

**COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES FRAMEWORK FOR EXISTING
SHOPPING MALLS IN MALAYSIA**

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**A project report submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science
(Hons.) Quantity Surveying**

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September 2020

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project report is based on my original work except for citations and quotations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously and concurrently submitted for any other degree or award at UTAR or other institutions.

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, a large number of shopping malls have sprung up like mushrooms in Klang Valley. The mushrooming of new shopping malls is accelerating the depreciation of the older, outdated and less trendy malls and this situation is transforming the retail sector into a red ocean. Retail sector especially shopping malls required an effective competitive strategy in order to survive in this highly competitive industry. There were previous researches studied about the shopping malls focusing on design, location, convenience, maintenance, consumers' emotion, utilitarian and hedonic principles and more. However, there was a lack of studies in focusing on the competitive strategies for shopping malls which are the combination of all appropriate ways and means to improve the performance of existing shopping malls. Therefore, the aim of this study is to reduce the abandonment of existing shopping malls in Malaysia by proposing appropriate competitive strategies. A quantitative approach was adopted for this study, where literature review served to identify various competitive strategies that could be applied in shopping malls. There were 15 competitive strategies parameters identified including parking facility, recreational facility, baby nursing and changing rooms facility, personal service, communal service, priority shopping access, retail mix, quality of product, digital service, digital payment, digital program, design factor, ambient factor, promotional activity and festival event. 123 sets of questionnaires were collected through social media such as email, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. After that, the relative importance on each competitive strategy parameter was analysed by using arithmetic mean ranking. The finding showed that the top three competitive strategies parameters for shopping malls are maintaining good hygiene, offering good quality of products and possessing good communal service such as lifts and escalators. Kruskal-Wallis Test and Mann-Whitney U Test were conducted and the results revealed that there were significant differences in term of competitive strategies parameters across different age groups and genders of respondents. A refined competitive strategies framework was developed as an outcome which could be referred by the shopping malls. Appropriate and suitable competitive strategies could be adopted based on the target customer

and market of the shopping malls. This study is intended to make contributions to the retail industry and allow the existing shopping malls to gain competitive advantage for survival and growth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the background of this study, which also covered the problem statement, research aim, research objectives, research methodology and research scope and chapter outline of this research.

1.2 Background of the Study

Shopping mall is described as a built covered shopping area, which contains various stores that are planned, designed, built and operated in different location and size (Arif, Yusof and Abdullah, 2012). Shopping malls are important in modern retailing system as it dominates the distribution system of goods under one shelter within shortest time. It also acts as either a focal point of community or a centre of retail commerce (Musil, 2011). Moreover, shopping malls provide vast range of goods, services and entertainment for customers and the development of shopping malls stimulate the economic growth and employment rate of a country including Malaysia (McGreevy, 2016). In 2017, the sub-sector of Wholesale and Retail Trade contributed 29.8% to the service sector's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (DOSM, 2019).

In Malaysia, the construction landscape has changed recently that the number of housing projects is growing, specifically within the Klang Valley. One of the tactics for developer to respond with the changes is more shopping malls for the community to enjoy the services, necessities, entertainment and convenience provided in mall (Ghani et al., 2011). Consequently, a large number of shopping malls have sprung up like mushrooms in Klang Valley. The mushrooming of new shopping malls is accelerating the depreciation of the older, outdated and less trendy malls and this situation is transforming the retail sector into a red ocean (Siow, 2018).

The total supply space of shopping malls in Malaysia had been kept raising from 2015 to 2019 as depicted in Figure 1.1. However, the occupancy rates fall yearly from 82.4% in 2015 to 79.2% in 2019 as illustrated in Figure

1.1 (NAPIC, 2020). It indicated that the vacancy rate in Malaysia was increasing yearly. Figure 1.2 portrayed the retail key facts by the states in Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur had a positive performance which secured more than 83% occupancy rate while Selangor slightly fell to 82%. Johor and Pulau Pinang managed to secure an average occupancy of 75.3% and 73.7% respectively. These four states showed higher vacancy rate as compared to other states in Malaysia (NAPIC, 2020).

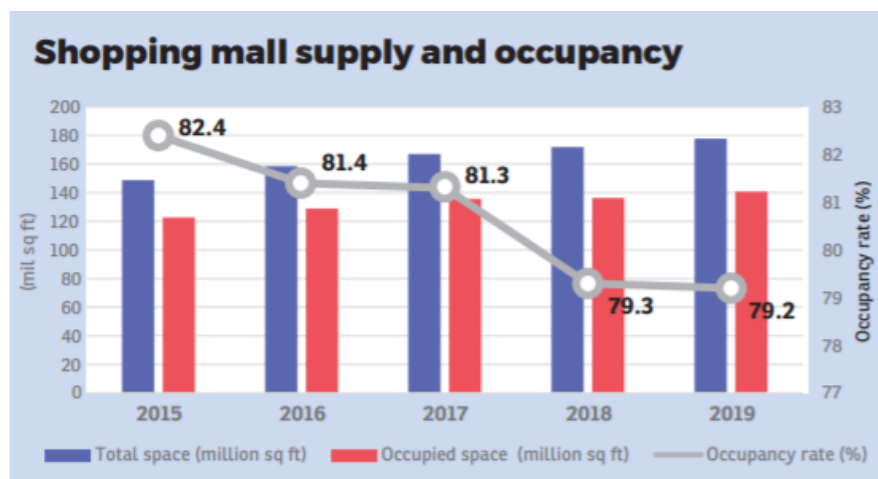


Figure 1.1: Retail Key Facts in Malaysia from 2015 to 2019
(Source: National Property Information Centre, NAPIC, 2020)



Figure 1.2: Retail Key Facts by States in 2019
(Source: National Property Information Centre, NAPIC, 2020)

NAPIC (2020) concluded that Malaysia has a total of 1,036 shopping malls with 177.66 million square feet of net lettable space and there are only about 32 million of residents in Malaysia, which is comparatively low. In addition, another 40 shopping malls are still under construction which resulted in additional 21 million square feet will be added to the retail market upon completion (Rahim & Co Research, 2020). More new shopping malls are coming up soon in Kuala Lumpur such as Retail Podium, Skymall, Lalaport Mall and so forth which will create an intense competition among the shopping malls (Rahim & Co Research, 2020). Some of the new shopping malls might face difficulty to build market share, which is turning more fragmentary due to the glut in retail malls.

50% of retail malls in Kuala Lumpur would be struggling for survival over the next 5 years and around 20% would probably close down (MCRA, 2019). Regardless to the five major key malls in Kuala Lumpur which are One Utama Shopping Mall, Suria KLCC, Sunway Pyramid, Pavilion and Mid Valley, most of the shopping malls in retail segment are gradually moving downturn by a shift towards e-commerce (FTCR, 2018). Besides, Chinese tourists who are the largest spenders, spend about US\$260 billion globally in shopping malls in Malaysia (MCRA, 2019). If tourism does not grow, business would not perform. This may also result in going downturn of shopping malls, and therefore become a surplus in the retail sector. Furthermore, retail sector contributes to the average labour force in Malaysia. Thus, if there are more existing shopping malls are under performed, the rate of unemployment rate of Malaysia will tend to increase due to the effects. In view of that, this research conducts a study on this issue to further investigating.

1.3 Problem Statement

There are shopping malls left to rot after falling out of favour including Sears department stores in Canada, La Samaritaine in France, Wayne Hills Mall in America, New South China Mall in China, Tacheles in Germany, New World Mall in Thailand, Central Market in Hong Kong and so forth (Hanbury, 2019). Obviously, the situation of increasing deserted malls have started in recent years, not only in Malaysia but also around the world. The reasons of these situations are rather complex and vary according to different variables. Thus, retail

performances are catching attention across different countries due to the abandoned mall phenomenon, multiple shopping options, outmoded business models and economic downturn. Small and old shopping malls will continue facing challenges, hard times and even closures with more new shopping mall coming up. As a result, it is essential to improve the retail performance by applying suitable and appropriate competitive strategies.

There were previous researchers study on the shopping malls focusing on interior designs of the shopping malls (Hami et al., 2018; Cowell, 1984; McGoldrick & Thomson 1992; Kaye, 1989; Guy, 1994; Laurie, 1989), which design a comfortable indoor functional space and a relaxing atmosphere to create an utmost shopping experience for the customers. Besides, consumers' emotions were focused by Das and Varshneya, (2017), Michon and Chebat (2004) and Wagner (2007) by taking account into two dimensions which were pleasure and arousal as customers also sought for emotional benefits such as relaxation and leisure while shopping. Furthermore, Guy (1994), Dawson (1983), Holbrook (1982) and Shiftan and Newmark (2002) studied the location of shopping mall as it was directly linked to the catchment. The catchment determined the type of customers and their spending habits. Whereas, Stoel et al. (2004), Keng et al. (2007) and Rahman et al. (2016) revealed exclusively on utilitarian and hedonic principles, excluding the essential value aspects that can be learned from the shopping experience at shopping malls.

On the other hands, Paul (1999), Baum et al. (1999) and Singh and Prashar (2013) had done research on the maintenance management of shopping malls for maintaining the effectiveness and quality of facilities to assure the future of the asset. Thogersen and Grunert (1997), Singh and Prashar (2013), Hoffman & Turley (2002) and Ruiz et al. (2004) focused on environment of shopping malls examining how the perception of the atmosphere in a mall can indirectly affect behavioural intentions. In addition, Singh and Prashar (2013), Ahmed et al. (2007), Yava and Babakus (2009) and Khare (2011) studied the convenience of shopping mall as convenience has become wider and more complex due to the hectic lifestyle, pressure of time wasting and advanced technology nowadays. Based on the previous studies conducted, it is found that there is little study on the competitive strategies for shopping malls which are the combination of all

appropriate ways and means to improve the performance of existing shopping malls.

Owning and running a mall is a challenging and endearing task. More recently, these retail markets have faced significant challenges which are the impact of the intra-regional competition, economic downturn, the rapid development of e-commerce and the customer behaviour-influencing experience market. Hence, this study aims to propose competitive strategies that can be adopted by the existing shopping malls. Adopting appropriate competitive strategies are able to attract and retain tenants and at the same times, it could drive more customers to the malls. Consequently, it reduces the underperforming and abandonment of existing shopping malls in Malaysia and drive the economic and social development of Malaysia.

1.4 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to reduce the abandonment of existing shopping malls in Malaysia by proposing appropriate competitive strategies.

1.5 Research Objectives

In order to achieve the aim of the research, three research objectives have been formulated.

- (i) To identify the competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.
- (ii) To compare the evaluation of competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia between different age groups and genders.
- (iii) To propose a competitive strategies framework for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.

1.6 Research Methodology

Figure 1.4 presented the research methodology applied to achieve the research objectives in this study. The research problem was defined, and the previous researchers related to the existing shopping malls in Malaysia were reviewed. Quantitative approach was selected on designing and distributing the

questionnaire surveys. The questionnaires were distributed online such as email or e-survey link through social media. The shoppers in Klang Valley were targeted in this study and the central limit theorem was adopted to achieve the sufficient sampling of this research. Next, the data were collected and analysed by using (4) statistical tests which included Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient test, arithmetic means, Kruskal-Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U Test. Lastly, a competitive strategies framework for existing shopping malls was developed based on the findings.

Phase 1 Problem Definition	Phase 2 Literature Review	Phase 3 Research Design and Data Collection	Phase 4 Data Analysis	Phase 5 Framework Development
<u>Objective 1</u> To identify the competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.		<u>Objective 2</u> To compare the evaluation of competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia between different age groups and gender.		<u>Objective 3</u> To propose a competitive strategies framework for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.

Figure 1.3: Summary of Research Approaches

1.7 Research Scope

The scope of this research is narrowed to the respondents who are the shopping visitors of retail malls within Klang Valley.

1.8 Chapter Outline

This research is designed and structured to five chapters. Chapter one acts as an introduction part of the study describing the research background which discuss the situation of retail industry nowadays. Besides, problem statement identifies the research problem and the research gap from the previous studies. Aim and objectives of the research are also identified accordingly. Moreover, research method, scope and the summary of chapter are also included. Chapter two is the literature review which provides detailed discussion on competitive strategies based on the review from previous studies. A framework of competitive strategies for existing shopping malls is developed and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three presents how the research design is constructed to achieve the research aim and study objectives. It also includes strategy data collection and data analysis approaches for this research. Chapter four displays the result of findings obtained through questionnaire and online survey. The analysis of this research is compared with previous studies and supported by secondary data to verify its reliability. Chapter five concludes the entire research study with referring to the achievement of corresponding study objectives. The research contribution to the retail industry, local government and body of knowledge are defined. Lastly, the limitation and recommendations for future research are also proposed.

1.9 Chapter Summary

In a nutshell, this chapter revealed a research gap on the competitive strategies for existing retail malls in Klang Valley which contribute to the focus of this study. The research problem had been clarified. The research aim and objectives had been identified to fill in the gap knowledge. Moreover, the research methodology is discussed, and the chapter outline stated the main structure of each chapter in the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the review of literatures and studies on the competitive strategies adopted in the shopping malls in Malaysia. Firstly, the terms of retail mall, competitive strategy and deserted malls have been defined. Next, the background of existing shopping malls in Malaysia is further discussed. Last but not least, competitive strategies of the shopping malls are investigated and evaluated in detail. A framework is illustrated in the end of this chapter.

2.2 Background of Shopping Malls in Malaysia

Shopping mall businesses that are seen as a transaction of supply and demand between sellers and purchasers are significant elements in the urban landscape. Malaysia has become one of the most desirable shopping destinations in Asia (Wonderful Malaysia, 2016). There are large number of shopping malls in Klang Valley, the heart of the city. For instance, the prominent shopping malls in Malaysia are Suria KLCC, Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, Mid Valley Megamall, One Utama Shopping Mall and Sunway Pyramid Mall. All these malls have achieved at least 95% of occupancy rate which consider excellent performance among other shopping malls (Knight Frank Research, 2019). Kuala Lumpur is home to a variety of luxury malls, a testimony to the love of shopping for the Malaysians (Albattat et al., 2019). Additionally, annual sales turnover for the shopping industry is close to RM120 billion. The retail industry creates a huge number of workforces in Malaysia, roughly 56,600 people with direct jobs (Ho, 2018).

When a shopping mall starts losing consumer traffic and its tenancy hits 60-70%, it is widely considered an outdated or abandoned mall. For instance, a large number of shops in Cheras Sentral Mall had closed down and the crowd was very low even during weekends. At the basement of the mall, there is only left Subway as F&B tenant and the anchor tenant which is the Hero Supermarket had also closed down. Another example of deserted mall is 1 Shamelin

Shopping Mall which was located at Kuala Lumpur. The mall was deserted as retail lots were closed most of the time, no thriving business nor much attractions. Only the cinema at Level 5 and the LuLu hypermarket at Level Lower Ground were still functioning as good.

Aeon Co (M) Bhd sold off the Aeon Mahkota Cheras shopping mall and the freehold land on which it sits for RM87.8mil in 2017 (Tay, 2017). This was due to its underwhelming performance over the years and contribution to Aeon's retailing segment was minimal. Ampang Park was a 44-year-old building was permanently closed down in January 2018. The building will be demolished with its narrow escalators and split-level floors to create more spaces for the Ampang Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station (Mior, 2017). SStwo Mall which was located in Petaling Jaya was closed down in March 2015 due to the undesirable performance. The mall opened for business in 2010 and closed down less than four-and-a-half years later. It had been purchased by Puchong-based DK Group of Companies for an estimated RM180 million (Ganesan, 2018).

Nonetheless, a new supply of retail malls will still remain high for the next three years (Aziz, 2017). In this case, the situation of saturation market and disorder market development in retail industry may happen due to lack of vision, planning and strategy. (Kok, 2007). To remedy the problem, shopping malls across the globe develop varies strategy in response to these competitive factors to draw shoppers back to their shopping districts before they become abandoned mall or "dead malls" (Hazel, 2002). "Dead mall" is defined as low consumer traffic level with high vacancy rate and being in a desperate condition (Urban dictionary, 2006).

