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Examining the Offline Shopping Preferences of Millennial Women:
A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

This paper explores the offline shopping preferences of millennial women and strategies to enhance their shopping experience in malls. The study begins with an overview of offline shopping, defining shopping malls, in-store experiences, and the evolving landscape of offline shopping. It also characterizes millennial women and their unique preferences. The literature review identifies three main factors influencing offline shopping: socio-cultural, psychological, and environmental. These factors are analysed separately to understand their impact on millennial women's shopping behaviours. Additionally, the paper examines various mall strategies aimed at increasing millennial women's intention to shop offline, categorized into development, environment, and marketing & promotion. The conceptual framework integrates these factors and strategies, providing a comprehensive understanding of their interplay. Discussions highlight theoretical and practical implications while acknowledging limitations and suggesting areas for future research. This framework aims to guide retailers in effectively enhancing the offline shopping experience for millennial women and offers a foundation for further academic inquiry.

1.0   Introduction

Shopping malls have rapidly expanded throughout Malaysia's retail environment, especially in the Klang Valley, turning them into destinations for social and recreational activities in addition to being commercial centres (Ying & Alias, 2022). The competition among these malls has increased, with 255 shopping centres and 68.2 million square feet of retail space in 2016 (Begum, 2018). Mall managers are investing to enhance customer happiness and shopping experiences to remain competitive (Amin, Cobanoglu, Rezaei & Wulan, 2021).

Despite the growing popularity of e-commerce, traditional shopping malls continue to be successful because Internet platforms do not allow for in-person product inspections. In contrast to the ease of online purchasing, offline shopping attracts attention to the need for real-world experiences (Sisca, Wijaya, Grace & Putri, 2022). Studies indicate that millennials, who possess considerable purchasing power and favour experiential shopping, continue to play a pivotal role in offline retail (Ping & Hwa, 2020; Ladhari, Gonthier, & Lajante, 2019).

Decisions on what to buy are heavily influenced by gender; women tend to spend more time in malls than men do, carefully examining merchandise and taking pleasure in whole shopping experience (Nair, Mundkur, & Tulshyan, 2022). Mall owners are aware of how crucial it is to comprehend how different genders make purchases in order to provide personalised services (Wong, 2022). Mall aesthetics have an impact on customer behaviour as well, emphasizing the value of ambiance and in-store experiences in drawing clients (Katrodia, Naude, & Soni, 2018). It is essential for mall owners to leverage these elements to boost traffic and revenue through offline purchases.

This review delves into the shopping habits of millennial women, emphasizing their preferences for in-person and offline interactions. It explores how malls and in-store environments influence consumers' purchasing decisions and examines the environmental, psychological and sociocultural factors that impact their inclination to shop offline. The review concludes with insights to mall strategies and highlights the significance of immersive spaces. Lastly, it proposes a conceptual framework for future research and offers practical implications for the retail industry.

2.0   Methodology

The methodology utilized in this study encompassed a thorough examination of academic literature pertaining to the exploration of offline shopping preferences among millennial women. This review sought to extract insights from various scholarly outlets, including peer-reviewed journals and academic publications. Utilizing secondary data sourced from published materials is paramount in research endeavours, as it furnishes insights gleaned from prior studies and furnishes a foundational framework for conducting new research or furnishing essential contextual information (Taherdoost, 2021). In ensuring the timeliness and relevance of the sources, particular attention was paid to papers published within the preceding five years, from 2019 to 2024. This timeframe selection was motivated by the dynamic nature of consumer behaviour and market trends, with the intention of capturing the most contemporary insights.

This preliminary investigation guided the selection of pertinent search terms for the literature review. Following a thorough examination of the available literature, the identified keywords encompassed "offline shopping" OR "shopping malls", OR "millennial women", OR "in-person shopping experience", OR "preferences for offline shopping" OR "strategies to enhance offline shopping intention". The result of these methodological approaches ensures a comprehensive understanding of the distinctions surrounding offline shopping preferences among millennial women, thereby laying a robust foundation for the interpretation of findings.

