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Study on shopping centre:

Consumer behaviour and environmental factors

-Case Skanssi

LUND UNIVERSITY
Campus Helsingborg

Final thesis by: Matti Rainio

Supervisor: Richard Ek

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Matti Rainio

Abstract: The tendency to buy goods and especially services is increasing in our society. This has strongly affected the retail markets in Finland during the last decade. The consumers are affected by the dynamic society, which have set new challenges for consumption. Shopping centres are similar to each other and therefore the experience can be a determining factor when choosing the shopping centre. A shopping centre is not just a place where people fulfil their basic shopping needs but a recreational destination where people come to spend time and socialise. This holistic customer experience is widely affected by the retail environment that shopping centre offers. Holistic shopping experience lies beyond the satisfaction of basic shopping needs.

This study examines the broader retail view of the shopping centre and how people approach to the phenomenon. Also, the competitive advantages a shopping centre can create for today's consumption society have been investigated. It has great importance to offer the retail mix in a unique style environment and creating interesting events and activities.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the phenomenon of a modern shopping centre and the relationship between the modern shopping centre and the young adults. The research has been carried out through qualitative research method and a case study. Shopping centre Skanssi, located in Turku Finland, was used to evaluate the influence of shopping environment. Eight respondents were interviewed to unfold young people's attitudes toward shopping centres.

The main conclusion of this thesis is that shopping environment is widely influenced by how people appreciate their shopping experience. Shopping centre has to create an atmosphere and a retail mix that serves people on multiple levels. This process is dynamic and it is affected by different factors such as background, design and social factors. In this thesis the process is called environmental stimulation. Young adults found that modern shopping centre should produce interesting environment and social experiences.

Keywords: *shopping centre, shopping behaviour, environmental stimuli, atmosphere and retail mix.*

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces what this thesis will deal with in the upcoming chapters. It also provides the actual research problem and the research question of the thesis. Finally this chapter will offer the structure of the whole study.

1.1 Research background

Success in the competitive market has never been regarded as a truism. Success in retailing requires the ability to deliver the right flow that attracts customers and to generate loyalty amongst the clients – these customers are protecting retailers from competitors in a long term (Best 2005:7). Shopping centres play a central role in retail markets around the world by acting as a huddle of services and goods. The advantages are clear; consumers benefit from a wide selection of goods and services that are available in a single location and stores gain a significant concentration of customers (ICSC, 2010:2).

The existing shopping centres of today's consumption society in Finland will face major challenges in the future caused by new consumer behaviour patterns and the rapidly changing, dynamic society. The wide range of services and goods in a same place may not necessarily be enough for people anymore. Consumers have so many different opportunities that it sets challenges for retailers. Internet and technologic development have made it possible for consumers to shop and have multiple ways to contact with retailers. Shopping centres have to provide an ecological environment that inspires people to come and enjoy the environmental experience. The environment has to be complete, furnished and culturalized – where art and leisure mingle with everyday life (Baudrillard, 1998: 28).

The importance of store environment has been understood for a long time. Donovan and Russian (1982) suggested that store atmosphere effects to emotional state and emotional response leaks to a variety of behaviours – whether its pleasure, arousal or dominance. Baker's et al. (2002) framework proposed that store environment has vital effect on shopping behaviour. The research explains how shopping experience have either positive or negative influence of a store environment on consumer patronage.

The idea for the thesis arose from studying social sciences and retail in Lund's university in 2010-2011. The whole master class visited many different retail environments in order to receive a good understanding of Nordic retailing markets. Trips to many interesting places such as Bromma Blocks in Stockholm (awarded Sweden's best shopping centre in 2011), Fields in Copenhagen (one of the largest shopping centres in Scandinavia) and Ullared in Falkenberg Municipality (one of the largest stores in Sweden) were made. These trips were made to analyse the authenticity and phenomenon behind the businesses. They provided not only a good understanding of shopping centres but also an idea for this master thesis. These different shopping centres provided interesting environmental elements that could affect peoples' behaviour in many ways. Baker et al. (1992) have divided these environmental

elements into three main categories: design, background and social factors.

There are several reasons why young adults (in this study people from 20 to 35 years old) have been selected as the target group for this study. First, young people have so many different opportunities (thanks for the technological developments) to choose and base their shopping that they certainly are one of the most demanding groups of people to pleasure. Young adults also use lot more time for shopping than the other groups and it is perhaps the key reason why they have such a wide awareness of shopping. Recreational shoppers aged 25 to 34 years spend 58 per cent more time when shopping for fun than people aged 55 to 64 years and 22 per cent more than 45-54 year people (Danziger, 2006:94).

Second, young consumers are interesting group because they have grown up with the culture of shopping and commercial markets and they are also most familiar with different styles of shopping from shopping in the shopping centres to shopping in the Internet. Most of the shopping centres in Finland were built in 1990's and they are the first age group that are used to shop in shopping centres throughout their lives. Even thought the economic position of young adults might be weaker than the older age groups, the symbolic value of shopping seems to be more important for the young adults (Arnett, 2000). Young generation has become a norm that often determines and is the most influential style for different age groups. However, there seems to be no clear definition for youth in the modern culture since the boundaries between the age groups are blurred and everybody are looking for eternal youth.

Third, young people in Finland have grown up in an affluent society that is surrounded by prosperous and allowed atmosphere. Young people are used to follow different trends and the role of aesthetics is significant for them (Wilska, 2005:79). With these things in mind, and the fact that in the future young people are going to be the wealthiest group of consumers, it is certainly engrossing group to study in the context of shopping centres.

Environmental elements are widely researched in this thesis together with consumer behaviour and young peoples attitudes towards shopping centres. This research is based on a case study, conducted in an out-of-town shopping centre Skanssi. The Skanssi shopping centre is relatively new, built in 2009, located 5 kilometres outside of Turku city centre. It is built to represents a new attracting shopping centre and it was made for meeting the needs of a 21st century customer.

1.2 Aims and Research Question

The purpose of this thesis is to study the phenomenon of modern shopping centre; describe and reflect its challenges in the saturated market.

Shopping behaviour and shopping atmospherics in shopping centres were selected as focus points for the research. Furthermore, The consumers' wants, needs and expectations for the modern shopping centres were studied. Other key factors were related to the success and attractiveness of retail centres and environmental stimuli.

Therefore, the main research question is:

What kind of environmental factors are affecting consumer behaviour in shopping centres?

In this thesis the empirical data is based on young adults' opinions and behaviour. So my next research question is

What are the young adults' opinions on shopping centres?

This research question aims to reveal the general reason for visiting shopping centres and also the clients' expectations and attitudes towards shopping centres.

To answer these questions, the different retail elements are discussed. The research in the empirical part of this study is limited to the Finnish retail market and particularly Turku area in Western Finland.

1.3 Structure of the study and the key concepts

This thesis follows the subsequent structure: chapter one introduces the thesis and the research questions as well as the reasoning behind this research. Chapter two describes the data and the empirical methods used in the study.

In chapter three, the thematic background, which contains the framework of this thesis, is illustrated. It procedures by examining the source material related to the topic. Teller (2008) presents theoretical discussion of the generic similarities and conceptual differences between shopping streets and shopping centres. The chapter also conducts a short presentation of Finnish retail markets and the shopping centres in general. Thematic background explains the aspects of an attractive shopping centre; what pieces it contains, how they are created in Finland and what kind of phenomena are behind it.

Chapter four gathers the behavioural aspects of shopping in relation to different theories of shopping behaviour. Understanding consumers' motivations for buying in the context of the shopping phenomenon demands for comprehension of shopping behaviour. This behaviour creates a link between shopping behaviour and the environmental settlements. That is the reason why especially atmospheric in shopping centres is widely studied in the upcoming chapter. The main theory is based on Baker's et al. (1992) model of evaluating feelings that are aroused by the store atmosphere, which in turn intends to unfold the research question.

In chapter five the empirical findings are reported and analysed. The most significant parts are transcribed conducting different opinions together.

Finally, chapter six is dedicated to conclusions and suggestions for further studies on the subject.

The keywords of this paper are: *shopping centre, shopping behaviour, environmental*

stimuli, atmospherics and retail mix.

In this research the *shopping centre* is determined as a facility with joint management and marketing and one or more anchor stores. There are 10 or more stores and GLA is more than 5,000 square metres.

Shopping behaviour is a process that contains all the needs and decision processes that are involved in buying a product.

Environmental stimuli is the step, which suggests and explains the effect the environmental state has on emotional state and eventually defines whether the consumer wants to stay in the environment or not. This environmental stimulation is divided into three critical dimensions: background, social and design factors.

Atmospheric is the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effect in the buyer that enhances his/her purchase probability (Kotler, 1973:48).

Retail mix combines wide selection of stores to work and operate successfully together in order to contribute to the success of the entire centre.

2. METHOD

"Qualitative research is about making sense and interpreting the world and phenomena through meanings that people attach to them. Things are studied in their natural settings. Interview is one of the many empirical materials that a qualitative researchers use in one's studies" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4).

This chapter discusses about the methodology of the study. Data analysis and data collection methods used in this thesis are described. After that reliability and validity of the study are explained.

2.1 Introduction to Methods

There are two ways to approach a question or problem, the deductive and inductive method. The deductive method refers to a situation where one has a formulated hypothesis from the get-go and will proceed to investigate its accuracy through research, study and analysis while the inductive research method attempts to set up a theory by using collected data (Yin, 2009). The deductive method was the natural approach in this study as the process develops from general approach to the specific.

In order to answer the research question: *"what kind of environmental factors are affecting consumer behaviour in shopping centres?"* qualitative research method is taken. Qualitative research method is more appropriate for this particular study than quantitative method as this study is answering people's perceptions and attitudes (Järvinen, 2004:66).

There are two types of data available for researchers when performing a study about social science: qualitative and quantitative. The difference between those methods rests on the nature of the data the researcher employs. The quantitative research is uses hard data, which is based on standardized questionnaires or other data that can be analysed and presented numerically. Qualitative data is more dependable on the researchers interpreting skills. It acquires researcher to understand different things that are not statistically interpreted, e.g. body language, expressions and chosen words. The qualitative data is interpretations of meaning in an explicit situation (Neuman, 2003:84).

In this study, the author has used a sample of Finnish young adults. The reason why this particular group was chosen is that young adults are seen as an age group that has economical autonomy and power to make independent decisions (Arnett, 2000).

As a method of collecting information, an interview allows an insight deep into *"people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings"* (May, 1997:110). This research is done using semi-structured interviews, which is a combination of structured and focused interviews. Structured interview is completely based on using a questionnaire as the data collection tool. In structured interview same questions are asked in the same way and the differences between answers are not dependable on the interview situation. There is no room for improvising and the interviewer has to be

neutral in every situation. The answers are easily comparable, which is the biggest advantage. Focused interviews are flexible and the respondent can talk about the subject in his/hers own terms. This allows the researcher to understand the interviewee's point of the subject (May, 1997:110).

Case study is useful when the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Yin (2009:1) defines case study as "*an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context, especially the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident*". Yin (2003:39) also outlines four case types: single case, multiple case, holistic case, and embedded case. A single case is most suitable for scarcely considered phenomena, which in this thesis is shopping centres.

As Yin (2009:6) defines, case study is often used when '*why*' and '*how*' questions are being asked in a contemporary set of events, which investigator has little or no control. Another characteristic of case study is that it can be used to deal with multiple sources such as documents, interviews and observations. These characteristics can help to enrich the data collection methods in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. There are two types of case study methods: single and multiple-case study. In this thesis, the single case study is used. Single case study was chosen as the method for this thesis because there were no suitable data available for examining the consumers' behaviour and attitude factors in a modern shopping centre. It is appropriate to use a single case study method especially with a largely representative case, such as critical, unique, typical or revelatory case (Yin, 2009:41).

2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The main body of research material for this thesis consists of personalized, semi-structured interviews. They are suited for well-managed interviews with a deep focus on the research subject additionally enriched by the interviewees' opinions (Bryman, 2008:437).

According to May (1997:110), there are four different kinds of methods to conduct interviews: structured interview, semi-structured interview, unstructured or focused interview and group interview. The semi-structured interview was chosen because it connects the advantages from the structured interview and unstructured interview. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer opens the topic with some standardized questions so that interviewee can talk more on their own terms without feeling constrained. Eventually this method brings more insight beyond the answers. Yin (2003:16) describes these answers as 'insightful' and 'targeted' where author can focus the conversation directly to topic and provide perceived causal inferences.

Semi-structured interviews, also called thematic interviews, are often used in the empirical part of the study. This procedure gives the respondent freedom to tell "*stories*" that may give a new perspective to the topic. The questions intend to encourage the interviewees to share their experiences and express their opinions

related to the subject matter (Yin, 2009).

One of the benefits of the semi-structured interviews is that it creates a deeper relationship between the respondent and the interviewer. The mutual trust and understanding are the key factors for it. Interviewing people allows researcher to go to deep into "*people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings*" (May, 1997:111). However, the questions have to focus on the themes that are relevant to the study and also be perceived as relevant and easily understandable from the interviewee's perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

2.3 Interview guide and empirical data

When carrying out a semi-structured interview, the researcher shall prepare an interview guide, specified themes into theory. The study is much more structured and organized when interview guide is done systemically. The interview guide is helpful especially when conducting specific themes together with the theory. It helps especially with the follow up questions, which are relevant part of semi-structured interviews. The questions do not have to be in the same order as in the interview guide and that makes it easier to add further questions later on (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

The qualitative semi-structured interview was divided into two main categories: consumer behaviour in retail context (background, awareness, attitude) and physical environment of shopping centres (atmosphere, design, ambience). Interviews were read and transcribed in order to find thematic arguments, structures and categories. Data was analysed and structured according to the research questions.

In this research every interview was conducted with caution in mind - the interviewer being careful not to lead the respondents to either way in their responses. There were eight interviews in total and the answerers were randomly chosen from the elected focus group, young adults. Every respondent conducted a tour around the shopping centre after the interview. This participant observation is often thought to be effective part of fieldwork when clarifying results by providing a way to renter the same field to explore (Fetterman, 2009). Participant observation was done to point out the respondents' reactions in different parts of the shopping centre. This approach gives the opportunity to include supplementary questions to get even deeper view of the respondent's situation and behaviour (Saunders et al., 2007). The interviews were conducted in Skanssi shopping centre and they were transcribed soon after the interviews, which gave an accurate account of the situation.

