

SHOPPING MALL ATTRIBUTES ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN SEREMBAN CITY

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Abstract. The retail industry in Malaysia is dominated by several key players, including both local and international retailers. It has made influential contributions to the national economic performance over the decades. Due to its significant contributions to the economy, this sector needs major attention to ensure the sustainability of economic success. The growing competition between shopping malls demands effective and strategic measures to offer pleasant shopping experiences to shopping mall visitors. To ensure long-term sustainability, mall operators must bridge the gap between customer expectations and mall attributes. This is to ensure the economic prosperity of the retail industry. This paper aims to explore the relationship between shopping mall attributes and customer satisfaction. This research carried out a quantitative methodology by distributing questionnaires to the respondents. The Relative Importance Index (RII) is implemented to analyse the data collected from 143 samples of respondents by using the convenience sampling technique. The study found that reachability was ranked as the most important attribute that impacted customer satisfaction, followed by service quality, facilities and amenities, entertainment, ambience and pricing and promotion of the products. The results suggest strategic innovative measures to improve customer experience and satisfaction to keep the economic benefits and tremendous turnover.

Keywords: attributes, customers' loyalty, customers' experience, relevance, service quality

Introduction

In the modern-day landscape of retail, shopping malls stand as quintessential hubs of consumer activities, including entertainment, gathering, dining, shopping and so on. Shopping malls also offer a diverse range of products and services as well as offering experience paradigms under one roof. Accordingly, The Malaysia Retail Market size is estimated at USD 89.66 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 119.64 billion by 2029. This has made the retail industry one of the largest contributing sectors to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the years. Malaysia's retail industry also achieved a better-than-expected growth rate, increasing by of 6.5% in retail sales in the final quarter of 2025 (DOSM, 2026). In the vibrant landscape of the Malaysian retail sector, shopping malls have evolved from mere points of purchase into integrated lifestyle hubs. The National Property Information Centre (NAPIC) reports over 1,000 shopping complexes nationwide, offering millions of square meters of retail spaces. However, this saturation has intensified competition, making the retention of shoppers increasingly difficult. Amidst the burgeoning competition in retail sectors, understanding the complex relationship between mall attributes and customer satisfaction has become crucial for the stakeholders to thrive in this dynamic environment. There is evidence that some of the mall management failed to attract customers and are unable to produce desirable profits, according to Zanawani et al.

(2022) and the growing mall population has changed the perspectives of the consumers as they tend to be more selective in their visits to malls.

Research indicates that customer satisfaction serves as the critical bridge between a mall's physical and functional environment and long-term customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction measures how well the expectations of a customer concerning a product or service provided by a company or business have been met. Schmitt (2003) defines customer services as "a state of mind in which the customer's needs, wants and expectations throughout the product or services that have been met or exceeded, resulting in future repurchase and customer loyalty". Customer satisfaction is pivotal for business owners or retailers in providing insights into parametric measurement to quantify the effectiveness of service. If the customers feel delighted and enjoy the products or services given by the business, then they will repurchase, revisit and raise the loyalty among the visitors. Customer loyalty is advantageous in many aspects. According to Ha (2021), shoppers who truly value a product are often eager to share their positive experiences without expecting any reward. Because this word-of-mouth is seen as selfless and sincere, the general public tends to trust peer recommendations far more than official advertisements. Therefore, an organisation's success lies in the satisfaction of customers by adding other factors like trust and commitment. Customer satisfaction and loyalty with shopping mall attributes play crucial roles in determining the influencing shopping behaviours and frequent visits. Notably, several key attributes will contribute to the overall satisfaction, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects of the mall environment.

Literature review

Shopping mall attributes impacting customers' satisfaction

Based on previous research, there are many spectrums of shopping mall attributes that have been identified as influencing factors impacting customer satisfaction. Some of the scholars name the attributes as dimensions, elements, and even classified as assets. The research classifies the shopping mall attributes into six (6) spectrums, namely reachability, ambience, entertainment, price and promotion of the products, facilities and amenities and last but not least, the service quality.