3.0   Literature Review

3.1   Overview of Offline Shopping and Millennial Women

3.1.1   Definition of Shopping Malls and In-Store Experience

According to Kiriri (2023), shopping malls are complex retail establishments characterized by unified property ownership, operation, and management, incorporating both retail and non-retail commercial ventures. This definition aligns with the perspectives of Idoko, Ukenna, and Obeta (2019), who describe shopping malls as

institutional complexes or assemblies of independent retail outlets, services, and parking facilities, overseen either by a central administrative center or operated independently.

Furthermore, studies such as Ali, Mishra, & Javed (2021) emphasize the value proposition of shopping malls, offering both hedonic (atmosphere, leisure, self-congruity) and utilitarian (functionality, safety, convenience) shopping experiences. Aceska & Heer (2019) present contrasting viewpoints, considering shopping malls as symbols of a globalized economy and consumer culture catering to elite needs and acknowledging their role as social and public spaces fostering interactions and sociality. Adanlawo and Rugbeer (2019) highlight the multifaceted role of malls beyond mere shopping, serving as venues for relaxation and socialization, thereby attracting additional customers. The quality of these traits varies across different malls, influencing their planning, development, and management (Makhitha, 2023). Additionally, a study by Ameen, Tarhini, Shah, & Madichie (2021) emphasizes the importance of malls adapting to evolving customer demands to ensure a pleasurable shopping experience, highlighting the necessity for managers to grasp customer expectations for sustained success.

Moreover, the in-store experience plays a pivotal role in attracting and retaining customers within shopping malls, profoundly shaping consumer behavior. Ali, Mishra, & Javed (2021) suggest that shopping for pleasurable experiences at malls and their stores can positively impact compulsive shoppers' sentiments. Kumar & Polonsky (2019) define the in-store experience as encompassing product demonstrations, expertise, testing, shop design, and unique activities by retailers, with consumers evaluating these encounters based on their objectives, purchase timing, mood, and familiarity with the store. Perceived atmosphere, as elucidated by Vilnai-Yavetz, Gilboa & Mitchell (2021), encapsulates a store's overall perception, considering both psychological and environmental elements, influencing purchasing experiences. Similarly, Amin, Ryu, Cobanoglu, Rezaei & Wulan (2021) highlight the significance of visual complexity, product variety, and a pleasant shopping atmosphere in fostering impulsive behavior, emphasizing the detrimental effects of poorly designed surroundings on shopping enjoyment and customer emotions. Furthermore, Ying and Aun (2019) categorize a store's indoor environment into social, structural, and ambience domains, all of which can influence a millennial's decision to engage in physical retail experiences.

3.1.2   The Evolving Landscape of Offline Shopping

The advent of the digital age has revolutionized the shopping landscape, with online platforms offering unparalleled convenience for consumers to purchase goods and services from the comfort of their homes. This shift has impacted traditional shopping malls, witnessing declining foot traffic and transactions as they contend with fierce competition from e-commerce giants and market saturation. Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin (2019) attributed the decline of shopping malls to the burgeoning electronic commerce sector and the proliferation of retail outlets, leading to a noticeable decrease in customer visits. Despite the advantages and disadvantages inherent in both offline and online shopping, the latter is gaining momentum due to its convenience and accessibility. Singh et al. (2023) highlighted the appeal of online shopping, which eliminates the hassles of physical store visits, crowds, and parking fees, saving consumers time and money. Ghazalle & Lasi (2021) underscore external factors like rising fuel costs and accessibility issues that contribute to the rising popularity of online shopping.

Conversely, offline shopping offers the immediate gratification of bringing purchases home instantly, a factor often prized by consumers. Research suggests that beyond mere product acquisition, mall shopping provides sensory and emotional satisfaction to customers (Han et al., 2019). Stenberg & Zhao (2019) emphasize the tactile advantage of offline shopping, particularly for items like clothing and furniture, where physical evaluation is crucial. Moreover, the personalized service and social interaction afforded by physical stores are highlighted as significant draws, especially for millennial women who prioritize experiential shopping (Kumar & Polonsky, 2019; Ameen et al., 2021). While time plays a pivotal role in the shopping decision-making process, Moon, Choe, & Song (2021) point out that other factors influence millennial women's preference for offline shopping in malls.

