EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INFLUENCING FACTORS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF COMMUNITY MALL CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT

Community malls are the new hang out place for modern lifestyle people in Bangkok and its growth is significant for many years, gaining retail space of shopping malls. Many property developers are interested in building community mall projects, but mostly lack knowledge and experience in shopping and retail management. This paper aims to be useful for new community mall developers, provide a clearer understanding of the physical and non-physical factors that influence target customers to visit a community mall. This paper explored the customization strategy of Siam Future Development. The research concentrated on analysis of consumer behaviors of community mall customers to acknowledge correlation between respondent's performance variables and influencing factors. The data collection is conceived by using online questionnaire survey, targeting working adults aged and matured between 25-60 years old who live in Bangkok and have visited community malls in Bangkok. The research shows that top five influencing factors are supermarket, atmosphere, location, tenant mix, and restaurant, respectively. Use of Pearson correlation determined that frequency of visit has direct relationship with the restaurant selection. A factor that community mall needs improvement the most is parking services. The summary explains what is the benchmark of characteristics that a community mall should offer, which can be a guideline for new community mall developers to consider prior to planning their development.

KEY WORDS: Community Mall / Consumer Behavior/ Factors / Tenants Mix / Developers

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Development of community malls has become the major retail trends in Bangkok and number of community malls is growing constantly. Among the major developer such as Siam Future Development, there are many new players entering the market recently. The definition of a community mall in Bangkok varies but basically, it is a mall situated in a residential area. Nonetheless, there are small community malls in suburb areas serving the needs to a particular residential community and upsize to a larger-scale community mall in Central Business District targeting white-collar workers. With the changing lifestyle of Bangkok people, smaller centers that offer convenient dining, shopping, and relaxing space have become more popular. Along with the severe traffic issue, a community malls that usually provide sufficient parking space and easy access become more attractive to consumers. Some community malls have great success and others fail to capture the demand. There are several factors that contribute to the success of a community mall, ranging from basic retail factors of good location to operation management (Pimhataivoot, 2014).

The Siam Future Development adopted the customization strategy that they believe is the key success factor in ensuring the popularity of its community malls. All community malls require a localization process that studies the residential population in the target area. Technically, the concept, design, and tenant mix of the community mall should correlate the class and lifestyles of the people in the community it is serving. “The key in such an industry is innovation and mix community malls format that cater to consumers convenience and exceed their expectations by offering a multidimensional experience while at the same time matching the needs of the residents in that catchment area” (Suthisopapan and Madan, 2014).

This paper intends to serve as a meaningful response of a possible investment on the family own land in Bangkok. This paper will provide guidelines for investors and developers who are planning to develop community mall anywhere in Bangkok. Community malls are the popular product for real estate developers. Experienced developers commonly have more experiences in developing a successful community malls. Nonetheless, there are landowners and investors who intend to achieve the development of community malls in Bangkok. Therefore, the paper will examine the business concept of community malls within the aspect of real estate development industry in order to identify the core factors contributing to success of community mall development projects.

Consequently this paper aims to demonstrate that, by identifying consumer behaviors of local customers, developers and investors will have a clearer procedures in the development process of community malls: (1) to select the right location; (2) to develop the appropriate concept; and (3) to select the suitable mix of tenants in the development of a new community mall. While there are still opportunities and demands for community mall in Bangkok, but without a research of local consumers and a logical assessment for the compatibility of product and services to align with the market demands, new community malls in Bangkok will experience failure and unnecessary loss in investment.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Growth of community malls in Bangkok

Nearly 40 new community malls are under construction, if not already open for business in Bangkok and suburban areas, during the year 2015 and 2016, as a response of the growing urbanization and changing lifestyles (Jitpleecheep, 2015). From Collier International (Thailand), the figure 1 is showing the growth of community mall total retail space to be growing seven consecutive years. Community malls accounted for half of new retail space of 282,600 sq m in the year 2014. According to Collier International (Thailand), the growth of community mall in 2015 is approximately 25 new community malls with over 320,000 sq m. The growth of community mall is surprisingly high due to the changing lifestyles of people looking for shopping convenience. Jitpleecheep shared Veena Arunyakasem, managing director of retail development consultant One Click Marketing Co. statement, telling that only 20-30% of community malls were successful because most of them are developed by property developers with minimum knowledge in the retail industry and lack retail management skills. Furthermore, the retail sector is facing a shortage of management personnel because there are not enough operators producing retail professionals to supply the industry (Jitpleecheep, 2015). One other reason that leads to failure in the community malls development is the shortage of knowledge and academic courses related to community malls development and operation.

Figure 2.1 Community malls total space in Bangkok by Collier International Thailand

Community malls are found all over Bangkok. It is everyone’s new favorite place to hangout. The start of Community mall fever began with the opening of K Village in 2010. Afterward Bangkok is filled with shopping center of this sort everywhere: Festival Walk, Nawamin City Walk, Rain Hill, Seenspace, Grass Thong Lor, Aree Garden, La Villa, Crystal Design Center, The Nine, The Circle, The Walk, The Crystal, Portico, Park Lane, and the list is endless. These smaller scale shopping centers or community malls don’t belong to retail giants The Mall or Central. The environment of these places is usually the outdoor circulation and most of them are smaller than the regular shopping mall.

Now the trend of building new community mall is not slowing down. They are popping up left and right in throughout Bangkok. In fact, developers are aggressively creating more community malls into all areas of Bangkok urbanization. Index Living Mall Co., Ltd. is currently investing five billion baht in building five more community malls in the next five years. Pure Sammakorn Development Co., Ltd.’s vision is also very progressive. Its third Pure Place Community Mall is already opened for business on Ratchapreuk Road. Siam Future Development Co., Ltd is the most serious one of them all. Its record includes La Villa, J Avenue and Festival Walk, and a few more. They believe there’s room in Bangkok for at least 150 more community malls (Amranand, 2012).

The term, community mall is the labeling importance of the word ‘Community’, identifying the importance of community needs. Characteristics that are found at such community mall would correlate with the demand of the community. The intention of people in the community to visit their local community mall can vary depending on the products and services offering. The attraction can determine its target group. For a community mall to be successful, it must have the appropriate summation of the offering that the community needs or looking for. Examining the consumer behavior of the community, local based study is necessary in creating the program layout of the community mall. Community mall is generally assumed to be a place where people go to shop and eat. But could there be other activities offering at the community that would attract people to come out is a question to answer, and certainly it will not be the same at all community mall locations (Bunwiroon and Tochaiwat, 2011).

