



## Challenges of Managing Shopping Mall in Lagos State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Mall management has been identified as a critical factor for the success of malls and the retail industry across the world. The study examined the challenges of effectively managing shopping mall in Lagos State, Nigeria. Primary data were collected with the aid of questionnaire administered on managers of the twenty (20) functioning purpose-built shopping malls in Lagos State. Descriptive statistical tools of percentages, mean and relative importance index were used to analyze the data collected. The proportion method was used to determine the factors that are significantly considered as problems of mall management and can negatively affect retail real estate investment in the country. The study found that the various shopping malls were sufficiently provided with adequate facilities that are enough for generating patronage to the malls. It also found that although the managers had sufficient educational training for effective management, the complex nature of the facilities provided posed some management challenges. In addition, the general insecurity in the country posed some security challenges in spite of the provision of security devices such as camera and close circuit television (CCTV) in the various malls while the most challenging was the question of appropriate combination of right tenants (tenants mix) during tenant selection stage, monitoring human traffics within the mall during shopping hours was ranked the least challenge to managing shopping mall. The findings from this study will provide professional bodies and policy makers with relevant information to devise appropriate management framework for enhancing shopping mall investment objective.

**Keywords:** Mall, Shopping Mall, Mall Management, Shoppers, Managers, Challenges, Nigeria

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### Introduction

The Shopping mall, as a very successful land use, has long dominated the retail landscape of most advanced nations by serving as neighbourhood, community, regional and super-regional centers (Wang, Zhanga and Wang, 2006; Ho, 2005). In emerging countries such as Mauritius however, mall industry seems to be evolving at an accelerating pace (Juwaheer, Pudaruth and Ramdin, 2013). This development can be attributed to the fact that shopping malls are now regarded as highly organised social spaces for entertainment, interaction and other types of consumer excitement (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and also because many

consumers view shopping malls as an entertainment source especially in the USA (Iksuk et al., 2005). This is underscored in the recent paradigm shift from shopping malls comprising mainly as traditional shopping activities to treating them as retail-entertainment complexes and community centres for social and entertaining events. Shopping malls, in the recent dispensation, are not only centres for shopping but they are now integrated with highly structured social spaces for entertainment, interaction and other types of consumer excitement (Juwaheer, Pudaruth and Ramdin, 2013).

Shopping malls are said to play a major role in consumers' lifestyle (Terblanche, 1999) as they currently serve many purposes and they are now used by consumers for many activities. For instance, in addition to being used as centres for shopping, some are found to serve as community centres for social and recreational activities (Myers and Lumbers, 2008). In some instances, shopping malls serve as recreation centres (Terblanche, 1999). Thus necessitating the presence of important facilities like food courts and entertainment facilities such as mega-theaters, amphitheaters, museums and other special attractions within the mall setting in attracting higher levels of patronage (Wong and Yu, 2003; Field, 2009).

The recent recognition of the benefits of shopping mall in the retail sector seems to be gaining acceptance in African countries like Nigeria. With notable and flourishing shopping malls in African countries such as South Africa and Kenya, shopping mall is regarded as a critical element of a community's economic and social welfare that provides people with choices and services. The development has also become welcome in Nigeria. With the establishment of Silverbird Gallery in 2004 as the first shopping mall in Lagos State, Nigeria, other malls have sprung up in other parts of the country. Tinapa Shopping Centre with a gross floor area of 80,000m<sup>2</sup> was established in Calabar, Cross River in 2009. Subsequently, Silverbird Entertainment and Jabi Lake with gross floor area of 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 26,479 m<sup>2</sup> respectively were developed in 2009 and 2015 respectively. Ever since, more malls have been developed in other parts of the country. Since the establishment of the first shopping mall in 2004, Lagos State has witnessed the development of more malls. investment in it. As a mega city of an estimated population of 17, 000,000 people, the possibility of malls having high patronage for the 20 malls within the mega city could be high. Yan and Eckman (2009) argued that consumers would shop more in a well-managed shopping mall with open-air shopping environment having unique architectural design and appealing restaurants. As such, efficient management of mall facilities for generating high level of patronage is important for the success of shopping malls.