All the respondents were from an age group of 20 to 35 years old. That is because young people's attitudes towards shopping centres had been chosen as the focus of this study. All the interviews were conducted on the 28th of November 2011 in the shopping centre Skanssi. Face to face interviews lasted approximately between 25 and 45 minutes and phone interviews 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the talkativeness of the interviewee. The selection criteria did not express any preferences between males and females, but four male and four females were interviewed, see table 1 below. All

of the participants were residents in the Turku and although from the same age group, represented different types of people with varying life situations and educational backgrounds. The interviews were conducted in their native language, Finnish so the quotations on the empirical part of the study have been transcribed to English. This procedure helps the respondents to express themselves unrestrictedly and creates a relaxed atmosphere with comprehensive results (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Respondent	Age	family	Motivation toward Skanssi	Transportation	Visits per month
Male 1	33	Married children	Hedonistic, utilitarian,	Own car	3-4
Male 2	27	In a relationship	Symbolic, hedonistic, cognitive	Own car	2
Male 3	23	Single	Utilitarian hedonistic	Friend's car	2
Male 4	28	In a relationship	Hedonistic	Own car	0-1
Female 1	28	Married, children	Hedonistic, symbolic, experiential, social	Own car	4
Female 2	25	Single	Social, hedonistic, experiential	Own car	3
Female 3	22	In a relationship	Symbolic, experiential, hedonistic, physiological	Family car	5
Female 4	29	In a relationship	Experiential, social, symbolic	Own car	4

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

According to Yin (2009) there are six sources of evidences that are most commonly used in case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations and physical artefacts. Yin (2009) suggests that a good case study should use as many sources as possible and none of these sources should have complete advantages over the other. In this research, two main methods for collecting data have been chosen: documentary research and interviews. When conducting the interviews, the answers are approached critically. Some information may not be accurate because sometimes the interviewee may not express their true feelings but gives out what the interviewer wants to hear (Yin, 2009). With these facts in mind,

extensive data collection and analysis were accomplished.

Every interview was recorded with a Dictaphone. With a Dictaphone interviewer can listen to the tone and choice of words of the interviewees repeatedly afterwards (Neergaard & Ulhoi, 2007:291). All the respondents were informed how their answers will be used later on and how they are presented in the research. Permission was also required to ask further questions by e-mail or phone in case more precise answers were needed.

2.4 Reliability, validity and limitation

According to Bryman (2008:43) three of the most important criteria for social science studies are reliability, replication and validity. Originally these terms are from quantitative research but they also affect in a qualitative study. To achieve reliability, researchers have to discuss if their study could have been influenced by temporary events. Replication means that the study should be able to be replicated by others and its results thereby tested. Validity presumes reliability, which means that the quality of the study has to be logically valid (Bryman & Bell, 2007:43).

According to Silverman (1997:203) tape recording and transcripts can provide good and detailed presentations of social interaction. Key aspects of reliability are selection of recorded material, technical quality of recorded material and adequacy of transcripts (Silverman, 1997:206). In this paper the selection of recorded material is guided by the research construction. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

In quantitative as well as in qualitative research central dimension of validity is correspondence between theoretical paradigm and observations of researcher (Silverman 1997:212). Qualitative research has also been criticized for being overly impressionistic and subjective. In other words, the relevance of the material is entirely evaluated by the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In this research, the theoretical paradigm has been formed first and it guides the empirical part of the research to the right direction. The interview themes and relating questions are based on the theoretical background. This helps to ensure a correspondence between the theoretical aspects, which brings added value to the survey. In the data analysis there also is a conversation between the theoretical background and the data. The reliability of the study is set to increase by measuring the same phenomenon with several questions in the survey (Yin, 2009).

The external validity is seen as a serious deficiency for these types of studies because they offer poor basis for generalization (Yin, 2009:43). Validity is tightly connected to the relativity between the conclusions and the context of the study. Therefore all the questions are based on the theory. As this study only studies one shopping centre, representativeness of the phenomenon may be questioned. Therefore it would have been beneficial to select another shopping centre to create greater depth to the research. Larger number of interviews would have been ideal, but due to the limited time,

extensive background information was referred to instead (Yin, 2009).

One of the problems with qualitative interviews is the risk of bias. The tone of the interviewer's voice or his body-language may affect the interviewees' answers and also sometimes the interviewer's interpretation of the responses can be biased. In order to avoid biased data collection and analysis and ensure objectivity, the interview guide used in this study was tested on two people prior to the actual interviews (Saunders et al, 2009).

The result is obviously limited to only one shopping mall, but this study has been made according to a well thought-out procedure. The atmosphere between the interviewer and the respondents allowed for a flexible but honest interaction where the topic was studied from a variety of perspectives. The data collection has been implemented in a way that is considered to be relevant and beneficial to this study. Furthermore, convenience sampling was used, meaning that the participants were chosen randomly and they were willing to share their knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2007:198).

Bryman and Bell (2007) are criticising that qualitative researchers are often too impressionistic and subjective because qualitative findings rely so heavily on the researcher's unsystematic views about what is relevant or not. Yin (2008) has similar sentiment; no case study is consistently objective and based exclusively on facts – there is always a lot of room for interpretation. Qualitative data is not obvious and it can not happen without the influence of the researcher's appraisal.

However, the good base with logical interview guide gave an option to adapt new results into the research. This offered deeper understanding of how consumers see on today's shopping malls and their social influence.

SUMMARY

The research method used was qualitative and the data was collected using both the secondary data and primary data. For the primary data, semi-structured interviews were used, because they were seen as an effective way to evaluate shopping behaviour and attitudes toward shopping centres. Secondary data material included books, articles, journals, reviews, publications and internet sources.

The data was conducted in a manner that enabled the researcher to approach and solve the research question. Secondary data is representing the influence of consumer behaviour that continues with analysing the primary data on it and finally findings from the empirical part.

The qualitative semi-structured interview was divided into two main categories: consumer behaviour in retail context (background, awareness, attitude) and physical environment of shopping centres (atmosphere, design, ambience). Interviews were read and transcribed in order to find thematic arguments, structures and categories. Data was analysed and structured according to the research questions. In order to minimize the possibility of misunderstandings, the interviews were carried out in Finnish

language.

Qualitative method will not attempt to measure effects and a relationship with numbers, and it is an ideal form of analysis when studying an obscure concept, such as social space. This thesis uses a qualitative approach to explore not just one but several elements surrounding consumer behaviour in retail context. This information will draw conclusions about the relationship between the shopping centre and an individual shopper, not the generalization of the whole population.

3. THEMATIC BACKGROUND

This part, called the thematic background, is examining the source material related to the topic. The following chapter conducts a short presentation of retail markets in general but it mainly concentrates on the information related to Finland and explains the main aspects of an attractive shopping centre: what pieces it contains, how they are created and what kind of phenomena are behind it. Shopping centre is not just a place that sells products: it has to offer many services and recreational amenities that entice people to visit them. This chapter explains the benefits of out-of-town shopping centres but also the negative side effects: since so many new shopping centres have been built during the last 15-years, government policies have shifted towards preserving town centres.

3.1 Introduction to retail centre

The term "*shopping centre*" is often used as a synonym for any type of retail centres all around the world (in USA they use the word "*mall*" instead of "*shopping centr*e"). Encyclopaedia of Britannica (2010) describes shopping centre as "*a collection of independent retailers and business operation in a joined location, maintained by a management firm as a unit*". Shopping centre normally consists of retail stores and also a wide range of different services such as restaurants, banks, postal offices and types of entertainment-associated amenities like movie theatres and bowling areas.

Shopping centres first came to Europe in the 1960s in the form of American-style enclosed malls. Sweden was actually the first country where an indoor shopping centre was purposely built in Luleå in 1955 (FCSC, 2012: 5). Finland's first shopping centre Heikintori was built in Espoo in 1968. Compared to a present day shopping centre, Heikintori is comparatively small with only 9500 square meters. For instance Skanssi's leasable retail area is 33 000 square meters, which means it is three times bigger than Heikintori (FCSC, 2012:132). Definitions of different types of centres often vary and the distinctions between them are blurry, which makes some centres hard to categorize. However, traditionally shopping centres are divided into three principal types by function and location; neighbourhood, community and regional shopping centre. The 20th century was the golden era for the development of shopping centres in USA and Europe.

Nowadays, shopping centres are classified by size and location but as the International Council of Shopping Centre (ICSC) states (1999: 1), definitions are intended as guidelines to understand the main differences between different types of centres. It has been noted, that modern shopping centres are taking a lot of influences from traditional town centre streets. Their size and format is like a city in a covered centre. There are schemes that integrate the existing urban fabric and connect with neighbouring area.

3.2 Types of retail centres

Shopping centres play significant role in the global retail market, serving as a concentration of both retailers and customers. Retail centres can be differentiated in a various ways, normally by location or size. Retail centres have changed among the varying needs of consumers. Most often retailers are categorised by their product strategy and pricing strategies but the success of the special stores have brought the target of specific groups of consumers. Retail centres can be located in a city centre, but often in the 21st century they have been built outside the cities (Teller, 2008).

In the everyday language, the word shopping centre is defined as a general reference to any type of centres even though technically it means a specific type of larger scale retail centre. Shopping centre or mall is normally the most common term for a retail facility, which contains normally more than ten businesses and 5000 square meters of space. Shopping centres have joint management and marketing with typical layout for front faces and similar interior. A single trader may not exceed 50% of the total commercial space (FCSC, 2012:5). According to Levy and Weitz (2009:197) a shopping centre is one or more buildings forming a complex of shops representing merchandisers, with interconnecting walkways enabling visitors to easily walk from unit to unit, along with a parking area – a modern, indoor version of the traditional marketplace. Shopping centre is a group of retail and other commercial establishments that are planned, developed, owned and managed as a single property. By combining many stores at one location the developer attracts more consumers to the shopping mall than if the stores were at separate locations. The developer and shopping centre management carefully select a set of retailers that are complementary to provide consumers with a comprehensive shopping experience, including a well thought out assortment of retailers. A good management and solid operation base is a essential key for the daily running of the centre (Levy & Weitz, 2009:199-201).

There are also different types of retailing centres. *Strip Centre* is a retail complex, normally in the USA, of at least 5 operators that have the exterior or an open space which can comprise many different buildings that are attached rows of stores managed as units. Strip centre is also called as Neighbourhood and community centres with on-site parking normally located in the front of the stores. These neighbourhood centres are common in Great Britain and in Ireland. *Hypermarkets* are quite common especially in the rural areas of Nordic countries where shopping centres are seen oversized. In a hypermarket a supermarket is normally dominating the space with more than 50 % of the retail space. There are about 10 smaller units operating alongside with the anchor store. *Retailer's department store* has a number of retail outlets separated by fittings and they locate almost always in a city centre, with joint management and marketing. *Indoor market* is an entity composed of specialist grocery outlets, located in the city centre, with personal service and with stalls, which face an interior walkway. *Retail Parks* are comprised of more than one commercial building, located outside city centre. They consist of a group of warehouse style shops with individual entrances from outdoors (FCSC 2012, 23).

In Finland, hypermarkets that are located close to each other form *power centres*; agglomerations of two or more hypermarkets, large general merchandise shops and a

couple of smaller speciality stores. Often these shops are outlets, characterized by low prices and they serve a wide selection of services and goods. These, also called *one-stop shopping areas*, are the kind of complexes that are built in a longer period of time. Power centres are located in areas where population has not been large enough to support a shopping centre (Marjanen, 2000).

3.3 Shopping centres in Finland

Shopping centres have strengthened their position in Finland's retail markets. Annual sales grew 3,6% (5,3 billion Euros) and the number of visitors grew 2,5% (326 million a year) in the Finnish shopping centre industry in 2011. The market share of shopping centres in retail sales was approximately 16%. This emphasizes the growing significance of shopping centres. Total retail sales in Finland were 36.6 billion euros in 2010, which was a 3.9% increase compared to the previous year. (FCSC, 2012:3.)

The Finnish retail market is dominated by two groups, SOK and Kesko, who together own 35 per cent of the total market and over 70 per cent of the convenience goods market (FCSC, 2012:15). Long distances and low population density increase the logistical costs, which is why there are a smaller number of specialist chains in Finland compared to the rest of Europe. The distance from Europe is one reason why Finland has not got much interest from foreign retailers. Nevertheless, in the last ten years some foreign convenience chains like Lidl and building traders, like Bauhaus have reached Finnish markets.

Out of the 80 Finnish shopping centres, 46 are located in city centres and 34 out-of-town. Shopping centres are also important concentrations of employment with a 34 000 workers (FCSC, 2012:14).

The role of the shopping centres has increased in Finland since most of the shopping centres have been built in the past 15 years. The total volume of sales increased from 2,3 billion to 5,1 billion between years 2005 and 2010, which highlights the rapidity of the rise of the markets during this century. The International Council of Shopping (ICSC, 2010:7) estimates that almost a quarter of all retail sales in Europe and in Finland are made in shopping centres in 2015.
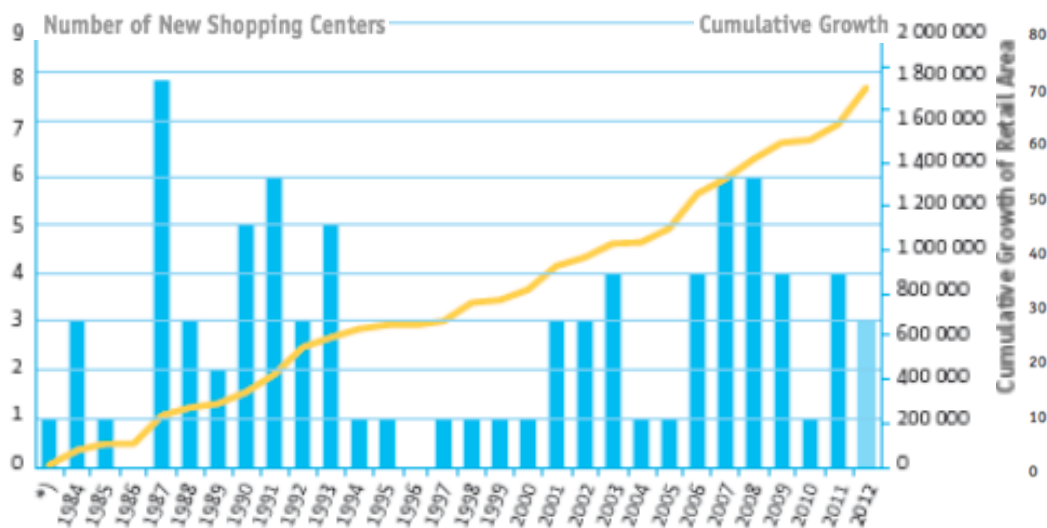
Diagram 1. Cumulative Growth of shopping centres in Finland

Source: FCSC (2012:13)

3.4 Down-town versus Out-of-town shopping environment

By choosing the place where the shopping is done customer goes through many levels. This chapter will introduce you to different situations and processes that are gone through before and after the actual shopping action. In Finland, large out-of-town shopping centres have grown 10 times bigger since 1990's and 75% of these centres are located outside city centres (Tompuri, 2006:26). Before deciding which store to go for, people are often tempted to choose the shopping environment; quite often they make a decision between shopping centre and shopping street.