3.1.3   Definition and Characteristics of Millennials Women

Millennials, particularly millennial women, stand out as a significant consumer group in today's market landscape (Barska, Wojciechowska-Solis, Wyrwa, and Jędrzejczak-Gas,

2023). The research underlines women's propensity for impulsive purchases compared to men (Han, Sahito, Thi Nguyen, Hwang, and Asif, 2019). Recognizing the needs and preferences of millennials, especially millennial women, is paramount for mall management to formulate effective development strategies. This section explores the definitions of millennials, their shopping inclinations, and gender distinctions. Defining millennials as individuals born between 1983 and 2000, scholars note their unique spending patterns and priorities, allocating disposable income towards necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, accessories, and technology, while also indulging in recreation, dining out, and technology (Pathy, 2019; Adnan & Omar, 2022; Balakrishnan & Jindger, 2020). Particularly, Malaysia's Generation Y is poised to emerge as the largest consumer group, particularly in the Klang Valley region (Ping & Hwa, 2022).

Millennials exhibit distinct traits that set them apart from other age groups, characterized as "digital natives" who value materialism, adventure, and brand prestige (Helal, Raisa, and Akter, 2022; Salim et al., 2019). Their adaptability to technology and unique purchasing behaviors highlights their significance in the retail landscape. Despite their digital upbringing, millennials display a surprising attraction for offline shopping, challenging conventional wisdom (Bupphachuen & Nelson, 2020). This preference persists among millennial women, aged 24 to 41, who have grown up amidst the ubiquity of online shopping (Zhang, Zhao, & Lin, 2021). Reasons for this preference include the ability to physically test products, receive personalized assistance, and engage with advertisements (Bupphachuen & Nelson, 2020).

In their shopping habits, millennials prioritize trends, style, quality, and brand recognition over price, significantly shaping their mall experiences (Ameen et al., 2021; Pentecost, Donoghue, and Thaichon, 2019). Gender also plays a pivotal role in influencing shopping behaviours and preferences (Katrodia, 2020). Contrary to stereotypes, women often dedicate more time to browsing and evaluating products than men (Singh, Upadhyay & Singh, 2023). Women also prioritize leisure and enjoyment during shopping, while men adopt a more goal-oriented approach (Ameen et al., 2021).

These gender disparities feature the need for tailored strategies to effectively cater to millennial women's preferences, who exhibit more deliberate and information-seeking

offline shopping behaviors. As such, understanding the degrees of millennial shopping habits and gender dynamics is crucial for mall management seeking to thrive in today's competitive retail landscape.

3.2   Factors Influencing Offline Shopping Preferences

3.2.1   Socio-Cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors encompass societal attitudes, behaviors, and values shaped by population, culture, and tradition, reflecting patterns and changes within civilization (Nasrudin, 2020). Notably, millennial women exhibit a preference for mall outings with friends or family, highlighting the desire for social interaction (Pentecost et al., 2019). This inclination is reinforced by studies indicating that social influence significantly impacts millennials' shopping behavior, with friends exerting a particularly strong influence (Kullak, Baier, & Woratschek, 2023). Moreover, the goal of making a purchase often intertwines with the desire to gather with loved ones, emphasizing the importance of social relationships in the shopping experience (Kullak et al., 2023). Additionally, customers express greater satisfaction with shopping experiences perceived as conducive to socializing (Chan & Li, 2022). Family status also plays a role, as millennial housewives, accompanied by children, prefer malls offering family-friendly amenities and attractions (Tadiarus et al., 2020). Furthermore, shopping is perceived as a gendered activity, with women traditionally shouldering household shopping responsibilities (Said, Hasmori & Pa'wan, 2020). Socio-cultural factors shape millennial women's offline shopping intentions, underscoring the significance of maintaining social connections and the family-friendly ambiance of large malls.

