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THE COMPARATIVE MALL SHOPPING BEHAVIOR: THREE COUNTRIES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The main purpose of the current study is to investigate the consumers' mall shopping behaviour. The study examined the differences in terms of shopping motives, mall attributes, activities carried out, product purchased in malls, and visiting patterns among the consumers from three different countries in the Middle East.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The countries were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. When sampling individual respondents in the malls, however, systematic random sampling was employed. A total of 1084 mall customers were interviewed in the exits of the malls through a structured questionnaire. Of the 1084 respondents, 324 were collected from Lebanon, 488 from Saudi Arabia, and 272 from the United Arab Emirates.

Findings: The study clearly indicated that there are significant differences in terms of customers' shopping motivation dimensions and mall attributes in the three Middle Eastern countries. It also uncovered that mall shopping activities and products purchased make important variances among customers. Furthermore, mall visiting patterns and outcomes of visits were found to be different among customers from the three countries.

Originality/Value: There are numerous studies in the literature investigating mall shopping behavior in certain countries. A handful of comparative studies also examined mall shopping behavior in different cultures. This study attempts to identify the mall shopping behavioral differences among the consumers from three different countries in the same culture and region.

Key Words: Mall shopping, consumer shopping motivations, mall attributes, mall shopping patterns, Middle East.

INTRODUCTION

Shopping malls have been of much interest to researchers in recent times. Nowadays, it is quite obvious that the modern mall concept is gaining more and more ground in retail. Countries with an emerging economy are one of the most obvious examples, where malls are emerging in great numbers, changing the way customers shop and like to shop (Li, Zhou, Nicholls, Zhuang and Kranendonk, 2004). Malls have become the central point of community entertainment and contribute to a city's social and economic environment (Ng, 2003). Malls are of great importance to customers and the retail trade in any economy and also signify urban development. Goss (1993) suggests that shopping plays a pivotal role in a consumers' life and malls are not just places for

retail but also meeting places for people. They do not only containing shops, but both private and public services as well, such as banks, money exchange offices, health centers, libraries, citizen service etc. Malls also offer a range of experiences such as cinemas, restaurants, cafes, and entertainment facilities.

Over the past several decades, retailing has become increasingly competitive, especially, as the industry matures, competition grows in intensity and complexity while consumer demand changes and becomes more fragmented. In such an environment, understanding and predicting consumer behavior is an important subject of retail research. Consumer satisfaction, as well as loyalty, becomes the ultimate objective for mall management and retailers. Therefore, a critical issue for malls and retail management is to determine the factors affecting a consumers' purchase decisions.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Mall retailing significantly contributes to developing economies as well developed ones. It has also changed the consumers' purchasing behavior. Middle East markets continue to attract an increasing number of international retailers competing with established global retail centres. Countries in the Middle East such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait offer great opportunities for mall retailing. The study attempts to investigate the differences among the consumers from three countries, namely the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon although they are located in the same region.

The UAE's retail sales are forecasted to grow from \$31.01bn in 2011 to \$41.22bn by 2015. According to a report by the consultancy Ledbury Research, the number of luxury outlets in the

world increased by 14 per cent in 2011 while in the UAE the number of luxury stores increased by almost 50 per cent. Key factors behind the impressive 33 per cent growth are strong underlying economic growth, increasing household consumption, growing acceptance of modern retailing concepts, and expatriate wealth. The average spending power of a household in the UAE stands at $14,400 per annum. Emirati households contribute significantly to this with an average of $23,000 per annum (Gissing and Wallace, 2008). Dubai and Abu Dhabi (the capital of the UAE) continue to be the main hub for the UAE's retail industry.

Saudi Arabia has the largest retail market in the Arabian Peninsula. Retail sales in Saudi Arabia are expected to grow from about $27 billion in 2011 to more than $37bn in 2015 (Business Monitor International, 2011). About 50 per cent of these sales are expected to be made by shopping malls. Currently, Saudi Arabia is witnessing an accelerated increase in retail business and the number of shopping centers, especially in main cities. The capital city, Riyadh, has around 150 shopping centers. The larger size of population, high percentage of youth population, and their high levels of disposable income provide an attractive opportunity for retail sector growth.

