

MASTER

The amenity of Dutch district shopping centres

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The Amenity of Dutch District Shopping Centres



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Preface

Being aware of what is happening, knowing what potential customers value and appreciate most, but also stubbornly holding on to 'what has worked for years'. In times of crisis and financial insecurity these are subjects companies are struggling with. The real estate sector is no exception. Developments in the retail sector thereby provided an actual and relevant subject matter: the experience economy. With interest of Eindhoven University of Technology from a theoretical point of view and CBRE (Retail Development Services) from a practical point of view a perfect combination was made.

I believe this study is useful for theoretical as well as practical purposes. To make it so, representatives of both ends were required. I would therefore firstly like to thank Ingrid Janssen and Aloys Borgers for their strict supervision. With Ingrid reviewing at a more abstract manner, Aloys complemented with a more in-depth supervision and vice versa. In addition, a word of gratitude goes out to CBRE as my internship provider, with Dorien Bosselaar and Frank Geuze as external supervisors in particular. Dorien, I joyfully look back on you 'rescuing' me several times when I was bogged down in a massive pile of scientific literature, but also thank you for the clear comments and guidance. Frank, I found it very useful reflecting my findings to the ones you gathered throughout many years in practice. It once again proved the practicality of my study.

Finally, a word of gratitude goes out to the 'home front; Margot, Gemma, Rob and Wim' who supported me throughout the entire process. It pleases me to write these final words, which means I have brought this masterproof and therewith my study at Eindhoven University of Technology to a successful end. I hope this particular research will be clear to anyone who will read it. If not, do not hesitate to contact me by email: christiaangroeneweg@hotmail.com.

Christiaan Groeneweg,

Houten, July 2012.

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Summary

The Dutch retail sector has evolved rapidly in recent decades. Due to a variety of developments and innovations retailers are struggling to survive. The current economical climate may be appointed as one of the main causes of this struggle. Dutch consumers experience the crisis and its cuts, whereby a decrease in confidence and willingness to pay can be seen. While the economical crisis negatively influences all real estate markets, other trends appear that force retailers into action like customization, online shopping and influence of social media. As Jones Lang LaSalle points out in their 'Retailmarkt Special 2011', companies can no longer ignore the ever growing influence of consumers (JLL, 2011). And they didn't. With the acknowledgment of these trends the retail market became aware of the chance to reposition itself.

An expedient is found in the phenomenon called 'the experience economy'. The theory of the experience economy is based on the fact that a certain level of prosperity leads to new challenges and needs. It is focused on production and services that satisfy our emotional needs. With the basic needs in life like satisfying thirst and hunger, protection against danger and social contacts becoming more obvious, consumers are in search for something more. Achieving self-actualization, fulfilling our potential and pursuing happiness. That is what counts for today's consumer.

A significant amount of scientist investigated a wide range of subjects related to 'consumer experiences' and 'the experience economy'. A common factor in most of these studies was that it covered 'recreational shopping', which occurs mostly in the inner city shopping areas. These observations implicitly formed an interesting issue; is there a difference in desired customer experience related to the location of these experiences? It is expected that inner city shopping areas will profit from the theory on the experience economy. However, this particular research examines if the theory on the experience economy can be of value to district shopping centres, which are likely to have utilitarian shopping goals and motivations. These utilitarian aspects are expressed by the large share of daily and weekly groceries. It is thereby listed as one of the main goals to get an insight in the aspects that contribute most to the amenity of a Dutch district shopping centre. Furthermore it is examined what the role of the experience economy in district shopping centres is and how it could be improved.

Recent literature has shown that the concept of 'the experience economy' is comprehensive. It is a new economic wave that cannot be underestimated and keeps growing alongside the increasing prosperity, especially in the Western countries where 'experience' got an economical value. In general it can be said that experiences originate from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or parts of its organization, which provoke a reaction. Thereby, experiences are strictly personal, holistic in nature, are not only initiated by the retailer but also due to aspects that are out of the retailers control and concern the cognitive, emotional, social and physical responses to these retailers. It concerns multiple determinants and moderators like retail atmosphere, service-interface, previous customer experiences and situational aspects, which influence the eventual customer experience. Dutch district shopping centres thereby distinguish themselves through being part of the supporting shopping areas in a city, the leading role of supermarkets and the composition of shops.

A synthesis of the two literature studies led to 34 characteristics that influence the amenity of Dutch district shopping centres, in which a delineation is made to 11 characteristics that are thought to be of most influence. It is decided not to quantitatively test all these characteristics but instead build new theory by means of a qualitative research approach, after which it can be compared to the characteristics from the literature study.

The ‘Conceptual Content Cognitive Map (3CM)-method’ was adopted to strengthen the intention in building new theory. Cognitive maps were made, based on in-depth interviews, to make visual representations of knowledge structures. The 3CM-method made it possible to subtract more detailed information, bypass the bias of an interviewer and encourages personal thoughts. The district shopping centres Admiraalplein and Crabbehof in the city of Dordrecht were chosen as research locations due to their unique location. With only 700 meters separating the two, it is expected that respondents are aware of both district shopping centres and their pros and cons, whereby it might be extracted which characteristics contribute to the choice to shop at one of the two district shopping centres.

The cognitive mapping technique (3CM-method) provided 18 cognitive maps that were used for the analysis. A total of 143 characteristics were mentioned, divided into 50 groups. In the next stage of analysis, these characteristics were reallocated into 27 so called ‘amenity classes’, which contain characteristics having the same meaning. The result of this reallocation showed that the amenity class with the highest frequency was ‘retail offer’ which endorses the influence of supermarkets on district shopping centres. More surprisingly was the second highest ranked class, that of ‘safety’. Together with ‘behaviour / type of visitors’ (placed 11th) these two classes appoint an important issue; the social aspect of amenity. Differences between the two shopping centres emerge when dividing the results accordingly. The use of colours and building materials, inconvenience of cars and the behaviour / type of visitors seem to highly influence the perception of district shopping centre Crabbehof, while they were not mentioned at all concerning Admiraalplein where instead safety issues are clearly emerging. The most important characteristics according to the 3CM-approach coincide with those from the literature (colours / materials, general appearance, crowding, lay-out and roofing). Two characteristics, also important according to the 3CM-approach, are not considered important in the literature. These are respectively the inconvenience of cars and behaviour / type of visitors, which are both entirely attributable to Crabbehof. Other observations that are made concern the high impact of lay-out, general appearance, parking facilities and accessibility / proximity.

The most important observation made in this study is that of the ‘social aspects of amenity’. It is interesting to see that the visitors of Admiraalplein and Crabbehof highly stress the asocial behaviour of other visitors and thereby the general notion of feeling unsafe in the concerning shopping centre. Crabbehof was even avoided in some cases. Furthermore it seems that aspects like the retail offer, sufficient parking lots or completeness of the offer are considered as ‘basic conditions’ to the success of a district shopping centre. Feelings unsafe and therewith the behaviour and type of visitors should be considered as one of these ‘basic conditions’. Aspects like these all need to be in place in order to take advantage of additional aspects like the use of colours, roofing of corridors or organising activities. Experiences are therefore not essential in creating a successful district shopping centre but can be paid attention to when the basic conditions are all in place.

Due to the qualitative research design and the choice of the two specific shopping centres the results of this particular study cannot be generalised. It on the other hand does provide some new insights to the customer perception of district shopping centres and to what extent they value certain characteristics. In addition, it provides a basis on which future studies could quantitatively build on. Main subject of testing would seem the influence of social aspects on amenity.

Chapter **one**

Introduction

1. Introduction

In this first chapter the set-up of this study will be addressed. It will therefore discuss the cause and motive of this particular study, illustrate the scientific as well as the practical relevance, elaborate on the research framework and concludes with a first delineation of the subject matter.

1.1 Cause and motive

The Dutch retail market is changing. Retailers are struggling to survive due to several reasons. One of these reasons, the current economical climate, may be appointed as one of the main causes of this struggle. The Dutch consumers experience the crisis and its cuts, whereby a decrease in confidence and willingness to pay can be seen. Over the last years the Dutch retail market has changed as a result of these developments. As Jones Lang LaSalle pointed out in their 'Retailmarkt Special 2011', companies can no longer ignore the ever growing influence of consumers (JLL, 2011). And they didn't. With the acknowledgment of this trend the retail market became aware of the chance to reposition themselves.

