation necessitates the development of shopping malls and modern plazas that houses stores, shops restaurant, parking and eco- friendly environment to enhance human co- existence and development. Thus, the following malls are earlier the Polo park mall, Kwara mall, Ikeja city mall, Tinapa, Enugu shopping mall and shopping places like Leventis and Kingsway have been in existence and functioning in the 1980s. The advancement in technology and global marketing have increases the demand of consumptions and shopping. The shopping pattern in today's cities and urban centers has strong attachment with the immediate environment and landscape to attract effective social cohesiveness of customers.

Literature has proved that social-environmental factors can be easily influenced human behavioral patterns and emotional display (Chang et al., 2014; Chen & Hsieh, 2011; Baker et al., 1992; Baker et al., 1994; Kumar & Kim, 2014; Sherman et al., 1997). For instance, Sherman et al. (1997). It shows that environmental features in an environment has great influence in human cognitive response (Oloruntoba et al., 2013). Social factor has great tendency to control customer level of interaction,

conversation and the tendency and willingness to shop for more goods. Since environmental factors has significant effect on human social response, customer behavioral patterns can be encouraged and develop in a shopping mall with the attractive environmental features, appealing architectural edifice and landscape. As social factor has been established having relationship with the perception of the customers towards procurement tendency of product sold in a mall (Kumar & Kim, 2014; Baker et al., 1994; Chen & Hsieh, 2011). A shopping mall with well landscaped enviros exhibit good attractive tendency to customers as shoppers often enjoy staying longer in naturally conducive environment. Importantly, where buying and selling activities triumph. Landscape in build environment provide eco-friendly vicinity and control human movement, thereby reduces over-crowdiness (Oloruntoba et al., 2013), as crowdiness affect customers emotional state and shopping mood (Eroglu et al., 2005b; Pan & Siemens, 2011; Pons, Mourali & Giroux, 2014; Machleit, Eroglu & Mantel, 2000). Research has shown that customers tend to shop more and exhibit high level of comfort under well controlled shopping centers, plaza and retail markets (Machleit et al., 2000, Michon et al., 2005; Argo, Dahl & Manchanda, 2005; Eroglu et al., 2005a; Pan and Siemens, 2011; Uhrich, 2011). The aforementioned shows the significance of the shopping concept and the shopping centers in the lives of the people. Shopping structures to achieved its purpose by designing it to meet the society needs and desires. The search for a place where people can meet the need for shopping as well as traveling to enjoy in their spare time or leisure time plays significant role in shaping shopping centers and malls (Uslu,

In this study, it is aimed to investigate consumption concept, consumers behavior, shopping centers and architectural design, and evaluation the effects of the designs on consumer behavior.

1.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

1.1 CONCEPTUAL / THEORETICAL

The activities of man in public space generate social interaction among users which reflects the public space environmental comfortability and psychological image of physical environment (Carmona et al., 2003; Pasaogullari and Doratli, 2004; Kang,

2006; Hau et al., 2012; Oloruntoba et al., 2013a; Andrew K. et al., 2022). Importantly, Erkip (1997) and Whyte, (2000) argue that accessibility is primary in measuring the degree of public space utilization in an environment while Pasaogullari and Doratli (2004) posits that in addition to accessibility of public space, the quality of public space, comfort, facilities and amenities , and attractiveness of public space were listed as contributing factors of public space utilization as we considered collective mind and social cohesion as determined factor of customers shopping behavior.

Figure 1: Interrelationship among Shopping Mall actors

Figure 2: Landscape in Public space and customer's behaviour Model in Shopping Malls

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As the study was designed to be comprehensive, the methods to be employed. Customer's perceptual survey via structured questionnaires.

