



Analysis of Location and Distribution Pattern of Modern Shopping Centers in Gusau Town Zamfara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Research on modern shopping centers in Nigeria concentrated on the regional shopping centers in bigger cities and towns neglecting the growing modern shopping centers in smaller towns and cities, which are changing the retail landscape of the country. Not only that, majority are concentrated on the customers' patronage pattern of these shopping centers and the influencing factors and ignored the relevance of location and distribution pattern in the development and sustainability of these shopping centers. The objective of the study was to analyze the spatial location and distribution pattern of modern shopping centers in Gusau Town Zamfara State, Nigeria. Five shopping centers were selected purposively for in-depth interview. Coordinates of the shopping centers were collected through the use of android-based GPS application, their sizes were measured using measuring wheel and factors of location and distribution was collected through in-depth interview. Spatial analysis tool and Nearest Neighbor Analysis tool of ArcGIS 10.0v were used to show the location and determine distribution pattern of the shopping centers. It was discovered that majority of the shopping centers are located along major roads networks of the town and within/close to middle- and high-income residential areas. The result also shows that, the distribution pattern of the shopping centers is disperse, with observed mean distance of 770.6 meters, nearest neighbor ratio of 1.40 and Z-score of 2.55, with a 5% likelihood that the disperse pattern is as a result of random chance, i.e. the disperse pattern was not as a result of random choice of site/location but careful review and selection of site. The P-value of 0.0109 indicates a significant difference from a random pattern. It is recommended that more investment should be made in the development of these shopping centers as they possess the potentials of creating jobs and raising commercial viability of the town. This is achievable through public private partnership or foreign direct investment.

Keywords: spatial distribution, location, pattern, shopping center, Gusau town

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Modern Shopping Centers are becoming places where customers patronize more frequently when compared with other point of sales for a variety of product categories (Johnson *et al*, 2021). These shopping centers have emerged in recent times not only as the most preferred shopping destination for time-poor consumer but also as an alternative investment destination for investors in retail business (Mansori & Chin, 2019). Technological advancement and modernization of merchandise and service delivery have led to the growth and development of modern Shopping Centers (Samuel & Murugan, 2020); and rising demand for better shopping environment, anticipated experience and longer operating hours, as well as nature of urban lifestyle have created space for them in the lives of affluent masses (Cheng & Nair, 2018; Fujie, 2019). The nature of modern shopping center (size and numbers of services) in many ways reflect the state of being/economic status of a city/town (Križan, Kunc, Bilková & Novotná, 2022). In recent time, shopping centers are moving away from traditional layouts in favor of innovative designs that provide a wide choice of products and services to modern

customers within shortest time possible (Okoro, Okolo & Mmamel, 2019)

In Sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that shopping centers have a gross leasable area (GLA) of at least 5,000 square meters, and approximately three million square meters of space. These include both recently constructed facilities, older and low-quality ones (Knight Frank Report, 2020). The Nigerian retail market is worth \$239 billion in 2022; it is expected to grow at a 9 percent from 2022 to 2027, reaching \$363 billion in 2027. Nigeria was ranked 39th as a potential investment hub in modern shopping center retail business in the world with neighbourhood shopping center as the most vibrant subsector (Kearney report, 2023). The location and distribution pattern of shopping centers are influenced by a wide range of factors, including market demand, labor, income, infrastructure, and the availability of space and transportation. The shopping center's location must to be easily accessible to its intended customer's base. Any center that is far away has a detrimental impact on retail store selection since less people will visit the store on a regular basis. Shopping centers located in the city centre



benefits more from their next door and remote customers (Aruya, Musa & Ismail, 2021)