2.3 Competitive Strategies of the Existing Shopping Malls

Competition between shopping malls in a glut of retail market has driven mall management teams to explore different competitive strategies to boost up flows for existing shopping malls (Rajagopal, 2008). Competitive strategy is defined as a plan of a particular organization in order to achieve competitive advantage over its rivals in the long-term period (Business Dictionary, 2018). In this research, six dimensions of competitive strategies are identified which are facility, service, product assortment, digitalization, environment and marketing.

2.3.1 Facility

The first competitive strategy identified is facility. A comfortable shopping experience starts with ease and convenient car parking facility provided. The queues and space-finding difficulties will dramatically affect the business of shopping mall as it is the first impression of shoppers going to the mall. The design of parking space likewise gives an impact on accessibility convenience to shoppers. Nowadays, shopping malls were not only built for retail purposes but also leisure shopping which provides various recreational infrastructures for customers to enjoy and relax. The leisure demand is varying with people, culture, time, and social environment (Marwae, 2016).

2.3.1.1 Parking Facility

Nowadays, consumers tend to keep seeking for convenience due to their hectic lifestyle. Several researches have found that convenience in accessibility is a core determinant of the image and patronage of shopping malls (El-Adly, 2007; El Hedhli and Chebat, 2009). Furthermore, the accessibility of shopping mall is related to the parking facilities provided (González-Hernández and Orozco-Gómez, 2012). Parking space near popular destinations is often scarce or limited. Visitors will normally choose to park in nearby areas where traffic is impeded and cause environmental externalities in the end (Inan et al., 2019).

A well-developed parking space brings convenience to customers and it is usually the first and last impression for them (Coleman, 2006). The amount of parking provided, the possible cost implications and the leasable area per parking space influence on the option of retail platform for shoppers. Furthermore, safety is always a serious concern for women in dark and enclosed parking in shopping malls. Hence, adequate female parking is good to be provided and cordoned off with one-way entry and exit respectively. For instance, the female parking at The Gardens Mall is secured by security guard to prevent the area being abused (Liew, 2017). It is convenient for the disabled or elder visitors if handicapped parkings are provided and located near to the entrance into the shopping mall.

Accessibility of the mall is regarded a primary factor of attraction. Visitors consider distance, time and effort travelling to the shopping mall, which are

related to accessibility of mall. The level of spatial convenient of shopping mall to customers depends on the distance between their home and the mall (Reimers and Clulow, 2014). The shorter the distance, the more convenient for them. Thus, shopping malls normally are constructed near public transport station or linked with good highway networks to attract shoppers (Moccia, 2012). In summary, accessibility and the parking facility are important determinant of competitive strategy for existing shopping mall.

2.3.1.2 Recreational Facility

After the occurrence of e-commerce, recreational infrastructure in shopping mall are significant to compete with online retailers by providing mall-based experiences which e-commerce unable to achieve (Grewal et al., 2009). Social and recreational facilities are able to give a positive impact in raising customer patronage in shopping malls by developing sustainable customer value to gain the competitive advantage at malls (Rajagopal, 2008).

In reality, malls have adopted the idea of open spaces to provide thrilling consumption experiences for shoppers that provide a way of escape from busy life, boredom and pressure-provoking situations (Babin et al., 1994). Thus, shopping malls today offer leisure activities, such as yoga classes, cooking classes, children's playground, holiday festivals, fashion shows, craft festivals and family entertainment attractions (Rigby, 2011). Customers tend to shop inside a shopping mall which has high socialization potential and perceived freedom from security concerns (Malike, 2010). A trip to a shopping mall can be described as exploring new experience, friends, ideas or knowledge which could be scheduled or unplanned (Ahmed et al., 2007). Socialisation highly influences the attitude of consumer towards shopping malls and become a competitive strategy for malls.

The recreational infrastructures in shopping malls trigger the shopping excitement of shoppers and expose the buying behaviour of shoppers. The excitement of customers persuades and motivates them to stay longer in the mall and influence on their purchasing decision. Shopping mall with recreational attractions can be recognized as one of the main drivers of tourism promotion by presenting attractive quality fashion items and storing preferences among tourist customers. Perceptions of emotional levels, shopping duration and

merchandise evaluations are gained from the arousal and satisfaction level felt by the customers in the shopping malls (Rajagopal, 2007). It has been noted that high shopping arousal is likely to create stronger buying behaviour and attitude in customers. In summary, recreational facility is one of the competitive strategies for existing shopping malls.

2.3.1.3 Baby Nursing and Changing Rooms Facility

Nowadays, the rights of women and children have been emphasized and concerned. For example, World Health Organization (2000) encouraged a supportive environment and facilities at workplace for working mothers to continue breastfeeding. The number of baby nursing rooms in Klang Valley shopping malls are increasing every year (Azhari, Salam and Hasbullah, 2011). A baby nursing room is a room for the use of carers to meet the personal needs of infants, toddlers, and even younger children (Kaplan, 2010). It is a space allocated for nappies change, fluids and solids preparation, feeding, breastfeeding, also breast pumping for mothers.

A safe and quality environment for baby nursing at shopping mall is important to provide privacy for breastfeeding and also meet the emergency needs of younger children. The location of baby nursing room should be easily sighted and accessed. It is vital to ensure that signage board does reflect the purpose of the baby nursing room correctly. Comfort and clean facilities are important such as nappy changing table, wash basin, nursing chair, drinking fountains and bottle warmers. Figure 2.1 shows that approximately 58% of the total number of shopping malls in Klang Valley is providing between 2 to 5 numbers of baby nursing rooms in each building (Azhari, Salam and Hasbullah, 2011). Hence, baby nursing room is essential nowadays which will become a competitive strategy for existing shopping malls.

Besides baby nursing rooms, changing rooms in shopping mall are the tiny but mighty space where purchasing decisions are made (Schimak and Hu, 2019). Changing room which are also called fitting room is one of the most competitive advantages brick-and-mortar stores have over online retailers. The customers tend to inspect and evaluate the clothing item by trying it on. Moreover, a good experience between customers and sales assistance in the fitting rooms can boost up the sales up to three times as people tend to make decisions based on

others' judgments. Besides, the size, design, hygiene, colour and lighting in the fitting rooms play crucial roles in purchasing decisions of customers as they may affect their emotions and satisfactions (Song et al., 2013). In summary, the baby nursing rooms and changing rooms are dominant to gain the competitive advantage over other existing shopping malls.

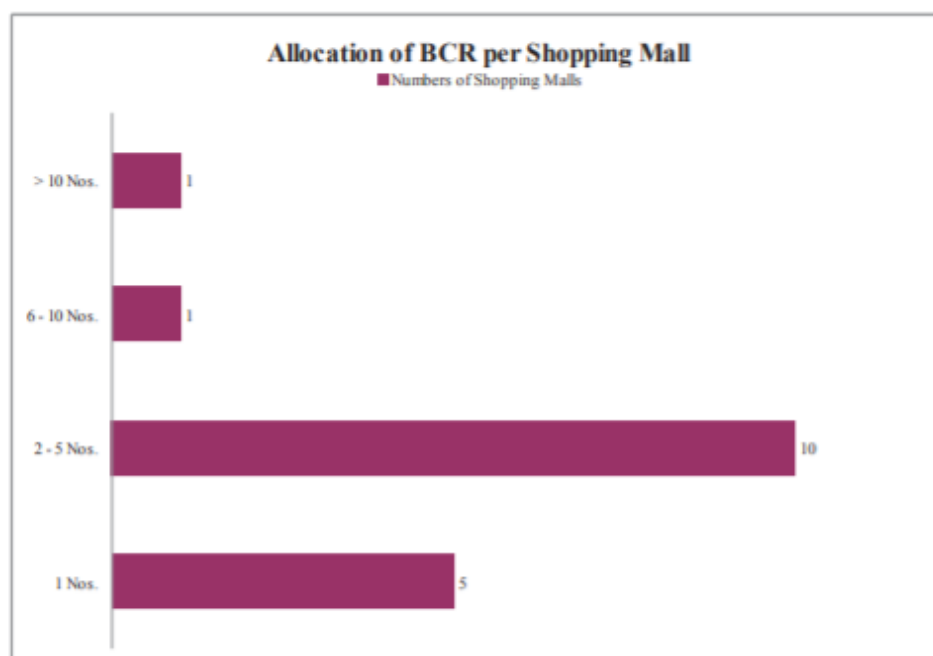


Figure 2.1: Number of Baby Nursing Room in Each Shopping Mall
(Source: Azhari, Salam and Hasbullah, 2011)

2.3.2 Service

Services are one of the significant attributes of the shopping mall. Previous research declared that there is a relationship between good quality of service provided by shopping mall and customer shopping behaviour which can affect the footfall of malls (Sit et al., 2003). The services in shopping malls could be separated into two categories which are personal and communal services (González-Hernández and Orozco-Gómez, 2012). The combination of personal and communal services is vital for the image of the shopping mall and create value to the shopping experiences of customers.

2.3.2.1 Personal Service

A shopping mall with good personal services is the key to create a competitive edge in the retail market. The personal services are relevant to the knowledge, attitude and courtesy of the staffs as every word and action of them are on behalf of the shopping mall. Ubeja (2013) declared that the relationship between the staffs and the customers affects the experience and emotions of the consumers. Customers generally desire to shop where salespersons are perceived as helpful and friendly.

A polite expression, sensitivity, welcoming attitude and even a smile of the staff towards shoppers also can influence the perception of customers (Soderlund and Rosengren, 2008). Normally, assistance from concierge personnel is provided to solve the problems or questions from customers in the shopping mall. In this case, a responsive and efficient help desk is the goal of every customer. Moreover, the demonstration by salespersons plays a significant role in growing customers' patronage in a shopping mall. Customers always purchase products and gain better services from the recommendation, knowledge or demonstration from staffs. High awareness of customers will usually compare the services provided by different shopping malls and choose the best one to shop.

Thus, staff training can be implemented for optimal interaction between staff and customers. Besides, the efficient interaction and openness to differences are important characteristics for employees in shopping malls. Throughout staff training, the employees get to communicate with diversity of customers such as consumers with physical disability and reduce the preconceptions of them (Goodrich and Ramsey, 2012). A good communication involves positive attitude, adequate knowledge and respective skills. In summary, a high quality of mall services can definitely increase the satisfaction of customers and gain a good reputation for the shopping mall.

2.3.2.2 Communal Service

Mall management covers wide range of services to ensure a lively and vibrant atmosphere in the shopping mall. Communal service is defined as the service which is used in common by more than one consumer in the same premises (Law Insider, 2020). The communal services are related to the amenities or

facilities provided in the shopping mall such as lift, escalator, store directory machine, wheelchair, security system, fire control system, prayer room, ambulance and more (Routledge, 2015). In order to make sure the shoppers prefer visiting the shopping mall, he or she must look forward to the communal services.

The signboards must be clear and unambiguous to provide accurate direction for shoppers. Another from signboards, store directory machines or boards can be provided to ease the shoppers in such big shopping mall. Besides, the lifts and escalators in shopping malls must have regular maintenance to ensure the safety of customers. Moreover, The Gardens Mall likewise offer wheelchair and stroller rental service for children, elders or people with disability (The Gardens Mall, 2020). In addition, shopping malls are usually crowded with people and incidents such as theft and robberies may happen. CCTVs and securities are a must to ensure the safety in a shopping mall. Automatic sprinkler system has to be installed for controlling the fire if accident happens. For the shopping malls in Malaysia, prayer room is essential for the shoppers or employees to make their praying in a comfortable space.

Some of the communal services such as smoke detectors are less to be used and end up being overlooked by the shopping mall. The regular maintenance is important to ensure the optimum function of them. Customers will feel safe and relax in such comprehensive communal services provided by the shopping mall. In addition, good communal service increases the customer loyalty and also generate positive word-of-mouth about the shopping mall. Hence, customers satisfy and traders successful. In summary, communal services plays a major role in competitive strategy of shopping malls.

2.3.2.3 Priority Shopping Access Service

The priority shopping access services are targeted for the senior citizens, pregnant women and persons with disability (PWDs). A user-friendly shopping mall is important to be considerate and mindful of all customers including the vulnerable groups to get access to food and other essentials. Customers with special needs should be given an attentive service, looking after their needs and requirements (Bashiti and Rahim, 2016). With the priority shopping access, they

get to skip the queue of shops in the shopping mall to earn more time and space during their shopping.

With implementing this service, the retail stores in the shopping mall have to cooperate and participate in this program to ease the shopping experience of shoppers within these categories. For instance, Sunway Velocity Mall provides a 'Priority Customer' wristband for the priority person to distinguish them with other shoppers (Sunway Velocity Mall, 2020). Even through the online shopping, Tesco offers priority food delivery slots to the most vulnerable people (Beard, 2020). During the Covid-19 phases, Tesco and Village Grocer likewise allows healthcare workers to access priority shopping in their stores for appreciating their hard work during this hard time (Beard, 2020).

Shopping mall is opened for people regardless of their age, agility or physical ability (Bashiti and Rahim, 2016). This priority shopping access service does fulfil everyone's needs with a safer environment. Furthermore, the vulnerable group of people will not feel helpless and panic when they are going to shopping mall. They deserve to have a better accessibility and connectivity to shopping mall. In summary, priority shopping access service is one of the keys to the competitive strategy of shopping malls.

2.3.3 Product Assortment

Product assortment is recognized as one of the competitive strategies for existing shopping malls. Too many malls that look alike, with too many stores selling too much of the same products, resulting in declining of mall patronage. Therefore, shopping malls have to be supported by selecting the right retail mix tenants to integrate under one same roof. Numerous researches have highlighted that shoppers' perception of product arrangement and product quality in retail malls are essential factors that influence directly on the behaviour of customers and business in malls (Cleeren et al., 2010; Wel et al., 2012).

2.3.3.1 Retail Mix

Retail mix is a strategy that appropriately combining the different types of stores in a shopping mall to attract more customers (Dawson, 1983). The factors involved in implementing the tenant mix are the services, products, style and variety of the stores. Maryam and Kambiz (2011) implies that retail mix is one

of the most critical attributes in the success of a shopping mall. One of the first attempt to determine the preferences for shopping mall layouts was done by Anderson, et al. (1999) and the result was product-based layout is more positive than the lifestyle-based layout.

A shopping with retail tenant mix should offer a wide range of category such as food and beverage, personal care, clothing, services, entertainment, home product and so forth. There are some particular rules to make the retail tenant mix more effective. For instance, anchor stores are usually situated at the end of the layout or furthest from other stores; complementary tenants should be grouped together; incompatible tenants should be scattered; services are suitable for side shopping malls or other places which are not suitable for stores selling impulse products (Fong, 2005).

Kaufman and Lane (1996) conducted a study and found that most of the consumers try to do as much shopping in one shopping trip as possible due to the time-stressed and convenience provided. Retail mix offers a wide range of near one-stop shopping particularly for window-obsessed shoppers and who seeking for multiple shopping experiences as diversification of products and services are easy to be obtained in a shopping mall (Idoko, Ukenna and Obeta, 2019). Among the tenant mix strategy, certain anchor tenants such as well-known supermarket or stores have to be included to attract customers.

The optimum mix of tenants are focused on customers' behaviour and preferences to satisfy the needs and wants of them (Borgers et al., 2010). Retail mix should clearly understand about the target community and target market of respective shopping mall. Burnaz and Topcu (2011) reveals that it is significant to maintain a high awareness level of the well-known retail stores within the malls and appropriate integrate them to attract the target community. Today, people go to mall not only for shopping but also an outing. Events like exhibitions, concerts, fashion shows and others are good to increase the footfalls in malls.

Retail mix strategy will definitely cause a positive impact on the operational performance of the malls. A shopping mall with retail tenant mix helps attracting more shoppers and generating excitement in them and thus increasing sales for retailers and also shopping mall (Fantoni, Hoefel and Mazzarolo, 2014). In summary, retail mix is one of the competitive strategies of

existing shopping mall in Malaysia. Shopping mall can be fashionistas' heaven, kid's wonderland, shoppers' paradise, gourmet hunter's sanctuary and a firm family favourite, all under one roof.

