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SEMINAR ON BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
(USBET) 2023**

**SUSTAINABLE BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT**

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# e-Proceeding

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# ASSESSING CUSTOMER PREFERENCES IN CHOOSING SHOPPING MALL: A CASE STUDY OF SERI ISKANDAR, PERAK

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## ABSTRACT

*As the retail landscape evolves, shopping malls have become an integral part of consumers' choices, emphasizing the need for immersive experiences and a diverse business environment. However, industry stakeholders often overlook the significance of addressing customer preferences and creating a comfortable shopping environment. Neglecting these preferences can lead to substantial losses for retailers. Therefore, it is crucial for retailers to understand and cater to customer preferences to thrive in a competitive market. This research study aims to identify and rank the factors that contribute to customer preferences when selecting a shopping mall. A quantitative approach was adopted, consisting of two sections. The findings revealed that convenience, parking space, location, environment, and product factors significantly influence customer preferences. Understanding and leveraging these factors can enable retailers to better align their offerings with customer preferences and enhance their competitiveness in the market. Based on the study identified that the location factor emerged as the primary factor of customer preferences, with customers preferring shopping malls located near their residences or workplaces and located near to public transport.*

**Keywords:** *Customer Preferences, Shopping Mall*

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive retail landscape, understanding the factors influencing customer preferences in selecting a shopping mall is vital for retailers and mall owners. The study by Kim et al. (2015) aims to explore the key determinants shaping customer decisions in this regard. Convenience is a critical factor, with shoppers favouring easily accessible malls with amenities and ample parking. Location also plays a pivotal role, as proximity to customers' daily routines significantly influences their preferences (Kwak et al., 2013). Moreover, the shopping mall's environment, including aesthetics, cleanliness, and ambiance, contributes to a positive shopping experience (Amin et al., 2020). Offering a diverse range of high-quality products and services tailored to customer needs further enhances preferences (Paul, 2017). By addressing these factors, retailers can improve customer satisfaction, loyalty, footfall, and profitability. The research seeks to identify and analyze the specific factors that significantly impact customer preferences in choosing shopping malls, despite various options on places to shop.

The shopping mall industry in Malaysia experiences dynamic changes in customer preferences due to shifting demographics, evolving lifestyles, economic conditions, and emerging trends (Fung, 2020). During economic downturns, customers prioritize price-sensitive options, while in prosperous times, they seek premium brands (Pandey & Parmar, 2019). Limited access to comprehensive customer data poses challenges in understanding attraction factors, leading to difficulty in offering personalized experiences (Kesari & Atulkar, 2016). To ensure customer loyalty and stand out from competitors in Seri Iskandar, shopping mall operators must provide unique value propositions, diverse retailers, outstanding customer service, engaging events, and a welcoming environment (Ipek et al., 2021).

This study aim is to identify customer preference on choosing shopping mall and to rank the most significance factor that contribute towards customer preferences on choosing shopping mall. By understanding offer a valuable insight towards retailer/owner, shopping mall developer and customer. By aligning their offerings with customer expectations, retailers can attract and retain customers, thereby contributing to the overall prosperity of the shopping mall. Consequently, industry stakeholders must prioritize strategies that revolve around customer satisfaction and adapt to the evolving demands of consumers. This approach ensures the long-term sustainability and profitability of shopping malls in the face of increasing competition and shifting consumer preferences.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Definition of Term**

Customer behaviour and preference are crucial in the selection of shopping malls, influenced by cognitive, emotional, and behavioural factors (Zahra & Awan, 2017). According to Akroush et al., (2011) Information processing, involving gathering and evaluating data from various sources, affects customers' perceptions and expectations. Decision-making processes, whether rational or emotional, depend on individual criteria like location, store variety, pricing, and convenience (Thomas & Pathak, 2012). Customer preference results from intrinsic and extrinsic factors, such as needs, values, social influences, and the environment (Dholakia et al., 2015).