The basic differences between shopping streets and shopping centres originate from the management concept behind the shopping malls. A shopping centre is a cluster of stores located in a single building planned, designed and built for retailing and retail-related functions; they are managed as a single unit by an institutionalized centre management. In the shopping centres tenants have to take part in cooperative marketing efforts (Levy & Weitz, 2006:199). One main aim of the owners, retail companies, and the management of the shopping centres is to increase its attractiveness (in other words, gravity, drawing power and preference in the eyes of the consumers), which should lead to opportunities for sales maximization for its tenants. The price or rent shopping centre tenants have to pay depends mostly on the attractiveness of the retail space and the sales volume they generate. This perspective of attractiveness and sales maximization dominates all strategic, tactical and operative management issues from the planning of the property to centre- marketing activities. The authority and power of the centre management is based on contracts with the tenants (Howard, 1997).

According to Teller (2008) the size and layout within agglomerations, depending on the size and number of tenants, can become problematic for consumers. Shopping centre management tries to ease this (shopping) endeavour by providing a clear

arrangement of tenants within the premises and setting up directories that enable consumers to easily target and access the tenants they seek. In addition, infrastructure services within shopping centre such as the provision of public toilets, cash dispensers and recreational areas to meet the expectations and demand of consumers, support the fulfilment of the defined (shopping) tasks. On the contrary, the location of tenants in shopping streets can evolve over time and may not necessarily result in a clear arrangement of possible shopping targets for customers.

Shopping streets on the other hand can be regarded as a cluster of (retail) stores located along and close to a main street of district, town or city centres. In contrast to shopping centres, shopping streets lack such a concerted management concept. This agglomeration format is found in urban areas that are not exclusively designed and managed in terms of general commercial issues and particular retailing issues (Bromley and Thomas 1995). Several stakeholder groups, e.g. people living in the area, politicians and landlords can influence the development of this agglomeration environment (Warnaby & Medway, 2004). As a consequence the infrastructure of a shopping street differs to that of a shopping centre; for example, in the availability of floor space for large-scale retailers, architecture, traffic infrastructure and parking facilities (Teller, 2008).

In the shopping streets, concepts that aim to enhance their attractiveness are reliant on the willingness of tenants to co-operate. Furthermore, they lack a contract-based liability for participation and adherence to agreed strategies and activities as found in shopping centres. Tenants in shopping streets generally try to maximize only their own attractiveness and consequently sales or profit while neglecting the importance to think and also act on a supra-store or agglomeration level (Teller, 2008). With these facts taken into consideration it is much easier to build a consistent look and organise campaigns for shopping centres than it is for shopping streets.

Urban centres have had a great influence in shopping centres in the recent years. They can be seen as intermediaries for communication. Urban centres should be places where people gather to discuss and meet each other (Mulgan, 1989: 264). The phrase "*see and be seen*" describes the function of the centre for people shopping in them (Mulgan, 1989:266). Urban centre as a meeting place benefits the entrepreneurs in an ideal way: more walking, more customers (Bohl, 2003: 22). Shopping centres should try to create some extra value for customers, so that they would like to head their shopping trips to shopping centres instead of down town shopping streets, for instance. Shopping centres should offer something to every demographic group. Added values should provide various experiential elements, like possibilities for social interaction (Marjanen 1997: 46).

The distance itself is not necessarily a problem for shopping centres. Marjanen (1997) studied that "*outshopping*" (out-of-town shopping) was preferred when all the aspects of shopping were considered. His survey pointed out that out-of-town shopping was the most convenient alternative for the respondents even though they appreciated accessibility and closeness. The survey also showed that consumers patronizing different store types also had different store-choice criteria.

The needs of consumers using a vehicle as a means of transport for shopping are consciously taken into account when planning and managing a shopping centre. There are no inner-city traffic problems (Wrigley & Lowe, 2002); shopping centres offer easy to access, cost-free and sufficient parking facilities often more convenient for the driving consumers than the shopping streets. The central location of a shopping street is less attractive for customers with cars as parking fees must be paid and parking lots are not always available. Parking facilities are mostly planned and operated by local authorities that do not necessarily consider the needs of tenants or consumers of agglomerations. The general traffic conditions determine the convenience of reaching shopping streets and also centrally located shopping centres (Teller, 2008).

Consumers who are not able, can not afford or simply choose not to use a car for their shopping trips may find the central location more attractive (Teller, 2008). This is one of the main attractors to shopping streets compared to the shopping centres. Many shopping centres are trying to set up transportations to and from city but there is often direct bus services arranged between cities and shopping centres.

People are not coming to city centre just for the shops, as interesting and attractive shops can be found from outside the city as well (Bohl, 2003: 22). Successful retail centre can be identified by a large flow of people. Swarming crowd is one of the key elements to form an attractive atmosphere in a shopping centre - people are pleased to see and follow other shoppers (Heikkilä, 1998: 97).

Retail centres should be more like multifunctional units in order to attract large amount of people from different age groups. Adding recreational opportunities would extend the time period spent in shopping centres and this would give the retailers an opportunity to longer their opening hours (Wrigley & Lowe, 2002). There should be more playing areas for children and rest zones for pensioners. Increasing settlements around the centre could enhance shopping atmospherics which ensures a vibrant and active shopping experience.

3.5 Shopping centre Skannsi

The out-of-town Shopping centre Skanssi, located four kilometres from Turku city centre, was opened in April 2009. There are 90 retailers in total and the anchor store is K-Citymarket. Skanssi came to challenge two main shopping centres, Hansa (located in Turku city centre) and Mylly (located in Raisio, ten kilometres from Turku). In 2010, it gathered 17 per cent market share, which was the third biggest share out of all Turku area shopping centres (with Hansa's 46 per cent and Mylly's 37 per cent). Mylly is another out-of town shopping centre in the Turku area, that has almost the same concept and it is the strongest competitor for Skanssi. Although Skanssi has one strong advantage compared to Mylly; its parking facilities are located under the building, which means that it is warm during the cold winter months.

From the very beginning, Skanssi has profiled its appearance by using the best quality materials and also concentrating on lightness and intimacy. Skanssi had the vision of building a shopping centre that combines pieces from modern architecture and

surrounding nature. Their concept envisioned offering a retail mix that interests many people but also some more specialised shops that can not be found elsewhere in the Turku area. They were especially interested in bringing in many fashion retailers. In Skanssi, 31 per cent of the retailers are in the field to clothing and fashion (Skanssi, 2011). Normally clothes are represented by around 22 per cent in Finnish shopping centres.

Skanssi has worked on creating a green image around their business. Since the early days of the construction process they have taken care of the environmental matters. They got rewarded for their efforts when they received a certification, for the first time as a new shopping centre, of ecological settlements. Skanssi received this LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Certification in 2009. LEED is an internationally recognised green building certification system, providing third party verification that a building is designed and built using strategies aimed to improving performance across all the metrics that matter the most: energy savings, water efficiency, C02 emission reduction and improved indoor environmental quality (Realprojekti, 2010). With this agreement Skanssi has to prove that environmental viewpoints are taken into account in the maintenance and use of the property. There is also a charging point for electric cars in the shopping centre. (Skanssi, 2011)

Skanssi has a wide variety of cafés and restaurants, an indoor playground and a dog sitting service. Their architecture pays tribute to the historical style and emulates a small European city. Skanssi intends to be a uniquely pleasant and enjoyable place to meet friends and spend time (Skanssi, 2011).

3.6 Future prospects for shopping centres

The planning rules for shopping centres have always been affected by the government policies. According to Lawson (2000) almost every EU country has either imposed a virtual ban or is considering administrative strictures. Since so many new shopping centres have been built during the last 15 years (see the diagram 1), government policies have shifted towards preserving town centres. This is a problem for out-of-town shopping centres; they have been considered to be a threat to town centres' retailing. Policy-makers are protecting city centres and planning policy prioritizes the development of existing town centres (Lawson, 2000).

In general, people's attitudes towards urban malls have been more negative in Europe than in United States. People tend to think that shopping centres are an "*American idiotism*" where everything has to be big. Shopping centres have been criticized for their similar looks and plaguing their ideology from each other. Alf Rehn (Locus, 2010:21), a professor from Åbo Akademi, criticizes that the pretension for tenants to stay in a same place for a long period of time will eventually reduce shopping centres agility. He would like to see different destination models and experiences that are related to shopping centre business, such as pop up restaurants and stores. Rehn is underlying the importance of shopping centres finding their own profiles and questions the "*one size fits all*" attitude. Rehn would like to see shopping centres as a third

dimension – a social place between work and home, a place where people could spend some quality time.

There are lot of opportunities connected to population ageing in Finland. Compared to other Nordic countries and the EU, Finland finds itself in a more difficult position. The Finnish age pyramid is one of the most unfavourable within the EU. By 2020, the old-age dependency ratio (age over 65) will increase from its current level of 17 per cent to 23 per cent (Parkkinen, 2010:34). This is explained by retirement of the baby-boom generations (born after World War II). Shopping centres should definitely try to have arrangements that are done with this segment in mind. Attracting pensioners would provide great number of clients and money for shopping centres.

The city centres are attractive because of the proximity of restaurants, cafés, shops and a wide range of recreational opportunities but also because of the heterogeneous group of working residents and pedestrians (Heinemeyer, 1967: 84-85). There are some aspects that should also be considered by shopping centres in the future. They could give more space to some entrepreneurs and add offices that would not be directly associated with shopping centre's services. The presence of working people would give shopping centres the inner city atmosphere which has been seen to increase the positive interaction in shopping centres. More about the effects of the atmosphere is written in chapter four.

SUMMARY

A shopping centre is an enclosed area that provides good shopping environment operated by one management company. Shopping centres are developing towards multifunctional centres offering not only shopping but also different services and recreational opportunities such as health centres, fitness centres, banks, kindergarten and even educational facilities.

Shopping centres have been criticized for their similar looks and plaguing their ideology from each other. Shopping centres have seen as a threat to city centres since their ever-growing attractions.

Today's shopping centres are also used as meeting places and they offer resting areas, baby rooms etcetera, in a safe, secured environment. In smaller cities, shopping centres can represent a "*second*" town.

4. THEORY

In order to gain understanding of the consumers' buying motivations in the context of the shopping phenomenon, their shopping behaviours towards retailers must be studied.

In this chapter, the relationship between the buyer and seller is studied. Consumer behaviourism is the field that studies the buying decision process of individuals, considering both economical and social factors around it. This research aims to create a link between shopping behaviour and the environmental settlements and to study the development of consuming over the years. Especially the significance of atmospherics in shopping centres is studied in the chapter. The main theory is further developed on Baker's et al. (1992) model of elements in holistic shopping behaviour that evaluates the feelings that are aroused by the store atmosphere. Baker's et al. (1992) theory in relation to the findings of this study will strive to eventually unfold the research question.

The following chapters are to explain consumer behaviour in a retail context.

4.1 The development of consumer behaviour

According to Solomon (1994:6) consumer behaviour is *"a study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires."*

As a term, consumer behaviour is wide-ranging. Earlier on the term has been linked to the moment where customer purchases the product from seller. However, it has been pointed out, that multiple processes and phases can be identified in consumer behaviour. Belch (1998) describes these processes as *"the activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires."* Normally consumer behaviour is studied from an individual point of view but it can also be analysed in the context of an organization or a group. Two main factors are closely related to this behaviour and indeed are the motives behind it: the will to buy and the ability to buy (Laaksonen, 2010: 535).

Shopping has become a part of our everyday culture: it does not only consist of purchasing products but also sustaining social relationships and seeking for adventures and stimulations. The consumer behaviour is a multi-filament phenomenon and it cannot be approached from only one direction (Kirkup & Rafiq, 1994). That is the reason why it has been inspected widely in the history of science. As the shopping behaviour changes rapidly alongside to the development of the society, it will be studied widely also in the future in order to understand its complicated innermost (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

The consumers' shopping behaviour has developed enormously in the course of life. The globalization and the revolution of information society have brought high extent of

information for consumers (Moye & Kincade, 2003). The focus on shopping behaviour has shifted from supplying goods to seeking experiences and the hedonistic significance has challenged utilitarian needs. Consumers have the tendency to demand for more, whether it is for social or ecological liability or experiential providing (Turley and Milliman, 2000). Shopping centres are the prime example of institutions that represent not only the commodities from around the world but the evolution of the consumer society (Sedlmaier, 2005:10).

Nowadays consumers have more power to centralize their choices and they are willing to go a step further in their decisions. Consumers can test a product in a store but order it from somewhere else, for example the internet (Markkanen, 2008). The consumer behaviour is multi-filament and there has been many new paths created during the last two decades (Parsons, 2003).

It is still quite common that consumers choose low prices and wider selection over locational convenience in hypothetical decision-making, but location and especially distance are still decisive variables when people are performing their everyday shopping (Marjanen 1997:145). This behaviour is being emphasized especially in the countryside; small stores succeed relatively nicely in a dominantly agricultural environment far from municipal centres (Home, 1990:90).

4.2 Consumer motivations and needs in retail context

Consumers have many different reasons for utilizing shopping centres. Often shopping centres are trying to offer services within every sector simultaneously: meet as many needs as possible. When consumers are shopping in a retail store they are affected either by their utilitarian needs (buying an item they need in order to complete the task) or hedonistic needs (buying an item for an entertaining, recreational or emotional experience). In other words, consumers can search for functional (utilitarian) or enjoyable (hedonistic) benefits. Utilitarian motivations are described task related and rational where 'accomplishment' is the force beyond the action. Hedonistic motivations are the facets of consumer behaviour related to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982:92). Earlier on, when people did not have much money to spend on trivialities, the shopping was more of an utilitarian activity. However, nowadays people have more time and money, which means that shopping is a fun way to spend time and more recreational than earlier. Groceries and daily consumer goods, on the other hand, are still mostly purchased based on the economic and utilitarian needs (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982:92).