3.2.2   Psychological Factors

Psychological factors, encompassing motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes, significantly influence the understanding and analysis of purchase decisions (Williams, 2023; Valenzuela, 2022). Buyer motivation, particularly the desire for novel

experiences and positive memories, drives purchases, especially among millennials (Rosiana, Setyawati & Floresti, 2022; Kullak et al., 2023). Moreover, the psychological draw of a store's reputation encourages regular visits, fostering shop attachment and customer loyalty (Alam et al., 2020; Adeola et al., 2023). Offline shopping environments tend to stimulate impulsive purchases, enhancing the hedonic value of the shopping experience (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018). Hedonic shoppers are particularly inclined towards impulsive purchases, especially in interactive environments (Nguyen & Ha, 2021). Furthermore, offline shoppers prioritize sensory experiences and immediate product possession, seeking reduced purchase uncertainty and individualized assistance (Sebald & Jacob, 2020). These psychological factors underscore the importance of creating immersive and interactive shopping environments to enhance the overall shopping experience and drive customer satisfaction and loyalty.

3.2.3   Environmental Factors

The elements impacting an organization's ability to create and preserve a fruitful connection with consumers are included in the shopping environment, which is the business environment (Khemariya, 2021). In this study, the environmental factors are divided into three categories: atmosphere, convenience, and leisure and entertainment. Table 1 presents the environmental factors found by previous researchers.

Table 1: Review of Environmental Factors that Affect Offline Shopping Intention.

Environmental Factors		
Category	**Elements**	**Author(s)**
Atmosphere	Appearance	Ameen at al., (2021); Amin et al., (2021)
	Cleanliness	Amin et al., (2021); Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin (2019)
	Crowd	Khemariya (2021); Ying and Aun (2019)
	Temperature	Amin et al., (2021); Joshi & Dasani (2020)
	Lighting and Music	Ameen at al., (2021); Bandwal et., (2022); Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin (2019); Joshi & Dasani (2020)
Convenience	Layout	Ameen at al., (2021); Kumar & Polonsky (2019); Pentecost et al., (2019); Ying and Aun (2019)
	Location	Amin et al., (2021); Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin (2019); Makhitha (2023)
	Parking Space	Singh et al., (2023); Makhitha (2023); Ying and Aun (2019); Tadiarus et al., (2020)
	Tenant Mix	Ameen at al., (2021); Tadiarus et al., (2020)
Leisure and Entertainment	Children Area	Singh et al., (2023); Joshi & Dasani (2020); Tadiarus et al., (2020)
	Public Seating	Aceska & Heer (2019); Tadiarus et al., (2020)
	Cinemas/Interactive Activities	Amin et al., (2021); Joshi & Dasani (2020); Tadiarus et al., (2020)

Table 1 compiles studies focusing on the myriad environmental factors influencing offline shopping intention, each category offering unique elements that enrich the mall experience (Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin, 2019).

The physical environment of malls, encompassing external appearance, interior atmospherics, and store conditions, plays a pivotal role in shaping shoppers' initial impressions and overall experience (Amin et al., 2021; Ying & Aun, 2019). Music and lighting, particularly when they evoke a soothing ambiance, contribute significantly to customer comfort and encourage prolonged shopping sessions (Bandwal et al., 2022; Joshi & Dasani, 2020). Convenience emerges as a critical category, with factors like proximity, highway access, and parking facilities being paramount, especially for time-constrained millennials (Makhitha, 2023; Amin et al., 2021). Open store designs and ample parking are also influential, attracting a broader customer base and enhancing overall accessibility (Kumar & Polonsky, 2019; Singh et al., 2023). Moreover, the diversity in tenant mix within malls positively impacts consumer satisfaction and fosters brand loyalty (Ameen et al., 2021). Additionally, offering a spectrum of leisure and entertainment options, such as children's amenities and entertainment venues, further enriches the shopping experience, aligning with the dynamic lifestyles of millennials (Tadiarus et al., 2020; Joshi & Dasani, 2020). Given these insights, mall managers are encouraged to leverage these findings to devise strategies that cater effectively to the diverse needs and preferences of their customer base.