Mall management can therefore be said to be a critical factor for the success of malls and the retail industry across the world (Wang et al, 2006; Ho, 2005). Mall management, which involves all the activities that are carried out by mall managers to ensure the delivery of a befitting space in a mall and guarantees efficient functioning of all ancillary facilities for

excellent mall experience, has potential for engendering patronage. With a major consensus in the literature that the success of shopping malls is a function of how much patronage that is generated, shopping mall management with a prime objective of attracting shoppers in a hierarchical system and persuading them to purchase goods and services (Roy and Masih, 2007) is not negotiable. However, the management of the functioning attributes which are concrete, tangible and observable (e.g., type and quality of the store's merchandising, the hours of operation, or the location convenience of the store) has not been empirically investigated in a developing country such as Nigeria. Yet, the size, type and characteristics of shopping centers today are becoming more complex thus posing challenging roles for the management teams (Chaturvedi et al, 2014)..

The literature has established that malls that can generate more traffic are those that are well managed. They are those that can command higher lease price from its store tenants since more mall traffic often translates into more store traffic and sales (Chebat, Sirgy and Grzeskowiak, 2010). Nevertheless, the newness of mall development in Nigeria as in other African countries suggests the possibilities of challenges from local managers who hitherto had been used to managing shopping centres. At the same time, it will likely be of interest to foreign investors who are interested in the Nigerian market to understand the possible challenges to effective mall management, which can affect patronage and rob them of profitability. An understanding of the challenges of mall management will not only assist mall developers with developing appropriate preventive measures, but will also equip local managers with tools for contemporary mall management. Therefore, a study to establish the challenges of managing shopping mall, especially from the perspectives of the mall managers, in the context of developing countries like Nigeria is desirable.

Several researches have investigated different aspects of shopping mall patronage and management but few are the researches that focus on the functional attributes of shopping malls. The focus of the study of D'Astous and Gargouri (2001) was on the impact of store image on product perception while Bloemer and Oderkerken-Schroder (2002) limited their study to the impact of mall image on mall satisfaction. As interest began to grow for shopping centres in Spain, Frassetto, Vallet-Bellmunt and Gil (2002) evaluated Key factors in shopping centre management. The study of D'Astous and Levesque (2003) centred on the effects of mall image on mall commitment, word-of-mouth, purchase intentions, and price insensitivity and mall loyalty. Arvanitis, Giannoulakis and Karanikolas (2009) documented the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in developing real estate management models for shopping malls and leisure centers. A study to investigate management challenges is missing, requiring a study of this nature.

In 2011, the study of Parka and Hongb which examined the efforts at reducing building energy as part of the greenhouse gas reduction plan suggests a need for a study of this

nature that will holistically evaluate the challenges of effective management, especially in the African context. While the study of Singh and Sahay (2012) analysed the factors that can enhance experiences of customers in shopping malls, the 2013 study of Hui, Zhang, and Zheng analyzed crucial facilities management (FM) service dimensions that affect customer satisfaction with regard to the shopping mall sector.

The work of Juwaheer, Pudaruth and Ramdin (2013), which examined shoppers' experiences in the mall found emerging paradigm for mall designers and developers all over the world was conducted in an advanced country, thus leaving a room for a study that will examine the challenges faced by managers in managing of the mall. In 2005, the study of Cheng, Li and Yu (2005) employed the analytic network process (ANP) to select the best site for a shopping mall. Since the success of mall investment hangs on its management during the life of the property, the relevance of this study is established. With a focus on examining mall management as a growing phenomenon in Indian retail industry, Roy and Masih (2007) identified the challenges of mall management to include issues such as positioning a mall, zoning and tenant mix, promotions and marketing and facility management in terms of infrastructure, traffic and ambience management and finance management as issues surrounding shopping mall management. A similar study in Nigeria will show the picture in Africa's largest country and the result will provide property managers and mall managers with sufficient knowledge of effective mall management. In examining the roles of shopping centers, Pitt and Musa (2009) argued that despite the complexities in terms of size, type and characteristics, the contemporary perspectives of malls classifies it as a place of business, as a property and as an investment and will require efficient management for success.