Lebanon is a service-based economy. Between 1997 and 2008, growth was driven by three sectors: retail and wholesale trade, telecom, and banks. Retail and wholesale trade sectors contributed 9.4 per cent to Lebanese economy over the past decade (Mottu and Nakhle, 2010). Lebanon is grouped as an "upper-middle income" economy by the World Bank with a per capita income of over $8,000. Although there are no official statistics on the country, it is believed that around 5 per cent of the Lebanese population is extremely wealthy and can afford a luxury and lavish lifestyle, whilst 30-40 per cent of the population belongs to the middle-income class who are affluent enough to pursue a

quality lifestyle and demand branded products. The Lebanese are adaptive to Western culture and lifestyle. Although it has recently attracted many investors who want to build modern shopping malls and other types of shopping centres, political tension due to war in the region poses a big threat to retailing.

The main purpose of the current study is to investigate consumers' mall shopping behaviour in three different countries in the Middle East.

Based on the central purpose of the study, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the differences among consumers in the three countries in terms of shopping motives?

2. Are there any significant differences among consumers in the three countries regarding their perception of mall attributes?

3. What are the differences among consumers in the three countries based on their activities and products they purchased from the malls?

4. Are there any significant differences among consumers from the three countries in terms of visiting patterns, such as, duration of shopping, number of visits, and number of shops visited etc.?

5. What are the differences between the three countries regarding outcomes of shopping from malls in terms of emotions, satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation?

The reason behind developing research questions rather than hypotheses is to reveal as much information as possible in our study as opposed to testing the hypotheses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Retailers and manufacturers are very interested in how shoppers make their purchase decisions, as well as when, why and whether a shopping trip leads to a purchase. Such information is critical in formulating marketing strategy and retail planning. Marketing literature has revealed that many factors may affect a shoppers' purchase decisions, including individual and psychological characteristics, cultural, social and environmental variables, and promotional strategies.

The current study investigates mall shopping motives, mall attributes, mall activities and products purchased from malls, and situational factors.

The Shopping Motives

Several studies in the literature have investigated underlying consumer shopping motivations. The earliest typology by Stone (1954) identified four shopper groups. The "Economic shopper" tends to emphasise price, quality, and the variety of merchandise; the "Personalizing shopper" looks for personal relationships in the context of shopping; the "Ethical shopper" employs moral principles in their choice of stores; and the "Apathetic shopper" shops out of necessity. Tauber (1972) categorized shopping motivations as personal and social motives. Personal motives included; role playing, diversion, self-gratification, learning about new trends, physical activity, and sensory simulation. Social motives for shopping involved; social experiences outside the home,

communication with others that have a similar interest, peer group attraction, and status and authority. Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg (1977) identified "the recreational shopper" as well as "the convenience (economic) shopper". Unlike the economic shopper, the recreational shopper gains satisfaction from the act of shopping itself.

Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) distinguished utilitarian motivations that are directed towards satisfying a functional or economic need and hedonic shopping motivations that are recreation, and pleasure and simulation oriented. Bloch, Ridway and Dawson (1994) considered the large enclosed mall as society's dominant consumer habitat and identified "mall enthusiasts", "traditionalists", "grazers" and "minimalists" based on the activities related to acquisition of products and services, and experiential consumption. Terblanch (1999) considered three types of shoppers based on the perceived benefits that consumers enjoyed during the mall visit; "the functional", "recreational", and "social shoppers". Arnold and Reynolds, (2003) identified six hedonic shopping motivations: adventure, social, gratification shopping, idea shopping, role shopping, and value shopping. They indicated that consumers go for shopping to get a multitude of senses such as thrill, excitement, and the ability to have an out of this world experience charged with sounds, sights, and smells. Ruiz, Chebat and Hansen (2004) recognized four types of shoppers by employing a consumer's activities in the shopping mall; "recreational", "full experience", "traditional" and "mission shoppers". Based on the work of Arnold and Reynolds (2003), Kim (2006) analysed hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations among inner city and non-inner city shoppers. Besides the six hedonic motivations He distinguished utilitarian motivations into two sub-dimensions: "achievement" and "efficiency". Indeed, many consumers today are becoming more concerned about efficiency due to the time pressures they face.

