

## Lifestyle, Entertainment and Retail Atmospheric of Customer's Preference Towards A Shopping Mall

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### ABSTRACT

A shopping mall is defined as an aggregation of retail and other commercial establishments owned and managed as a single property. Today, shopping malls offer services to customers in the form of convenient access to a desirable mix of retailers within a managed environment to provide a satisfying and safe shopping and leisure experience. This study aims to understand the influence of lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospheric on customers' preferences towards a shopping mall located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted to collect information and a total of 250 usable questionnaires were further used for data analysis. The findings indicated that lifestyle and entertainment were significantly related to the customers' preference towards the mall. Overall, this study provides an understanding of the customers' preference for a mall and adds to the body of knowledge in understanding consumer behavior.

**Keywords:** *Shopping Mall; Lifestyle; Entertainment; Retail Atmospheric; Malaysia*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A shopping mall is a group of retail and other commercial establishments that is planned, developed, owned, and managed as a single property, typically with on-site parking provided. The mall's size and orientation are generally determined by the market characteristics of the trade area served by the center (International Council of Shopping Centres – ICSC, 2014). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), a shopping mall is defined as an aggregation of retail and other commercial establishments owned and managed as a single property. Levy et al. (2014) described shopping malls as closed, climate-controlled, lighted shopping centers with retail stores on one or both sides of an enclosed walkway. Meanwhile, Kushwaha et al. (2017) stated that shopping malls offer services to their customers in the form of convenient access to a desirable mix of retailers within a managed environment to provide a satisfying and safe, shopping and leisure experience to the visitors.

However, the competition level in the retail market is high and requires the managers to manage their shopping malls appropriately as well as understand the visitors' behavior during their visit to a shopping

mall in terms of their main purpose of visiting the mall and the managers' attitudes to attract visitors to visit or revisit the relevant shopping mall (Makgopa, 2016). The New Straits Times (2018) reported that by the year 2019, Malaysia had 700 shopping malls with a total net lettable area of 170 million square feet. Currently, Malaysia has about 560 shopping malls operating nationwide with a total net lettable area of about 135 million square feet and the occupancy rate for the majority of the malls in Klang Valley is between 85 percent to 87 percent. However, the Retail Group Malaysia (RGM) estimates the Malaysian retail industry would record a negative growth rate of 11.4 percent for the first quarter of 2020, and this situation happens due to the implementation of MCO by the Malaysian Government to control the spread of the pandemic Covid-19 nationwide.

The increasing number of shopping malls has led customers to become more selective in choosing the mall which they want to visit that suits their preferences. Customer behavior is essential to the retailers as they need to choose a suitable location to build the mall to ensure that customers' needs and demands can be met (Ojuok, 2016). To fulfill the needs of modern clients who have information and requirements about shopping but with a limited time, shopping malls are the answer for them as malls can provide them with the expected comprehensive experience plus the pleasant surrounding for them to combine shopping with other activities (Heffner & Twardzik, 2014; Okoro et al. 2019). When customers' reasons for visiting malls are understood, it can assist in the customers' segmentation which in return will provide a valuable contribution to the marketing communications strategies development towards attracting more people to visit a shopping thus increasing the mall visits (Makgopa, 2016).

Over the years, the role played by shopping malls has been altered due to the global trends which have come together at the same time. One trend is that today customers are no longer visiting the shopping mall to search for a product or service served by the mall, but the customers also view their visit as a form of entertainment activity. In Malaysia, this mixed-use development has been implemented by the shopping mall where malls co-exist within a housing community. Thus, people living in housing communities can live, shop and work all within a walking distance, instead of the need to drive to a crowded suburban shopping mall. However, the increasing number of competitors within the Klang Valley especially malls co-existing within a housing community have been affecting the performance of The Mines shopping mall besides the increasing popularity of e-commerce.