Reachability

While mall attributes such as merchandise variety, entertainment options, and social activities are vital for extending visit duration, the physical accessibility of the mall is often termed "reachability" remains a primary determinant of customer choice. Research by Thanasi-Boçe et al. (2020) suggests that mall size often outweighs driving distance in importance; however, "good location" is a subjective concept defined by a shopper's specific situational needs. This includes the proximity to their residence and the convenience of satisfying multiple needs in a single trip. A "convenient" location is often one that sits between a shopper's workplace and home, allowing for errand-splitting. In regions with tropical or arid climates, such as Kuwait or Malaysia, external environmental factors further dictate mall reachability, as persistent hot weather makes air-conditioned malls an essential shelter. When combined with underdeveloped public transport networks and high vehicle ownership, the mall becomes a primary target for "car-centric" social life. On the other hand, modern shoppers increasingly prioritise malls that are easily accessible via private transport. According to Yusuf et al. (2022),

ease of access for personal vehicles is a decisive factor in mall selection. Concurrently, Amin et al. (2021) seconded the reachability as an essential tangible aspect of the location of the shopping mall. Other than that, the distance to the parking area and pedestrians are also tangible attributes that determine customer satisfaction.

Ambiance

Shopping mall ambiance includes various sensory elements such as lighting, music, decorations, layout and overall atmosphere which collectively contribute to create a pleasant and engaging shopping setting. The physical atmosphere of a shopping mall acts as a primary catalyst for attracting patronage and enhancing the overall shopping experience. Yuan et al. (2021), emphasis on environmental comfort, which incorporates thermal, visual, and acoustic factors alongside the spatial structure of the mall, significantly shapes how consumers perceive their visit. These settings, which include the mall's layout, aesthetic appeal, and fixtures, are essential in creating an inviting space that encourages shoppers to remain within the premises (Mayhoub and Rabboh, 2022; Turkson et al., 2022). Some researchers also highlight that the quality of lighting (ambiance) is a more significant determinant of customer satisfaction than the specific light source itself, providing connections to outside views and natural sunlight, which enhances the perception of daylight, correlates with higher shopper satisfaction (Şener Yılmaz, 2018). Thus, strategic lighting does more than just provide visibility; it strengthens brand image, increases sales volume, and elevates the customer's perception of product quality and price value. However, a well-designed environment may not be the sole driver of long-term commitment. Adeola et al. (2023) argue that while a pleasant environment is attractive, it does not necessarily guarantee loyalty on its own. Instead, it is the perceived mall value encompassing utilitarian (functional), hedonic (pleasurable), and epistemic (novelty-seeking) values that ultimately secures customer loyalty. This suggests that while a superior physical environment sets the stage, the value derived from the shopping experience is what ensures repeat visits.

Entertainment

Modern shopping centres have transitioned from traditional retail outlets into multifaceted lifestyle destinations. According to Makhitha (2023), these malls now serve dual-purpose hubs where diverse product categories and speciality stores coexist with extensive recreational offerings. This evolution is a response to intense market competition, where malls utilise a variety of entertainment alternatives to differentiate their brand image and curate a more pleasurable shopping experience (Thanasi-Boçe et al., 2020). The efficacy of entertainment in securing patronage can be attributed to several key factors, which are physical stimulation and segment-specific appeal. The entertainment value of a mall is derived from specific triggers within its ecosystem. Jabeen et al. (2024) highlight that the combination of atmospheric elements, recreational amenities, and sensory stimuli provides shoppers with a form of "temporary enjoyment" that enhances the overall appeal of the destination. For certain consumer segments, entertainment is not merely an add-on but a primary driver of mall selection. This is particularly evident among the younger generation, where the presence of "fun" and interactive facilities significantly increases the frequency of their visits and satisfaction (Adeola et al., 2023). In a saturated market, offering unique entertainment experiences

allows a mall to carve out a distinct identity, appealing directly to those seeking hedonic fulfilment alongside their utilitarian shopping needs.