2.2 Characteristics of Community malls

Considering the concept of community malls in the US. They are usually located in the residential areas, mostly in the suburbs, and have shops and serve that people of that particular area need in their daily lives. Though community malls in Bangkok are totally different. Some places only have restaurants. There would be no services like laundry or pharmacy or tutoring services. Since people in Bangkok have different definition of what community mall actually resembles. Some that only have restaurants and fashion shops can also be called a community mall. While other places have more offering such as a supermarket, pharmacy, beauty clinics, etc. The pool of tenants can identify the characters of each place. There are community mall of various sizes. For example, comparing La Villa Aree to Aree Garden. These two are very different by the size. The location is also a factor. But the feel of community or the feeling of attachment to the local residents of the community, Aree Garden is more unique, in a sense that it only has 10 shops, which are not a franchise. The bookshop there hosts regular customers that become familiar faces. So, if we look at the sense of closer community, Aree Garden has much more emotional connection with their customers than what La Villa can serve. La Villa have many chain restaurants and shops. The shoppers aren’t always the resident of the area. It is a meeting place for people from everywhere. Some even drive to get there regularly. Anyway both malls are successful in their own vision of concept.

In the past people would have to go to all the major malls on the weekend, to hang out and spend time with their families and friends. Now people can commute closer to community malls instead because of many reasons. It may have a convenient location. Shops or services they need are available there. When community malls are providing the convenience that people want, why would they go to mega malls. Bangkok, community malls are the place for people to get out. It is not the place for residential community to tighten. "Bangkokians assemble in loose groups. They don't form real communities, unlike in the US or Japan, where cities are divided into different neighborhoods, and where each zone is well planned, with a school, a fire station, a post office," says Ariya Aruninta of the Department of Landscape Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. The sense of community may not be what the Bangkokians are looking for in community malls (Amranand, 2012).

Amitha Amranand interviewed Architect Patama Roonrakwit of Community Architects for Shelter and Environment (CASE), who works closely with poor communities in Thailand through a participatory design process, sees the relationship between community and commerce in Bangkok as fairly random. "It starts with a good location, which then attracts people to settle and form a community. As the community grows, it pulls in commerce. And as commerce grows, it pulls in more people to settle. Bangkok just keeps spreading with no rhyme or reason," says Patama. Bangkok is so big that the city is forming with no sense of community or town center that people come out to meet. There are very few real communities remaining in Bangkok. Older part of Bangkok like Bang Lampu is an exception. Community malls in that area serves loose groups of shoppers, a more specific demographic of consumers but the communities aren't genuine (Amranand, 2012).

2.3 Key Strategy from The Market Leader

Obviously community malls have gained much popularity because of the changing in lifestyle of Bangkok people toward modernity, demanding more and more convenience. Bangkok is the city with the worst traffic congestion and people are seeking ways to commute less and reduce their time on the road. People in Bangkok prefer easy living, quicker and easier physical access to dining and shopping, and easy-to-find parking spaces. Community malls makes up approximately 11% of all retail market, which is almost the same size as the hypermarket share. With the zoning laws and regulations, developing large shopping malls in the city becomes more difficult. Development of housing projects, new roads, and shortcuts in residential areas also support the convenience of going to nearby community malls. Hence making the community a feasible choice for people and at the same time attractive for real estate developers. Investing in community malls is more cost effective than investing in mega malls. Therefore, real estate developers are penetrating and saturating this market. While Bangkok still have more demand for community malls, developers compete to make their project the highlight of their strategic locations. However, some community malls are more successful that others (Suthisopapan and Madan, 2014). The question often raised is about the crucial factors that developers analyze prior to developing a community mall and what strategies can contribute the most to the attraction of customers to such community malls.

One strategy adopted by SF is the customization strategy. SF believes that there is no common plan for all community malls. A single execution plan that works for all community malls doesn't exist because the location of each community mall is unique and certainly requires localization and studying the residential population in the target area. Basically, the concept, design, and tenant mix of the community mall should match the class and lifestyles of the community it is serving. To cater consumers convenience and exceed their expectations by offering multidimensional experience while at the same time matching the needs of the residents in that catchment area. The ABAC polls showed that community malls customers have positive attitude because of the layout design and location than mega malls. Nowadays shopping experience has changed from indoor to outdoors environment (Suthisopapan and Madan, 2014). For shorter visits of shoppers, they would spend majority of their time within each stores. The common areas of the community malls are usually open-air. This is the concept that all community malls follows due to its energy efficiency and the closer to nature atmosphere.

The research result has shown that consumer behaviors of different community vary depending on various factors, such as its residents' economic status and environment. Community mall developers should therefore understand the characteristics of local consumers and use the information as the guideline to develop the community mall. Specific study of a community is important for selection of retailers in order to achieve the best response from the local demand (Bunwiroon and Tochaiwat, 2011).

The general community mall model concentrates on the approach of the developers' and investors' point of view. The community mall should be considered as a Product. For the realization of this Product, there is three composing elements needed, which are Location, Customers Mix, and Tenants Mix. And between these elements, many interactions occur. The most important fields to be mentioned are those in which all three elements meet, overlap with each other. To conclude, the better a shopping center utilizes the synergies between its composing elements, the more successful it gets (Reikli, 2012).

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is a research study to consider the consumer behaviors of community malls customers. The focus is on the factors that influence them to choose to visit community malls. The market leader of community mall developers, Siam Future Development utilized customization strategy to capture the demand of a particular community within the proximity of the project location. To concur to SF's success strategy, this research aims to emphasize the customization strategy by exploring the general factors that contribute to the attractiveness of a community mall. The study will prioritize the factors according to the statistical result and provide an extensive detail of each factor to gain a better understand of the core characteristics of a community mall that requires customization.

The community malls in the central business district have a broader group of target customers, compared to community malls in the suburbs that have more specific group of target customers living in the residential area nearby to the project. The research will mainly focus on the quantitative method, which data collection targets the general customers of community mall who live in Bangkok. This quantitative research used online questionnaires, which were distributed author's social connection. The data acquired were then analyzed and calculated to determine the correlations between respondents' behaviors at a community mall and importance index of each factor influencing their intention to visit, which also affect their behaviors when going to community malls. The derived information can be used for selection of retailers and improve overall quality of community malls.