In the Mines Shopping Mall Annual Report (2019) the volume of shopper traffic has been decreasing yearly. The volume of shopper traffic for 2018 was 55.7 million and in 2019 it was 48.6 million shoppers. This decline in shopper traffic is an indicator for the mall and the management team to address this decrease in customer traffic to ensure that the mall can survive in this industry. Thus, this paper aims to study the factors that influence the customer's preferences towards the shopping mall, focusing on The Mines Shopping Mall. In this study, the factors being investigated are lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics and their influence on a mall preference by customers. Lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics are used as important factors in this study because according to the study performed by Kushwaha et al. (2017), that retail atmospherics is an important factor that influences the customers' selection of shopping malls in India.

Meanwhile, the study from Sebastian and Purwanegara (2014) showed that lifestyle and entertainment are important factors that influence customers to visit a shopping mall in Jakarta. From the above studies, we identify that lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics are important factors that can attract and influence the customer to visit The Mines Shopping mall. Correspondingly, our research question for this study is; what is the situational analysis of The Mines Shopping Mall?, the second research question is; what is the influence of lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospheric on the customer's preference towards The Mines Shopping Mall?, and our third research questions is; what are the recommendations to increase shopper traffic at The Mines Shopping Mall?. All the research questions have been developed to examine the influence of lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospheric on the customer's preferences towards The Mines Shopping Mall, and lastly, to suggest recommendations to increase shopper traffic at The Mines Shopping Mall.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Customer Preference***

Customer preference refers to the customers' choice of one specific mall over other alternative malls based on the comparative advantages of shopping malls (Kumar & Narayan, 2018). Preference can also refer to the greater fondness or liking for one specific mall over another. There are many reasons for a customer to choose a shopping mall to visit. Customers view a specific mall's characteristic in an emotional way where they see the mall as warm and trustworthy. Other malls which the customers do not want to visit may be perceived as unfriendly and unpleasant. A study by Sharma and Sharma (2020) stated that almost all customers have strong impressions towards different shopping malls including the ones which they have never even visited before. That is why customers' preferences play a crucial role in this study.

Customers' preferences can also be defined as determining the growth of both the retail and shopping industry in any market on a relatively large scale. With the changes of customers' preferences gradually over time, new prospects have been created for shopping malls to accommodate customers' desires and innovate their products and services (Kumar & Narayana, 2018). These can be done with various marketing strategies to grab people's attention. Customers' preferences can also be affected by the shopping atmospheric indications that are present in the mall since it can create a positive sentiment that adds to a hedonic experience (Sharma & Sharma, 2020). These positive behavioral responses of the customers will lead them to the positive involvement with shopping malls to create an overall pleasant experience.

An enjoyable and fulfilling shopping experience will satisfy the customers thus heighten their preference towards the mall. According to a study by Cho and Lee (2016), preference towards a store or mall can be measured by the behavior of approach or avoidance. This includes physically remaining or avoiding of an environment, a customer's willingness to explore or avoid the environment, willingness to interact or show disinterest with the environment, and lastly a customer's initiative to engage or disengage with the employees at the shopping mall. This approach is strongly associated with customers' emotions and intentions when visiting shopping malls.

### ***2.2 Lifestyle***

Lifestyle is introduced as a concept to describe the patterns of customers. Patterns of customers describe the way people live in their own homes, their possessions, types of activities they practice, their varied interests as well as their socializing skills with others. Hence, concerns on lifestyle rely heavily on how people divide their time between activities and how much money is allocated for their expenditures (Dahana et al. 2019). Other than that, lifestyle can also be affected by family and friends. One's lifestyle can influence others to change how they normally behave in their daily lives. One of the main reasons for a lifestyle change is when it is possible to improve their living for the better.

A study shows lifestyle adds richness to their understanding of customers' purchasing behavior. Also, lifestyle may trigger customers' attention and intention which can help researchers and marketers understand why a customer engages in a certain behavior (Dahana et al. 2019). The importance of lifestyle and its influence on the consumer can be emphasized by profiling their psychological attributes, evaluating their attitudes, and relating those to their purchasing and consuming patterns (Krishnan, 2011). For customers to choose products, services, and activities, it is often associated with a certain lifestyle. Therefore, before choosing a shopping mall to visit, lifestyle is related to the customer's preference because there is a relationship between one's lifestyle and one's total product assortment.