Shopping motivation refers to the processes that cause people to behave in a certain way (Solomon, 1994:34). Often shopping centres are trying to create atmospherics that serve especially people's hedonistic needs. Researches have showed that the key motivator words for hedonistic shopper are adventure, value, social, gratification and idea shopping (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

However, researches point out that all shopping experiences consist of the combination of both utilitarian and hedonistic motivations. These two consumption motivations

should not be divided into two totally separate practises of shopping. While shopping activity may be mainly influenced by one type of motivation, the presence of the other will have an affect on shopper's behaviour (Moye and Kincade, 2003). With this in mind, positive shopping experience can be a result of either type of consumer motivation (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

One of the most influential theories of human needs has been the theory of Maslow (1970), which was initially developed in the 1940s. Maslow suggested a hierarchy of needs, from the most basic or primitive through to the most civilized or mature. According to McGoldrick (2007:88), Maslow's theory shows that people seek to progress through this hierarchy and, as needs at one level are satisfied, those at the next level take over. Maslow also estimated 'tolerated satisfaction levels', at which people typically proceed to next level, even though the lower level needs may not be 100 per cent satisfied. There are many other researchers that have argued for different kinds of needs. Foxall and Goldsmith (1994:151) have created a multidimensional approach, which introduces six different types of needs that customers are fulfilling while shopping. First there are physiological needs that can be fulfilled with products that allow consumers to get on with their everyday life. Second, social needs, when customers shop to express their dedication to a group, to show their group membership. Third, symbolic needs: people shop to achieve certain symbols of success, status or power. In addition, hedonistic needs are needs that are fulfilled through sensory benefits, such as taste, smell or sound and cognitive needs represent the need to know something. Finally, experiential need refer to specific shopping experiences that make the consumer feel good in a certain way. These theories are just basic examples of consumer motivations and needs. In this research, there is no need to go deeper with theories of needs because the focus of the study is not on any particular shopping needs. However, these theories are good to mention because they give a clear perception on consumer behaviour. This research is more focused on consumers' general attitudes towards shopping centres and the store atmospheric factors. See the figure 1.
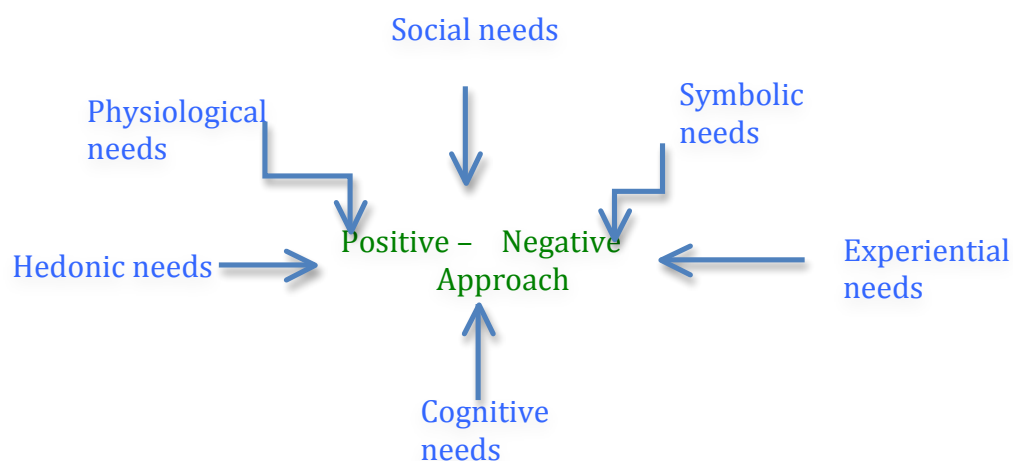

Figure 1. A multidimensional approach to consumer motivation

Source: Adapted from Foxall and Goldsmith (1994:151)

In everyday shopping, behaviour can be defined for example by the way consumers shop after a working day. After a long day, consumers only have a limited amount of energy and time. The nature of the consumer's job will presumably have a bigger effect on their everyday shopping behaviour than the locations of home or shops. McGoldrick (2002:87) demonstrates that it is in the interests of the retail strategists to go 'back to basics' in their attempt to try and understand consumer motivates, since otherwise there is a tendency to get confused with needs and solutions (McGoldrick, 2002:87).

Understanding consumer behaviour will certainly help retailers to strengthen their sales. When customers have identified the need for something, for example a new laptop for a student, they begin to look for information. The amount of information gathered is related on the value customer feels that can be gained from the search: the knowledge the customer has on the product types and the amount of money he is prepared to spend in order to satisfy his needs (Levy & Weitz, 2009:99). Furthermore, these days almost every shopping centre have information on their opening hours and special offers available in the internet. The second stage in the buying process is when people are evaluating their possible purchase and visit the venue. These first steps are the most important for shopping centres when trying to gain the interest of new customers and lure them to visit their centre. After the purchase, shops are often trying to build a loyalty between the customer and shop. They might offer services that entice people to visit the particular retailer again. These services can also benefit the other retailers in the shopping centre and help them to get new visitors (Levy & Weitz, 2009:100-101).

Kirkup and Rafiq (1994) argue, that retail development is a stimulator in the regeneration of the physically, socially and economically neglected areas. They conclude that retail development contributes to a new social network; the improvements in landscaping can contribute toward the wholeness of the area which could be perceived as positive development.

Babin (1994) explains that sometimes the consumers' shopping motives influence other shopping behaviours than the acquisition of goods. The non-fictional reasons, such as social motives including the chance of meeting friends in shopping centres are an example of this. Furthermore, personal motives, such as simply getting out of home or seeking diversion from other tasks can act as a motive to go to shopping centres.

4.2.1 From rational consumer to experiential consumer

Traditionally, rational decision-making has been identified through rational consumption. In this simplified, normative model the path has four steps; (1) recognizing a problem and establishing consumer goals and needs, (2) gathering the information, (3) evaluating the data and (4) taking action (Wood 1998: 296-297). In this hypothesis, the consumer has economically ideal understanding of markets and product choices. The choice is purely based on rational arguments. In the real life, consumers' decision making process is a lot more complex and it deviates significantly

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from rational decision-making model. It has been widely recognized since Edward Tauber's (1972) pioneering article *Why people shop*?" proved that the social and individual motives are important when studying consumer behaviour. Consumers can shop just to gain recreational matters or in search for social interaction. He also found a number of personal motives inspiring shopping including boredom or loneliness and social motives such as status, authority or the pleasure of bargaining (Tauber, 1972).

Nowadays, it is clear that shopping is motivated by many different elements, not just satisfying needs. The value of shopping gathers all the qualitative and quantitative characteristics, subjective and objective factors, which all together form the shopping experience (Schechter 1984). Hirschman and Holmbrook (1982) describe consumers either as problem-solvers or seekers of *fun, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation or pleasure*. It has been stated, that interpreting shopping behaviour only with rational arguments, senses and benefits, is too narrow-minded. Recreational browsing often is the dominant tendency; shopping is more about browsing the stores and seeking impulse purchases (Babin etc. 1994).

The holistic shopping experience involves the customers' cognitive, emotional, affective and physical response to the retail environment. It is created with the preceding elements but there might also be additional elements that can not be influenced by the retailers (Verhoef et al., 2008:32)

4.3 Model of comprehensive shopping

Laaksonen (2010: 575) has divided shopping behaviour into three different sectors: shopping orientation, shopping behaviour and shopping environment. See the figure 2.

Shopping orientation

Shopping behaviour   *Shopping environment*

Figure 2. Model of elements in holistic shopping behaviour
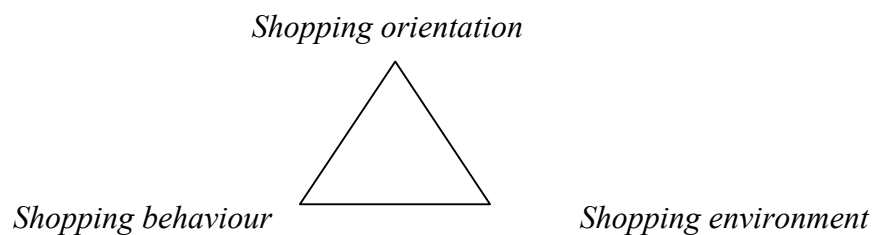
Source: Laaksonen, 2010:575

Shopping orientation can be identified in many different ways and there is certain evidence of the relationship between shopping orientations and store attributes in retail studies. Bellenger and Moschis (1982: 374) describe that shopping orientations are mental states that result in various general shopping patterns. Moschis (1992) also

states that shopping orientations are used to categorize shoppers based on their shopping experiences, activities, interests and opinions about the process. According to Laaksonen (2010: 575), shopping orientation indicates consumers to act in certain way in a certain environment. Consumer motives and attitudes are behind this competence, which has developed through consumers' learning processes. Shopping orientation is a relatively stable way to evaluate consumer's observations; how consumer sees the supply of the store and how he experiences the energy in that certain environment. Shopping orientation is an essential element in defining the continual behaviour model. It offers simplified base for decisions by guiding the processes toward certain stores or product groups.

All things equal, people generally behave in a manner consistent with their intentions and attitudes. Hawkins et al. (2001:394) define attitude as *"an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of our environment"*. Attitudes are the leading variables of behaviour. They play an important part in consumer theory because they form a crucial link between consumers' perceptions about products and the products they end up buying from the marketplace (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994:24).

Consumers are motivated to follow certain behaviour models and hold something at bay from their subconscious. Nevertheless, the changes in retail structures may direct consumers towards certain behaviour, such as supporting small stores for ethical reasons (Laaksonen, 2010: 575-576).

Bei and Chia (2001) explain how normally shopping involves a combination of goods and service. Three of the most common factors for choosing a shopping environment are quality, merchandise and price; consumers behave in ways that maximize their rewards or benefits.

There has been several studies that divide shopping orientations into different categories. Stone (1954) was the first to categorize shoppers into economic, personalizing, ethical, and apathetic dimensions. Economic shoppers were described as having troubles with finance, personalizing shoppers preferred to shop in local stores, ethical in neighbourhood stores and apathetic shoppers had no interest in shopping at all. Boone, Kurtz, Johnson & Bonno (1974) came up with similar set dimensions 20 years later. Their shopping orientation is focused on location and behaviour, which means that it features cognitive, affective and co-national characteristics (Laaksonen 2010: 575).

As the society and shopping developed to their current state, the shopping dimensions have also progressed into their modern society form. Moye and Kincade (2003) have found six remarkable orientation factors for clothes shopping; confident, brand conscious, appearance conscious, convenience, bargain and decisive factor. As the previous example indicates, the consumers' motivations are underlined with hedonistic needs. This was the total opposite a few decades ago. These days it is very important to please people's hedonistic needs.

4.4 Shopping environment and retailing atmospherics

To enable a thorough analysis on the behavioural factors that people generate toward shopping centres, it is crucial to identify the various elements of store environment. The design of a shopping centre has become one of the most important factors to attract customers. According to Dylan (2007), atmospherics refer to "*the design of an environment through visual communications, lighting, colours, music and scent that stimulate customers' perceptual and emotional responses and ultimately affect their purchase behaviour*". Nowadays people are demanding more from the shopping facilities and there should be some extra stimulations available. Ambient factors are typically described as background conditions in the environment (Baker et al., 1992). McGoldrick (2002:254) explains that major industries have been formed around the store design although the holistic picture for retail design has not yet been formed.

Generally, customers do not even notice these factors unless they exceed an acceptable range, such as if the music is played too loud, even if they recognise the ability to modify in-store behaviour through the creation of an atmosphere. Turley and Milliman (2000) made a review of 60 experiments that manipulated portions of a store's complex atmosphere where they found statistically significant relationship between atmospherics and shopping behaviour. They found that the effect of the retail environment on consumer behaviour is both strong and stable, and it can be shaped to increase positive shopping behaviour. Normally these factors are used converted and successful stimuli gives the best possible result for retailing. However, if these factors are used alone, without taking the other factors in the store environment into account, the result might be even worse than without any ambient stimulation (Markkanen, 2008).

In the field trip to one of Sweden's most modern retail centres, Bromma Blocks in Stockholm (conducted by the social sciences and retail master class of Lund University in October 2010), the feeling of great stimuli was experienced. A great example of a shopping centre creating nice and relaxed atmosphere by using recreational, simulative tools was the lounge room found in Bromma Blocks. There the consumers could play table tennis or rest their feet on one of the comfortable sofas and listen to the music played by the DJs. Modern shopping centres have common areas that look like a typical living room: large sofas, free newspapers and even board games available. Bromma Blocks advertises itself as a place where historic buildings have been integrated with modern and innovative architecture (Bromma Blocks, 2010). Bromma Blocks comprises some 80 shops located in old hangars that create this area's special character and atmosphere.

The design of a store must be consistent with the image they want to highlight. In Bromma Blocks, they have built venues by using audacious ideas and old functions of the buildings that has been carefully preserved. The hangar gates and façades have been preserved, as have the lattice girders that hold up the roof. Even the smallest details might give impressions of something, like the shining marble-effect in floorings give the impression of cleanliness (Cox & Brittain, 2004). The in-store environment should provide pleasant ambience but also a unique experience to customers. In the next chapter the store elements of a shopping centre are categorized.

According to McGoldrick (2002), four main dimensions of atmosphere in the retail context are visual sight (colour, brightness, size and shapes), aural (sound, volume, pitch and tempo), smell (scent and freshness) and touch (softness, smoothness and temperature). According to Baker et al. (1992:448) the retail environment has the potential to be an effective and powerful marketing tool if the retailers have a deep understanding on how to utilize it.

The following chapters discuss and introduce the expansive theory that represents the factors that form the environmental stimuli, an important part of atmospherics.

4.5. The model of environmental stimuli in store environment

As demonstrated earlier in this study, there are many methods and elements concerning the approach of store environment. One of the first introductions to the influence of retail store environments on consumer perceptions and behaviour was carried out by Kotler (1973), when he wrote about the "*atmospherics*" concept. He discussed the environmental impacts of store interiors and suggested that a store's atmosphere creates a retail image in the shoppers mind. His theory was later adapted by two environmental psychologists, Russel and Mehrabian (1974). In Russel and Mehrabian's (1974) M-R model they hypothesized that pleasure has a significant relationship with the overall approach-avoidance measures. This model proved that emotions, evoked by shop environments, are related to consumer behaviour, and further, to buying behaviour.

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) later evaluated the favourable feelings aroused by store atmosphere. Their theory also studied the possible negative affects stemming from store environments. The theory suggests that environmental state affects people's emotional state and it defines whether the consumer wants to stay in the environment or not. This theory helps retailers to choose various combinations of these factors according to their needs. When environmental stimulant has been formed, Donovan and Rossiter's model suggests that it will produce an emotional state. Emotional state can be characterized in terms of three different dimensions, also known as the *PAD-model: Pleasure – Displeasure, Arousal – Avoidance, Dominance – Submissiveness*. 'Pleasure' measures the extent in which a person feels good, joyful, happy and satisfied in the situation. 'Arousal' refers to whether the person feels excited, stimulated, alert and active or not. A high-load (arousing) pleasant environment is said to produce approach behaviours, whereas a high-load unpleasant environment is said to produce avoidance behaviours. 'Dominance' shows the scale in which the person feels in control of the situation and free to act. (Donovan & Rossiter 1982).

The assumption has been tested and it has been confirmed that a positive emotional state has a positive effect on buying and time spent in the environment. In the contrary, a negative emotional state has a negative impact on the time spent in the environment and buying decisions (Donovan, et al, 1994). Later on this theory was further developed and divided into three critical dimensions by Baker, Grewal and Levy (1992): social, background and design factors. Figure 3 shows the model used.

After dividing environmental stimulants into three different dimensions it is also easier to adapt them into retail context. In this theory social factors are the people that are present in environment, normally the customers and the staff. Background factors, or also called the ambient factors, are conditions in the environment, such as music, lightning and room temperature. Design factors include the visible and physical elements, for example architecture and the materials used in the building. The findings were that this model actually works in a retail environment and the connection between arousal and behaviour is more explicit than between pleasure and behaviour (Baker et al., 1992).

In the next chapters, design, background and social factors will be considered and the elements forming these factors in shopping centres will be studied.

