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Critical Factors of Shopping Centre Attractiveness in the Opinions of Students – the Case of Poznan

Summary

The number and floor area of shopping centres are increasing in many Polish cities, regarded by consumers as one of their favourite forms of retail outlet concentration and especially attractive for young buyers. The purpose of this research is to present the empirical findings of a quantitative study into university business students' perceptions regarding the factors of shopping centres attractiveness. A pencil and paper questionnaire survey was conducted on a representative group of 278 students of one faculty at the Poznan University of Economics and Business. Its results were used to identify, with the help of exploratory factor analysis, the critical factors determining the attractiveness of shopping centres from the perspective of students. The results show the factors of shopping centre attractiveness from the perspective of business university students, with the following being critical: offer perception, location and decoration, comfort of shopping, entertainment, and toilet accessibility.

Key words: shopping centres, factors of attractiveness.

JEL codes: L81

Introduction

Young consumers, including students, form an important target group for shopping centres. Young people are increasingly becoming frequent shopping mall patrons (Haytko, Baker 2004), and therefore, as some authors claim (Crutsinger, Knight, Kim 2010), they constitute the future market for the sector. This might be due to the fact that young consumers feel a close link to malls and have a connectedness with them (Wilhelm, Mottner 2005; Altman, Low 1992, in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016). Thus, it is crucial to know in detail the preferences of this group, which may, however, differ across cultures (Abaza 2001; Spilkova, Radova 2011; Gentina et al. 2014) as well as according to the level of the sector's development in particular countries.

Previous studies into young consumers' behaviour in relation to shopping centres have touched upon many aspects. As Can, Kurtulmusoglu and Atalay (2016) point out, earlier studies have found that a convenient location for malls is important to the youth market (Haytko, Baker 2004; Tabak et al. 2006; Jackson et al. 2011; Sari et al. 2011, in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016). Entertainment was also found to be important (Tabak et al. 2006; Jackson et al. 2011, in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016), as well as hygiene factors (Jackson et al. 2011,

in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016). The study by Can, Kurtulmusoglu and Atalay (2016), for example, identified the following factors as having the greatest impact on the mall preferences of students in Turkey: mall programmes for loyal customers; traffic in the mall locality and the mall's parking facilities; the mall's facilities for disabled people; the quality of the mall locality; and the quality of the people visiting the mall. The present study relates to the crucial criteria that young people (students between 19 and 24 years old) in Poland consider when selecting which shopping mall to visit.

Over recent decades the Polish retail sector has undergone dynamic changes. The economic and political transformation which began in 1989 triggered a significant development in retail enterprises belonging to the private sector, both Polish and, to an even greater degree, foreign ones. As a result, in a relatively short time the sector became entirely privatized. Additionally, in the early 1990s shops representing previously unknown retail formats such as hypermarkets, supermarkets and discount stores began to appear (Wrzesińska 2008); and at the same time shopping centres began to emerge with the first modern shopping centre in Poland being built in Warsaw in 1993 (Mikołajczyk, Borusiak, Pierański 2014).

The development of shopping centres was possible for the following reasons, among others: due to the increase in wealth among Poles, who came to appreciate the advantages of one-stop shopping; because of the lengthening of work time; Poles are one of the nations with the longest working hours in Europe (Polacy wśród najdłużej pracujących narodów świata 2015); but also because of the many previously unknown facilities offered by shopping centres to their customers. Older consumers tend to perceive and assess shopping centres using their shopping experience under the previous economic system as a reference point; however, this is not the case for the young generation. For students today, shopping centres are more and more becoming "natural" environments, places which they have always known. Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson (1994) called them "consumer habitats" and, as such, shopping centres are not only being perceived as locations with a range of shops, but also as main urban spaces to spend leisure time (Dębek 2015), and this trend is clearly visible in Poland (e.g. Bosiacki, Rydlewski 2009; Wilk 2003; Rochmińska 2011). Consequently, shopping mall owners and managers need to address this tendency (which they have to some extent triggered themselves) in the management process.

The changes in respect to the shopping centres are especially dynamic and visible in the biggest cities. Poznań, the fifth most populated city in Poland, has one of the highest density ratios of modern retail space in Poland. In 2015 it was 755m² per 1,000 inhabitants, according to a report by Colliers International (Shopping centres in Polish agglomerations). The city is also an important academic centre, with the number of students constituting approximately 20% of the resident population. Students, therefore, are a significant group of customers for the shopping centres.