It can be concluded that there are a numerous shopper typologies in the literature based on shopping motives, which can be classified under two general motives. First, utilitarian shoppers are ones who are practical in their purchases and seek to satisfy their most utilitarian needs; this group has been identified as minimalists, serious or mission shoppers (Gonzalez-Hernandez and Orozco-Gomez, 2012). Second, hedonic shoppers consider shopping malls a place for socialization, entertainment, and leisure activities. This group has been named, grazers, entertainment, recreational, relaxed or full-experience shoppers.

Mall Attributes

Investigating what attributes make a shopping mall attractive has been the subject of many studies since the 1960s. The distance from the consumer's home and the size of shopping mall were found to be the most significant attributes in earlier studies (Brunner and Mason, 1968; Huff, 1964, 1966; Cox and Cooke, 1970). However, studies at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s began employing multidimensional models by adding more cognitive attributes in order to better explain a shopping mall's attractiveness. These cognitive attributes have evolved into the concept of shopping mall image which describes the perceptions of consumers. For example, Mas-Ruiz (1999) identified three main attributes to measure shopping mall image; shopping environment, variety and professionalism, and parking. Other studies recognized for main components of shopping mall image were merchandising, accessibility, services, and atmospherics (Dennis, Marsland and Cockett, 2001; Wong, Lu and Yuan, 2001; Sit, Merrilees and Birch, 2003).

Consumers evaluate shopping malls based on different attributes or dimensions. For example, convenience and location were found to be the most important mall attributes (Singh and Sahay, 2012; Wong, Ng, Wong and Wong, 2012; Jackson, Stoel, and Brantley, 2011). Anselmsson (2006),

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Majumdar (2005) and Lehew, Burgess and Wesley (2002) identified mall atmosphere as a significant dimension. Some studies stressed the importance of the presence of an anchor store (Damian, Curto and Pinto, 2011; Finn, 1996), a variety of stores (Chebat, Sirgy and Grzeskowiak, 2010; El-Adly, 2007; Lee, Ibrahim, and Faisal, 2005), and retail assortment (Chebat, et al., 2010; Yilmaz, 2004; Frasquet, et al., 2001). Malls perceived to have stores with acceptable prices are likely to be favoured by shoppers than malls with stores having unacceptable prices (Chebat, Sirgy and Grzeskowiak, 2010; Yilmaz, 2004). Others found entertainment to be one part of the attractiveness attribute for the malls (Jackson, Stoel, and Brantley, 2011; El-Adly, 2007; Sit, Merrilees, and Birch, 2003; Reynolds, Ganesh, Luckett, 2002). Special events such as cultural performances, fashion shows, and parties (Lee, Ibrahim, and Faisal, 2005) were also found to be essential mall attributes. As the literature review indicates, consumers favour malls for a variety of attributes.

Mall Shopping Activities and Products Purchased

A review of the literature reveals that consumers visit a mall for a variety of reasons; purchasing, recreation, eating, socialization with friends, bargain hunting, and collecting information (Gilboa and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2012; Millan and Howart, 2007; Haytko and Baker, 2004; Ruiz, et al., 2004;Tsang, Zhuang, Li and Zhou, 2003). Utilitarian consumers go to malls for convenience and monetary savings, and value quality of shopping on the basis of their shopping experiences rather than collecting information or purchasing products. However, malls are consumer habitats in which the goal of each consumers visit is to satisfy different needs. Therefore, malls should include different facilities and dimensions, such as dining, entertainment, and leisure. Furthermore, the

distinction between shopping and entertainment is becoming blurred because shopping mall patronage nowadays involves more than the acquisition of goods and/or services but also the pursuit of leisure activities like entertainment. Additionally, consumers are becoming time poor and seeking to maximize their shopping time via multitasking. That is, consumers seek to fulfil both task and non-task oriented shopping activities in one excursion to shopping malls.