Environmental Stimuli	Emotional State	Approach or Avoidance
Design Factors -Layout -Signs -Architecture **Background Factors** -Colour -Lightning -Music -Scent -Temperature **Social Factors** -Staff -Events and activities -Shoppers -Social responsibility	Pleasure or Arousal	Response
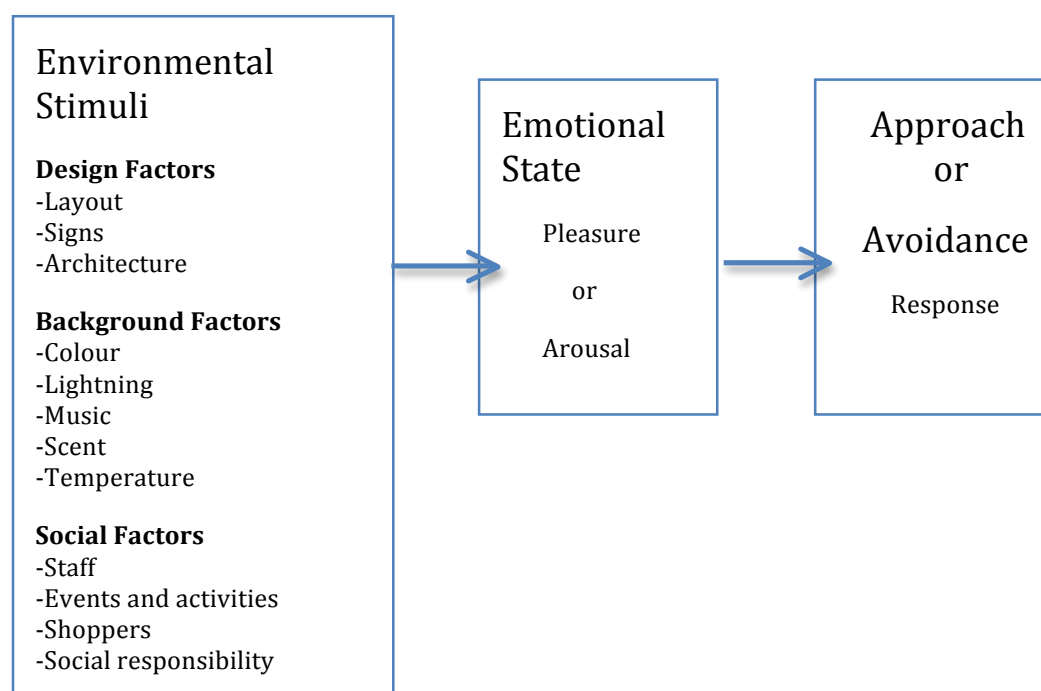
Figure 3. Extend model of store atmospherics

Source: Adapted from Baker et al. (1992)

4.5.1 Background factors

Background factors or, as often described, ambient factors, include music, temperature, lighting and noise (McGoldrick, 2002:460). Normally people do not even notice these factors unless the temperature is set on too high, or the music is played too loud.

The visual dimension is often related to the use of colours and the way colours and effect the human brain has been widely studied. Different colours create different stimulants and it is important to know which colours would have a desired impact in a certain environment (Markkanen, 2008). For example, it is good to have lighting with warm shades close to the cashier, such as red, because it creates a feeling of safety in

the customer and can even encourage them to make some unplanned purchases (McGoldrick, 2002:461). On the other hand, if they control the whole room, these warm colours could make the shopping experience unpleasant, so can be beneficial to mix in cool colours such as blue (Nordfält, 2007). Colours are also associated with feelings and for example violet can have even an aggressive psychological affect on people (McGoldrick, 2002:461).

Lighting is part of the overall atmosphere but it can be a design factor too. Furthermore, Areni and Kim (1994) state, that people tend to purchase products remarkably more under bright lighting than under soft lighting.

Music plays an important role in forming the right retailing atmosphere in shopping centres – it controls the pace of the traffic in them by creating a certain image with its tempo (Markkanen, 2008). Music can control and separate areas and sectors and it can easily be changed, for example specific type of music can be played at certain times of the day. Normally shopping centres are playing the same music in all the corridors but independent retailers choose their music according to their customer segmentation or demographics, like playing Latin music in stores that attract Hispanic population. Slow music normally encourages shoppers to slow down and helps people to relax and that is the reason why stores often use classical music (Levy & Weitz, 2009:531). Slow music, often called ambient music, is also the most researched element in the store environment in shopping centres. When ambient music is played, it does not make a big difference if it is played loudly or just in the background. The artist or composer of ambient music is often unknown and it has been found to slow the pace of traffic down. This fact can definitely help shopping centres during the rush hours. Music also influences the way customers react in the situation when they need to wait for service. Waiting music is often used to calm people down which is the reason why the volume of the music is sometimes higher close to cashiers. Pleasant music creates positive associations with the products in sale, which in part encourages the customer to buy the products. (McGoldrick, 2002:462). It has been proved that up-beat music improves sales (Nordfält, 2007:181).

Different scents can affect the way a customer perceives a store: either in a positive or negative way. Often it is better to have a store without a smell if there is no certain connection with the smell and the products (Nordfält, 2007:212). However, there are special aromas that have a positive affect in the store atmosphere. For example, Las Vegas casinos use aromas that rise and increase optimism and the smell of coconuts induce purchases of more exotic holidays (McGoldrick, 2002:463). Some places also launch oxygen so that people would not get tired and eventually spend more time and money in the venue. During the Christmas time a smell of mulled wine might stimulate a positive, festive atmosphere. For example, in American Apparels shop in Copenhagen, its staff spray their own perfume label all over the shop. People who have visited the place could recognize the same scent somewhere else later on, which would make them think about American Apparel. This is a good example of how a scent can create a tight connection with a specific product or brand.

Temperature can be seen as a very important factor for shopping centres in Finland.

Shopping centres offer steady temperature and this benefits shopping especially during the winter periods. Warm corridors attract people more than walking from shop to shop outside. Shopping centres are also protected from wind and rain. In Finland, winters are long and shopping centres are definitely benefiting from this.

4.5.2 Design factors

These days, consumers have high expectations for design and people are more aware on design factors than 20 years ago. Consumers are exposed to many ideas through different media, for example internet and television. The status and the layout of the shopping environment have become important factors so the design and the quality of materials should be in accordance with the quality of products they offer. People might act negatively if high fashion retailers are located in untidy environment. Shopping centres have to ensure their stores are trendy and portray an image that is appealing to their target markets. Even the design of toilets should be considered when building an efficient shopping environment (Markkanen, 2008:125).

There are many details that retailers should take into account in order to have a good retail environment and design. Flexibility is important for shopping centres because it helps retailers to move to a different area if necessary. Accessibility to all is also essential because centres should attract a wide range of consumers, such as families with baby buggies and people in wheelchairs. That is the reason why elevators should be placed alongside every escalator. Nowadays the information technology gives tactile appeals and enables the consumers to for example search catalogues by using a touch screen device. Tactile components are important because the first touch can often be the first step towards buying – you often touch trolleys before purchasing the actual products (McGoldrick, 2002:458-459).

According to McGoldrick (2002:466) there are some Feng Shui principles that can be applied in a successful shopping centre. Entrances and walkways, for instance, should offer free traffic and especially feeling of openness. Seating arrangement should be in a logical order and mirrors could be used to create the feeling of spaciousness. Plants are a source of oxygen and full-spectrum lighting increases energy and brightness.

4.5.3 Social factors

Social factors include all the people, including both store employees and customers, inside the store environment. An environment that creates a high level of arousal is likely to catch the interest of the customers (Baker et al. 1992). The employees of different retailers deliver the social image of the shopping centre. Personal selling is an important factor especially in stores with expensive, complex or infrequently used products (McGoldrick, 2002:458). It is the management of the shopping centre that has the responsibility to react if they feel that the behaviour of some retailers is not what they are expecting.

There are studies, that have suggested that large crowds could have a positive influence on shopping centres. In a crowded leisure setting people tend to value the lack of personal space. This is because they consider other consumers as an integral part of the service experience (Pons et al., 2006). Of course if the venue is fully packed, it turns into a negative experience; an overcrowded store is associated with low level of pleasure (Hines and Bruce, 2008). After all, positive emotions create a pleasurable shopping experience.

Nowadays, shopping centres are focusing their attention increasingly into the in-store environment. Pleasant ambience is important but in order to create a unique shopping experience, shopping centres are forced to rethink commonly used retail promotion techniques (Baker et al., 2002). The term *event* in retail context refers to the cumulative interpretation of associations contributed to events by consumers (Gwinner, 1997). Often events are related to the four seasons because they are ideally dividing seasons to quarters of a year.

Parsons (2003) has pointed out the importance of creating events in a structured and retail-controlled environment. In this environment, the retailer provides a recognizable temporary activity within the store that creates a memorable experience for the participating customers. Typical examples for in-store events are fashion shows, exhibitions and school holiday entertainment. However, there is a limited amount of researches made from the effects of event-based retailing in shopping centres.

There are many positive stimulants that inventive retailing events can offer its customers with innovative products and flashy store interiors, layouts and designs. Furthermore, they often promote the customers' hedonistic shopping values. Events are seen as promotional instruments where customers will be less indisposed in participating in the event and more likely to have positive evaluations on the products or services advertised. Typically this would increase the enjoyable aspects of shopping, which will eventually higher the sales (Leischnig et al., 2010).

Social factors are also related to shopping motives and the consumers' environmental concerns. In this theory, consumers are actually considering environmental aspects while shopping (Honkanen, et al., 2006). Also, the theory is connected to the consumers' lifestyle. Maynard's (2007) The New York Times article showed how the motive of buying "*green*" products or purchasing them from environmental sustainable marketplaces is a way for consumers to gain status and pro-social reputation. People with pro-social reputation are often seen as trustworthy and they easily motivate others to follow their behaviour. There are examples of Hollywood actors who have convinced people to purchase local food. This might sound far-fetched, but the same procedure could be transferred to Turku by getting local well-known people or clubs to support sustainable shopping places. This indicates that environmental solutions together with consumers' social responsibility could influence people's state of pleasure and eventually form a positive emotional state. Devinney et al. (2006:3) describe social responsibility as *"the conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs"*.

In Finland, most of the events arranged in shopping centres are either related to fashion

or sport. The sales are normally arranged right after Christmas and summer seasons and mid-season sales are placed between them. The idea is to clear the seasonal products in order to get more space for the items of the following season. Skanssi has two special days organised every year, when they promote their centre with campaigns and special offers. The widely advertised days are called "*Skanssiaiset*" (Skanssi, 2011).

One reason behind shopping centres building houses close to their market area is to fill their centre with social life all through the day. For example, Skanssi has started to build houses to enliven the atmospherics (Locus, 2010).

4.6 Retailing location and retail mix

The mixture of different types of shops and boutiques construct the retailing mix, which plays a huge role in making shopping centres more attractive. In order to build a successful retail mix, shopping centre management has to consider various aspects. A good retailing mix does not only consist of locating the right kind of shops to right places but also taking the consumer behaviour aspects discussed in the previous chapters into consideration.

By combining many stores at one location, the developer attracts more consumers than if the stores were at separate locations. The developer and shopping centre management carefully select a set of retailers that are complementary in providing a comprehensive shopping experience for the consumers (Levy & Weitz, 2009: 199-201). The ideal tenant mix in a retail centre includes a wide selection of stores that work well together, operate successfully as individual businesses and contribute to the success of the entire centre. The aim of retailers, whose stores are located near to other stores, is to benefit from bundling and agglomeration effects. Teller (2008) points out, that the retailers benefit from using the same infrastructure and infrastructural services such as regional traffic infrastructure, public transport systems and public toilets.

The grocery stores should not be taken as a starting point for developing an attractive shopping centre. The attractive shopping centre should invest in specialized retailers and especially in stores that can not be found from city centre (Heikkilä, 1998: 80-82).

Reasons behind selecting a specific store are normally expressed in terms of the positive attributes that help to fulfil shoppers underlying motives. The connections between these store attributes and consumers' motives are usually left to the imagination or to further investigations but retailing mix is one of the underlying key motives (McGoldrick, 2002: 92). From a consumer's point of view, retail store choices are dependable on their attitude towards consumption, which makes it problematic to research. Consumers' involvement level may be either low or high.

Retailers normally have three location options to choose from for their trade area: free-standing (a retail location that is not connected to other retailers), city or town's business district or shopping centre. Levy and Weitz (2009: 195) are describe the trade area as a *"geographic area that encompasses most of the customers who would*

patronize a specific retail site."

Building narrower shopping streets and growing numbers of shopping centres have been major trends in retailing. There has been no proper planning to manage the shift toward agglomeration with retail stores. Teller's (2008) studies prove that retail mix has, together with atmosphere, the highest relative importance in a customer's perspective.

SUMMARY

Above, some main theories from consumer behaviour to various consumer motivations are presented. Successful atmospherics together with a balanced retail mix has a beneficial effect on people's behaviour in shopping context. Different ways to influence the customers' shopping experiences and atmospherics include communication, united level of services and the availability of entertainment facilities.

Retail environment consists of various elements, such as design, lighting, music and services, that can be adjusted by retailers in order to achieve desirable behavioural practices with the customers. Understanding of the customer experience process is essential in creating a successful shopping centre.

Extend model of store atmospherics suggests that the environmental state affects people's emotional state which in turn affects the consumers' decision to stay in or leave the environment (Baker et al., 1992). Retailers can choose from various combinations of the critical dimensions introduced by the theory (social, background and design factors) to aid them in creating a desirable environment. The dimensions create either positive or negative emotional states, which have a significant effect on attitudes, buying decisions and time spent in the environment. This theory is tested in the empirical part of this study.

The empirical part adopts the structure used in the theoretical part. This aims to help the reader to get a better understanding on the topics and also to make the structure easier to follow. Furthermore, the interviews follow this same structure too.

5. EMPIRICAL STUDY

It is invaluable to understand the way consumers assess their physical and social environment on the actual retail setting. Eight people (see the appendix 1) were chosen for interviews according to purposive sampling in order to analyse how shopping centre Skanssi has succeeded in fulfilling the demands of a modern shopping centre.

The research was made by using semi-structured interviews to gain understanding of customers' behaviour toward shopping and their opinions about shopping centres. The questionnaire used as a base for the interviews included some 40 questions that intend to resolve the research question. See appendix 1. Two out of eight respondents had children of their own.

5.1 General thoughts of Skanssi and other shopping centres

Its accessibility was the main reason for respondents to show up in Skanssi. All of the respondents had arrived to Skanssi by their own car. This fact underlines the need of a car when making the decision to come shopping in an out-of-town shopping centre. Only one respondent had ever visited a shopping centre by public transport. Respondents said that even if there would be more possibilities of public transport, it would not make any difference in their current behaviour concerning transportation. Three of the respondents (male one and four and female three) answered straightforwardly that it would not even cross their minds to go to a shopping centre by bus or some other type of public transport. When asked to further explain their statements and their attitudes toward public transportation, respondents explained that instead of catching a bus, they would just end up choosing another shopping environment in a walking distance. Using car to reach shopping centre was natural to respondents: *"Why come to a shopping centre by bus? Shopping centre is a place where you can park your car easily and you don't have to mind the traffic" (male one).* An interesting fact is that all the respondents live in areas where public transportation is available. It just was not in their interest to visit out-of-town shopping centres by bus or public transports. They would rather choose the city centre for their marketplace where such effort would not be required; *"When going to city centre I could think taking the bus instead. In city it is much faster to walk between the stores. You don't have to find a parking place and pay for that" (male four).* Teller (2008) was arguing how consumers who are not able, can not afford or simply choose not to use a car for their shopping trips may find the central location more attractive. However, according to interviews this really isn't true because transportation itself wasn't a problem for respondents.