The choice a person makes in a consumption environment is done to portray that person's lifestyle pattern since the decision made has become a purpose in his or her lifestyle (Krishnan, 2011). This is because customers have different thoughts and interests which will affect their way of shopping (Anuslu & Cilan, 2019). When a shopping mall is deemed to suit the preference of customers based on their lifestyles, they will prefer to frequent that specific shopping mall.

### ***2.3 Entertainment***

Shopping malls are visited by customers not only to search for a product or service, but they also view these visits as a form of entertainment activity that provides fun from the shopping experience. This is

because customers engage in various activities during their visits to shopping malls (Makgopa, 2016). This finding is also supported by Ali and Alolayyan (2012) stating that besides being a spot for people to buy daily things, shopping malls are visited for activities such as resting and hanging out with peers. Also, shopping malls have become a place for meeting or watching movies, especially among youngsters as it allows them to indulge in their shopping experience. (Makgopa, 2016).

A study by Wong and Nair (2018), mentioned that an entertaining or recreational activity is seen as a task favoured to be accomplished compared to buying things. It is proven by various studies that a shopping experience can yield a significant major influence on shopping intentions as many people enjoy shopping as a leisure activity thus making entertainment or recreation an important element in shopping activities (Wong & Nair, 2018). Wong and Nair (2018) found that approximately 69 percent of their respondents are categorized as recreational shoppers hence emphasizing the importance of entertainment as a major contributor to value perceptions of customers. To bring entertainment to a new level, many malls have begun organizing exhibitions, fashion shows, live music to amplify the shopping experience to the fullest, and sometimes retailing appears as a secondary entertainment (Wong & Nair, 2018).

Apart from that, entertainment can influence a customer's decision-making because customers have their own choices to make. Accordingly, entertainment orientation can be separated into four dimensions, namely, number of entertainment facilities offered, the space used for entertainment facilities, employees involved in the entertainment services, and finally the proportion of customers who visit the shopping malls (Ali & Alolayyan, 2012). Since entertainment plays a big factor in providing a delightful experience for customers who visit shopping malls, it is related to customers' preferences. A shopping mall that delivers more entertainment features will attract more customers. With more entertainment features, customers will have a wide array of selections to choose from. Moreover, this can retain customers' loyalty towards the shopping mall and determine its success (Ali & Alolayyan, 2012).

#### **2.4 Retail Atmospherics**

The atmosphere is defined as the quality of the surrounding space. Retail atmospherics is one of the key elements of an enjoyable shopping environment and the impact on customers' emotional states can be shown. The time spent by customers at shopping malls is quite long and this is associated with their perceptions and preferences of the mall atmosphere (Elmashhara & Soares, 2020). This means customers will spend more time at the mall when the atmosphere is pleasant. The emotional state of a customer is also related to the mall atmosphere as it shows the desire of a customer to stay in a certain area longer than others (Elmashhara & Soares, 2020).

The atmospheric of a shopping mall is one of the target variables to help manage effective and cognitive responses inside customers' minds. It should be noted that the environment can help the customers to destress by encouraging excitement and reassuring concerns (Joshi & Gupta, 2017). Everything surrounding the customers within the shopping mall atmosphere can be assumed by their senses to include factors comprising a diversity of variables (Elmashhara & Soares, 2020). Tripathi (2016) suggests that factors like atmosphere and ambiance are related to customers' sensory experience which consists of cues associated with an actual functioning of a mall. Besides, these atmospheric elements can induce emotional reactions from customers thus influencing their preference in choosing a shopping mall.

Aside from evoking preference, the feeling of pleasure with the experience in a shopping mall can prolong the time spent in the mall. These aspects of atmospheric will leave a memorable experience for the customers hence creating a positive preference towards the mall. The atmosphere and ambiance can be further elevated with both tangible and intangible stimuli of the surrounding (Tripathi, 2016). Due to atmospherics' linkage with customers' preferences, it arises as a significant factor in attracting customers.

