Article

The Modern Retail Center: A Study on the New Role of Retails Centers as a Place for Spending Leisure Time

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Abstract: The rapid process of urbanization is affecting residents’ living patterns. Concurrently, shopping and consumption patterns are changing at what seems to be a constant rate. Recently, a look at retail centers would leave one to understand that these centers are by no means exempted from these changes. Retail centers, which initially held a more commercial role, are now considered to be places of leisure as well as. In this research, the new role of these retail centers as a new part of public spaces and area for leisure activities is being examined. In order to survey this new concept of retail centers, two retail centers that were almost similar to each other in terms of function and characteristics in Iran and Spain respectively, considered as a developing country and developed country were studied. The results of the research show that retail centers, due to their new nature, have shown similar behavior in both. In general, nowadays retail centers have more of a recreational role, so that more than 65% of the people in Tehran and Madrid are spending their time in recreational activities. Nevertheless, in developing countries, the process of these changes has been imitative and to say anything of cross-sectoral policies it will require more research.

Keywords: Retail center; public space; shopping; leisure; outdoor activities

1. Introduction

Retailing is a key Factor for creating and regenerating the cities (Dixon, 2005), but constructors have to compete with more factors to make their costumers to spend more time in the retail centers (Howard 2007). Retail shops are faced with tough situation for attracting more costumers in comparison with non-retail travel companies or car companies (Mitchell, 2001).

There is wide range of definitions for the word “leisure”, without doubt it can be in front of work, or saying it as a synonym with entertainment which itself can be explained as effectively any satisfying experience (Torkildsen, 1992).

Recently, leisure and recreational features of consumption have become more and more remarkable to consumer research (Bloch & Ridgway, 1991; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Hirschman 1984; Bloch and Bruce 1984; Belk 1982).

Shopping is a form of leisure activities and diversion that may even be one of the favored entertainments and a preferred activity of choice (Gonzales 1988; Hughes 1989). Essentially, the main purpose of retail centers was once shopping, but now leisure activities are becoming integrated day by day, all the while leisure interests are changing with users, time, culture and social environment (Marwaee, 2016), customers in contemporary societies are spending more time on recreation, the originators’ of retail centers are trying to find way to make them more of a recreation activities (Torkildsen 2005, Howard 2007). Consumers of any age prefer to spend more time in retail centers than in school, than at work or than at home. The Majority of young people in big cities...

Retail centers have become community centers, offering customers such recreational attractions as music, movies, games, and eating (Kowinski 1985; Stoffel 1988). Lots of customers enjoy being in retail centers and shopping (Bloch et. al. 1994; Campbell 1997; Prus and Dawson 1991; Solomon 1996). Leisure activities can be the key to the success retail centers since can make an interesting and exciting experience for customers (Haynes & Talpade, 1996), and diversity of products assortment effect on consumers purchasing behavior more than prices (Fox et al., 2002; Kowinski 1985; Stoffel 1988).

Recreational activities and finding place to eat are pivotal to retail center owners, because they must create an interesting and entertaining atmosphere for customers that provides for their demands and extends their visiting time (Sit et al. 2003). Spending time on such units including atmosphere, activity variety, design as well as customers’ desire to stay and intend to return to the retail center are seen as a social enthusiasm. (Cvetković, 2018).

Retail center have a notable value for social indicators through open spaces, which allows visitors to have contact socially. Spaces for playing can provide opportunities for social interaction, which develops team working, share, negotiate, cooperate, resolve problems and learn self-support skills (Ginsburg, 2007; Hudson & Thompson, 2001).

An important issue is understanding customers’ demand and their expectations since, depend on their culture or countries, their demands may be different as (Obeja and Bedia, 2012) mentioned that customers are aware of Extra facilities and services which provided retail centers. These cultural issues have an effect on attracting people, price of products, consumers’ income & culture also had some impact on the failure of these units (Ambavale, 2013).