Consumers purchase a variety of products from malls. One of the main functions of shopping malls is to provide a variety of products such as food, clothing, household products, cosmetics, jewelry, under one roof. This variable, however, has not been studied very extensively in the literature (Gilboa and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2010, Zhuang, 2006).

Visiting Patterns

Visiting patterns refer to aspects of visitors' behaviour such as frequency of trips to the mall, time spent at the mall, number of malls visited, and mall companions (Millan and Howard, 2007; El-Adly, 2007) and these influence consumers' purchasing decisions. For example, mall customers tend to buy more products and spend more money when accompanied by a friend or relative (Borges, Chebat and Babin, 2010; Nicholls, Roslow and Dublish, 1997). Purchases made during the shopping trips can be either planned or unplanned. Many consumers are used to preparing mental or written shopping lists before going shopping. Some customers, on the other hand, are impulse shoppers who make their purchase decisions primarily based on hedonic or experiential motives. Customers who had made lists make more purchases than those who had not. There is also positive relationship between the time and money spent in malls; the more time visitors spent in malls, the more money they spend (Kuruvilla and Joshi, 2010). Frequency of shopping, shopping duration,

and time of the day significantly affect shopping behavior (Li, F., Zhou, N., Nicholls, J. A. F., Zhuang and Kranendonk, C., 2004; Nicholls, et al., 1997).

Shopping outcomes

Satisfaction represents a response with a cognitive and/or emotional character as a result of a specific product, service or experience (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt 2000). Satisfaction can be the crucial predictor of future patronage intentions and loyalty since it functions as an internal mechanism for confirming or disproving consumer expectations. This is important for mall management and retailers in order to maintain and enhance their customers' future behaviors such as patronage, loyalty and recommendations by designing the appropriate set of specific strategic and tactical actions. Loyalty is also considered to be an extension of satisfaction and refers to revisiting the mall and repurchase or re-patronage of a product, service or retail offer. It is a construct of compound moments of truth revealing positive consumer experiences relative to the retailer's merchandise or service (LeHew, Burgess and Wesley, 2002; Oliver 1999). Some studies (Chebat, et al., 2010; Andreu, Bigne, Chumpitaz and Swaen, 2006; Hunter, 2006; Stoel, Wickliffe, Lee, 2004; LeHew, et al., 2002) explained that the atmosphere of shopping malls affects consumers' experiences through creating positive emotions and arousal, and this consequently results in favourable outcomes such as a desire to stay longer, spend more money, and satisfaction with and loyalty to a mall.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection Method

Sampling is more difficult in international compared to domestic research. At least two levels of sampling should be considered in international research: sampling of countries and sampling of the individual respondents from within each country. The countries were selected based on convenience sampling, including Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The selected cities: Beirut, Riyad and Abu Dhabi, were thought to be representative of those countries. In the sampling of individual respondents in the malls, systematic random sampling was used since the objective of the study was to make generalizations about the populations. Every tenth customer was interviewed at the exits of the malls through a structured questionnaire. Arabic and English versions of the questionnaire were used in the study. As shopping profiles can differ considerably with the time of day and day of the week, interviews were conducted at different periods within the week and at different times. The study is based on a total of 1084 respondents.

Out of 600 people surveyed, only 324 surveys were collected in Lebanon, giving a response rate of 54 per cent. Of the 324 respondents, 190 were female and 134 were male. University graduates represent 83 per cent of the sample. Almost two third of the respondents were from the 18-30 age

group. Public and private employees made up 40 per cent. Out of 1000 people surveyed in Saudi Arabia, 488 surveys were collected, giving a response rate 48.8 per cent. Of the 488 respondents, 462 were males and 26 females. There are some reasons behind the low number of Saudi female participation. First, going shopping alone for Saudi females is forbidden due to cultural and religious reasons. Second, it is a challenging task to approach Saudi women for market researchers as strangers. Therefore, it is tolerable to achieve a low level of female participation. More than two thirds of the sample had a university degree. Distribution of the sample according to age groups was almost evenly distributed among the 20-40 age group. Almost 90 per cent of the Saudi sample was public and private company employees. Out of 550 people surveyed in the UAE, 272 surveys were collected, giving a response rate of 49.45 per cent. Of the 272 respondents, 114 were males and 156 females. Distribution of the sample based on age groups was almost evenly distributed among the 20-40 age group.

