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ABSTRACT

Shopping centres are increasingly becoming places for leisure. In order to attract more consumers and to lengthen shopper stay, various leisure components are being added to retail and shopping places. At the same time, under the influence of consumer culture, recreational shopping became one of the widespread leisure activities among different social categories. Contemporary research shows that nowadays youth leisure is also widely associated with shopping centres. Recreational shopping, attendance at various leisure venues and events, but also browsing around shopping centres is becoming more and more popular among young people. Although this phenomenon is well elaborated in the context of developed countries, the research on youth leisure in shopping centres in post-socialist context is at its infancy, especially considering its spatial aspects. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore perception and recreational use of shopping centres by young people and to present a preliminary study exploring this phenomenon in six big inner-city shopping centers of Belgrade. By using the online questionnaire, it seeks to discover preferences of young people towards certain shopping centers, recreational opportunities, and recreational spaces, in order to identify factors that shape their choice and use of shopping centers for leisure.

Keywords: youth, leisure, shopping centre, urban recreation, recreational space

Introduction

In contemporary societies, people are spending more on leisure,\(^2\) triggering retailers and shopping centre developers to seek the ways to make shopping more of a leisure pursuit. (Torkildsen 2005, Howard 2007). In order to attract more consumers and to lengthen shopper stay in the shopping centers and malls\(^3\), they started adding various leisure venues and facilities to

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1 Corresponding author

2 Torkildsen(2005) noted that “leisure is defined in terms of freedom from constraint, freedom to choose, time left over after work or as free time after obligatory social duties have been met.” He explained that the term “leisure” is in some cases is synonymous to term “recreation”, and noted that recreation are activities in which people participate during their leisure time, but recreation needs to provide satisfaction in some way.

3 According to the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC, 2004, p.1.), the shopping center is “a group of retail and other commercial establishments that is planned, developed, owned and managed as a single property, with on-site parking provided. The center’s size and orientation are generally determined by the market characteristics of the trade area served by the center. The three main physical configurations of shopping centers are malls, open-air centers, and hybrid centers.”
Economic downturn made shopping centers and malls to look for new ways to attract consumers by adding various forms of entertainment and experiences to the retail mix (Randy White, CSM, 2010).

Following this phenomenon, in the past decades, recreational aspects of consumption have become increasingly salient to consumer researchers (Bloch et al. 1991, Sit et al. 2003, Howard 2007). Consumer and leisure geography research explore recreational aspects of consumption and different phenomena that relate leisure and shopping, such as: recreational shopping (Guiry & Lutz 2000, Bloch et al. 1991), attendance of various leisure venues and events (Zacharias & Schinazi 2003, Leischning et al. 2011), browsing around shopping centres (Bloch, Ridgway & Sharrell, 1989) and the role of special events (Kowinski 1985). Preferences of different social groups are explored and special attention is given to young people since youth leisure is becoming widely associated with shopping centres (Taylor and Cosenza 2002, Martin and Turley 2014, Baker and Haytko 2000). Although this phenomenon is well elaborated in the context of developed countries, the research on leisure in shopping centres in post-socialist context is recently gaining attention among researchers (Jakovčić 2011).

Therefore, the primary focus of this paper is the exploration of the perception and recreational use of shopping centres as leisure venues. It presents a preliminary study of this phenomenon in six big inner-city shopping centers of Belgrade. By using on-line questionnaires, we seek to discover if and how young people use shopping centers in Belgrade for leisure, what are their preferences towards certain shopping centers and recreational opportunities and venues these places provide, in order to identify factors that shape their choice and use of shopping centers for leisure. The first part of the paper reviews literature on relations between shopping and leisure in order to construct a conceptual and analytical framework for our study. Based on this, in the second part, we first introduce research methodology and then review and compare recreational opportunities of six chosen inner-city shopping centers in Belgrade. Results of the on-line questionnaire are further analyzed in detail and discussed in relation to research questions.