Hence, the aim of this study was to identify the factors which are taken into account when assessing the attractiveness of shopping centres by young people, represented by students of economics. Such research is important from both a cognitive and practical

point of view; with the increasing intensity of competition in the shopping centre sector meaning that owners and managers are more and more intent on identifying those attributes of shopping centres that customers perceive as the most important and which will enable them to attract more customers than their competitors do. However, it is worth mentioning that, generally, customers find it difficult to differentiate between malls. This is a significant problem for the sector (Barnes 2005, in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016), which needs to find and create the most relevant distinguishing features. At the same time, young consumers are still interested in modern shopping centres which offer new stimuli, ambience and information (Kusumowidagdo, Rembulan, Agus Sachari 2015). Two research questions were formulated:

- What attributes of shopping centres are taken into account by young people (represented by students) when assessing their attractiveness?
- Are these factors different in comparison to those previously identified in the literature?

Shopping centres attractiveness factors – literature review

Attractiveness in the retail trade, indicating the ability to attract customers, was traditionally analysed from the perspective of the theory of retail gravitation (Reilly 1931), which was associated with spatial interaction models (Komornicki 2003). In a more recent approach, attractiveness is defined as a multi-dimensional feature, consisting of a number of factors: factors related to the product and its attributes; factors related to the retailer, such as the range of services offered and the physical conditions of the business (e.g. the size of the sales area); as well as factors related to the customers, including their characteristics and their perception of retail establishments (Pan, Zinkhan 2006; Teller, Reutterer 2008; Charterina 2012).

The attractiveness of shopping centres is closely linked to the motivation of customers to visit them. Research conducted on this subject shows that two main motivations can be distinguished: economic, associated with the ability to make purchases; and emotional, associated with the possibility of having a pleasant time at the centre (Ruiz 1999; Nicholls et al. 2002; Mohammed 2007). Thus, numerous studies have identified both such attractiveness factors; those that may be subjected to a rational assessment (the number of stores, the price level), as well as those which mainly affect people's emotions (the atmosphere, the image of the shops/shopping centre). Table 1 summarizes the attractiveness factors indicated by the researchers studying this issue.

The above factors differ in their level of detail/aggregation, and, as the research shows, also in the force of their impact on attractiveness. However, they provide an important starting point in the search for the factors determining the attractiveness of shopping centres in Poznań in the eyes of young shoppers. Next, the attributes of shopping centres that potentially determine their attractiveness and which were included in other studies were analysed. These are enumerated in Table 2.

The number of these attributes is quite substantial, comprising over 70 features gathered in 13 groups. This multitude may be a consequence of the fact that the list includes the results of research conducted in many countries in Europe and Asia; namely Austria, Spain, Poland, Great Britain, Indonesia, Turkey, India, China, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. These places are characterized by having different cultural patterns determining people's lifestyles; including, for example, consumption patterns, ways of doing shopping, ways of spending leisure time, ways of fulfilling aesthetic needs, attitudes to values, and forms of coexistence in specific societies. In addition, these countries differ in their level of economic development, which affects things such as the state of the road infrastructure and public transport as well as the level of wealth (expressed, among other things, in the percentage of people owning a car). These phenomena can affect the perception of those factors determining the attractiveness of shopping centres. For example, if all the shopping centres are easily accessible, the location may be less important in the ranking of attractiveness factors. On the other hand, pay toilets in a shopping centre (which is the case in some shopping centres in Poland) may result in overestimating the importance of free toilet facilities as an attribute of attractiveness.

Table 1

An overview of the findings of research into the factors determining the attractiveness of shopping centres

No.	Author(s)	Attractiveness factors
1.	Singh and Sahay	Ambience Physical infrastructure Marketing focus Convenience to shoppers Safety and security
2.	Venkateswarulu and Uniyal	Appeal and convenience Amenities and atmospherics Ambience Personnel Parking and seating Restrooms Smell Security Size of store
3.	Teller, Elms and Reutterer	Atmosphere Retail tenant mix Merchandise value Ambience Accessibility Parking Personnel Orientation Infrastructural facilities