Together with the growing influence of customers another trend is emerging. Consumer are increasingly exposed to mass communication and production while they are in search of the other part of the spectrum; customization. This trend is highly related to individualization and implies that consumers want to join in determining the retailers offer, have the feeling the offer is created especially for them and want to be approached with products and services that are adapted to their specific needs (CBW-MITEX, 2010). Some examples of increasing participation of consumers are 'Nike ID' (Nike), 'Design your own life' (IKEA) and 'Maak de smaak' (Lays), in which consumers can give a personal twist to the existing offer. Alongside the economical crisis and individualization a third trend of great importance emerged over the past decade; online shopping. As the NRW points out in their paper on consumer experience, the influence of technology on shopping behaviour can no longer be called a trend, but is a solid fact (NRW, 2011). The shopping behaviour of Dutch consumers is partly based on internet on mobile phones and social media. Consumers have got the opportunity to buy almost everything online. They can do a quick research on the internet concerning the sales prices of random goods. Thereafter, they can decide at home or work, before going to the shopping zone, where they are going to buy the goods they need. It is this simple example that provides a clue to the reaction of retailers to these trends; retailers must provide triggers to enthuse and attract customers to come to their stores.

A solution is found in the phenomenon called 'the experience economy'. This economy is entirely built on the preferences and growing demands of consumers. Pine & Gilmore (1999) were one of the first scientists who wrote down their vision in the book called 'The Experience Economy'. While their vision was quit revolutionary at that time, they attracted the attention of many scientists in the following years, which has led to a significant amount of scientific studies up until this moment. The theory of the experience economy is based on the fact that a certain level of prosperity leads to new challenges and needs. It is focused on production and services that satisfy our emotional needs. As Piët (2003) points out, it is a new economical wave in the development of our society. With the basic needs in life like satisfying thirst and hunger, protection against danger and social contacts becoming more obvious, consumers are in search for something more. Achieving self-actualization, fulfilling our potential, pursuing happiness. That is what counts for today's consumer.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) state that there is a certain pattern in the transition of every economical stage. In the first stage people trade commodities, mostly agricultural products, metals or minerals. The next economical offer is that of goods, which are intended to satisfy someone's needs like products in a supermarket. Subsequently the third stage is that of services, in which the costs of a certain good rise significantly because of the, non-material, addition of services. The fourth level is that of the addition of experience.

A cup of coffee can be more expensive in a five-star restaurant than in a local pub because of the experience and atmosphere of the location. As Pine and Gilmore (1999) clearly point out, 'experiences have always existed, but consumers, companies and economists bundled them with non exciting activities like chemical cleaning, car reparations and wholesale, on one big pile in the service sector'. Whoever buys a service, pays for a couple of non-material activities which will be executed on behalf of the customer. On the contrary, whoever buys an experience pays for the time he or she can enjoy a series of memorable events that, just like in a theatrical performance, are organized by the entrepreneur to personally involve the consumer' (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

As mentioned before, a significant amount of scientist investigated a wide range of subjects related to 'consumer experiences'. As Verhoef et.al. (2009) point out in their paper on the creation of customer experience, scientists have covered a large part on aspects of customer experience. Studies have been done on drivers of customer experience (Berry et.al., 2002; Gentile et.al., 2007; Naylor et.al, 2008), social environment (Baker et.al. 2002; White et.al., 2006), service interface (Mittal et.al, 1999; Williams, 1996), atmosphere (Karam, 2005), price (Kerin et.al., 1992), assortment, channels, past customer experience, moderators, goals and shopping motives (White et.al., 2006), but there are still some aspects of customer experience that need further investigation. Especially when observing that the majority of these investigations are orientated on the United States.

The NRW, Dutch Council of Shopping centres, published a research paper in 2011 in which they tried to enlarge the knowledge of customer experience to eventually give some practical recommendations. While this paper was useful for providing insights of customer experience, they explicitly noted that it covered the 'recreational shopping', which occurs mostly in the inner city and inner city shopping centres (NRW, 2011; Vreenegoor, 2011; Venselaar, 2007). This statement implicitly formed an interesting issue; is there a difference in desired customer experience related to the location of these experiences? Although creation of customer experiences seem to be one of the main objectives in today's retailing environment, the academic literature investigating this subject has been limited (Verhoef et.al., 2009). Grewal et.al. (2009) point out that location issues do matter when addressing customer experience. They conclude in their paper on the role of macro factors in the retail environment that additional work is desired on location issues while this topic is underexposed. While locations are likely to have a significant impact on decisions for merchandising, this topic could prove to be of great importance to the retail sector.

The motives for visiting a shopping mall or shopping centre can also be of influence to the level of customer experience needed. While the recreational shoppers are more likely to visit the inner city centres because of the higher level of entertainment that is offered, the motive for shopping at a district shopping will likely have a more 'necessity' character because of the weekly returning grocery shopping. To clarify further, Kooijman (1999) describes in his study that from a certain perspective district- and neighbourhood shopping centres can be characterized as 'buying centres' where its mostly about 'cheap' and 'easy'. It seems that the impact of the experience economy varies alongside the type of shopping area. The influence and role the experience economy has on a more convenience shopping areas, like district shopping centres, is yet unknown.

1.2 Relevance

Not only the findings written down above provide clues for possible differences in applicability or influence of the experience economy on different types of shopping areas. Bäckström et al. (2006) point out in their research on the experience orientated economy, that social aspects are connected to other in-store consumers and were particularly true in smaller towns where it was common for consumers to come across other consumers. Thus, they conclude that visiting stores can fulfil certain social needs within consumers (Bäckström et al., 2006). It is on this point that some findings come together.

An interview with E. Zwetheul (Corio) revealed that Corio, one of the biggest retail investors in Europe, in the case of district shopping centres focuses on the surrounding neighbourhoods and tries to fit in this community. A district shopping centre could prove to have a more social value for consumers, a meeting place, than the inner city shopping centres. A complementary substantiation can be distracted from thesis of P. Erdman. In his masterproof on experience concepts for shopping areas, he concluded that the experience concept seemed more relevant for inner city shopping areas than district shopping areas, which enhances the assumption mentioned above (Erdman, 2008; Snelder 2005; Mensink, 2008). Aside from the scientific relevance, this thesis will hopefully provide the Dutch retail sector some new insights. While research on this particular subjects has not been done yet, the observations and resulting from that the conclusions can serve as useful information for the Dutch district retail sector.

1.3 Research framework

As a result of the findings and grounded assumptions mentioned above, the following goal- and problem definition were extracted.

1.3.1 Research goal

The origin of this thesis lies in the assumption that the desired customer experience of Dutch district shopping centres, approached from a consumer perspective, differs from other types of Dutch shopping centres. It is also assumed that the retail-mix of district shopping centres tends to suit certain shopping goals. These goals or motives will likely tend towards utilitarian shopping motives which is expressed by a large share of daily and weekly groceries. This particular research examines if the theory on the experience economy can be of value to district shopping centres. The results of this research project should provide an insight into the aspects that contribute most to the amenity of Dutch district shopping centres. Thereby it should enlighten what the role of the experience economy in district shopping centres is and how a district shopping centre could respond to this trend. The district shopping centre hereby is approached as a whole, which means it focuses on the aspects that influence the experience of customers in the public area. So the focus will be on external appearance, retail offer and layout instead of in-store aspects of individual retailers.

1.3.2. Problem definition

Through multiple market changing trends like the growing competition, deteriorating market conditions, changing demands of the consumers and growth of online shopping, Dutch shopping centres are forced to distinguish themselves by means of enhancing the customer experience. It is unknown to what extent this trend is applicable and necessary for Dutch district shopping centres.

On the base of this research goal and problem definition the following research question is formulated. The associated sub questions are written down thereafter.

1.3.3 Research question

To what extent do Dutch district shopping centres meet consumer's requirements concerning the amenity?