Half of the respondents stated that reaching an out-of-town shopping centre is easier than going to the city centre if there is a car available. Reason for that was that *"you find parking place easier in shopping centre"* (female one) and *"shopping centre is close to work and it is here on my way to home"* (female three). There was only one respondent, male three, that did not have a car available, but transportation itself was not a problem for him neither a reason to avoid shopping centres: *"Of course it is a bit*

more complicated for me to go to shopping centres because I should then loan a car and I can walk to city centre. But it is still rather easy to take a bus if I would like to go there". This respondent had arrived to Skanssi together with his friend. When asked if it would make any difference for him if he had his own car, he continues saying *"it wouldn't make any difference for me if I would have a car or not. There is just nothing in shopping centres that interests me"*. Respondent explained that he hardly ever visits shopping centres at all. When asking for reasons for this he explained: *"I am not just the shopper guy"*.

There was no consistent line in the answers of how respondents would like to develop Skanssi or shopping centres in general. However, three out of eight respondents wanted to have more services in Skanssi. They would like to see small spas and other places where they could spend time while their companion or children are shopping.

None of the respondent thought that Turku needed more large-scale out-of-town shopping centres, and two out of eight respondents criticized the need for Skanssi: *"Even this place is unnecessary"* (male four). The reason for this negative attitude was that the respondent sees shopping centres as a threat for his own neighbourhood. He explains: *"If there wouldn't be this shopping centre I wouldn't have to come this far to shop. If my own suburb would get some of these clients, they wouldn't have to close all shops there.* When asking the effects on that he continues saying from his own experience that *"always when there are new centres built it cuts clients from the small independent shops"*. It is true that shopping centres are mainly privately owned and they always look for economical success. This means that they do not necessarily have any obligations to provide functions that are not profitable. So the worst-case scenario is that first the suburbs lose their shops and soon all the services will be gone as well.

One of the respondents noticed that there is no gas stations close to Skanssi and that can be seen as a remarkable minus for people who want to fill all their needs and requirements in one place. However, Skanssi got its own gas station built during this research.

5.2 Consumer behaviour in retail context

All the respondents believed that shopping has become a part of people's life styles. It shows that shopping plays an essential part in people's lives especially in modern Western countries and in cities. Young adults are particularly interesting as a focus group as they can see the difference in their shopping behaviour compared to their parents' behaviour. *"I could never see my father coming to spend time in a shopping centre. He is more the kind of guy who just quickly purchases something he needs. For me shopping is part of my daily life culture. Shopping for me is more than just shopping, like meeting friends and seeking inspiration"* (female four).

This answer is a perfect example of the ideology that the change of shopping behaviour represents. As mentioned earlier, shopping behaviour has changed from supplying goods to seeking experiences and the hedonistic significance has challenged utilitarian needs. The hedonistic needs were substantially represented in the respondents'

answers. Hirschhman and Holmbrook (1982) divided consumer behaviour into two categories, the problem-solvers and seeker consumers. This survey clearly demonstrates that the respondents were seekers; shopping is all about sensory stimulation and pleasure where recreational browsing has a dominant tendency.

Some consumers tend to go shopping just to update their knowledge on latest trends or new products. Female three thinks that shopping centre is an easy way to get the latest trends and products: "*I think you can see the latest updates and trends easily in shopping centre. You can just browse and jump to different stores easily. Going to shopping centre is an easy and fast way to see the latest trends and products*".

5.3 Consumer motivations and needs toward shopping centres

The respondents came to Skanssi in search for hedonistic benefits. They were more interested in just browsing the stores and seeking experiences than satisfying their utilitarian needs. However, they found it important that shopping centre also offers basic groceries and daily consumer goods.

There were three utilitarian and five hedonistic consumers among the respondents. All the respondents believed that the social factor is one of the main motivations for people to go to shopping centres: "*For me shopping centres represent a place where you meet your friends and people in general. Sometimes I like to go shopping just to see people without a need of purchasing anything*" (female four). Even the respondent, who had the most negative attitude towards shopping centres (male three), agreed that "*shopping centres offer a good place for some people to socialize*". Still, he himself was not interested to spend time in Skanssi.

The ones that identified itself as utilitarian shoppers thought that price and product accessibility are important motivators for shopping in shopping centres: "*Comparing prices is easy and there are so many stores in here that it allows a good comparison base between the products and stores*" (Male one). These three respondents described that shopping centres offer an easy comparison between stores and therefore add the utilitarian value to their purchasing.

When analysing the respondents' shopping motivations in relation to Foxall and Goldsmith's (1994) approach of six basic needs, the social needs had the most important influence among the respondents. As said in the theory part, people gather to shopping centres to see people and fulfil their social status: "*Yes, I come here just to relax and hang out with my friends. I guess it is part of my lifestyle to come here*" *(female three)*. When asking if the respondent believes that it enhances her social status, she replied: "*Yeah, you can say it enriches my social life*". The other things that were important to her were "*experiential*" since she wanted to "*see and be amazed by new products or ideas*" in her visits to shopping centres. It has been researched that particularly women find shopping an opportunity for social interactions (Cross, 1993).

When the respondents were asked to describe their shopping orientation towards shopping centres, it was often easy to see the attitudes that affected consumers'

observation: *"I think I always have the same orientation in my mind when going to shopping centre" (male three)*. He continued describing, *"it is somehow the same feeling that I always get when entering to shopping centre - the product is always the same"*. He continued that *"it is hard to change my attitudes to any direction"* and as Laaksonen (2010) describes, the same stable level of energy stays through the certain shopping environment.

There seem to be mutual agreement on how important shopping centres are for the people living in rural areas. Male two described how *"important it is to have shopping centres in Lapland for instance. The distances there are huge and therefore it is easy that all the shops are located under on roof"*.

5.4 Shopping environment and retailing atmospherics in retail setting

All the respondents said that generally they would rather choose to shop in shopping streets than in shopping centres if the atmospheric factors would be optimal: a sunny, windless day. Generally respondents thought that atmosphere in a shopping street is more authentic because it offers some extra elements, like smells from the surrounding areas, that shopping centres can not produce: *"The feeling or atmosphere is more genuine in city centre. I have this feeling that shopping centres are always a bit artificial"* (Female four). When asked for possible reasons for it, the respondent answered: *"Like almost every shopping centre sort of lacks identity"*. This has been the problem for shopping centres from its first decades, since 1960. People still think that shopping centres are operating with the same familiar concept: a lot of different stores and mixed markets but no specific characteristic.

Many of the respondents thought that the atmosphere of shopping centres is somehow unnatural. They described city centres as more valuable in terms of architecture and traditions: *"Architecture and old buildings make me think that history is part of my shopping experience when I'm walking and shopping in the city centre. I never get that feeling in shopping centres and that is why I don't go there just to hang around"* (Female four). According to Koolhaas (2000) the worldwide popularity of shopping centres has led to a decay of local identity. It has been a problem for new shopping centres to unite the local characteristics to their concept. Alf Rehn (Locus, 2010) criticizes the "one size fits all" attitude, which seems to be a problem for Skanssi's solutions as well. Too often shopping centres *steal* ideas, some even in the global scale. Male two was criticizing that shopping centres are still working too much on their own: *"They should unite their strategies and plans together with city councils"*. This claim is not necessarily true because as explained earlier, policy-makers are protecting city centres by tightening the planning permission (Lawson, 2000). Every planning process is strictly controlled by the municipality representatives.

However, all of the respondents, that criticized Skanssi's artificial look, said that they would think differently if they would have children with them. Male three expressed that *"I assume this environment is working perfectly if you have children. All the moving and factitious environment would be so with children"*. Two of the respondents

who had children (Female one and Male one), said that their shopping activities in shopping centres have increased after they got children. *Male one* described *"Shopping centre is a safe and controlled environment and it gives me time to do shopping while kids are playing in ball pool"*. It was interesting to realise how respondents' attitude would change if they had children of their own. Previously male three criticized the existence of shopping centres – how there are too many of them and how they are useless. But when he thought of the family perspective, he would *"presumably"* spend more time in the shopping centres. Other respondents agreed that in the future they might spend more time in shopping centres if they have children of their own. Female two explained that *"With children it would be much easier to shop in more controlled and protected area."* This is true because one of the aims of having guards and surveillance is to create a sense of security preventing unexpected activities. Female one explained she will be spending more time in shopping centres in the future because *"They are going to develop and offer more interesting services for me"*. When suggested there might not be any kind of development she stated: *Then I would be disappointed - I wouldn't come here more then, but I don't think that can happen"*. This answer underlines the importance of development. The level of service and shops must fulfil the rapidly changing consumers' requirements. If the new trends are not adapted to the shopping selection in shopping centres, it could create serious troubles for them.

The studies show that shopping environment creates retail experiences that strongly influence consumers' behaviour. Most of the respondents felt that generally, Skanssi offered a store atmosphere that pleases them. They really liked the big windows and the natural light that offers a nice atmosphere and a feel of nature itself. Next chapter will go deeper on the effects of design and atmosphere and Skanssi's environmental stimulation.

5.5 The model of environmental stimuli in actual retail environment

In a modern lifestyle, consumers want to have it all together; they demand for more and that challenges shopping centres to develop. This means that restaurants, social activities and events have a deeper role in shopping centres. The experience and enjoyment perspective become more relevant than fulfilling a commercial perspective of buying something. This sets higher standards for the environmental stimuli.

One of the respondents, female one, thought that an environmental stimulus has developed remarkably during the last fifteen years. She explained how *"shopping centres have developed remarkably after Mylly came to this area."* She remembered how revolutionary experience it was for her when she first visited Mylly: *"I remember being astonished of how different experience it was. The whole thing was super interesting. Maybe because I was just some 14-years old at the time"*. In the development of modern life, shopping has become closer to entertainment and experience. The same respondent described that *"even Mylly has developed from that time"* but how *"Skanssi has taken things even further with their Jukupark: now you can go climbing in a shopping centre"*. This answer is a good example of how wide

range of stimulus are affecting peoples' demands toward shopping centres. As Hirschman and Holmbrook (1982) describe, consumers that are seekers, just like this respondent, are seeking for fun things to experience and the wholeness of sensory stimulation.

In general, people had not thought a lot about things that affect their environmental stimulation in shopping centres. When representing these elements, like background factors, lightning and music, people realised that there are many specific aspects that form the stimulation, which eventually leads to positive emotional state and positive response. In the next chapter, environmental stimulation is divided into three different factors (social, background and design) by Baker, Grewal and Levy (1992). After dividing environmental stimulants to three different dimensions it is also easier to use it in a retail context.

5.5.1 The effect of background factors

At first, the respondents could not pick a specific thing that would be the most important environmental factor for them. The respondents were only able to give relevant answers after they were provided with a short introduction to different factors. The temperature *(background factor)* was the most crucial factor to encourage people to shop in shopping centres because they offer steady and pleasant environment: "*It is so easy to go there during winter time. You can leave your jacket to your car and go shopping lightly-clothed which makes shopping more pleasant. On the other hand, I don't want to stay inside in summer time* (Female four). Steady temperature was the pulling factor that brought people to shopping centre. Respondents felt that steady warm environment assures a pleasant shopping environment. Especially during the long winter periods it is good to shop in a place that offers steady temperature and lighting. The air conditioning did not produce any relevant benefit for respondents to go shopping in shopping centres during the summer periods. This is a very important matter especially in the Nordic countries, as the weather might not act as such an important factor somewhere where the seasons do not restrain outdoor activities.

People felt that progressive materials used in the shopping environment make the whole shopping experience more pleasurable. Respondents described that especially lighting is better in Skanssi than in its rival, Mylly: "*Of course ten years makes a difference. In here, they have maybe researched what they could develop from Mylly. I think the feeling of space is better in here; maybe the materials used in the building are progressive*". When asking to compare Skanssi's lighting with other stores, he continued: "*though I have seen better centres in London, for example. But those centres are located in city centres. Overall I like Skanssi a lot. Maybe it is because of the lighting*" (Male four).

Different studies have shown that people tend to purchase products remarkably more under bright lighting than under soft lighting. Good lighting did not necessarily make them to shop more but "*If the lightning would be awful it, might impair my shopping activity*", (Male three). There were not any other pulling factors than temperature

among the background factors. However, in the end of every interview, when respondents participated to the tour around Skanssi, three out of eight respondents described that lighting is actually really well planned in Skanssi and it might eventually increase their shopping motivation: *"When I look and think at the lighting now, after this tour, I would say that it has a positive effect to my shopping behaviour"* (female one). As Areni and Kim's (1994) study shows, people tend to purchase products remarkably more under bright lighting than under soft lighting.

On the other hand, one respondent described lightning as *"a waste of money – it just uses electricity and destroys nature"* (Female two). This same respondent thought that shopping centres should shut down almost all of their electricity after the stores are closed: *"Now when I pass Skanssi I can see their huge illuminated billboards. And it is not just the billboards but also the fact that they have some lights on inside the shopping centre as well. After the shopping hours I mean and this is just absurd to my taste"*. This answer is something that battles against Skanssi's idea of being a *green* shopping centre. As said earlier, since the early days of the construction process, Skanssi has taken care of the environmental matters. It also strengthens the fact that people are more aware of the sustainable development. Energy efficient ideology would help retailers to cut the electricity costs.

It did not make any difference for the respondents if there was background music played or not. However, one respondent (female one) thought *"Sometimes some stores are playing music too loud and it can be very distracting"*. Nordjält (2007:181) studied, that up-beat music could generate a need to shop more among the customers. However, the research demonstrates that it does not necessarily improve sales. This same respondent (female one) even said that *"It makes the situation really stressful and oppressive"*.

5.5.2 The effect of design factor

Respondents were asked to analyse design on the context of shopping centres. Male one described how *"Design is something that makes my shopping easy"*. When asked what he meant by the word easy, he replied: *"It is the wholeness that comes with materials and tiny parts co-operating well together"*. Another respondent, male three, found *"Skanssi's design very enjoyable. There are a lot of things that I enjoy, like uniform furniture and chairs you can find all over the centre"*. He continued by comparing Skanssi's design with an another shopping centre*: "I think, compared to Mylly, Skanssi has taken one step further with the design"*. As explained earlier, people tend to think that the *design factors* in shopping centres are lacking the history, which can be found from the old pedestrian shopping streets. Respondents liked Skanssi's modern architecture, but they criticized it for being a bit too artificial: *"I can see that Skanssi has put some effort of its design. They have thought about the wholeness of the centre. It is very consistent and fine, I think"* (Male two).