No.	Author(s)	Attractiveness factors
4.	Wong, Yu and Yuan	Location Quality and variety Popularity Facilities and sales incentives
5.	Bodkin and Lord	Convenience Presence of a specific store in the mall Services and prices
6.	El-Adly	Comfort Entertainment Diversity Mall essence Convenience Luxury
7.	Ahmad	Aesthetic Convenience and accessibility Product variety Entertainment Service quality
8.	Hui, Ning and Chan	Design-image factor Transport-marketing factor Commodity factor Service-tenant factor Relaxation factor
9.	Tandon, Gupta, Tripathi	Atmospherics Entertainment Tenant management Facilities management
10.	Dębek	Aesthetics Atmosphere Convenience Commercial capability Layout Leisure potential Perceived safety Social positioning
11.	Can, Kurtulmusoglu and Atalay	Sensory characteristics and employee trustworthiness Perception of mall quality Adequacy Physical features Accessibility and empathy Structural features Security and convenience Mall comfort and politeness of employees

Source: Singh, Sahay (2012); Venkateswarulu, Uniyal (2007); Teller (2008); Teller, Reutterer (2008); Teller, Elms (2010); Wong, Yu, Yuan (2001); Bodkin, Lord (1997); El-Adly (2007); Ala'Eddin Mohammad Khalaf Ahmad (2012); Hui, Ning, Chan (2016); Tandon, Gupta, Tripathi (2016); Dębek (2015); Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay (2016).

Table 2**Attributes of shopping centres that potentially determine their attractiveness**

No.	Attributes	Author/s (year)
1.	Accessibility (convenient location, distance of mall from home/workplace, access conditions, trading hours)	Rajagopal 2009, 2010, 2011; Keng et al. 2007; El-Adly 2007; Teller, Elms 2010; Ahmad 2012; Singh, Sahay 2012; Ahmad 2012; Hui, Ning, Chan 2016; Dębek 2015
2.	Parking (free parking, type of parking facilities, distance between car park and centre)	Ammani 2013; Dilek, Top 2013; Singh, Sahay 2012; Keng et al. 2007; Teller, Elms 2010; Hui, Ning, Chan 2016
3.	Infrastructural services/physical infrastructure (cash dispensers, toilets, child care, place to sit, elevators and escalators, size of the centre, facilities for disabled people, layout)	Singh, Sahay 2012; Tsai 2010; Keng et al. 2007; Kim 2002; Dennis et al. 2001; Teller 2008; Teller, Elms 2010; Hui, Ning, Chan 2016; Tandon et al. 2016; Mikołajczyk 2012
4.	Entertainment (special events, theme-based events, promotional events, entertainment events, cinema, exhibitions, recreational facilities, recreational area, play area for children, centre popularity)	Ahmad 2012; Rajagopal 2010, 2011; Khare, Rakesh 2010; Khare 2011; Farrag et al. 2010; Tsai 2010; El-Adly 2007; Ahmed et al. 2007; Parsons 2003; Kim 2002; Dennis et al. 2001; Can et al. 2016; Teller, Elms 2010; Tandon et al. 2016
5.	Aesthetics/atmosphere/atmospherics/ambience (aroma, music, lighting, décor, architecture, temperature, ventilation, cosiness, luxury)	El-Adly 2007; Teller, Elms 2010; Ammani 2013; Ahmad 2012; Cai, Shannon 2012; Singh, Sahay 2012; Rajagopal 2009, 2011; Khare, Rakesh 2010, Khare 2011; Tsai 2010, Ahmed et al. 2007; Keng et al. 2007; Parsons 2003; Kim 2002; Tandon, et al. 2016; Dębek 2015
6.	Tenant-mix/offer variety (specialization, diversification, product range, merchandise value, width and breadth of assortments, selection of merchandise, choice of major stores, anchor store, quality of the stores, variety of brands, prestige of brands, quality of services, human services, eating and drinking, catering)	Ammani 2013; Cai, Shannon 2012; Keng et al. 2007; Ahmad 2012; El-Adly 2007; Parsons 2003; Kim 2002; Dennis et al. 2001, Teller, Reutterer 2008; Teller, Elms 2010; Hui et al. 2016; Tandon et al. 2016; Mikołajczyk 2012
7.	Orientation/traffic management (crowd management, space management, ease of navigation, ease of orientation)	Keng et al. 2007; Teller, Elms 2010; Tandon et al. 2016; Ahmad 2012
8.	Shopping centre personnel (employee attitude, posture, politeness, friendliness, competency, supportiveness, reliability, knowledge, experience,)	Hui et al. 2016; Teller, Elms 2010, Can et al. 2016
9.	Security and safety (safety from accidents, safety while shopping, security against acts of terror)	Singh, Sahay 2012; Can et al. 2016
10.	Cleanliness (general hygiene, maintenance of flooring, clean washroom)	Singh, Sahay 2012; Tandon et al. 2016; Teller, Elms 2010; Dennis et al. 2001
11.	Prices (price-value ratio, overall price level, commodity price, number of price promotions)	Hui et al. 2016; Teller, Elms 2010
12.	Promotion (promotional schemes, advertising, signage, programmes for loyal customers)	Singh, Sahay 2012; Can et al. 2016; Hui et al. 2016
13.	Social positioning/socialization (quality of people visiting the centre, similarity of people visiting the centre)	Dębek 2015; Can et al. 2016; Dennis et al. 2001; Tandon et al. 2016