- i. Distribution of questionnaires to the users of the shopping mall to determine their level of satisfaction with landscape provided.
- ii. Study of the quality and quantity of spaces provided for shopping and circulation and the surrounding environment.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Hypothesis Development

The degree of utilization of Landscape in public space affects group social ties (ST) and is reflected in the community's collective mind (CM). It has been postulated that the quality of public space Landscape (QTP), comfort derived in public space Landscape (CTP), attractiveness of public space (ATP), and its accessibility (ACC) determine public space utilization (Passaugulari and Doratli, 2004). However, O'Reilly et al. (1998) opined that a group becomes satisfactory to its environment and fellow members when they exhibit a good degree of cohesive affinity. Group cohesiveness is associated with individual membership within a group to remain a unit in pursuit of a collective goal (Carron et al., 1998). Huang (2009) avers that social ties and collective minds predicts group social cohesion. Collective bond and social unity can lead to group cohesiveness. It reflects a common community connection that facilitates participation and willingness to help others as a result of bond and trust that were developed through consistent interaction (Macinko and Starfield, 2001) that is obtainable in public spaces (Carmona et al. 2003; Oloruntoba et al., 2013b). The aforementioned factors exhibited in Public space Landscape as expected in Shopping Malls. Hence a total of 211 structured questionnaires were administered by the ShopRite customer's

Therefore, confirmatory analysis model was developed (Figure 3) and hypotheses that:

H1- Quality derived in landscape (QTP) can positively influence Social ties of Customers (ST).

H2- Quality derived in landscape (QTP) can positively influence Collective Mind of customers (CM).

H3- Comfort derived in landscape (CTP) can positively influence Social ties of Customers of Customers (ST).

H4- Comfort derived in landscape (CTP) can positively influence Collective Mind of customers (CM).

H5- Attractiveness of landscape (ATP) can positively influence Social ties of Customers (ST).

H6- Accessibility to landscape (ACC) can positively influence Social ties of Customers (ST).

H7- Attractiveness of landscape (ATP) can positively influence Collective Mind of

customers CM.

H8- Accessibility to landscape (ACC) can positively influence Collective Mind of customers CM.

H9- Social ties of Customers (ST) can positively influence Collective Mind of customers (CM).

Thus, the study develops a model to validate the influence of social cohesion on collective mind of customers to buy and sell in shopping mall. Having developed a model to validate the hypothesis, the model was validated to ascertain the study research aim and addresses the hypotheses. The level of shopping MALL landscape/ open space utilization in relation to the degree of customer's behaviours was given research analytical consideration using survey questionnaires and observations.

Thereafter, based on the administered survey questionnaires, variables to variable test was carried out to verify the assumptions of public space in fostering social cohesion, and further validates the potential influences of social cohesion on customers behaviours development as postulated in the literature. Since this study hinged more on the quantitative approach, variable to variable test was done to prepare better research pedestal and supports for the research questions and hypothesis proposed. Thus, public space utilization variables via landscape (constructs) were tested in relation to social cohesion variables (constructs) to establish the existing interrelationships (Figure 3).

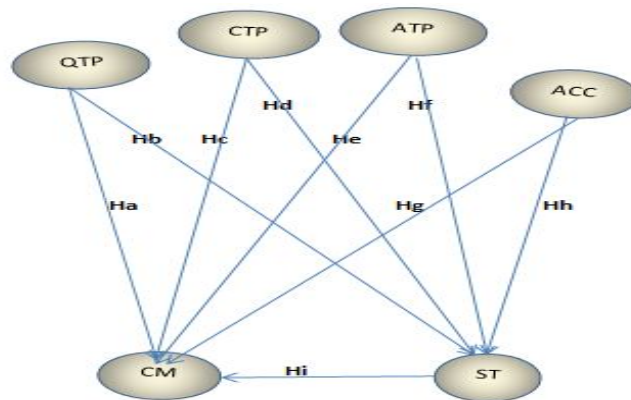


Figure 3 Proposed confirmatory research model of Landscape in public space and customer's behaviour to shopping (variables to variables)

Note: Comfort derived in landscape = CTP, Quality derived in landscape = QLP, Accessibility to landscape = ACC, Attractiveness of landscape = ATP, Social ties =

ST, Collective Mind of customers behaviour to shopping = CM, Social cohesion = SC