1.3.4 Sub questions

- 1) What is meant by customer experience?
- 2) Which determinants influence the customer experience?
- 3) In which phase of the buying process can a customer be influenced by experiences?
- 4) What are the characteristics of a Dutch district shopping centre?

- 5) What are the shopping motivations of consumers visiting a Dutch district shopping centre?
- 6) Which characteristics of a Dutch district shopping centre are important to their customers and which of these characteristics affect customer experience?
- 7) To what extent do customers in Dutch district shopping centres find the determinants of experiences (that emerged in the literature study) important?

The sub questions are intended to provide an answer to the main research question. The first five sub questions are covered by the literature study, from which a clear understanding of the experience economy in Dutch district shopping centres must be provided. The majority of this part of the research will be done by desk research; a research fully based on literature (Verschuren et.al., 2007), additionally some fieldwork will be done in exploring and orientating on Dutch district shopping centres. The sixth and seventh sub question must be answered during the fieldwork. Together with the findings from the literature study, an analysis can be made from which the level of importance and applicability can be derived.

1.3.5 Lay-out and approach

As can be seen in figure 1.1, this study is based on two literature studies; the experience economy (chapter 2) and Dutch district shopping centres (chapter 3). Both studies will be integrated in chapter 4. Consecutively, the method to find out which characteristics of district shopping centres are important according to their customers will be discussed in chapter 5, along with the description of cases and fieldwork. The results will be elaborated in chapter 6, after which the conclusions and recommendation will be drawn in chapter 7.

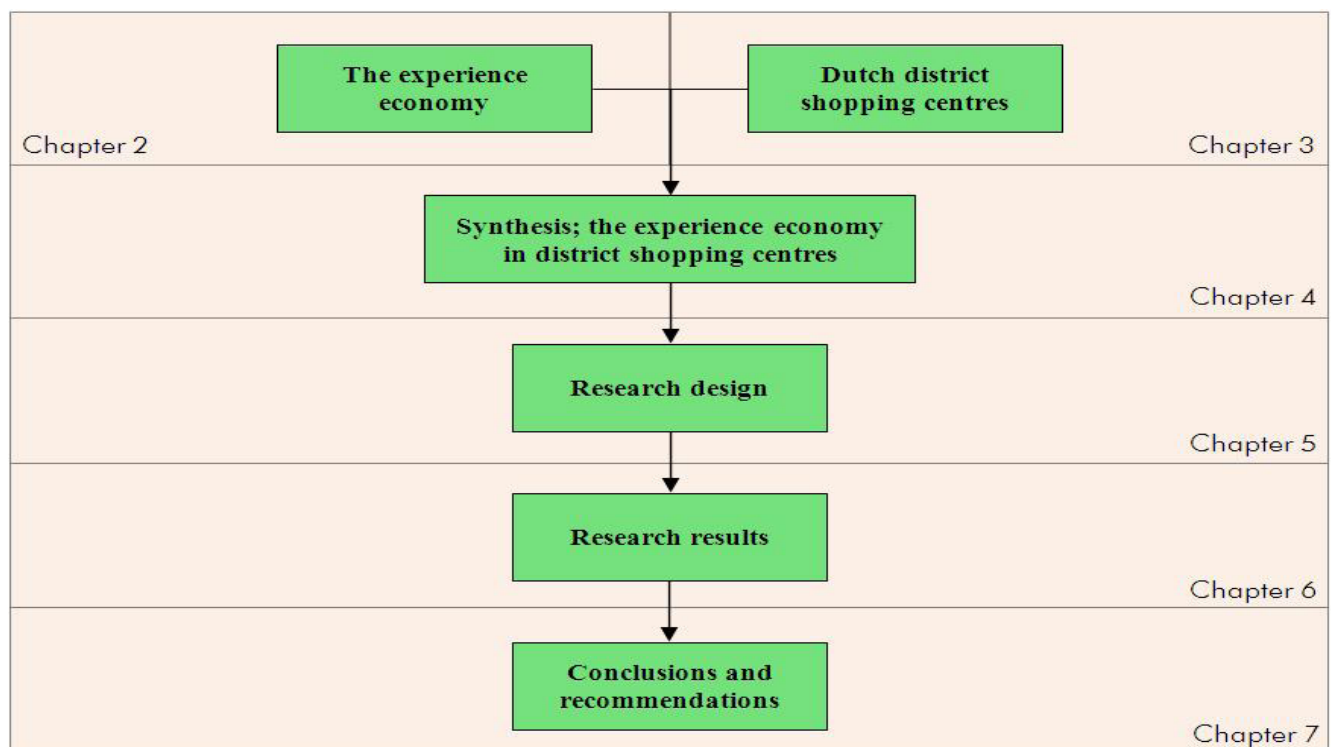


Figure 1.1, Lay-out of the master proof

In order to comply with the goal of this particular research and to provide an adequate answer to the research question, a qualitative research approach is adopted. A qualitative approach enables to bring out more detailed background information and deepen on certain issues by means of asking subsequent questions. Due to the ambition to gain new insights, a qualitative approach is useful because it enables

the respondents to indicate the attributes themselves instead of letting them choose from a set of pre-determined answers and therefore the bias of the interviewer is partly bypassed. This particular study makes use of two district shopping centres as a case study. The two district shopping centres and their features will be fully discussed in chapter 5, but they are chosen due to their relatively unique location; only 700 meter separating the two. Therewith it is expected that respondents are aware of both district shopping centres and their pros and cons. By means of the case study and the alternative research approach (3CM-method) an answer should be found to the research question. In addition, it should clarify what the role of the experience economy in district shopping centres is and how a district shopping centre could respond to the trend of ‘the experience economy’.

1.4 Delineation

As the previous cause and motive show, this research will focus on ‘Dutch district shopping centres’. The exact definition of a Dutch district shopping centre is not yet given but can be found in chapter three, in which the Dutch district shopping centre will be described. In advance, it is of importance to recognize that they differ from other types of shopping centres on three grounds, namely; the leading role of supermarkets, the necessary level of demands and alongside that the composition and amount of shops (Bolt, 2003). While there are so many aspects that influence customer experience the in-store and individual influences of retailers, like placement of cash registers, grouping of merchandise or in-store paint and wallpaper, are excluded. In this study, Dutch district shopping centres are on the contrary looked upon from a more holistic perspective, concerning the public area, external appearance, layout, retail offer, facilities and accessibility. The influences of the aspects that are excluded are not underestimated, but a delineation has to be made to create a clear overview. It is assumed that the external and spatial factors measured in this research will influence one or multiple aspects of customer experience, but it will not be specifically elaborated which of these cognitive, affective, social or physical experiences it will affect.

Chapter **two**

The Experience Economy

2. The Experience Economy

Before some well-founded conclusions can be made concerning the effect of the experience economy on Dutch district shopping centres, it is of great importance to get a better understanding of the phenomenon called 'The Experience Economy'. While this concept seems to consist of many different facets, this chapter will address the main aspects to eventually formulate a definition on which can be progressed, and therefore provide an answer to the first sub questions. The first paragraph of this chapter will explain the basics of the experience economy. In the subsequent paragraphs the complex nature of this phenomenon will be enlightened.

2.1 The base of the experience economy

The creation of experiences seem to become more and more important in the current Western economy. As Piët strikingly states in her book called 'De emotiemarkt', a fourth economic wave is arising besides the three classical waves – the agricultural, the industrial and the service economy – which economist Alvin Toffler (1980) predicted in our social development (Piët, 2003). This fourth economical wave is called 'the experience economy' and seems to grow in importance alongside the ever growing prosperity. But for a better understanding we will first take a few steps back, in time as well as in complexity.

The concept of 'experience' has repeatedly been a subject of scientific research in many different fields over the last decade. Walls et al. (2011) provide a clear summary of scientific definitions concerning the concept of customer experience, showing that Maslow (1964) was one of the first who gave a definition on this matter. From a sociological and psychological perspective, Maslow described so called 'peak experiences', the most positive experiences, as the experiences in which the individual transcends ordinary reality and perceives being or ultimate reality, in which it is short in duration and accompanied by positive affect (Maslow, 1964 in: Walls et al., 2011). From an anthropological and ethnological perspective, experiences are described as the influence of culture on the way an individual receives events into his or her consciousness (Carú and Cova, 2003 in: Walss et al., 2011). But from an economical and marketing perspective, experiences are declared as private, personal events that appear in reaction to certain stimulations and concern the entire being as a result of observing or participating in an event (Schmitt, 1999 in: Walls et al., 2011).