Crave for quality and shopping experience in serene environments appeared to be driving Nigerian consumers towards patronage of various modern shopping centers across the country. This has intercepted the traditional marketplace culture and is draining customers from the traditional and downtown markets (Bayero, 2018; Iqbal, Nazir and Memon, 2022). Following the opening of more departmental stores in major Nigerian cities, especially Lagos, Kano, Abuja, Ibadan and Port Harcourt as well as other major cities, the retail market is experiencing new purchasing trends as large number of consumers seem to have started readjusting to the new regime with little regard for open market (Olanade *et al.*, 2021). Studies on modern shopping centers in Nigeria are few and concentrated on the patronage of regional shopping centers commonly referred to as shopping malls and factors influencing the patronage neglecting the relevance of location and distributional pattern in the development and sustainability of modern shopping centers. This is evident in the works such as Edwin and Gerald (2017) who examined Mall consumption motivation in Nigeria: The mediating role of attitude among shoppers. Onuola and Nnenanya (2017) assessed store layout and customers loyalty of Supermarkets in Port Harcourt Nigeria. Idoko and Nebo (2017) analyzed mall consumption motivation and the mediating role of attitude in Nigeria. Bayero (2018) correlates consumer cognitive attributes of shoppers with attractiveness of mall and intensity of shoppers. Idoke, Ukenna and Obeta (2019) analyzed the determinants of shopping malls patronage frequency in developing economy: Evidence from Nigeria Mall shoppers. Iroka *et al.* (2019) assessed the influence of facilities on patronage of various shopping malls in Ibadan while Bello (2012) analyzed the determinants of shopping center rent in Akure. Iroham *et al.* (2019) studied the influence of facilities on patronage of the various shopping malls in Ibadan, Nigeria. Ikadeh & Cloete (2020) examined the impact of shopping center development on informal and small business in Lagos, Nigeria Olanade *et al.* (2021) investigates Megamalls and lifestyles of urban dwellers in selected cities in southwest, Nigeria. Aruya, Musa & Ismail (2021) analyzed the locational pattern of shopping malls in the federal capital city, Abuja, Nigeria. From the foregoing, only work of Aruya, Musa & Ismail (2021) have touched

location issues in Abuja, which is an urban area, but majority of the above cited works are mostly in the southern part of the Nigeria and their findings may not adequately represent the situation on ground at the local level especially in Northwestern part of the country, due to difference along culture, religion and values.

Therefore, the present study examined the location and distributional pattern of modern shopping centers at local level in Gusau town, in order to see if variation exists between regional and local pattern. The specific objectives are to analyze the spatial locations of the shopping centers, assess their distributional pattern and the factors responsible for the nature of the distribution.

1.1 Study Area

Gusau Town is the capital city of Zamfara State. It is located in the north western part of Nigeria, and lies between latitude 12° 14' and 12° 20' N and longitude 6° 15' and 6° 30' E. It has an area of 3,364 km². Gusau town has two climatic seasons; the dry and wet seasons. The dry season covers period between November and April, which is characterized by dominance of north-east trade wind. When the wind is strong (Harmattan period), the weather turns dry, cold and dusty. The wet season is characterized by the dominance of south-west trade wind (tropical maritime air mass), between May and September. Average annual temperature of Gusau town is 29°C. Temperature can be as low as 17°C during Harmattan and as high as 42°C during hot season between March and April. Total annual rainfall of Gusau town is between 750-1000mm depending on the intensity of rain and duration of rainy season, and has a mean annual rainfall of 875mm (Chubado & Obajobi 2022). It consists of six (6) political wards namely; Galadima, Madawaki, Mayana, Rijjiya, Tudun Wada and Sabon Gari (See Fig. 1). The town has a population of 383,162 as at 2006, and 2019 projected population of 421,482 people. The population is dominated by young age groups between 14 to 40 years. It has a population density of 157.1 person square kilometers (Chubado & Obajobi 2022). The major economic activities of the Gusau people are farming (crop and livestock production) and trade. Gusau was the commercial center of the old Sokoto State. This contributed to the exponential growth and expansion of Gusau town physically and economically, as it serves as exchange center of agricultural produce cultivated within the State (Usman, Ibrahim, Kurfi & Muhammad, 2019).