3.3   Mall Strategies to Boost Millennial Women's Offline Shopping Intent

This topic explores strategies for shopping malls to increase millennial women's intention to shop offline. With the rise of online shopping, malls must find ways to attract customers and adapt to the changing retail industry. Table 2 presents the strategies for shopping malls suggested by previous researchers.

Table 2: Review of Mall Strategies Suggested by Previous Researchers.

No.	Author(s) and Year	Title	Country	Strategies
1	Ameen, Hosany, and Paul (2022)	The Personalisation-privacy Paradox: Consumer Interaction With Smart Technologies and Shopping Mall Loyalty	United Kingdom (UK) and United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Active engagement on social commerce platforms, personalised marketing material, and smart technology-enabled personalization.
2	Ameen, Tarhini, Shah and Nusair (2021)	A Cross-Cultural Study of Gender Differences in Omnichannel Retailing Contexts	UK & UAE	Technological integration, taking into account regional and cultural diversity, and keeping up with changes in consumer behaviour.
3	Ameen, Tarhini, Shah and Madichie (2021)	Going With the Flow: Smart Shopping Malls and Omnichannel Retailing	UK	Combining real-world and virtual settings utilising technologies like biometrics, virtual reality, augmented reality, and mobile applications.
4	Amin, Ryu, Cobanoglu, Rezaei, and Wulan (2021)	Examining the Effect of Shopping Mall Attributes in Predicting Tourist Shopping Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions: Variation Across Generation X and Y.	Malaysia (MAS)	Pleasant interactions among mall employees, promote enticing activities, implement promotional packages, entertainment, a positive and distinctive mall image, and advertising.

5	Bandwal, Tripathi and Singh (2022)	Impact of In-store music on Customers, Owners, and Employees in India	India (IND)	Ensure a tidy storefront, improve the music selection (pay attention to the clientele and their demographics) and install speakers at the right place.
6	Helal, Raisa and Akter (2022)	Online and Offline Shopping Decision-making Process Of Generation Y Customers	*Secondary Source	Using fliers, billboards, and mascots while providing excellent customer service.
7	Makhitha (2023)	Attributes Influencing Consumers' Selection of a Shopping Centre: The Demographic Impact	South Africa	Convenience, cost, goods, and social influence.
8	Moon, Choe, and Song (2021)	Determinants of Consumers' Online/offline Shopping Behaviours During the Covid-19 Pandemic	South Korea	Merging the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, create new space design and entertainment.
9	Wang (2023)	Research on the Impact of E-commerce on Offline Retail Industry	Canada	Innovate stores and become destinations that provide remarkable experiences, provide interactive product displays and presentations, customised services, creating welcoming and pleasant mall settings, organise meet-and-greets with influencers or designers.

10	Ying and Aun (2019)	Examining Factors Influencing Consumer Choice of Shopping Mall: a Case Study of Shopping Mall in Klang Valley, Malaysia.	MAS	Prioritise the layout, atmosphere, and interior and external design of the mall.

Previous research has identified strategies to enrich offline shopping experiences for millennial women across three key domains: development, environment, and marketing.

Development strategies harness smart technologies like IoT and AI to personalize the shopping journey. For instance, the integration of smart navigation maps and AI chatbots assists in seamless navigation and provides customized recommendations, thus enhancing convenience and safety (Ameen, Madichie et al., 2021). Such technological innovations not only streamline the shopping process but also contribute to a more engaging and secure environment, catering to the preferences of millennial women shoppers. Innovative formats and technology integration are also critical for creating unique experiences and fostering brand loyalty (Wang, 2023). By incorporating cutting-edge technology into their operations, malls and stores can differentiate themselves from competitors and attract tech-savvy millennial shoppers. For instance, interactive digital displays, virtual reality experiences, and augmented reality fitting rooms offer engaging ways for customers to interact with products and brands.