Price and promotion of the products

The competitiveness of a shopping mall is fundamentally rooted in its ability to cater to a diverse range of consumer needs through a comprehensive mix of products and services. According to Adeola et al. (2023), leading malls in developed retail landscapes are characterised by their "always-on" availability and a wide variety of stores, restaurants, and entertainment facilities. This multi-category approach ensures that the mall appeals to a broad spectrum of shoppers by providing a one-stop destination for both utilitarian and recreational requirements. Beyond the physical presence of stores, the strategic composition of a mall's offerings serves as a critical selection factor for consumers. This involves two primary dimensions, which are the extensiveness of facilities and retailers, and price and promotional attractions. The availability of various specialised shops and support facilities is a decisive factor in where a consumer chooses to shop (Yusuf et al., 2022). A mall that offers a wide range of product categories and service providers can better capture market share by fulfilling multiple shopping missions in a single visit. Pricing strategies remain a dominant influence on patronage habits. Makhitha (2023) notes that price and promotional activities are often deemed the most significant attributes for shoppers when selecting a destination. By offering products across various price segments from budget-friendly options to premium brands, malls can attract a more inclusive demographic. In the Malaysian context, the synergy between a diverse tenant mix and competitive pricing creates a compelling value proposition. When a mall successfully integrates a variety of speciality stores with attractive price points and promotional incentives, it significantly enhances its interest as a preferred destination for the local community.

Facilities and amenities

Facilities Management (FM) serves as the vital link between a mall's physical assets and the people who use them. According to Yusuf et al. (2022), FM is an integrated discipline that coordinates infrastructure services to create a cohesive environment that supports a mall's primary business operations. In an era where shopping centres must compete intensely to attract consumers seeking exciting atmospheres and comprehensive facilities. Šostar et al. (2024) mention that FM practices must be continuously refined to meet high service standards and provide "value for money" to the shopper. The physical configuration of a mall, including spatial layout, lighting quality, and the reliability of vertical transportation, such as elevators, often dictates a shopper's preference for one mall over another (Yusuf et al., 2022). A superior and comfortable environment creates an "ambience" that encourages longer stay durations and strengthens customer loyalty. Basic operational excellence, such as floor cleaning and proactive maintenance services, are fundamental to effective space management. Kushwaha et al. (2017) emphasise that cleanliness is a critical factor in establishing a positive atmosphere. These services are not merely administrative; they are strategic tools used to attract and retain shoppers by consistently meeting their hygiene expectations. Superior FM practices are directly linked to higher levels of consumer satisfaction. Research indicates that malls which prioritise safer and more comfortable facilities (for example, AEON Mall) achieve significantly higher satisfaction ratings

than those with substandard management (Yusuf et al., 2022). Ultimately, when a mall's facility management is executed at an excellent level, it transforms the physical space into a destination where customers feel safe and valued, directly influencing their willingness to return.

Service quality

The human element, specifically customer service, is a primary determinant of a mall's success. Yusuf et al. (2022) identify customer service as a significant attribute that directly dictates long-term loyalty. This service quality is largely personified by the staff; when employees demonstrate friendliness, helpfulness, and a commitment to "time convenience," they create a positive psychological bond with the shopper, making them more likely to return (Adeola et al., 2023). The overall service encounter serves as the foundation for a shopper's perception of value. According to Turkson et al. (2022), the experience value of a mall is influenced by several critical dimensions, which are service efficiency, dual value creation and atmospheric synergy. Those are the speed and excellence with which staff handle inquiries or issues; high-quality service encounters satisfy both utilitarian needs (efficiency and task completion) and hedonic needs (the enjoyment of a welcoming and playful environment). When service excellence is paired with a pleasant mall setting, it significantly elevates the customer's overall experience value. Furthermore, Kushwaha et al. (2017) provide a comprehensive framework for satisfaction, identifying seven significant factors that shape the shopping experience. These include service experience (defined by security and cleanliness), internal environment (design and architecture), convenience (operating hours and parking), and utilitarian factors (variety of goods). Notably, safety and security supported by visible and helpful staff are essential for ensuring a secure shopping environment, which remains a top priority for Malaysian shoppers. To conclude the literature reviews, the research conceptual framework is shown as in *Figure 1*.