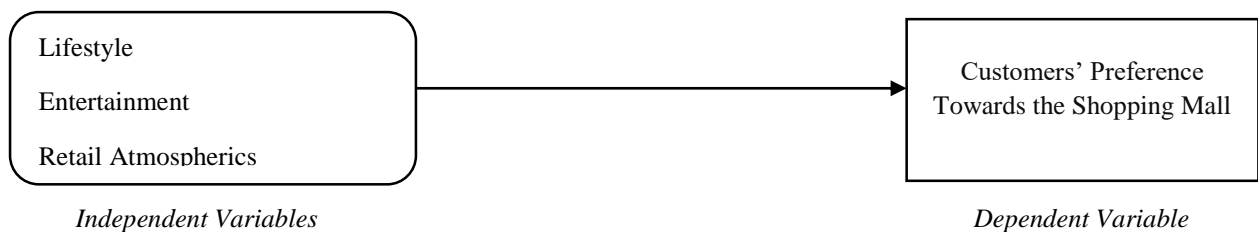
#### **2.5 Theoretical background**

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of the most researched models which describes the psychological process of mainly decision making. There are three main components which are attitude, subjective norms, and intentions that are used in predicting behavior. Firstly, attitude deals with the positive and negative connotations of an individual's certain behavior. Subjective norms on the other hand involve both normative and social influences which can give an impact on an individual's behavior (Mumbua et al.

2017). It will result in different behaviors depending on how much weightage is given between the two main components and that individual behavioral intention.

This theory is also best used to describe the type of factors that determine the preference of a shopping mall since its behaviors can be predicted without much complication (Sulehri & Ahmed, 2017). In another context by Okoro et al. (2019), the behavior of an individual can be determined by his or her beliefs on the consequences of this behavior along with the evaluation of these consequences which affect the preference.

Therefore, this theory suggests that an external stimulus can also affect the person’s behavior and preference compared to just the internal ones. Overall, the theory of reasoned action consists of behaviour and intention to perform the behaviour from attitudes, subjective norms, and external variables. These factors play a significant role when recognizing the power of attitude on behavior. From the relevant literature and the related theory that has been applied in this study, the following conceptual framework is developed.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is adapted from Swamynathan R. (2013), where there are three (3) independent variables in total which consist of lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics and customers’ preference towards The Mines Shopping Mall as the dependent variable and the TRA theory is used to describe the type of factors that influence the preference of a shopping mall since its behaviors can be predicted without much complication (Sulehri & Ahmed, 2017), and the hypotheses for this study are as follows:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle and customer’s preference towards The Mines Shopping Mall.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between entertainment and customers’ preference towards The Mines Shopping Mall.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between retail atmospherics and customers’ preference towards The Mines Shopping Mall.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The respondents consists of customers who have visited The Mines Shopping Malls because these customers will be aware of the factors influencing customers’ preference for shopping malls and will be aware of the information required to complete this study. Data collection was conducted from October to December, 2020 and 250 usable questionnaires was used for data analysis. An online questionnaire was distributed based on an adaption of an existing questionnaire from previous research. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential analysis techniques (correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis) were employed to determine the relationship between lifestyle, entertainment and retail atmospherics factors and customer preference towards a shopping mall.

The questionnaire was developed and structured into several sections according to the research objectives as section A consists of demographics, section B consists of questions that are related to the dependent variables which are customers’ preferences towards shopping mal, section C, section D, and section E consists of questions that are related to the independent variables such as lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics. However, there is a pretest conducted before the actual survey as there is modification to the questionnaire to fit with the study purpose and objectives and to measure the relevance and clarity of the

questions. The researchers chose five respondents from the target population to answer the questionnaire using WhatsApp application and there was no incentives given to motivate the respondents to participate in answering the survey.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.2 Reliability Analysis

To test the reliability of a survey instrument, Cronbach's alpha is used since it determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items as shown in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2: Reliability Analysis**

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's' Alpha	Interpretation
Lifestyle	5	0.615	Acceptable
Entertainment	5	0.625	Acceptable
Retail atmospherics	5	<b>0.699</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

The result of the reliability analysis shows that lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics presented a good internal consistency as their Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.615 to 0.699. The highest Cronbach's Alpha value is for retail atmospherics at 0.699, followed by entertainment at 0.625, and lifestyle at 0.615. Meanwhile, for customers' preferences, the value for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.545 which indicates poor reliability.