Preliminary on the fact that experiences have got an economical value these days, the psychological value is one of importance as well. On the well known pyramid of Maslow we are discussing the peak of this pyramid, as can be seen in figure 2.1. With the current prosperity in mind, it can be concluded that the lower layers of the pyramid have become more obvious and that the emphasis is increasing towards the upper layers. The NRW, Dutch Council of Shopping Centres, describes this development in her paper concerning the customer experience of Dutch shopping centres and illustrated it in the figure below. While their paper is not scientifically founded, it does clearly enlighten the hierarchy of needs and the conditional versus unconditional nature of these needs, which in this phase is sufficient and therefore used to clarify this development.

As Piët states, the result of this fifth storey is the optimal achievement of our potential, the merging of being and ability, or shortly; finding balance (Piët, 2003). Due to the economical developments in the West employment, healthcare, food and safety have become more obvious because of the basic level of regularity and offered facilities in these countries and additionally because of the fact that almost everything you need can be bought. What is left can be found in the fifth storey of the pyramid; investing in of the

pyramid; investing in our wellbeing (Kooijman, 2002). With this in mind, the following paragraph concerning the economical value of experiences is easy to understand.

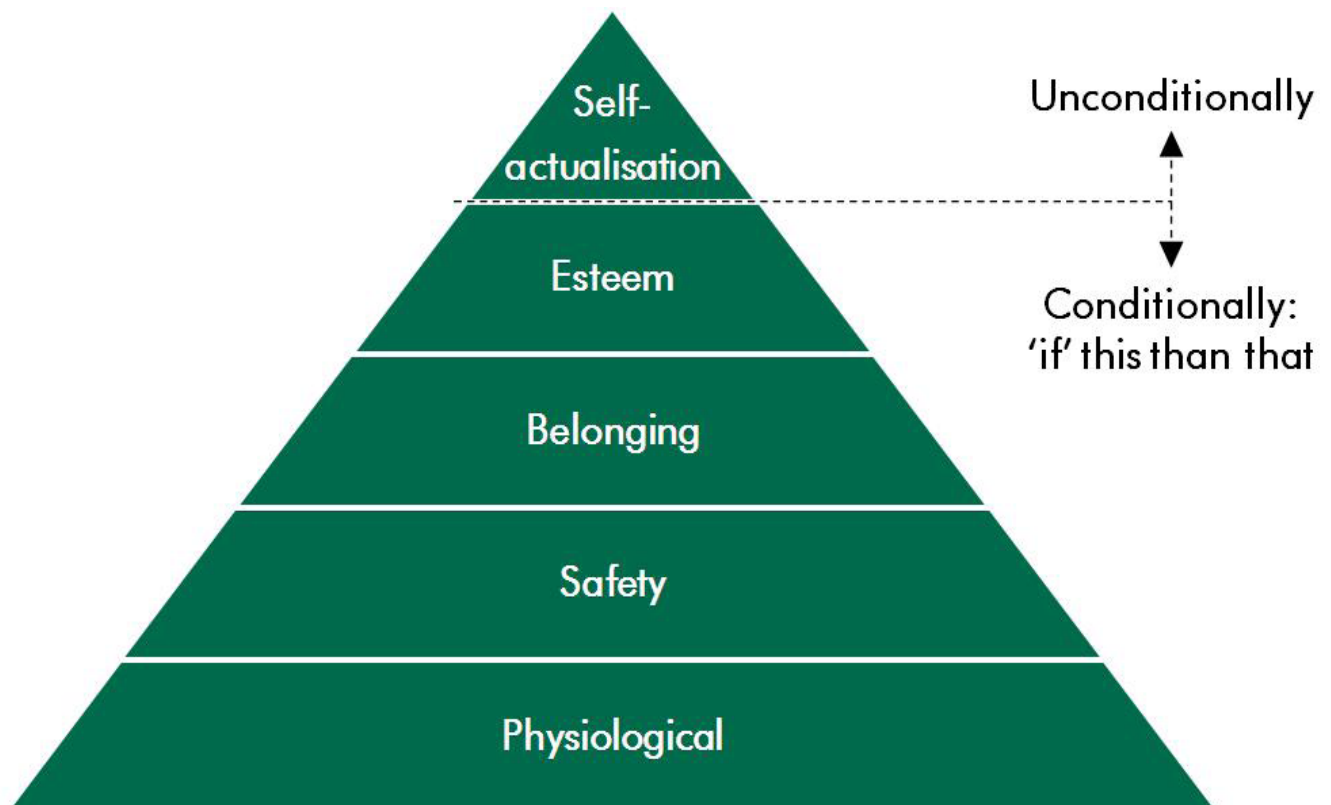


Figure 2.1, **The Maslow pyramid**, edited by NRW.

Source: NRW, *Consumentenbeleving in winkelgebieden* (2011).

As Piët states, the result of this fifth storey is the optimal achievement of our potential, the merging of being and ability, or shortly; finding balance (Piët, 2003). Due to the economical developments in the West employment, healthcare, food and safety have become more obvious because of the basic level of regularity and offered facilities in these countries and additionally because of the fact that almost everything you need can be bought. What is left can be found in the fifth storey of the pyramid; investing in our wellbeing (Kooijman, 2002). With this in mind, the following paragraph concerning the economical value of experiences is easy to understand.

In the book called “The Experience Economy”, Pine and Gilmore (1999) prove, through a simple and recognizable example, the economical value of experiences. A cup of coffee is central in their example. Coffee beans are considered as commodity, where the value of a cup of coffee is about €0,05. When a manufacturer pulverizes these beans and wraps them up, the product changes from a commodity to a ‘good’ and thereby the value increases to about €0,25 a cup. Subsequently, when a services is added, for example in a café where the cup of coffee is made for you and brought to your table, the value increases significantly to about €2,- a cup. In proportion this is a big step, but despite that still widely accepted. The final step includes the addition of an experience. The cup of coffee can also be served at the San Marco-Square in Venice, with the site of a beautiful historical city, whereby the bill adorns a staggering €15,-. The fact that you are able to buy a cup of coffee disappears as being obvious. The ambiance, atmosphere and experience you get when drinking your cup of coffee is increasingly important for consumers. And even

more important, the consumer is willing to pay for it. Table 2.1 gives an insight in these economical differences. It shows that experiences focus on the individual, consider the customer as the central objective and distinguish through the personal character of the offers.

Table 2.1, **Economical differences.**

Source: Pine and Gilmore (1999).

Economical offer	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences
Economy	Agricultural	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economical function	Harvest / delve	Fabricating	Supplying	Directing
Nature of the offer	Exchangeable	Material / touchable	Intangible / un-touchable	Memorable
Key attribute	Natural	Standardised	Customized	Personal
Delivery method	Bulk stored	Stored a piece after production	Made on demand	Shown during a period of time
Salesman	Merchant	Manufacturer	Service provider	Director
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Demand factors	Features	Properties	Advantages	Sensations

A visual elaboration might provide the most logical development of the ascending economical value, as can be seen in figure 2.2. This figure shows the growing relevance for customers if needs are sufficiently met, the increasing price because of the growing value and thereby, due to the fact that companies can differentiate their offers more easier, a specific value can be provided that is not affiliated to the market price of the competitors.

