

THE IMPACT OF SHOPPING TOURISM ON THE FUTURE OF LEISURE SERVICES

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Tourism has grown to be an activity of worldwide importance and significance. For a number of countries, tourism represents the largest commodity in the international trade, and in many others it ranks among the top three industries, becoming a major social and economic force in the world lately.

The leisure in tourism represents the principale method to limit, individualise and diversify the tourism offer, the firms and tourism destinations. More than that, the leisure determines the increase of the competitive degree, the revenue obtained and the economic efficiency.

As a major component shopping has become one of the most significant leisure activity and the development of this segment stands to stimulate the future of amusement services and their major influence in the tourism industry.

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1. Shopping as leisure activity

Economies tend to follow a developmental progression that takes them from a heavy reliance on agriculture and mining, toward the development of industry and finally toward a more service based structure. In this context, the third sector has gained in importance and its role can be definitely being seen in the special interest the countries are developing it.

As a major component, the tourism services have increased over the years representing the fastest growing industry in the world. Regarding the tourism services, the main component of this are accommodation services, transport services, food and beverage services and leisure services.

The leisure services were always analyzed as supplementary services, but over the years the role and importance of these has changed dramatically. At first, the main components were lodging and food and beverage, later on the leisure segment has risen in the eyes of the consumers.

So, the development of tourism is determined not only by escaping from routine activities, but also by the customers' need to spend the free time in a pleasure way. More than that, the leisure services represent a major factor for increasing the competitiveness degree, a major method to limit, individualise and diversify the tourism offer and to increase the revenues obtained.

Leisure is usually described as the free time, or better said the non-work time. In its large sense, leisure encompasses all those activities that are not work activities. This description is not a fair one, taking into consideration the important role of leisure in the tourism industry.

Even though the term leisure is considered to be a synonym to the words free time or recreation, its meaning is more profound including a large variety of activities.

Leisure services are presented as the services provided by several organizations in order to occupy the free time as³⁰:

- eating and drinking out,
- staying away from home,

30 Lashley C., Lee-Ross D., Organization behaviour for leisure services, Batterworth.Heinemann,2003;

- travel including visit to leisure location,
- visiting places including travel from home,
- watching and participating in sporting activities,
- attending cultural occasions,
- shopping for leisure;

Shopping has become one of the most common activities of leisure and has changed its initial part as a need to survive to a want to enjoy.

The shopping activity can be regarded from two points of view³¹: as a **functional activity** and as a **leisure activity**. As a functional activity, shopping presents the following characteristics: high expectation, predictable, meets identified needs, time efficient, and target activities. The leisure shopping encompasses several particularities such as values different, wants novelty, creates wants, consume time, browsing and opportunistic.

In other words, the functional shopping is valued because it meets identified needs, but leisure shopping creates want rather than satisfying those needs. The functional shopper has high expectation and prediction based on the shopping centre offer, while the leisure shopper is impressed by novelty and different merchandise. As for the other characteristics, leisure shopping doesn't depend on a travel and shopping route, and it purchases randomly by instinct and stimulation, being a time consumer.

The relationship between functional and leisure activity and its continuity is frequently presented by specialists, (originally from Carr, 1990) as a passage from “**quarter mastering**” as functional to **technical**, to **expressive** and in the end to **recreational** as leisure.

The *Quarter mastering* finds itself as the functional end and it represents the purchase of goods for essential needs and suggesting a routinely action. Next on the chart towards the leisure activities there is the *technical* which demands planning, analyzing decisions, price studying for item that have a special mechanical functionality – such as refrigerates. More closely to recreational shopping is the *expressive* one that can be translated by acquiring goods that influence a better image of oneself as make up, jewelry, etc. At the other end, *the recreational* activity of shopping is pursues the nature of amusement, fun and enjoying the actually activity of purchasing items.

Another differentiation must be taken into account, the *expression of buying* and *the expression of shopping*. The first one suggest the process of acquiring merchandise from a seller, and the second one implies also activities like sorting, comparing prices, socializing, waking through shops, etc. More than that, the leisure shopper could rarely buy merchandise, as this action doesn't represent the essence of his shopping, but when he does, he might purchase more than a regular shopper would do.

More and more the consumer has changed his idea of shopping including a recreational need by examining the products, the new environments, the new friends, etc. determining that the act of shopping to stand up for fulfilling more than the need to buy some things.

The notion of leisure shopping can sometimes be subjective involving a large variety of concepts such as³²: *shopping for leisure*, *shopping and leisure* and *shopping as leisure*.