2.3.3.2 Quality of Product

Gupta et al. (2004) declared that customers tend to shop in shopping malls which deliver higher quality of products. Researchers use quality to evaluate the main market indicators like reputation, competitiveness and customer loyalty (Hansen and Solgaard, 2004). Shopping malls are like a magnet which attract the consumers often seeking for higher quality of products and services in order to get some distinctiveness. Quality of products is classified into perceived and objective, is a crucial criterion that triggers an increase in foot traffic in shopping mall (Brunso et al., 2005). Perceived quality is defined as the ability of the product to satisfy the needs and expectations of consumers (Bergman & Klefsjo, 1994).

In evaluating the performance of retail brands in terms of their market share, high quality and consistency are more critical than the price (Zain and Saidu, 2016). Batra and Sinha (2000) found that customers tend to have a lower perceived risk of making a purchase mistake when they choose higher quality product. Idoko et al. (2019) reveals that shopping mall should understand the powerful strength corresponding with product classifications and wisely decide on the recruitment of retailers in the shopping mall to positively identify higher quality items. According to anecdotal evidence, consumers flock to mall locations from various cities partially in search of 'scarce' higher quality products. This situation is unavoidable as there is a changing trend towards customer consumption of foreign-made products with higher quality due to their low ethnocentrism.

The quality of the products not only have to be good, but also consistent. Regular testing and customer feedback are needed to maintain the high quality of products (Zain and Saidu, 2016). Retailer can get the feedback of customers' experience through numerous paths such as online social media, website, survey or even asking face-to-face. In this case, retailer get to address any issues or product flaws to improve the quality and meet the satisfaction of consumers. The effort retailer put on will create a better image or reputation for shopping

mall. Besides maintaining the quality of product, consistent improvement has to be made for higher quality product. A study reveals that 84% of shoppers chose innovative products (Copadis, 2019).

Quality is important for retailers to gain competitive advantages. High quality of products tends to fulfil the mentality and inner side of consumers and possibly triggers their purchasing decisions while shopping within malls and contribute to sustained interest in malls (Skallenrud et al., 2009). In summary, there is a positive relationship between quality and customer satisfaction on retailer's brand products. Product quality has to be good, safe and reliable to satisfy customers and retain their loyalty so that a shopping mall can survive.

2.3.4 Digitalization

The next competitive strategy for shopping malls is digitalization. Digitalization is radically shifting the retail system of shopping mall due to the advanced technology nowadays is more efficient than traditional mode of management (Frishammar et al., 2018). The traditional strategy of malls is the management of physical equipment, such as maintenance and security, which allow sellers to trade effectively (Chebat et al., 2006). Shopping malls have to develop an appropriate strategy to adapt the evolving digitalization challenge. There are two strategies which are digital services and digital program (Frishammar et al., 2018).

2.3.4.1 Digital Service

Digital technologies, in particular, are devices identified by a simple programming of characteristics; the homogenisation of data that can be easily gathered, kept, distributed, analysed and displayed; a higher level of industrialisation which is the fourth industrial revolution (Yoo et al., 2010). Digitalization is broadly characterized as the use of diverse digital technology to convert operations, processes and products from traditional to digital in order to promote new ways to gain advantage and value by operating shopping mall.

For digital service strategy, the type of technology used is basic and can be accepted by every shopping mall. The marketing department of the shopping mall can provide basic facilities such as free Wi-Fi and basic information on official websites including opening hours and store location (Frishammar, 2018).

Facebook page of the shopping mall also can be created to update the latest information or event to the public. Importantly, the shopping mall has to keep the webpage updated as this is a great platform for customers to voice out their opinions or suggestions.

Shopping malls are able to create offline experiences nowadays (Staack, 2018) as digital postal service is introduced. For example, One Utama Shopping Mall introduced an online shopping platform which is oneshop.com.my (Khoo, 2018). Customers can purchase their desired product through their website and collect goods from the actual stores at One Utama Shopping Mall. However, the collaboration of retailers and shopping mall is significant to achieve this strategy. Besides, cross benefit between stores can be created as customers may visit other stores while collecting their good in the mall. In summary, the digital service is one of the competitive strategies for existing shopping mall.

2.3.4.2 Digital Payment

By 2021, Malaysia transitions towards a cashless revolution as the traditional wallets are gradually replaced by smartphones (FaveBiz, 2020). In Malaysia, 25.84 million out of 32 million of people are mobile internet users. Figure 2.2 illustrated the steady growth over the last five years in value of cashless transaction in Malaysia. Following the digital retail trend, a lot of merchants in Malaysia transform to digital forms of commerce which is digital payment such as E-wallet. E-wallets are just like payment cards that operate by using an app (Gazi, 2020). E-wallet users have to load fund into a digital wallet before paying for products and services. Mobile apps which offer e-wallet service including Boost, MaybankPay, GrabPay, FavePay, Touch 'n Go e-wallet and more. QR code and in-app payment are the usual ways of e-wallet payments.

There are usually offers or discounts for the e-wallet users to encourage the adoption of e-wallet payments. Besides, the government provides RM30 to e-wallet users aged 18 and above for promoting and encouraging public to use it. Thus, it is critical for the physical stores in shopping mall to accept digital payments to grow their business. Furthermore, customer loyalty can be built through e-wallet payment by giving cashback to customers (Pikri, 2019). For example, every RM1 cashback that retailers give, customers come back and spend at least RM7. With the help of digital payments, retailers are able to

analyse the market patterns and develop marketing strategies to maximize their non-peak hours in the shopping malls. At least 98% of retailers find it useful to receive actionable data insights from digital payments (FaveBiz, 2020).

The digital payment provides customers with easier, faster and more convenient access to money across the various shopping malls region (Franciska and Sahayaselvi, 2017). It takes lesser time to process a digital payment compared to a credit card payment. Thus, the number of transactions in a day increase. Moreover, it creates a secured environment as there is not much cash in-store and retailers do not need to deposit the large amount of cash into their bank. Furthermore, the transaction data which reflects the customers' spending habit is easier to be collected and retailers are able to drive smarter business decisions. The reports are likewise useful for the retailers to recognize how effectiveness of their cashback rebate strategy is. In summary, digital payment is an important factor of competitive strategy for existing shopping malls.

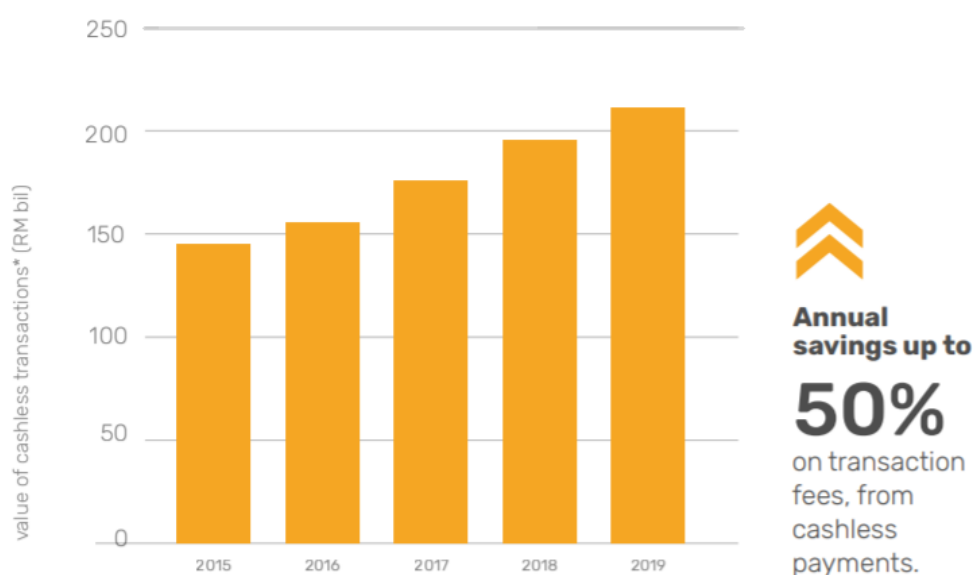


Figure 2.2: Cashless Payments in Malaysia
(Source: Bank Negara Malaysia, 2020)

2.3.4.3 Digital Program

A recent cross-industrial report reveals that the retail sector has the lowest awareness of the way to implement the digital program effectively. Furthermore, previous study also reported that shopping mall can definitely benefit more from

adopting new digital technologies compare to other industry sectors. Digital technologies allow new functions and promote data management compared to the analogue one (Yoo et al., 2010). By adopting digital technology, businesses can generate value in the form of performance, complementarity, innovation and efficiency.

For digital program strategy, it is more complex and large data of digital technology is needed. The Information Technology (IT) department has to cooperate with technology supplier to gather large amount of data from consumers in the shopping mall (Frishammar, 2018). The shopper data can be collected through loyalty program (Liew, 2017). The gathered data is analysed and to improve and simplify the logistic services, footfall, flow of measurement, heat maps and more. Shopping malls can use the data to maximize their store location and facilitate the flow of customers through the analysis of shopper traffic and retail location sales. Through this strategy, shopping malls can optimize the usage of mall and increase their sales because of the advance and efficient management and analytics.

This strategy focuses on two sides' interaction which are the customers and retailers. The shopping malls get to track shoppers via their smartphones and customize relevant goods recommendation for them according to their shopping profile (Frishammar, 2018). According to Lesonsky (2017), about half of the women in the survey indicated that they will not even enter a store unless they see a markdown. Thus, shopping mall may use e-commerce platforms to create bundled digital offers with the combination of different retailers in mall. An app for shopping mall can be developed so that retailers get to communicate with customers easily. Therefore, they get to connect the physical world with digital services. In summary, digital program is an important factor of competitive strategy for existing shopping malls.

2.3.5 Environment

Environment is declared as one of the competitive strategies for existing shopping malls. Developing a friendly physical environment is an effective retail strategy to cause some positive emotional reactions and patronage behaviour and eventually influence on customer buying behaviour (Levy and Weitz, 2012). Pleasant environment influences on mall patronage as customers

may feel reluctant to visit the mall with a poor environment. Massicotte et al. (2011) reveals that the mall environment influences the behavioural responses of consumers which are cognitive, emotional and physiological. Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin (2019) separated the environment of shopping mall into two categories, which are the design factor and the ambient factor.

2.3.5.1 Design factor

Design factor which is associated with the spatial arrangement including layout, textures, display and signs (Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2019). Besides, the design of the tangible elements such as decorations and greenery outside or inside the shopping mall influence the perception of customers. The first impression of a visitors is likely to be produced in part by the physical environment including interior design which is exposed. Positive perceptions on the interior design of shopping mall will provide a positive effect on desire to stay of shoppers.

Interestingly, the architecture of the mall has a clear impact on desire to stay and excitement (Wakefield and Baker, 1998). Shopping malls with boring layouts like single level L shapes could be at a disadvantage as compared with more creative layouts like multi-level star-shapes. Das and Varshneya (2017) demonstrated that interior design represented by high ceiling and roof have a positive impact on consumers' emotions and mental richness. The aesthetic of a shopping mall potentially causes psychological fulfilment and generates higher levels of excitement and experiences that exceed the products and services normally sold in shopping malls (Kamarulzaman and Lih, 2010). This offers the opportunity for visitors to transform or change their perceived third world identity. Furthermore, the design of signboards within the shopping malls are significant as they are used for communication with visitors.

In this digital age, a brand's social media likes and followers are considered monetary values (Marane, 2018). With the selfie-obsessed, hashtag-driven and influencer-based culture today, it is important for shopping malls to design iconic places for shoppers to notice and take photos. For example, the sky avenue light reflective floor in Genting Highland and the crystal fountain at Pavilion. There are many shoppers such as influencers on social media would like to leave a memory and post on their social media. Indirectly, more people

will get to know about the shopping mall and customer flow increases. However, this strategy is less suitable for shoppers who feel shy to take photographs when there are people looking around.

When consumers are satisfied with the design factor, retailers are able to reap many benefits, such as consumer loyalty and sustained profitability (Liu and Jang, 2009). Based on the research on Dick and Basu's conceptual framework (1994), a real loyalty customer is one who has fairly good attitudes towards the retailer and possesses a strong repeat buying behaviour. In summary, a unique interior and exterior design of a shopping mall is the competitive strategy of the existing shopping mall.

2.3.5.2 Ambient Factor

Ambient elements are defined as the intangible environment features such as lighting, scent, aroma, background music, temperature and cleanliness (Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2019). These elements are able to influence on the consumer emotion and behaviour. Mattila and Wirtz (2001) investigated the influence of fragrance and music by using an experimental method. They manipulated fragrance and music in a field setting in three by three factorial designs and the results suggested a significant effect.

Shopping motivations include the interior and exterior atmosphere of the shopping mall as it is also part of their shopping experience and process. Furthermore, some pleasant ambience stimuli like music, product videos, hands-on experience services and fragrance help customers to make positive purchasing decisions. Importantly, the entrance of a shopping mall has to make a friendly and warm welcome into an atmosphere that suits the style of shopping mall. Moreover, unhygienic and unmaintained washrooms are found to have a negative impact on evaluations, likelihood of purchase, judgment and willingness to pay for goods. 66% of the customers will reduce the duration staying at mall due to the poor hygiene of the shopping mall (Singh and Prashar, 2013).

In summary, the pleasant ambience of the malls, ergonomics, architecture, excitement and variety motivate the customers to stay longer have significant influence on the competitive strategies for existing shopping mall. (Craig and Turley, 2004). Positive perceptions of the mall atmosphere can impact

enthusiasm of visitors in a positive way. Management of mall shall provide attention to the environment not just during the design phases but also regularly by surveying mall customers on their views and repeat patronage their intentions. Dennis et al. (2010) reveals that comfortable atmosphere can help create retail traffic, boost sales and customer spending.

2.3.6 Marketing

The last competitive strategy for shopping malls goes to marketing. Retail marketing strategy is about the techniques and methods shopping malls implement to attract shoppers and boost sales (Rajagopal, 2008). Make use of word-of-mouth marketing with promotional activity and festival event. The main concept is that shopping malls increase the satisfaction of customers until they share their experiences with their mates (Nicasio, 2018). A sound marketing strategy can be executed leading a shopping mall to develop its competitive edge and succeed in long-term customer satisfaction and retention.

2.3.6.1 Promotional Activity

Popular promotional practices used in shopping malls by the retailers include discounts and incentive to increase the mall patronage. Many traditional promotions such as product presentations in stores are considered as poor efficiency strategy, whereas mall-wide sales are the type of promotional strategy which customers tend to be attracted. Thus, a combination of leisure activities and cost-oriented promotions are said to be effective ways to attract customers (Parsons, 2003).

Customers tend to gain profit from promotions and discounts when there is a decrease of disposable income during economic downturns. The purchasing behaviour of consumers is highly affected by their perception of the magnitude and frequency of mall promotions (Chebat et al., 2010). Furthermore, price-sensitive consumers are often drawn by sales packages like gifts, price promotions and rebates offered by sellers in shopping mall (Yousaf, Arora and Gupta, 2015). Fox et al. (2009) reported that consumers will unlikely switch retail platform when they get extra advantages or profit from promotional activity. Indirectly, sales promotion deals increase the store traffic of malls and also create positive impact on the sales of other goods.

Sales promotion activities helps maintaining retail patronage behaviour (Fox et al., 2009). The promotional effects produced by different promotional tools can be tracked over longer periods of time and calculated in terms of achieving the long-term objectives of shopping mall (Rajagopal, 2008). Moreover, customers' response to the different promotions in various shopping malls, networks and branches have to be evaluated in order to get appropriate improvements in the process of providing marketing programs to consumers. In summary, varies promotional sales adopted by stores are the competitive strategy for existing shopping malls.

2.3.6.2 Festival Event

Events marketing is an important factor regards to the attractiveness of the mall. Customers' perceptions of event consist of three factors which are perceived crowding, perceived quality and potential participation benefits (Sit et al., 2014). These factors may have positive effect on customers' enthusiasm which influences their unplanned purchases and shopping satisfaction. Shopping mall may consider developing retail systems to organize seasonal events to boost the inherent excitement and enjoyment shopping experience of customers (Mathwick et al., 2002).