Research Variables

The short version of mall shopping motives was adopted from Babin, et al. (1994) in the questionnaire. These were measured on a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Respondents were asked to indicate the main reason or reasons for visiting that particular mall. The eleven answers included well-known brands, atmosphere, easy parking, assortment of merchandise, quality of merchandise etc. Respondents were asked to measure them on a seven point Likert- scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very likely). The respondents were asked to indicate the activities they have done in the mall of the six shopping activities such as looking and browsing, bargain hunting, shopping in a specific store etc. The questionnaire also contained product categories and asked respondents to specify the products they

bought from the mall like food, clothing, household items etc. The visiting patterns, planned versus unplanned, first time versus many visits to the mall, going to the mall earlier than 1pm or later and weekday versus weekend were also asked in the questionnaire. They were measured with the dichotomous scale. The duration of shopping, the number of stores visited, and the number of companions were included and measured with ratio scales. The questionnaire included questions regarding the outcomes of shopping, namely, emotions, satisfaction, loyalty and word of mouth. Emotions were measured by asking respondents to rate how much they felt specific emotions while shopping. They indicated their agreement on a 7-point scale, 1(strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Emotion items were "happy", "pleased", satisfied", "contented" etc. Satisfaction was measured with the statement "my overall satisfaction from this mall" on the scale ranging 1(very low) to 7 (very high). Loyalty was measured with three statements, like "the probability that I would visit this mall is" on the scale 1(very unlikely) to 7 (very likely). Recommendation was measured with the statement "the likelihood that I would recommend this mall to my friends, relatives and colleagues is" on the scale 1(very low) to 7 (very high). Finally, the questionnaire included demographic variables, such as age, gender, education, work status, and income level.

FINDINGS

Before analyzing the data, exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied to both the shopping motives and mall attractiveness factors in order to gather the variables into meaningful groups. The purpose of the analysis was also to assess the dimensionality, measurement and psychometric properties of scales used in the study.

Table 1: Results of Factor Analysis of Shopping Motivations

Shopping motivations	Factor Loading	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Joy of shopping		36.035	.837
I continued to shop, not because I had to, but because I wanted to	.827		
This shopping trip was truly a joy	.771		
I enjoyed this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased	.734		
Compared to other things I could have done, the time spent shopping was truly enjoyable	.700		
I had a good time because I was able to act on "the spur-of-the moment"	.587		
Adventure of shopping		15.752	.701
During the trip, I felt the excitement of the hunt	.782		
While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure	.778		
While shopping, I was able to forget my problems	.647		
Efficiency of shopping		9.416	.601
I couldn't buy what I really needed	.766		
I was disappointed because I had to go to another store(s) to complete my shopping trip	.757		
This shopping trip was not a very nice time out	.711		
Notes: Principal component analysis; varimax with Kaiser normalization; a rotation converged in five iterations; KMO: .852; Barlett: 3280.049; df: 55; p , 0.001			

According to the factor analysis results, the shopping motives were grouped under three headings: joy of shopping, adventure shopping, and efficiency of shopping. Factor analysis explains 61.2 per cent of the total changes in variations. Cronbach's alpha values for the three shopping motive dimensions were between .60 and .83, an acceptable level for further analysis. Table 1 presents the factor analysis of shopping motivations for the total population.

Table 2: Results of factor analysis of mall attributes

Mall Attractiveness Factors	Factor Loading	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Internal attributes		50.133	.892
Well-known brands	.801		
Favourite specialty shops	.774		
Attractive design and decoration	.747		
Assortment of merchandise	.680		
Quality of merchandise	.636		
Good value for the price	.615		
Ambience of the mall	.606		
Quality of service	.606		
External attributes		11.118	.736
Easy parking	.863		
Security	.716		
Access convenience	.671		
Notes: Principal component analysis; varimax with Kaiser normalization; a rotation converged in three iterations; KMO: .910; Barlett: 5337.923; df: 55; p , 0.001			

According to factor analysis results, the study grouped mall attributes into two sub-dimensions: internal attributes and external attributes. Factor analysis explained 61.2 percent of the total changes in variations. Cronbach's alpha values for internal and external attributes were .89 and .73 respectively.

