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## SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Gender differences in lifestyles and perception of megamall patrons in Ibadan, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The development of megamalls in Nigeria and other developing nations has witnessed tremendous impact, giving people choices of places for goods reasonably and relatively affordable. Women have been at the forefront of shopping activities due to their presence more at the shopping malls. This study aims to ascertain gender differences in lifestyles and perceptions of mall patrons in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with 216 respondents accidentally selected from 5 shopping malls in the Ibadan metropolis. Descriptive statistics of frequency distribution table was used for analysis, while independent sample t-test was used for further statistical analysis. Findings reveal that even though men visit the malls, it is more for recreational activities, while women, on the other hand, view shopping malls as a to purchase goods, meet new people, and enjoy the beautiful ambience it offers. This reveals an average level perception of megamalls by its users. Furthermore, a significant difference was found between male and female shopping malls patronage. The mall is also seen as more of a recreational centre for social interaction and leisure activities than a commercial

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### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The study reveals that megamall is increasing in many cities in Nigeria with the varied perception among men and women. It has also influenced the lifestyles of urban dwellers, with women often patronising the malls more than men. However, even though women are often seen at the mall, men also visit the mall for recreation and are most often responsible for funding women's visits to the malls. Therefore, mall operators need to recognise both genders as active mall users and make provisions for both men and women in their stock to ensure the sustainability of their businesses.

centre where buying and selling take place. Therefore, it was recommended that there be a general reorientation to refute the idea that the male gender seldom patronises shopping malls and makes purchases. They should be treated as viable customers like their female counterparts to ensure megamall sustainability in Ibadan Nigeria

**Subjects:** Gender Studies - Soc Sci; Tourism; Urban Studies; Urban Cultures

**Keywords:** gender; lifestyle; megamall; Nigeria; patrons; perceptions

## 1. Introduction

The split between the male and female world led to mental and emotional representations of the gender world and activities. Due to this, purchasing and shopping power shifted from one male directional route to women's endeavours due to their shopaholic nature (Vijaya et al., 2017). Female folks began to build activities, formulate identity, and demonstrate shopping behaviour, which gave birth to modern interest in establishing malls in nooks and crannies of society (Olonade et al., 2021). The megamall is growing rapidly and significantly in Nigeria but still evolving in some parts of the country. The essence of megamalls originated from the various choices that people make. People love to live in a serene, urbanized, safe, and secured environment that depicts oneness and totality (Busari, Olonade & Asamu, 2019).

Megamalls provide a utopian world with comfort, which embodies experiential values. They accommodate social meanings and create social values and images. The advent of mega shopping malls shows a high dichotomous divide between gender – male and female folks. Shopping is an everyday commercial activity that allows for social dimensions, practices, interests, perceptions, and consumption (Busari et al., 2019). It is a reflection of lifestyle, which offers social relations. According to Miller et al. (1998), purchasers assemble around items that characterize their personality and move toward becoming highlights of specific schedules of amiability. Hence, mega malls proffer plausible leverage for identity, needs of people, and social space. In this vein, studies have shown that megamalls, recreational and film centres are enmeshed with the presence of female folks more than their counterpart—males (Dholakia & Uusitalo, 2002; Osibanjo et al., 2019).

Gender depicts an attribute that constitutes masculine or feminine in society, and a persons' gender symbolizes his or her sex, whether female or male, as biological evidence outlines in many cultures characterizes sexual orientation as the consequence of socially built thoughts regarding the conduct, activities, and jobs specific sex performs (George et al., 2021). These convictions, qualities, and frame of mind display demonstrate the general public's pleasant and satisfying standards and the individual's genuine beliefs. They are learned from various intersecting sources such as parental influences, a child's socialization in school, and what is depicted in the media is of paramount importance to gender awareness growth, the role to be played, and world view (Iwelumor et al., 2020). To fully understand the assignment of gender, the physiological and biological attributes assigned by nature must be taken into account, followed by socially constructed behaviour (Olonade et al., in press). Gender involves a wide range of characteristics related to and distinguishing between masculinity and femininity based on these characteristics; biological sex (variation of male or female or intersex), gender- and gender-based social structures.