Source: own compilation.

Research methodology

The aim of this study was to identify the factors which are taken into account by students when assessing the attractiveness of shopping centres. Students (people aged 19-24 years at the tertiary education level) are a significant group of shopping centre customers both current and future. It is assumed that the attractiveness factors for this group of customers may be quite specific, different to those for other groups of shoppers. Based on the literature review presented above and the experience of the authors of this study, forty-four shopping centre attributes that may contribute to their attractiveness have been specified (Table 3).

Table 3
Shopping centre attributes considered in the study

No.	Items	'does not apply' answer (%)
1	The shopping centre has convenient opening hours	0.35
2	The interior of the centre is logically planned so it is easy to get around	0.00
3	It is easy to get around the shopping centre even if it is crowded	0.71
4	The information available in the shopping centre makes it easy to find a specific store (service outlet)	1.07
5	I feel safe in the shopping centre	0.35
6	The shopping centre has a sufficient number of parking spaces	39.00
7	It is easy to manoeuvre the car around the shopping centre car park	44.00
8	The car park signage makes it easy to find one's car	42.00
9	The shopping centre has conveniently located toilets	1.42
10	The shopping centre has a sufficient number of toilets	1.07
11	The shopping centre has a satisfactory number of cash machines	4.28
12	It is more comfortable to walk around a shopping centre if there is a cloakroom for customers overcoats	14.50
13	The shopping centre has a sufficient number of benches, chairs etc. for the customers to rest	1.42
14	The shopping centre offers easy access to free Wi-Fi	15.30
15	The shopping centre has a sufficient number of rubbish bins	1.42
16	The shopping centre has a spacious and properly equipped play area for children	40.70
17	Themed events, such as for example an organic product week or a French wine weekend, are often organised in the shopping centre	14.50
18	The shopping centre offers a range of possibilities for spending leisure time	2.85
19	The overall price level in the shopping centre is adequate for my means	0.71
20	There are frequent price promotions in the shopping centre	1.78
21	I visit this shopping centre because it is close to my university	1.42
22	I visit this shopping centre because it is close to where I live	3.20

No.	Items	'does not apply' answer (%)
23	I visit this shopping centre because it is easy to get there by public transport	7.50
24	I visit this shopping centre because it is easy to get there by car	42.80
25	I visit this shopping centre because it is easy to get there by bicycle	50.00
26	I visit this shopping centre because it has places where I can leave my bicycle	56.00
27	I visit this shopping centre because it is located in the city centre	3.92
28	I visit this shopping centre because it is close to some attractive places	1.42
29	The shopping centre is filled with a pleasant aroma	2.14
30	The interior of the shopping centre has an appropriate colour scheme	2.14
31	The temperature in the shopping centre is at a comfortable level	0.71
32	The materials used for the interior decoration of the shopping centre give an impression of high quality	1.07
33	There are some attractive decorative features in the shopping centre (e.g. fountains, sculptures, etc.)	1.07
34	The shopping centre has an attractive exterior	0.35
35	Appropriate music is played in the shopping centre	2.50
36	The shopping centre is clean	0.35
37	The shopping centre has a large variety of shops	0.00
38	The shopping centre has many famous brand stores	0.71
39	The shopping centre has a wide range of bars and restaurants	0.35
40	An advantage of the shopping centre is that it offers the possibility of using the services of a medical centre, banks etc.	14.20
41	The shopping centre offers an appropriate range of services such as dry cleaning and laundry, clothing alteration and repair, key cutting, etc.	18.90
42	The shopping centre personnel (e.g. the security staff, the cleaning staff) are friendly towards customers	6.78
43	The shopping centre personnel have sufficient knowledge to answer customers' questions	12.50
44	When in the shopping centre, I often have contact with the centre's staff	12.10

Source: as in Table 2.