3.1 Sampling

The sampling targets primarily on working adult age between 25 – 60 years old for both genders who live in Bangkok and had visited a community mall in Bangkok within the past 30 days of the date surveyed. The author believes that this group makes up a majority of potential community malls customers. This group has the highest spending power and able to make their own decision to visit a community mall of their choice. The range of age in this group is inclusive of the Millennial Generation or Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby boomers, or having birth years during 1956 – 1991.

3.2 Data Collection

This research applied the quantitative method using online questionnaire survey with closed-ended question type. The data collected are from 65 respondents given the limited time and restriction to reach the target group. The link to online questionnaire survey was sent to author's social network of friends and colleagues who are qualified as the sampling target.

3.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire design and composition correlate to the objective of this research by referring to the literatures that had been reviewed. The questionnaire survey consists of five main parts, beginning with the screening question, respondent's behaviors questions, specific questions related to influencing factors, suggestions for improvement questions, and the demographic question, respectively. To ensure the usefulness of collected data, respondents must be eligible according to the sampling target. The final process is the data analysis using SPSS program as an application tool.

3.3.1 Example of questionnaire

The screening question is only one question asking whether or not a respondent has visited any community malls within the past 3 months. All of the respondents have selected yes for this question. Due to the reason that majority of respondents in the author’s social connection live in Bangkok. Community malls are the typical go to place for people living in Bangkok.

The second set of questions was intended to determine the behavior of community mall customers. The questionnaire asked:

- How often do you visit a community malls in the past 3 months?
- Which day of the week do you usually visit a community mall?
- What time of day do you usually visit a community mall?
- How do you usually travel to a community mall?
- How long do you usually stay at a community mall?
- Who do you usually go to a community mall with?
- How much do you spend each visit at a community mall?

Within the second set of question, there is one important question that asked what types of business do you visit at a community mall? The answers from respondents here will determine the distribution of visiting purpose. The choices for answers in this question includes:

- Supermarket
- Restaurant
- Beverage/Dessert café
- Fashion retail shop
- Bank or financial services
- Fitness facility
- Tutoring school
- Cosmetic service
- Theater

Third part is the specific questions related to influencing factors of choosing to visit a community mall. The questions asked respondents to choose how much do they agree on the factor in the scale of 1 to 5, with #1 being strongly disagree and #5 being strongly agree.

The specific questions are categorized in major sections of factors. The samples of specific questions are as follows. All of the questions begin with, “you choose to visit the community mall because...”

1. Location
   a. It is located near your house.
   b. It is on your commuting route.
2. Parking service
   a. It is easy to park your car.
   b. It offers a valet parking service.
3. Atmosphere
   a. It has an outdoor concept.
   b. It has a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere.
4. Supermarket
   a. It has the supermarket you prefer.
5. Tenants mix/restaurant
   a. It has a good selection of restaurant.
   b. It has the franchise restaurant you prefer.
6. Tenants mix/fashion retail
   a. It has a good selection of fashion retail shops.
   b. It has the products and services you prefer.
7. Marketing and management
   a. It has the event or festival you want to go to.
   b. It was promoted in an advertising media.

The fourth part is the question for suggestion. This part asked for respondents to tell their favorite community mall in Bangkok and explain why they like this community mall. The other question is asking about what they want the community malls to improve the most. The choices for improvement in the last question includes:

- Get bigger (more variety of shops)
- Get smaller (more sense of community)
- Customer services
- Cleanliness (shops and facility)
- Parking services

- It is good the way it is

The fifth part is the demographic questions

- What is your gender?
- How old are you?
- What is your occupation?
- What is your personal income?

3.4 Data Analysis Method

After having data collected, the sampling data analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Program, applying the factor analysis to sort out what are the factors that affect consumer behavior to choose to visit a community mall in order to improve the overall quality of community malls in Bangkok.

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the data collection and its result using the SPSS analysis, mainly consists of three parts: personal information of respondents, interaction with the mall, high interaction group, factors related to high factor group.

4.2 Demographic Data

There were 65 respondents received from the online questionnaire. All respondents having age more than 19 years old for both male and female who had visited community malls in Bangkok within the past 30 days.

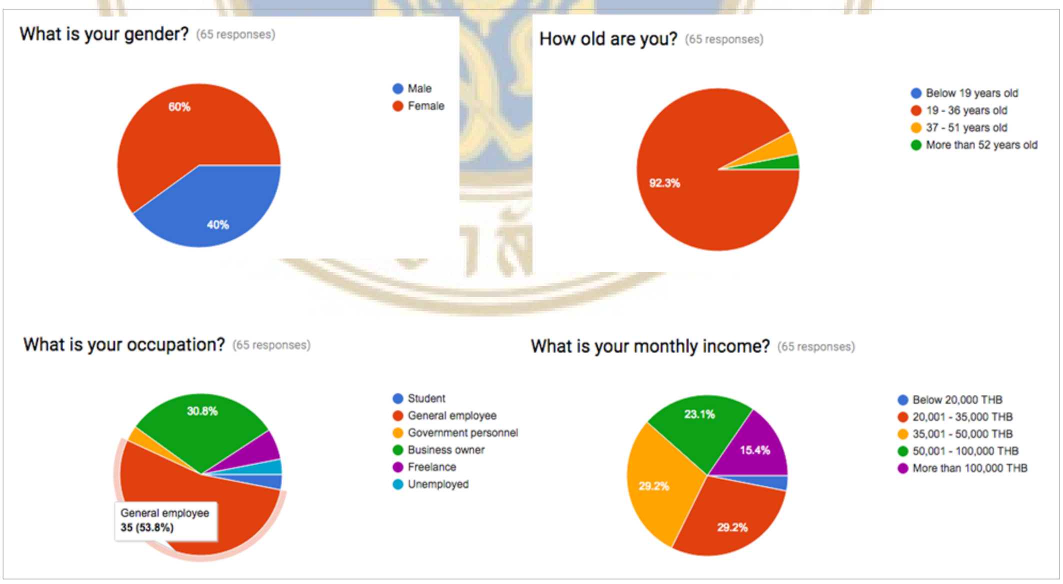

Figure 4.1 Summary of respondent information

4.2.1 Gender

From the survey 60 percent or 39 respondents were female while 40 percent or 26 respondents were male, altogether totaling to 65 respondents to further conduct the testing and analysis.