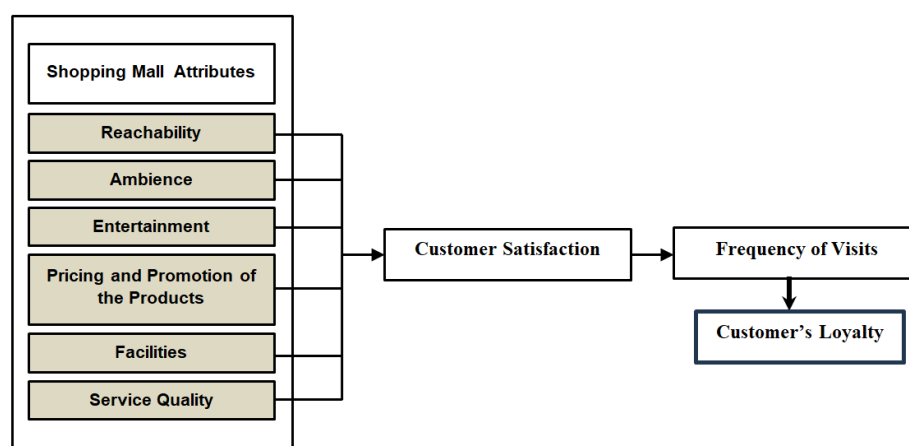


Figure 1. The research conceptual framework.
Source: Yusmar and Azman (2023).

Materials and Methods

Data collection, data analysis section A and section B

This study applied quantitative research methods. The non-probability of convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling technique as it is less costly, resourceful and easy to implement due to certain limitations while performing this research. This research involved adult visitors (18 years old and above) in a shopping mall. It was conducted face-to-face as the researcher approached the respondents and asked them to complete the survey via Google Form questionnaires. There 143 respondents participated in this research, representing the patrons of ABC Mall in the city centre of Seremban, Malaysia. The case study was chosen based on its characteristics, offering nearly 100 speciality stores, including a bowling alley and amusement facilities. The mall is also easily accessible, close to the city centre, and equipped with various facilities and reasonable operating hours. The Cronbach-alpha value for this questionnaire was 0.846, depicted as good reliability, reflecting the interrelated items within the test. The questionnaires consisted of two (2) sections, namely Section A and Section B.

Table 1 presents a comprehensive profile of the respondents' demographic characteristics and visitation patterns. Section A of the research instrument was designed to capture essential background variables, including gender, age, and occupation, which serve as the baseline for the study. Furthermore, this section examines the respondents' frequency and purpose of visits, as these behavioural indicators are critical in evaluating their subsequent impact on customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. The data is analysed in the form of descriptive statistics. By establishing this demographic framework, the study can better correlate specific consumer segments with their unique perceptions of the shopping mall environment. The sample is predominantly female, representing 63.64% (n=91) of total respondents compared to 36.36% (n=52) males. A notable trend in the cross-tabulation shows that shopping (SHP) is the primary motivator for both genders, though significantly more pronounced in females (n=55). Interestingly, male respondents showed a higher relative interest in entertainment (ENT) (n=17) compared to their dining preferences. The largest age groups are the 21–30 years (30.77%) and 51 and above (28.67%).

Table 1. Crosstabulation between demographic profile and the purpose of visits.

Variable	DIN	ENT	SHP	OTR	N	%
Gender						
Male	4	17	22	9	52	36.36
Female	15	10	55	11	91	63.64
Age						
20 years and below	2	5	2	6	15	10.49
21-30 years	7	9	25	3	44	30.77
31-40 years	5	10	11	3	29	20.28
41-50 years	2	0	8	4	14	9.79
51 and above	3	3	31	4	41	28.67
Occupation						
Government Sector	6	12	26	7	51	35.67
Private Sector	2	2	10	5	19	13.29
Sel-employed	3	0	7	3	13	9.09
Pensioner	1	1	13	3	18	12.58
Students	7	12	21	2	42	29.37
Frequency of visits						
None	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-2 times a month	4	8	16	2	30	20.98
3-4 times a month	11	13	40	15	79	55.25
More than 4 times a month	4	6	21	3	34	23.77
Purpose of visit	19	27	77	20	143	100

Note: DIN=Dining; ENT=Entertainment; SHP=Shopping; OTR=Others; N=Frequency; %=Percentage.