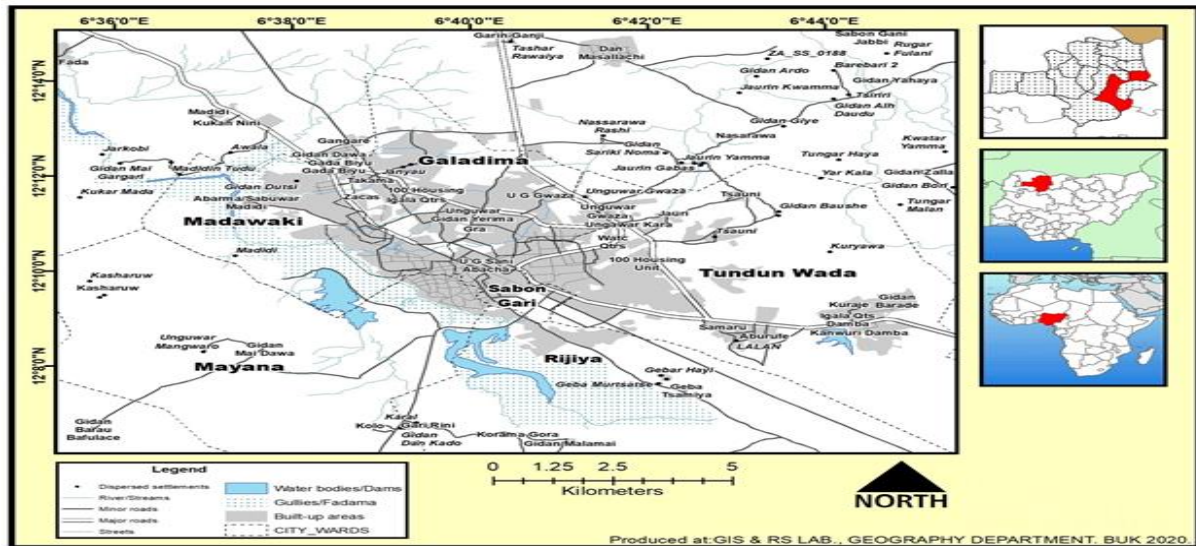


Fig. 1: Gusau Town
Source: Author's analysis (2020)

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Data was collected using Android based GPS application, in-depth interview and structured observation checklist. Five Shopping Centers were selected purposively from six political wards of the town, for in-depth interview with their Managers. Gusau town map was sourced from GIS unit of the Department of Geography Bayero University Kano, which was scanned, Geo-referenced and digitized in the GIS environment. The coordinates of the shopping centers and their names, number of customers from each political ward with their residential location and other relevant data were imported into Excel 2007 and later into the GIS environment to form a database. Spatial distribution of the Shopping Centers was analyzed using the spatial analysis tool box of ArcGIS software 10.0v by using the latitudinal locations (coordinates) of the Shopping centers to show how they are distributed in space. The same tool (Nearest Neighbor Analysis utility of the ArcGIS 10.0v) was used to determine the spatial pattern of their distribution. This was done automatically by the software via calculating the average nearest neighbor ratio through dividing their observed mean distance by the expected mean distance. Nature of the shopping centers and factors of location and distribution were analyzed using content analysis technique.

3.1 Location of the Shopping Centers

Based on result of analysis in figure 2, the shopping centers are located along major roads of the town which connect the central business districts and some are on Gusau-Sokoto Bye pass and this is in consistent with the findings of Cheng (2004) that shopping centers are mostly found in areas with high land price; traditionally land along major roads have higher values. There are total of eleven (11) modern shopping centers in Gusau town. Jafatu store, Zamfara Plaza and Fadama plaza are located at Umar Musa Yar'adua drive, along Government House road in Galadima Ward. Fadama and Jifatu are directly opposite to Gidan Sambo and adjacent to investment house. A. S. Mamuda 2 and A. S. Mamuda 4 are located at Tudun Wada area along Gusau-Kaura Road adjacent to Labin-labin garage both in Tudun Wada ward. Sardauna Gallery is located opposite Police Commissioner's House along Gusau-Sokoto Bypass also in Tudun wada ward. A. S. Mamuda store 1 is located opposite Central Bank of Nigeria along Sani Abacha way, Sabon Gari ward. A. S. Mamuda 3 is located at old market road in Madawaki ward. Mailiitafai Ventures is located at opposite Kasuwar Kanawa, in Tudun Wada Ward and Dreamland Plaza is at Lalan roundabout in Tudun wada ward. All the shopping centers except Dreamland plaza are within 3000 meter radius of the commercial hub of Gusau town.