Shopping mall may collaborate with company brand managers so that they can use area of mall as brand launch venues. This strategy induces excitement in customers and is likely to contribute to a higher customers' footfall (Idoko et al., 2019). Furthermore, shopping mall may develop into friendly spaces with beautiful interiors and natural landscape, becoming valuable venues for specific events or exhibitions (Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2019). Entertainment-based events can include fashion shows, themed events, concerts and more (Sit and Birch, 2014). These activities can have a positive effect on approach actions and can raise satisfaction rates (Sands et al., 2015).

Event marketing studies have generally focused on the expectations and emotions of consumers about festival events that take place in a real, outdoor setting (Thrane, 2002). For example, festival events include jazz festivals and wine festivals and cultural festivals. Pre-planned festival events such as jazz and cultural events are known as high-implication events that customers are

typically involved in and actively intend to attend (Kim et al., 2002). Generally, customers prefer to participate in festival events while shopping in mall at the same time.

Mall events possesses a powerful force for creating an exciting mood in shoppers and they tend to be attracted by the overwhelming atmosphere. Events likewise trigger excitement among customers. Research shows that the event atmosphere gives positive signs or stimuli that regulate the mood of shoppers (Ghee and Ahmad, 2010). Moreover, festive events are also able to cause customers immerse in enjoyment and pleasure, resulting in a positive attitude towards the mall (Das and Varshneya, 2017). In summary, festival event is important factor of competitive strategy for existing shopping mall.

2.4 Conceptual Framework of the Competitive Strategy

This study further develops the conceptual framework by incorporating the suitable competitive strategies that can be adopted by existing shopping malls (Figure 2.3). Previous relevant studies were reviewed and a list of relevant competitive strategies was identified and tabulated in Table 2.1. The integration of the competitive strategies' parameters clarified the practices involved when adopting the strategies.

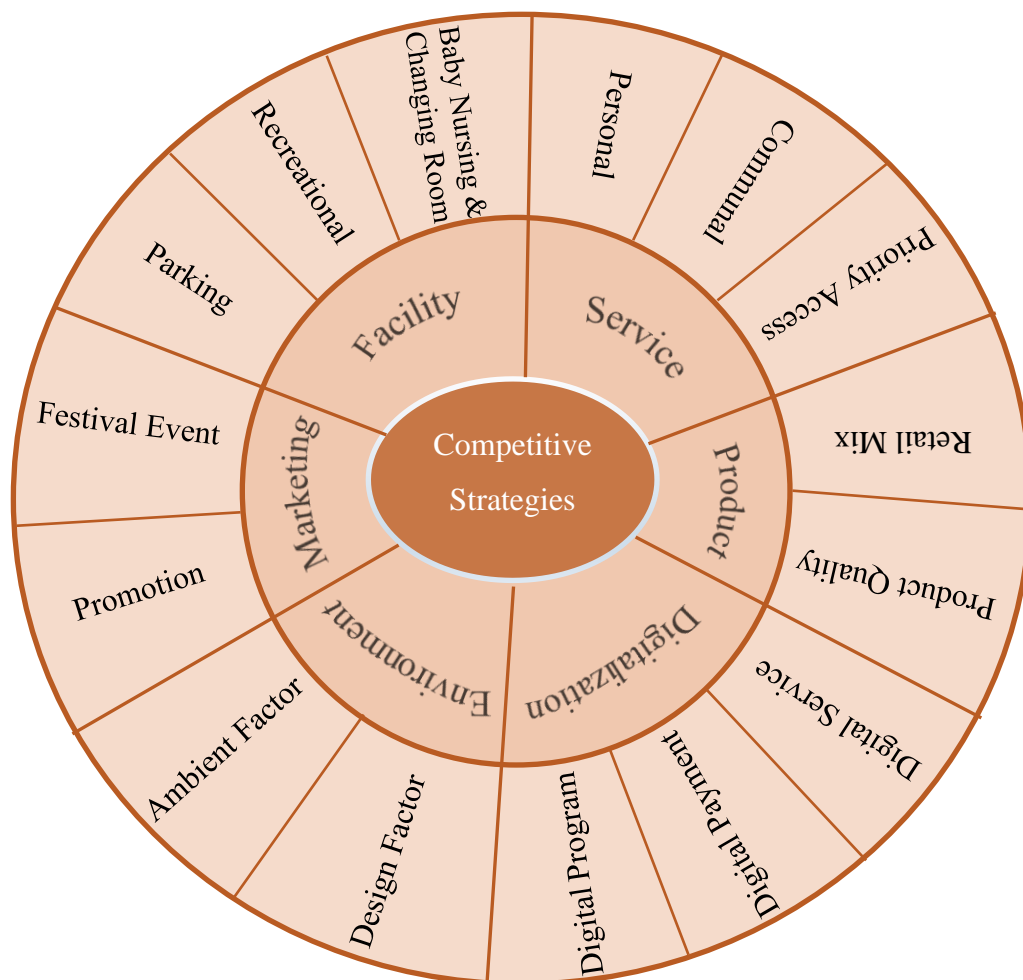


Figure 2.3: Conceptual Framework of Competitive Strategies

Figure 2.3 summarises the parameters of competitive strategies for existing shopping malls to avoid being eliminated among the competitive retail market. Firstly, the shopping mall can focus on facility dimension including parking, recreational, baby nursing and changing room facility to increase the satisfaction level of customers. Next, services including personal, communal and priority access are significant for customers to have the feelings of being concerned and respected. Furthermore, tenant mix and product quality have to be focused to increase the choices and lifestyle quality of customers. Shopping mall nowadays may also emphasize on digitalization including digital service, digital payment and digital program to catch up the advance technology century. Moreover, the environment dimension including design factor and ambient factor should be focused to attract more customers and keep the shopping clean

and hygiene. Lastly, marketing approach of shopping mall is significant as promotion and festival events cause a positive impact on the psychological aspect and purchase behaviour of customers.

Table 2.1: Literature Map of Parameter of Competitive Strategies

No	Parameters	Previous Studies												
		Rajagopal (2008)	Idoko et al. (2019)	Erishammar et al. (2018)	Gudonaviciene & Aljosiene (2013)	Porral and Mangin (2019)	Calvo-Porra and Lévy-Mangin (2019)	Wakefield and Baker (1998)	Singh and Prashar (2013)	Albattat et al. (2019)	Jhamb and Kiran (2012)	Ahmed, Ghingold and Dahari (2007)	Kushwaha, Ubeja and Chatterjee (2017)	IONITĂ, I.M. (2017)
1	Facility													
a)	Parking Facility		/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
b)	Recreational Facility	/	/		/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	/
c)	Baby Nursing and Changing Room Facility		/						/					

2.5 The characteristics of shoppers with the competitive strategies

A cohort theory by Ryder (1965) reveals that the characteristics of shoppers will influence on the consumers' behaviour, attitude and perception by adopting competitive strategies. The major moderator variables are said to be the different in ages and genders of shoppers. Male shoppers are increasing, and the generation of shoppers is getting broader following to the trend nowadays. Thus, the retailers have to adapt the changes in order to survive in brick-and-mortar business or increase the footfall. It is important for shopping malls to cater both genders and different generations of shoppers by adopting suitable competitive strategies. As a result, this research conducts a study on the differences between characteristics of shoppers in term of age and gender on the proposed competitive strategies.

2.5.1 Ages of shoppers and the competitive strategies

Results of the research may be inconsistency due to the moderating function of age in relation to the characteristics of shopping malls (Idoko et al., 2019). People from different generations perceive variations in environment stimulation. Such variations may be related to their atmospheric evaluation of shopping malls (Anselmsson, 2006). There are researches showed that age is one of the factors that influences customer assessment of shopping destinations although some researches provide conflicting results. For instance, Teller et al. (2013) found that elderly people around age of 60 are able to affect the perception and behavior relevant to shopping mall patronage.

In a research undertaken in India, Devadas and Manohar (2012) recorded a substantial difference between age groups with regard to attributes of shopping mall with younger customers (20–40 years old) who prefer to the entertainment factor compared to older customers (65 + years old) who prefer to the diversity and value which improve their living standards. Furthermore, Yuniarinto et al. (2017) reported that age reduces the retail impact of utilitarian motivation attributes. However, Jin and Kim (2001) stated that shopping motivation such as utilitarian or hedonic are not affected by age. Furthermore, Ertekin et al. (2014) reports that age does not affect the perception of hedonic-driven customers to the environment in a shopping mall. Ultimately, age may enhance or weaken the attitude of shoppers regarding to various attributes of retail malls.

In summary, there is a difference between different age groups on the competitive strategies for shopping malls based on these previous studies.

2.5.2 Genders and the competitive strategies

Gender cohort theory from Ryder (1965) emphasized the importance of mall attributes to influence the shopping attitude of different genders of shoppers. Females tend to shop for certain categories such as grocery and clothing, whereas males are responsible for shopping specialized products like cars and house maintenance (Buttle, 1992). However, Fischer and Arnold (1994) indicated that different genders have different perceptions and behaviours about shopping. Males and females may vary in certain ways of consumption, product preference and reaction to marketing strategies and product assortment (Zeithaml, 1988). Females often engage more in clarifying for product details before making decision and spend more time in malls comparing to males (Fischer and Arnold, 1994). On the other way, the participation of married men in shopping may depend on the status of wife's job.

Moreover, Chang, et al. (2004) distinguished that different genders will have different level of satisfactions during hedonic shopping. The hedonic shopping value for females will usually related to variety-seeking tendency, physical store environment and overall shopping satisfaction while there is no mediation for males. Furthermore, Kavussanu and Roberts (2001) found that males have lower task orientation compared to females and thus inferred that the utilitarian shopping value for males could be lesser. Besides, Raajpoot et al. (2008) and Lim et al. (2007) examined that the differences of shopping attitudes between male and female shopping. They revealed that males make greater use on salespersons assistance than female and females place greater priority on the convenience and product selection within shopping mall. In summary, there is a difference between different gender cohort on the competitive strategies for shopping malls based on these studies.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In a nutshell, this chapter presented the review for the competitive strategies that can be applied by shopping malls. The strategy is categorized into six dimensions which are facility, services, product assortment, digitalization,

environment and marketing. The approaches for each dimension were studied and reviewed in detail. Lastly, a conceptual framework of competitive strategies had developed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research method is investigated and discussed. A diagram of research flow is developed to present the procedures of conducting the research. Moreover, the instrument used for quantitative data collection is determined. The method to determine the sampling is discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the statistical tests which used to analyse the data are identified and discussed.

3.2 Research Method

Research methods are the approaches, procedures, or techniques applied to collect data or facts for study to discover new knowledge or provide a deeper understanding of a subject (Rajasekar, 2013). Scientific research methods only accept those explanations which can be verified by experiments but not on reasoning alone. Thus, research methods help collecting samples and solve a problem. Research method is categorized into three types which are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches (Forman et al., 2008). Mixed approaches include the compilation and "mixing" of both quantitative and qualitative data into a sample. The process of carrying out a research method including collecting, analysing, evaluating and findings.

3.2.1 Quantitative Research Approach

The quantitative method is utilized to enumerate the issue by generating statistical data or numerical data (Carol, 2016). Survey and questionnaire are two of the methods carrying out quantitative research. The question is better addressed in a quantitative project by recognizing which factors or variables affect an outcome. Besides, the objectivity of quantitative research should be presented from impersonal point of view.

There are few key features of quantitative research which differ from qualitative research. The goal of quantitative is to evaluate the relationships among variables (Forman et al., 2008). Furthermore, data collection is closed-

ended while data analysis is deductive. The research process is fixed and sequential while the sampling of quantitative research is representative. Moreover, validity is tested using expert judgment, mathematical modeling and prediction.

Quantitative research method is able to collect large amount of data in a shorter duration but may lack of details. The collected data is easy to be analyzed but lack of comprehensive to explain complex issues. The findings can be tested and checked to make it more reliable, but it is difficult to set up a research model. The result of quantitative approach is straightforward, but it may also be misleading or subjective due to the biases of researchers (Devault, 2019).

3.2.2 Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research explores concepts, ideas, perceptions and view (Forman et al., 2008). Qualitative research method including narrative research, grounded theory, case studies and others. Qualitative study is exploratory and researchers use it to examine a subject when the variables and theoretical basis are unclear. Qualitative analysis approaches use open-ended methods, such as interviews, for data collection and analyze it by using non-statistical techniques.

There are few key features of qualitative research differ from quantitative method. The goal of qualitative is discovery-oriented and comprehensive to investigate the question and process underlying assumptions. Furthermore, data collection is open-ended while data analysis is interpretive and inductive. The research process is iterative while the sampling is purposeful. Moreover, validity is tested using methodological rigor and researcher's expertise and experience. Moreover, findings are applied to setting similar to the ones in the study. (Forman et al., 2008).

For qualitative research method, richer data can be collected but it is more difficult to analyze. Besides, it refined the quantitative data, but the findings normally cannot be evaluated to the study community and population. Qualitative research provides multiple ways to collect data on sensitive topic but it is time consuming.

3.3 Justification of Selection

In this study, quantitative research approach is selected for achieving the research objectives. The main purpose of this study is to propose a competitive strategies framework which can be applied by existing shopping malls in Malaysia to reduce the abandonment of retail malls. Quantitative method is chosen due to a large number of statistical data is needed to determine the respondents' views on various competitive strategies identified from this study. Questionnaire surveys are chosen among the different quantitative approaches as it can be distributed to large number of respondents in the shortest possible time (Apuke, 2017). Ranking method can be used to determine the sequence of the importance of different competitive strategies influencing the business of shopping mall. The results are reliable when there is large amount of responses received. A framework will be developed based on the findings obtained from large responses.

Qualitative research is considered less suitable in this study as it is non-numerical and descriptive method. It looks at information that usually describes emotional and subjective responses using words, rather than numbers. Qualitative approach is suitable for research natures which require deeper understanding from wording (Hammarberg, Kirkman and Lacey, 2016). For this research, a large response is required to construct the competitive strategies. It is difficult to be collected and analysed by using qualitative research method as qualitative approach normally involves small number of respondents (McLeod, 2019). Thus, qualitative approaches are less suitable for this study as the results obtained from qualitative approach is unable to represent the whole community in Malaysia.

3.4 Research Design

Figure 3.1 shows the different phases involved during the research process. For this research, there are eight phases of the research process. Based on this analysis, the research process is adapted from Kothari (2004) and modified. The study goal can be reached throughout the research process.