4.2.2 Age

As shown in figure 4.1, 92.3 percent of respondents are in the age group of 19 – 36 years old, which makes this group the majority of all respondents. The rest of them age more than 36 years old. The group with age of over 19 years old is a mix of Generation Y (1971 – 1980) and Generation M (1981 – 1987). These two groups of people share similarities in terms of consumer behaviors. They are educated and have spending power. They are compulsive buyer and can make purchase decision on their own. This group is considered the target primary group of this study.

4.2.3 Occupation

In the group of respondents, more than half of them are general employee at 53.8 percent. The next group is business owner at 30.8 percent. Two types of occupation totaled to more 80 percent of all respondents are general employee and business owner. These two groups certainly have their own source of income and have the ability to decide to visit a community mall on their own and manage their own spending when visiting.

4.2.4 Income

As shown in figure 4.1, 29.2 percent of respondents have income in the range of 20,001 – 35,000 Baht per month, which is equal to the amount of respondents having income of 35,001 – 50,000 Baht per month. The third order is the group that has the income of 50,001 – 100,000 Baht per month at 23.1 percent. And, follow by the group with highest income range of above 100,000 Baht. This is the group with highest spending power and it makes up 15.4 percent of all respondents

4.3 Data Analysis

This research paper used the online questionnaire to gather consumer behaviors of community mall customers. The survey asked respondents questions about their usual behaviors when visiting a community mall. The answers from respondents provide a useful set of information and better understanding of the visiting pattern of target customers.

In table 4.1, the first result from the consumer behavior study of community mall customers shows the proportion of business within the community mall that was the purpose of their visit. The respondent is allowed to choose three types of business that they made purchases or used the services when visiting a community mall. The type of business that receives the highest attraction is the restaurant, with 23 percent of total selection from the respondents. The second highest is the supermarket with 20 percent. And, the third place is beverage and dessert café. The fourth place in business of attraction at community mall is the bank. In the selection table for respondent to choose, there are 9 types of business, which are as follows

1. Supermarket
2. Restaurant
3. Beverage and dessert café
4. Fashion retail shops
5. Bank and financial institution
6. Fitness facility
7. Tutoring school
8. Cosmetic service
9. Theater

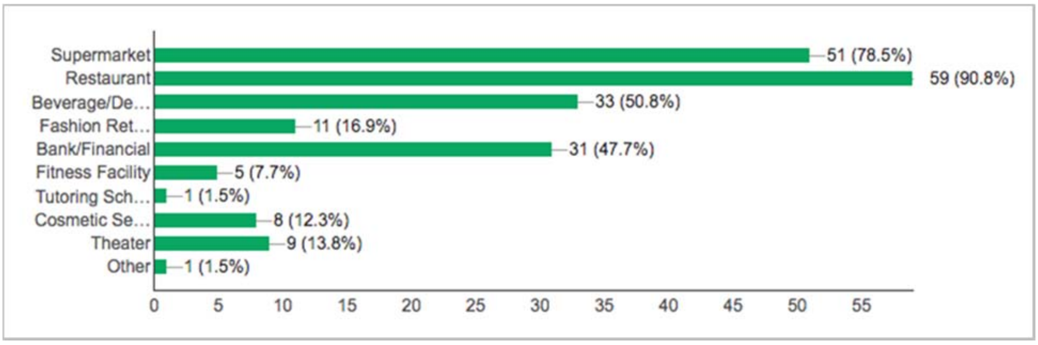

Figure 4.2 Business of attraction at community mall

The online survey asked questions related to typical behaviors when visiting a community mall in order to gain insights about the performance of respondents. There are three performance characteristics of respondents as shown in the figure 4.3.

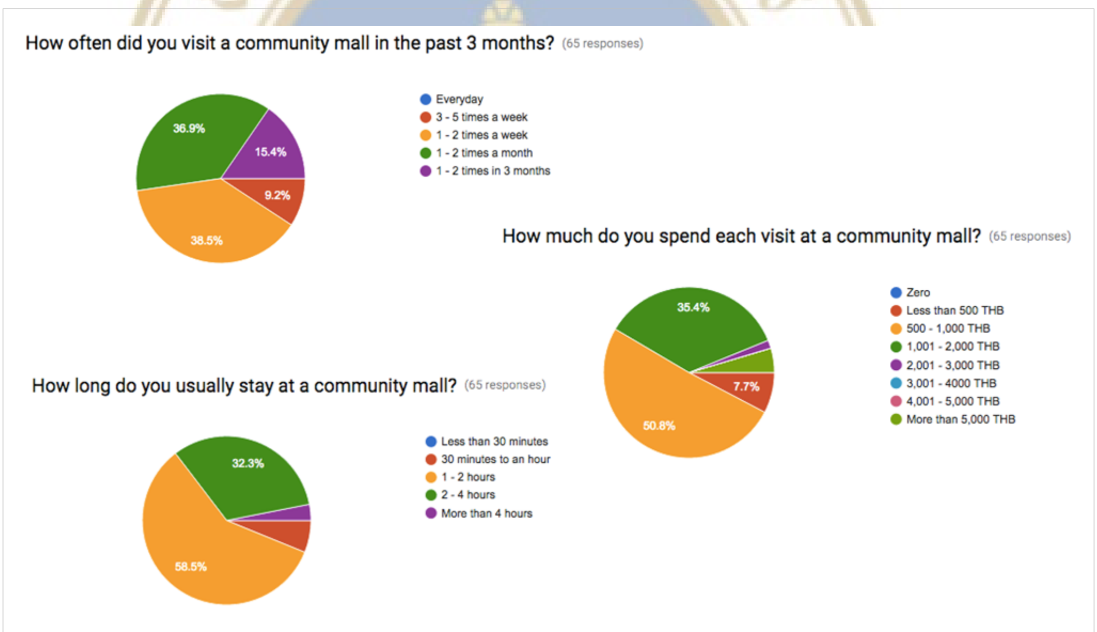

Figure 4.3 Performance variables of respondents

The first is the frequency of visit within the past 3 months. Out of all 65 respondents, only 9.2 percent have highest frequency of visit, which is 3 – 5 times a week. For the second highest frequency, there are the 25 respondents, visiting community malls 1 – 2 times a week, which is the majority of respondents; but nearly equaled to the group that visit 1 – 2 times a month, with 24 respondents.