The young adult cohort (21 years old – 30 years old) was highly active in shopping (n=25) and entertainment (n=95), a trend that aligns with Thanasi-Boçe et al. (2020), who posited that younger consumers are more inclined to seek social, gratifying experiences and participate in entertaining activities during their retail journeys. While senior respondents (51 years old and above) show the highest concentration for shopping (n=31), this may suggest that older consumers view malls as a primary destination for essential procurement or low-impact exercise (walking). Conversely, the motivations of senior citizens appear strictly utilitarian or health-oriented. These findings are corroborated by Yuan et al. (2021), whose research highlights a fundamental split in priorities: younger cohorts value product diversity, whereas older shoppers prioritise the physical comfort and accessibility of the mall environment. The middle-aged respondents (31 years old - 40 years old), on the other hand, show a balanced distribution, with a noticeable interest in entertainment (n=10). The respondents are largely comprised of those in the Government Sector (35.67%) and Students (29.37%). The government employees have displayed a strong preference for shopping (n=26) and entertainment (n=12). The students' respondents show the most diversity in their visit purposes, contributing significantly to entertainment (n=12) and dining (n=7), likely due to the social nature of their mall visits. As expected, the group of pensioners focuses almost exclusively on shopping (n=13).

A majority of the respondents (55.25%) visit shopping malls 3–4 times a month, which aligns with a weekly visiting habit. High-frequency visitors (more than 4 times a month) account for 23.77%. The data indicate that as the frequency of visits increases, shopping remains the dominant activity, suggesting that the mall serves as a habitual destination for the respondents' retail needs. Aggregating the totals at the bottom of the table, Shopping (SHP) is the leading purpose of visit (n=77), followed by Entertainment (ENT) (n=27), Other activities (n=20), and Dining (DIN) (n=19). The demographic analysis reveals a respondent profile dominated by female working adults and students who primarily utilise the mall for shopping and entertainment. The high frequency of visits (weekly or more) combined with the diverse occupational backgrounds suggests that the mall functions as a vital 'third place' for social and economic activity within the study area. In this study, mall patronage is operationalised through the frequency of visits. This approach is predicated on the principle that frequent shoppers often experience higher levels of satisfaction due to environmental familiarity and the reduction of navigational friction (Arifiana and Mardikaningsih, 2024). As repeat visitors have already established a behavioural bond with the retail centre, their expectations are more consistently aligned with the mall's offerings, facilitating a more seamless path to customer satisfaction (Adeola et al., 2023). In overall, the data suggests that while shopping remains the core functional draw, the mall serves as a multifunctional urban hub for diverse social and recreational activities among the Malaysian professional and student populations.

On the other hand, Section B encompassed twenty-nine (29) variables of shopping mall attributes categorised by reachability (1), ambience (2), entertainment (3), pricing and promotion of the products (4), facilities and amenities (5), as well as service quality (6) attributes. The five (5) Likert Scale format was used; (“1”) not satisfied, (“2”) slightly satisfied, (“3”) satisfied, (“4”) very satisfied and (“5”) extremely satisfied to record visitors' satisfaction on mall attributes. The Relative Importance Index (RII) determines the relative importance of the attributes involved. The points of the Likert

scale are equal to the value of W, the weighting given to each factor by the respondents. The Relative Importance Index (RII) was calculated by using Eq. (1).

$$\text{Relative Importance Index} = \frac{\sum W}{AN} = \frac{5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{5N} \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