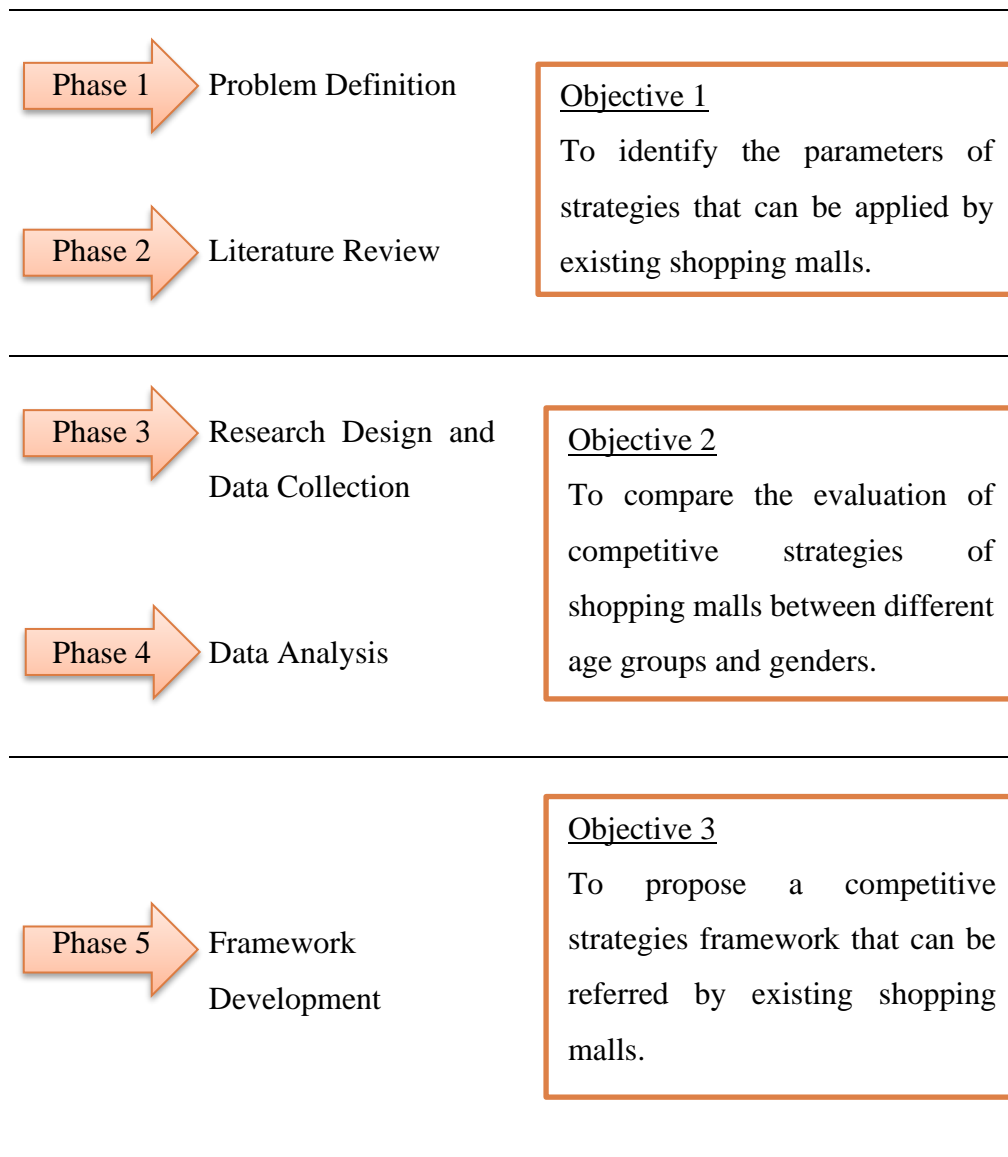


Figure 3.1: Research Flow

(Source: Adapted and Modified from Kothari, 2004)

Phase 1 of the research is identification of research problem. Initially, an interested topic is selected, preliminary research question and objectives are developed. Previous events or incidents relevant to the topic are reviewed to emphasize the research question of the study. Before identifying the study problem, a solution is explored to ensure the viability of the studies (Kothari, 2004). After that, a literature review is conducted at phase 2. A literature review consists primarily of reviewing, analyzing and organizing literature done by existing researchers on the topic in order to evaluate the state of information in the field. The literatures relevant to the research problem are reviewed. Reading

broadly helps in certain variables, such as what previous study has already been conducted in the past or provide explanations of the theoretical structures and existing methodologies implemented by similar research topic.

Phase 3 of the research is research design which is the framework for research planning and answer the research questions. Developing a research design involves deciding the necessary data, the related theories and variables, the participants and the sources, the procedures of data collection and analysis methods (McCombes, 2019). Moreover, the research design determines the criteria of the project. After the research design process, data collection is carried out. Data collection can be carried out in many different ways and questionnaire survey is used in this research. The research method, material and technique of collecting data have to be determined. Furthermore, the criteria of selecting participants have to be specified also the ways to access them.

After the collection of data, data analysis is carried out at phase 4. Determining the data analysis method is the last step of designing the research. Quantitative data analysis is adapted in this research to analyze the numerical data. The result of findings has to refer back to literature review to support or justify the findings in discussion session. After that, a conceptual framework of competitive strategies for existing shopping mall in Malaysia is developed at phase 5. A framework is designed to support theory of a research study. Then, a conclusion has to be stated and this has to relate back to the research question. The success in achieving the research objectives, the contribution, limitation and recommendation in this research are discussed.

3.5 Literature Review

After identifying a research topic, the study for relevant literature regarding the topic will begin (Creswell, 2014). Literature review fulfils numerous purposes such as sharing the findings of other researches with similar research field. It also related the research to a broader literature to extend the previous research and fill in the knowledge gaps (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Generally, literature review can be written in four ways which are integrating previous studies, criticizing past scholarly research, building bridges between similar subjects and defining the key issue in the research area (Cooper, 2010). For this

study which using quantitative research method, has to include a lot of literature at the initial of a study to provide guidance for research questions. In quantitative research model, literature acts as a framework for the study in a deductive manner.

There is no definite way to perform a literature review and there are seven steps of conducting a literature review recommended by Creswell (2014). First step is identifying the keywords. For this study, the keywords used are retail, strategy, mall, attribute and competitive strategy. Second step is browsing the holdings catalogue such as journals, books or e-database. The situation of the shopping malls in Malaysia is searched and discussed in literature review. Third step is setting a priority from the huge number of journals. The important strategies contributing to the performance of shopping malls which have the higher frequency of appearance in the literatures become priority of study. Next, the fourth step is ensuring the contribution of the articles are able to enhance the understanding of the literature review.

After that, a literature map is developed in a graphical form in step five. A conceptual literature map is designed in the literature review to visualize how the research contributes to literature. For this study, the literature map is constructed in Figure 2.3, at Section 2.4. Step six is drafting the summaries of the most related journals and providing references for the literature by following Harvard Style according to the guideline. The summary of the related journals for this study is shown in Table 2.1, at Section 2.4. Lastly, the analysis of literature is compiled, arranged and organized by essential concepts. The literature review is ended with a summary of key topics and discuss how is the specific research contributes more to the literature and fill a gap in the past studies. Besides, the flaws in previous research and the issues in its methods can be pointed out (Boote & Beile, 2005). Figure 3.2 summaries the process of conducting literature review.

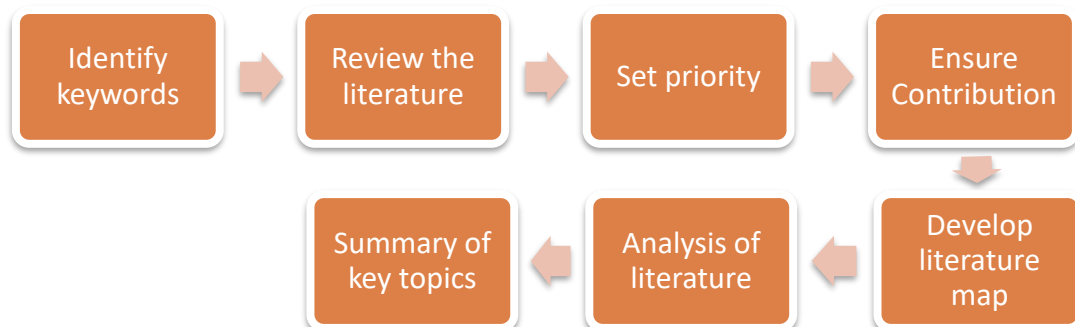


Figure 3.2: Process of Conducting Literature Review

3.6 Quantitative Data Collection

The various methods of questionnaire management will influence on the quality of the data obtained during the phase of quantitative data collection (Bowling, 2005). A large amount of data is required to be collected when quantitative research is implemented. Therefore, online distribution of surveys is suitable to be adopted in this study to collect such big amount of responses. The questionnaires are distributed electronically by sending emails or e-survey links through social media such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook or Instagram to the public who went to the shopping malls in Klang Valley. In-depth interview and face-to-face communicating are likewise methods of collecting quantitative data, but they are not being implemented in this study.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Design

There are steps that should be taken into account while developing a questionnaire. Firstly, preliminary questions are determined from literature review. After that, the preliminary questions should be divided into a few basic parts. The different parts shall relate to the research objective (Naoum, 2007). The first page of the questionnaire is designed as a cover page which composes the researcher's general information such as name, contact number, e-mail address and some introduction of the research title.

The questionnaire is separated into two sections. Section A is demographic section which is designed to obtain the general information of respondents such as gender and age group. Besides, their general shopping habit and behaviour are inquired such as the duration they usually stay in a shopping mall, the purpose of going to shopping mall, type of shopping they prefer and so forth. In Section A, closed-ended questions are implemented where respondents are asked to select from a list of choices. Close-ended questions are chosen because it provides a simpler way for researchers in analysing the collected data as limited choices are set (Farrell, 2016). On the other side of coin, the rigidity of close-ended questions may constraint the answers from respondents. However, there is a choice of 'other' for respondents to choose and provide answers in their own words to minimize the rigidity of close-ended question.

Section B composes of a list of competitive strategies parameters that act as dependant variables of this research. This section aims to evaluate the opinions of respondents on the importance of different parameters of competitive strategies for shopping malls. The questions in Section B are designed using a five-point Likert scale where 1=not important, 2=less important, 3=neutral, 4=important, 5=very important. Likert scale is an alternative which allows respondents to express their level of importance with a particular statement (McLeod, 2019). There are total of 31 sub-parameters of competitive strategies to be evaluated by respondents. A sample of the questionnaire survey is attached in Appendix A.

3.6.2 Sampling Determination

The population for this study is shoppers within Klang Valley. Convenience and snowball sampling method were selected to distribute the questionnaire surveys in this research. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method where the sample is collected from a group of people who are convenient to be reached by researcher (Edgar and Manz, 2017). In this research, family and friends of researcher are targeted to distribute the questionnaire surveys. Snowball sampling is also one of the non-probability sampling technique which is solely based on referrals from primary data source (Naderifar,

Goli and Ghaljaei, 2017). Family and friends who are the primary data sources are asked to share the survey with others until achieving the sufficient sample of research.

However, the population of this study was too wide to determine as there are no definite numbers of shoppers that can be obtained. In this research, central limit theorem was adopted to obtain the sampling. Central limit theorem in statistic stated that the distribution of the sample means will approach a normal distribution when the sample size was sufficiently large, regardless of population distribution shape (Ganti, 2019). This theorem held especially true for sample sizes over 30. Therefore, as a sample size increased, the sample mean and standard deviation would be closer in value to the population mean and standard deviation. Besides, the sampling error would decrease as the sample size increased (McLeod, 2019).

3.6.3 Questionnaire Distribution

After designing the questionnaire and the determination of sampling size, the questionnaires were distributed to the targeted respondents by online approaches. In this research, the questionnaires were formulated with the aid of Google Form. By sending through email, the e-survey was inserted as a hyperlink and attached with a detailed cover letter outlining the study goals. Furthermore, the link of the e-survey was sent to the respondents by social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat and Instagram.

Online surveys tend to have higher response rates compared to paper surveys as respondents require little effort to complete it. Moreover, respondents get to fill up the e-survey with no restriction on time and location through mobile phone, laptop or tablet. The larger the number of respondents, the higher the reliability of this research. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in different age groups from below 18 to above 60 years old. The processing of data for this analysis took about 4 weeks.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is significant to assist in obtaining a comprehensive survey result. It is able to convert the raw data into useful data by establishing a relationship among the collected data. The selection of statistical test can be vary depending on the number of variables and sampling size. In this research, four statistical tests including Cronbach's Alpha (α) Reliability Coefficient, Arithmetic means, Kruskal-Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U Test.

3.7.1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha is used to calculate the internal consistency which is the reliability and defining how closely connected a set of objects act as a group (Bruin, 2006). This method is widely adopted while there are multiple Likert questions in a questionnaire of the research and determine the reliability of the scale. The formula of Cronbach's Alpha is showed as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{N\bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1)\bar{c}}$$

Where,

N = number of items

\bar{c} = average inter-item covariance among items

\bar{v} = average variance

Table 3.1 demonstrated the rule of thumb for interpreting alpha for Likert scale questions. In principle, the results determined from Cronbach's alpha test would range from 0 to 1. Generally, the higher alpha value indicates the higher of the internal consistency of items in the test (Stephanie, 2014). The objective of this test is to check the reliability of each competitive strategy parameter for the shopping malls.

Table 3.1: Rule of Thumb of Cronbach's Alpha

(Source: Stephanie, 2014)

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

3.7.2 Arithmetic Means

The arithmetic mean is the simplest and commonly used method to calculate the mean or average (Chen, 2019). The sum of a set of numbers is calculated, then divided by the count of that series of numbers. The test is suitable for both continuous and discrete data. In this study the central tendency calculation is conducted to quantify the means of each competitive strategic. The purpose of this test is to identify the mean of every competitive strategy parameters in order to rank the strategies. Consequently, the means are rated appropriately to analyse the relative value of each competitive strategy evaluated by the respondents. The formula of arithmetic mean is showed as follows:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Where,

\bar{x} = mean of an item

$\sum x$ = sum of an item

n = total numbers of observations

3.7.3 Kruskal-Wallis Test

Kruskal–Wallis test is a non-parametric test which can be used to identify if there are statistically differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a continuous or ordinal dependant variable (McDonald, 2014).

For this study, the independent variable is the six different age groups of respondents. The dependant variable is the parameters of competitive strategies

to be adopted by shopping malls at ordinal level which is Likert scales. In this research, this test is used to analyse the data and evaluate according to the respective mean rank of different age groups towards the competitive strategies' parameters.

Two hypotheses formulated in order to detect the significance differences on the competitive strategies between the age groups for this study.

Null hypothesis, (H_0) indicates there is no significant difference on the competitive strategies between the age groups, whereas,

Alternative hypothesis (H_1) indicates there is a significant difference on the competitive strategies between the age groups.

The formula of Kruskal-Wallis is showed as follows:

$$H = \left[\frac{12}{n(n+1)} \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{T_j^2}{n_j} \right] - 3(n+1)$$

Where:

n = sum of sample sizes for all samples

c = number of samples

T_j = sum of ranks in the j^{th} sample

n_j = size of the j^{th} sample

The calculated H-value is used to determine the hypothesis by comparing with the critical chi-square value. If the calculated H-value is less than the critical chi-square value, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is failed to reject. In vice versa, if the calculated H-value is more than the critical chi-square value, then the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Based on the alpha value (p) and degree of freedom as tabulated in Table 3.2, the critical chi-square value can be obtained. A larger value indicates larger differences between the groups that are being compared.

Table 3.2: Chi-square Table

(Source: Vaughan, 2009)

Degree of Freedom	P-value			
	0.1	0.05	0.025	0.01
1	2.706	3.841	5.042	6.635
2	4.605	5.991	7.378	9.210
3	6.251	7.815	9.348	11.345
4	7.779	9.488	11.143	13.277
5	9.236	11.070	12.832	15.086
6	10.645	12.592	14.449	16.812

3.7.4 Mann-Whitney U Test

The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric alternative adopted to compare differences between two independent groups on a continuous or ordinal dependent variable (Nachar, 2008). The goal of the test is to test for differences of the median that are caused by the independent variable. For this research, the independent variable is the two groups of gender whereas the dependant variable is the parameters of competitive strategies to be adopted by shopping malls.

Two hypotheses formulated in order to detect the significance differences on the competitive strategies between the gender groups for this study.

Null hypothesis, (H_0) indicates there is no significant difference on the competitive strategies between the gender, whereas,

Alternative hypothesis (H_1) indicates there is a significant difference on the competitive strategies between the gender.

3.8 Summary of Chapter

In a nutshell, quantitative research method was used for this research. Questionnaire survey was conducted to gather the quantitative data. The questionnaires were distributed through online alternatives. Besides, the central limit theorem was used to obtain the sufficient sampling in this research. The target respondents were the shoppers in Klang Valley. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient, Arithmetic means, Kruskal-Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U Test were implemented to analysis the data. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software is implemented to analyse the three statistical tests.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data obtained from questionnaire surveys. It starts with a summary of demographic background of collected respondents. Then, the data are analysed by adopting Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Reliability method to verify the reliability of results. The arithmetic means of competitive strategies parameters are computed and ranked. After that, Kruskal-Wallis Test is carried out to determine the significance relationship of competitive strategies parameter across different age groups. Subsequently, Mann-Whitney U Test is used to determine the significance relationship of competitive strategies parameter across different genders. In the last part of the chapter, conclusion is drawn to provide a concise and comprehensive summary of result to the study.