Table 3: ANOVA analysis results of shopping values

Shopping values and mall attributes		DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Sig.	
Shopping values							
	Between groups	75.328	2	37.664	40.622	.000	UAE›LB›KSA
Joy of shopping	Within groups	933.672	1007	.927			
	Total	1009.000	1009				
	Between groups	1.640	2	.820	.820	.441	ns.
Adventure shopping	Within groups	1007.360	1007	1.000			
	Total	1009.000	1009				
	Between groups	78.230	2	39.115	42.318	.000	UAE›LB›KSA
Efficiency of shopping	Within groups	930.770	1007	.924			
	Total	1009.000	1009				
Mall Attributes							
	Between groups	44.513	2	22.256	23.223	.000	UAE›LB›KSA
Internal Attributes	Within groups	978.487	1021	.958			
	Total	1923.000	1023				
	Between groups	3.764	2	1.882	1.885	.152	ns.
External Attributes	Within groups	1019.236	1021	.998			
	Total	1023.000	1023				

Then, ANOVA analysis was applied in order to test the differences among the countries regarding shopping motivations and mall attributes. According to the test results, the difference among the countries in terms of joy of shopping (F: 40.622, p<.001) and efficiency of shopping (F: 42.318, p<.001) were significant. However, adventure of shopping did not differentiate the countries. Of the mall attributes, only internal attributes significantly differentiated the countries (F: 23.223, p<.001). Table 3 shows the ANOVA test results of shopping motives and mall attributes based on the countries.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis results of the activities and products purchased in the mall

Activities	Lebanese		Saudi		UAE		X^2	Sig.
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Looking and browsing	109	33.6	118	24.2	86	31.6	9.888	.007
Making a specific purchase	81	25.0	254	52.0	50	18.4	108.754	.000
Bargain hunting	15	4.6	70	43.7	12	4.4	31.726	.000
Eating	165	50.9	134	27.5	106	39.0	46.222	.000
Shopping from a specific store	132	40.7	206	42.2	190	69.9	65.150	.000
Meeting with friends	154	47.5	72	14.8	104	38.2	109.203	.000
Purchased Products								
Food	157	48.5	226	46.3	136	50.0	1.014	.602
Clothing	192	59.3	340	69.7	188	69.1	10.650	.005
Household products	28	8.6	136	27.9	90	33.1	58.994	.000
Stationary	13	4.0	54	11.1	38	14.0	18.692	.000
Cosmetics	65	20.1	166	34.0	122	44.9	42.236	.000
Other products	65	20.1	48	9.8	42	15.4	17.002	.000

Chi-square analysis was applied to activities done in the malls and products purchased from malls. According to the analysis results, the samples in the study showed considerable differences regarding activities carried out in the mall. For example, shopping from a specific store differentiated the customers (p<.001). UAE customers visit a mall to shop from a specific store (%69.9), compared to Lebanese (% 40.7) and Saudi customers (% 42.2). Making a specific purchase was one of the activities that separated customers (p<.001). Most Saudi consumers (% 52) go to the mall for this purpose, compared to Lebanese (% 25) and UAE consumers (%18.4). Eating is one of the main activities that significantly differentiated Lebanese consumers (% 50.9) from UAE consumers (% 39) and Saudi consumers (% 27.5) (p<.001). Lebanese consumers (% 47.5) prefer to go to malls to meet with friends, compared to UAE consumers (% 38.2) and Saudi consumers (% 14.8) (p<.001).

The consumers from the three Middle Eastern countries differed on the basis of the product categories they bought from the malls, except food items. The consumers from the three countries purchased mainly clothing and food items from the malls. Food products did not differentiate consumers from the three countries. Half of the UAE consumers bought food items, compared to Lebanese (%48.5) and Saudi consumers (% 46.3). Almost 70 percent of UAE and Saudi consumers visited the malls to purchase clothing compared to Lebanese consumers (% 59.3) and this difference was significant ((p<.001). One third of the UAE consumers (33.1) bought household items from the malls compared to Saudis (% 27.9) and Lebanese (%8.6) (p<.001). Cosmetics items are popular among the UAE (% 44.9) and Saudi (% 34), but not Lebanese (% 20.1) and this difference appeared to be significant (p<.001). The Chi-square analysis results for the activities carried out in the malls and the products purchased are presented in Table 4.