Where, $\sum W$ =Sum of weighting given to each attribute by the respondent; A=the highest weight in the research; N=total number of respondents. The collected data were analysed descriptively by using the SPSS Statistics 28 Software as well as the Relative Importance Index (RII) to assess and rank the relative importance of the mall attributes and visitors' satisfaction. RII were categorized into five tiers of importance value where, high relative importance (H) (from 0.8 to 1), high medium relative importance (H-M) (from 0.6 to 0.8), medium relative importance (M) (from 0.4 to 0.6), medium-low relative importance (M-L) (from 0.2 to 0.4) and low relative importance (L) (from 0 to 0.2). Waidyasekara et al. (2016) believed that a high index denotes greater importance, applicability and relevance whilst a low index represents less importance, applicability and relevance.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 illustrates the overall ranking and importance of shopping malls' attributes towards customer satisfaction. Based on the RII scores, four elements were rated at a high importance level, while two others were rated at high-medium importance. The scores were between 0.71 to 0.85. Based on the overall ranking of the shopping mall's attributes, it is found that reachability ranked first (RII=0.8543), followed by service quality (RII=0.8355), facilities and amenities (RII=0.8215), entertainment (RII=0.8025), ambience (RII=0.7632) and lastly pricing and promotion of the products (RII=0.7103). This translates that reachability ranked the highest relative importance in determining the customers' satisfaction with the shopping mall's elements. Amin et al. (2021) contended that reachability factors such as travel time and distance, alongside the accessibility to shopping malls, serve as key determinants of shopping intention and behaviour. Consistent with these findings, Calvo-Porral and Lévy-Mangín (2018) also highlighted that accessibility remains essential in determining the success of a shopping mall. In addition to demographic indicators such as age and gender, consumer behaviour is also predisposed by shopping mall attributes, including layout, decoration, services, a range of retailers as well as entertainment options, which affect customers' purchasing decisions (Deftha et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025).

Table 2. The importance level of shopping mall's attributes.

Shopping Malls' Attributes	RII	Rank	Importance Value
Reachability	0.8543	1	High
Service Quality	0.8355	2	High
Facilities and amenities	0.8215	3	High
Entertainment	0.8025	4	High
Ambience	0.7632	5	High Medium
Pricing and Promotion of the Products	0.7103	6	High Medium

Table 3 further depicts the RII score of reachability attributes towards customers' satisfaction. The results indicate that the shopping mall should be located close to other amenities, ranked as the highest score, followed by close to other public transport in the second rank. This is consistent with the findings of Hawkins-Mofokeng et al. (2022) and Upadhyaya (2017), who agreed that mall reachability is crucial, as certain places surrounded by traffic congestion will irritate the shopper to shop at shopping centres and a lack of nearby public transport infrastructures. Furthermore, a sufficient number of sitting areas ranked third, followed by the distance between parking lots and the entrance, must be ample and satisfactory building layout are the sub-attributes in determining the customers' satisfaction. Therefore, 28.67% of the respondents who are aged 51 years old and above influence the result of the study. Amin et al. (2021) established that the shopping mall's entrance situated in proximity to parking facilities attracts significantly higher footfall compared to those located further away.

Table 3. *The descriptive analysis.*

Item	Shopping Malls' Attributes	RII	Rank	RII By Group
Reachability attributes				0.8543
RH2	Close to other necessary amenities	0.8713	1	
RH1	Close to public transport	0.8699	2	
RH3	Sufficient number of sitting areas	0.8615	3	
RH5	Distance between parking lots and the entrance	0.8126	4	
RH4	Satisfactory building layout	0.8112	5	
Ambience attributes				0.7632
AN1	A satisfactory amount of lighting	0.7944	1	
AN3	Good temperature control	0.7874	2	
AN5	Cleanliness	0.7577	3	
AN4	Convenient lobby space	0.7493	4	
AN2	Good air quality	0.7479	5	
AN6	Good interior and exterior design	0.7423	6	
Entertainment attributes				0.8025
ET5	Eateries	0.8210	1	
ET2	Arcades	0.8154	2	
ET1	Bowling Alley	0.8112	3	
ET4	Cineplexes	0.8014	4	
ET3	Children's Play Areas	0.7634	5	
Pricing and promotions of the product attributes				0.7103
PM4	Various ranges of products and services	0.7268	1	
PM2	Affordable price segments of products	0.7085	2	
PM3	Satisfactory allocation of vouchers and gifts	0.7085	3	
PM1	Various price segments of products	0.6972	4	
Facilities and amenities attributes				0.8215
FA2	Lifts and escalators are accessible to visitors	0.8476	1	
FA5	A sufficient number of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)	0.8280	2	
FA1	A sufficient number of parking lots	0.8196	3	
FA3	Acceptable amount of signage and a directory board)	0.8141	4	
FA4	Acceptable number of toilets, a baby changing room, and a musholla	0.8140	5	
Service quality attributes				0.8355
SE1	Good customer services	0.8476	1	
SE2	Reasonable operation hours	0.8420	2	
SE3	Sufficient wheelchairs and strollers	0.8168	3	