3.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Absolute Location of Modern Shopping Centers

S/N	Shopping Center	Coordinates	
		Latitude	Longitude
1	A. S. Mamuda 1	12.171	6.669
2	Jifatu	12.175	6.665
3	A. S. Mamuda 2	12.171	6.680
4	Zamfara Plaza	12.177	6.662

5	Fadama Plaza	12.176	6.665
6	Mailittafai Ventures	12.165	6.677
7	I. G. Plaza	12.172	6.684
8	A. S. Mamuda 3	12.170	6.661
9	Sardauna Gallery	12.183	6.681
10	Dreamland Plaza	12.149	6.711
11	A. S. Mamuda 4	12.173	6.684

Source: Field work, 2019

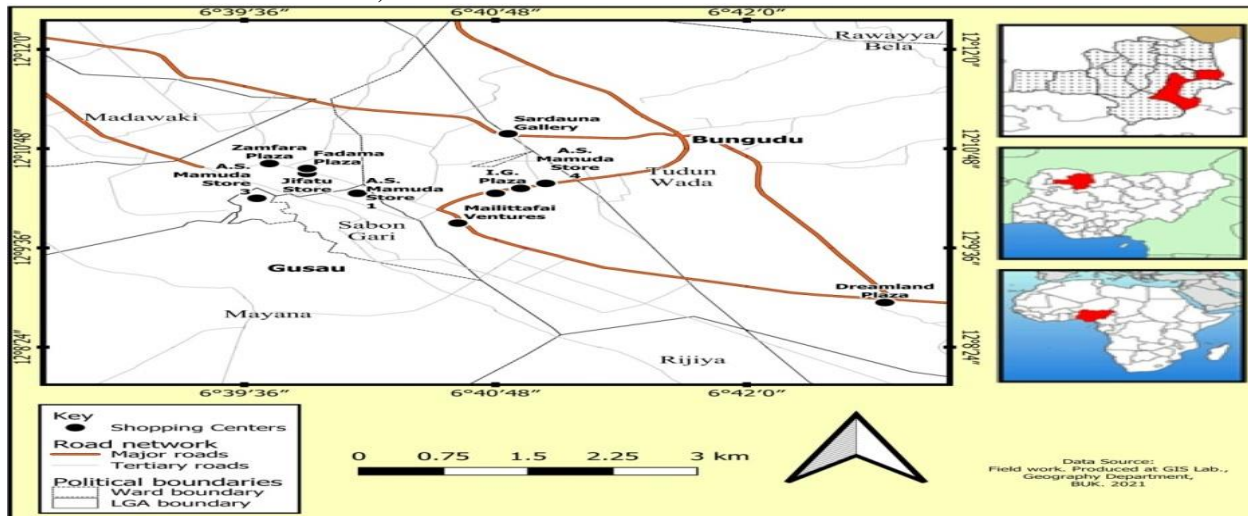


Figure 2: Location of Shopping Centers
Source: Field Survey, 2019 and Author’s Analysis, 2020

As displayed in figure 2, findings disagreed with Walter Christaller’s Central Place Theory assumptions that the world is Isotropic and facilities and resources are distributed equally. The shopping centers are not equally distributed among the six political ward which make up Gusau Town, due the fact that feasibility studies and sustainability analysis are conducted by Investors to ascertain area’s ability to support the facility in terms of number of shopping trips and potential amount spent per trip, prior to their establishment. This unequal distribution of shopping centers can be attributed to unequal distribution of resources among the population of Gusau Town, and this is why majority of the shopping centers are located in Tudun Wada Ward because it houses majority of the middle and high income Earners. But it agreed with Mabogunje (1964) and Cheng & Nair, (2018) who investigated retail structure in Lagos and spatio-temporal distribution of large-scale retail stores in Wuhan, China respectively found that, modern shopping centers are found along major roads and roads intersections. It is also in conformity with the findings of Bayero (2018) that availability of good road networks and pedestrian which guarantee free flow of traffic influence patronage of neighborhood shopping centers, thereby drawing customers from different locations, far and near; and also an important factor for site selection.