The concept of shopping for leisure presents the activity of buying goods that can be used in the leisure time, perceived here as a free time, as it was mentioned before – books, sporting equipments, and so on.

Shopping and leisure describe the activity of purchasing goods in an environment that offers different types of leisure facilities – theatres, cinema, bowling alley, etc., usually found in malls, and other venue that incorporates such entertainment opportunities.

31 Jenkins J., Pigram J., Encyclopedia of leisure and outdoor recreation, Routledge Publishing, London, 2003;

32 Timothy D., Shopping tourism, retailing and leisure, Chanell View Publication, 2005

Shopping as leisure and therefore the leisure shopping that has been underline previously accentuate the idea of shopping as a recreational, amusement, entertainment pastime and therefore as leisure.

As the consumers' ideas and conceptions of buying have evolved it mustn't eliminated the necessity of buying for functional purposes only, but to understand and concentrate on the segment of shopping for leisure. It can be neglect the main interest in shopping, but it should be proper analyzed the leisure shopping and its trends by all the actors implicated in the commercialization of goods and services.

2. Shoppers typology

The shopping activity has changed dramatically over decades with significant importance to the consumers and more than that to the producers and distributors.

One of the central particularities in this change is represented by the consumer's behavior in leisure shopping as a response to the increasing role of leisure in general, the stressful day to day life, the international trends in shopping, leisure and tourism, etc.

At the early 1950', the specialists have identified a serious typology of early leisure shoppers³³: *economic, personalizing, ethical and apathetic*.

The *economic* shopper presents itself as certain buyer of goods and services, with the determinate intension of purchasing, as a result of comparing, analyzing, browsing the variety of products.

The *personalizing* shopper appears to be an individual for whom the shopping experience is unique and exciting and tents to form social relationships with the store's personal. This type of shopper tends to be more interested in cultivating special relationships with the human resources in the magazines than to analyze and compare prices and products as a step to the concept of future leisure shopping

The *ethical* shopper presents a tendency to feel obligated to shop in specific stores, like family ones, in opposed to grand magazines, supermarkets, mall, due to its character of authenticity, uniqueness, etc.

The last one, the *apathetic* shopper is not interested in shopping, regardless of venue, price, variety of products and services, and considers the activity as a boring and only for functional necessity.

Other specialists divide the consumers' characteristics in shopper like³⁴: store loyal shoppers, convenience shopper, compulsive shopper and price conscious shopper.

Another study can present shopping as³⁵: *inactive* (restricted shopping interest and low or inexistent shopping entertainment), *active* (engaged in outdoor activities and enjoying shopping around for bargain prices and looks for products that suggest a higher social class), *service shopper* (interested in the quality of the service trying to obtain and maintain a beneficial relationship with the store staff, regardless of the costs, preparing to pay higher prices for better services), *classic or traditional shopper* (engaged in outdoor activities like the active one, but more conscious about spending money and less enthusiastic about the activity itself), *dedicated fringe shopper* (enthusiastic with the new products, and the idea of new and unknown and present little interest in socializing with the sellers), *price shopper* (obsessed with the price at a lower level in the detriment of quality, variety, services, etc.), *transitional shopper* (usually young people that tend to tries new and adventurous products, with the possibility of changing their consuming habits and behavior), *convenience shopper* (the main characteristic is looking for a ease way of buying goods with little importance of price, or store venue, etc.), *coupon saver shopper* (heavy reliance on the coupons and advertising products in the act of purchasing),

33 Swarbrooke J., Horner S., Consumer behavior in tourism, Butterworth-Heinemann Publishing, 2007;

34 Broadhurst R. Managing environments for leisure and recreation, Routledge Publishing, 2001;

35 Timothy D., Shopping tourism, retailing and leisure, Chanell View Publication, 2005;

innovator shopper (tends to buy new products and buying as an impulse), and *unclassified shopper* (with non specific behavior as a pattern for shopping).

A new trend in leisure shopping is represented by mall shopping, because of its large variety of department stores and products, but most important the large extra leisure facilities as cinemas, spectacle places, different types of sports and games facilities, landscape arrangements, etc. In this context shopping in malls can provide a diversity of behavior such as: *light consumer*- is looking for a specific item in a specific place of the mall, *multiple consumers* – is determined to buy more than one item from a store or from different stores, *leisure shopper* – search for more recreation and entertainment purposes than a direct purchase, and combined shopper – a vast interested shopper.