Several studies have opened a line of thought on gendered perceptions about the concept of shopping and megamalls (Eeden, 2006; Kuruvilla et al., 2009; Sohail, 2015). Some schools of thought believe there are separate worlds for males and females with peculiarities to needs, wants, and recreations according to society. The importance of gender-factor in mall shopping cannot be over-emphasized. Vijaya et al. (2017) noted that differences in socialization and upbringing of men and women would ultimately influence their shopping behavior. The quest to get, retain and serve

customers to the fullest increases, so goes for patrons and shoppers. There is a dearth of studies that shows significant differences in shopping behavior between men and women. Shopping has been viewed as a women's activity from different quarters. They are more likely to be shopping for food, clothes, and other personal items, while their male counterparts can be shopping for valuables and essential products. However, these are gradually phasing out as their role is connecting progressively and overlapping. Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand the impact that mega shopping malls have on people, male and female, and the decisions they have formed over time.

Mathur (2019) and Vadivel (2011) affirmed that megamall styles have many added features to attract shoppers. Mega malls are putting up measures to assessing consumers' behaviours, loyalty, interest, and services so that they can easily be lured from small street stores (Adekola et al., 2019). Gender difference, on its part, is an external influence on consumers' behaviour. In Alreck and Settle (2002), Dholakia and Uusitalo (2002), and (Olu-Owolabi et al., 2020), there has been a dossier of information on gender differences such as in message processing, price promotions, impulse purchases, advertising, and responses towards the different shopping forms.

Sohail (2015) attests that way of life grasps social association, economic wellbeing, family foundation, identity, inspiration, discernment, and advertising upgrade, which can be recognized by a broad scope of exercises, interests, and sentiments. The shopping courses of action and examples of activities in which customers invest their energy and cash delineate their way of life just as structure their discernment. Shopping orientations extended to incorporate individual, financial, social, and recreational attributes of customers (Visser & Du Preez, 2001). Matthew et al. (2019) see that megamall turn into a promising direction for living that concentrates magnetic components of utilization inside a solitary defensive and clear condition. Megamall portrays and offers itself as an option in contrast to the downtown area with offices and feeling to make customer experiences thrilling ones where relationship, unwinding, and shopping interlaced in a verified domain (Olonade et al., 2021).

Megamall experience depicts knowledge of or skills related to megamall shopping events that one gains through involvement with those particular events. As far as gender and mega mall are concerned, studies have examined shopping mall patronage and its effects on gender in developed countries, but there is a dearth of research in Nigeria, especially in Ibadan. It is essential to examine this with some other variables to understand the correlation between gender and megamall shopping in developing countries. Here, the study added perception and lifestyle and reported the differences. Flowing from the above, this study examines the gender-based perception and lifestyle of patrons in some selected megamalls in the Ibadan metropolis.

This study hinges on two theories; William Glasser's Choice theory and Henri Tajfel and John Turner's Social identity theory in 1979. The choice theory posits behaviour that one chooses is central to their existence. Five cardinal needs drive one's behaviour: love and belonging, freedom, fun, and power. While survival needs include food, clothing, shelter, respiration, personal safety, safety, and sex, children. Glasser has four fundamental and psychological needs: power/significance/competence; freedom/autonomy; and fun/learning. The theory of choice suggests that an individual's existence depends on a conscious comfort zone and role models of a perfect world of parents, relationships, possessions, beliefs, etc.

Social identity theory submits that a personality largely depends on the group they belong. The idea was postulated by the two British social psychology Henri Tajfei and John Turner, in 1979, and it depicts that individual self-concept, belief, persuasion is derived from membership of an organization. It relates to the study of the interplay between personality and social identities. It promotes a common identification with a collective or social category that creates a common culture among the participants. Tajfel and Turner (1979) submits that group serves as a vital pointer to the source of pride and self-esteem.