Within the shopping mall industry, different types of retail formats coexist, including shopping complexes, hypermarkets, supermarkets, grocery stores, and standalone shops. Shopping complexes offer a comprehensive and enjoyable experience with various retail stores, dining options, and entertainment (Warnaby & Medway, 2018). Hypermarkets combine supermarket and department store features, providing a onestop shopping experience (Coughlan & Lucey, 2017). Supermarkets cater to daily grocery needs, while grocery stores offer a wide range of essential items (Ann & Koenraad, 2010). Standalone shops, operating independently, serve local communities with unique products and experiences (Picot et al., 2018; Kumar & Polonsky, 2019). Despite challenges in competition and management, standalone shops remain significant

### **Customer Preferences in choosing shopping mall**

#### **Convenience factor**

Shopping centers with sophisticated amenities and captivating environments foster stronger retailer-customer relationships, leading to positive experiences and increased loyalty. Consumer visits and duration in malls are influenced by one-stop shopping, convenience, and free services (Chantarayukol, 2019). Mixed-use malls offering diverse services attract more visitors for longer periods. To cater to family and friends, malls can incorporate additional features like video games and movies. Shoppers express greater satisfaction in centres with a variety of retail outlets, dining options, and entertainment (Ammani, 2013). Comfortable seating areas are provided for consumers and their families. Extended operating hours contribute to customer convenience, accommodating busy schedules (Schwanen, 2004). A broad choice of tenants with trendy and distinctive goods attracts and retains shoppers. A wellcurated tenant mix enhances mall identity and increases customer excitement. These factors

contribute to a comprehensive understanding of customer preferences in shopping malls (Khare.2012).

### **Parking space factor**

The availability and quality of parking spaces play a crucial role in attracting and satisfying customers in shopping malls. Adequate parking space is essential for customers who prefer driving, saving them time and effort (Makgopa, 2016). Factors like parking search time, quality, and availability contribute to the overall convenience of the parking experience (Soto et al., 2018). Reliable parking facilities positively impact customer satisfaction, while breakdowns or insufficient maintenance can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced revisits (Obot et al., 2018). According to Takagi et al. (2020), Security in parking areas is vital, with well-lit spaces and surveillance systems instilling a sense of trust and encouraging loyalty. A perception of a safe and secure environment fosters customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, ensuring reliable, wellmaintained, and secure parking spaces is crucial for a positive shopping experience and customer retention in malls.

### **Location factor**

Various factors influence consumers' decisions on where to shop, including distance from home or work, product range, pricing, quality, and parking. Travel expenses like gas and parking fees are also considered when choosing a shopping destination (Zambrano-Rey, 2019). Convenience, specifically the distance a consumer needs to travel to reach a store, is a critical consideration, followed by brand recognition, pricing, and product selection (Ghosh et al., 2010). Consumers prefer grocery stores with convenient locations and a wide variety of products regardless of their specific location. Proximity to public transport positively impacts customer behavior, leading to more frequent mall visits and longer shopping durations (Man & Qiu, 2021). Shopping malls near public transport hubs attract a diverse customer base, including those without personal vehicles, expanding the mall's market potential. Overall, considering these factors can enhance the appeal and accessibility of shopping malls to a wider customer demographic.

### **Environment factor**

The study of environmental variables in shopping mall management is crucial for enhancing the attractiveness of retail stores within these malls. Factors like ambiance, layout, lighting, temperature, and overall atmosphere play a significant role in attracting and engaging customers, improving their shopping experience, and driving sales (Calvo-Porrall & Levy-Mangin, 2018). The construction of a shopping mall, including visibility, signage, and cladding, reflects its prestige and target customer demographic (Tandon, 2016). Mall managers play a vital role in catering to



customer preferences by designing the mall atmosphere, selecting entertainment options, and curating goods and services accordingly (Afaq et al., 2020). The incorporation of ambient stimuli such as product displays, music, and scent can positively influence customers' purchasing decisions and trigger emotions (Rajagopal, 2008). Creating a pleasant ambience inside and outside shopping malls is essential for enhancing the overall shopping experience.