The second performance variable is the length of time that respondents are spending at a community mall. The result shows that 58.5 percent or more than half of respondents usually stay at a community mall for 1 – 2 hours. The next group of respondents usually stays around 2 – 4 hours, which makes up 32.3 percent of sampling group or 23 respondents. There are four respondents spend 30 minutes to hour at community mall.

The third performance variable is the amount of money spent at each visit. The result shows that 50.8 percent of respondents spend 500 – 1,000 Baht at each visit; following with 35.4 percent of respondents spending 1,001 – 2,000 Baht at each visit to a community mall. This group of respondents is considered to have reasonable spending amount per visit, which clearly make this group the target customers of community mall.

The research intended to see the level of importance between various factors that appear most likely to be their reason of visiting a community mall. The factors were separated into 7 main areas, which are location, parking service, atmosphere, supermarket, restaurant, tenant mix, and marketing and management. With these rating scale, the study is able to entail the weight of importance for each main factors that the author listed for the questionnaire, assuming that these factors are common influencing factors. The result is the mean value calculated from the scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being positive. The level of importance is divided into 5 levels as follows

1. 1.00 to 1.80 being least important
2. 1.81 to 2.60 being less important
3. 2.61 to 3.40 being neutral
4. 3.41 to 4.20 being important
5. More than 4.20 being very important

Table 4.1 Importance Levels of Influencing Factors

Influencing Factors	Mean	SD	Level
Location			
(1) It is located near your house.	4.141	0.990	Important
(2) It is located near your work.	3.438	1.283	Important
(3) It is on your commuting route.	3.766	0.868	Important
Parking			
(4) It is easy to park your car.	3.469	1.345	Important
(5) It offers a valet parking service.	2.391	1.190	Less Important
Atmosphere and facility			
(6) It has an outdoor concept.	2.734	1.130	Neutral
(7) It has a beautiful architecture.	3.094	1.065	Neutral
(8) It has a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere.	3.875	0.864	Important
(9) It gives you sense of community that you live in.	3.125	1.148	Neutral
(10) It has a clean and organized facility.	4.156	0.859	Important
Importance of supermarket			
(11) It has the supermarket you prefer.	4.156	0.895	Important
Restaurant Mix			
(12) It has a good selection of restaurants.	3.875	1.254	Important
(13) It has the franchise restaurants you prefer.	3.625	0.984	Important
(14) It has a restaurant/cafe that was posted on social network.	3.234	1.004	Neutral
Tenant Mix			
(15) It has the good selection of fashion retail shops.	3.250	1.182	Neutral
(16) It has the fashion retail shops you prefer.	3.188	1.167	Neutral
(17) It has the products and services you prefer.	4.109	0.819	Important
Marketing and Management			
(18) It has the event or festival you want to go to.	3.094	1.035	Neutral
(19) It was promoted in an advertising media.	2.844	1.144	Neutral
(20) It is operated by an experienced management company.	3.344	1.087	Neutral
(21) It has friendly customer service staffs on site.	2.844	1.116	Neutral

In the table 4.1, there are 21 questions that the online questionnaire asked the respondents to rate according to their own influencing factors to decide to visit a community mall.

The top five influencing factors are as following

1. Supermarket - It has the supermarket you prefer.
   a. At important level, with Mean of 4.156
2. Atmosphere - It has a clean and organized facility.
   a. At important level, with mean of 4.156
3. Location - It is located near your house.
   a. At important level, with mean of 4.141
4. Tenant Mix - It has the products and services you prefer.
   a. At important level, with mean of 4.109
   b. Restaurant - It has a good selection of restaurants.
   c. At important level, with mean of 3.875

Furthermore, the research utilized the SPSS program and use Pearson Correlation to compare two factors. One is the behavior of the community mall customers, in several variables; frequency of visit, money spending at each visit, time spending at each visit, age, and income. Then, these characteristics of respondents are calculated to find the correlation with the influencing factors of location, parking service, atmosphere, supermarket, restaurant, retail shops, and management.

Table 4.2 Result table of SPSS analysis using Pearson Correlation

		Frequency	TimeSpent	Spending	LocationMax	Parking	Atmosphere	Supermarket	Restaurant	Retail	Management	Age	Income
Frequency	Pearson Correlation	1	.455**	.058	.226	.375**	.222	.050	.551**	.269*	.211	-.003	-.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.651	.073	.002	.077	.698	.000	.032	.095	.984	.301
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
TimeSpent	Pearson Correlation	.455**	1	.427**	-.040	.614**	.208	-.031	.691**	.285*	.193	.173	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.755	.000	.099	.807	.000	.022	.126	.171	.477
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Spending	Pearson Correlation	.058	.427**	1	-.194	.314*	.152	.179	.267*	.277*	.158	.454**	.194
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.651	.000		.125	.012	.229	.158	.033	.027	.213	.000	.125
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
LocationMax	Pearson Correlation	.226	-.040	-.194	1	.143	.249*	.129	.066	-.086	.070	.079	-.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	.755	.125		.259	.047	.309	.606	.497	.584	.536	.802
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Parking	Pearson Correlation	.375**	.614**	.314*	.143	1	.349**	.102	.659**	.365**	.286*	.099	-.174
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.012	.259		.005	.420	.000	.003	.022	.435	.169
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Atmostsphare	Pearson Correlation	.222	.208	.152	.249*	.349**	1	.326**	.297*	.315*	.410**	-.039	.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.099	.229	.047	.005		.009	.017	.011	.001	.763	.753
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Supermarket	Pearson Correlation	.050	-.031	.179	.129	.102	.326**	1	.059	.227	.217	.172	-.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.698	.807	.158	.309	.420	.009		.645	.071	.084	.174	.898
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Restaurant	Pearson Correlation	.551**	.691**	.267*	.066	.659**	.297*	.059	1	.323**	.220	.032	-.200
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.033	.606	.000	.017	.645		.009	.081	.804	.112
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Retail	Pearson Correlation	.269*	.285*	.277*	-.086	.365**	.315*	.227	.323**	1	.564**	-.133	-.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.022	.027	.497	.003	.011	.071	.009		.000	.296	.828
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Management	Pearson Correlation	.211	.193	.158	.070	.286*	.410**	.217	.220	.564**	1	-.033	-.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.095	.126	.213	.584	.022	.001	.084	.081	.000		.794	.679
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.003	.173	.454**	.079	.099	-.039	.172	.032	-.133	-.033	1	.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.984	.171	.000	.536	.435	.763	.174	.804	.296	.794		.006
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
Income	Pearson Correlation	-.131	-.090	.194	-.032	-.174	.040	-.016	-.200	-.028	-.053	.338**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.301	.477	.125	.802	.169	.753	.898	.112	.828	.679	.006	
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3 Pearson Correlation of consumer behaviors and influencing factors