2. The role of shopping centers

Architects and establishers, design shopping centers and malls for retailers and developers who are interested in creating places to attract more consumers (Richards 1990).

Nowadays we have been faced with changing the consumption pattern because of globalization, the international incorporation of markets for goods, and services distinguishes the modern world economy. This process - basically known as “globalization” - is providing more and more countries with opportunities to benefit higher standards of living, but at the same time is making pressure on societies to adapt to their traditional practices (Rodrik, 1994).

Globalization makes the behavior of consumption progressively similar from one country to another. Critics of globalization often discuss that the strong pressure of market integration is forcing the world towards increasing homogeneity (e.g., Spring, 2000). This changes have also vastly effects on shopping malls, and forced the establishers and architects to build different types of shopping malls for answering the various types of costumers’ needs (Ihfasuziella, 2018).

Retail centers as new modern places give their costumers more opportunities to choose. Considering studies in this area of activity, we can see six periods of evolution in the conception of customers’ recreational activities in Retail centers; 1930 (passive Browsing and effect of capitalism on consumption pattern), 1950 (Targeted Browsing and clarifying Spectrum of users), 1970-80 (Establishing Retails with Multi purposes), 1990 (Adding leisure activities and popularized them), 2000 (focusing on customers’ behavior to make the Retails centers more cognitive), and at the present time (focusing on recreational activities, Browsing and Targeted Trip) (Stone, 1954; Eppli & Benjamin1994; Haynes & Talpade, 1996).

Shopping centers exist in three types according to their size and number and type of users they serve. Neighborhood centers of one or two anchor supermarkets which serve a radius of 2 miles, community malls, which are larger than neighborhood centers, and offer a wider range of products. They usually feature two large anchor shops that serve a radius of 20 miles and the third one is named “superregional” malls, which serve a multistate area. (Crawford, 1992; Simmons, 1991).
Table 1. Europe shopping centre Classification and typical Characteristics
Source: International Council Shopping Center, 2004 (ICSC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional shopping center</th>
<th>Typical GLA</th>
<th>Typical Type of Anchors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concept</strong></td>
<td><strong>Range (Sq.M.)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An all-purpose scheme that can be either enclosed or open-air and is classified by size</td>
<td>80,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very large</strong></td>
<td>An all-purpose scheme that can be either enclosed or open-air and is classified by size</td>
<td>40,000-79,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Large</strong></td>
<td>An all-purpose scheme that can be either enclosed or open-air and is classified by size</td>
<td>20,000-39,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
<td>Comparison-Based (Centres include retailers typically selling fashion apparel and shoes, home furnishings, electronics, general merchandise, toys, luxury goods, gifts and other discretionary goods)</td>
<td>5,000-19,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small</strong></td>
<td>Convenience-Based (Centres include retailers that sell essential goods)</td>
<td>5,000-19,999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty Shopping Centre</th>
<th><strong>Retail Park</strong></th>
<th><strong>Factory Outlet</strong></th>
<th><strong>Theme-Oriented Centre</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also known as a &quot;power centre.&quot; A consistently designed, planned and managed open and large-scale specialist retailers that are mostly freestanding</td>
<td>Open-air and/or enclosed centre that comprises manufacturers' and retailers' outlet stores selling brand</td>
<td>5,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Large</strong></td>
<td>Large: 20,000+</td>
<td>Leisure-Based - A consistently designed, planned and managed scheme that includes some retail units and typically concentrates on a narrow but deep selection of merchandise within a specific retail category</td>
<td>5,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
<td>Medium: 10,000-19,999</td>
<td>Non-Leisure-Based - A consistently designed, planned and managed</td>
<td>5,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small</strong></td>
<td>Small: 5,000-9,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually anchored by discount department stores, warehouse clubs, off-price stores or other &quot;category killers&quot;</td>
<td>Generically not anchored, although certain brand-name stores may serve as &quot;magnet&quot; tenants</td>
<td>Usually anchored by a multiplex cinema</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
scheme that includes some retail units and typically concentrates on a narrow but deep selection of merchandise within a specific retail category.

