Solid State Technology
Volume: 63 Issue: 6
Publication Year: 2020

Cut-Throat Competition In The Supermarket Industry: Impressions Of The Managers Of Selected Supermarkets In Amanzimtoti

Dumsile Cynthia Hlengwa[1], Robert Walter Dumisani Zondo[2]

[1]Durban University ofTechnology
[2]Durban University of Technology

Email: [1]dumisileh@dut.ac.za
[2]dumisaniz@dut.ac.za
[1]https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3286-9192
[2]http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0214-860X

***Abstract*- Background**: The number of shopping malls is proliferating across the face of South Africa year after year despite the mounting evidence that they are declining across the globe due to a number of factors. This includes, amongst others lifestyle changes, emergence and growth of on-line shopping, rising cost of utilities and fuel, thinning wallets and thinning threshold populations. While the United Nations calls for a more sustainable form of development (Sustainable Development Agenda 2030) that is mindful of how things connect to and affect one another systematically, older concrete structures are being abandoned to decay to the promotion of social degeneration, environmental despoliation and loss of income for developers and shop owners.

Objective: The study determine the effects, in terms of threshold populations and profitability, of this form of excessive development to existing and new supermarkets, which tend to be used as key tenants in shopping malls.

Method: The study was non-experimental, descriptive and deductive in nature. The method used was qualitative and the data collection technique was interviews with the general managers of 10 of the 12 supermarkets found within a 5kilometre radius of the old Amanzimtoti CBD. The study design was cross-sectional case study of selected supermarkets in Amanzimtoti. The data collection tools were observation, semi-structured interview schedules. The sampling frame was non-representative as supermarkets were selected to avoid repetition of the same brand twice except in case where the size and variety of goods was different.

Results: Competition in the supermarket industry is cut-throat in the area of study. Competing supermarkets had to come up with a number of operational strategies such as revamping the shops, adding more products to their lines. In addition, they determine prices on a weekly basis, bargaining with suppliers in order to keep the prices competitive. Managers also spend more time on the shop floor in order to keep on the pulse of product movement, dates and customers, even sacrificing staff (more workload, retrenchment strategies, etc.) in order to remain profitable.

Conclusion: In order to facilitate sustainability all developments should be viewed in terms of them being systems within other systems and enhance the growth and sustainability of systems that already exist within the respective area. Consequently, it is important for the local municipalities, developers and supermarket shareholders to involve managers as practitioners in proposed developments and how such developments would affect the stores that manage

Keywords: *Cannibalism, close proximity, shopping malls, supermarkets, sustainable development, viability*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Oltermann of the Guardian (2014) there is brutal competition among supermarkets worldwide. Anderson (2014) warns that an oversupply of shopping malls could lead to decline in profitability and viability of businesses. Muller (2013) observes that 'hardly a month has gone by without construction starting or yet another new mall or a newly completed one opening its doors', yet in America 'the resurgence of the city centres make shopping malls increasingly irrelevant' especially to young people (Lawless, 2014). On the same note Staff Writer (2015) posits that to survive, businesses have to position themselves in destination centres supported by tourists and adopt 'a multi-channel approach' to doing business than waiting for customers to come through their doors. Muller (2013) observes that 'hardly a month has gone-by without construction starting or yet another new mall or a newly completed one opening its doors'. South Africa was set to add another 25 new shopping malls between 2013 and 2016 growing the number to a total of 180 more than doubling the number in a five year period. While this may make good business sense, it reduces the flow of customers to existing central places leading to over-commercialisation, cannibalism and the demise of existing centres.

Location of shopping malls is according to Skogster (2006) determined by social surroundings and the density of consumers in a given geographical area. Customers (residents), tenants are landlords are important players in decisions pertaining to development of shopping malls. Christaller's Central Place Theory (CPT) regards supermarkets as lower order centres providing lower order goods that are replenished regularly. There should therefore be a wider spread of such central places in a settlement. The same theory also highlights the importance of satisfaction of threshold population prior to development and range of central goods or services (maximum distance people are prepared to travel to purchase good or service) which also has implications for distance between centres offering the same goods or services.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Big shopping malls seem to be mushrooming in juxtaposition to old ones where no apparent population growth has taken place. Lawless (2014) notes the 'shattered glass' and 'dreary corridors' in what used to be bustling Rolling Acres Mall in Akron, Ohio, while just across it another 'two-storey' mall was opening. Lawless (2014) observes that in America there was big number of 'super regional, megamalls' and 'retail leviathans' in areas where the population size and 'financial health don't overlap entirely'. Such unsustainable developments force older ones to 'fight for scraps' by stripping them of their major tenants and customers forcing them to fall far below the required threshold populations and die natural deaths. According to Ozuduru and Guldmann (2013) the major pillars of built environment and urban economy are residential areas and retail outlets of varying sizes.

They further argue that retail outlets are crucial in the development of local economy and fuel further urban growth and development. Yin, Qian and Zhu (2017) conducted a study in China looking into the causes of development of ghost cities with unoccupied skyscrapers, apartments and estates. They attributed this phenomenon of massive overinvestment in urban built environment. Ironically, they argue that the development of ghost cities were a result of rapid and overzealous urban construction facilitated by local governments to achieve growth-oriented goals. This brings the concept of sustainable growth under scrutiny as especially where tenancy tends to be low in abounding new build up spaces.

Ozuduru and Guldmann (2013) identify three types of urban development resilience and equilibrium namely: ecological or physical resilience, engineering or design resilience and economic resilience which is linked to sustainability of retail units. Resilience and sustainability are crucial to eco-city environmentally friendly development. They also highlight the plight that CBDs face due to urban sprawl as large-scale retail centres get developed in city fringes. This has shattered the resilience of inner city retail representing old market places. They also point out that it is not only retail units in CBDs that seem to have lost their resilience, but also some shopping malls particularly in China, the US and the UK. They note that wanton development of consumption spaces is a result of failed partnerships between local government and developers who have opposing agendas such as to maximize public welfare and to maximize profits. Piparato (2014) advanced the following possible causes of shopping malls dying: outdated business models, economic downturn, overambitious development pans that do not take cognizance of threshold populations, poor urban planning and cultural dynamics.