		Time spent	Spending	Location	Parking	Atmosphere	Supermarket	Restaurant	Retail	Marketing & Management	Age	Income
Frequency of vist	Pearson Correlation	.455**	.058	.226	.375**	.222	.050	.551**	.269*	.211	-.003	-.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.651	.073	.002	.077	.698	.000	.032	.095	.984	.301
Time spent at each visit	Pearson Correlation		.427**	-.040	.614**	.208	-.031	.691**	.285*	.193	.173	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.755	.000	.099	.807	.000	.022	.126	.171	.477
Spending at each visit	Pearson Correlation			-.194	.314*	.152	.179	.267*	.277*	.158	.454**	.194
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.125	.012	.229	.158	.033	.027	.213	.000	.125

In the table 4.2, the result shows several correlations between the performance variables and factor variables.

Correlations regarding frequency of visit:

1. Restaurant selection is positively related to frequency of visit at 99% confidence.

2. Parking convenience is positively related to frequency of visit at 99% confidence.

This statistical result illustrates that customers who have more frequency of visits are concerned about restaurant selection the most; follows with parking convenience and shop selection respectively.

Correlation regarding time spent per visit:

1. Restaurant selection is positively related to Time spent of visit at 99% confidence.

2. Parking convenience is positively related to Time spent of visit at 99% confidence.

For the performance variable of time spent per visit, customers who spend for longer period of time are also concerned about restaurant selection the most; follows with parking convenience and shop selection respectively.

Other prominent correlations are:

1. Spending per visit is positively related to Time spent of visit at 99% confidence. This relation is logical, the longer the customer stay at the community mall, they tend to spend higher amount.

2. Atmosphere is positively related to frequency of visit and time spent at 95% confidence. The importance of atmosphere in keeping the customers to stay is significant. To design a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere of the community mall is important.

3. Shop selection is positively related to frequency of visit, time spent, and spending at 95% confidence. With this test result, it shows that shop selection or tenant mix, providing variety of products and services are also the attraction that brings customers to such community mall.

4. Age is positively related to spending at each visit at 99% confidence. This is explaining that the older the customers are, the more they tend to spend at a community mall.

The author also wanted to know whether or not a respondent is revisiting the same community mall more than three times in one month. So, the questionnaire asked about visiting the same community mall three times in one month. As shown in figure 4.4, 66.2% of respondents re-visited the same community mall, which means that majority of community mall customers are a regular customer of one particular community in their commuting route.

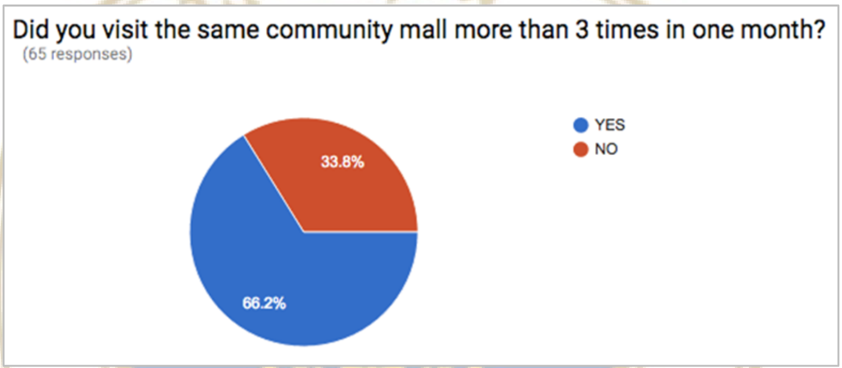

Figure 4.4 Proportion of respondents revisiting the same community mall

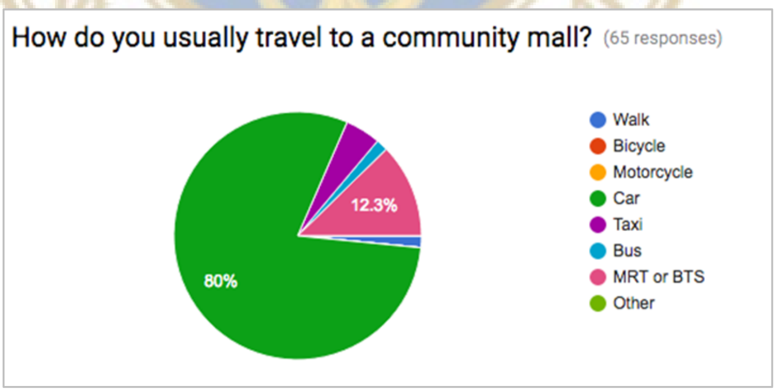

Figure 4.5 Choice of transportation to visit a community mall

The figure 4.5 is showing the choice of transportation of respondents. Majority of community mall customers is travelling to a community mall by car, which amounts to 52 respondents. The second group is respondents traveling to community mall by BTS, which makes up only 12.3 percent or 8 respondents. When majority of customers are using cars to commute to community malls, providing a convenient parking area and services can become an important factor in developing a community mall.