3. Leisure time and shopping center:
Leisure has vast definitions; contrasting leisure with work or mentioning it as a synonymous with recreation, which itself can virtually be seen as any satisfying experience (Torkildsen, 1992).
Leisure times can be a time of relaxation, comfort, calmness and free time that anyone uses in a differently way. Following table briefly refers to the provision of leisure from different viewpoints;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Definition of Leisure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cambridge Dictionary | - The time when you are not working or doing other duties  
- Leisure is the time when you are |
| Collins Dictionary | not working and you can relax and do things that you enjoy. |
| Oxford dictionary | - Time when one is not working or occupied; free time(Use of free time for enjoyment)  
- Healthy recreational activities that people do in their free times cause mental expansion, growth and character improvement. |
| George Butler | - Leisure is remaining time that an individual has after all other activities |
| Stanley Parker | A pleasant memory, a kind of freedom from duties |
| Max Kaplan | |

There are four main relationships between shopping and leisure: (1) independence (shopping as purchasing); (2) shopping for recreation; (3) shopping and recreational activities; and (4) shopping at leisure. These distinctions are not exclusive while any given shopping trip can show just one of these sides, it may also show two or more (Finn and Rigby 1991).
4. Retail centers and sense of presence

The sense of place can be seen as a political fact. What can be done to the look of a locality is contingent upon who controls it. Users can be excluded, amazed, confused, made compliant, or kept ignorant by what they see and hear. Thus, the sense of the place has always been a matter of moment to any ruling class (Lynch 1976; Aram et al., 2019).

Developing retail centers as a global phenomenon, especially in Asia and Middle Eastern countries, has had a rapid growth as of late (Yusuf 2012), the Retail centers’ development is not solely a functional purpose, yet it can be seen as experiential one, they have more compound functions as compared to previous ones (Kusumowidagdo, et al., 2013). Each user has different sensations along with dissimilar depths and level from place regarding to their relationship with it. The sphere of retail centers has effect on shopping habits (Kusumowidagdo,2011) there are variety factors which could define the utility of a retail such as; Travel distance (Bucklin, 1971), travel time (Brunner & Mason, 1968), Accessibility (Bucklin & Gautschi, 1983), scale (Bucklin, 1967), variety of shops (Crask, 1979), and number of stores (Weisbrod, Parcelis, & Kern, 1984).

Retail centers can explore place attachment (Maharani, 2009), there is relationship between social and physical indicators which form a place with visitors’ behavior (Najafi and Mina, 2011), and those indicators can generate the place’s characteristic (Steele, 1991).

Figure 1. Linkages Between the nature of leisure, Relationships between leisure and shopping, and the Scale of Retail

These spaces provide a sense of presence for all ages and gender groups in urban cities. Public spaces considered as a very important issue in urban design thanks to their significant role as the city’s social life scene. Unfortunately, in recent years, we see the disappearance of such spaces in urban planning (khademi, 2016).

By eliminating or neglecting the design of such public spaces, people are welcoming the retail center and attending them not only for buying but also for being present (Madanipor, 2014), they have made a new concept for these spaces. In this regard, this study examines social events and how these spaces are transformed into public spaces in one retail center in Tehran and one Retail center in Madrid as case studies.

