

3 The relationship between servicescapes and tourists' evaluation of shops

Akira Uehara, Taketo Naoi and Shoji Iijima

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Highlight how tourists' evaluation of shops is influenced by shops' features in various manners;
- Demonstrate how excessive interior manipulation (organization) showed negative effects on shops' touristic and active atmosphere;
- Evidence how the disorderliness of interiors might have been sensed as touristic and active aspects of the shops, implying the importance of sustaining a certain degree of naiveté;
- Highlight how shopkeepers' openness to tourists and the presentation of the lifestyle in the interiors and exteriors contributed to opportunities for tourists to experience local lifestyles;
- Demonstrate how the decorated interiors and assortment of touristic goods had negative effects on tourists' perception of the shops as places to experience local culture, whereas the organized interiors had positive effects on the same perception;
- Conclude that servicescape of shops should be considered depending on whether the place intends to foster tourists' shopping activities or enhance their experience of local culture.

Keywords: Servicescape, shopping, tourist behavior, experiences, perceptions.

Introduction

Shopping has been viewed as an important part of the tourism experience (Hsieh & Chang, 2006) and as a destination attraction (Timothy & Butler, 1995). It has been shown to be one of the major motivations for tourists (Turner & Reisinger, 2001; Wang, 2004). Apart from providing tourists with purchasing opportunities, shopping offers them a taste of local culture (Stobart, 1998). Experiencing a destination and its local culture has been pointed out as one of the key motives for shopping at a tourist destination; other motives include purchasing necessities and meeting social obligations (Murphy et al., 2011).

Retailers in an increasingly competitive marketplace find it more difficult to differentiate their stores solely on the basis of merchandise, price, promotion, and location (Baker et al., 1994). This implication highlights the importance of other factors, such as stores' environmental factors. Kotler (1973) argued that a store itself can offer a unique atmosphere or environment that may influence the consumer's patronage decision. Store environments have been found to be one type of input into the consumer's image of, or overall attitude toward, a store (Darden & Schwinghammer, 1985). Darden and Schwinghammer (1985) found that consumers' beliefs on the physical attractiveness of a store have a higher correlation with patronage intentions compared with merchandise quality, general price level, or selection.

The above observations on the importance of stores' physical environments can be understood with reference to the concept of man-environment research. Tourism phenomena, including tourist shopping, are argued to emerge from interaction between humans and environments (Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992). Man-environment research, a stream of environmental psychology, adopts transactionalism, which refers to a standpoint for emphasizing and examining the mutual relationship between humans and environments (Gifford, 2001). Such a stance takes importance particularly in understanding that tourists' shopping, in terms of their decision on their purchases at destinations, tends to be made *after* rather than *before* their arrival (Moore et al., 2012).

This chapter, which is the preliminary stage of a study on the effects of shops on tourists' evaluation of a destination, aims to elucidate the relationship between shops' characteristics and tourists' evaluation of the shops. The research relies on the concept of servicescape and measures the effects of shops' social, physical, and design factors on tourists' evaluation through an onsite participatory research method. This chapter pays particular attention to the taste of local life that tourists obtain

from the shops. In light of the findings of Stobart (1998), it is meaningful to elucidate the features of shops that appear active and tourist friendly, which have been pointed out as significant factors in attracting tourists (Naoi et al., 2009) and ensuring that they experience local culture.

Literature review

Research on tourist-environment relationship in commercial spaces

Shopping in commercial spaces is one of the major motives of tourism (Choi et al., 1999; Cohen, 1995). Tourists purchase souvenirs and local specialties and pay for local dishes at restaurants. Timothy (2005) argued that tourists' shopping may not necessarily be only for purchasing goods but also for leisure activities. Butler (1991) classified tourists' shopping into two types: shopping for purchases and shopping as an activity that is secondary to excursions. Secondary shopping is regarded as observable, particularly when they visit a destination with primary attractions, such as cultural assets, rather than shopping opportunities. At such destinations, before or after visiting primary attractions, they may take opportunities to enjoy shopping at nearby shopping places with no predetermined plans about what and where to purchase.

While some parts of tourists' decision making, such as the length of their stay and their trip type, are usually done before their trip, others, such as those regarding tourists' onsite activities, are likely to be done after their arrival (Moore et al., 2012). Such tourists' onsite decisions may be affected by environmental factors. Gifford (2001), noted the possibility that spaces' characteristics may affect particular behaviors positively or negatively. This claim is regarded as applicable for relationships between tourists and destinations. Particularly, when tourists make an onsite purchase with no predetermined plans, their decision may be influenced by environmental factors, such as visually attractive signs, rather than information available at home. Moore et al. (2012) also suggested that tourists' onsite behaviors can be induced by not only pre-trip information, such as guide books, but also by the characteristics of visited environments.

The abovementioned man-environment research is considered as one of the academic areas on the relationship between tourists and places in commercial spaces. Approaches of this area have been intensively applied in the fields of civil engineering and architecture. Many studies in these fields have focused on the man-environment relationship in daily environments and analyzed the effects of environmental factors

on individuals' movements (Hashimoto et al., 2009; Kiso & Monnnai, 2013; Tanaka et al., 2003). Meanwhile, few studies have focused on the relationship between tourists and places, and to the best of the current authors' knowledge, none of them have touched on the influences of detailed environmental factors on tourists' shopping.

Although there are previous tourism studies dealing with tourists' purchasing behavior, studies that asked respondents for evaluations of onsite environments are scarce. The dominant practices are face-to-face (Moore et al., 2012), mail (Fairhurst et al., 2007; Littrell et al., 2004), and web surveys (Choi et al., 2016). These studies examined tourists' pre-trip decision-making and their post-trip satisfaction, but not tourists' onsite evaluation of visited environments.

As for onsite studies on tourists' shopping experiences, Zaidan (2016) researched 527 foreign tourists' evaluation and perceived characteristics of luxury items sold at a shopping mall. Brida and Tokarchuk (2017) interviewed 886 tourists to investigate the relationship between their planned and actual expenditures. Suhartanto, Ruhadi, and Triyuni (2016) examined 563 visitors' perceptions and expectations of shopping attributes, including products' characteristics, services, convenience, and shop location. Despite the scope for investigation of tourists' characteristics owing to the large sample size, these studies have failed to shed light on the effects of environmental factors, such as individual shops' exteriors and interiors.

Turning further to consumer behavior studies on the effects of environmental factors on consumer buying behavior, there are studies that examined the effects of the layouts of a restaurant or the colors and brightness of lighting inside it (Ariffin et al., 2012) and the effects of music (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). However, most of them employed experimental settings. These have not been applied to on-site research, at least for investigating tourists' shopping. It is thus important to clarify the characteristics of shops that contribute to tourists' shopping and cultural experiences at non-tourist-oriented shops. Naoi et al. (2015) elucidated the features of touristic, non-touristic, and intermediary spaces in shopping districts, as perceived by local students. Uehara et al. (2017) further examined local students' perceptions of the characteristics of various spaces in a shopping district, focused on the relationship between the characteristics of commercial spaces and tourist activities undertaken by students there. However, these studies, which both pointed to the importance of non-touristic features for visitors' experiences, examined locals', and not tourists', perceptions of shopping places.