Gender has a connection with specific social roles and expectations. The concept of being a woman has a great deal to do with their system of choices, values, and beliefs, as posited by Glasser's choice theory. The group one belongs to tends to influence the life and perception of one's own. The group that individuals belong to gives them a definition of who they are and how they should behave in the social sphere (social identity). Therefore, the classification of males and females into social roles creates problems because people feel they must be at one end of the spectrum and identify themselves as men or women. Overall, communities interpret biological differences between men and women to create a set of social expectations that define men and women's appropriate behaviours and determine the different access to women's and men's rights, power, resources, social power, shopping, and lifestyle (Olonade et al., *in press*). The social roles of men and women are based on societal, cultural standards that lead to creating a gender system. In many societies, the gender system is the basis of social patterns that include gender separation and the primacy of male standards. But in terms of mega mall patronage, females are likely to still lead because of their insatiable desire motive, which does not necessarily mean need. Both the choice theory and social identity theory applied to this study by bringing out how individual social group determines their choices in their preference for shopping at the malls. Even though shopping is associated with the female gender, it is expected that men are usually responsible for funding many of these shopping sprees by women.

## 2. Methods

Data were obtained through questionnaire administration and secondary sources (reviews of related studies from various published and unpublished records, reports, books, journals, and magazines). The self-developed questionnaire consisted of questions related to shoppers' demographic characteristics, frequency in megamalls, and user's perception about shopping. Five (5) different malls in Ibadan with two hundred and sixteen respondents (male and female) were purposively selected for the study. The questionnaire was distributed accidentally to mall customers at the selected shopping malls. Independent sample t-test, Percentage, Mean and Standard deviation were used for the study. The main reason for applying the independent samples t-test is that it is a statistical method of comparing two groups in terms of their means (in this case, male and female shopping preferences). Furthermore, the ethical principle of anonymity, voluntary participation, and informed consent was strictly adhered to in this study.

### 2.1. Results

#### 2.1.1. Demographic profile of respondents

**Table 1** shows the demographic distribution of respondents. Based on age, 46.8% of respondents fall between 25 and 34 age intervals with the highest frequency, while 2.8% fall between 55 years and above. On gender, 120 of the respondents are female, and 96 of the respondents are male. This implies that most respondents are female, indicating that more women visit the mall more than men. On the level of education, 80.1% are in the tertiary level of education and ranked the highest, while 1.4% only had primary education. This implies that virtually all of the respondents are higher educated and knows the importance of a mall. On monthly income, 32.4% respondents earn between #20,000—#40,000 which serves as the highest frequency while 9.7% respondents earn between #60,000-#80,000. This ranked the least among monthly earners in the study. On the type of residence, 45.8% of respondents live in at least two bedrooms flat while only 0.9% lives in other forms of accommodations. They both ranked highest and least in the distribution. By implication, respondents can afford a decent accommodation to live in, translating their status to buying from the mall.

#### 2.2. Research question 1: How do megamall patrons and shoppers perceive megamall?

**Table 2** shows that most respondents indicated that "I like megamalls" ( $\chi = 2.89$ ) and "Customer service relations is second to none" ( $\chi = 2.77$ ). These were ranked first and second, respectively, among students. Conversely, 'I see it as an avenue to un-mind and mingle ( $\chi = 2.48$ ) and "There is

**Table 1. Demographic representation of respondents in the study**

<b>Selected variables</b>	<b>Frequency (N = 216)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Age group</b>		
15–24	83	38.4
25–34	101	46.8
35–44	18	8.3
45–55	8	3.7
55 and above	6	2.8
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	96	44.4
Female	120	55.6
<b>Level of education</b>		
Primary	3	1.4
Secondary	16	7.4
Tertiary	173	80.1
Others	24	11.1
<b>Monthly income</b>		
Less than #20,000	42	19.4
#21,000–40,000	70	32.4
#41,000–60,000	33	15.3
#61,000–#80,000	21	9.7
81,000 and above	50	23.2
<b>Place of residence</b>		
Single room	51	23.6
Self-contain	45	20.8
Two bedroom	99	45.8
Three bedroom	19	8.8
Others	2	0.9

**Source:** Authors' survey, 2019

price reduction service which is better than street vendors” ( $\chi = 2.48$ ) were ranked least. It has a grand mean of 2.61.

Test of norm conducted was conducted on the perception of patrons in megamalls. The maximum score for a respondent on the eight items scale above is 32 (8 x 4), that is, the number of items on the perception scale multiplied by the number of possible responses. The level thereof is three, which are high, average, and low levels of perception. Therefore, to establish an interval score, the maximum score was divided by the number of groups ( $32/3 = 10.7$ ). Thus, an interval score of 11 was used to chart the norm Table

Thus, the overall mean score of the patrons' perception of megamalls is 21.29, which falls within the interval distribution of 12–22. It has clearly shown that megamall patrons have an average level of perception of megamall and shopping lifestyle.