In Tehran, due to the importance of the construction and maintenance of public spaces with the provision of municipal budget funds, the spaces with the public functions are being removed or overlooked in urban planning projects. The 2008–2014 Spanish financial crisis, also known as the Great Recession in Spain (Economic Journal,2012; European Economic Snapshot, 2010 ) or the Great Spanish Depression, began in 2008 during the world financial crisis of 2007–08. In 2012, it made Spain a late participant in the European sovereign debt crisis when the country was unable to bail out its financial sector and had to apply for a €100 billion rescue package provided by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). The comparison of the economic situation (Government Budget) between Iran and Spain during the 1990s and the 21st century can be seen below (Figure 1).
For the first time in the United States, chain stores increased in the late 1920s (Jacobs, 1985; Kowinski, 1985). In the 1930s, this type of market flourished and turned into supermarkets with discounts. In 1956, with the founding of the first retail center in Southland by Victor Groningen, his utopian assets (Richard & Jennifer, 1991), this retail center became a gathering place for civic and social meeting place. This trend continued in the following years, and many retail centers became indoors. In the 1970s, the attitude of retail centers sought to add side-effects such as food stores, cinema, and theater (Gwyn, 2017). Almost everywhere in the United States, a large number of teenagers set their appointments in the suburban vicinity of retail center. In a research project conducted in 1985, 63% of the users of retail centers came there once or twice a week, and most of them spent one to five hours in these spaces. They rarely just went shopping alone and usually went out in these spaces with their friends. Only half of the people said that they shopping as their goal of coming to shopping malls. Other reasons include playing computer games, seeing friends, and watching people (Anthony, 1985).

In Iran traditionally markets have always been the venue for social events (Aram, Solgi, and Holden, 2019). With the arrival of modernism in Iran, major changes were made to the pattern of designing shopping spaces. The establishment of Ferdowsi’s stores in 1957 and Cyrus’s shops in 1970 and the expansion of them in the city created a new style of shopping in Tehran, which influenced this emerging atmosphere of Tehran’s lifestyle (Leila, 2017). With the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, the process of extending Retail centers was stopped, and after that, they were sold or renamed. In the 1990s, new chain stores such as Shahrvand and Refah, were established in Tehran. (Varyj Kazemi and Rezaei, 2000). In the design of shopping malls and chain stores of the 90s, there was no place for life. These type of markets were mostly passageways. The passages were designed for purchase, but people were using these spaces for their free space due to the lack of public spaces, but leisure was not the main issue of these spaces. In the early 21st century, major urban projects were conducted in Tehran. In that period, the municipality encouraged the contractors to build high rise building, towers, and retail centers. Many retail centers were built in Tehran during this decade (such as Golestan Shahrak-e Gharb, Ghaem Tajrish, etc.) and these spaces turned into a youth meeting point. Women became more and more present. These spaces rapidly became a place to roam and meet peers and were considered a venue for people to update their fashion news. Starting construction in the last decade (from 2010) and adding more services such as food court, cinema, playground, etc., a new type of commercial-recreation spaces pattern in Tehran formed.

Centers and supermarkets have experienced an important development since their appearance in Spain in the 70s. The first supermarkets to follow the American model in Madrid were named Jumbo and Hypercorrect in Madrid, which were located in large suburban areas and near the main road with a large variety of restaurants and leisure activities. In the 80s the first Retail centers of Spain were inaugurated with lots of facilities, shops, offers, parking spaces, etc. A case in point, the La Vaguada, and Parque Sur were the retail centers were established in the 80s in Madrid. In the 90s the trend of retail centers was devoting more space to leisure. Finally, since 2000, we have seen the retail shops saturated with cinemas and comprised with sports. The most representative example is Xanadu, which opened 2003 in Madrid (López, 2013). In summary, Spain has 3 periods of retail shops transformation: 1. Up until 80s hypermarkets periods 2. From the 80s until the 90s advent of retail centers 3. From the year 2000 diversity of Centers Shopping are heightened. Recently, retail centers in Madrid have not only been considered a Retail center, but have also become a leisure and entertainment center. These spaces are not just meeting point for youth, but can be used as a recreational destination, in which they can spend their full day buying, going to the cinema, having fun, and eating (Gómez, 2008).