Data Analysis and Results

This study carried out a test to examine the effects of Landscape utilization variables (accessibility, comfort, attractiveness, and quality) on customer's social cohesion variables (collective mind and social ties) as presented in Figure 1 in of this study. Therefore, convergent validity of the variables was analyzed and followed by testing of data reliability. Thus, the significance of the model was determined by using SEM as a reliable tool to test the causal relationships between the variables that have multiple indicators (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1996). AMOS was applied (as a structural equation-modeling tool) in this analysis to achieve detail and graphical presentation of the findings. The validity tests performed on all the variables indicate that the indicators of the variables exhibit a factor loading value that is higher than the minimum recommended value of 0.7 affirmed by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

Thus, all the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed the minimum recommended value of 0.5 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1998), which implies that the measure exhibits sufficient convergent validity (Table 1,2). As such, all the factors reflect unidimensionality. The measurement model variables were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1992). All factor loadings exceeded 0.5 at the significance level of 0.001. In Figure 4, the observed normalized χ^2 for the measuring model was 2.183 ($\chi^2/df = 2.183$; where $df = 180$), which was less than 3.0, a good value as recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). The goodness of fit index (GFI) was 0.853 and the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) was 0.811, both exceeding 0.8, which is recommended as a marginal acceptable value (Chau and Hu, 2001).

The comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.932 and it exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.9 (Chau and Hu, 2001). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was below the maximum cutoff level of 0.08 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993) at 0.075. Therefore, the collective output of this result indicates that the measurement model exhibited a good degree of acceptability and it provides

support for the structural model's validity. Figure 2 depicts the analysis of this result while the path loadings are further illustrated in Table 1.

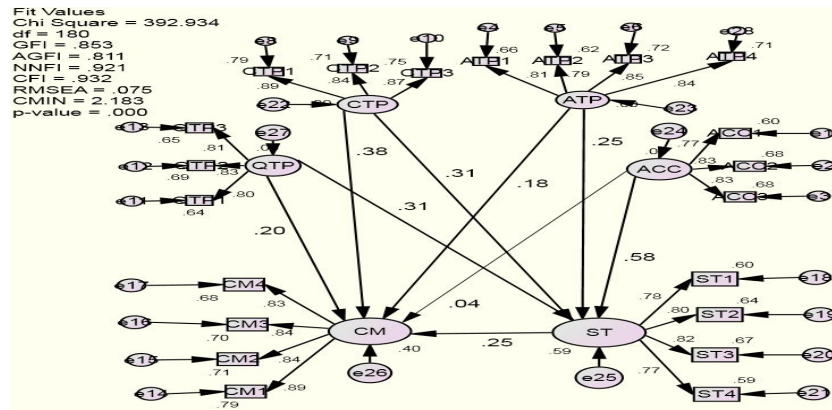


Figure 4 : Results of the confirmatory analysis model.

Note: Comfort derived in landscape = CTP, Quality derived in landscape = QLP, Accessibility to landscape = ACC, Attractiveness of landscape = ATP, Social ties = ST, Collective Mind of customers behaviour to shopping = CM, Social cohesion among customers= SC

Table 1: Measurements of variance analysis and reliability.

Variables and Indicators	Item Loading	T-value	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability
Accessibility	0.774		0.849	0.655	0.851
ACC1					
ACC2	0.827	11.669			
ACC3	0.826	11.664			
Attractiveness	0.815		0.849	0.680	0.895
ATP1					
ATP2	0.790	12.601			
ATP3	0.850	13.823			
ATP4	0.843	13.698	0.854	0.749	0.900
Comfort					
CTP1	0.889				
CTP2	0.840	15.453			
CTP3	0.867	16.122			
Quality			0.899	0.662	0.854
QTP1	0.800				
QTP2	0.832	11.885			
QTP3	0.808	11.687			

Collective Mind			0.919	0.716	0.911
CM1	0.887				
CM2	0.841	16.001			
CM3	0.836	15.855			
CM4	0.826	15.506			
Social Ties	0.778		0.900	0.626	0.870
ST1					
ST2	0.801	11.936			
ST3	0.817	12.202			
ST4	0.769	11.408			

Note: Comfort = CTP, Quality = QLP, Accessibility = ACC, Attractiveness = ATP, Social ties = ST, Collective Mind = CM, Social cohesion = SC.