The environmental category focuses on optimizing the physical and aesthetic aspects of the shopping environment to enhance the overall shopping experience. Factors such as interior design, floor layout, and staff interactions significantly impact customer perceptions and satisfaction levels (Ying and Aun, 2019; Amin et al., 2021). Creating welcoming atmospheres with comfortable seating areas, ambient lighting, and pleasant background music can help shoppers feel relaxed and enjoy their time in the mall. Additionally, providing amenities like clean restrooms, nursing rooms, and baby care facilities caters to the needs of millennial mothers and families, making the mall a more inclusive and family-friendly destination.

Marketing strategies play a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers by promoting mall events, special offers, and exclusive experiences. Activities such as weekly specials, fashion shows, and live entertainment can draw crowds and create buzz around the mall (Amin et al., 2021; Helal et al., 2022). Advertising through various channels, including social media, email newsletters, and traditional media outlets, helps raise awareness and drive foot traffic to the mall. Hosting in-store events like product

launches, workshops, and celebrity appearances adds excitement and provides opportunities for shoppers to engage with brands on a more personal level.

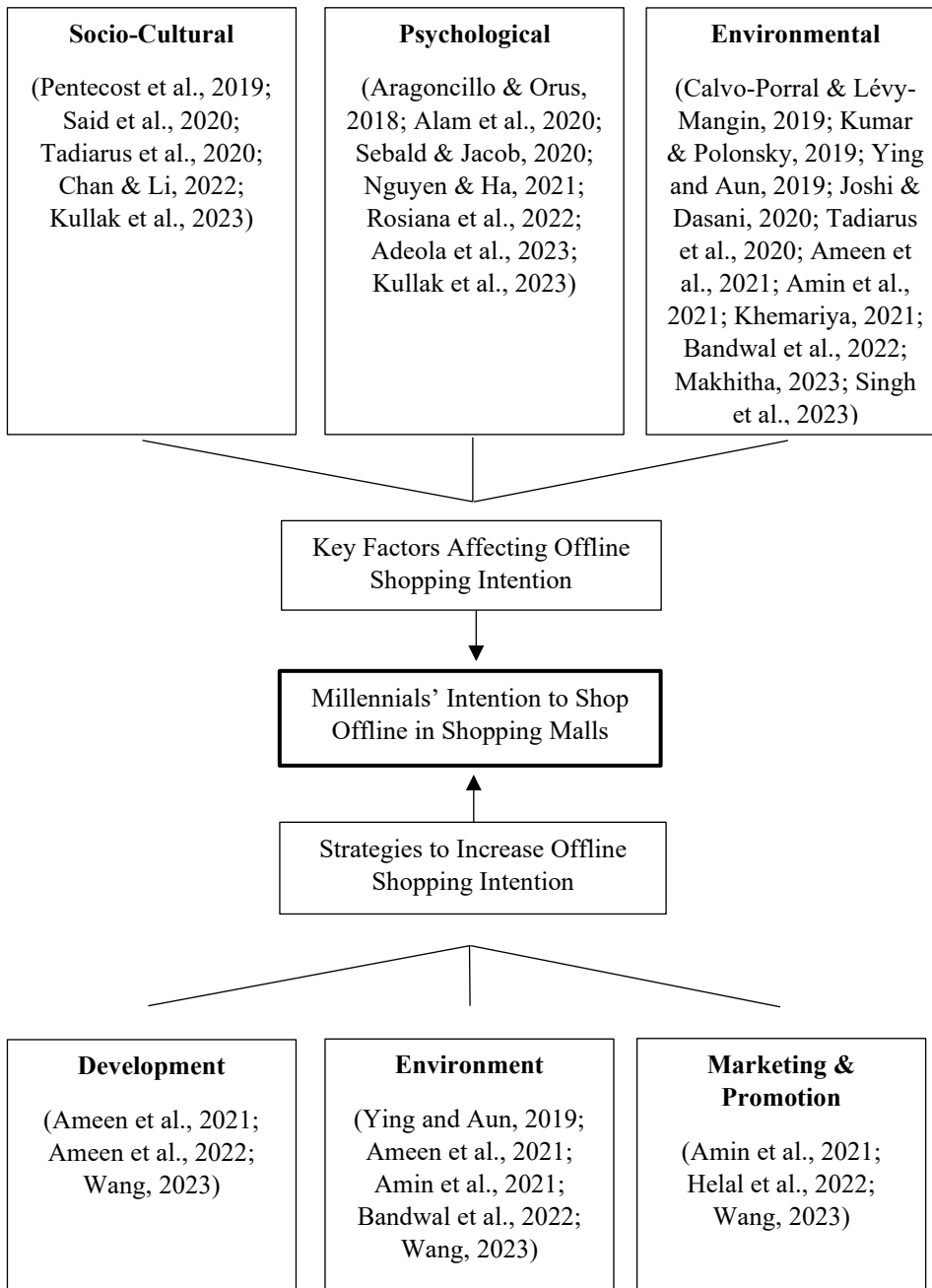## 4.0   Conceptual Framework

Figure 4.1 Conceptual Framework

This framework examines the factors influencing millennial women's intention to shop offline in shopping malls and the strategies to enhance this intention. It identifies three main categories—socio-cultural, psychological, and environmental—that collectively shape millennial women's shopping preferences. The literature review analyzes each category separately to understand their individual impact on offline shopping intentions.

Notably, it is important to note that the factors reviewed do not directly relate to the strategies examined; the strategies were not derived from the factors but were instead reviewed separately to provide a broader understanding of potential enhancements to offline shopping experiences. This approach was taken to ensure a comprehensive exploration of all possible influences and interventions, maintaining the separation to allow a clear understanding of each strategy's effectiveness and to explore a wide range of approaches independently of the specific influencing factors.

Subsequently, the framework transitions to strategies aimed at increasing offline shopping intention, categorized into development, environment, and marketing & promotion. These strategies are also reviewed separately to evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing offline shopping experiences. By understanding and implementing these strategies, retailers can improve the offline shopping experience for millennial women. This framework provides a foundation for future research, allowing scholars to explore specific areas within socio-cultural, psychological, or environmental domains or to develop new strategies for increasing offline shopping among millennials.