The focus of studies such as Ligthelm (2008), Tsai (2010), Mokgabudi (2011) and Mokgabudi (2011) was on the impact of shopping mall development in townships on the traditional small township retailers including spaza/tuck shops. In 2014, Chaturvedi, Chakraborti, Bartaria, and Neve identified the challenges of shopping mall management to include: identifying, understanding and meeting the ongoing needs of consumers, retailers and mall owners, establishing excellent management teams and the quality of management services in a shopping mall; the quality of management; and setting up a competent team. The appropriateness of these findings might be required in the Nigerian context.

Hughes and Seneca (1997) cited in Wang *et al* (2006) identified the emergence of big-box store as a threat to existing shopping mall as big-box stores are leading to graying of shopping centers development. The study found that many shopping centers in the United States and Canada had experienced change and loss of anchors as a result of emergence of big-box stores. According to Cheng (2004) cited in Wang *et al* (2006), lack of required capital and expertise in shopping center development and management is a major challenge to shopping mall management. Wang *et al* (2006) identified lack of expertise and

experience in the area of feasibility studies and day-to-day operation/management as other major challenges confronting shopping mall management. Wrong locational analysis or market survey before the construction of shopping mall in a particular location will determine the success of such shopping mall. In China, Hui, Zhang and Zheng (2013) analyzed crucial facilities management (FM) service dimensions that affect customer satisfaction with regard to the shopping mall sector.

Michon, Chebat, Yu, and Lemarié (2015) investigated how female fashion shoppers responded to the shopping center environment and committed to mall patronage. In 2016, the study of Mittala and Jhamba concentrated on discovering the main attributes that influenced shoppers' patronage of a shopping mall in the Indian context. Hui, Ning and Chan (2016) limited the focus of their study to examining the critical factors of shopping malls in urban complexes in China from customers' perspectives. Chotipanich and Issarasak (2017) provided insight into the arrangement of the FM strategic choices in operation and its relationship using empirical evidence in the field of Facility and Property Management identified the key patterns of relationships between the FM operational arrangements and the business strategy of the mall. This study found that the functional scheme of FM adopted in operations was deliberately related to the needs of business strategy and the operations of the given shopping mall.

As such, applying the findings of these studies which derive from the experience of mall managers in developed economies might be misleading. Hence, mall managers in Nigeria will need to know, from local market and industry, especially Lagos retail market, the pitfalls to avoid if they will be able to manage mall investment effectively and enhance its value.

### **Methodology and Data**

The study of the challenges of managing shopping mall was carried out in Lagos state, Nigeria. The focus on Lagos state is justifiable because of the affordability of data collection. Lagos as the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria has the highest number of shopping malls spread across the urban and sub urban parts of the mega city. The study is therefore, necessary in Lagos State having twenty (20) functioning shopping malls purposively selected for sample. Prominent among these are: City Mall in Lagos Island, The Palms in the outskirts of Victoria Island, Spar in Lekki, The Landmark at Ajah, Ikotta Shopping Center at Ajah and The Crown Shopping Mall in Crown Estate.

The study utilised the self-administered questionnaire to collect data from the managers of all the twenty (20) functioning malls in the study area. The self - administered questionnaire ensured prompt response and guarantees high rate of return. Nevertheless, the structured questionnaires were supplemented with guided observation as a means to make the data and

information obtained from respondents, in respect of mall characteristics, reliable.