#### 4.2.1 Demographic Profile

**Table 4.3: Demographic profile for the respondents.**

Attribute	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	180	72%
	Female	70	28%
<b>Age</b>	< 25 Years Old	133	53.2%
	26-40 Years Old	104	41.6%
	41-55 Years Old	12	4.8%
	56 Years Old	1	0.4%
<b>Race</b>	Chinese	15	6%
	Iban	2	0.8%
	Indian	5	2%
	Malay	226	90.4%
	Siamese	2	0.8%
<b>Education Level</b>	Diploma	78	31.2%
	Degree	143	57.2%
	Masters	25	10%
<b>Income</b>	PhD	4	1.6%
	< RM 1,200.00	91	36.4%
	RM 1,201.00-RM 3,200.00	96	38.4%
	RM 3,201.00- RM 5,200.00	45	18%
	RM 5,201.00- RM9,200.00	13	5.2%
<b>Frequency of customers visit to The Mines</b>	>RM 9,201.00	5	36.4%
	Once in a week	36	14.4%
	Once in two weeks	31	12.4%
	Once in a month	183	73.2%
	<b>Time spend at The Mines</b>	1-2 Hours	103
3-4 Hours		120	48%
>4 Hours		27	10.8%

From Table 4.3 above, the majority of the respondents were male which represented 72% of the responses while females represented 28%.

Meanwhile, for the age demographic, most of the respondents were from the ages of 25 years old and below

which represented 53.2% (133 respondents). 41.6% of the respondents were between 26 to 40 years old. For the respondents between 41 to 55 years old, it was 4.8 % while 0.4% of the respondents were more than 56 years old. A study done by Anna and Monika (2018) stated that a modern shopping center addresses its offer of products and services to a new generation of consumers, young, middle-aged, and mature. They also mentioned that older consumers are less prone to succumb to a new trend in fashion and the development of new products and services.

Most of the respondents spent 3 to 4 hours at The Mines Shopping mall which represented 48%. This is followed by respondents who spent 1 to 2 hours at The Mines Shopping mall which represented 41.2% while 10.8% represented respondents who spent more than 4 hours there.

#### 4.2.2 Descriptive Analysis

Overall Mean and Standard Deviation for Lifestyle, Entertainment, Retail Atmospherics, and Customers' Preference.

**Table 4.4: Descriptive Analysis**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank (Based on Mean)
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<b>2.192</b>	<b>0.753</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	2.174	0.745	2
<b>Retail Atmospherics</b>	2.060	0.808	3
<b>Customers' Preference</b>	<b>2.168</b>	<b>0.826</b>	-

Table 4.4 above shows the overall descriptive statistics for the variables included in the study. Based on the mean analysis, lifestyle achieved the highest mean of 2.192. Based on that situation, the result indicated that lifestyle was chosen by the respondents as the most important independent variable in the study, followed by entertainment. The difference in scores between lifestyle and entertainment is 0.018. The lowest score is retail atmospherics (2.060). The result indicated that most of the respondents disagreed that retail atmospherics was a factor that could influence customers' preference towards The Mines shopping mall. The respondents disagreed that *the lighting and music played in the mall are soothing and the seats placed in the mall are suitable for shoppers to rest.*

##### 4.2.2.1 Lifestyle

**Table 4.5: Mean and Standard Deviation for Lifestyle**

Element	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank (Based on Mean)
<b>The mall is the best place to find latest fashion clothing.</b>	2.24	1.182	2
<b>Visiting a mall is a must for me.</b>	<b>2.28</b>	<b>1.117</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I am attracted to the mall because of the availability of multiple organized retailers at a single place (International brand, supermarket etc.)</b>	2.08	1.216	5
<b>I visit the mall to make myself less stressful.</b>	2.13	1.286	4
<b>I always meet up with my friends in the mall.</b>	2.23	1.193	3
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.192</b>		