Five respondents thought that Skanssi had succeeded to form a complete, unique design around the premises. However, there were some things that could developed in

its design: *"At first, the layout of this shopping centre was disorganised. It took some time for me to get used to it. I would have needed some more signs around here"*, (female two). Layout was definitely one thing that Skanssi could develop. Four out of eight respondents answered that the signs in the parking lot are inadequate and *"It is impossible to know beforehand where to park the car if you just want to visit one specific store"* (male four). Respondent would like to know in advance, before parking the car, *"which would be the best plan to choose and where to get up to the store level"*. The same respondent thought that "*Skanssi should simply increase the number of signs in every possible entrance"*. It is good to keep in mind that this respondent, male four, is simply using shopping centres for buying specific products. He is not looking for arousal or pleasure but just simple products. However, like in this case, when the shopping experience starts with an unpleasant design environment (the parking area in the basement), it could produce avoidance and will definitely have a negative impact on the time spent in the environment (Donovan et al., 1994).

Except for the signs, Skanssi received a good grade for its design solutions. As Solomon and Rabolt (2008:68) describe, a well-designed store environment can fulfil consumers' shopping needs and create a pleasant, efficacious and enjoyable experience. One respondent (female four) also described how *"Skanssi has taken care of people with baby buggies and wheelchairs"*. As Baker's et al. (1992) theory suggests, feeling of open space and easy accessibility are important factors when creating a positive experience.

5.5.3 The effect of social factors

As discussed earlier, *social factors* are one of the main things that pull people to shopping centres and are an essential part of the overall shopping experience. The importance of the employees and the social aspect seems to be remarkable: *"I like to ask what fits me and discuss the products with employees"* (female three).

Respondents could not see any uniformity among the level of customer service in different stores. Some stores offered good service while the others did not. Setting up some standard rules on how to approach customers could be something that shopping centre management could think of in order to standardise and advance customer service. The respondents noticed that there was not any unite protocol in the service: *"No, I didn't notice any similarities among the service in different stores"* (female one). When asking if this would have a positive effect in her shopping experience she answered; *"Yes, I can see that I would appreciate if in every store they would welcome me with a smile and a simple greeting. Yes this could be something that shopping centre management could set up"*. Three out of eight respondents would also like to see more personal service in stores. As discussed earlier, this is an important factor especially in stores where products are expensive or complex (McGoldrick, 2002:458). People got the feeling that sometimes visiting stores does not wake any attention among the staff: *"Sometimes, like in half of the stores, I don't get any recognition when entering them"* (male two). This could be explained by the free flow fact; there are not any doors to open when entering stores. Sometimes people can enter stores unobserved

and that is the reason why they will not receive a higher level of service. However, this is not necessary a bad thing because *"I don't even need service. It is better for me to jump to different stores without someone harassing me"*, explained one respondent (male 1).

The location is always one of the key aspects when evaluating shopping centres' social functionality. One respondent saw that *"it is too far away from the other communities"* (male three). By this respondent meant that it is impossible to form bond to any community when location is totally isolated from other everything. On the other hand, he could not think of a better place to locate it: *"No, I can't find a suitable place here in Turku."* One respondent, male four, made an interesting observation, that *"you can't find much tourists in here"*. It is true, that large pedestrian streets in the cities attract a lot of tourists, which affects the commercial structure of the shopping streets (Heikkilä et al., 1994:34). When asking if the respondent thought shopping centres could seem attractive for tourists, he stated *"There ain't nothing the shopping centres could offer to attract people away from city centres"*. He continued, *"If this shopping centre would offer something extraordinary, like a thousand unique shops, it would come to my mind as a tourist to come and visit."*

Respondents had different opinions about how well Skanssi promotes sustainable development. Shopping centres could use sustainable development as a tool to create social groups with the same attitude and style of thinking. None of the respondents had heard that Skanssi has received a certification on its efforts toward sustainability development. Skanssi could further promote the sustainable environment by encouraging its consumers to use public transport or environmental products. They could arrange events and special weeks that would promote their ideology - now their efforts do not reach their capability. There was one good suggestion among the respondents (female four) about how Skanssi could promote their idea of sustainable development: *"Skanssi could reward the customers that come to visit their shopping centre by bus."* She was reasoning this by telling an example how *"last year I received flowers when visiting one shopping centre by bus"*. It would be interesting to see whether this type of campaigning would change the shopping centre's emotional state.

Three out of eight respondents believed that they always consider environmental aspects while shopping: *"For me it is natural to think about these things. It is my own little contribution to make the world a better place by being aware of my decisions while shopping"* (male two). Even the other five respondents believed that they think about environmental sustainability in one way or another while shopping: *"It is not always the first thing that I consider while choosing the marketplace where I'm shopping, but I feel it is important to know about these things"*. This confirms Honkanen's et al. (2006) theory that consumers are on some level always considering their environmental consequences, although it does not necessarily mean that it affects their final decisions.

All participants thought that events are a good way to strengthen the relationship between shopping centres and consumers positively. One respondent (female four) pointed out that *"events would affect the relationship positively if the experience is fresh and entertaining"*. She believed that *"shopping centres are still isolated in a way.*

They are not a part of communities so these events would be a logical pattern to unite its characteristic". The *'isolation'* from different communities has been a problem for out-of-town shopping centres since the beginning. Respondents could not give any suggestions on what should be done differently in terms of location and accessibility but they all agree that shopping centres should not be located too far from the city centre.

All participants thought that events are a good way to strengthen the relationship between shopping centres and their existing customers but also to get more new people engaged. Female one pointed out that she could visit events, such as fashion shows, together with her friends. She believed that *"events are a fun activity that provide good, free entertainment"*. However, female three was the only respondent who believed that events would really create a deeper relationship between the shopper and the shopping centre. Male two had a very positive attitude towards events and he believe large sporting events like *"sport oriented week"* would enforce the positive image around any shopping centre.

5.6 Retail mix in Skanssi

The problem with the similar range of stores in shopping malls in Turku appears to be well known by the respondents. A lack of niche stores seems to be a problem in every shopping centre. Consumers are searching for uniqueness and something different from the ordinary. The retail mix of Skanssi does differ from its competitors and that was found as a definite strength among the respondents. This study demonstrates that an interesting retail mix is an important competitive advantage for shopping centres. Niche stores are important but the large retail chains and basic fashion brands (H&M, Carlings etc.) have to be there to attract the mass of consumers. According to Rehn (2010) the similarity of many shopping centres is not necessarily a bad thing. In order to reach success and attractiveness it is necessary to have chain stores; it brings low prices, extensive selection of brands and good competition for sales.

The main shops that respondents demanded to have access to were related to clothes and footwear. Two out of eight respondents stated that a grocery shop is not necessary. In general, Skanssi ticked the boxes for what respondents believed define a good shopping centre: *"For me, Skanssi offers everything I need when shopping in a shopping centre. They have some stores that I haven't seen anywhere else. They have a wide range of clothing stores and some services that I have found useful too"* (female one).

Six out of eight respondents would like to see more specialized stores represented in shopping centres that you can not find from city centres. The reason for that was simple; *"If Skanssi would have some special stores, that I could find nowhere else, I would come here more often"* (female three). She also argued that *"this would definitely increase its shopping attraction"*. According to McGoldrick (2002:92) this would also higher consumers' involvement level and act as a positive attribute.

Female two thought Skanssi should diversify its retail mix by expanding the store

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range: "*I would like to see more shoe shops, why there is only eight of them in here? And I would like to see more specialised stores in general*". It seems that in every shopping centre they have the exact same stores". In contrast, one respondent (male four) argued that shopping centres have already become too big and because of that, retailing mix is not working: "*I hate to walk long distances inside shopping centres. It is just irritating if you want to purchase one item and it is situated in a long distance.*" This respondent would like to see different options in moving inside shopping centres. This problem has been recognized by the FCSC and they actually recommend building shopping centres no larger than 50 000 square meters (FCSC 2012:32). Skanssi's size is still considerably under the recommendation (33 408 square meters) but there are shopping centres in Finland that are close to 100 000 square meters large. It has often been documented by the FCSC (2012) that such trend produces undesirable regional effects. Its interests include societal consideration that can and should contribute to achieving sustainable urban development. On the other hand, it is hard to create a shopping centre that offers a variety of services and shops and interests a large amount of people but also stays in harmony with its surrounding environment.

One suggestion for a solution that arose from the interviews was to diminish the size of the anchor store. Seven out of eight respondents stated that Skanssi's anchor store is too large for their purposes. The store itself did not play an important role among the respondents. None of them choose to go to a shopping centre just to visit its anchor store; "*I never go there just to shop in the anchor store. I just don't see any point in that*" (female two). When asked for reasons behind that, the answer was similar: "*I can find supermarkets closer than this one. Why come here just to buy groceries? I come here to buy clothes*". This is something that should be concentrated on when developing new centres. People tend to look for smaller shops and unique boutiques in shopping centres and the interviews evidence that modern shopping centres would not necessarily need an anchor store any more.

One respondent (male two), with a very negative attitude toward anchor stores, came up with a good idea of dividing anchor stores into smaller units and scattering them all over the shopping centre: "*Yeah, I can see that would be a good decision. At least it would work for me. Then I could buy some groceries more often.*" He also justified his opinion by saying, "*it would save me a lot of time*". If there would be several small grocery shops it would also make shopping simple and more rational: "*I don't go to anchor store because it takes a lot of time just to walk and find one singular thing. Lets say that buying one bottle of milk is not worth walking 500 meters*" (male two). Maybe it could be more beneficial for Skanssi to have two or even three smaller scale grocery stores around the shopping centre. This procedure would not necessarily be easy to adapt into existing shopping centres. For example, Skanssi's anchor store Citymarket is by far the biggest shop. It would be almost impossible to cover its space naturally.

Male one gave another good solution for developing retail mix: "*I think they should change the whole structure of how they locate different type of departments and stores together*". When asked what he meant by that he said, "*Now you can find all the cafés and restaurant close to each other but they should be divided more widely*". This is true, although you can find some cafés located in different parts of Skanssi. However,

all the restaurants are concentrated in the middle area of the building. Maybe the shopping centre management could spread the cafés and restaurants out since it has been proved that the more diverse the shops are the more people are attracted to the area (Heikkilä, 1994:32). This proposition could eventually offer an interesting and truly distinctive retail mix in comparison to other out-of-town shopping centres.

One female respondent would like nanny-services in shopping centres because *"It would give freedom for parents to concentrate on their own shopping"*. This is a valid point since the interviews showed the ever growing importance of shopping centres to families. Shopping centres should definitely think of more creative solutions for families.

Overall, people were satisfied with Skanssi's retail mix and one respondent even explained that "it is close to perfect" (female four). However, male four thought that Skanssi should offer even more specialized stores that would eventually attract more young consumers and especially men to shopping centres. Same respondent also stated the importance of having some place, for example a sports pub, men could spend time: *"I think all the services have been made for women, like beauty shops"* When asked what are the pulling points for men to visit Skanssi he replied; *"The only reason why I am here is that there is a football shop you can only find in Helsinki. It is great that finally this shop, Duosport, came to Turku. It is the only reason why I've been visiting here"*. This answer stresses the importance of niche stores and especially the ones that are not found anywhere else in the city.

SUMMARY

Five out of the eight respondents answered that Skanssi's design and atmospheric elements are working extremely well compared to other shopping centres. It was described to be an *enjoyable, unique and consistent* place. Respondents had contradictory perceptions on whether the shopping environment and atmosphere have a vital effect onto their overall purchasing behaviour; prices and product availability are still seen as the most important factors. However, the environmental stimuli tends to play a significant role in their shopping behaviour.

As seen in the literature review, the development of shopping centres has changed alongside the society and culture, which has eventually affected consumer behaviour. Their social significance has changed completely from the sixteenth century shopping centre to the modern one. Customers' interviews have given an important tool to reflect on consumers' perspective on how they narrate the environment in the modern shopping centres. The interviews presented that although shopping centres are trying to adapt their space to the surrounding areas, there are still many factors that dissatisfied respondents. People tend to think that shopping centres are fighting and suffocating small neighbourhoods and that their area is unnatural. According to the interviews, shopping centres should act as a part of the community structure in which accessibility, housing and other services mutually support each other.

The most important background factor that caused positive environmental stimulation

was the steady temperature, because the respondents felt that it advanced their shopping comfort. However, when analysing this in a bigger scale and adapting the results to Baker's et al. (1992) model of store atmosphere, the social wholeness played even more important role. This might not have been notified by the respondents but it obviously has a big effect on consumer behaviour. Shopping centres should provide opportunities for social interaction and inclusion and it should act as a developing force for community ties. Too often people still see shopping centres as a loose part of community – without history and characteristics of their own.

The warm parking lot was definitely a factor that differentiated Skanssi from its main competitor Mylly. Compared to the other shopping centres in the Turku area, people thought that Skanssi's design is modern, more up to date. Respondents criticized the need of an anchor store. There was a good solution provided of how it could be divided to smaller units around the shopping centre.

The interviews proved that the respondents' awareness on the store environment affects their attitude and behaviour. Consumer behaviour in retail context (background, awareness, attitude) and physical environment of shopping centres (atmosphere, design, ambience) both worked as important agents in creating these attitudes.

Skanssi should promote their ecological ideology. Spreading the knowledge of their environmental awareness could act as a worthy channel to enforce consumers' positive behaviour toward Skanssi and shopping centres in general.

According to the interviewees, Skanssi's retail mix could benefit from having more niche stores, that are not available anywhere else on the particular economic area. Anchor store is not a necessity and it could be divided into smaller units throughout the shopping centre.

In general, women were more positive toward shopping and shopping centres than men. However, this was not tested in any particular way in this thesis and the interviews were not planned to outline the differences between genders.

In terms of improvements, shopping centres should try to change people's perceptions of them as places to fill their utilitarian or hedonistic needs to them as a social space just as any other public space. At their best, shopping centres act as self-organising public services (just like hospitals and schools) that provide shared resources to improve people's quality of life. Shopping centres should form and share spatial resources from which experiences and added value arise in ways that are not possible in our private lives alone (Mean & Tims, 2005).

6. CONCLUSIONS

After the literary review of ideas and theories related to modern shopping centres followed by empirical research complemented by additional sources (such as books, magazines, newspapers and online sources), this chapter attempts to bring different ideas together and draw new conclusions from them.

6.1 Research Summary

The aim of this thesis is to examine and unfold young consumers' attitudes and relationships towards modern shopping centres. The study has been carried out by first introducing the theoretical background of shopping behaviour and retail atmosphere and then experimenting their interdependence in an actual retail setting.

Relating to atmospherics, shopping centres should always ensure a pleasant feeling in their retail environment. Having a deep understanding on the customer experience and the way it is related to the retail atmosphere would be highly beneficial for creating a successful shopping centre. Shopping centre management should know how to create an easily changeable, dynamic environment that interests people in a rapidly evolving competition.