Table 3 illustrates the Relative Importance Index (RII) scores for the sub-attributes of ambience. Satisfactory lighting achieved the highest ranking, followed by effective temperature control, cleanliness, convenient lobby space, air quality, and aesthetic interior and exterior design. These findings align with Zanawani et al. (2022), who identified lighting and air quality as the predominant ambience sub-attributes influencing customer satisfaction. This is further corroborated by recent studies such as Chen (2024), who posited that the physical mall environment remains a critical determinant of shopper contentment. Nevertheless, the RII scores indicate that while

these ambience sub-attributes are influential, they have lower relative importance than other primary attributes, such as reachability.

The Relative Importance Index (RII) scores for entertainment sub-attributes are detailed in *Table 3*. Eateries emerged as the highest-ranked sub-attribute, followed by arcades, bowling alleys, cineplexes, and children's play areas. This hierarchy of preference is likely influenced by the specific demographic profile of the respondents and their primary motivations for visiting the mall. In the current retail landscape, intense competitiveness between shopping centres is increasingly enacted through the provision of diverse entertainment alternatives aimed at fostering a superior shopping experience. According to Thanasi-Boçe et al. (2020), amenities in the context of supplementary services in shopping complexes serve as critical instruments for mall image differentiation, particularly for consumer segments that prioritise experiential value over traditional transactional shopping. This aligns with the observations of Zanawani et al. (2022), who noted that urban dwellers frequent malls' visit as a form of social escapism, as they are seeking a psychological reprieve from the "hustle and bustle" of city life. Furthermore, the latest industry data suggests that Food and Beverages (F&B) remain a primary anchor for physical malls, with 78% of Malaysians preferring in-person dining despite the rise of digital commerce (Rahim et al., 2025). Consequently, leisure facilities such as arcades and bowling alleys do not merely provide entertainment, but they also function as "de-stressing" environments that extend shopper dwell time and foster emotional engagement (Upadhyaya, 2017).

While product pricing and promotion are traditionally considered vital drivers of mall patronage, the results in *Table 3* present an interesting divergence. The aggregate RII scores for the pricing and promotion category were the lowest among all tested sub-attributes. Specifically, "various ranges of products and services" achieved the highest ranking within this group (RII = 0.7268), followed by "affordable price segments" and "satisfactory allocation of vouchers and gifts" (both RII = 0.7085). Conversely, "various price segments of products" was positioned at the bottom of the scale (RII = 0.6972). This outcome is likely attributable to the demographic composition of the study, where working adults constitute 71% of the respondents. This suggests a sample with relatively high purchasing power, for whom aggressive discounting or diverse price points are less critical in determining overall satisfaction compared to product variety and quality. These findings align with Zanawani et al. (2022), who noted that urban shoppers in Malaysia increasingly prioritise the diversity of stores and merchandise over pure cost-savings. On the other hand, Makhitha (2023) identified that the affective shopping segments predominantly comprise young, single females. This cohort's consumer behaviour is primarily motivated by gratification-seeking, social interaction, value-driven purchasing, and a high degree of brand loyalty. However, this statement contrasts with Kalaivani and Shankar (2017), who identified a robust correlation between promotional activities and consumer behaviour. Meanwhile, promotional strategies typically bolster patronage and sales volumes in broader market contexts; the data here suggests that for the affluent urban professional segment, the breadth of offerings outweighs promotional incentives.