3.2: Distribution Pattern

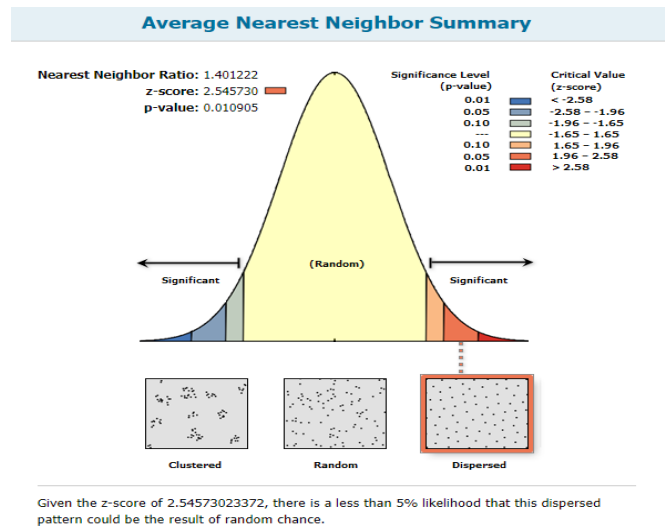


Figure 3: Nearest Neighbor Analysis Result
Source: Field Survey, 2019 and Author’s Analysis, 2020

Based on the result of Nearest Neighbor Analysis, as shown in Figure 3, the pattern of distribution of modern shopping center in Gusau Town is dispersed in nature. Even though the pattern of their distribution is disperse,



they tend to be clustered at the middle part of the town (i.e. within 3000m radius), where land prices are high. This cannot be unconnected with the fact that, all the shopping centers want to locate at a point which is equi-distance from all parts of the town and which is also well connected with both road networks and pedestrian roads. The shopping centers are distributed among the six political wards which make up Gusau town, with at least one in each, except Mayana and Rijiyawa wards. The result also shows that, the observed mean distance between the Neighborhood shopping centers is 770.6 meters, nearest neighbor ratio is 1.40 and Z-score is 2.55, with a 5% likelihood that the dispersed pattern is as a result of random chance, i.e. the dispersed pattern was not as a result of random choice of site/location but careful reviewed and selection of site. The P-value of 0.0109 indicates a significant difference from a random pattern.

With reference to Figure 2 which shows how the shopping centers are distributed in space, findings agreed with Rafal & Rita (2022) that number of bigger retail outlets (Shopping Centers) reduces while that of smaller ones increases with increasing distance from the city center (Inner Zone). This is true looking at how the major players (Jifatu and core) in the retail business of the Town are located at the inner zone, while the small ones are located at the fringe. It also agreed with Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory that a minimum population threshold is required to sustain a retail facility and the urbanization/suburbanization made it possible for the Shopping Centers to spread out in the town, creating

a dispersed pattern of distribution. The finding also supports the assertion of critics of the theory that though capitalism dominates world market, government does have some control, this can be seen in how land use regulatory body (ZUREP) in the town influences the distribution of the shopping centers via ensuring compliance with land use laws. It is also in agreement with the findings of Iroham *et al.*, (2020) that there is positive relationship between Shopping Center size and population size, income and age, hence the reason for absence of Neighborhood Shopping centers in some parts of the Town and small size of the Shopping Centers.

3.3 Factors of Location and Distribution of the Shopping Centers

3.3.1 Factors of Location

Result of in-depth interview (see Table 1) shows that choice of right location helps to develop a sustainable competitive advantage for a shopping center and the most important factors to consider are accessibility and visibility because once the decision is made it cannot be changed. Qualitative analysis of audio-taped and written record of interview revealed that there are five major factors considered by the shopping center developers in the study area in choosing appropriate location for their shopping center to be successful and sustainable, these factors are; Central location accessible from all angles of the town, Proximity to potential customers, Good access roads, Hazard-free environment and Adequate space.

