



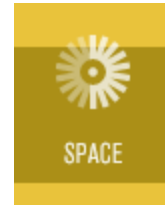


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## RETAIL AREA DESIGN INFLUENCES SHOPPING BEHAVIOR

**Author's Title:** Image and Consumer Attraction to Intraurban Retail Areas: An Environmental Psychology Approach

**Author(s) Name:** Simon J. Bell

**Year of Publication:** 1999

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### Design Issue

This study evaluated the environmental components that influence consumers' decisions to shop in particular intraurban retail areas (suburban shopping centers, strip malls, or downtown shopping areas).

- Retailers may be able to take advantage of store image (physical attractiveness and [ambience](#) of the store) to attract and keep consumers and differentiate themselves from other businesses.
- Little research exists that considers how consumers' behavior is related to selection of a particular shopping area.
- Understanding how consumers select shopping areas will help retailers, designers, and public policy officials develop and maintain thriving shopping districts.

### Design Criteria

Author Identified:

- Create a visually appealing retail shopping or strip mall area to ensure consumer loyalty and continued patronage, as store image is widely accepted as a main factor in consumer decisions, especially if consumers are not familiar with a certain product.
- Consider how different aspects of the built environment (streets, landscaping, building exteriors, [signage](#), etc.) contribute to a shopping area's image.

InformeDesign Identified:

- Be aware that a variety of components (physical environment, customer service, products, etc.) contribute to the image of a store.

### Key Concepts

- An intraurban retail area is a collection of freestanding retail stores and the public areas (roads, parking areas, etc.) that surround it.
- Consumers may rely on image to tell them about the quality of goods and services at a store and image may also communicate the [value](#) of products sold.
- Positive feelings about a shopping area were associated with an increase in consumers' willingness to shop in that area.
- Quality stores with a wide selection of quality products, good customer service, and an appealing environment were more likely to attract consumers.
- Price and [convenience](#) were not determining factors in consumers' decisions about where to shop.

### Research Method

- [Subjects](#) (554) from a large city (approximate [population](#) 190,000) responded to a mailed [questionnaire](#); 66% female (average age 48) with a secondary level education and an annual household income of \$25,001-35,000. Subjects were asked to identify their preferred shopping area from five choices.

- [Variables](#) used to measure feelings and actions relevant to shopping area decisions included 1) price fairness, 2) quality of products and shops, 3) variety and range of products, 4) variety of shops, 5) fashionability of products, 6) visual amenity (physical attractiveness, sign clutter, colors of buildings, window displays, and general appeal), 6) convenience (location, car parking, [wayfinding](#), and business hours), and 7) customer service.
- Subjects' willingness to buy was measured on a [Likert-type scale](#). LISREL was used to test the [causal](#) model (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993).
- [Factor analysis](#), [regression](#), [Cronbach's alpha](#), path analysis, and [correlations](#) were used to analyze the [data](#).

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## Limitations

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- The findings may not be [generalizable](#) across all types of intraurban retail areas.
- The range of variables was limited due to the narrow scope of existing retail literature.

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## Commentary

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This study presented a structure for studying shopping area behavior and the relationship between environmental stimuli and consumer behaviors. Considerations of additional [demographic](#) variables, the impact of anchor stores on retail patronage, and the use of on-site [interviews](#) were suggested for future research.

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## Adapted From

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