The main purpose of this research is to find that retail centers have taken a new shape of public spaces and that people attend these places not only to respond to their essential needs (shopping), but also for recreational and spending theirs leisure time.
5. Materials and Methods

The recent research in terms of the purpose is functional research and comparative study, comparative method is a foundational tool of analysis. The comparative method focuses specifically on its relation to experimental, statistical, and case-study approaches. Three main areas of renovation and analytic alternatives have emerged which strengthen the viability of the comparative method: within-case analysis, quantitative techniques employing a relatively small amount of cases, and systematic comparison of a small amount of cases with the goal of causal analysis (Collier, 1993).

In this research, the case study approach was utilized as a method of study, and the data was collected by a field study for dependent factor and questionnaire for independents factors.

3.1. Study Site

Two almost similar case studies in terms of Characteristic (Community malls)¹ and Functional² (Both were built in the current context) were selected (Table 1) as evaluation models; (i) Koroush Retail center (RC)³ which located in Tehran (Figure 2) and (ii) Las Rosas Retail center, located in Madrid (Figure 3).

### Table 3. Similarity and Disparity of Las Rosas Rc & Koroush Rc

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Las Rosas RC</th>
<th>Retail Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Las Rosas RC</td>
<td>Koroush RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disparity</th>
<th>Las Rosas RC</th>
<th>Koroush RC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similarity of two RC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disparity of two RC</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.1. Tehran: Koroush commercial center

Tehran, with a population of 8.70 million, is the largest city in Iran. It contains many retail shops, one of which is Koroush Commercial Center, built in 2009. With an area of approximately 9500 square meters and a population of 858,346, it is located at the intersection of Sattary Highway and Payambar Street in district number 5 in the northwest of Tehran, near the tourist area. The total number of retail shops is 550 units. This Retail center was constructed in a middle-class neighborhood, which was constructed around the same time.

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¹ Community malls are larger than neighborhood centers, and offer a wider range of products. They usually feature two large anchor shops. They may also follow a strip, L or U-shaped configuration. Community centers usually feature a retail area of 9,300 to 32,500 m² with a primary area of 4.8 to 9.7 km² (Crawford, 1992; Simmons, 1991).

² Two types of retail centers exist: the ones which were built in Current context, and ones which were built with all new districts

³ In rest of paper instead of Retail Center used (RC).
Figure 3. Location of Koroush Retail center in Tehran

Figure 4. Location of Las Rosas Retail center in Madrid

Koroush Retail center is a complex of commercial, cultural and entertainment, including a cinema, campus, kindergarten, cafe, VIP restaurant, and a supermarket. According to previous findings, the major item sold currently is clothing. In addition to high priced brands, Koroush Commercial Center offers apparel for middle incomes as well. Apart from the shops, shoppers can enjoy spending time in the food courts, restaurants, coffee shops, game lands, and cinema complexes available in the top floors of the mall. Additionally, the parking lot is quite spacious, with several floors underground.

Measurements in Tehran were conducted on 12th of April 2019 during peak hours of Friday (weekend of Iranian) from 20:00 to 22:00. According Cochran formula, in total 150 questionnaires were collected from Koroush Commercial Center.
2.1.2. Madrid: Las Rosas Commercial center

Madrid, Spain’s central capital, has a population of 3.17 million and more than 100 retail centers. One of these centers, Las Rosas, is located in the San Blas-Canillejas district on Avenida de Guadalajara with a population of 158,9. It was built in June 1998 with an area of 110,000 sqm2. It has two access entrances: the main entrance at Avenida de Guadalajara, and the second one by the street of Aquitaine.

The center consists of two commercial levels with 61 stores, a cinema, restaurants, and markets. The first floor is primarily occupied by Carrefour and Mercado Clasico, while the second floor is made up of restaurants and the cinema. Las Rosas was established in one of the oldest district in Madrid and is made up of low-or middle-income residents. The retail center itself was built along with the neighborhood and most of its customers are local residents.

By using Cochran formula, 60 questionnaires obtained from Las Rosas shopping center on the 2nd of March 2018. The responders have answered the question during the peak time of Las Rosas shopping center from 18:00 to 20:00.