Tulimello (2015) also observes that institutional development planning has displayed dramatic changes since the Fordist and post-Fordist economic periods. Tulimello further singles out the development of shopping malls as instrumental in restructuring urban centres and urban planning cultures. Benmelech, Bergman, Milanez and Mukharlyamov (2011); Teller and Schnedlitz (2011) seem to think that shopping mall developers use organisational integration, interdependence and enhanced communication to justify the development of shopping malls. While Gestalt’s law of proximity enhances groupings and may promote buying in one mall, it may work negatively for the businesses that are located in shopping malls too close to each other especially if (Anikeeff, 1996) ‘minimum buying power requirements’ are interfered with. Anikeeff also points out that developers first have to identify key and anchor tenants that have greater market pull powers and ability to sustain the shopping mall and supermarkets are used for this purpose. This is then followed by the selection of tenants that will create an appeal for the mall, those that complement others in terms of increasing sales and those that display enough financial stability to honour their lease agreements. The fact that supermarkets are used as anchor tenants in all shopping malls and shopping centres implies that this service will be replicated in all adjacent shopping malls and centres leading to an oversupply where these central places seem to be mushrooming within close proximity of each other. This study assesses the viability and sustainability of supermarket businesses located in shopping malls that are within a close range of each other in terms of availability of threshold populations and healthy profit margins.

Figure 1: Ghost of Rolling Acres Mall in Ohio

Source: Lawless, 2014

Piparati showcased 13 dead shopping malls around the world which included Cloverleaf Mall, Crestwood Court in St Louis, Hawthorne Plaza in California, North Towne Square Mall in Ohio, Randall Park Mall in Ohio, Rolling Acres Mall in Ohio, Turfland Mall in Lexington, Woodville Mall in Ohio, Acropolis Mall in Mexico, New World Shopping Mall in Bangkok, Royal Arcade in England, New South China Mall in China and Dayton Arcade in Ohio. All these dead shopping mall are massive structure that were constructed distabilising the biodiversity in the area through the creation of concrete jungles. Now they reflect massive waste of resources and unsustainable form of development. In Brazil the trend has been towards the development of more and more shopping malls. In a study conducted in 2016, Dos Santos and Sehnem (2016) highlighted that while the trend in developed countries such as America pointed to the death of shopping malls, this economic sector was still booming in Brazil having reached the record high in 14 years. In 2013 alone 38 new shopping malls were opened in Brazil contributing significantly to economic growth in the country.

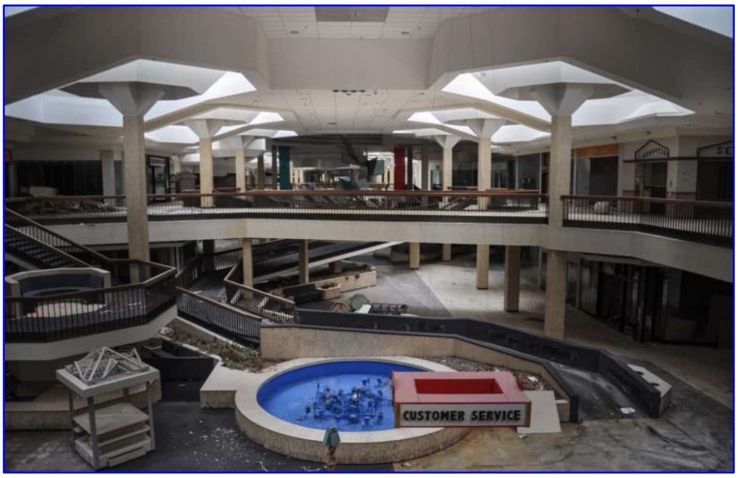

Figure 2: Beautiful and structurally sound abandoned Rolling Acres Mall in Ohio

Source: Lawless, 2014

Lawless (2014) argued that local governments were being bamboozled by developers into concerting to this kind of unprecedented wanton and unsustainable development to the demise of existing malls. According to Eckhart (2017) the dead shopping malls wreak havoc as they become hideouts for criminals and a safety concern. Clearly, the principles of systems thinking, sustainable development and the central place theory are ignored leading to retail cannibalism and environmental despoliation. Linder (2016) cautions that in five years' time one-third of China's shopping malls will be out of business due to the rise of on-line shopping, and that those that want to survive will have to find new strategies to do business. Sydness Architects (2017) suggested a new form of development for Shanghai which is a complex compendium of residential, hotel, shopping, recreation and office space (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Derelict Shanghai, China's shopping mall capital

Source: Linder, 2016

One wonders why developers in China could not redesign and revamp the shopping mall (Figure 3) instead of building yet another one with no guarantees for durability. Figures 3 and 4 depict the sad story of malevolent, unrestrained and unsustainable development where new central places prey on existing ones for tenants and customers.

While the trend of dying shopping mall can be seen around the world, South Africa had total of 1 785 shopping mall in April 2016 (Staff Writer, 2016) and 1 950 by August 2017 (May, 2017) with more still to be built including the Fourways Mega Mall planned for 2018. South Africa is said to have the sixth most number of shopping malls globally after the US, Japan, Canada, the UK and China. These are developed countries with strong currencies and South Africa's currency is very weak with high levels on unemployment and poverty. Stone (2017) states that in South Africa one cannot travel for more than 50 kilometres without coming across the country's 'major obsession: the shopping mall'.

Figure 4: Image of Song Jiang Development in Shanghai, China

Source: Sydness Architects, 2017

While Tshandu (2017) argues that the future of shopping malls in South Africa was uncertain, the same article rejects the plea to improve existing properties instead of building new malls as 'unfair'. It seems that mall development in South Africa is driven by developers seeking growth and profits than need. The development of shopping malls fall under what Matei and Antonie (2015:62) call innovation. Shopping malls are according to Busani (2016) sustainable cities of the future that are built withstand intense pressure from facilitated development, rapid rural-urban migration and keep environmental impact as low as possible. May (Sunday Times, 28 August 2017) cites the market trend analyst (Dion Chang) stating that the retail market in South Africa has reached saturation point and that cracks were beginning to show with for example once bustling malls having papered-up shop fronts and the whole second floor which used to be occupied by Stuttafords standing empty in the 'newly refurbished Rosebank Mall' Johannesburg. The newly completed Mall of Africa experience difficulty to attract customers and tenants. This can be witnessed in the case of wars over supermarket retailing already taking place in South Africa over exclusive right in shopping malls (Broughton, 2014). There are at least two ghost central places in the small area of Amanzimtoti (old CBD and Athlone Park Centre). Their death was caused by the development of Arbor Crossing and Galleria shopping malls, which themselves find difficulty to attract and retain tenants as witnessed by a number of front papered shops.