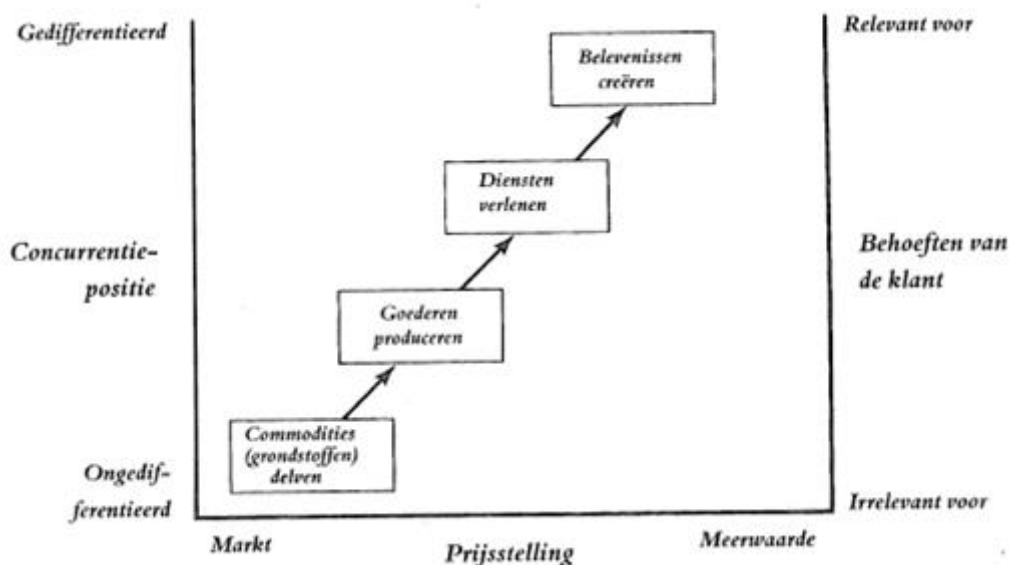


Figure 2.2, **The stair of economical value.**

Source: Pine and Gilmore (1999).

2.2 Amenity

Using the base given in the previous paragraph, this section will elaborate further on the concept of 'experience'. Considering the fact that this research is aimed at the Dutch retail market, it will be linked to the consumer, whereby we speak of 'customer experience'. As the start of this chapter enlightened, the customer experience contains a large variety of determinants that are of influence on the final amenity. Aside from that, the concept of customer can be approached from a wide range of angles. As Verhoef et al. (2009) state in their paper concerning the customer experience, many scientific studies are aimed at customer satisfaction or quality of the offered services. 'The literature concerning marketing, retailing and service management has not considered the customer experience as a separate construct' (Verhoef et al., 2009). But the amount of scientific publications has increased during the last decade. For example, Berry et al. (2002) elaborated on the determinants on customer satisfaction, Naylor et al. (2008) on the effect of transformational appeals on the retail experience and Bäckström et al. (2006) on an experience-orientated economy and experience-seeking consumption in retailing.

Recent scientific literature shows that there are many definitions concerning the customer experience that provide a view on the complexity of this concept. Gentile et al. (2007) first of all state that the experiences customers have originate from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or parts of its organization, which provoke a reaction.. They further elaborate that it is a strictly personal experience and it could involve the customers at a rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual level. In addition, Verhoef et al. (2009) provide a definition that 'customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company'. The difference between the direct and indirect contact manifests itself during the time of contact. During the purchase, use and service the customer initiates the contact and therefore it is a direct contact. During unplanned meetings with representatives of companies, services or brands they speak of indirect contact which often takes the form of word-of-mouth recommendations or criticism, advertising or new reports (Meyer et al., 2007 in: Verhoef et al., 2009). Additionally, Verhoef et al. (2009) state that the customer experience is holistic in nature and concern the cognitive, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer. It is an experience that is not only initiated by the retailer by means of service, atmosphere, assortment and price, but also due to aspects that are out of the retailer control like the influence of mind-set or visiting motive (Verhoef et al., 2009; Lizhu, 2006).

The paragraph above shows that the concept of customer experience is complex and subject to many different aspects. It can be said that the customer experience is the total experience, from searching to consumption to the phase of the after-sales and concerns multiple retail channels (Verhoef e.a., 2009). With the insights that are given above, Verhoef et al. (2009) set up a conceptual model whereby various determinants of customer experience are developed as can be seen in figure 2.3. The determinants are; social environment, service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, price and promotions but also experiences in alternative channels like the internet and finally the interaction between the retail brand and the customer experience. Together, all of these determinants affect the customer experience whereby the retailers are able to influence a lot of these determinants. In addition, the conceptual model contains a dynamic element which takes into account the fact that the current customers experience on time t can be influenced by previous customer experiences on time $t-1$ (Verhoef e.a., 2009). On the other side of the conceptual model, the consumer side, another two moderators are added that in their turn affect the influence of the determinants on the final customer experience. One of these moderators is the so-called consumer moderator. This moderator concerns the motive or goal of shopping. "For example, task-oriented customers may consider the assortment as a more important driver of customer experience than experientially oriented customers" (Verhoef e.a., 2009).

The other moderator concerns the situational affects on the customer experience, like the influence of location, type of store, channel or culture. Although this conceptual model is set up with the goal to create a optimal customer experience management strategy, it can be of significant use for this research as well due to the holistic approach and the acknowledgement of situational influences, which is one of the main concerns of this particular research project. Since it was a theoretical research, no surveys or methods where used to empirically test it. The figure below shows the model described above. The box shaded in green contains the situational affect on the influence of the different moderators on the eventual customer experience, which will be discussed more in depth in the upcoming chapters.

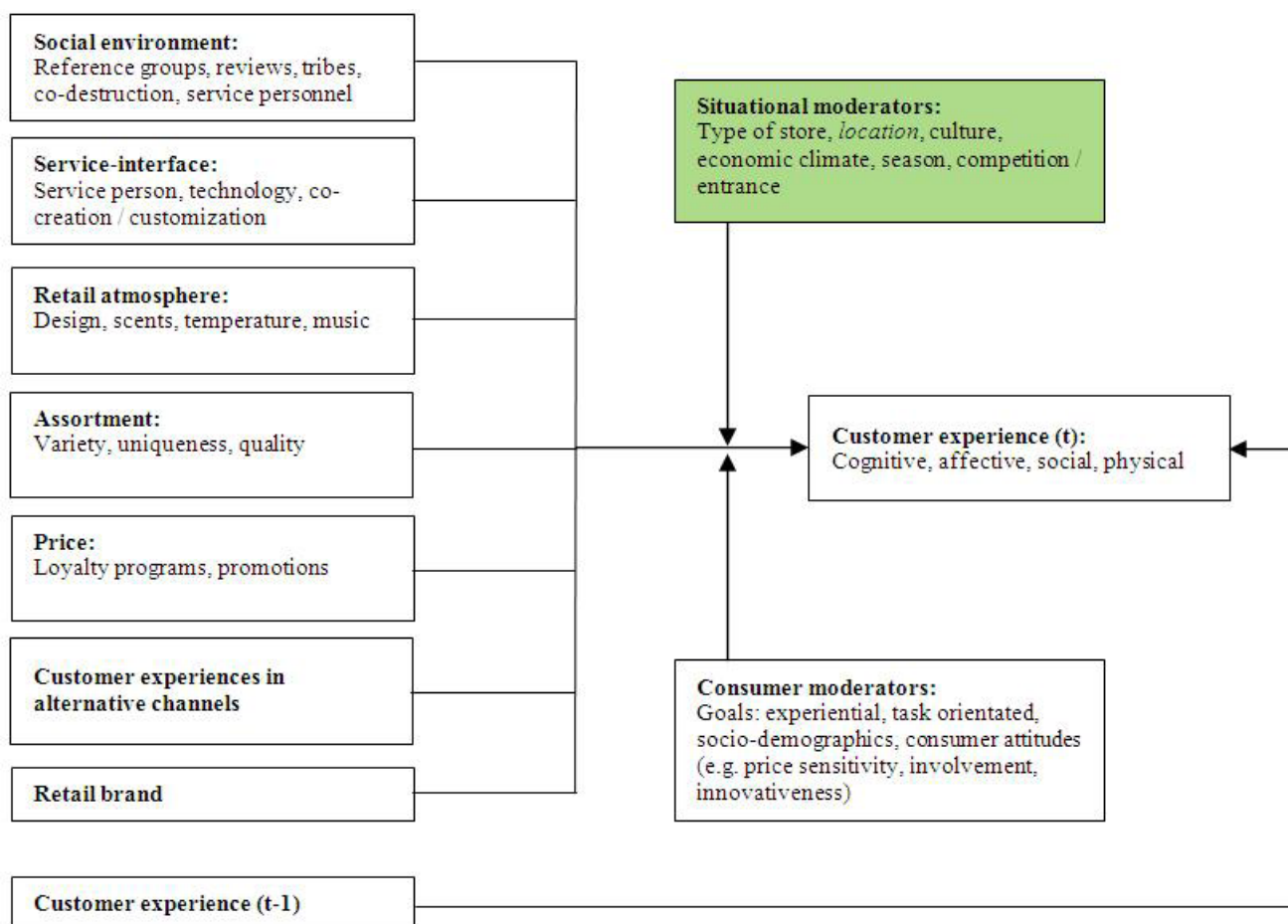


Figure 2.3, Conceptual model of customers experience creation.