6. Results

Looking at the size of the districts, where koroush RC and Las Rosas RC are located, one can see that the kourosh’s District is almost three times bigger than san Blas-Canillejas district, so the numbers of questionnaire in koroush Rc is 3 times more than in Las Rosas Rc (kourosh's District is one of the biggest Retail centers in Tehran with a population of 858,346 and las Rosas’s district with a population of 158,9). The outcomes of this study derived from evaluation and analysis of 150 questionnaire data distributed across Koroush Commercial Center and 60 questionnaires were collected from Las Rosas, trough using SPSS software.

In this research, in order to investigate the role of retail centers as a new concept of public spaces contributing to the increased presence of people and increased outdoor activities, three variables were considered (two independents and one dependent): (i) travel duration to retail centers, (ii) motivation of customers to attend retail centers and (iii) a variety of retail centers as a dependent variable.

Information regarding the travel duration variable was collected by questionnaire to examine the time that shoppers spent traveling to the retail centers studied. This variable provided information about the retail center’s attraction. In fact, this variable was considered as a factor that demonstrated shoppers’ attitudes towards attending the retail center. One exception, however, is shoppers with a short travel duration, which generally applies to residents who live in the vicinity of the retail centers. However, travel duration was important because customers who traveled longer distances spent more time in the retail centers than residents of the neighborhood.

The second variable, motivation of customers to attend retail centers, was divided into three main categories: shopping, leisure, and browsing (window shopping). The questions in this section were asked from a researcher inside the retail centers in order to clarify the reason behind shoppers’ presence. By analyzing this indicator, the main stimulus of customer presence was revealed.

The shop variety as a dependent variable collected by field study has been categorized in 5 categories; restaurants and leisure activities, fashion and accessories, technology, supermarkets, beauty services that will show us the main tendency of each retail center for attracting their customers.

4.1. Tehran:Koroush commercial center

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4 Nowadays the food revolution in retail centers is completely obvious, Restaurants, cafeteria and eating establishments of all kinds are attracting the user’s interest. As Gratton and Howard said more than half of all leisure spending away from the house is on eating and drinking.
The extent of the attraction towards the Koroush Commercial center was analyzed according to the customers’ travel time, which was obtained from the questionnaire (Table 1). A duration of less than 20 minutes was associated with residents who lived in the vicinity of the retail center and was not considered useful for the attraction variable. However, a travel time of more than 20 minutes was considered an effective factor in the attractiveness of the retail center.

The results of this research indicated that individuals with a travel time of between 20 and 40 minutes and between 40 minutes and 1 hour have the highest frequency of attendance at Koroush Commercial center, with 29.5% and 25%, respectively. Additionally, it is of interest that the highest percentage of shoppers present at the Koroush center were located outside of the vicinity. In fact, this center was of special interest in this study due to its commercial-recreational features. According to (Figure 5), approximately 70% of people visited this venue for a duration of more than 20 minutes.

![Figure 5. Koroush Retail center’s Time Duration](image)

The Kourosh Retail Center is a local retail center that was established to meet the needs of the 5th district of Tehran. Nevertheless, these data demonstrate that in addition to meeting essential needs of the residents, this center is considered a hub of leisure activities as well. Figure 6 indicates that 48.7% of the respondents come to this center for leisure activities and only 29.2% came for shopping. Meanwhile, the percentage of individuals who browsed the stores and did not spend money (22.1%) is of interest. In general, the data in Figure 6 demonstrates that the contribution of leisure activities (recreational activities, social interaction, watching, eating, playing, etc.), which makes up 70.8%, is higher than essential activities, which only makes up 29.2%.

![Figure 6. Koroush Retail center’s Motivation](image)
Analyzing the shop variety in Kourosh RC shows that Fashion and Restaurants have a remarkable percentage (51%, 31%), these numbers demonstrate that the main purpose of this retail center is attracting users to buy and spend more times there which is the main goal of all modern retail centers (Figure 7).