Table 3 presents the Relative Importance Index (RII) scores and the corresponding rankings for five sub-attributes within the Facilities and Amenities category. The overall group RII score is 0.8215, indicating that respondents generally perceive these attributes as highly significant to their shopping mall experience. The attribute "Lifts and escalators are accessible to visitors" achieved the highest RII score of 0.8476, ranking it

first. This suggests that physical mobility and ease of movement between different floor levels are the most critical functional requirements for shoppers. In the context of multi-storey Malaysian shopping complexes, efficient vertical transportation is a prerequisite for seamless navigation. Ranking second is the "Sufficient number of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)" with an RII of 0.8280. Despite the rise of digital payments, the high ranking of ATMs indicates that cash accessibility remains a vital convenience factor for mall patrons, likely for small-scale purchases, dining, or as a backup payment method. "A sufficient number of parking lots" ranked third (RII = 0.8196). This result underscores the reliance of Malaysian consumers on private vehicles. The availability of parking is a "gateway" facility; if parking is perceived as inadequate, it can serve as a significant deterrent to mall patronage regardless of other internal attractions. The remaining attributes, "Acceptable amount of signage and directory boards" (RII = 0.8141) and "Acceptable number of toilets, baby changing rooms, and musholla" (RII = 0.8140), ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. While ranking fifth, the score of 0.8140 is still very high, indicating these are "must-have" hygiene factors. In Malaysia, the inclusion of a musholla (prayer room) and baby changing rooms is a fundamental expectation for inclusive, family-friendly shopping environments. According to Zanawani et al. (2022), effective facilities management plays a vital role in determining the overall customer experience and overall satisfaction.

Table 3 presents the Relative Importance Index (RII) scores for the "Service Quality Attributes" category, which achieved a robust aggregate group score of 0.8355. The attribute "Good customer service" achieved the highest ranking (RII = 0.8476), indicating that the human element of service remains the most critical determinant of the shopping experience. This is followed by "Reasonable operation hours", which ranked second (RII = 0.8420), suggesting that mall accessibility in terms of time is a significant convenience factor for urban dwellers. Mahmud et al. (2023) noted that in emerging urban economies like Malaysia, extended or flexible operating hours are essential to accommodate the lifestyle of working professionals, directly impacting perceived mall convenience. Finally, the "Availability of sufficient wheelchairs and strollers" ranked third (RII = 0.8168). While it ranks lowest in this group, its high individual score underscores the growing importance of inclusivity and family-friendly amenities in modern mall management. Collectively, these findings underscore that shoppers prioritise professional service and temporal convenience as the primary drivers of satisfaction within the service domain.

Conclusion

Customer satisfaction is a key driver in providing marketers and business owners with parameters to manage and improve the business. Customer satisfaction is indispensable for business sustainability, especially in the long run. In summary, this study has explored the significant impact of shopping mall attributes towards customer satisfaction. Through extensive analysis and empirical evidence provided, it is apparent that reachability, service quality, facilities and amenities, entertainment, ambience and pricing and promotion of the product attributes play pivotal roles in shaping customers' experience and overall satisfaction levels. The findings suggest that shopping malls need to prearrange these attributes to boost customer satisfaction and earn customer loyalty. Moreover, the shopping mall developers and managers should also focus on forming a welcoming and pleasant ambience, especially for the mall which is located on

the urban fringe, while offering convenient facilities and amenities, providing a diverse range of stores according to their functionality, employing competitive pricing strategies and executing excellent customer service perceptions.

Furthermore, as consumer preferences change over time and competition intensifies, continuous monitoring and adaptation to these attributes are essential for maintaining customer delight and competitively persistent in the retail landscape. In order for the retailers to maintain their position in a good business atmosphere, the study suggests that these industry players delve further into the attributes involved, as well as explore the strategic innovation measures in improving services to the customers. Ultimately, understanding the interplay between shopping mall attributes and customer satisfaction is crucial for mall operators and retailers to flourish in the dynamic retail environment, which leads to greater customer experiences and long-term economic success.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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