In order to identify the attractiveness factors of shopping centres, the exploratory factor analysis method was used.

Factor Extraction (Exploratory Factor Analysis)

Research instrument and sampling

The data necessary for conducting the exploratory factor analysis were obtained by means of a questionnaire survey. The measurement instrument consisted of three introduc-

tory questions, 44 research items (the 44 affirmative sentences presented in Table 3), as well as demographic questions. The aim of the introductory questions was to identify each respondent's favourite shopping centre (independent variable) in Poznań. Then the participants were asked to express their opinions about their favourite shopping centre by means of the 44 statements. They responded to each of the sentences using a five-point Likert scale, where '1' meant strong disagreement with the statement, while '5' indicated full agreement. The choice of a five-point scale was based on the assumption that in Polish conditions this scale provides a high degree of internal consistency, as well as taking into account the cultural characteristics of Polish society (Białowas 2013).

The survey was conducted among the students of the Faculty of Management at the Poznań University of Economics and Business. In order to ensure the credibility of the research, the structure of the studied population was reflected in the structure of the sample, the variables being the academic stream (Management, Spatial Economics, Finance and Accounting) and gender. The sample structure is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Sample structure according to study programme and gender (%)

Programme/gender	Female	Male
Management	28	15
Spatial Economics	7	4
Finance and Accounting	26	20
TOTAL	61	39

Source: as in Table 2.

The sample size was determined based on the condition that at least five observations have to be recorded for each factor (item) (Hair et al. 1998). With the questionnaire consisting of 44 items and the adopted minimum of five observations for each of them, the research sample should not be less than N=220. Given the fact that some questionnaires might be filled incorrectly, it was decided to increase the sample by about 30% to N=287. Before the main survey, a pilot survey was conducted in order to test respondents understanding of the questions, the questionnaire duration, etc. The pilot survey did not reveal any problems with comprehending the questions; in addition, the number of questions, and thus the time allotted for completing the questionnaire, was also found to be optimal.

The survey was conducted in October 2015. The questionnaires were distributed among students during their classes. Each recruited student had to meet the sample structure requirements. After a preliminary assessment, 278 correctly completed questionnaires were accepted for further analysis. The other 9 were excluded either because no answers were provided or the same answers were provided to all the statements, suggesting that the respondent had not understood or had not read the sentences. Additionally, in the initial phase of analysis, those statements which received a relatively large number of 'not applicable'

responses were removed from the survey. As a result of this operation, a total of 17 sentences were excluded.¹ They related to certain attributes of shopping centres which proved not particularly important from the point of view of students. These included such issues as the ease of getting to the shopping centre by car, the ease of manoeuvring when parking, the availability of play areas for children, and the possibility of using the services of banks, medical centres, clothing alteration services, etc.

Data analysis

After reducing the number of analysed questionnaires as well as the number of statements to 27, exploratory factor analysis could begin. First, the results were subjected to Bartlett's sphericity test and the KMO (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) measure was calculated. Both the obtained measurements confirmed the basis for performing factor analysis (Table 5).

Table 5
The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin and Bartlett's tests

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy		.860
Bartlett's sphericity test	Approximate chi-square	2385.261
	Degrees of freedom	351
	Significance	.000

Source: own research.

Following a varimax rotation, the selected 27 statements were qualified for factor analysis. The analysis was conducted using the method of Principal Component Analysis. Based on Cattell's scree test (a scree plot), five groups of factors were created. Then, adopting a factor loading level of 0.4 as a cut-off point, all the factors were assigned into specific groups (Table 6).

The five factors combined explain nearly 57% (56.6%) of common variance: the first one explains 27%, the second and third 9% each, and the fourth and fifth 5% each. A scale constructed in this way was subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach's alpha. The value of Cronbach's alpha for all the 27 items equalled 0.89, which confirms the reliability of the scale.² Cronbach's alpha was also calculated separately for each group of factors. The values obtained for the coefficient also confirm the reliability of the scale as the vast majority of them reached or exceeded the critical level of 0.7. Only in the case of one factor was the value less than 0.7. However, some authors believe that any value higher than 0.6 is acceptable (Carson, Madhok, Wu 2008; Casalo, Flavian, Guinaliu 2008, in: Światowiec-Szczepańska 2012).