5.0   Discussions in Theory and Practice

The study explores the offline shopping preferences of millennial women by examining socio-cultural, psychological, and environmental factors. It provides a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in retail environments and suggests further exploration of input variables beyond traditional managerial roles. The framework offers a foundation for expanding existing propositions and identifying emerging themes like social innovation and mission agility. The findings emphasize the importance of robust strategies for social enterprises to sustainably navigate the pandemic. By leveraging

creative thinking and innovative approaches, social enterprises can achieve short-term sustainability and lay the groundwork for long-term success. The study accomplishes that a refined understanding of socio-cultural, psychological, and environmental factors, combined with strategic innovation, can empower social enterprises to thrive amidst the current pandemic landscape.

6.0   Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The literature review on offline shopping preferences of millennial women has limitations, including limited scope due to academic paper availability, reliance on Western data, and lack of primary data collection. To address these gaps, future research should conduct comparative studies across different regions to understand how socio-cultural, psychological, and environmental factors influence these preferences. Qualitative research methods like interviews or focus groups can provide richer insights into subjective experiences and motivations driving offline shopping behaviors. Emerging trends, such as technology impact or changing consumer expectations, can also shed light on evolving offline shopping preferences among millennial women. By addressing these recommendations, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of millennial women's offline shopping preferences and inform strategies to enhance their shopping experiences.

7.0   Conclusion

This paper comprehensively examines the factors influencing millennial women's offline shopping preferences and strategies to enhance their shopping experience in malls. By identifying socio-cultural, psychological, and environmental factors, we gain a deeper understanding of the various elements that shape millennial women's shopping behaviors. The exploration of mall strategies, categorized into development, environment, and marketing & promotion, highlights effective approaches to attract millennial women to offline shopping environments. Although these strategies were reviewed independently of the factors, this separation allowed for a clearer assessment

of each strategy's effectiveness and facilitated a broader exploration of potential interventions. The conceptual framework provides a structured approach to improve millennial women's offline shopping experiences, serving as a practical guide for retailers and a foundation for future research. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, considering emerging trends and evolving consumer behaviors to stay ahead in the competitive retail landscape.

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