**Leisure in shopping centre**

Nowadays shopping centres are not being used merely for shopping activities, as their new character motivates customers towards entertainment and spending leisure time (Bloch et al. 1991). In order to attract more visitors and lengthen leisure time that customers spend in the shopping center, contemporary retail strategies emphasize integrating entertainment and recreational activities and elements into shopping centres. Entertainment is pivotal to shopping centers because it induces an exciting or fun shopping experience (Haynes & Talpade 1996). Food and entertainment are crucial to visitors because they create an entertaining ambience that makes visit pleasant and exciting, it provides a needed break and extends the visit (Sit et al. 2003). Social motivation to spend time on such premises include ambience, a variety of activities, design as well as customers desire to stay and intend to return to the shopping centre. With the evolution of the shopping center, the mall space becomes a meeting place and place of leisure activities (Cvetković & Vanšta Lazarević 2016). For some consumers, shopping is a favourite leisure activity (Bloch et al. 1991).

**Leisure opportunities in shopping centres**

**Leisure attractions as factors of visiting shopping centres**

Shopping centres are becoming social centres and they offer various socializing (food courts) and entertainment activities (concerts, exhibitions, cinemas, bowling), relaxation opportunities (beauty salons, personal services, spa centers), sporting activities (fitness, courts), and so on.
Bloch et al. noted that there appear to be two broad categories of leisure activity that may occur while in a shopping centre - recreational shopping and traditional recreation. Literature review shows that main forms of recreational use of shopping center can be categorized as leisure shopping, browsing/hanging out, or attendance at venues and events (Bloch et al. 1991).

**a) Leisure shopping**

Recreational shopping is shopping activity that is characterized by the shopper experiencing gratification from the shopping process per se, either in conjunction with or independent of the acquisition of goods and services (Guiry & Lutz 2000). One of first shopping centre study that measured entertainment - Bellenger and Korgoankar (1980) defined recreational shoppers as “… those who enjoy shopping as a leisure-time activity”, contrasting them with “economic shoppers” who experienced no pleasure from the shopping process per se.

**b) Browsing and hanging out**

Bloch et al. noted that “Instore browsing is the in-store examination of a retailer’s merchandise for recreational and informational purposes without an immediate intent to buy” (Bloch, Ridgway, & Sharrell, 1989). Browsing can provide a consumer with a way to spend a rainy afternoon and in addition, it can add to the individual’s store of information concerning new product developments, brand differences, or sale prices. Furthermore, the search aspect of browsing may be pleasurable in and of itself (Bloch et al., 1989). A recent study reported that looking around and browsing is a more common reason for mall patronage than is accomplishing a specific purchase objective (Monitor 1988). Consumers differ in the types of stores they find pleasurable for browsing because of variable involvement in the merchandise presented for sale (Bloch et al. 1991)

**c) Main entertainment venues in shopping centres**

The mall is a physical frame - the shell for the content, which is changing according to the capacity and content that is needed. The mall is no longer just a shopping center, but it becomes a city center itself. With the evolution of the shopping center, the mall space becomes a meeting place and place of leisure activities, offering visitors such recreational attractions as music, movies, games, and dining out (Kowinski, 1985). A mall visitor can come to meet with friends, go to dinner, walk at its streets and do to the cinema, stores may be completely irrelevant during such visits.

**d) Special events**

Special events are increasingly becoming important for both research and practice. Retailers use events in order to provide customers with a unique shopping experience and differentiate from competitors (Leischnig 2011). The various events, exhibitions, performances, promotions, concerts etc. are organized on the streets of the shopping malls from time to time. With the organization of special happenings that are related to certain events throughout the year(such as Easter, New Year’s Eve and Christmas) visitors are enabled to feel the spirit of these events like nowhere else in the city (Cvetković & Vaništa Lazarević 2016).