¹ The percentage of 'not applicable' responses for the excluded statements ranged from 15% to 84%.

² Cronbach's alpha over 0.7 indicates high reliability for the scale (Światowiec-Szczepańska 2012).

Table 6
Results of EFA

Factor number/ Explained variance	Factor title	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach Alpha
F1/27%	Offer perception	The shopping centre has many famous brand stores	0.79	0.84
		The shopping centre has a large variety of shops	0.77	
		The shopping centre is clean	0.75	
		There are some attractive decorative features in the shopping centre (e.g. fountains, sculptures etc.)	0.61	
		The shopping centre has a wide range of bars and restaurants	0.58	
		The shopping centre has an attractive exterior	0.55	
F2/9%	Location and decor	I visit this shopping centre because it is located in the city centre	0.83	0.81
		I visit this shopping centre because it is close to my university	0.82	
		The materials used for the interior decoration of the shopping centre give the impression of high quality	0.62	
		I visit this shopping centre because it is close to some attractive places	0.52	
		The interior of the shopping centre has an appropriate colour scheme	0.46	
F3/9%	Shopping Comfort	It is easy to get around the shopping centre even if it is crowded	0.73	0.74
		The interior of the centre is logically planned so it is easy to get around	0.66	
		I feel safe in the shopping centre	0.65	
		The information available in the shopping centre makes it easy to find a specific store (service outlet)	0.56	
		The shopping centre has convenient opening hours	0.54	
		The overall price level in the shopping centre is adequate for my means	0.51	
		The temperature in the shopping centre is at a comfortable level	0.42	
F4/5%	Entertainment	The shopping centre personnel (e.g. the security staff, the cleaning staff) are friendly towards customers	0.73	0.62
		The shopping centre has a satisfactory number of cash machines	0.63	
		The shopping centre offers a range of possibilities for spending leisure time	0.56	
		Appropriate music is played in the shopping centre	0.55	
		The shopping centre is filled with a pleasant aroma	0.54	
		There are frequent price promotions in the shopping centre	0.48	
		The shopping centre has a sufficient number of rubbish bins	0.41	
F5/5%	Access to toilets	The shopping centre has a sufficient number of toilets	0.87	0.79
		The shopping centre has conveniently located toilets	0.86	

Source: as in Table 2.

Results

The factor analyses revealed that from the point of view of students there are five major factors that affect the attractiveness of shopping centres. The factor labelled 'Offer perception' relates to the impression that a shopping centre has on shoppers. Importantly, this impression is not formed through shopping or interacting with the staff: it is created by merely being in the shopping centre. The way in which the customers perceive the offer of a shopping centre is primarily influenced by the range of available shops and the diversity of brands. In addition, this image is complemented by the availability of bars and restaurants. It is worth noting that this group of items relates to the perception of the shopping centre itself rather than the individual stores, and that is why this group also includes such issues as the cleanliness of the centre, the decor, and, to the least extent, the appearance of the centre's exterior.

The second group of items relates to the importance of a suitable location as a criterion influencing the choice of shopping centre. It is not surprising that in this context some of the most important issues are a location in the city centre and proximity to the university. This group also includes two items related to the architectural aspects of a shopping centre's interior, namely the colour scheme and the quality of the materials used.

The factor relating to shopping comfort indicates a very broad spectrum of issues that affect the well-being of customers who visit a shopping centre. These items primarily comprise such elements as the ease of getting around the centre, even if it is very crowded, as well as a logical plan of the shopping centre, which makes it easy to find the right store. A sense of safety and convenient opening hours also play a significant role. A particularly noteworthy fact is that the comfort of shopping can be greatly affected by the adequacy of the price level in relation to the financial capabilities of customers. Thus it can be concluded that the sense of affordability of the product range offered by a shopping centre has a positive effect on customers' satisfaction with their shopping. On the other hand, maintaining an appropriate temperature level inside the shopping centre seems to be the least important among this group of items.