The target population of the study was limited to facility managers, maintenance managers and business managers of the twenty purposively selected shopping malls in the study area. It must be emphasized that the sample size was drawn conveniently and on the basis of those willing to give information. Data on respondents' social economic profile and what they perceived as the challenges of shopping mall management were collected with the use of questionnaires. The data collected were analysed with the use of frequency counts, mean and relative importance index

## **Results and Discussions**

In view of the fewness of the sampled population, efforts were made to retrieve all the questionnaire administered on all the property/facility managers of the twenty (2) purposively selected shopping malls in Lagos State. As such, the result of the 20 (100%) retrieved questionnaire is presented below:

In presenting the results of the survey, the paper examined, at the first instance, the characteristics of the shopping malls as well as the analysis of respondents' socio economic characteristics and their perception of the challenges of mall management in the study area. The results are presented in Table 1-5

### ***Characteristics of Shopping Malls***

The characteristics of the various shopping malls were examined with a view to establishing their locations, sizes, year of establishment as well as the services provided. The result in respect of this is contained in Table 1.

The result indicated that the first modern mall in Lagos State was established in 2004 while the second mall was established in 2005. The history of mall development in the study area can therefore be traced to the return of civilian dispensation in Nigeria of between 1999 and 2007. This development could have been triggered by the liberalization policies of the government which opened the market to foreign participation and encouraged private investors to drive the economy. The remaining eighteen (18) malls were established between the period of 2008 and 2016. In addition to the fact that investors could have been convinced of the profitability of mall investment by the success of the first two malls, the investors' confidence in Nigerian market could have also been influenced by the successful transmission of power from one civilian regime to the other.

The result in respect of the size of the malls indicated different sizes. The leaseable size area of three (3) of the malls were between 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The malls that had a size range of between 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> were six (6). A further five (5) of the malls

had a leaseable size range of between 10,001 m<sup>2</sup> and 15,000m<sup>2</sup>. While four (4) malls had a leaseable size range of between 15,001 and 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>, the remaining two had a leaseable size of more than 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This suggests that the malls are substantially big and can be said to be of world class/standard.

In addition, the malls were with modern facilities such as a multi-storey car park that could take hundreds of cars, lift, escalator, air conditioners and conveniences. Other common facilities in the malls were Cinemas, several retail shops, restaurants, indoor game centres, banks and service providers.

An investigation of the time of operations of the malls revealed that the malls generally operated for an average of 15 hours per day. The cinemas were largely operated in the night. At the same time, the game centres open in the day and are open to tourists and shoppers. In addition, all the malls are provided with adequate 24-hour armed security supplemented with adequate gadgets. In all malls, electricity supply was augmented with standby generators for uninterrupted power supply. Car parks provided were sufficiently large to accommodate between 350 and 1,000 cars. While some maintained open space car parks, others had multi-storey car parks. The malls were generally fenced to condone off criminals and unwanted quests.

### ***Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents Mall Managers***

Table 2 shows the result of the question about the socio-economic characteristics of the respondent mall managers.

**Table 1:** Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents Mall Managers

<b>Variables (Academic Qualification)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Higher National Diploma	6	28.57
Bachelor of Science	11	57.14
Master's Degree	3	14.28

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018.

The findings in respect of the academic qualification of the respondents are that 28.57% of the respondent mall managers are holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) academic qualification, 57.14% hold Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) degree in their various disciplines while the remaining 14.28% are holders of Master of Science (M. Sc) degree. The result is an indication that a majority of those saddled with the responsibility of managing shopping malls are educated enough to understand the issues involved in mall management. The various owners of the mall must have been mindful of who manages so as to be able to achieve the investment objectives of mall management.

**Table 2: Professional Qualification**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Probationer	6	28.57
ANIVS	14	71.43
FNIVS	0	0

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018.

Table 3 also contains the responses of the mall managers in respect of their professional qualifications. The result shows that 71.43% of the managers are associate members of the Nigeria Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) while the remaining 28.57% of the respondents are probationers of NIESV. With the majority of the mall managers being professionally qualified, it could be inferred that the management of mall is seen as a serious business that requires high level of professionalism. The few malls handled by probationers are likely built with not very complex facilities and services.

**Table 3: Experience in Mall management**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-5 years	6	28.57
6-10 years	11	57.14
11-15 years	3	14.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018.