Table 4.5 shows a descriptive statistic for lifestyle. The highest mean is 2.28 and the lowest is 2.08. The highest score indicated that visiting the mall was a must for respondents as it was the most important factor that influenced customers' preference visiting The Mines shopping mall. The second highest is 2.24, where respondents agreed that the mall is the best place to find the latest fashion as a factor that influences customers' preference towards The Mines shopping mall.

#### 4.2.2.2 Entertainment

**Table 4.6: Mean and Standard Deviation for Entertainment**

Element	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank (Based on Mean)
Certain stores in the mall create curiosity and excitement for me to visit the mall.	1.89	1.155	5
I go to the cinema in the shopping mall as it meets my entertainment needs.	2.23	1.275	3
I enjoy the spas and beauty parlours available at the shopping mall.	<b>2.37</b>	<b>1.169</b>	<b>1</b>
The kids' play zone is one of the best entertainment facilities in the mall.	2.30	1.105	2
The mall is a place to shop effortlessly.	2.08	1.181	4
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.174</b>		

The descriptive table shows the mean and standard deviation for entertainment. From the table, we can see the highest mean is 2.27 for respondents who enjoyed the spas and beauty parlors available at The Mines shopping mall. The lowest mean is 1.89, showing respondents enjoyed certain stores in The Mines shopping mall that created curiosity and excitement. From this score, respondents agreed that spas and beauty parlors were two of the important factors that influenced visitors to visit The Mines. Meanwhile, The Mines should improve their stores' attraction so that they can increase the shoppers' traffic in the future.

#### 4.2.2.3 Retail Atmospherics

**Table 4.7: Mean and Standard Deviation for Retail Atmospherics**

Element	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank (Based on Mean)
The food court arrangement in the mall is convenient.	1.98	1.165	5
There are ample parking facilities in the mall.	2.02	1.240	3
Seats placed in the mall are suitable for shoppers to rest.	2.02	1.146	4
The shopping mall is clean and has a modern layout.	<b>2.16</b>	<b>1.259</b>	<b>1</b>
The lighting and music played in the mall are soothing.	2.13	1.189	2
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.060</b>		

The descriptive table shows the mean and standard deviation for retail atmospherics. From the descriptive table, the highest score for the mean is when respondents agreed that The Mines shopping mall is clean and has a modern layout (2.16). The lowest mean for retail atmospherics is when respondents disagreed that the food court arrangement in the mall was convenient (2.13). It means the food court arrangement in The Mines shopping mall failed to meet the customers' expectations. The second highest mean for retail atmospherics is where respondents agreed that the lighting and music played in The Mines shopping mall were soothing and could be important factors that influence customers' preference coming to The Mines.



#### 4.2.2.4 Customers' Preference

**Table 4.8: Mean and Standard Deviation for Customers' Preference.**

Element	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank (Based on Mean)
I do most of my shopping at The Mines Shopping Mall because it has everything I need.	2.17	1.182	2
I shop at The Mines Shopping mall due to the fun shopping experience provided.	2.04	1.163	3
I will continue shopping at The Mines Shopping mall because it saves money.	<b>2.30</b>	<b>1.079</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.168</b>		

Table 4.8 above shows the mean and standard deviation for customers' preferences. From the descriptive statistic, the highest mean is where respondents agreed that they would continue to shop at The Mines shopping mall because it saved money (2.30). This can be a big opportunity for The Mines shopping mall to increase their shoppers' traffic. The lowest mean in the descriptive table is when respondents disagreed that they did not shop at The Mines shopping mall due to the fun shopping experience provided (2.04). Meanwhile, respondents agreed that shopping was easier at The Mines because it had everything they needed and could be an important factor that influences customers' preference to visit the mall (2.17).