Source: Verhoef et al. (2009).

Before discussing the specific features of district shopping centres, there are a couple of topics that have not been covered yet while they do matter when trying to understand the way customers react to the experience economy, and at a lower level the determinants that retailers control. That's why the following paragraphs discuss the buying process in relation to experiences and the aspects of experiential consumption from the retailers' point of view.

2.3 The Buying Process

The awareness of retailers towards a better understanding of customers to eventually increase the customer satisfaction and retail performance is expanding. Ailawadi and Keller, Leischnig et al. (2011) note that retailers have a unique position to create customer experiences that may involve different aspects like the store as a whole or their own private labels (Ailawadi et al., 2004 in: Leischnig et al., 2011).

Additionally, Berry et al. (2002) point out in their essay on customer experiences, that companies must use the knowledge of understanding the customer's journey – from the expectations they have before the experience occurs to the assessment they are likely to make when it is over – to orchestrate a series of “clues” that collectively meet or exceed customers satisfaction (Berry et al., 2002). They conclude that the key is in how effectively the company manages these experiences. But to manage it, retailers must first get a better understanding of these experiences and how consumers react to it.

According to Walls et al. (2011), the pattern of experiences consists of five distinctive features: (a) the peak of the primary hedonic process or state; (b) a period of hedonic or affective adaptation during which the intensity of the hedonic state declines; (c) a steady level of the hedonic process that continues as long as stimulus intensity is maintained; (d) a peak of affective after-reaction, which quickly follows stimulus termination and whose quality is hedonically very different from that of the primary hedonic state; (e) the after state in which the experience gradually disappears (Solomon et al., (1974) in: Walls et al., (2011). In order to clarify the terms ‘hedonic’ and ‘utilitarian’ a short description will be given below. When speaking of hedonic shopping value this term reflects the value received from the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of the shopping experience. Utilitarian shopping value on the contrary reflects the acquisition of products or information in an efficient manner and can be viewed as reflecting a more task-orientated, cognitive, and non-emotional outcome of shopping (Jones et al., 2006). So the utilitarian aspects concern the task-related value of a shopping experience while the hedonic aspects concern the shopping experience itself unrelated to tasks. These terms can also be used while speaking of online-shopping, while the hedonic aspects then reflect on the internet as an entertainment medium, the utilitarian aspects reflect more on the large availability of product information but also the possibility to quickly compare multiple products.

Referring back to the description above about the five distinctive features, this pattern can be helpful in understanding what a person is experiencing during an event. The pattern describes that a first experience is probably more intense than witnessing it day by day. This sounds logical, while the customer is getting used to the sounds, smells and sights showed before. So it is comprehensible that the experiential aspects are of influence on the current customer experience, and as Gentile et al. concluded after their survey amongst consumers, a relevant part of the value proposed to customers is linked to these experiential features (Gentile et al., 2007).

Asides from the pattern of experiences an insight in the buying process is required. Puchinelli et al. (2009) provided a clear theoretical review on this part, in which they apply some specific consumer behaviour theories that can help retailers get a better understanding of their customers. No surveys or methods were used to empirically test it. In their overview they have organised the topics that, as a whole, give a broad insight concerning consumers in retail environments. The topics that are included are as follows: (1) goals, schema, and information processing, (2) memory, (3) involvement, (4) attitudes, (5) affect, (6) atmospherics, and (7) consumer attributions and choices (Puchinelli et al., 2009). These topics are related to the five primary decision stages as can be seen in table 2.2. The asterisks note the topics that can influence the decision stage.

One of the interesting topics in relation to this particular research is the subject of goals, schema, and information processing, in which ‘schema’ can be described as a rule or principle that enables the understanding by means of creating a mental model to structure and assist in explaining the complex reality. While consumers shop for various reasons they might not need a specific product or service. According to Puchinelli et al. (2009), consumers establish the progression of the experiences, the consumer's perception of the retail environment, and consumer satisfaction with the experience, regardless of the

Table 2.2, **Consumer decision process**

Source: Puchinelli et al. (2009)

	Need Recognition	Information Search	Evaluation	Purchase	Post-Purchase
Goals, schema	*	*	*	*	*
Memory		*	*		
Involvement	*	*	*		
Attitudes			*	*	*
Affect	*	*	*	*	*
Atmospherics			*	*	*
Attributes and choices			*	*	*

specific goals. So the same retail environment can produce very different outcomes and feelings, depending on the consumer’s goals (Puchinelli et al., 2009; Akther et al., 1994; Miller, 1993). This is an important statement, saying that a shopping centre cannot focus solely on one type of customer. As they further elaborate; goals depend on the needs of consumers and therefore establish a context for organizing knowledge in memory. By providing an organizational structure for other elements in the associative network, goals determine the relative characteristics of a product and in a more abstract manner for shopping environments (Puchinelli et al., 2009). As table 2.2 indicates, goals influence the behaviour and assessments of the consumers’ needs towards the level of satisfaction of the retailers’ products.

Some of the remaining topics will be noted shortly in the following part, as each of these aspects partly contributes to consumer behaviour and thereby shows its complexity. Memory of items for example affects the level of influence on new experiences related to that item. So, referring to table 2.2, the recall of information about a product affects consumer behaviour whereby the short-term and long-term memories affects the consumer processes uniquely (Puchinelli et al., 2009). Additionally, the level of involvement also affects the consumers experience. A high involvement logically results into a different outcome of customer experience than a low involvement due to the level of interest, need recognition and information search. The fourth aspect of the table, concerning the attitudes of customers, implies that positive attitudes will result into behaviour that benefits the retailers. Attitudes may affect the consumer decision process in many different ways whereby context plays an important role. The fifth aspect concerns affective processing which refers to an internal feeling state and represents a general term used to refer to the collection of moods and emotions (Puchinelli et al., 2009). Occasions in which customers are truly in a neutral state are very rare, but moods can influence the channel customers will chose. If the retail environment is within that channel it can make consumers more engaged or aroused. The penultimate aspect concerns the atmospherics, which will need no further explanation here. Finally, the consumers’ attributes and choices refer to the final stages of the consumer decision process in which they become central to consumer behaviour. (Puchinelli et al., 2009).

In their paper on creating and consuming experiences, Bäckström et al. (2006) analyse some situational variables and their influence on consumer’s in-store experiences. By means of a case study they investigated the substance of arguments about an experience-orientated economy of retailers as well as consumers. Their fieldwork consisted of two types of methods, respectively in-depth interviews with retailers and by means of The Critical Incident Technique, which is intended to invite consumers to describe memorable incidents to analyse the description of these certain positive or negative incidents. The result of their