Table 5: Chi-square analysis results on visiting patterns

Visiting Patterns	Lebanese		Saudi		UAE		X^2	Sig.
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Planned vs. Unplanned visit	194	59.9	400	82.3	172	63.7	56.527	.000
First time vs. many times visits	28	8.6	58	12.4	26	9.6	3.263	.196
Earlier than 1pm vs later	60	19.8	24	4.9	64	23.7	62.825	.000
Weekdays vs weekend	178	54.9	114	23.6	142	52.6	102.263	.000
Shopping from a specific store	132	40.7	206	42.2	190	69.9	65.150	.000
Meeting with friends	154	47.5	72	14.8	104	38.2	109.203	.000

The consumers from the three Middle Eastern countries generally plan to visit the malls. Most of the Saudi consumers (% 82.3), however, make a planned visit compared to UAE consumers (% 63.7) and Lebanese consumers (% 59.9) and this difference was significant (p<.001). Lebanese consumers (% 54.9) and UAE consumers (% 52.6) prefer to go to the malls on weekdays rather than weekends, whereas Saudi consumers (% 23.6) favor weekend visits (p<.001). There are

significant differences among consumers from the three countries (p<.001) although most of the consumers in the three samples choose to visit the malls later than 1 pm. The Chi-square results on the visiting patterns are presented in Table 5.

Table 6: ANOVA analysis results on visiting patterns

Visiting Patterns		DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	
	Between group	.794	2	.397	.189	.827	ns.
Number of visit during the week	Within groups	2014.807	962	2.094			
	Total	2015.601	964				
	Between groups	73.209	2	36.605	1.586	.205	ns.
Number of stores visited	Within groups	23569.235	1021	23.084			
	Total	23642.444	1023				
	Between groups	146.838	2	73.419	3.204	.041	KSA›UAE›LB
Number of companions	Within groups	23878.406	1042	22.916			
	Total	24025.244	1044				
	Between groups	143.041	2	71.521	20.907	.000	UAE›LB›KSA
Length of visit	Within groups	3574.775	1045	3.421			
	Total	3717.816	1047				

Of the visiting patterns, the study found that there were no significant relationships between the countries and the length of stay and number of stores visited in the malls. However, differences were found in the number of companions the consumers visited the malls with (F: 3.204, p<.05). Saudi consumers came to the malls with more people, holding an average of 3.18 people, compared to UAE consumers with 2.97 people and Lebanese consumers with 2.31 people. Time spent in the malls was significantly different among the consumers from the three countries (F: 20.907, p<.001).

UAE consumers stayed longer in the malls (3.26 hours) compared to Lebanese (2.63 hours) and

Saudi consumers (2.32 hours). ANOVA analysis results on the visiting patterns are presented in

Table 6.

Table 7: ANOVA analysis results of outcomes of mall shopping

Outcomes		DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	
	Between group	86.221	2	43.111	30.076	.000	UAE›LB›KSA
Emotions	Within groups	1483.539	1035	1.433			
	Total	1569.760	1037				
	Between groups	77.477	2	38.739	22.219	.000	UAE›LB›KSA
Satisfaction	Within groups	1884.747	1081	1.744			
	Total	1962.224	1083				
	Between groups	118.707	2	59.353	37.526	.000	LB›UAE›KSA
Loyalty	Within groups	1695.537	1072	1.582			
	Total	1814.243	1074				
	Between groups	124.945	2	62.472	29.445	.000	LB›UAE›KSA
Recommendation	Within groups	2285.047	1077	2.122			
	Total	2409.992	1079				

According to ANOVA analysis that was applied to the outcomes of the mall shopping experience

presented in Table 7, Middle Eastern consumers were found to be significantly different in terms of

all mall shopping outcomes. UAE consumers have the highest positive shopping emotions (F:

30.076, $p<.001$) and satisfaction (F: 22.219, $p<.001$) compared to other countries. Lebanese

consumers have more loyalty to their shopping malls (F: 37.526, $p<.001$) and they recommend

them more than consumers from other countries (F: 29.445, $p<.001$).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

Shopping plays an important role in a consumers' life. Retailers and manufacturers are very interested in consumer making decisions in retailing in order to produce sound marketing strategies. Competition among different types of retail formats is also becoming intense. Recently, it is quite obvious that the modern mall concept is gaining more and more ground in retailing. Shopping malls are emerging in great numbers in developing countries as well as in developed ones. The challenge for retailers and shopping mall management is to understand how to compete successfully against their local competitors. For these reasons, the study tried to compare consumers from three Middle Eastern countries based on their motivations, perceptions of mall attributes, activities carried out, the products purchased, and some situational factors influencing their shopping behaviours in the malls.

The study findings clearly indicate that there are significant differences among the customers' shopping motivation dimensions. The joy of shopping and efficiency of shopping are higher in the UAE than the other two countries. The study also found that UAE customers value internal attributes of the malls higher than other countries' consumers. There was no difference among the consumers in terms of adventure shopping motivations and external attributes of malls.

The samples in the study showed considerable differences based on all the activities carried out in the mall. Middle Eastern consumers, especially in the UAE visit a mall to shop from a specific store. For most of the Saudi consumers, going to a mall for making a specific purchase and

shopping from a specific store are the main activities they do in the malls. Lebanese consumers, on the other hand, go to malls for mainly eating and meeting with friends.

In the analysis of the products purchased from the malls, consumers considerably differed in terms of all types of product categories except food. Consumers mainly go to malls to buy food items and clothing in the three countries. Besides these categories, UAE consumers purchase cosmetics and household products from the malls.

The study results indicated that situational factors differentiate the consumers except the frequency of visits in a week and first time versus many times. First of all, all the consumers prefer to make a planned and afternoon visit to malls. Lebanese and UAE consumers tend to shop from the malls on weekdays rather than on weekends. Saudi consumers visit the malls with more companions and UAE consumers stay longer in the malls than the other consumers.

Based on the findings regarding the outcomes of shopping, all outcome variables namely, emotions, satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation separated the consumers from the three countries. UAE consumers have more positive shopping emotions and satisfaction than other countries, whereas Lebanese consumers are more loyal to their malls and make more positive recommendation compared other consumers.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study have implications for both researchers and practitioners. For researchers, this study showed that there are quite significant differences among consumers from the three different countries, sharing almost the same culture and speaking the same language in the same region. This finding is important in that the consumers from geographically and culturally similar countries can present different shopping behaviors.

For practitioners, first, malls are the community places where consumers enjoy shopping and play an important role in their lives. On the other hand, consumers expect to find various stores and brands and complete their shopping with efficiency. Second, consumers care about the internal attributes of the malls more than external ones. Therefore, mall management should provide attractive design and décor, specialty shops, well-known brands, and good quality merchandise and service. Creating a pleasant shopping environment should be seen as essential to attract customers. Third, customers visit malls for a variety of reasons, including buying food and beverages, visiting a certain store, looking and browsing, bargain hunting, eating, meeting with friends, etc. Mall management should carefully plan the malls layout by considering the customers' reasons to visit and activities done in the malls. Fourth, mall visiting patterns of the customers from the different countries could be different. Thus, mall management should make necessary arrangements to provide better service to their customers. Finally, outcomes of mall shopping, namely emotions, satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation are crucial for the success of the malls and retailers. Therefore, they should take necessary actions to deliver better products and services to their customers.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This research has some limitations which should be dealt with in future works. First, this study investigated some variables that can be important for the mall shopping behavior. Further studies can integrate more variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of mall shopping behavior in the Middle East. Second, convenience sampling was used in the selection of the countries for the survey. Future studies can improve on this limitation by using random sampling techniques in order to increase accuracy. Third, further studies can employ samples from different countries to improve our understanding about Middle Easter consumers.

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