The responses in respect of the experience of mall managers are that a majority (57.14%) of the managers have been managing malls for between 6 and 10 years. A subsequent 27% of the managers have less than 10 years of experience in mall management, while the remaining 15% have less than 5 years of experience of mall management. Altogether, the result showed that a total of 75% of the mall managers have more than six years of mall management experience. It can be said that a majority of these managers must have been involved in the traditional shopping centre management, the experience of which must have equipped them for the management of contemporary mall management.

**Table 4:** No of Branches

No of Branches	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	20	100%
6-10	-	-
11-15	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	-

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018

The responses showed that all (100%) of the managers have less than 5 branches. This is contained in the responses of the managers that they operate between 1 and 5 locations. The result confirms the fact that mall development is a new phenomenon in the country, which is gradually getting acceptance.

**Table 5:** Facilities in the Mall

	Facilities in the Mall	Availability (100%)	
		No	Yes
1	Shop units	-	100%
2	Food court	-	100%
3	Recreation centre	-	100%
4	Mega theatre	05%	95%
5	Amphi theatre	10%	90%
6	Museum	20%	80%
7	Catering centres	-	100%
8	Security	-	100%

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018

Responses in respect of the availability or otherwise of various facilities of attractions in the various malls revealed that all the malls were provided with shop units, food courts, recreation centres, catering centre and security gadgets/operatives. 95% of the malls were provided with mega theatres. Of the malls, only 90% had provision for amphi theatre while 80% of them had museums. Generally, the malls in the study area were efficiently provided with modern facilities that would require to be managed for generating patronage.

### ***The Challenges of Shopping Mall Management***

Table 7 contains the responses of shopping mall managers on factors considered as challenges of managing shopping malls in Lagos State Nigeria by means of proportion method.

**Table 7:** Relative Impact Index of the Challenges of Shopping Mall Management

Challenges	Low	High	Very High	Total Weighted Value	Mean	RII	Rank
Proper Tenant Mix i.e combination of retailers in the shopping mall	0	4	10	19	2.71	0.90	1st
Management of the facilities such as electricity, water, etc	0	4	10	19	2.71	0.90	1st
Identifying, understanding and meeting the ongoing needs of consumers	0	6	8	19	2.57	0.87	3rd
Availability of Security apparatus	0	6	8	18	2.57	0.86	4 <sup>th</sup>
Competition from online stores (big-boxes)	2	2	10	17	2.43	0.81	5th
Rising rental values	2	6	6	16	2.29	0.76	6th
Establishment of excellent management team	2	8	4	15	2.14	0.71	7th
Low patronage of retail shops within the mall	0	14	0	14	2.00	0.67	8th
Shortage of trained staff	2	10	2	12	1.71	0.57	9th
Human trafficking within mall during shopping hours	8	4	2	9	1.29	0.43	10th

**Source:** Field Survey, 2018

The result of relative impact index (RII) of the challenges of the effective management of shopping mall in the study is contained in Table 7. The result is that of two challenges: the management of the facilities provided in the mall as well as achieving proper tenant mix - were ranked first each with RII of 0.90. The result showed that mall managers considered having appropriate and balanced tenant mix in occupation of the various spaces as the greatest challenge. This challenge, with an RII of 0.90 was ranked as the highest among the challenges of effective mall management. Since most African retailers and business operators preferred to have their businesses located close to their dwellings, it became difficult to have businesses, especially during tenant selection, to select proper tenant mix with different and diverse business concerns and focuses. Where proper tenant mix is not maintained and tenants/occupiers operate similar businesses, low patronage is prevalent with its attendant result of rent default and unrealized financial business objective.

An equally important challenge of mall management was effective management of physical and environmental facilities of the mall. It could be said that many of the malls which are of

contemporary designs and built with sophisticated components are rather complex compared to the traditional shopping centres thus requiring specialized training for effective management of the fabrics. The issue of managing ancillary facilities and services like cinema hall, gymnasium and parks that make shopping malls centres of attractions for patronage could be a problem to the managers of the malls since real estate management curriculum of studies and training are not designed to equip them with the skills required for managing such facilities. With malls being new ‘innovations’ into the Nigerian real estate and business markets, appropriate local capabilities and skills for mall management might be missing thus posing great challenges to the present crop of mall managers.