4.2 Demographic of Respondents

A total of 123 sets of respondents are received through social media such as email, Facebook, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. The details of the respondents' attributes are summarised and tabulated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic of a Sample of 123 Shoppers

General information	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	67	54.5%
Male	56	45.5%
<i>Age group</i>		
Less than 20 years old	12	9.8%
20-29 years old	47	38.2%
30-39 years old	32	26.0%
40-49 years old	15	12.2%
50-59 years old	10	8.1%
60 years old and above	7	5.7%
<i>Duration spent in a shopping mall</i>		
Less than 2 hours	31	25.2%
2-5 hours	84	68.3%
6-10 hours	6	4.9%
More than 10 hours	2	1.6%
<i>Preferred type of shopping mall</i>		
Both (Physical and online)	63	51.2%
Physical shopping	42	34.1%
Online shopping	18	14.6%
<i>Preferred shopping mall</i>		
Mid Valley Megamall	74	60.7%
Pavilion	46	37.7%
One Utama Shopping Mall	45	36.9%
Sunway Pyramid	31	25.4%
KLCC	16	13.1%
Others	14	11.2%
<i>Source of shopping malls' information</i>		
Friends and families	97	78.9%
Social media	82	66.7%
TV ads or radio	17	13.8%
Newspaper	14	11.4%
Brochure	7	5.7%
<i>Transportation to shopping mall</i>		
By driving car	98	79.7%
By public transport	53	43.1%
By Grab car	28	22.8%
By riding motorcycle	1	0.8%

Table 4.1 (Continued)

General information	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<i>Companion of visiting shopping mall</i>		
Family	99	80.5%
Friends	82	66.7%
Alone	28	22.8%
Colleagues	14	11.4%
<i>Day of visiting shopping mall</i>		
Weekends	111	90.2%
When there is sale or promotion	47	38.2%
Seasonal festival	41	33.3%
Public holidays	38	30.9%
Weekdays	32	26.0%
<i>Purpose of visiting shopping mall</i>		
Food and beverages	101	82.1%
Socializing such as gathering	86	69.9%
Shopping on fashion	83	67.5%
Grocery Shopping	76	61.8%
Entertainment such as movies	65	52.8%
Shopping on electronic appliances	35	28.5%
Events such as roadshow	30	24.4%
Services such as haircuts	19	15.4%
Indoor sports such as ice skating	13	10.6%
Fitness such as gym or yoga	8	6.5%
Working	8	6.5%

Table 4.1 displayed the frequencies and percentages of the shoppers on different categories of characteristics. The results obtained are from 54.5% of females and 45.5% of male shoppers. Age groups are categorized into six groups including less than 20 years old (9.8%), 20-29 years old (38.2%), 30-39 years old (26%), 40-49 years old (12.2%), 50-59 years old (8.1%) and 60 years old and above (5.7%). The result illustrates that 52.8% of the respondents will generally visit the shopping malls up to 2 times per month, following by 3-6 times per month from 42.3% of respondents and 2.4% of them would like to visit shopping mall more than 6 times per month. Furthermore, the optimum duration for the shoppers staying in a shopping mall is 2 to 5 hours according to the 68.3% of respondents in the study. Other than physical shopping, Table 4.1 showed that online shopping which is trending nowadays is unavoidable. There

are 51.2% of the participants prefer both physical and online shopping. Then, a larger number of respondents, 34.1% are preferring to physical shopping as compared to the 14.6% of online shopping supporters. The most welcomed and preferred shopping mall by shoppers in Klang Valley is Mid Valley Megamall (60.7%), followed by Pavilion (37.7%), One Utama Shopping Mall (36.9%), Sunway Pyramid (25.4%) and KLCC (13.1%).

A significant number of respondents are getting the information of various shopping malls from their friends and families as well as social media which comprised 78.9% and 66.7% of the respondents respectively. There are also other sources such as TV ads, radio and newspaper while brochure is the least effective source of information as it only accounts for 5.7% of the respondents. In term of transportation, cars will be the first choice of 79.7% of the respondents, followed by public transport (43.1%) and Grab car (22.8%). Interestingly, there is only one respondent in the research who is riding motorcycle to the shopping mall and this shows the reason why car parking spaces are always more than motorcycle parking spaces. Besides, majority of the shoppers would like to visit shopping malls with family (80.5%) and friends (66.7%) especially during weekends. 90.2% of the respondents, which indicate approximately all of them feel free to visit shopping mall during weekends. The proportion of respondents visit to shopping malls during weekdays, public holidays, seasonal festivals and sale period are quite similar, which are 26.0%, 30.9%, 33.3% and 38.2% respectively. The shoppers always go shopping malls for hunting food and beverages (82.1%), socializing (69.9%), shopping on fashion (67.5%) and grocery (61.8%). Minority of the respondents which is 6.5% would choose to go shopping mall for working or fitness such as gym and yoga.

4.3 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test revealed the value of 0.943 based on the 31 sub-parameters of competitive strategies evaluated by shoppers in Klang Valley as displayed in Table 4.2. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.943 means that the collected data are considered very reliable (Stephanie, 2014) to be used for analysis purpose in this research.

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics of Competitive Strategies

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.943	0.945	31

4.4 Arithmetic Means of Competitive Strategies Parameters

Table 4.3 displays the codes and competitive strategies parameters that can be implemented by shopping malls. The parameters are categorized into 3 levels. The first level is the 6 dimensions (A to F) of competitive strategies include facility, service, product assortment, digitalization, environment and marketing. The second level is 15 main parameters (A1 until F2) which correspond to each strategy. The third level is 31 sub-parameters (A1a until F2a) that are diversified from the main parameters. The 31 sub-parameters of competitive strategies had been evaluated by the shoppers through the questionnaire survey.

Table 4.3: Parameters of Competitive Strategies

Code	Competitive Strategies
A	Facility
A1	Parking Facility
A1a	Offer reasonable price of parking
A1b	Offer sufficient amount of parking space
A1c	Provide female and handicap parking space
A1d	Short distance from parking or public transport station to the shopping mall entrance
A2	Recreational Facility
A2a	Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall (e.g. cinema, baking studio or gym)
A3	Baby Nursing and Changing Rooms Facility
A3a	Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall
B	Service
B1	Personal Service
B1a	Possess good attitude and knowledgeable staff
B2	Communal Service
B2a	Possess good communal service (e.g. lifts, escalators and clear signboards)
B2b	Provide securities and CCTVs to ensure the safety in a shopping mall
B3	Priority Shopping Access Service

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Code	Competitive Strategies
B3a	Provide priority shopping access for elderly, pregnant women and people with disability
C	Product Assortment
C1	Retail Mix
C1a	Provide different types of products and services in a shopping mall
C1b	Provide good arrangement of stores in the shopping mall
C2	Quality of Product
C2a	Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items
C2b	Offer good quality of services with high reliability, responsiveness and assurance
D	Digitalization
D1	Digital Service
D1a	Provide free and strong Wi-Fi within shopping mall
D1b	Update latest information on their social media regularly (e.g. website, Facebook or Instagram)
D1c	Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall
D2	Digital Payment
D2a	Provide digital payments which are e-wallets (e.g. Boost, Touch 'n Go, GrabPay)
D3	Digital Program
D3a	Provide an online shopping platform (e.g. website or apps)
D3b	Introduce a member card of shopping mall for more benefits (e.g. cashback, voucher, point collection)
E	Environment
E1	Design Factor
E1a	Have a good exterior design of shopping mall to attract more shoppers (e.g. stylish and modern)
E1b	Have a good interior design of shopping mall (e.g. functional, aesthetic and comfortable)
E1c	Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture (e.g. sky avenue reflective floor at Genting Highland)
E1d	Provide comfortable places for shoppers to take a rest (e.g. benches or sofas)
E1e	Increase connectivity to the nature by having greenery design in the shopping mall (e.g. plants, flowers or branches)
E2	Ambient Factor
E2a	Provide comfortable environment within the shopping mall (e.g. soft background music)

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Code	Competitive Strategies
E2b	Provide pleasant ambient scent within the shopping mall (e.g. light lavender scent)
E2c	Provide optimum lighting and air-conditioning in the shopping mall
E2d	Maintain good hygiene in the shopping mall
F	Marketing
F1	Promotional Activity
F1a	Organize different sales or promotions regularly
F2	Festival Event
F2a	Organize events and exhibitions (e.g. book/baby/education/home living fairs, new products launch, concert/performance or themed event)

4.4.1 Mean Ranking of Main Competitive Strategies

Table 4.4 depicts the overall mean ranking of the main competitive strategies evaluated by the shoppers. The six dimensions of competitive strategies included facility, service, product assortment, digitalization, environment and marketing. The higher rank of mean indicates the higher concerns and attentions are paid by the shoppers.

Table 4.4: Overall Mean Ranking of Main Competitive Strategies

Code	Main Competitive Strategies	Mean	Rank
B	Service	4.31	1
C	Product Assortment	4.26	2
F	Marketing	4.00	3
A	Facility	3.96	4
E	Environment	3.85	5
D	Digitalization	3.58	6

Table 4.4 illustrated that service of a shopping mall has the highest mean ranking (mean value = 4.31) among the six dimensions of competitive strategies. This result indicates that services provided are the main competitive strategy and are crucial for the success of a shopping mall. This is due to majority of shoppers emphasize on the services provided, good quality of service contributes to a large impact on the customer flow and their experience satisfactions as explained by Sit et al. (2003). The next highest mean ranking is

product assortment of shopping mall (mean value = 4.26) which includes retail mix strategy and quality of products. The result reveals that a wide range and high quality of product categories are important to draw in more shoppers. Thus, it considers an important competitive strategy for a shopping mall. Anderson, et al. (1999) revealed that product-based layout is more positive than the lifestyle-based layout as most of the customers would prefer one-stop shopping for the convenience. On the other hand, the lowest mean ranking is digitalization of shopping mall (mean value = 3.58). It portrays that there is only a small group of shoppers aware of the importance of digitalization in the competitive retail industry. The shoppers in Malaysia are still not prompt to digitalization as compared to overseas country such as China, as the Malaysians are still adopting with the digital transformation of retail industry (Frishammar et al., 2018).

4.4.2 Mean Ranking of Competitive Strategies Sub-Parameters

The overall means of 31 competitive strategies sub-parameters are ranked and tabulated in Table 4.5. The higher rank of mean indicates the strategy evaluated are important from the perspectives of the shoppers.

Table 4.5: Overall Mean Ranking of Competitive Strategies Sub-Parameters

Code	Parameters of Competitive Strategies	Mean	Rank
E2d	Maintain good hygiene in the shopping mall	4.76	1
C2a	Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items	4.68	2
B2a	Possess good communal service (e.g. lifts, escalators and clear signboards)	4.50	3
B1a	Possess good attitude and knowledgeable staff	4.42	4
C2b	Offer good quality of services with high reliability, responsiveness and assurance	4.38	5
A1b	Offer sufficient amount of parking space	4.37	6
E2c	Provide optimum lighting and air-conditioning in the shopping mall	4.34	7
A1a	Offer reasonable price of parking	4.28	8
B3a	Provide priority shopping access for elderly, pregnant women and people with disability	4.19	9
D2a	Provide digital payments which are e-wallets	4.18	10
F1a	Organize different sales or promotions regularly	4.17	11

Table 4.5 (Continued)

Code	Parameters of Competitive Strategies	Mean	Rank
E1d	Provide comfortable places for shoppers to take a rest (e.g. benches or sofas)	4.16	12
B2b	Provide securities and CCTVs to ensure the safety in a shopping mall	4.12	13
C1a	Provide different types of products and services in a shopping mall	4.07	14
E1b	Have a good interior design of shopping mall (e.g. functional, aesthetic and comfortable)	3.92	15
E2a	Provide comfortable environment within the shopping mall (e.g. soft background music)	3.91	16
C1b	Provide good arrangement of stores in the shopping mall	3.89	17
A3a	Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall	3.85	18
F2a	Organize events and exhibitions (e.g. book/baby/education/home living fairs, new products launch, concert/performance or themed event)	3.82	19
A1c	Provide female and handicap parking space	3.81	20
D3b	Introduce a member card of shopping mall for more benefits (e.g. cashback, voucher)	3.78	21
D3a	Provide an online shopping platform	3.76	22
A1d	Short distance from parking or public transport station to the shopping mall entrance	3.74	23
A2a	Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall (e.g. cinema, baking studio or gym)	3.72	24
E1a	Have a good exterior design of shopping mall to attract more shoppers (e.g. stylish and modern)	3.63	25
E2b	Provide pleasant ambient scent within the shopping mall (e.g. light lavender scent)	3.63	25
E1e	Increase connectivity to the nature by having greenery design in the shopping mall	3.42	27
D1a	Provide free and strong Wi-Fi within shopping mall	3.40	28
D1b	Update latest information on their social media regularly (e.g. website, Facebook or Instagram)	3.29	29
D1c	Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall	3.07	30
E1c	Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture (e.g. sky avenue reflective floor at Genting Highland)	2.88	31

According to the Table 4.6, the top mean ranking of competitive strategies parameters is **E2d**= “*Maintain good hygiene in the shopping mall*” which is categorized under “Environment” with mean value of 4.76. This shows that shoppers pay heavy attention to the cleanliness of shopping mall especially during the Covid-19 pandemic period. The habit of keeping good hygiene is able to save lives and combat the spread of Covid-19. The hygiene of washrooms in shopping mall is exceptionally important as shoppers must go to washroom within long hours of shopping. It was reported that 61% of 10,257 public toilets in Malaysia are a disgrace and a dishonour even toilets in shopping malls or fancy restaurants (Lee, 2019). According to the study by Singh and Prashar (2013), 66% of the shoppers would like to leave and rarely visit again due to the poor hygiene of shopping mall. Thus, shopping malls shall always maintain a clean and comfortable environment to provide a positive effect on desire to stay of customers.

The next top ranking is **C2a**= “*Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items*” under category of “Product Assortment” with mean value 4.68. Quality of products is critical to satisfy and build trust with customers as well as retain their loyalty to the store (Hansen and Solgaard, 2004). Customers would likely generate positive word-of-mouth of the shopping mall due to the high quality of products and this will indirectly become the most efficient advertisement or marketing strategy. **B2a**= “*Possess good communal service*” under group of “Service” with mean value 4.50 ranked third important competitive strategies as ranked by shoppers. Customers are likewise pay much attention to the common amenities provided in the shopping mall such as lifts, escalators, signboards, wheelchairs and more. The comprehensive communal services contribute to the feelings of safe and convenient in customers (Routledge, 2015).

On the other hand, the lowest mean ranking of competitive strategies parameters is **E1c**= “*Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture*” which is under design factor of “Environment” with mean value 2.88. Nowadays, sponsored posts with photographs or video taken by the influencers in social media can be considered as a job for promoting a brand. Although the brand which is promoted by influencer in social media may able to increase the interest

and trust of customers, but it is more important for the brand to achieve the expectations of customers (Marane, 2018). It is pointless for a brand to rely solely on the social media but overlook the quality of it. Thus, shoppers perceived that this is not a key competitive strategy for a shopping mall.

The second lowest mean ranking is **D1c**= “*Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall*” which is under category of “Digitalization” with mean value 3.07. The cooperation of retailers and shopping mall is important to achieve the expectation outcome (Natalie Khoo, 2018). The limited choice of stores on the online platform may affect the shopping desires of customers. The next lowest mean ranking also comes from group “Digitalization” which is **D1b**= “*Update latest information on their social media regularly*” with mean value 3.29. Although social media updating is a potential asset to the business of shopping malls, but there are elderly customers who are not used to the social media such as Instagram or Facebook. According to Malaysia Digital Marketing Statistics (2020), there are only 8.7% of Internet users are from elders who age 50 years old and above. Besides, the updates on shopping mall should not limit to the most popular social media channels. Thus, this competitive strategy rated less importantly by the shoppers.