Table 1: Summary of Themes and responses of structured interview

THEMES	RESPONSE
Motivations to venture into modern shopping center retail business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of potential customers • Growing demand for clean and modern retail shopping centers • Diversification of the town's economy
Factors considered when choosing location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central location accessible to all potential customers • Proximity to potential customers • Good access road • Adequate space for parking and shopping • Hazard free environment
Factors responsible for the nature of spatial distribution of modern shopping centers in Gusau town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suburbanization • Development in road transport networks • Adherence to zoning laws • Increase access to mobility by customers • Decentralization of service provision
Challenges in modern shopping center retail business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft • Fluctuations in patronage • Multiple taxation



According to the respondents (see table 1), the central location in the study area is the investment House and central market axis which is well connected with all part of the town and as well the dominant commercial center/hub. It has a link with the all Central Business Districts which attracts customers from all angles. The manager of Jifatu store said;

"We prefer this location (central part) because it is the Busiest and commercial hub of the town and accessing it is not a problem from where ever one may come from because of its high connectivity"

According to one manager another reason for choosing central location is the value of landed property in the city center; where they can easy dispose off the land in case of unfortunate event such as liquidation and poor profits margin. He also states:

"God forbid we don't pray for that, even if situation changes we have to close down operation, we will not lose much of what we invested in building the shopping center due to the fact that we can easily sell off the building and realize substantial amount".

The second factor also considers after central location is the proximity to potential customer. The shopping centers try as much as they can to see that they locate close to their potential customers because every retail outlet depends on constant flow of customers in order to realize their potentials and maximize profit. The shopping center developers conduct survey within the town to see where they can have high patronage. This is the reason they indicated as what led to the absence of the shopping centers in some parts of the Town. The manager of A. S. Mamuda (i) emphasized on this factor by saying:

"We don't just build shopping centers anyhow, we make careful study of the areas we thought can support and sustain the center, which is why if you go to places like Birnin Ruwa, there are no shopping centers like this one because majorities are small income earners so cannot sustain it".

Good access road that could guarantee free flow of people, goods and service to and fro the shopping center is another important consideration in site selection for shopping center in the study area. Easy access and less traffic congestion are main reason why shopping center retail business is booming in Gusau. Majority of the Managers are of the view that no matter how good a location is for shopping centers from the perspective of other factors, if it lack good access road it is not considered suitable for erection of modern shopping center. And that they do not just build for the immediate

environment but for the whole Town. The managers unanimously agreed that:

"When we build neighbourhood shopping center we don't just build it for the immediate environment (primary trade area) alone, we expect others from far places to patronize us and if the road is bad they will not come (patronize us)"

Hazard-free environment/location is an important factor that is considered by shopping centers in choosing their location in the study area. Pollution, crowd and inconveniences are what drive away customers from traditional markets in this 21th century retail. The shopping centers ensure that the location is free from all potential danger the customers may be exposed to in the process of reaching the center and browsing the merchandize, because of the high value modern shoppers attached to safety and convenience. Manager of Sardauna Gallery shopping center further stated:

"We make sure the location we choose is free from any hazard which would make our customers uncomfortable. Issues such as thugs attacking customers, we put security surveillance everywhere surrounding the center to detect any unfortunate occurrence"

The findings agreed with the view of Aruya, Musa & Ismail (2021) that accessibility is a major factor for deciding where to locate a shopping center because ones the decision is made is hard to change. It is also in line with findings of Aruya, Musa & Ismail (2021) that a location with good road network and links with Central Business District is the most preferred location for developing shopping center. It also agreed with Muhamed and Fatima (2015) that locating the centers in areas with high land value has an added advantage in case of unfortunate incidence (Liquidation), where one need to sell out the land. The finding also conformed to the work of Oluwunmi, Umeh & Role (2022) that customers attached much importance to store location, the reason behind the developers' interest in choosing strategic locations. It is as well in agreement with the opinion of Iroham *et al*, (2020) that before reaching conclusion of where to develop the shopping center trade area analysis is done to ascertain the level of sustainability of the shopping center and potential customers' zone. It also conformed to the postulation of Central Place Theory that for any economic activity to take place in a location, minimum population threshold is required to support it.