## **Product factor**

According Yoon et al. (2014). Price, product assortment, availability, and quality significantly impact consumer preferences in shopping malls. Lower prices and the availability of cheaper alternatives attract customers, while positive store reputation influences store choice. Understanding price sensitivity among consumers is crucial, as some individuals are more sensitive to price than others. Additionally, the arrangement and assortment of products have a substantial impact on meeting consumer needs. Forecasting product sales, determining pricing strategies, and ensuring product availability are critical for businesses and marketers (Rihn et al. 2018). Preferences can vary across different products, and each component of a product can influence consumer choice. Convenience remains a key driver of consumer preference, and factors such as location, cleanliness, and product quality play a vital role in shaping customer perceptions and experiences in retail settings. Retailers must address these factors to enhance the shopping experience and cater to customer preferences effectively (Gorji & Slami, 2018)

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The method that been use for this research is Quantitative method where questionnaire in google form has been distributed to resident in Seri Iskandar. The questionnaire consists of 2 section which is the section 1 is respondent information while the second section is relating to customer preferences on choosing shopping mall. The questionnaire uses Linkert Scale to determine the customer opinion regarding the factor of preferences. The sample size for the study was determined using the Slovin's method. The calculated minimum sample size required was 277 respondents, while the maximum recommended sample size was 398 respondents. In this study, a sample size of 379 respondents was obtained. Slovin's Formula as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

**Table 1: Slovin's Table Formulas**

DATA	NUMBER
N = Number of populations in Seri Iskandar	94,573
E = (Margin Error)	0.06
E = (Margin Error)	0.05
<p>Calculation 1:</p> $n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot E^2}$ <p><i>n = 277 respondents</i></p>	<p>Calculation 2:</p> $n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot E^2}$ <p><i>n = 398 respondents</i></p>

(Source: Researcher, 2023)

The Pilot study has been run to total of 20 respondents and gain the Cronbach Alpha reliability Test of 0.736. This coefficient was calculated based on a total of 19 items using the Likert scale. The obtained value falls within the reliable and acceptable range.

**Table 2: Reliability Test Cronbach's Alpha**

CRONBACH ALPHA	NUMBER OF ITEMS
0.736	19

(Source: Researcher, 2023)

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software, which enabled efficient processing and presentation of the data using graphs and tables. The questionnaires were distributed to people in Seri Iskandar which consist of resident, university student and immigrant for data collection. Based on insight gained from a literature review and matrix table has identified the factor of customer preferences on choosing shopping mall. The Likert Scale was used to evaluate items, and mean values were calculated to assess the level of influence perceived by respondents. Frequency and percentage distributions were examined using Descriptive analysis, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Overall, the use of SPSS facilitated the exploration of customer preferences on choosing shopping mall in Seri Iskandar, Perak.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis of gender distribution reveals that female respondent account for 57.8 percent of the total participants, slightly higher than the male respondents at 42.2 percent. The age distribution table shows that individuals aged 18-30 years constitute the largest group at 52.5 percent, while those aged 60 years old and above years make up the smallest group at only 7.9 percent out of the total 379 respondents. Majority of the respondent has a background education of Bachelor's degree at 35.6 percent. While the Highers frequently visited mall goes to D mall Shopping Complex with the numbers of 141 respondent out of 379 respondents.

**Table 3: The descriptive statistics of the respondents**

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	60	42.2
Female	219	57.8
<b>AGE GROUP</b>		
18 - 30 years	199	52.5
31 - 45 years	98	25.9
46 - 59 years	52	13.7
60 years and above	30	7.9
<b>EDUCATION BACKGROUND</b>		
Lower Certificate of Education	20	5.3
Malaysian Certificate of Education	64	16.9
Diploma	94	24.8
Bachelor's degree	135	35.6
Master's degree	47	12.4
Doctoral Degree	19	5.0
<b>FREQUENTLY VISITED MALL</b>		
D mall Shopping Complex	141	37.2
Tesco Supermarket	130	34.3
Econsave Supermarket	108	28.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*(Source: Researcher, 2023)*

The finding of this research shows that the factor of customer preferences was categorised as 5 main factor which is convenience factor, Location factor, Environment Factor, Parking Space Factor and Product Factor. This factor are mainly attributes towards customer preferences while choosing shopping mall to go. Therefore, among the preferences, the research has identified that the first place of factor that contribute on