Garfield (2017) argues that food retailers are crucial for the survival so shopping malls and Eckhart (2017) regards supermarkets as anchor stores that are hard to replace because of the amount of space they occupy in the shopping mall. Their closure leads to the downward spiral of the mall as customers wither away and 'never come back' forcing other smaller retailers to close down and vacate the shops. With fewer customers and tenants criminals take advantage (Eckhart, 2017). In support Peyton, Moseley and Battersby-Lennard (2015) contend that supermarkets are regarded as key tenants because of their gravitational force to bring in customers. Food retailers are attracted to shopping malls because they are located in close proximity to densely populated residential areas, easy transport facilities and have ample parking. According to Norton and Rawlinson (2016) while the grocery industry in South Africa is characteristically low margin, price and value proposition competition are intense especially among the larger supermarket chains.

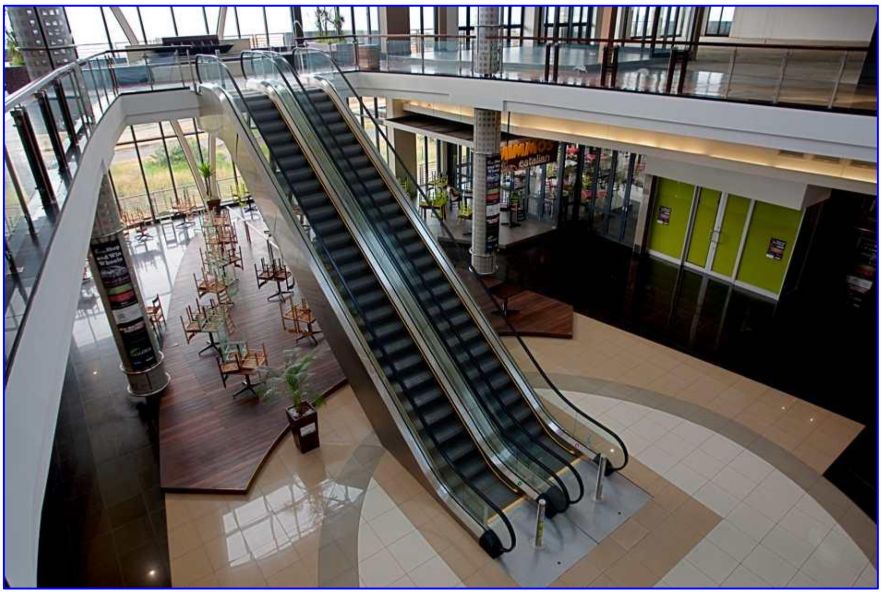

Figure 5:Interior of Galleria Shopping Mall, Amanzimtoti

New entrants (Game, Makro, Food Lovers and others) into the industry have also proved that high entry barriers and sunk costs can be circumnavigated. Shevel (2017) points out that the industry environment has become even tougher for all food retailers with thinning profit margin and difficulty to grow market share. Reardon and Gulati (2008) argue that in developing countries such as Africa, Asia and Latin America, the number of supermarkets have been growing faster than their DGPs and ability to keep them viable especially due to globalisation and associated foreign direct investment. Viability is a result of how busy the central place is at different times of the year to enable it to make a decent profit to continue attracting investment, improve and adapt to changing customer needs. A study conducted by Parker, Ntounis, Quin and Millington (2016) discovered that there were numerous factors that influence the vitality and viability of a retail centre. Ranking among the most important in making the centre high street were: activity hours, vision and strategy, type of retailer, networks, experience, management, appearance, diversity, attractiveness, accessibility and walkability, adaptability and others. These factors determine whether the customer would get on with the supermarket, live with it, forget it or ignore it. Morgan (2015) added high standard of food safety, proximity to home, value for money, convenience of trading hours, lower prices, convenience of parking and cleanliness to the list of most important factors when choosing a supermarket to patronize. Wylie (2015) posits that to be viable and profitable supermarkets race to locate in profitable high population densities, proximity to schools, transport networks, lower rent peripheral areas close to affluent city districts and (Peyton *et al*. 2015) middle income neighbourhoods. This choice and selection of places of locate supermarkets unfortunately leads to market saturation in high-income areas at the expense of less affluent and rural-urban fringe residential areas creating what Jiao, Moudon, Ulmer, Hurvitz and Drewnowski (2012) call food deserts.

Shopping malls are seen by Rajagopal (2009) as crucial to economic development as they provide spaces where demand and supply can converge. Sanburn (2017) argues that some of the shopping malls and their tenants die to correct the market in 'over-retailed' and high technology areas that offer the online alternative. Broughton (2014) cites the high court case between retail giants Spar and Masstores for trading rights around Ulundi in KwaZulu Natal. Broughton also refers to the current and growing trend of stores not traditionally carrying groceries such as Game, Makro and Food Lovers tightening the competition by diversifying into groceries in their stores. Staff Writer (2018) cited the case where Shoprite Checkers, Pick 'n Pay and Spar were accused of anti-competitive behaviour of signing exclusive agreement with landlords preventing Massmart (Game) from selling fresh grocery products. In this case, Game wanted to convert into Cambridge Food Store that would pose direct competition for Spar in the same shopping mall thus reducing the value of occupation and margins. Prinsloo (2010) states that certain local conditions such as threshold values of individual markets should be met prior to the development of service centres such as supermarkets. These conditions should be based on size of permanent residents of the area, type of settlement, mobility, their buying power and market trends and development of new residential areas. Prinsloo further advises that at least 60% of the required threshold population should be available prior to development of a service centre. While the existence of more than one supermarket in a shopping mall may benefit other tenants: by bringing in more potential customers, customers: by providing more choice and reducing prices as well as the landlord: through more anchorage (Broughton, 2014), it is disadvantageous to both supermarkets in terms of patronage and profit margins. Hence, this study assesses the viability of supermarket businesses located in shopping malls that are within close range to each other.