study on two hundred and fifty two consumers, but also seven retail firms, shed some more light on the creation of retail experiences. The retailers all agreed that the market demands an increased experience-orientation, as competition increases and consumers are more focused on emotional sides of shopping (Bäckström et al., 2006). But as discussed in the previous paragraph, it is useful to get an understanding about what experiential consumption consists of. The results of the research of Bäckström et al. showed that, according to the retailers, the following aspects are central: education (knowledge intermediary), inspiration (product displays), innovations (new combinations of products), opportunities to try out products and services, stimulation of senses, recreation and special activities (Bäckström et al., 2006). The emphasis hereby lies more on the hedonic consumption than the utilitarian, so these aspects respond. Educational aspects can help to create a pleasurable in-store experience by means of providing and sharing information or knowledge about how to use the products. Inspiring customers expresses itself through suggesting to customers how to use products or for example presenting clothing in an interesting way to indirectly give the customers some tips and ideas. Besides that, the innovation and new combination aspect expresses itself for example by means of combining products that traditionally have not been sold together. Additionally, the opportunity for customers to try out products seem to enhance the in-store experience while it shows what the product can actually do for the customer. Stimulating senses is in line with the previous aspect, while scents or music can enhance the in-store experience. One of the last aspects, that of the recreation, shows an important resemblance to goals and motive of shopping as elaborated above. Visiting stores may just serve as a possibility to escape the everyday routine and thus the corresponding goods offered may be of influence to the decision to shop at a certain location.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the concept of 'the experience economy' is comprehensive. It is a new economic wave that cannot be underestimated and keeps growing alongside the increasing prosperity, especially in the Western countries. While people are willing to pay for these experiences it got an economical value. In the scientific literature there are a lot of definitions on this concept that show some similarities. In general it can be said that experiences originate from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or parts of its organization, which provoke a reaction. Thereby, experiences are strictly personal, holistic in nature, are not only initiated by the retailer but also due to aspects that are out of the retailers control and concern the cognitive, emotional, social and physical responses to these retailers. It concerns multiple determinants and moderators like retail atmosphere, service-interface, previous customer experiences and situational aspects, which influence the eventual customer experience. The literature on the buying process of customers provides a better insight in the customer behaviour which contains a well known distinction, that of the hedonic and utilitarian shopping values. The utilitarian aspects concern the task-related value of a shopping experience while the hedonic aspects concern the shopping experience itself unrelated to tasks. This notation provides a useful insight while, as stated before, the same retail environment can produce very different feelings and outcomes, depending on the consumer's goals.

Chapter **three**

The District Shopping Centre

3. The District Shopping Centre

As mentioned in the first chapter, a well-grounded understanding of the district shopping centres, especially in relation with other types of shopping centres, is of great importance for conclusions to be made further on. This chapter will elaborate on the different aspects of district shopping centres in the Netherlands, starting with their origin to eventually the more specific properties.

3.1 History

According to Dawson et al. (1990), the definition of a shopping centre in general is; a group of commercial establishments which have been designed, planned, developed, owned, marketed and managed as a unit. So a shopping centre was meant to function as one area, in which all the retailers have to follow the same rules. Unity of stores, a proper mix of goods and an accessible public area are a couple of elements that can ensure customers to stay at a shopping centre (Reith, 2011). Around the 1960's, the first planned shopping centres were established in Western Europe, which started the spreading of shopping centres in The Netherlands as well. Before these years, and especially before World War II, the number of systematically planned shopping centres in The Netherlands was limited because spatial planning was of no concern these days (Zwetheul, 2009).

After World War II there suddenly was an increasing demand of shopping centres due to the rapid demographic growth and the re-construction of the country. The government became aware of the need to structure these developments and set out some regulation. For the first time shopping centres were developed that were concentrated at a certain area, taking into account the function, size and location (Gantvoort, 1990). In the years that followed a variety of shopping centres were developed, spreading the entire country. This spreading did not occur randomly but instead was subject to a set of theories that were designed to give the optimal distribution of shopping centres in a certain area or city.

A well known theory is that of geographer Christaller who designed a model in which shopping centres can be ranked. The origin of his theory lies in the assumption that a shopping centre facilitates the surrounding area. With the theory of Christaller, Dutch policymakers calculated the ideal and most optimal location for a shopping centre. The presumption of Christaller thereby was that a consumer will buy his or her goods in the shop located closest by (Dawson et al., 1990). Additionally, according to his theory, a retail-mix that provides certain products, which have the same level of demand, together form a type of centre. With this in mind, a certain hierarchy is formed in which each type of shopping centre has its own submarket within the area (Bolt, 2003).

The first and biggest type of shopping centre in this hierarchy is the “shopping concentration of the first order”, which has the largest amount of shops and sales meters. This type of shopping centre offers goods for many different industries compared to the other types of shopping centres (Zwetheul, 2009). The last and smallest types of shopping centres are the neighbourhood shopping centres. Following this order, within a region the following classification is formed; inner-city shopping centres, city district shopping centres, district shopping centres, neighbourhood shopping centres and individual independent retailers (Bolt, 2003), as can be seen in figure 3.1.

According to Christaller, consumers can easily decide to shop at a shopping centre, that is located some miles further away, because of the fulfilment of certain purposes or when they can buy goods for better prices. The improved mobility of consumers and thereby the improved accessibility of shopping centres makes it possible for consumers to switch between shopping centres more easily (Reith, 2011).

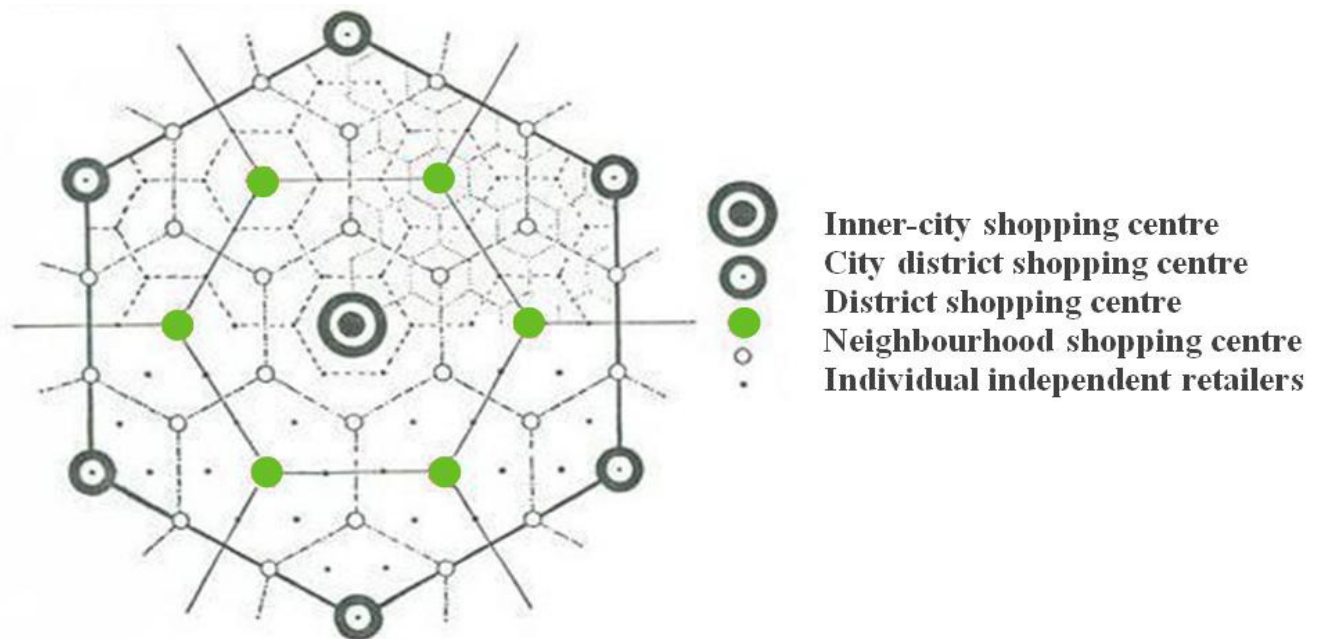


Figure 3.1, **Hierarchy of shopping centres according to Christaller.**

Source: Zwetheul (2009), originally sourced from Christaller (1933).

The theory of Christaller also provides a way to divide the types of shopping centres into central and more supporting shopping centres. The inner-city district shopping centres are part of the central shopping areas, while the city district shopping centres, district shopping centres and neighbourhood shopping centres are part of the supporting shopping areas. While the types of shopping centres mentioned above will serve as the main distinction in this thesis, there are some additional types of shopping centres that will complete the overview. The central shopping areas namely also concern the main shopping areas and the core providing shopping areas as can be seen in figure 3.2. And as Zwetheul (2009) states, another type of shopping area is added since the 70's, namely the peripheral retail locations. These peripheral locations include large-scaled concentrations with all sorts of shops or specialized shopping areas. Together with the classification given above, a clear overview of the Dutch retail market and her types of shopping centres is given as can be seen in figure 3.2. Concluding, an important first distinction is made in this paragraph where the district shopping centres are grouped into the supporting shopping areas, which means they are not core providing or the main shopping areas of the city, but instead support a certain district.