An important aspect of shopping typology is learning about the different types of shoppers in order to produce and promote special goods and services that will meet the increasing and difficult need and wants of the consumers. At the base of this classification stand the general ***motivations for leisure shopping*** like:

- something to do;
- the desire to buy gifts for friends;
- special occasions that determines the purchase of products;
- buying souvenirs from trips;
- waking with friends and family to shopping;
- price reduction, promotions;
- desire to buy unique products specific to a destination;
- shopping for special types of products that can't be found at home, etc.

As it can be seen, most the motivations for leisure shopping are involving in some degree the necessity of travel. Indeed shopping as a leisure activity takes place often in the tourism sector. The quality of tourist makes an individual more likely to shop by impulse and in a large degree than would regularly do. On the other hand not all leisure services are a part of the tourism industry, as tourism can also be seen as a leisure service or activity, the interdependence of this sector as from part to the whole activity and vice versa.

3. Future trends in leisure shopping

Regarding to the leisure shopping experience it is notable that more and more the shopping activity is connected to the general leisure activities and is perceived together or definitely liked to each other.

For example: many lodging establishments have installed retail outlets and commercializing mostly leisure shopping products; different stores and complex designed for leisure shopping enhance their attractiveness by adding new facilities offered such as catering; the conference programs usually include nowadays, shopping experience trips; the airport, airlines, ferry and cruise company are developing their own leisure shopping stores and facilities in order to increase their income especially as a result of the loss of duty free sales; new shops that appeals to the hobbies offering facilities and equipment, for instance painting; etc.

Another important trend in developing the leisure shopping facilities is represented by the marketing and promotion from other sectors of leisure:

- tour operators organize excursions that include shopping experience;
- hotels usually promote leisure shopping facilities for selling their weekend breaks;
- transport operators promote shopping facilities for the out of peak season; etc.

A special place in leisure shopping is expressed by the environments. The general environment of shopping determines an increase or a decrease of this activity. For instance, the ambience of shopping would include visit to a food court, seen a performance and creates a pleasant shopping environments, for extending the shopping stay and therefore the shopping enhancement.

The various facilities offered by an establishment, as the synergy between shopping and other recreational activities has a major potential for impulse purchasing, influencing the environment of general shopping in a store, hypermarket, mall, etc.

In this context it is important to mention the leisure shopping that takes place near the historical areas or event areas, etc. This way, there are significant benefits from satisfying human and social leisure in retailing context aside from merchandising itself. By extending the retail environment into a broader leisure setting commercial establishments are able to draw in more people and keep them for longer periods of time, influencing higher expenditures.

Leisure shoppers are more inclined to make impulse purchases than the functional ones. Impulse purchases occur when the decision to buy something appears when entering the store, decision on the spot.

Sellers, producers and distributors underline the importance of *impulse shopping* so they promote an environment that stimulates this as such:

- practicing lower prices has a very significant impact on buyers;
- a lot of exposure to a product in different retail units;
- the promotion of self-service operations rather than assisted will increase the variety of goods purchased;
- wide spread advertising that influences shoppers psychology;
- appealing products, ease to store products, small size, ease to carry products, etc.

Approaching shopping as a leisure activity has been seen at first with restraints, even though there is a great potential to increase the competitive advantage and consumer expenditure.

Nowadays and future trends show that the shopping centers have begun to include in their offer recreational facilities, and leisure shopping and entertainment interbreeds forming "shoppertainment" phenomena where people visit shopping centers to rather to participate in a recreational activity than purchase goods and services.

As a result, the shopping spaces are designed to enlarge their recreational environment by:

- the empathizing of the architectural and environmental aspects of the shopping centre (lavish designs, interior landscaping and natural lighting replicate the open space and outdoor settings);
- the enlargement of malls and shopping centers' offer like: special events and concerts, entertainment extension, catering etc;
- the appearances of support centers as result of the leisure shopping, like pharmacies, day care center, banks, etc.

In conclusion, the leisure shopping has a great benefic influence on the consumer and on the store seller, owner, etc. If the shopping is presented as a leisure activity, the consumer, often the tourist perceives a well being state, a modality to pleasantly occupy the free time in a recreational environment and enjoy himself. More and more people chose to interact in leisure activity to reduce stress, to enjoy them and to develop their physical and emotional particularities.

Let's not forget the importance of leisure to the organizations and owners of different facilities of entertainment. Shopping for leisure will also improve their image, their competitiveness degree, will enhance the costumers' expenditure and determine the efficiency of their activities.

This trend of shopping as leisure has increased the number of participants and over the years has developed into an important travel form - tourism for shopping with venues and season in peak or out of peak known world wide.

Shopping remains one of the most interesting satisfying and stimulating form of leisure that will change the form of future travel and tourism industry.

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