**Spatial characteristics and leisure atmosphere as factors of visiting shopping centres**

The interior of the shopping centers are organized as the urban matrix, with streets and squares, nature elements that are deployed throughout the mall, it is furnished in a way that it resembles the urban space. Visitors’ satisfaction and their emotions are affected by the ambience and design of a shopping mall’s physical environment (Tsimonis, 2010). Size of shopping
centers, the assortment of stores and events render a large variety of stimuli and full ranges of leisure-time recreational attractions (Bloch et al. 1991). Recreational opportunities that are integrated into shopping centers can be organized as permanent, temporary, and occasional. In that sense, recreational venues and facilities exist as fixed (cinemas, playrooms ...), themed ambient in indoor spaces, quasi-public spaces and as spatial interventions in the outdoor space of shopping centre (Živković, 2015)

**Youth leisure in shopping centre**

Growing percentage of young people in large urban agglomerations spend their leisure time in shopping malls. Published studies rarely mention young shoppers, mostly analyzing teenagers (Taylor and Cosenza, 2002, Martin and Turley, 2014, Baker and Haytko, 2000). Despite that, little insights are available regarding the influence of perception (Kushwaha et al. 2017) and recreational use of shopping centres by young people (Jakovčić, 2011). Considering transition to adulthood in Serbia, we established sample for this research of 15-35 years (Ignjatović 2009).

**Shopping centre as youth leisure space; case study of Belgrade**

During the last decade, several shopping centers have been constructed in Serbia, with a substantial space allocated to entertainment. Shopping centres are beginning to dominate the city center and its suburbs, as a visual sign and place for socialization and consumption. In Belgrade, first large type of shopping centre was opened in 2007. Until then, shopping activities were situated mostly in small type shopping centers, and in department stores and had few or none recreational activities. Exploration of the locational, spatial and leisure characteristics, as well as of perception and recreational use of shopping centres as leisure venues will further be explored on six big inner-city shopping centers of Belgrade.

Table 1 presents spatial characteristics, location and recreational activities of six shopping centres in Belgrade, based on online research of shopping centres official web pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopping centre</th>
<th>Spatial characteristics:</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Recreational activities - permanent</th>
<th>Recreational activities - occasional</th>
<th>Recreational activities outside space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ušće 2009</td>
<td>Gross area: 130,000m2</td>
<td>Casino, fitness center, cinemaplex, catering facilities</td>
<td>Fairs, festivals, concerts, speeches, humanitarian gatherings, seasonal events, exhibitions, fashion events</td>
<td>Ice rink, NAXI beach, sports courts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail area: 50,000m2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floors: P+3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parking: 2 levels for 1300ps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stores: 143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movie halls: 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food court 1000m2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

4 By ICSC SHOPPING CENTER DEFINITIONS Basic Configurations and Types - Large: An all-purpose scheme that can be either enclosed or open-air and is classified by size. 40,000-79,999 m²
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Gross area:</th>
<th>Retail area:</th>
<th>Floors:</th>
<th>Parking for</th>
<th>Stores:</th>
<th>Movie halls:</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delta City</td>
<td>87,000m²</td>
<td>30,000m²</td>
<td>P+2</td>
<td>1200 ps</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Casino, Cineplex, entertainment and educational center, Catering facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fairs, festivals, concerts, season events, exhibitions, tournaments, competitions, fashion events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadion</td>
<td>75,000m²</td>
<td>28,000m²</td>
<td>P+2</td>
<td>800 ps</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td>Catering facilities, wellness center (800m²), restaurant, PC games room, Conference spaces Football club on the roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian gatherings, Ice rink, seasonal events, festivals, exhibitions, children’s games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Fashion</td>
<td>61,000m²</td>
<td>32,000m²</td>
<td>P+2</td>
<td>5000 ps</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>8, 3000m²</td>
<td>Slot Club, Cineplex, children’s playroom Catering facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussions, children’s activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajiće-va</td>
<td>60,000m²</td>
<td>18,000m²</td>
<td>P+3</td>
<td>450 ps</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel, playroom, catering facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seasonal events, performances, concerts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zira</td>
<td>40,000m²</td>
<td>7,000m²</td>
<td></td>
<td>400-450 ps</td>
<td>&gt;450</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel, conference center, fitness center, office space, bars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research methodology

Relevant data was collected by online questionnaire, conducted in Belgrade, in the Serbian language during February 2018. The target population of this study consisted of young people of 15-35 years. The aim of this study was to explore perception and recreational use of six largest shopping malls in Belgrade. A structured questionnaire was developed to discover preferences young people have towards certain forms of urban recreation, recreational opportunities and recreational spaces, in order to identify factors that shape their choice and use of shopping centers for leisure. The questionnaire consisted of questions concerning shopping motivation, preferences, demographic information of respondents, questions about urban recreation, recreational opportunities and recreational spaces of shopping malls.