The 'Entertainment' factor comprises elements which make customers perceive that being in a shopping centre is not as a chore but an opportunity to have a pleasant time. Thus, the entertainment nature of a shopping centre is connected with, among other things, the available leisure options, friendly service and frequent price promotions. Moreover, this factor includes elements that create the ambience of a shopping centre, namely music and pleasant aromas. Finally, this group of items also comprises features whose presence helps avoid any disruptions to spending time in the shopping centre. These include an adequate number of cashpoints, permitting access to financial resources; and an adequate number of rubbish bins, which help to keep the shopping centre tidy.

The last group of items is connected with the availability of toilet facilities; their sufficient number and convenient location in the shopping centre.

Discussion and conclusions

The findings of the research into the factors which are the criteria of the attractiveness of shopping centres assessment from the perspective of students are largely consistent with the results of earlier studies conducted in other countries. One of the most important factors proved to be an attractive location, which was also the case in research carried out by Haytko, Baker 2004; Tabak et al. 2006; Jackson et al. 2011; Sari et al. 2011, in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016). Another significant factor is entertainment, which was also found to be important in a number of previous studies (Tabak et al. 2006; Jackson et al. 2011, in: Can, Kurtulmusoglu, Atalay 2016). In addition, the perception of the offer and the comfort in shopping, and even the access to toilet facilities, play a significant role. These findings could be important for investors and managers of shopping centres, who, in order to attract young shoppers, should develop and design them taking into account the most important attractiveness factors.

The authors of the paper are fully aware that the possibilities of generalizing the results of the study are fairly limited because the study was conducted on a representative sample of only one faculty at the Poznań University of Economics and Business. This could serve as an incentive to conduct research on a larger sample, for example to include students from other universities, from Poznań, or ideally from the whole of Poland. Alternatively, or in addition, the sample of high school's pupils would be an important addition to the analysis.

Each of the above options would certainly yield very valuable results. In any future research it would also be worth taking into account other attributes of shopping centres, previously not included, related to changes in the structure of the sector, changes in the intensity and instruments of competition in the sector, as well as the resultant development of shopping centres' offerings.

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Główne czynniki atrakcyjności centrów handlowych w opinii studentów – przypadek Poznania

Streszczenie

W wielu polskich miastach zwiększa się liczba i powierzchnia sprzedażowa centrów handlowych, postrzeganych przez konsumentów jako jedna z ich ulubionych form koncentracji placówek handlu detalicznego, atrakcyjna zwłaszcza dla młodych nabywców. Celem badania jest zaprezentowanie empirycznych wyników badania ilościowego odbierania przez studentów uczelni ekonomicznej czynników atrakcyjności centrów handlowych. Badanie ankietowe typu papier-ółówek przeprowadzono na reprezentacyjnej grupie 278 studentów jednego z wydziałów Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu. Jego wyniki wykorzystano do ustalenia, za pomocą eksploracyjnej analizy czynnikowej, głównych czynników determinujących atrakcyjność ośrodków handlowych ze studenckiego punktu widzenia. Wyniki wskazują na czynniki atrakcyjności centrów handlowych z perspektywy studentów uczelni ekonomicznej, przy czym najważniejsze są następujące: percepcja oferty, lokalizacja i wystrój, komfort robienia zakupów, dostępność rozrywek i toalet.

Słowa kluczowe: centra handlowe, czynniki atrakcyjności.

Kody JEL: L81

Основные факторы привлекательности торговых центров по мнению студентов на примере Poznani

Резюме

Во многих польских городах увеличиваются число и торговая площадь торговых центров, воспринимаемых потребителями в качестве одной из любимых форм концентрации заведений розничной торговли, особенно привле-

кательная для молодых покупателей. Цель изучения – представить эмпирические результаты количественного исследования восприятия студентами экономического вуза факторов привлекательности торговых центров. Опрос типа «бумага и ручка» провели в представительной группе 278 студентов одного из факультетов Государственного экономического университета в Познани. Его результаты использовали для определения, с помощью эксплоративного факторного анализа, основных факторов, предопределяющих привлекательность торговых центров с точки зрения студентов. Результаты указывают факторы привлекательности торговых центров из перспективы студентов экономического вуза, причем самыми важными являются следующие: восприятие предложения, размещение и декор, удобство покупок, доступность развлечений и туалетов.

Ключевые слова: торговые центры, факторы привлекательности.

Коды JEL: L81

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