The third highest ranked challenge by mall managers is the need to identify, understand and meet the needs of customers with an RII of 0.87. Since customers need would always vary, meeting them would always require different behavioural and psychological approaches which are not much emphasized in the real estate training of Nigerian estate surveyors and valuers that lay claim to property management in Nigeria. This observed deficiency could pose problem in practice. In addition, meeting the business needs of today’s contemporary and sophisticated customers could be a problem because the contemporary customers are well informed to operate in a competitive global terrain. Since the explosion of information technology has exposed contemporary clients to options and alternatives in the global market, and the educational training of estate surveyors and valuers is short of business and human relationship skills, the mall managers seem to be having difficulty meeting the needs of the teeming customers of the mall.

The fourth rated challenge is the issue of providing general security for the mall with RII of 0.86. This is inability to guarantee the safety of lives of workers and shoppers as well as the need to protect the facilities and services from theft and vandalism. Ensuring adequate security could be a challenge faced by managers of mall because in spite of the presence of security operatives and the installation of CTV Camera to enhance security, guaranteeing the security of lives of mall customers or patrons remains a challenge. The inefficiencies of security mechanism in the shops could be linked to the general insecurity in the country ‘fueled’ by terrorism which could always reduce patronage of the malls. The current consciousness of insecurity in the country at large requires that individuals make personal security arrangement for life and property. The failure of technology such as the CCTV camera which relies on constant electricity supply to function effectively could be linked to the epileptic and erratic nature of power supply in Nigeria. With the inability of the successive Nigerian governments to guarantee constant supply of electricity, customers are not assured of the possibility of apprehending criminals and bandits in case of attacks during mall patronage.

Ranked as the fifth top challenge is the threat posed by ‘Big boxes’ and/or the competition

from online shop. The benefit of easy shopping on line as a result of the explosion of information technology driven by globalization of goods and services could have negatively reduced mall patronage and productivity. Online shopping might be getting much more preferred as it saves shoppers the stress and cost of moving to and from the location of mall. While competition from big boxes and rising rental values were ranked 5th and 6th with RIIs of 0.81 and 0.76 respectively, challenges such as establishment of excellent management team, patronage of retail shops and shortage of trained staff were ranked 7th, 8th and 9<sup>th</sup> with RII of 0.71, 0.67 and 0.57 respectively. Human trafficking within the shopping malls during shopping hours was ranked 10th with RII of 0.43. The implication is that the challenges have impact on mall management as ranked.

The least ranked challenges of: low patronage of retail shops within the mall, shortage of trained staff and the requirements for coping with human trafficking within mall during shopping mall with corresponding RII figures of 0.67, 0.57 and 0.43 respectively were not considered too significant. Since retailers who record low patronage will largely find rent payment difficult, wrong composition of management team will result in unsatisfactory service provision to retailers and/or shoppers.

## **Conclusion**

The study has evaluated the challenges of effective shopping mall management in Lagos State, Nigeria arising from the day-to-day experience of the mall managers and concludes that mall management is still at its infancy in African countries like Nigeria and requires diligent nurturing. The study found absence of competence for managing the complexities peculiar to mall management facilities and services and requisite behavioral and psychological skills for identifying, understanding and meeting customers' needs.

The study also found that the general insecurity in the country has made it difficult to secure lives and property in the mall with a resultant effect of low patronage. In addition, the incursion of the online shopping with its attendant reduction of cost of shopping posed major threat to mall patronage and management.

A policy implication of the study is the need to amend the curriculum of estate management programme in the country to include more behavioural and psychological courses that will prepare managers for efficient practice of mall management. It is also recommended that malls be equipped with sufficient attractions to draw customers.

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