III. METHODOLOGY

The method for this research will be discussed under the following headings, namely: research design, target population, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research design

A qualitative method to data collection and analysis due to the nature of the research objectives that this study seeks to satisfy. The qualitative method (Wagner *et al*, 2012: 51) was used to answer the why and how questions (Maree, 2012:76) and allowed the researchers to provide contextual details, experiences, perceptions and expectations of the target population regarding the issue under investigation. The study was cross-sectional and case study in design.

3.2 Target population

A population as a full set of cases, objects, groups, products, events or even conditions to which the research problem relates which constitute units of analysis about which conclusions have to be made to satisfy the research objectives (Welman *et al*, 2011: 52). Kazerooni (2001) and Castillo (2009) define a target as the population of ultimate interest which is wider than a study population which they see as a subset of target population that can feasibly, effectively and efficiently studied in order to understand the problem. The group of individuals that share the most common attributes as binding characteristics or traits to which the research objectives and questions refer and (Castillo, 2009) and who are potentially available as participants in this study are all the supermarkets that fall within a 5km radius of the previous CBD of Amanzimtoti. These supermarkets are located at the old Athlone Park shopping centre, Arbour Crossing, Galleria, Value Centre, Beach Road Amanzimtoti, old CBD and Seadoone Mall. The number of supermarkets in this area has grown to the total of 12 supermarkets since retail shops that are not typically supermarkets such as Makro, Game and Food Lovers have also resorted to carrying food stuff increasing the competition intensity in the area.

3.3 Data collection

Since the study was qualitative, 10 interviews with general managers were viewed as adequate for data collection. In the case where there were more than one such supermarkets in the study area only one was included in the study. However, in cases where the sizes were different such as one being a hyper store and another being smaller, both were included because they could be experiencing competition differently. Consequently 10 of 12 supermarkets were included in the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic approach. The aim was to establish patterns and enable the researchers to draw conclusions (Welman *et al*, 2011).

IV. FINDINGS

The sample size was small 10, so there was no need to use coding and aggregate the responses of the managers as data generated were not massive. In this chapter patterns, structures and language used in speech were identifies and captured in writing (Lewins *et al*, 2010:4); Jirwe (2011:5); Grbich (2009:111). The study targeted general managers of 10 of the 12 supermarkets found within the 5km radius of the old decaying CBD of Amanzimtoti. The 12 supermarkets included the following: 3 Woolworths Food Stores, 2 Checkers

Supermarkets, 2 Pick 'n Pay Supermarkets, 1 Shoprite Supermarket, 1 Game, 1 Makro, 1 Take 'n Pay, 1 Food Lovers Market.

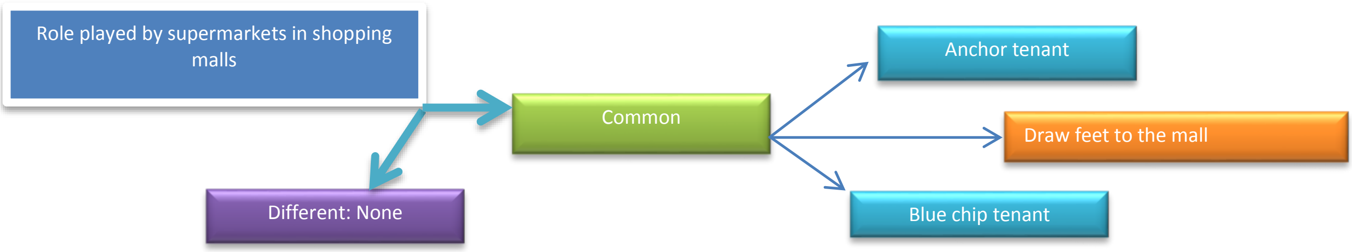

Figure 6: Role played by supermarkets in shopping malls

Small convenience stores were excluded from the study. The identified of the 10 supermarkets involved in the study were protected in order to protect the identities of general managers. They were referred to as supermarket A – J for confidentiality purposes. None of the managers had a different view of the role that supermarkets play in the viability and sustainability of the shopping malls. The agglomeration economies associated the system that is a shopping mall, are largely dependent on the presence of key businesses that have power to pull customers to the mall (see Figure 6). Even though as a system, a mall is self-regulating, it is not independent of external factors such as uncontrolled development that defeat entry barriers and make the system vulnerable. The supermarkets still require enough threshold and range to draw customers from to stay profitable and justify its existence. The managers share a variety of responses regarding the viability and profitability of their stores. Figure 7 shows that the most common responses were that the profits were down since new store opened in the area, while just about the same number of managers argued that their stores were profitable and viable despite the big number of supermarkets found within a 5km radius. Some felt that the strength of the brand and the fact that they specialised on trolley customers kept them profitable and growing regardless.

Figure 7: Viability and sustainability of the store

Some managers thought that locating in close proximity to each other was advantageous for safety reasons, draws many customers, they learn from each other and that it keep them on their toes, while others felt that it was good for the customers only as there was no price flexibility. On the issue of severity of competition, managers highlighted challenges such as weekly prices, subtle price wars, effect on bottom-line, and others.