3.3.2 Factors of Distribution

Findings also revealed the factor responsible for the pattern of distribution of shopping centers in the town



are; suburbanization, zoning of service provision among neighborhoods, development in road networks and increase in ownership of mobility by customers. According to the Managers, expansion, urbanization and suburbanization experienced in the eastern and northern parts of Gusau town, have led to the development of new residential areas of middle and high income earners, such as Gidan Dutsi in Madawaki ward, Janyau in Galadima ward, Dantsauni and Damba in T/wada ward as well as Bulunku in Rijjiya ward. The Manager of A. S. Mamuda (II) further explained that:

“During the regime of Governor Yarima he built five sets of hundred (100) housing units at strategic locations and fringe areas of the town which were given to civil servants. As a result the town expands outward. And you know Gusau economy is heavily relying on civil servants because they tend to be majority of customer that we consider”

It was revealed that increased level of awareness, income and desire for clean and convenient shopping environment, resulted in opening up of modern shopping center in these areas with a view to expand trade, decentralize service provision and ease cost of transport for potential customers; this led to the disperse pattern of distribution of the shopping centers and it is attributed to development in road network.

Development in road transport networks which guarantee free flow of traffic in the town played a significant role in creating disperse pattern of modern shopping centers in Gusau. Good access road and pedestrian roads which links the different parts of Gusau, makes it less important for the shopping center developers to mind where they erect their building, because from where ever potential customers may live within the town, can access it with ease and within short time. The managers unanimously agreed that:

“Gusau Town is very well connected with road networks and all part of the town is accessible within short period, with little traffic congestion and physical barriers, this is why we do not care much where we erect our store”

This could inform the reason why majority of the shopping centers are found along major roads; especially those which connect the Central Business Districts of Gusau in order to ease customer’s access to the center. Another reason highlighted by respondents as to why the pattern of distribution of modern shopping centers in Gusau is disperse, is increase in ownership of private cars and bikes. Gusau as an urban center which houses different categories of people and has significant number of people with car ownership, according to one Manager:

“Unlike some years back i.e. before return to democracy in 1999, many potential customers now have cars and bikes and do not mind travelling long distance to purchase a product or access a service, as long as it meets their specifications and satisfy their needs”

This can be attested to, looking at the observed ownership of private cars by Shoppers who patronize modern shopping centers, with which they use to access the shopping centers without considerations to distance.

Adherence to zoning laws and decentralization of services are other factors mentioned by respondents which they feel is also played vital role in the disperse pattern of distribution of modern Shopping Centers in Gusau. According to the Managers agglomeration has its own advantages but the disadvantages in the case of modern shopping centers outweigh the advantages, because if all the shopping centers locate in one place e.g. central zone, many part of the town will not be serve and many potential customers will be lost, due to distance, which many may not afford to pay high transport fare to access a service or purchase a products in these shopping centers. This is why one manager said:

“If we locate in one single place competition among us (shopping center) will be too high and many areas in the town will be left unserved and that kind of situation does mean well to us”

For this reason, many shopping center managers/developers take careful examination of the town and potential customer zones far away from other shopping centers before taking decision and this resulted in having dispersed pattern. Adherence to zoning laws ensured by Zamfara Urban and Regional planning board, especially in the erection of commercial facilities and buildings also contributed in making the pattern of distribution of Neighborhood shopping centers to be dispersed. The Manager of I.G. Plaza who had even showed his building permit said:

“Before we are given building permit by ZUREP, we have to conduct environmental impact assessment and the officials had to survey the location to ensure that what we want to do is compatible with existing land use and general land use plan of Gusau town”

These findings agreed with that of Cheng (2004) who concluded that population, road network development and rising living standard are the driving forces of developing shopping centers at different locations. Looking at how the shopping centers developers in the town considers income level of prospective customers, it also conformed with the findings of Oluwunmi, Umeh & Role (2022) that income affects distribution of shopping



centers. It also agreed with Walter Christaller' Central Place Theory that a minimum population threshold is required to sustain a retail facility.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded the sizes of modern shopping centers in Gusau Town are far below the recommended size by international council of shopping centers, but their locational and distributional pattern is similar to what is obtainable at regional and global level, where majority are found within and closer to high and middle income residential areas/wards; and are located along major road networks which have high accessibility. Expansion of the town, suburbanization and development in road networks resulted in disperse pattern of distribution of the shopping centers in the town. It is recommended that more investment should be made in the development of these shopping centers as they possess the potentials of creating jobs and raising commercial viability of the town. This is achievable through public private partnership or foreign direct investment.

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