Main findings

The results are based on responses from 73 respondents. By using the on-line questionnaire, it seeks to discover preferences of young people towards certain shopping centers, recreational opportunities, and recreational spaces, in order to identify factors that shape their choice and use of shopping centers for leisure.

1. About respondents

Selected demographic and personal information of the respondents, including gender, age and employment status is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>64,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>49,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Time spent in mall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times a week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times a month</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times a year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1h</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1h-3h</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>80,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3h-6h</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;6h</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time span spent on shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4 of time spent shopping</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 of time spent shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 of time spent shopping</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research also sought to establish the length of time the respondents have been spending in the mall and frequency of visit, which is presented in Table 3. The largest number of respondents (31.5%) go to the shopping centers several times a month, once a month (23.3%) and several times a year (31.5%), while 11% of respondents visit shopping center once a week. It is important to identify how customers spend their time during one visit. The time spent in shopping centers for the vast majority of respondents is 1-3 hours (80.8%) during one visit, while 8.2% spend less than an hour, and 13.7% of respondents spend 3-6 hours. It is important to note that only 16.4% of respondents spend time only in shopping, whereas over 80% of respondents spend about ¼ - ¾ of time in other leisure activities. The results showed that respondents are more likely to visit shopping malls that are in the vicinity of their residence or workplace (82%) to avoid travelling a long distance, but results do not wholly coincide to their perception of malls they like to visit.

2. Shopping centres as a leisure spaces - similarities and differences.

In order to understand does perception of malls influence choice of the shopping center, we asked participants to firstly choose to what mall they go more often and afterwards what mall they like to visit in their leisure time (Table 4). The most visited shopping center is Ušće, which is at the same time the most loved for recreational use. It is characterized by the largest offer of various recreational facilities, the largest gross area and number of stores. Shopping centre Stadion is more commonly used than Delta City, but it is less attractive to use in leisure time. The fourth in ranking is Big Fashion, where only one-tenth of the respondents use it in their free time.

The offer of permanent and occasional recreational facilities is different for shopping centers and respondents valued them differently (Table 5). Ušće and Delta are best evaluated for both. Most respondents rated the offer as good or very good for thisshopping centers. The offer of leisure time content in shopping centre Zira is worst rated, while at Stadion, Rajiceva and s Big Fashion they are rated as average. With shopping centre Big Fashion, there is a difference in the assessment of the offer of permanent and occasional content in favor of the permanent ones, which was rated 42% as good, while only 24% evaluated the offer of occasional content and events as good. Key factors for visiting and using shopping centre in free time are the availability and variety of venues and facilities, including opportunities for leisure. The quality of the offer of permanent and occasional opportunities for recreation is in relation to the perception and use of shopping center in free time by the respondents. To conclude, some, but not all shopping centres in Belgrade are perceived and used as leisure spaces. Four shopping centres are recognized as spaces in which shopping relates to recreation and leisure time. These are Ušće, Delta, Stadion and Big Fashion. At the same time, these shopping centers have the highest offer of permanent and occasional recreational facilities.
3. Leisure attractions as factors of visiting the shopping centres

The results showed that almost half of respondents (41.1%) agreed that in process of making the choice of shopping center it is essential that it contains recreational activities such as sport/cultural/entertainment activities. We asked respondents what is the main reason of visiting the shopping centre for leisure. Besides shopping as the main reason of visit (67.1%), almost quarter of respondents mentioned that cinema, recreational activities (12.3%) and browsing (8.2%) are the main reason of their arrival.

Table 6: Leisure time in shopping centre

In order to understand how respondents spend their time in shopping centre, they were presented with multiple-choice table to identify how they spend leisure time in this premise. (Table 6.) Respondents agreed that recreational activities such as catering (60.3%) and cinema (67.1%) are most present activities, and they will elongate timespan in their visit to shopping center. Large amount of respondents use leisure time spent in shopping centre window shopping (45.2%) and browsing (17.8%). While almost half of the respondents spend time in shopping centre socializing with friends (42.5%), 17.8% of them spend time in recreational activities, and 4.1% of them are relaxing, sitting on a bench an observing.