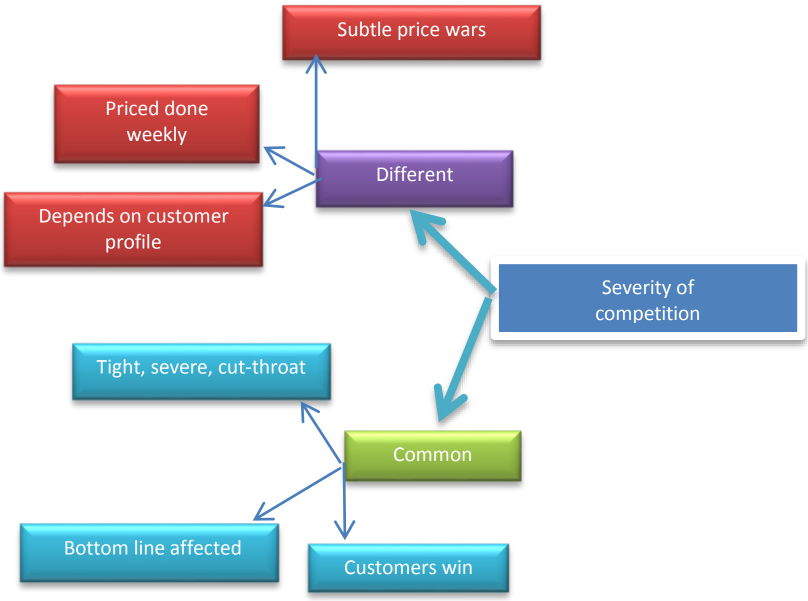

Figure 8: Severity of competition

The majority of managers did not know about the consultation process stating that the developers and local governments would have consulted with their head offices. Others claimed that there was no consultation as they came to know about proposed developments from newspapers. They strongly felt that they should be treated as stakeholders that they are as they would be affected by the increase in the number of supermarkets in the area. Others shared that the local municipality would have done the needs analysis for the area and that if they had raised objections, they would have been listened to.

Figure 9: Consultation process prior to development

The store managers used a variety of operational strategies to stay viable. The common strategies included extending the shopping hours, improving customer service, improving and revamping the stores to improve appeal and extending their product lines to include even their own brands and even lines that were not previously carried in the store. The different operational strategies were pushing their own brands and others were as drastic as becoming pension pay points, bargaining with the suppliers and even freezing positions.

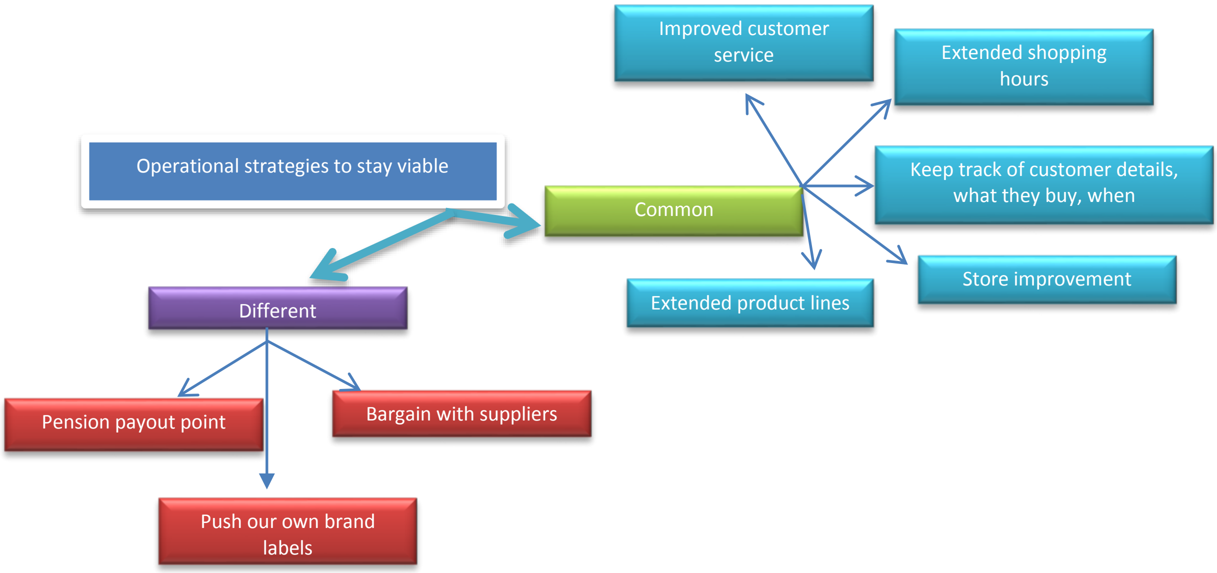

Figure 10: Operational strategies to stay viable

The managers had the following recommendations to improve profitability and sustainability of supermarkets in the area of Amanzimtoti?

Table 1: Recommendations to improve profitability and sustainability of supermarkets in the

area

*Supermarket A*If there are more residential areas developed around the area, then the supermarkets can be more profitable and sustainable. The local municipality should bring events and carnivals back to the area because they would help bring more people and business to the area.

*Supermarket B*The centre should tighten the security to ensure the future sustainability of the supermarkets.

Supermarket C There should be a flea market that will help draw more people into the area.

Supermarket D There should be more activities and events bringing people into the area and make the area exciting. This would be good for business.

*Supermarket E*The different supermarkets should explore macro and micro opportunities to earn more profits. My feeling is that the different supermarkets are not struggling as I have not seen them aggressively marketing themselves and promoting their products.

*Supermarket F*There should be local buses running between the malls and the residential areas to improve access.

Supermarket G Planning would be important. There should be a centralised hub with many supportive stores and services to attract customers.

Supermarket H We should keep up with the trends in terms of customer needs and preferences.

Supermarket I They came up with fresh strategies, conduct marketing research to find out exactly what the customers need and provide that. They could become serious about customer service, provide staff training to ensure that they are effective in playing their roles.

Supermarket J Supermarkets should go back to basics such as competitive prices, putting prices on items because customers get turned off if they have to struggle to find out how much an item costs and they also do not want to get surprised at the till. They should ensure that the shelves are full and they are never out of stock on top moving lines and daily requirements. They should focus of good customer service and quality standards.

V. CONCLUSION

This study was looked into urban development through the lenses of SDG 9, systems and complexity theory as well as the central place theory. As presented in the theoretical framework of the study, desirable development and growth is socio-economically and environmentally sustainable. To facilitate sustainability all developments should be viewed in terms of them being systems within other systems and enhance the growth and sustainability of systems that already exist within the respective area as opposed to cannibalizing on them.