4.5 Kruskal-Wallis Test

The Kruskal-Wallis test is adopted to appraise the significant differences on the competitive strategies’ parameters on different age group of shoppers. In order to identify the significant differences between different age groups of respondents, the critical chi-square is computed by examining the p-value and degree of freedom. The degree of freedom is computed by deducting 1 from the numbers of groups of sample size. There are 3 different groups of respondents being compared, thus the degree of freedom is figured as 2. On the other hand, the p-value is 0.05. Thus, the critical chi-square value is figured as 5.991 as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Chi-square Table

(Source: Vaughan, 2009)

Degree of Freedom	P-value			
	0.1	0.05	0.025	0.01
1	2.706	3.841	5.042	6.635
2	4.605	5.991	7.378	9.210
3	6.251	7.815	9.348	11.345
4	7.779	9.488	11.143	13.277
5	9.236	11.070	12.832	15.086
6	10.645	12.592	14.449	16.812

As a result, 2 hypotheses are formulated as follow:

Null hypothesis (Ho): If the H-value is less than 5.991, there is no significant between different age groups on the competitive strategies. The null hypothesis is failed to reject.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): If the H-value is more than 5.991, there is a significant difference between different age group on the competitive strategies. The alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4.7 is the summary of the parameters which shows the significance in the Kruskal-Wallis test towards the perception of competitive strategies parameters across different age groups. The result showed that 12 competitive strategies are examined to have asymptotic significance that less than 0.05 and chi-square value that more than 5.991. A larger value of chi-square indicates larger differences between the age groups that are being compared. As $p < 0.001$, there is very strong evidence to suggest a difference between at least one pair of groups.

Table 4.7: Summary of Kruskal-Wallis test in SPSS on Age Group

		Chi-square	Asymptotic Significance
A1a	Offer reasonable price of parking	7.609	0.022
A1b	Offer sufficient amount of parking space	5.995	0.050
A1d	Short distance from parking or public transport station to the shopping mall entrance	12.149	0.002
A2a	Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall (e.g. cinema, baking studio or gym)	27.756	0.000
B2b	Provide securities and CCTVs to ensure the safety in a shopping mall	6.991	0.030
B3a	Provide priority shopping access for elderly, pregnant women and people with disability	11.205	0.004
C1a	Provide different types of products and services in a shopping mall	9.991	0.007
D1b	Update latest information on their social media regularly (e.g. website, Facebook or Instagram)	6.929	0.031
D1c	Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall	15.979	0.000
D2a	Provide digital payments which are e-wallets (e.g. Boost, Touch 'n Go, GrabPay)	18.958	0.000
D3a	Provide an online shopping platform (e.g. website or apps)	11.320	0.003
E1c	Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture (e.g. sky avenue reflective floor at Genting Highland)	12.930	0.002

The mean rank of the 12 competitive strategies are computed through Kruskal-Wallis test and tabulated in Table 4.8. Besides, the differences on the perception between different age groups of respondents are explained. The age groups of respondents are further divided into three groups which are 'Less than 30 years old', '30-39 years old' and '40 years old and above' to fulfil the requirement of central limit theorem that each age group achieves minimum sample size of 30.

Table 4.8: Mean Rank of Competitive Strategies Parameters on Age Group

Code	Competitive Strategies	Age Group	N	Mean Rank
A1a	Offer reasonable price of parking	Less than 30 years old	59	#54.27
		30-39 years old	32	64.81
		40 years old and above	32	*73.44
A1b	Offer sufficient amount of parking space	Less than 30 years old	59	#54.70
		30-39 years old	32	67.89
		40 years old and above	32	*69.56
A1d	Short distance from parking or public transport station to the shopping mall entrance	Less than 30 years old	59	#46.39
		30-39 years old	32	62.75
		40 years old and above	32	*76.22
A2a	Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall (e.g. cinema, baking studio or gym)	Less than 30 years old	59	*77.87
		30-39 years old	32	55.00
		40 years old and above	32	#39.73
B2b	Provide securities and CCTVs to ensure the safety in a shopping mall	Less than 30 years old	59	64.68
		30-39 years old	32	#48.52
		40 years old and above	32	*68.72
B3a	Provide priority shopping access for elderly, pregnant women and people with disability	Less than 30 years old	59	57.43
		30-39 years old	32	#53.81
		40 years old and above	32	*78.61
C1a	Provide different types of products and services in a shopping mall	Less than 30 years old	59	*71.60
		30-39 years old	32	#50.39
		40 years old and above	32	55.91
D1b	Update latest information on their social media regularly (e.g. website, Facebook or Instagram)	Less than 30 years old	59	*70.39
		30-39 years old	32	55.61
		40 years old and above	32	#52.92
D1c	Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall	Less than 30 years old	59	*74.64
		30-39 years old	32	53.84
		40 years old and above	32	#46.84

Table 4.8 (Continued)

Code	Competitive Strategies	Age Group	N	Mean Rank
D2a	Provide digital payments which are e-wallets (e.g. Boost, Touch 'n Go, GrabPay)	Less than 30 years old	59	59.99
		30-39 years old	32	*80.47
		40 years old and above	32	#45.27
D3a	Provide an online shopping platform (e.g. website or apps)	Less than 30 years old	59	*68.46
		30-39 years old	32	67.61
		40 years old and above	32	#44.48
E1c	Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture (e.g. sky avenue reflective floor at Genting Highland)	Less than 30 years old	59	*71.98
		30-39 years old	32	61.00
		40 years old and above	32	#44.59

Note:

* indicate the highest mean rank of age group on the respective competitive strategy

indicate the lowest mean rank of age group on the respective competitive strategy

The result in Table 4.8 portrayed that most of the significant differences of perceptions happen between respondents who are “Less than 30 years old” and “40 years old and above” in the aspects of “Facility”, “Digitalization” and “Environment”.

In terms of “Facility”, the largest different of perspective between youngest age group and eldest age group is **A2a**= “Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall”. The higher mean rank of teenagers age group which is 77.87 infers that younger respondents will pay more attention on the entertainment provided by the shopping malls as compared to elder respondents. It is difficult for elder shoppers to conduct some of the extreme entertainment in shopping mall such as gym, ice skating, yoga class and escape room while younger generations would like to give a try and gain those thrilling experiences as a way to escape from hectic or boredom life (Rigby, 2011). The other significant difference between youngest and eldest age group under group

“Facility” is **A1a**= “*Offer reasonable price of parking*”, **A1b**= “*Offer sufficient amount of parking space*” and **A1d**= “*Short distance from parking or public transport station to the shopping mall entrance.*” The result represents that elder respondents have higher mean ranks and this indicates that elders will more emphasize on the price, amount and distance from parking space. Although there are exceptions, most elderly people are better at saving money than young people as they are more cautious about their future and they have more life experiences (Green Hub, 2019). Hence, elders will prefer to visit the shopping mall which offers reasonable price of parking spaces. For senior citizens, their physical coordination is less efficient as compared to teenagers. Thus, the large amount of parking spaces can increase the chance of selecting nearer parking to the entrance of shopping mall and likewise shorten the waiting time. El Hedhli and Chebat (2009) found that convenience in accessibility is regarded a primary factor of the image and patronage of shopping malls. To ensure the parking lots are not misused, parking spaces provided for disabled should also be allocated for senior citizens.

In terms of “Digitalization”, there is significant difference of the perspectives between “Less than 30 years old” and “40 years old and above” onto the parameter **D1b**= “*Update latest information on their social media regularly*”, **D1c**= “*Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall*” and **D3a**= “*Provide an online shopping platform*”. The result declares teenagers have higher mean ranks as compared to eldest age group which mean teenagers perceived digitalisation in retail business is an important competitive strategy. Through online retail services, shoppers get to purchase their desired products at anywhere and anytime without restriction (Staack, 2018). Shoppers can also get the latest information of the stores such as resting day or promotion period to avoid disappointment and gain some benefits from it. However, there is an existence of digital divide between elders and younger people. Elders use significantly fewer digital applications and spend less time online than younger adults due to their concerns on the mistakes when using software, the complicated procedures, their insufficient knowledge and more (Pieri and Diamantinir, 2010). Thus, the acceptance of digital

technologies among elders can be fostered through explaining, showing, and teaching them with patience so that they can also gain benefits from it.

In terms of “Environment”, there is significant difference of the perspectives between “Less than 30 years old” and “40 years old and above” onto the parameter **E1c**= “*Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture*” with mean ranks 71.98 and 44.59 respectively. The results revealed that this strategy is more effective for the teenagers but not elders. The elders are not used to take photographs and feel shy to camera because taking picture is not that convenience and simple during their young age (Mazlan, 2019). On the other hand, teenagers born in the digital age and hence, they are more easily adapted to the camera.

The result in Table 4.8 portrayed significant differences of perceptions between respondents who are “30-39 years old” and “40 years old and above” in the aspects of “Services” and “Digitalisation”. In terms of “Services”, there is significant difference of the perspectives between them onto the parameter **B2b**= “*Provide securities and CCTVs to ensure the safety in a shopping mall*” and **B3a**= “*Provide priority shopping access for elderly, pregnant women and people with disability*”. The results displayed that senior citizens have higher mean ranks in both strategy parameters as compared to younger adults. This revealed that elders are more concerning about the safety and priority access provided by the shopping malls. Shopping malls are usually crowded with people and incidents such as theft and robberies may happen. Due to the ageing, lower energy and strength of the elders could hardly defeat the robbers on their own and hence a reputable security services are able to provide confidence for them to visit a shopping mall safely (Savard and Kennedy, 2018). Besides, customers with special needs such as senior citizens deserve an attentive service so that they will not feel helpless and panic during shopping (Bashiti and Rahim, 2016).

In terms of “Digitalisation”, there is significant difference of the perspectives between “30-39 years old” and “40 years old and above” onto the parameter **D2a**= “*Provide digital payments which are e-wallets*” with mean ranks 80.47 and 45.27 respectively. The result indicated that young adults have higher frequency in using e-wallets as compared to elders. The e-wallets provide

customers with easier, faster and more convenient of payment in shopping malls (Franciska and Sahayaselvi, 2017). However, digital payment may not make payment any easier for senior citizens as most of them do not even carry their phones around all day and some of them do not even own a smartphone (Pieri and Diamantinir, 2010).

The result in Table 4.8 depicted significant differences of perceptions between respondents who are “below 30 years old” and “30-39 years old” in the aspects of “Product” on the parameters **C1a**= “*Provide different types of products and services in a shopping mall*” with mean ranks 71.60 and 50.39 respectively. It can be inferred that teenagers are more considered about different products and services because they tend to follow latest fashionable trends while adults are more emphasized on the quality of items (Robesonian, 2018).

4.6 Mann-Whitney U Test

Mann-Whitney U test is applied to recognize the significant difference on the importance of competitive strategy parameters between gender groups. The p-value used in this test is 0.05.

Two hypotheses are formulated for this test as follow:

Null hypothesis (H_0): When $p > 0.05$, there is no significant difference between the gender groups on the competitive strategies. The null hypothesis (H_0) is failed to reject.

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): When $p \leq 0.05$, there is a significant difference between the gender groups on the competitive strategies. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

Table 4.9 is the summary of the parameters which shows the significance in the Mann-Whitney U test towards the perception of competitive strategies parameters across different gender groups. The result stated that five competitive strategies are examined to have asymptotic significance that less than 0.05.

Table 4.9: Mann-Whitney U Test on Gender Groups

Code	Descriptions	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig.
A1c	Provide female and handicap parking space	1275.000	2871.000	-3.192	0.001
A3a	Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall	1317.000	2913.000	-2.975	0.003
C2a	Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items	1595.000	3191.000	-2.067	0.039
D3b	Introduce a member card of shopping mall for more benefits (e.g. cashback, voucher, point collection)	1382.000	2978.000	-2.621	0.009
F1a	Organize different sales or promotions regularly	1327.000	2923.000	-3.001	0.003

In order to identify the differences on the perception between gender groups, the mean rank of the five competitive strategies are computed through Mann-Whitney U test and tabulated in Table 4.10. The gender groups of respondents are categorized into female and male.

Table 4.10: Mean Rank of Competitive Strategies on Gender Groups

Code	Descriptions	Respondent	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
A1c	Provide female and handicap parking space	Female	67	70.97	4755.00
		Male	56	51.27	2871.00
A3a	Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall	Female	67	70.34	4713.00
		Male	56	52.02	2913.00
C2a	Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items	Female	67	66.19	4435.00
		Male	56	56.98	3191.00
D3b	Introduce a member card of shopping mall for more benefits (e.g. cashback, voucher, point collection)	Female	67	66.37	4648.00
		Male	56	53.18	2978.00
F1a	Organize different sales or promotions regularly	Female	67	70.19	4703.00
		Male	56	52.20	2923.00

Note: **Bold** indicates the highest mean rank for competitive strategy parameters

As shown in Table 4.10, there are significant difference of perceptions between genders in the aspect of “Facility”, “Product”, “Digitalisation” and “Marketing” and female respondents have higher mean rank in all parameters of competitive strategy as compared to male respondents.

In terms of “Facility”, female respondents have a higher mean rank on **A1c**= “Provide female and handicap parking space” with mean rank 70.97 and **A3a**= “ Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall” with mean rank 70.34 as compared to the mean ranks of 51.27 and 52.02 respectively obtained from male respondents. Females pay higher attention to the parking facilities in shopping malls because safety is often a serious concern for them in the dark and enclosed parking garage (Chain, 2018). Female reserved parking provides a safer environment for female shoppers to visit shopping malls. Besides, baby nursing room provides privacy for breastfeeding and also meet the emergency needs of younger children which can reduce the stress and

burden of female shoppers during shopping (Azhari, Salam and Hasbullah, 2011).

Female respondents have a higher mean rank on the competitive strategy parameters **D3b**= “*Introduce a member card of shopping mall for more benefits*” with mean rank 66.37 and **F1a**= “*Organize different sales or promotions regularly*” with mean rank 70.19 as compared to 53.18 and 52.20 respectively obtained from male respondents. It can be deduced that females would be more desired to reap benefits from sale and membership of shopping malls. According to Lesonsky (2017), 45% of women, about half in the survey stated that they will not even enter a store unless they see a markdown. Thus, not only offers from physical stores but also online bundle sales can be organised to increase the mall patronage.

In terms of “Product”, female respondents own a higher mean rank on **C2a**= “*Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items*” with mean rank 66.19 as compared to 56.98 obtained from male respondents. Seock and Bailey (2007) discovered that women visited more websites and more deeply compared various quality choices than men. It can be inferred that females will pay higher attention on product quality during shopping.

4.7 Refined Competitive Strategies Framework

Figure 4.1 portrays the refined competitive strategies framework which modified from the preliminary framework developed in Chapter 2 as referred to Figure 2.3. The modified framework integrates the arithmetic means of the sub-criteria of competitive strategies into the preliminary framework.

The refined competitive strategies framework consists of 6 main competitive strategies and 15 sub-criteria. Figure 4.1 displayed an ascending pyramid that adopts a low-to-high approach for the importance level of competitive strategies. The ascending pyramid inferred that “Digitalization” has the lowest mean rank, followed by “Environment”, “Facility”, “Marketing”, “Product Assortment” and the highest mean rank is “Service”. The sub-criteria of competitive strategies are tabulated and arranged from highest to lowest of mean value in the refined framework. Some significant differences of perceptions between age groups and genders on the competitive strategies are

discovered by adopting Kruskal-Wallis Test and Mann-Whitney U Test. By considering about the different perspectives between age groups and genders, an appropriate and suitable competitive strategy framework can be developed to assist the shopping malls.