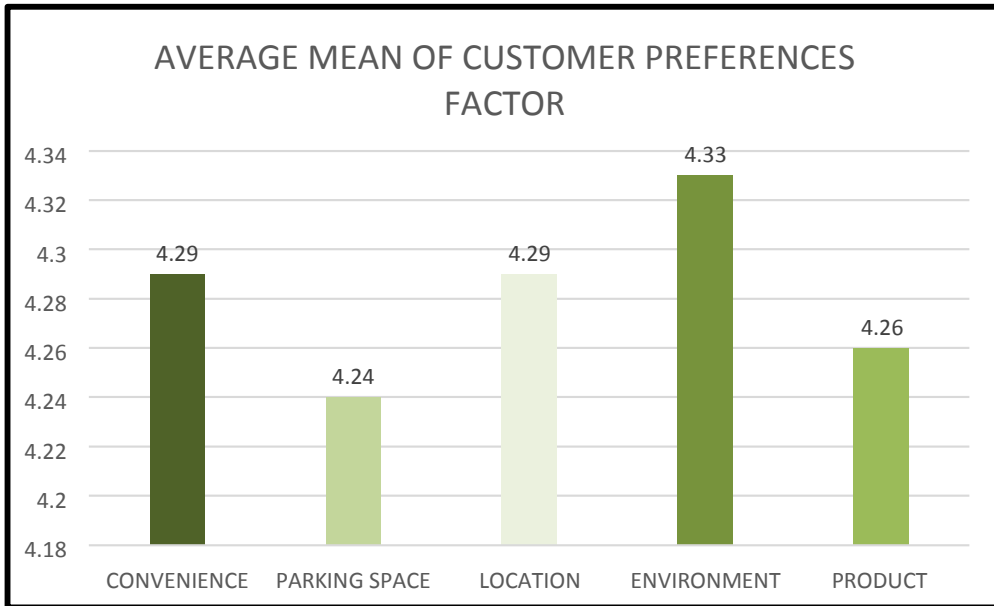
customer preferences on choosing shopping mall in Seri Iskandar, Perak is Location with the total average of 4.33 followed by convenience and Environment factor for the second place with number of average means is 4.29. The third place goes to Product with 4.26 and Parking Space for 4.24. The Summary of Finding are shown below:

**Table 4: Summary of Finding for Customer Preferences Factor.**

	<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>AVERAGE MEAN</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>CONVENIENCE</b>	Availability of Facilities	4.35	<b>4.29</b>
		Longer Operation Hour	4.20	
		Broad Tenant Mix Choice	4.34	
		Quality of Facilities	4.31	
		Cleanliness of Facilities	4.33	
		Provide Entertainment activities	4.23	
<b>2</b>	<b>PARKING SPACE</b>	Availability of parking space	4.35	<b>4.24</b>
		Car Density During Peak Hour	4.19	
		Reliability and Security	4.25	
		Distance from Parking Space to shopping mall	4.16	
<b>3</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	Distance from House or Working Place to shopping mall	4.36	<b>4.33</b>
		Near to Public Transport	4.30	
<b>4</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	Mall layout and Design	4.31	<b>4.29</b>
		Odour	4.33	
		Music Played	4.25	
<b>5</b>	<b>PRODUCT</b>	Price of the Product	4.34	<b>4.26</b>
		Arrangement of the Product	4.14	
		Quality of the Product	4.30	
		Availability of the Product	4.24	

*(Source: Researcher, 2023)*





**Figure 1: Average Mean of Customer Preferences Factor**

*(Source: Researcher, 2023)*

**Table 5: Rank Analysis Table of Factor of Customer Preferences on Choosing Shopping Mall.**

Factors	Average Mean	Rank
Location factor	4.33	1
Convenience factor	4.29	2
Environment factor	4.29	3
Product Factor	4.26	4
Parking Space Factor	4.24	5

*(Source: Researcher, 2023)*

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the survey responses indicated a high level of agreement regarding various aspects of the mall, including its amenities, services, atmosphere, and overall shopping experience. The findings of this study highlight the importance of providing a satisfying and enjoyable shopping experience to attract and retain customers. It is crucial for mall management to focus on maintaining and improving the identified positive attributes of the mall, such as the range of choices available, pricing, convenience, and overall ambiance. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of customer preferences in the context of the chosen mall in Seri Iskandar. The findings can be used by mall management to guide strategic planning, marketing efforts, and improvements to enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, the success of the mall. Future research can build upon these findings by investigating specific areas for improvement and conducting comparative analyses with other malls in the region. Therefore, to be concluded the highest preferences factor of location which is the location of shopping mall from house/ working place and the location of shopping mall that located near to public transport.

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*nar*

*Setuju.*

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