Matei and Antonie (2015:62) argue that social innovation should be aimed at identification and implementation of labour market integration processes through new forms of participation to meet unmet social need, not to replace functioning existing systems, which is an unsustainable form of innovation and development. Knopjes (2015) cites the CEO of Price Water Coopers (Dion Shango) stating the need for adopting a collaborative and participative approach involving 'everyone' in shaping, designing and developing cities that enhance the lives of the residents. These initiatives were aimed at aligning African cities development to the UN SDG and the African Union's (AU's) Agenda 2063 strategy for optimal use of resources aligned with the triple bottom line. Busani (2016) seems to think that the radical move to sustainable cities development should entail effective and comprehensive urban legislation, proper urban planning and design and adequate financing for development projects. Klopp and Paller (2015) on the other hand posit that urban development in African countries reflect 'heavy' reliance on foreign consultants who do not understand the needs, resources and development politics in those countries. They further argue that in some cases development plans do not pass through all elected bodies that represent stakeholders such are community representatives and they tend to reflect an unsustainable 'high modernist vision that justifies large infrastructure projects and excludes attention to citizen priorities'.

The United Nations Habitat (2015) regards sustainable urban development as development that promotes sound physical environment, socio-cultural development, economic and institutional growth in response to the 2030 sustainability agenda, while Hammer and Pivo (2016) explain it in terms of the social, environmental and economic value of investments. For developments to be considered sustainable they should be responsive to people's needs, minimize environmental impact, promotes efficient use of naturel resources and provides cities with lungs to breathe through open green belts and spots thus reducing the carbon footprints inherent in development, while maintaining economic viability. Dos Santos and Sehnem (2016) argue that in Brazil there was still evidence that development and business operations tended to focus on economic growth at the expense of social and environmental sustainability imperatives even though they were included in the talks. Steelcase Inc. (n.d.) posit that if businesses nurture their various resources and stakeholders they operate sustainably because, they further argue, all three indicators have corresponding impacts on each other and are equally important to organisational success and sustainability.

Awasthi and Chauhan (2012) point out that while cities attempt to meet the ever growing customer demands through development, growth and production, the quality of the environment and thus urban dwellers' lives deteriorates due to unprecedented amounts of pollution, congestion and lack of open space. They further identify four stages towards development, namely: criteria for assessing performance of the central place; selection of decision-making committee involving all stakeholders; identification of alternatives and their pros and cons and performance of sensitivity analysis to enable them to select the best alternative. According to Crawford (2016) the hybrid approach to urban planning would include simple universal rules in which residents are capacitated to plan and design their own spaces of living and shopping together with the collaborative approach where urban planners, developers and residents come up with a shared vision, goals and designs for urban spaces of living and shopping (Moroni, 2014), as sustainability should occur from a specific local solutions to problems and needs (Dos Santos and Sehnem, 2016) This approach would, according to Marshall (2012) take place within municipal development controls and encourage the generation of development options and selection of the best possible ones. This study argues that the participative approach would give a voice to all stakeholders including environmentalists and their green development agenda, owners of existing shopping centres and their tenants so that their interests are also protested. The residents would have a voice regarding the number of shopping malls, big chain stores, convenience stores and stall that would sustain their areas.

The Central Place Theory would with some modifications helps alleviate challenges of severe competition. While that may be the case, moderate competition is required as it raises quality and service standards and benefits customers through price regulation. The majority of respondents shared that industry competition in the area was tough and keeping profits minimal. Unfortunately most of the respondents were not involved in planning phases of development and they could not share much on that question. The study maintains that sustainable development is one that is systematically planned to listen to the views of all stakeholders. It is important for the local municipalities, developers and supermarket shareholders to involve managers as practitioners in proposed developments and how such developments would affect the stores that manage. Some of the strategies used were anti-competitive including espionage (where managers pretending to be shoppers were comparing prices in order to drop theirs). This was the case because development in this industry was not controlled and linked to available buying power. Local municipalities and developers should go back to basics of sustainable development as suggested by the United Nations. Local residents' voices should be taken seriously when the development agenda for their spaces of living is being discussed. This study concludes that while such wanton development and over-retaining may be good for the consumers, development should have a triple bottom line approach and that people include both customers and employees. It is not sustainable to exploit the employees in order to keep the customers in an over-traded small space.

REFERENCES

[1]. Allen, P. 2012. Cities: The visible expression of co-evolving complexity. Heidelberg: Springer.

[2]. Anderson, A. 2014. Proliferation of shopping malls in South Africa set to continue. Business Day (BDlive) 14 January 2014. Available: www.bdlive.co.za [Retrieved: 22 November 2017].

[3]. Anikeeff, M.A. 1996. Shopping centre tenant selection and mix. Research Issue in Real Estate, Vol. 3.

[4]. Awasthi, A. and Chauhan, S.S. 2012. A hybrid approach integrating affinity diagram, AHP and fuzzy TOPSIs for sustainable city logistics planning. Applied Mathematical Modelling 36 (2012) 573-584. Available: www.elsevier.com/locate/apm [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[5]. Bell, J. 2010. Doing Your Research Project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

[6]. Bhasin, H. 2016. Complexity theory of businesses – What is complexity theory? Marketing 91. Available: www.marketing91.com/complexity-theory/ [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[7]. Bischoff, S. and Rädler, T. 2011. What is the significance of the research question? Doctoral Seminar: Research Methodology I November 3rd, 2011

[8]. Broadribb, K. 2018. Implementing a successful stakeholder consulatation. QSR International. Available: download.qsrinternational.com [Retrieved: 28 January 2018].

[9]. Broughton, T. 2014. Mall wars over retailing rights. Available: www.iol.co.za/business-report/companies/mall-wars-over-retailing-rights-1778157 [Retrieved: 30 November 2017].

[10]. Busani, B. 2016. Africa's cities of the future: Proper planning key to sustainable cities. Africa Renewal. Available: www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2016/africa [Retrieved: 30 March 2017].

[11]. Castillo, J.J. 2009. Relationship between sample and population in research. Available: explorable.com › Research › Methods [Retrieved: 30 March 2017].