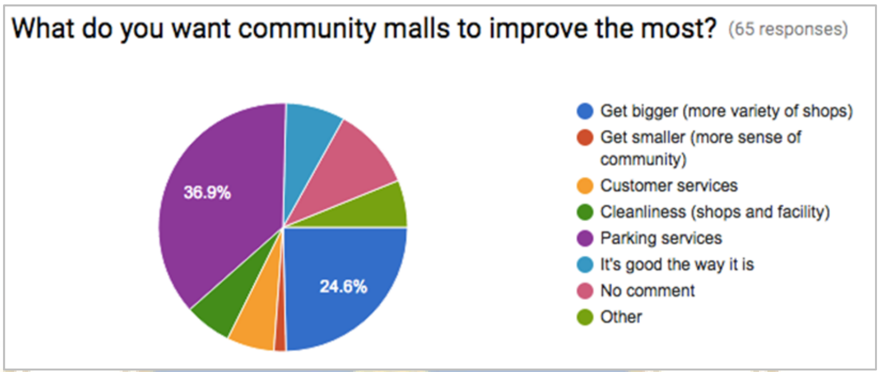

Figure 4.6 Respondents suggestion for improvement

In order to get personal opinions from respondents, the questionnaire asked for suggestion to improve the overall quality of community malls in Bangkok. The questionnaire had five choices of areas for improvement, which are get bigger, get smaller, customer services, cleanliness, and parking services. In figure 4.6, 36.9 percent of respondents want parking services to improve. The second area the respondents voted for improvement is to get bigger, with more variety of shops.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The growth of community malls is significant for the past seven years and there are still demands for more community malls in the greater Bangkok as well as in the suburban areas. Related articles about the economics of community malls showed that in 2015 around 20% of community malls developed are profitable. Major players such as Siam Future, Index, and Pure place have had their share of successful community malls in both metropolitan areas and in residential areas of Bangkok. While other community malls have been developed by property development that lacks experiences in retail management. The major players have their own strategies for development and operations but the knowledge is not available to public, due to competition. Therefore, this research paper attempted to explore the strategies of the key player like Siam Future Development to understand their way to successful projects. Mainly SF has what they referred to as ‘Customization Strategy’ which is a way to tailor make each community mall to match its target customers’ preference and needs. The elements that they localized their projects include concept, atmosphere, and tenant mix with the strategic statement of convenience.

Community malls in greater Bangkok are larger and have much broader target customers than ones in suburban areas. General characteristics of these community malls are much like shopping center in downtown areas of Bangkok. The level of customization for such community mall in the metropolitan area is based on a larger sum of Bangkok population. In contrast, community malls located in the suburbs, targeting local residents within the vicinity, tends to require deeper comprehension of the specific market segment. This research is in fact inspecting the broader group of target customers in Bangkok, to explore the factors influencing community mall customers to visit a community mall. The exploration process had mainly undertaken the online questionnaire to attain demographic information about community mall customers, common behavioral patterns, and physical and non-physical qualities of a community mall. These qualities of community malls are considered as related factors in attracting target customers to visit a community mall. The research selected all of the potential factors based on literature reviews and logical assumption. Statistical results from the survey was analyzed and tested for correlation, with the objective to capture a pattern of characteristics and to summarize the findings, as the guideline that community malls developers should reflect upon as the development strategy.

The research found that majority of community mall target customers are in the age group of 19-36 years old. This group falls into the generation M, which is the most fortunate age group who was born with convenience and technology. They are usually self-oriented for making decisions. They generally believe in their own opinion, yet can be easily influenced by friends. They have compulsive consumer behavior and tend to follow the social trend. They are technologically educated. They are accepting to modern and creative thinking. So, target customers of community malls will look for independent lifestyle, uniqueness in concept, convenient in usability, and variety of choice.

The top three types of business that target customers visit are supermarket, restaurants, and beverage and dessert café respectively. Community malls are a popular place for people to meet, eat, and hang out. Bangkok is a mega city that is shortage of place for communal activities. Community malls and shopping centers have become the classic gathering place for Bangkok people. The business of choice being restaurants and café are not surprising because people in Bangkok are looking for a place to sit down, meet, converse, and socialize. This is the lifestyle of people in Bangkok. Most community malls nowadays always have supermarket or at least an upsize convenient/drug store. Supermarket is the mandatory component that community malls use as the anchor store.

A good portion of target customers in this research (66.7 percent) has a regular community mall that they revisit multiple times within one month, so there is certainly a sense of attachment that a target customer have with their community mall of choice. Whether the attraction is the supermarket, favorite restaurants or coffee shops or even the atmosphere, it is the key characteristics that become the signature of the community mall. The target customers are looking for that signature. It is how they remember a community mall and looking forward to revisit. Project design concept is an important factor for community malls. Actually it is more important for community malls in the greater part of Bangkok than the ones in residential areas because it has to stand out among the broader group of target customers. Smaller community malls in residential areas depends more on the location than the project concept by itself, though it still needs to portray the signature characteristics that brings satisfying experiences to customers.

For the decision of target customers to visit a community mall, the research result shows the top five most influencing factors. The first place being supermarket follows with atmosphere, location, tenant mix, and restaurant, respectively. If a community mall, in the broader aspect of target customer, being positioned as the marketplace, supermarket becomes a very important factor. Supermarket is a place where people shop for groceries and consumer goods for their home and assumedly it has to be located near their homes or on their commuting route. Logically supermarket should be a factor that correlates to location factor. To easily say is that customers who are looking for supermarket in a community mall, it must a community mall that is in a convenient location to them.

As a business, community malls' revenue is mainly from the rental fee so the developers are reliant to the success of their tenants. But, it cannot rely on just one successful tenant. The mix of tenants must align in the direction that supports the key characteristics of such community mall. This part triggers the necessary discussion of tenant mix and restaurant factor. In the statistical calculation, Pearson correlation shows that the factor of restaurant selection is positively related to the frequency of visit. Despite the score of influencing factors that supermarket came on top, variety of restaurants in a community mall can also be the attraction as well, since the respondents with higher frequency of visit cares for the restaurant selection.

One factor that community mall developers may overlook is the convenience of parking. Referring to the table 4.1 showing the level of importance of influencing factors, the factor (4); It is easy to park your car, had the Mean of 3.469 being important. The transportation mode of choice for target customers is car, being 80 percent. If the amount of parking spaces is insufficient, customers will experience an inconvenience that may affect them to not coming back or choose other destination instead. Moreover, the questionnaire asked for what is the area the community mall needs improvement the most, the number one suggestion was to improve parking services. Valet parking service was included as one of the factors listed in the questionnaire but respondents did not see it as the important factor. Providing the valet service can support parking convenience but it certainly is not part of the decision making process. Overall design of traffic flow is important for parking convenience. The capacity of parking should balance with the number of expected incoming customers at peak hours.