When asking the interviewees opinions on the research question, "*What kind of environmental factors are affecting consumer behaviour in shopping centres?*" there were two answers that were repeated: steady temperature (background factor) and other shoppers (social factor). The background factor, temperature, is quite reasonable because interviews were conducted on a day when the temperature outside was below zero. However, this verifies the assumption that shopping centre environments benefit from winter periods. Consumers enjoy shopping in an environment where they are not affected by the cold weather, wind or rain. This applies to every Nordic country. Shopping centres offer an ideal environment to spend time and meet people. However, respondents agreed that city centres and shopping streets offer more positive environmental elements, such as history and architecture, when weather is ideal.

Shopping centres' accessibility was also rated highly beneficial, although this factor is limited to those who do have an access to a car. As stated earlier, consumers who are not able, cannot afford or simply do not want to use cars for their shopping trips may find city centres more attractive (Teller, 2008). Every respondent who took part on the survey conducted for this research had arrived by a car, which explains why accessing the out-of-town shopping centre was not problematic for them.

People see that shopping centres play an important role in their shopping behaviour. The survey demonstrates that especially for young people, shopping is mostly about sensory stimulation and pleasure where recreational browsing has a dominant tendency. This also answers the sub-question *What are the young adults' opinions on shopping centres*? Most of the respondents described that shopping centres give a significant value to their lives. Shopping centres are places where they gather to meet people and have a good time. However, they would like to see more events,

recreational opportunities and people around the shopping centres. Shopping centres should offer even more social stimuli by organizing special events and ever-creative solutions.

6.2 Main Findings

The survey showed that an interesting retail mix, that Skanssi has managed to offer, and especially specialized stores are definite key factors for a successful shopping environment. Shopping centres still have to include large retail chains in their retail mix because they attract the majority of consumers. Niche stores tend to appeal to smaller target groups. The shopping centre management should consider these factors when finding shops that are somehow unique and interesting.

Another main factor that young consumers appreciate in modern shopping centre environment is the feeling of space. This is something that is quite hard to fix later on if it has not been taken into account in the building phase. Elements such as corridors can always be narrowed and divided, but enlarging them afterwards is difficult. This is something that shopping centres should take into consideration early the planning process when constructing new centres.

Parsons (2003) studied the importance of creating events in a retail-controlled environment. The interviews indicated that crowded environments fascinate people because they rouse social stimulation. Shopping centres should create even more events and services that are not necessarily related to shopping, for example sporting activities, and even a broader range of services. Especially young people's shopping normally consists of browsing the stores and seeking for impulse purchases – shopping centres are part of their everyday lifestyle.

The respondents' attitudes toward shopping centres were generally positive. They thought that shopping centres play an important role especially in the rural areas of Finland. Respondents would like to see shopping centres as their 'amusement parks' – places where they could spend time and meet friends and have a cup of coffee etcetera. The shopping in shopping centre is not just utilitarian and there is not always a need to purchase something when visiting them.

Respondents mainly had positive attitudes toward shopping centres and the development of the environment solutions. However, there was a critical echo behind some statements. Young people seem to realize that there is monopolization on the organized retail sector and certain stiffness among the management. More new ideas and critical thinking should be applied.

6.3 Practical implications

None of the respondents were aware that Skanssi represents green ideas and ecological themes in its environment. This should be something for Skanssi to concentrate on

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since the survey demonstrated that young people tend to appreciate ecological functions in their shopping environment. Using sustainable development as an underlying motive and social congruent would be one way to differentiate from the other centres. This could be an effective and structured way to change consumers' behaviour towards shopping centres. People would definitely appreciate the shopping centre management's awareness on the negative side effects they produce. Advertising their shopping centre as an environmentally friendly shopping environment would definitely bring a lot of good publicity for Skanssi.

In the recent years, Skanssi has worked towards achieving gold LEED-operations and maintenance certificate for existing building and they finally achieved this goal in September 2012. Skanssi is now the only shopping centre in Europe with two LEED-certifications, holding both the New construction (received in 2009) and the Existing building gold-level certifications. This would be a perfect time to release a campaign and transfer their ideology to their customers. Receiving certifications can have a positive impact on a shopping centre, but consistency in reflecting its actions according to this existing brand is extremely important. The interviews point out that there is still a lot to do for Skanssi to get their message through to consumers. LEED-certification could work as a tool to promote Skanssi's design and responsible building, and most importantly to highlight the fact that it received a high score in energy efficiency, site waste management, the quality of its internal environment and landscape management.

The management team should transmit these existing ecological achievements to the awareness of the customers. Without any transferring mechanism (according to the interviewees, no methods are currently used for announcing their ideology) it is not possible to understand the efforts Skanssi has made toward building a sustainable shopping space. The ideology does not reach enough customers only trough the website. If they would receive the "green" knowledge, which is already available, it could eventually affect their attitudes and decision-making.

It has been discussed in this thesis how management rules the shopping centre together with the politicians and municipal decision makers. When analysing it from another point of view, it is the customers who eventually run the business and decide where to develop. Their impact on the surroundings is a lot more important than the design of the shopping centre or the retail mix. However, because of the strict control of the shopping centre management over the public spaces in shopping centres, a limited range of events can be offered. Frequent and diverse events created for promotions and participatory functions would probably have a positive impact on the attractiveness of the centre and encourage harmonious atmosphere, but especially spontaneous events are still rarely seen. Miles (1998) criticized in his book *Consumerism as way of life,* how the management and retailers are controlling the shopping centres rather than the consumers themselves. The shopping centres appear to provide all the immediate gratifications of consumerism without letting people to make the decisions. Changing this consumerist lifestyle would need a whole new way to approach shopping centres and to see the wholeness behind the curtain. Also the local authorities and decision makers should provide a link to unify the existing areas and to push them to give their best social, cultural and economical capacity together.

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From the qualitative material gathered for the purpose of this study it is clear that hedonistic factors seem to have a bigger effect on modern shopping than the utilitarian ones. As said often in this paper, the pleasure of browsing and receiving experiences is a vital part of the young people's behaviour in shopping centres. Generally it can be said that young consumers in this particular sample are achieving hedonistic values and personal experiences while shopping in shopping centres but nonetheless utilitarian values also still play a part in functional shopping centres; it is important to find the right shop easily and to purchase the product effectively, without any exertions.

Maybe approaching shopping centres from a broader perspective would make sense. Perhaps a reasonable aspect to approach shopping centres would be acknowledging that it represents a lifestyle. Shopping centres offer a social space for people to practice their activities – whether it is making purchases or spending leisure time. Shopping is a part of life as is going to school or to work, not just a platform for filling hedonistic or utilitarian needs. Shopping centre are a public spaces, just like street markets and community centres, and they play a vital role in the social life of communities. They act as a 'self-organising public service', a shared resource in which experiences and value are created (Mean & Tims, 2005). As internet shops and social technology is designed to efficiently sell goods and services, shopping centres might actually be considered good. Shopping centre at its best can be seen as an example of a space with some unique attraction for tourists but most importantly a place that local people visit regularly to take part in important social functions and interactions.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

In this thesis, the empirical research was made with young adults. In future study, it could be interesting to expand empirical research on aged people and see what kind of environmental aspects they would appreciate and also how their shopping habits have changed trough out the years.

This study was done in one shopping centre region (Turku) only and not nationally. It would also be interesting to see if there are regional differences on the behaviour across Finland or on any national level.

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The questionnaire form

Background information

-Age

-Car

-Family

-Visits

Part 1 /consumer behaviour in retail context

Minkälainen shoppailija olet näistä?

What of the following buyer type describes you the best? (Foxall & Goldsmith 1994:151)

- Adventurous?   -Seikkailulline

- Value consumer   -arvokuluttaja

-experiental   .symbolic needs

- Social   -sosiaalinen

- Hedonic   -mielihyvä / tyytyväisyys

- idea rich?   -idea / ideoiva

                    ----→ minkä takia?

                    → Why?

 Millainen ostostentekijä koet olevasi ?

What kind of a buyer you feel you are?

Hedonic(hedoninen, nautintoon liittyvä vs utilitarian(käytännöllinen)

Hedonic or a utilitarian?

Impussiostos? Heräteostos?

Do you do impulse shopping?

Viihteellinen ostokäyttäytyminen (=kiertely, kahvittelu, hengailu? Yleistä? Kuinka usein per kk? Suhde ostokeskus VS. kaupunkikeskus

How would you determine you shopping behaviour? Do you ever just come here to walk around, have a cup of café etc.? Is that common for you? How many times a month do you spend your time in shopping centres? What if you compare this to your time spent in city centres? Why?

Koetko skanssin toimivan vihreiden aatteiden pohjalta? Vaikuttaako tämä ostokäyttäytymiseesi?

Do you see Skanssi as a "green-shopping" centre? Does this affect to your purchasing behavior?

Oletko huomannut merkkejä kestävästä kehityksestä Skanssissa?

Have you seen any signs of sustainable development in Skanssi?

Menetkö ikinä lisäämään ymmärrystä ostoskeskuksiin (vrt. Muoti uudet tuotteet jne.)?

Do you ever go to shopping centre to update your knowledge on current trends and new products?

Mitä ostokokemuksen pitäisi sisältää? Mitä aisteja?

In terms of feelings and stimulus, what are the attraction ingredients and sense that shopping centre should produce?

Miten vertaat niitä fiiliksiä ja tunnetiloja kaupunkikeskustoihin?

How do you compare these feelings and emotions to the feelings you get from the city centre?

Edustaako Skanssi vihreitä aatteita sinusta? Millä tavalla?

Do you find that Skanssi is representing green ideas or ecologic themes? On what way?

Vaikuttaako kestävän kehityksen aatteet sinun ostomotivaatioihin?

Is sustainable environment effecting your shopping motivations?

Tiesitkö skanssin saaneen certificaatin kestävästä kehityksestä?

Do you know that Skanssi has received an certificate of its environmental sustainability?

Part 2. Physical environment of shopping centres

Onko skanssi tyylikäs?

Do you feel Skanssi is stylish?

Skanssin atmosphääri? Kallis vs. halpa? Vihreä tai egologinen =feng shui? Sana mikä kuvaa hyvin?

What do you think about the athmophere in Skanssi? Is it cheap or expensive?

Tilava vs. ahdas? Valoisa?

Do you find Skanssi small or big? Light?

Does the lightning effect on your purchases?

Luuletko, että kirkas valaistus laittaa sinut ostamaan enemmän kuin pehmeä valaistus?

Do you think that bright lightning makes you purchase more than soft lightning?

Avoin, selkeä? Kiinnittänyt huomioita musiikkiin?

Open, clear? Have you noticed the music?

Moderni? Oletko nähnyt parempia jossain? Missä?

Do you find Skanssi modern? Have you seen better somewhere? Where?

Ootko koskaan kuullu mistään ympäristön vaikutus stimuleista? Osaatko kuvailla miten ne vaikuttaa sun ostokäyttäytymiseen? Taustaominaisuudet/valaistus/musa/ihmiset/socialliset factat ym?

Have you heard of any stimulies? Do you know how they could affect your shopping experience? Background/lightning/music/people/social factors….

Miten vertaat tilaa ostoskeskuksena, onko se stimuloivampi kuin kaupunkikeskustan? Millä tavalla?

How do you compare environmental stimulies between shopping centres and city centres? What ways is it different?

Tarpeeksi erilaisia kauppoja? Kauppojen määrä? Mitä kauppoja liikaa? Oikein sijoitettu? Täyttääkö sinun ostotarpeet?

Retail mix? How is it working? Positive-negative things? Well planned? Fulffill your shopping needs?

Onko skanssin sijainti suunniteltu niin, että se tukee ympäröivän asutuksen tarpeita?

Is skanssi locatde so that they support the structure of urban communities?

Part 3. General discussion about shopping centres / Tour around Skanssi

Minkä takia tulit tänään tänne

What was the main reason for you to come here today?

Määrittele ostoskeskus.

What in your opinion is a definition for a shopping center/ mall?

Mitä ostoskeskuksen pitäis sisältää?

What should a shopping center include?

Mitä palveluita? Mitkä välttämättömät?

What services? What are the most necessary shops/ services in a shopping center?

mihin erikoistunut /minkälaisia liikkeitä?

What kind of business firms? What kind of specialities?

Miten tavoitat ostoskeskuksen? Auto / Bussi / joku muu mikä?

How do you reach a shopping center? By a car, buss or something else?

Voisitko mennä sinne bussilla jos ei olisi autoa?

Could you take a buss there, if you didn´t have a possibility of an own car?

Matka km? Saavutettavuus, helpompi vai vaikeampi kuin kaupunkikeskusta?

How long way it is for you to come here (in km)? Is it easier to come here than to go to a city centre?

Ostoskeskusten soveltuvuus suomeen? Tarpeeksi turun alueella?

How do you feel the shopping centres fit into Finland? How about the area of Turku?

What is your general approach toward shopping centres? Positive – Negative?

Parkkitalo?tärkeä juttu että on lämmin?

Is it important to you that the parking lot is warm?

Muuttuisiko mielipiteesi jos olisi lapsia?

Do you think your opinion would be the same, if you had children?

Teetkö ostoskeskuksissa enemmän impulsiiviostoksia kuin kaupunkikeskustassa?

Do you do more impulse shopping in shopping malls than city centres?

Kausiluontoinen ostaminen. Onko eroja? Mielummin ostoskeskukseen talvella vai kesällä? Miksi? Fresh air kesällä? Tärkeä? Pitäisikö kauppakeskusten levittäytyä ulos? Ulkokahviloita, ulkomyymälöitä, kesällä ulkoshoppailukatu?

Seasonal shopping? Is there difference in your shopping during different seasons? Do you rather come to a shopping mall in the winter or summertime? Why? A breath of fresh air? Is the air-condition in the summer important? Do you think that the shopping centre should spread outside, with for example outdoor cafes, outdoor shops etc?

Milloin ostoskeskukseen/million kaupunkikeskustaan / mikä suhde? Miksi? Kuinka monta kertaa per kk kauppakeskukseen?

When do you prefer a shopping centre and when do you prefer a city centre? Why? What would you say is the relation between the two? How many times / per month do you go to a shopping centre?

Tuletko koskaan ostoskeskukseen ankkurikaupan takia?

Do you ever come to a shopping centre because of its anchor store, in this case Citymarket ? Why?

Koetko että skanssissa on enemmän muotikauppoja kuin muissa ostoskeskuksissa yleensä?

Do you feel like that there is more fashion stores in Skanssi that usually in shopping centres?

Mainostaminen?

Advertisment? How do they affect on your shopping towards shopping malls?

Suhde kuinka usein erikoiskauppaan vs. ankkuriin ostokeskuskessa asioidessa?

Could you estimate the relation of how many times you visit the shopping centre because of the anchor store and how many time because of the specialitystores?

Miten kehittäisit ostoskeskuksia? Miten skanssia?

How would you make shopping centres better? How about Skanssi?

Tapahtumat? Oletko ollut? Kenen kanssa? Mikä kiinnostaa?

Events? Have you been in any? With who? What´s interesting?

24h?

Mitä toivoisit lisää skanssiin?

What would you like to have in adition in Skanssi?

Plussat , miinukset?

Downsides and upsides of Skanssi?