[12]. Colander, D. and Kupers, R. 2014. Complexity and the art of public policy – changing society from the bottom-up. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[13]. Coldwell, D. and Herbst, F. 2004. Business Research. Cape Town: Juta.

[14]. Complexity Academy. 2015. All courses. Available: http://complexityacademy.io/courses-list/ [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[15]. Cronbach, L.J. and Meehl, P.E. 1955. Construct validity in psychological tests. Psychology Bulletin Vol. 52, No.4.

[16]. Crawford, R. 2016. What can complexity theory tell us about urban planning? Research Note 2016/2, New Zealand Productivity Commission. Available: www.productivity.gov.nz [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[17]. Department of Water and Forestry, Republic of South Africa. 2005. Stakeholder participation. Available: www.dwa.gov.za [Retrieved: 4 March 2018].

[18]. de Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. and Delport, C.S.L. 2011. Research at Grass Roots : For the social sciences and human services professions. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

[19]. Dey, I. 1993. Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists. New York: Routledge.

[20]. Dos Santos, G.D.S. and Sehnem, S. 2016. Analysis of the practices aimed at sustainability at a shopping mall from Santa Catarina, according to the guidelines of the global reporting initiative. Sistemas & Gestao: Revista Eletronica Open Journal Systems, Vol.11, No. 2 (2016).

[21]. Eckhart, N. 2017. Dying shopping malls are wreaking havoc on suburban America, Business Insider. Available: www.businessinsider.com/dying-shopping-malls-are-wreaking-havoc-on-suburban-america-2017 [Retrieved: 4 March 2018].

[22]. Finn, M., Elliot-White, M. and Walton, M. 2000. Tourism & Leisure Research Methods: Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation. London: Pearson Longman.

[23]. Fox, W. and Bayat, M.S. 2007. A Guide to Managing Research. Cape Town: Juta.

[24]. Goddard, W. and Melville, S. 2006. Research Methodology: An Introduction. Landsdowne: Juta.

[25]. Golafshani, N. 2003. Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. The Qualitative Report Vol. 8, No. 4. Available: www.nova.edu/sss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf [Retrieved: 28 January 2018].

[26]. Grbich, C. 2009. Qualitative Data Analysis: an introduction. Los Angeles: Sage.

[27]. Hammer, J. and Pivo, G. 2016. The triple bottom line and sustainable economic development theory and practice. Economic Development Quarterly 1-12.

[28]. Henning, E., van Rensburg, W. and Smit, B. 2007. Finding your way in Qualitative Research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

[29]. Holland, J. 2014. Complexity: A very short introduction. New York: Oxford University Press.

[30]. Hsu, W., Holmes, T.J. and Morgan, F. 2014. Optimal city hierarchy: A dynamic programming approach to central place theory. Journal of Economic Theory, Vol. 154

[31]. Jiao, J., Moudon, A.V., Ulmer, J., Hurvitz, P.M. and Drewnowski, A. 2012. How to identify food deserts: Measuring physical and economic access to supermarkets in King County, Washington. Am J Public Health. 2012 Oct; 102(10): e32-e39.

[32]. Jirwe, M. 2011. Analysing qualitative data. Nurse Researcher, Vol.18, No.3, April 2011. Available: www.ebscohost.com [Retrieved: 28 January 2018].

[33]. Joppe, M. 2000. The research process. *The Quantitative Report Journal*, 8(4): 597-607.

[34]. Kazerooni, E.A. 2001. Population and sample. Fundamentals of Clinical Research for Radiologists Vol.177, No.5, November 2001. Available: http://www.ajronline.org/doi/full/10.2214/ajr.177.51770975 [Retrieved: 28 January 2018].

[35]. Knopjes, B. 2015. Our African city initiative set to advance urban development in Africa. Available: www.infrastructurene.ws/2015/10/29 [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[36]. Lawless, S. 2014. The death of the American mall. The Guardian, 19 June 2014. Available: www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/jun/19/-sp-death-of-the-american-shopping-mall [Retrieved: 4 February 2018].

[37]. Lewins, A., Taylor, C. and Gibbs, G.R. 2010. What is Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA)? Available: onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro_QDA/what_is_qda.php [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[38]. Linder, A. 2016. Five years from now, one-third of China's shopping malls will be out of business, report says, Shanghaiist. Available: shangaiist.com [Retrieved: 4 March 2018].

[39]. Maree, J.G.K. 2012. Complete you thesis or dissertation successfully: Practical guidelines. Cape Town: Juta.

[40]. Maree, K. 2010. First Steps in Research. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

[41]. Matei, A. and Antonie, C. 2015. Complexity theory and the development of the social innovation. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 185 (2015) 61-66.