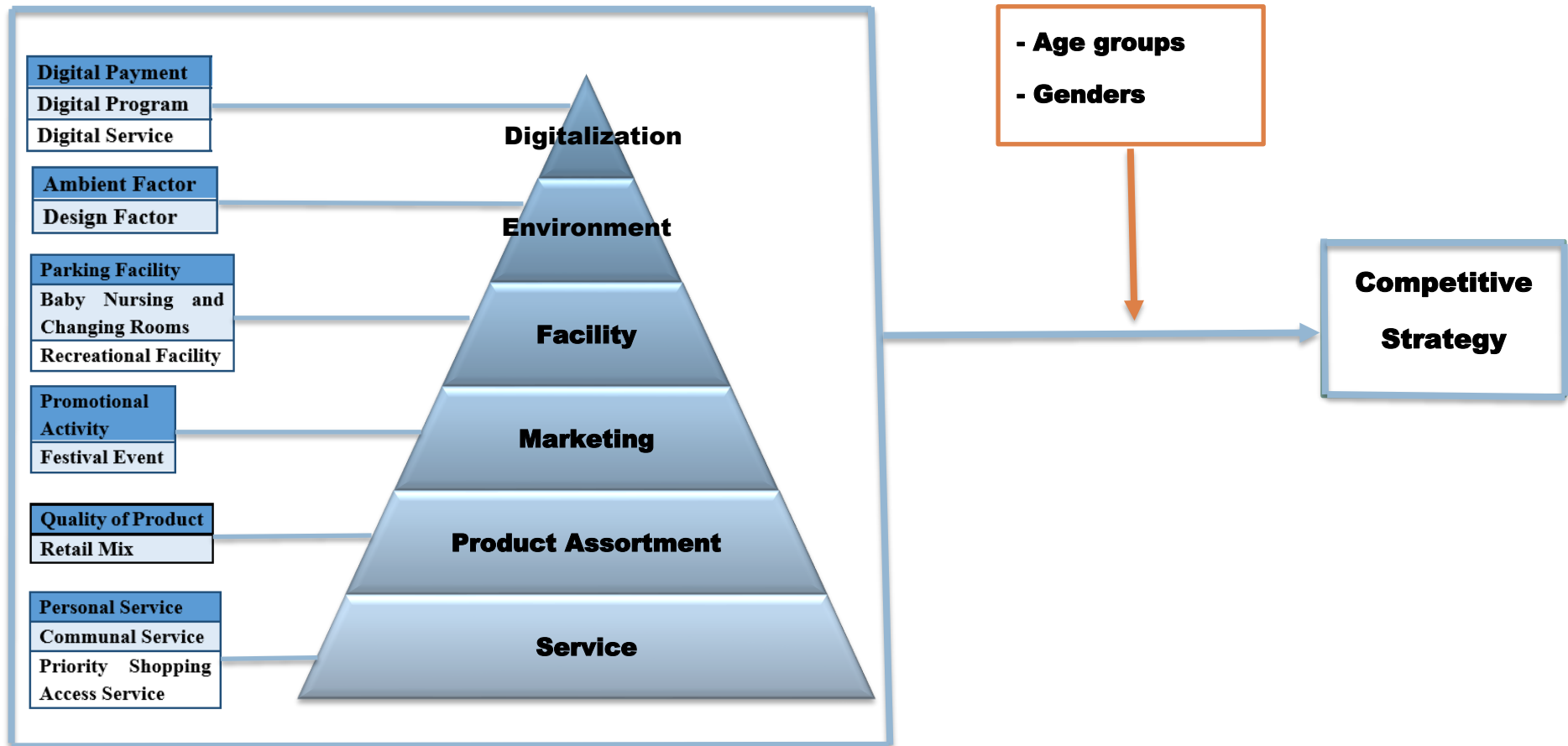


Figure 4.1: Refined Competitive Strategies Framework for existing shopping malls

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter had discussed comprehensively on the perception of the respondents towards the competitive strategies of shopping malls. A total 123 sets of questionnaire surveys were collected and the data were analysed by using the statistical tests include Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient, arithmetic mean, Kruskal Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U Test. In order to develop a deeper understanding on the pattern from different group of respondents, all the demographic data of respondents were explained and summarized in a table. The result of Cronbach's Alpha value shows that this research is reliable in term of internal consistency.

The arithmetic mean test revealed that "Service" has the highest mean ranking while "Digitalization" has the lowest mean ranking. Among the 31 competitive strategies parameters, the highest mean rank obtained from respondents is **E2d**= "*Maintain good hygiene in the shopping mall*" while the lowest mean rank is **E1c**= "*Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture*".

Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there are 12 competitive strategies parameters have significant difference between age groups. The top three significance difference on parameters are **A2a**= "*Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall*", **D1c**= "*Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall*" and **D2a**= "*Provide digital payments*" as they have asymptotic significance value of 0.000.

The result of Mann-Whitney U Test discovered five significant differences on parameter between gender groups. The top three significant difference on parameters are **A1c**= "*Provide female and handicap parking space*" with asymptotic significance value of 0.001, followed by **A3a**= "*Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall*" and **F1a**= "*Organize different sales or promotions regularly*" which both have asymptotic significance value of 0.003.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarizes the overall chapters of the study. The chapter begins with the accomplishment of research objectives with the outcome of the findings. The research contributions to the retail industry, government, professional bodies and body of knowledge are also highlighted. Lastly, limitations of the research are acknowledged and recommendations for future research are suggested.

5.2 Accomplishment of Research Objectives

Retail performances are gaining attention in Malaysia due to the abandoned mall issue, multiple shopping options, outdated business practices and economic downturn. Small and old shopping malls are facing challenges, tough times and even closures with more new shopping mall coming up. Thus, it is significant to improve the performance of shopping malls by adopting suitable and appropriate competitive strategies. However, according to the previous studies, it is found that there is little study on the competitive strategies for shopping malls in Malaysia. Thus, the aim of this research is to reduce the abandonment of existing shopping malls in Malaysia by proposing appropriate competitive strategies. In addition, three research objectives are proposed and the accomplished of the research objectives are explained in the next sub-section.

5.2.1 Objective 1- To identify the competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.

The application of competitive strategies had been acknowledged as potential solution to assist existing shopping malls in gaining competitive advantage in retail industry. By achieving the first objective of the study, secondary sources of information such as textbooks, internet, market reports, journal articles and newspapers are reviewed. The parameters of competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia were tabulated in Table 4.3. There were six

dimensions of competitive strategies include facility, service, product assortment, digitalization, environment and marketing. 15 main parameters were corresponded to each strategy and 31 sub-parameters are diversified from the main parameters.

5.2.2 Objective 2- To compare the evaluation of competitive strategies for existing shopping malls in Malaysia between different age groups and genders.

Objective 2 was achieved through distributing questionnaire surveys. The 31 sub-parameters of competitive strategies which identified from literature review were evaluated by the respondents in the survey. The parameters of competitive strategies were ranked by using arithmetic means and tabulated in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5. The results discovered that “Maintain good hygiene in the shopping malls” under “Environment” is the most important strategy, followed by the “Offer good quality of products offered without rotten or expired items” under “Product Assortment”. “Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture” under category “Environment” is the least importance at the perspective of respondents.

Besides, Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that 12 competitive strategies parameters were found significant differences between age groups. Interestingly, the result revealed that most of the significant differences of perceptions happen between respondents who are “Less than 30 years old” and “40 years old and above” in the aspects of “Facility”, “Digitalization” and “Environment”. They have different perspectives on entertainment, parking price and amount, social media updating, digital postal service, online shopping platform and corners for taking pictures provided by the shopping malls.

Furthermore, Mann-Whitney U Test found that there were five significant difference between genders onto the competitive strategy parameters in the aspect of “Facility”, “Product”, “Digitalisation” and “Marketing”. Amusingly, female respondents have higher mean rank in all five parameters of competitive strategy as compared to male respondents.

5.2.3 Objective 3- To propose a competitive strategies framework for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.

A preliminary competitive strategies framework was constructed through the literature review as demonstrated in Figure 2.3. After the data collection and analysis, a refined competitive strategies framework was thus developed as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The refined framework portrayed the importance level of main competitive strategies obtained from the mean analysis in an ascending pyramid and the sub-criteria of competitive strategies are tabulated from highest to lowest rank accordingly. The considerations of different perspectives of competitive strategies between age groups and genders are also added in to develop a comprehensive competitive strategy framework for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.

5.3 Research Contribution

This research contributes to the retail industry and assists the retailers in shopping malls to gain competitive advantage and survive in this retail glut. The proposed competitive strategies framework provides a reference for shopping malls to implement according to their target market and customers in different groups such as gender and age groups. Furthermore, shopping malls will gain a better understanding of different strategies on the perception of respondents in different age groups and genders.

Moreover, this research contributes to local government or professional bodies in retail such as Malaysia Association of Retail Management (MARM). By referring to the research, local government may aware to the oversupply of shopping malls in retail industry and trigger them to draft regulations or formulate policy to prevent existing shopping malls being abandoned. For example, policy about hygiene in shopping malls can be strengthen as shoppers pay highest attention on the cleanliness according to the study. Besides, the proposed competitive strategies framework can be a resource for the professional bodies to develop and stimulate the growth of the retail industry in Malaysia by focusing on the proposed competitive strategies.

Apart from that, this research contributes to the body of knowledge. The competitive strategies framework can be further improved by other researchers

from different countries by adding more parameters of competitive strategies after considering the geographical, cultural and practice differences. Other researchers may also refer to the proposed strategy framework as one of their resources when conducting relevant study.

5.4 Research Limitation

Few limitations in this study are identified and needed to be considered in the future research. First, this study is limited to conduct in Klang Valley and thus it may inaccurate to represent the shoppers of whole Malaysia. The shoppers at other region such as East Malaysia may have different shopping behaviour or attitude as compared to shoppers in Klang Valley.

Next, the quantitative data collection is implemented to propose a competitive strategy framework and it is unable to be verified by the professional practitioners in the retail industry. Quantitative research likewise does not involve in-depth or comprehensive explanation from the respondents. Quantitative data collection only provides numerical descriptions rather than comprehensive elaboration as compared to qualitative data collection.

Moreover, the initial of six age groups are reduced to three age groups which are “Less than 30 years old”, “30-39 years old” and “40 years old and above” to fulfil the requirement of central limit theorem. This is due to the unbalance distribution of respondents. For example, only 5.7% of respondents are “60 years old and above” while 38.2% of respondents are “20-29 years old” as referred to Table 4.1. The insufficient of respondents for some age groups may affect the accuracy of the result of Kruskal-Wallis tests.

5.5 Research Recommendation

To overcome the research limitations, some recommendations are suggested for the future studies. First, research scope can be widened to produce a higher accuracy and reliability result. For this research, shoppers from East Malaysia and other regions of West Malaysia can be included to investigate the different perceptions of them on the strategies for shopping malls.

Next, mixed research method is suggested to be implemented for future research. Qualitative approach is recommended to use to verify the proposed

competitive strategies framework. At the end of the research, case studies can be carried out to validate the proposed framework in the research to account for the applicability in the retail industry. Besides, interviews are suggested to carry out to investigate more comprehensive data and new strategies can be generated. This can increase the reliability of the results and the richness in findings.

Furthermore, a balanced collection of questionnaires is suggested for the future research to get balanced perspectives from varies groups, levels or characteristics of respondents. To achieve a balance collection of questionnaires, researcher shall check for the response rate for every group of respondents. More questionnaires can be distributed to the lower response rate of the respondent group. A balanced number of respondents in every category will increase the reliability and accuracy of the results.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter had summarized the overall chapters and the way in achieving all research objectives. The contributions of research were also identified and discussed. Besides, the research limitations and challenges encountered when conducting the research were highlighted. Lastly, recommendations were suggested to improve the quality of future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaires for Shoppers

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Chan Wei Ling, a final year Quantity Surveying student from Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering & Science (LKC FES) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Currently, I am conducting a survey for my Final Year Project entitled “Competitive Strategies Framework for Existing Shopping Malls in Malaysia”, a partial fulfillment of my Bachelor of Science Degree program in Quantity Surveying. The purpose of this research is to identify and propose a competitive strategies framework for existing shopping malls in Malaysia.

I believe that your shopping experiences will help on this research. Your participation in this survey will significantly contribute to this study and will add a significant value to the Retail and Property Industry.

It will be highly appreciated if you could spend 5 minutes of your valuable time to fill up this survey. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

If you have any questions about this survey, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Student name: Chan Wei Ling

Contact number: 016-5872818

E-mail: weiling1998@1utar.my

Thank you for your participation and time.

Section A: Demographic Section

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age group?

- Less than 20 years old
- 20-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- 60 years old and above

How often do you visit a shopping mall in a month?

- 0-2 times
- 3-6 times
- 7-9 times
- More than 9 times

How long do you usually spend in a shopping mall?

- Less than 2 hours
- 2-5 hours
- 6-10 hours
- More than 10 hours

Which type of shopping do you prefer?

- Physical shopping (e.g. visit to shopping mall)
- Online shopping (e.g. Lazada, Taobao, Shopee, etc)
- Both (Physical and online shopping)

Which shopping mall do you visit frequently?

(You may tick more than one choice.)

- Mid Valley Megamall
- One Utama Shopping Mall
- Sunway Pyramid
- Pavilion
- KLCC
- Others. Please specify. _____

How you get to know more about a shopping mall?

(You may tick more than one choice.)

- Social media such as Facebook or Instagram
- TV ads or radio
- Newspapers
- Brochure
- Friends and families
- Others. Please specify. _____

How do you normally go to a shopping mall?

(You may tick more than one choice.)

- By driving car
- By riding motorcycle
- By public transport
- By Grab car
- Others. Please specify. _____

With whom you normally visit to malls?

(You may tick more than one choice.)

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Alone
- Others. Please specify. _____

When do you generally go to a mall?

(You may tick more than one choice.)

- Public holidays
- Weekends
- Weekdays
- Seasonal festival such as during Chinese New Year, Hari Raya or Deepavali
- When there is sale or promotion

What is the purpose of you going to a shopping mall?

(You may tick more than one choice.)

- Working
- Grocery shopping
- Shopping on fashion and accessories
- Shopping on TV, home appliance, mobile or electronic item
- Services such as haircut, facial, spa, manicure or pedicure
- Socializing such as gathering or meeting

- Entertainment such as movies or KTV
- Fitness such as gym, yoga or Zumba
- Activities such as ice skating, theme park, playground or indoor sports
- Events such as roadshow, product launch, educational, travel or baby fair
- Food and beverages
- Others. Please specify. _____

Section B- Parameters of Competitive Strategies

This section aims to evaluate your opinion on the importance of different parameters of competitive strategies for shopping malls. Competitive strategy is defined as a plan of an organization in order to achieve competitive advantage over its competitors in long-term period. Please rate the following competitive strategies on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important)

	Not important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Very important
	1	2	3	4	5
Competitive Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
1 Offer reasonable price of parking	•	•	•	•	•
2 Offer sufficient amount of parking space	•	•	•	•	•
3 Provide female and handicap parking space	•	•	•	•	•
4 Short distance from parking or public transport station to the shopping mall entrance	•	•	•	•	•
5 Offer various leisure activities in shopping mall (e.g. cinema, baking studio or gym)	•	•	•	•	•
6 Provide baby nursing and changing rooms in shopping mall	•	•	•	•	•
7 Possess good attitude and knowledgeable staff	•	•	•	•	•

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|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Possess good communal service
(e.g. lifts, escalators and clear signboards) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 9 | Provide securities and CCTVs to ensure the safety in a shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 10 | Provide priority shopping access for elderly, pregnant women and people with disability | • | • | • | • | • |
| 11 | Provide different types of products and services in a shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 12 | Provide good arrangement of stores in the shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 13 | Offer good quality of products without rotten or expired items | • | • | • | • | • |
| 14 | Offer good quality of services with high reliability, responsiveness and assurance | • | • | • | • | • |
| 15 | Provide free and strong Wi-Fi within shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 16 | Update latest information on their social media regularly (e.g. website, Facebook or Instagram) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 17 | Provide digital postal service ordering online and collect items at shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 18 | Provide digital payments which are e-wallets (e.g. Boost, Touch 'n Go, GrabPay) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 19 | Provide an online shopping platform (e.g. website or apps) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 20 | Introduce a member card of shopping mall for more benefits (e.g. cashback, voucher, point collection) | • | • | • | • | • |

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|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Have a good exterior design of shopping mall to attract more shoppers (e.g. stylish and modern) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 22 | Have a good interior design of shopping mall (e.g. functional, aesthetic and comfortable) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 23 | Provide iconic places for shoppers to take picture (e.g. sky avenue reflective floor at Genting Highland) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 24 | Provide comfortable places for shoppers to take a rest (e.g. benches or sofas) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 25 | Increase connectivity to the nature by having greenery design in the shopping mall (e.g. plants, flowers or branches) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 26 | Provide comfortable environment within the shopping mall (e.g. soft background music) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 27 | Provide pleasant ambient scent within the shopping mall (e.g. light lavender scent) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 28 | Provide optimum lighting and air-conditioning in the shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 29 | Maintain good hygiene in the shopping mall | • | • | • | • | • |
| 30 | Organize different sales or promotions regularly (e.g. coupons, promotional codes or giveaways) | • | • | • | • | • |
| 31 | Organize events and exhibitions (e.g. book/baby/education/home living fairs, new products launch, concert/performance or themed event) | • | • | • | • | • |
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