**Research Question 2:** Is there is any significant difference between patrons' perception of megamall shopping based on gender (male and female)?

**Table 2. Shows perception of megamall patrons in percentages**

Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD	P
I like megamalls	142 65.7	45 20.8	21 9.7	8 3.7	2.89	1.038	Ist
I see it as an avenue to un-mind and mingle	118 54.6	69 31.9	11 5.1	18 8.3	2.48	.993	7 <sup>th</sup>
Hardly can one have access to needed items	10 (4.6)	51 23.6	49 22.7	106 49.1	2.77	1.061	2 <sup>nd</sup>
It is meant for wealthy families, most especially women	12 5.6	17 7.9	91 42.1	96 44.4	2.56	.985	6 <sup>th</sup>
Megamall does not provide a serene and secured atmosphere	39 18.1	47 21.8	98 45.4	32 14.8	2.67	.989	4 <sup>th</sup>
Customer service relations is second to none	121 56	15 6.9	58 26.9	24 11.1	2.77	1.031	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Megamall exhibits efficient service delivery, which is better than street vendors	65 30.1	57 26.4	45 20.8	49 22.7	2.67	.954	5 <sup>th</sup>
There is a price reduction service which is better than street vendors	76 35.2	91 42.1	33 15.3	19 8.8	2.48	.979	8 <sup>th</sup>
			<b>Grand mean:</b>	<b>2.67</b>			

Source: Author's survey, 2019

**Table 3. Test norm table on patrons' perception of megamall**

Interval	Total mean score	Remark (perception level)
1-11		Low
12-22	21.29	Average
23-33		High

**Table 4. Independent sample t-test analysis of the difference in the perception of male and female to megamall shopping**

Variable (patrons' perception of megamall shopping)	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	T	Remarks
Female	120	24.20	5.029	223	12.164	.000
Male	96	23.70	5-054	222.808		

Source: Author's survey, 2019

Table 3 and 4 shows a significant difference in the perception of male and female shoppers in megamall in Ibadan. This means that megamalls are widely accepted among the female gender, showing more preference for them.

### 3. Discussions

Over the years, shopping has been seen as gendered activity. The majority of shoppers today are women, and their numbers are increasing, so goes for their taste (Sohail, 2015). They tend to shop more than men for items like groceries. On the other hand, beauty cares and clothing materials shop for automobiles, shirts, and house appliances, especially electronics. This belief which is also affirmed by the findings of this study is becoming appalling in mall patronage. Even choices are becoming global, and the narrative is changing. In this present world, personalization is the key that makes businesses and institutions like burgeoning megamalls in Ibadan keep abreast that

gender has a role to play in patronage. Megamalls' effective operation lies with customer engagement, conversion, and loyalty devoid of separation in consumerism.

This study shows that men visit malls solely for recreation purposes, while women perceive megamalls as a place to shop, relate, sight-see, talk, relax, beautify, and emotionally lean on women-driven life values. This finding is in line with that of Busari et al. (2019) that megamalls serve recreational purposes more than commercial purposes. It has clearly shown that megamall patrons have an average level of perception of megamall with implications on their patronage. This also reported by Sebastianelli et al. (20108) in their study on gender and mall perception using sampled data from the US. Also, there is a significant difference between male and female shoppers in megamall. It was also discovered that megamalls, among others, provide a platform for social interaction where people enjoy their leisure activities. This corroborated the findings of Busari et al. (2019), which concluded that megamalls are a site for social interaction.

### 3.1. Conclusion and recommendation

In conclusion, this study established that there is an average level of patron's perception of megamalls and shopping activities, indicating that the purpose of these increasing megamalls is not even well known by patrons and cannot be fully utilized yet. Also, it was ascertained that there is a gulf between gender and shopping lifestyles. Even though women engage in shopping activities more than men, as revealed in this study, it should be noted that men bear most of the cost of these shopping sprees. Therefore, based on the study findings, it was recommended that there be a general reorientation to negate the notion that male folks hardly visit megamall and make purchases. They should be treated as viable customers like their female counterparts to ensure megamall sustainability in Ibadan, Nigeria

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