[42]. Marshall, S. 2012. Planning, design and the complexity of cities. Heidelberg: Springer.
[43]. Maxwell, J.A. 1992. Understanding and validity in qualitative research. Harvard Educational Review, Fall 1992; 62, 3. Available: mkoehler.educ.msu.edu > maxwell92 [Retrieved: 20 January 2018].
[44]. May, J. 2017. Shopping malls are dying, but that doesn't mean SA's stopped spending: We chat to trend analyst Dion Chang about the rise of the stealth-bomb shopper and the future of retail in South Africa, Sunday Times, 28 August 2017. Available: www.timeslive.co.za [Retrieved: 4 March 2018].
[45]. Mishra, S. 2017. What is the relevance of the central place theory? Available: www.quora.com [Retrieved: 4 Mach 2018].
[46]. Morgan, R. 2015. What makes a supermarket super? Available: www.roymorgan.com [Retrieved: 26 November 2017].
[47]. Morgan, C. 2018. Stakeholder research and consultation: Keep your ears to the ground. B2B Market Research Specialists. Available: http://www.b2binternational.com> stake... [Retrieved: 27 February 2018].
[48]. Moroni, S. 2014. Complexity and the inherent limits of explanation and prediction: Urban codes for self-organising cities. Planning Theory. 14(3): 248-267.
[49]. Muller, 2014. Number of large malls in South Africa estimated to grow to 180 by 2016. Times Media 28 November 2013. Available: www.bdlive.co.za [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].
[50]. New Zealand Government. Stakeholder consultation process standard – Executive summary. Available: http://fs.fish.govt.nz [Retrieved: 27 February 2018].
[51]. Oltermann, P. and Willsher, K. 2014. Brutal competition batters supermarkets the world over. The Guardian, 5 October 2014. Available: www.theguardian.com [Retrieved: 24 November 2017].
[52]. Osborn, D., Cutter, A. and Ullah, F. 2015. Universal sustainable development goals: Understanding the transformational challenge for developed countries. Report of a study by stakeholder forum.
[53]. Ozuduru, B.H. and Guldmann, J. 2013. Retail location and urban resilience: Towards a new framework for retail policy. Resilience Cities 6.1, 2013: Vol.6, No.1.
[54]. Page, C. and Meyer, D. 2005. Applied Research Design for Business and Management. Australia: Irwin/McGraw-Hill.
[55]. Parker, C., Ntounis, N., Quin, S. and Millington, S. 2016. Identifying factors that influence vitality and viability. Economic and Social Research Councils.
[56]. Peyton, S., Moseley, W. and Battersby-Lennard, J. 2015. Implications of supermarket expansion on urban food security in Cape Town, South Africa. African Geographic Review. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
[57]. Piperato, S. 2014. 13 'Ghost Malls' from around the world. National Real Estate Investor. Available: www.nreionline.com/retail/13-ghost-malls-around-world [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[58]. Planning Tank. 2017. Central Place Theory by Walter Christaller (1933). Happy, healthy and sustainable settlements. Available: planningtank.com/settlement-geography/central-place-theory-walter-christaller [Retrieved: 26 November 2017].

[59]. Pollett, T. 2018. Stakeholder consultation. International Finance Corporation. Available: http://www.ifc.org> wps> wcm> connect [Retrieved: 27 February 2017].

[60]. Prinsloo, D.A. 2010. Classification and hierarchy of retail facilities in South Africa. Urban Sudies.

[61]. Rajagopal, J. 2009. Growing shopping malls and behaviour of urban shoppers. Journal of Retail & Leisure Property. Vol.8, 2, 99-118.

[62]. Readon, T. and Gulati, A. 2008. The supermarket revolution in developing countries: Policy for competitiveness with inclusiveness. IFPRI Policy Brief 2, June 2008.

[63]. Researchgate. 2017. Systems and Complexity Theory. Available:

[64]. Sachdeva, J. K. 2009. Business Research Methodology. Mumbai: Global Media.

[65]. Sanburn, J. 2017. Why the death of malls is about more than shopping. Available: Time.com [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[66]. Seidel, J.V. 1998. Qualitative Data Analysis [Online]. Available: www.qualisresearch.com [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[67]. Sharma, S. 2017. Significance and applicability of Central Place Theory of Christaller. Available: www.yourarticlelibrary.com/geography/significance-and-applicability-of-central-place-theory-of-christaller [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[68]. Shevel, A. 2017. Supermarket chains fight for share of the market. Business Live. Available: www.businesslive.co.za [Retrieved: 20 November 2017].

[69]. Skogster, P. 2006. Location planning theories in valuation of retail premises. Available: http://www.fig.net > fig2006 > papers [Retrieved: 20 November 2017].

[70]. Smith, D. 2014. Brutal competition batters supermarkets the world over. The Guardian. Available: www.theguardian.com [Retrieved: 17 November 2017].

[71]. Staff Writer. 2015. Most expensive shopping centres in South Africa vs the world, Business Tech, 22 November 2015. Available: http://businesstech.co.za/news [Retrieved: 4 March 2018].

[72]. Steyn, L. 2014. The magnificent march of SA's malls. Mail & Guardian: Africa's Best Read. Available: www.mg.co.za [Retrieved: 28 November 2017].

[73]. Stone, J. 2017. The biggest change to expect in future SA shopping malls. Available: www.2oceansvibe.com [Retrieved: 30 November 2017].

[74]. Sydness Architects. 2017. Song Jiang Development. Available: sydnessarchitects.com [Retrieved: 4 March 2018].

[75]. Teller, C. & Schnedlitz, P. 2011. Drivers of agglomeration effects in retailing: The shopping mall tenant's perspective. Journal of Marketing Management, Volume 28(9-10): 1043-1061.

[76]. Thomson, P. 2012. What not to do in a thesis conclusion [Online]. Available: http://patthomson.wordpress.com/2012/12/17/what-not-to-do-in-a-thesis-conclusion-part-one-... [Retrieved: 15 April 2018].

[77]. Tulimello, S. 2015. Questioning the universality of institutional transformation theories in spatial planning: Shopping mall developments in Palermo. International Planning Studies, Vol. 20, Issue 4.

[78]. United Nations. 2015. Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Available: sustainabledevelopment.un.org

[79]. United Nations Habitat. 2015. Eco-build Africa: Promoting sustainable construction, urban development and communities. Symbio City [Online]. Available: www.ecobuild-africa.com

[80]. Wackernagel, M., Hanscom, L. and Lin, D. 2017. Making the sustainable development goals consistent with sustainability. Frontiers in Energy Research, Energy Systems and Policy. Available: http://goi.org/10.3389/fenrg.2017.00018 [Retrieved: 23 November 2017].

[81]. Wagner, C., Kawulich, B. and Garner, M. 2012. Doing Social Research: A global context. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

[82]. Welman, J.C. and Kruger, S.J. 1999. Research Methodology for the Business and Administrative Sciences. New York: Oxford.

[83]. Wylie, I. 2015. How supermarkets choose where to open …and where to close. The Guardian. Available: www.theguardian.com [Retrieved: 12 November 2017].

[84]. Yin, D., Qian, J. and Zhu, H. 2017. Living in the “Ghost City”: Media discourses and the negotiation of home in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China. Sustainability, MDPI, 9, 2029; doi:10.3390/su9112029 [Online]. Available: www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability

[85]. Zhang, H., Qi, Z., Ye, X., Cai, Y., Ma, W. and Chen, M. 2013. Analysis of land use/land cover change, population shift, and their effects on spatiotemporal patterns of urban heat islands in metropolitan Shanghai, China. Applied Geography, Vol. 44.