Table 7: Recreational content in shopping centre and their significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is diversity of content offered important for the choice of SC?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does recreational content increase motivation for visit SC?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does existence of recreational content prolongates visit in SC?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does recreational content influences on frequency of visit in certain SC?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all respondents (90.4%) agreed that diversity of content in shopping mall is vital for a choice of visited shopping centre. Recreational content increase the motivation for visiting it for 39.7% of respondents, this content has an impact on the prolongation of stay in the premises at
46.6% and in 19.2% affect the fact that they are coming to certain shopping centres. The main motive for going to shopping centres in Belgrade is shopping, but the recreational content is recognized as an important factor of shopping centres visit.

Special events organized in outdoor and indoor areas of SHC are not particularly appealing to respondents; the results showed that not one of the respondents identified them as the main reason for visiting the shopping centre, but 12% of them noted that organized events would lengthen their stay. Open spaces in front of shopping centres are important - respondents prefer to participate in outdoor events (16.7%) instead of indoor events (6.8%).

4. Spatial characteristics and atmosphere are an important factors for visiting and using shopping centre

Individual consumers place different importance on the various attributes of shopping center. Hence, it is important to identify and understand what factors are attracting visitors to certain shopping mall. This query consisted of total 8 statements out of which highest factor load was 4.22 for “Concentration and variety of the content.” (Table 8.) Besides a pleasing and entertaining ambient of shopping center, a safe environment and security offered by shopping centrespace (4.0) and the climate comfort (4.14) is also central to consumer perception. Shopping center provides a higher order, cleanliness and safety, as well as an ideal climate without frost, rain and heat. The positive effect of ambience and atmosphere respondents rated as 3.85.

Table 8. Importance of certain factors in visit of shopping centre.

However, despite the significance of entertainment, content variety and safety, the lowest factor load (2.19) was “Concentration of people”, as a high concentration of people acts repulsively for the vast majority of respondents. Shopping centres are being perceived as community recreational spaces, places for walking, meeting with people, relaxing and passively enjoying the atmosphere. Thus, many shopping centers have incorporated food courts, cafes and restaurants in their area, which is supported by respondents, as factor load for food court was 3.37.

Conclusion

Our study on youth leisure in shopping centres in Belgrade is aligned with previous research in developed countries and confirmed that young people in Belgrade use some, but not all shopping centres in their free time, and that recreational opportunities contribute to increasing attractiveness of the shopping centres. Some, but not all shopping centres in Belgrade are perceived and used as leisure spaces, and this depends on their size and offer of recreational opportunities. As in other studies, our study confirms that although shopping (including recreational shopping) is a major attraction in shopping centers, cinema venues, food courts and cafes are important too. Hanging out, sightseeing and special events are of less importance, and leisure in shopping centres is not associated with sport and culture at all. Leisure time in shopping centre is perceived as a form of socializing. Special events, organized in outdoor and indoor areas of shopping centres and highly valued by previous studies, but are not particularly appealing to respondents in Belgrade. Outdoor events are preferred to indoor.
research, spatial characteristics and atmosphere are an important factor for visiting and using shopping centres in both positive and negative way.

The retailers and marketing strategists can use these findings as this article gives an insight into young consumers' preferences and also adds new dimensions to already existing knowledge of consumer behaviour for shopping, leisure and entertainment products.

Since this was just an initial research and exploratory in nature it has several important limitations. It is based on on-line questionnaire limited in time (two weeks) and thus gained answers from a relatively small number of respondents (73) and of the population that uses ICT and certain web-sites. Consequently, opinion of young people that belong to some age (pupils) or social groups (unemployed) is not well presented in this research. In that sense, for further research, it is recommended to explore the topic by using other research methods and techniques (on-site questionnaires in shopping centers and research in secondary schools) that will provide a better picture of the ways that young people perceive and use shopping centres for leisure.

Acknowledgment

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