![Graph showing shop variety](image)

**Figure 7.** koroush RC's Shop Variety

4.2. *Madrid: Las rosas Retail center*

In Madrid, due to the difference in case study scales in terms of population and area, the time periods for questionnaires were less than those in the case study in Tehran (Koroush Commercial Center). The study was conducted in four different time periods using a questionnaire that was completed by 60 respondents. The time period corresponding to 0 - 10 minutes applies to local residents who use the retail center to supply daily necessities, and therefore was not considered an effective factor. However, the time period from 10 - 60 minutes is considered a significant factor.

Although this retail center is a neighborhood retail center, the results showed that individuals who spent 0 - 10 minutes to use this space comprised 45% of the total, while those who spent 10 - 60 minutes comprised 55%. This information demonstrated that this retail center attracted individuals from further distances than the Koroush RC (Figure 8).

![Graph showing time periods](image)

**Figure 8.** Time Periods in Las rosas Retail center
Regarding the aims of the visitors who attended the retail center, questions were divided into three categories: shopping, leisure, and browsing. According to the data obtained in this study (Figure 9), recreation activities were the most frequent (50%), followed by shopping (35%), and browsing (15%).

By studying Shop variety in LasRosas RC the results show that the highest percentages belong to Restaurants and leisure (30%) and fashion and accessories (28%) which could play an acceptable role as a modern Retail center (Figure 10).

7. Discussion
Researchers have examined the effect of retail centers on various aspects, especially on costumers’ behavior and attracting them to these centers. The main purpose of their studies works on customer’s behavior (Meoli et al., 1991), showing their demands for quality, value and the variety of merchandise (May, 1989). Tenant mix (Brown, 1992; Dawson, 1983) which have also been found to be influential in the selection of shopping locations (Hackett, 1993). The other studies work on customers’ preference, and the indicators which retail centers should have to attract more customers (Raaij, 1983).

There are some researchers who studied retail centers as a public space, their studies aim to recognize the mechanisms of the daily production of inequality in the new spaces of consumption and to examine the latter as a form of public space (Zhelnina, 2011). There is also a thesis that investigated the possibility of using privatized public spaces as a design strategy for retail centers, by merging civic functions and retails to create a new type of public realm to transform the city (HO Chun Wang, 2010). The main purpose of these researches is comparing retail centers with public space and introducing Retail centers as a new form of public space. From their point of view a retail center has have seen as a building or unit which supplies the customers’ all kind of needs, which is the basic nature and role of these centers. However, rarely these retail centers have been mentioned as a place where nowadays customers prefer to use as an alternative and new place for recreational activities and spending their leisure time there.

8. Conclusions

Regarding to three indicators in this research; Time duration and Motivation as an independent ones and Shop variety as a dependent one, demonstrate that retail centers probably could achieve to their main goal for attracting more customers not only for purchasing but also for eating, browsing and recreational activities. Also, the users who select these places consciously, and prefer to spend more time and do more recreational activities in these new modern units in comparison of public spaces, being in public spaces for users would be such a necessary activities not optional ones.

The results of the research conducted in both case studies show despite the fact that retail centers were constructed to supply residents’ needs; their attractiveness is quite high due to the variety of facilities available, and the majority of customers attended the centers for reasons other than purchasing, indicated that recreational services and leisure time could be behind the attractiveness of the centers.

While retail centers were initially established as a modern and new phenomenon in cities, their patterns have changed across the world in the same way. Based on these findings, it appears that the primary motivation of retail centers in developed countries such as Spain is related to leisure, however, in developing countries, such as Iran, centers are increasing their recreational role to attract more visitors.

Regarding the significance of this study and the rapid changes that have taken place in developing countries, further research is required since changes in developing countries are more influenced by imitation of patterns, rather than following a particular process and temporary policies.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

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