When analyzing the physical characteristics of community malls, there are several factors to consider: finding the right location, creating the unique concept, inclusion of supermarket, selecting magnet restaurants, sorting products and services for the proper tenant mix, establish sufficient parking capacity, and so on. Another factor that is non-physical can also be very important is the marketing and management. There are questions associated to this area of business operation. Customers may not consider this factor to be important; in the research result, this area shows neutral for level of importance. However, from the business aspect, it is important. The operation ranges from keeping good relationship with all tenants to creating a weekend events to attract new customers. With the increasing competition, marketing is a crucial tool to get public attention and communicate with target customers. For general management, operation has to be on routine for cleaning and facility maintenance. Well-trained customer service staffs should always be on site to assist customers who needs help. Nonetheless, knowledge and experience in retail management can certainly be beneficial to the business.

5.2 Recommendations

Overall quality of a community mall is only part of all factors that attract customers. This research study examined consumer behaviors to gain a better understanding of what target customers are looking for in a community mall business. There may be one factor that is more important than other factors. But in the end, there are so many factors not included in this study that contribute to the success of all community malls. The balance of all factors that sums up to a satisfying customer experience is the strategy. There is a bottom line or a standard that all community malls must offer. Customers will individually prioritize their demand when choosing to visit a community mall. Therefore, new community mall developers must give importance to these basic factors to meet the benchmark when planning to develop a community mall.

5.3 Suggestion for further studies

List all of community malls in Bangkok and identify common characteristics of successful ones. Gather detailed information of all community malls; sort them in major categories by location, size, and concept. Illustrate the proportion of tenants mix within each mall for comparing the differences. Scale the level of success of community malls, by revealing the earning ratio of total revenue per year to the total retail space of each community mall. With the collected information and statistical data of existing community malls in Bangkok, the further study will show a more accurate detail of influential elements that contribute to success of community malls.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Factors influencing consumers to visit community malls in Bangkok

This survey is supporting a research study of a graduate student pursuing the Master of management degree at College of Management Mahidol University.

The purpose of this research study is to explore consumer behaviors toward community malls in Bangkok. Insights from this study will benefit real estate developers, to acknowledge crucial factors in developing successful community malls in Bangkok.

Questions

1. Have you visited any community malls in Bangkok within the past 3 months?
    a. Yes or No
2. How often did you visit a community mall in the past 3 months?
    a. Everyday
    b. 3 - 5 times a week
    c. 1 - 2 times a week
    d. 1 - 2 times a month
    e. 1 - 2 times in 3 months
3. Did you visit the same community mall more than 3 times in one month?
    a. Yes or No
4. What types of business do you visit at a community mall? (Select 3 choices)
    a. Supermarket
    b. Restaurant
    c. Beverage and dessert café
    d. Fashion retail shops
    e. Bank and financial institution
    f. Fitness facility
    g. Tutoring school
    h. Cosmetic service
    i. Theater
    j. Other

5. Which day of the week do you usually visit a community mall?
   a. Weekday (Mon - Fri)
   b. Weekend (Sat - Sun)
   c. Holidays (Your day off)
6. What time of day do you usually visit a community mall?
   a. Morning (10.00 - 12.00)
   b. Lunchtime (12.00 - 14.00)
   c. Afternoon (14.00 - 17.00)
   d. Dinnertime (17.00 - 20.00)
   e. Late evening (20.00 - closed)
7. How do you usually travel to a community mall?
   a. Walk
   b. Bicycle
   c. Motorcycle
   d. Car
   e. Taxi
   f. Bus
   g. MRT or BTS
   h. Other
8. How long do you usually stay at a community mall?
   a. Less than 30 minutes
   b. 30 minutes to an hour
   c. 1 - 2 hours
   d. 2 - 4 hours
   e. More than 4 hours
9. Who do you usually go to a community mall with?
   a. Alone
   b. With friends
   c. With family
   d. With boyfriend or girlfriend

10. How much do you spend each visit at a community mall?

a. Zero
b. Less than 500 THB
c. 500 - 1,000 THB
d. 1,001 - 2,000 THB
e. 2,001 - 3,000 THB
f. 3,001 - 4000 THB
g. 4,001 - 5,000 THB
h. More than 5,000 THB

Following questions are about factors that affect your decision to visit a community mall.

11. You choose to visit a community mall because...

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

a. (1) It is located near your house.
b. (2) It is located near your work.
c. (3) It is on your commuting route.
d. (4) It is easy to park your car.
e. (5) It offers a valet parking service.
f. (6) It has an outdoor concept.
g. (7) It has a beautiful architecture.
h. (8) It has a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere.
i. (9) It gives you sense of community that you live in.
j. (10) It has a clean and organized facility.
k. (11) It has the supermarket you prefer.
l. (12) It has a good selection of restaurants.
m. (13) It has the franchise restaurants you prefer.
n. (14) It has a restaurant/cafe that was posted on social network.
o. (15) It has the good selection of fashion retail shops.
p. (16) It has the fashion retail shops you prefer.
q. (17) It has the products and services you prefer.
r. (18) It has the event or festival you want to go to.

s. (19) It was promoted in an advertising media.
t. (20) It is operated by an experienced management company.
u. (21) It has friendly customer service staffs on site.

Your suggestion is appreciated.

12. What is your favorite community mall in Bangkok?
    a. Short answer
13. Why do you like this community mall?
    a. Long answer
14. What do you want community malls to improve the most?
    a. Get bigger (more variety of shops)
    b. Get smaller (more sense of community)
    c. Customer services
    d. Cleanliness (shops and facility)
    e. Parking services
    f. It's good the way it is

Your personal information.

15. What is your gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female
16. How old are you?
    a. Below 19 years old
    b. 19 - 36 years old
    c. 37 - 51 years old
    d. More than 52 years old
17. What is your occupation?
    a. Student
    b. General employee
    c. Government personnel
    d. Business owner
    e. Freelance
    f. Unemployed

18. What is your monthly income?
    a. Below 20,000 THB
    b. 20,001 - 35,000 THB
    c. 35,001 - 50,000 THB
    d. 50,001 - 100,000 THB
    e. More than 100,000 THB