#### 4.2.3 Regression Analysis

**Table 4.9: Regression Analysis for Lifestyle, Entertainment, Retail atmospheric, and Customers' Preference.**

Item	Standard Beta	(t)	Significance (p)
Lifestyle	0.037	3.513	0.001*
Entertainment	0.499	4.614	0.000*
Retail Atmospherics	0.378	1.730	0.085
R-square	0.301		
Adjusted R-square	0.293		
F-value	35.373		
p-value	0.000		

\*Significance level at  $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 4.9, the value R-Squared is 0.301, which means that 30.1% of the variance in the dependent variable (Customers' Preference) can be explained by three independent variables (Lifestyle, Entertainment, Retail Atmospheric) in this study. Based on the regression analysis only two variables were found to be significant, which are Lifestyle ( $\beta=0.037$ ,  $t=3.513$ ,  $p=0.001^*$ ) and Entertainment ( $\beta=0.499$ ,  $t=4.614$ ,  $p=0.000^*$ ) respectively. From this result, the customers of The Mines Shopping Mall agreed that lifestyle and entertainment were two important factors that influenced them to visit the mall. However, retail atmospheric ( $\beta=0.378$ ,  $t=1.730$ ,  $p=0.085$ ) did not influence customers' preference towards the mall.

Meanwhile, the adjusted R-squared value is 0.293. From the adjusted R-squared, 29.3% of the variance in the customers' preference towards The Mines shopping mall can be explained by all the variables in the framework. In this study, the remaining 69.9% is influenced by other variables. Shopping malls have always become a destination for most people where the shopping experience is enjoyed. Meanwhile, the shopping mall in this study must improve shoppers' traffic at the mall by focusing on entertainment and lifestyle activities.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Shopping malls offer services to their customer in the form of convenient access to a desirable mix of retailers. Shopping malls provide a satisfying and safe, shopping and leisure experience to visitors. Due to

the current changes in lifestyle, many recreational and leisure activities have changed. Lifestyle, entertainment, and retail atmospherics were three factors investigated in this study to determine if they influence customer preferences to visit a shopping mall.

The findings show there is a significant relationship between lifestyle and entertainment while atmospherics does not influence customers' preference for the mall. The current mall in this study offers places for entertainment, social and experiential activities to interact, resulting in a positive relationship between entertainment and customer preference for a mall. This is consistent with findings that confirmed shopping malls are positioned as sites of social encounters (Doury, 2001, Howard, 2007); they are places where activities such as walking and talking with friends, doing activities with children, or eating in restaurants usually take place. The study by Zahra and Abdul (2017) found that the consumers' lifestyle has a significant relationship with consumers' behavior towards the choice of shopping malls. For the significant relationship between entertainment and customers' preference, the study by Swamynathan and Mansurali (2013) stated that the entertainment mix of the mall such as theatres, games, and kids' zone are some of the attractive factors that can influence customers' visit to a shopping mall. Furthermore, a study by Sebastian and Purwanegara (2014) concluded that fashion and accessories tenants are important for customers to visit the shopping mall in Jakarta.

Retail atmospherics was not supported for this study and one possible reason is that there is a lack of lighting in parking facilities, as per the reviews highlighted by the shoppers going to this mall (Google review, 2018). According to Underhill (2004), the customer's experience starts at the car park and its entrance is where the shopping mall begins. As the parking lot is the first touchpoint for the customer, the probability of a bad impression is high and can set a negative mood that will continue with them for the entire time in the shopping mall. For shopping mall managers, this study implies the need for providing customers with experiential activities and targeted retail atmospherics to attract the customers to their shopping mall. Future events organized by this particular shopping mall must include lifestyle activities to appeal to the visitors of the mall. Events such as gaming competitions, cooking and health exhibitions may lure more visitors to the mall. In conclusion, lifestyle events and entertainment activities are important factors for the management of any shopping mall to consider. Although the present study tested the direct relationships, future research could test the model using other moderators such as ethnicity or income. In conclusion, the findings of the study can be used as a reference and knowledge in understanding consumer preference towards a shopping mall.

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