This study considered the path loadings of approximately 0.2 and above as a practically significant loading as recommended by Cohen (1988; 1992a; 1992b). Hence, the results indicate that the quality of public space (QTP) is practically significant to CM and ST exhibits path loadings of 0.2 and 0.31 on collective mind (CM) and social ties (ST), respectively. The comfort derived in public space (CTP) exhibits path loadings of 0.38 and 0.31 on CM and ST, respectively, which implies that both CM and ST can be influenced by CTP. Attractiveness of public space (Landscape) (ATP) has a significant influence on both CM and ST and it exhibits 0.18 and 0.25 path loadings on CM and ST, respectively. Accessibility to Landscape (ACC) has a path loading of 0.58 on ST and depicts a good significance level but it has 0.04 paths loading on CM, which indicates the weak influence. However, social tie of customers (ST) was found to demonstrate a reliable influence (0.25 path loading) on the collective mind of customers to selling/ Buying (CM).

Table 2: Summary of structural model results

Hypothesis	Hypothesized path	Path coefficient	Results
H1	QTP can positively influence ST.	0.20	Supported
H2	QTP can positively influence CM.	0.31	Supported
H3	CTP can positively influence ST.	0.38	Supported
H4	CTP can positively influence CM.	0.31	Supported
H5	ATP can positively influence ST.	0.18	Supported

H6	ATP can positively influence CM.	0.25	Supported
H7	ACC can positively influence ST.	0.04	Not Supported
H8	ACC can positively influence CM.	0.58	Supported
H9	ST can positively influence CM.	0.25	Supported

Note: Comfort derived in landscape = CTP, Quality derived in landscape = QLP, Accessibility to landscape = ACC, Attractiveness of landscape = ATP, Social ties = ST, Collective Mind of customers behaviour to shopping = CM, Social cohesion among customers= SC

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Landscape / Public space measuring variables were strongly associated with the customer's social cohesion measurement variables (Ha, Hb, Hc, Hd, He, Hf, and Hg). This implies that the factors that are responsible for social cohesion Shopping Malls influenced by landscape (public space) variables (QTP, ATP, CTP, and ACC). In Tables 1; 2, and Figure 4, the resulting outputs indicate that only the accessibility to Landscape does not have a strong influence on CM (Hg) but it demonstrates a strong influence on ST (Hh). Interestingly, this research model further presents that people's ST has a practically significant influence on CM (Hi), which suggests that the weak relationship between ACC and CM can be considered insignificant as ST will eventually influence the people's collective mind of customers in shop in Malls (CM).

This result suggested that, in Cities, users of Landscape meet to have social contact that trigger social cohesiveness via social interaction. The Landscape / public space attributing variable of comfort, quality, and attractiveness in Shopping Malls such as the aesthetics, amenities, landscape, facilities, and safety have significant influence on the social ties and the collective mind that reflects the group social bond and share goal respectively. Social bond is developing among the customers in Shopping Malls as a result of their social interactions and engagement in social spaces, importantly in public spaces. However, user accessibility to public space in Malls exhibited the potential to influence social ties that associated with their social bond but incapable to trigger user's collective mind. This is due to the fact that group collective mind that reflects their shared goal may require users having interest and deriving social and mental gains in public space to develop group share goal as a result of the consistent social bond. Therefore, accessibility to Landscape /public space in

Shopping Malls cannot independently influence the collective mind as reflected in Figure 4 but facilitates social ties. This finding is consistent with past studies that postulate people who visit public spaces, particularly those who involve in social activities in a public space of acquiring social bonds (Peters et al., 2010; Carmona et al., 2008; Macinko and Starfield, 2001). It affirmed that architectural training and practice has significant influence on human shopping potency.

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