3.2 Definition of the district shopping centre

As Bolt (2003) clearly elaborates in his book on valuing shopping facilities, a district shopping centre differs from other types of shopping centres on a couple of grounds. Although there are many different opinions and elaborations on dividing these different types of shopping centres, it is wise to pick out one that is explicit and obvious. This research will elaborate on the definition of Bolt, who states that shopping centres differ on three grounds, namely the size, required level of demands and thereby the composition of the retail offer (Bolt, 2003). Concluding from his table in which he divides the different types of shopping centres (Bolt, 2003, p.73), a district shopping centre is a supporting shopping centre with a size of about 15 to 50 shops, which equals a floor space of about 3.000 to 12.000 m², serves a district of about 10.000 to 30.000 people, has a composition of shops that offers about 40% to 50% daily groceries and contains no department stores. In 2005, the ISCS (International Council of Shopping Centers) made a 'Pan-European Shopping Center Standard' in which a standardisation of European shopping centre definitions is made (Lambert, 2006).

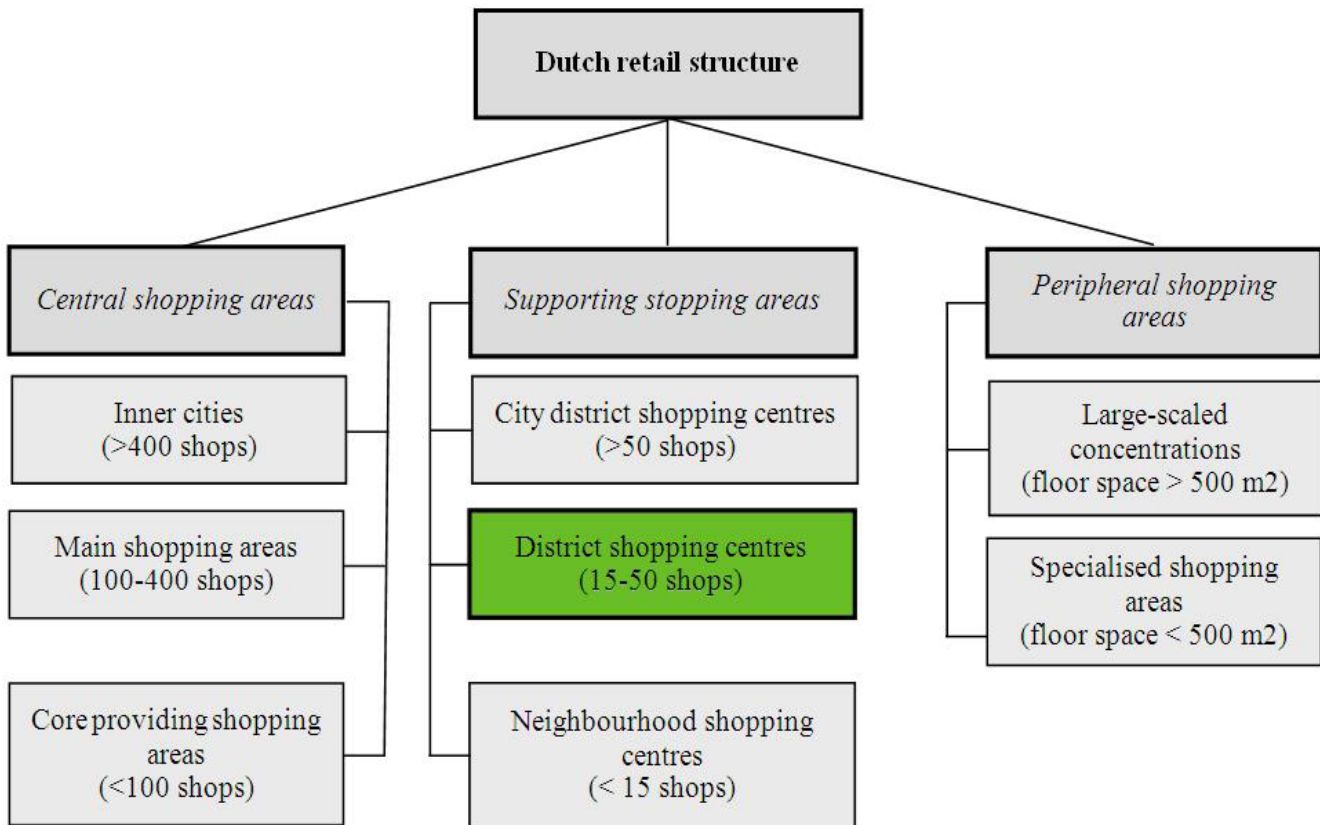


Figure 3.2, **Hierarchy of the Dutch retail structure.**

Source: Zwetheul, 2009.

According to the definition above based on Bolt (2003), a Dutch district shopping centre can be defined as a traditional, small, convenience based shopping centre with a GLA of 5,000 to 19,999 m², as shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1, **Dutch district shopping centre according to international standard ICSC**

Source: Lambert, 2006.

Format	Type of Scheme		Gross Leasable Area (GLA)
Traditional	Small	Convenience-Based	5,000 – 19,999 m ²

3.3 Use of the district shopping centre

One of the main aspects that influence the eventual performance of a district shopping centre is the behaviour of the customer. So before a potential customer decides to shop at a certain shopping centre, he or she considers his or her options. While this is partly elaborated in the previous chapter, this paragraph will go more in depth and discuss the three main steps of customer's considerations, namely the choice, goal, and social goal of the potential customers.

3.3.1 Choice of the customer

According to Reith (2011), a customer has a couple of considerations before deciding where to shop, which are the orientation, selection and identification of destination, evaluation of surroundings, selection of a product, analysis of a product and recognition of a product (Chebat et.al, 2005 in: Reith, 2011).

These considerations can be grouped into three steps, namely the cognitive mapping, decision-making and decision-execution. During the cognitive mapping the customer is orientating. Previous experiences are of great importance, as well as the distance towards the shopping centre (Reith, 2011; Teller et al., 2012). So the perception of a retail area before the actual shopping has a significant influence on the eventual choice. Ultimately, the evaluation of the retail area affects the consumers' behaviour in terms of site choice, buying and patronage intentions, retention proneness and many more (Teller et al., 2008; Athiyaman, 2011).

In their paper concerning the attractiveness of retail agglomerations, Teller et al. (2008) evaluated this attractiveness by taking any possible moderating effect into account that arises from the shopping experience and the customer's involvement in the current shopping trip (Teller et al., 2008). With this model, which is based on an extensive literature review, a distinction is made between situational-driven and non-situational driven (sustainable) aspects of agglomeration attractiveness with a direct or indirect impact on the customer's behaviours. The marketing mix, which is a part of the characteristics, consists of site-related factors, tenant-related factors, environment-related factors, buying-related factors and dimensions of attractiveness. The perception of characteristics is divided into ten different exogenous factors, namely the accessibility, parking, retail tenant mix, merchandise value, non-retail tenant mix, orientation, ambience, atmosphere, distance, involvement and overall attractiveness. They based their results on a survey amongst 2,000 on-site, face-to-face interviews.

An important result of their study is the fact that situational aspects have proven to exert a major impact on the evaluation of attractiveness (Teller et al., 2008). "Since the situational factors used in our model, namely 'involvement' with a specific shopping task and perceived distance to the agglomeration, had emerged before or during the actual trip, they can hardly be influenced by the current on-site conditions at the agglomeration directly" (Teller et al., 2008; Léo et al., 2002). So, according to their research, the chances of affecting customers' perception of a certain shopping area by means of an applied marketing mix are limited, whereby on the other hand the influence of situational aspects are ascertained. These situational aspects will be enlightened some more in chapter 3.4.

3.3.2 Customer goals and motivations

While shortly elaborated in the previous chapter, the customer goals of shopping can be of great importance to this particular research. As Reith concludes in her masterproof, the shopping motives can be divided into three motives, namely the 'run', 'fun' and 'goal' motives, whereby the 'run' motive cover the utilitarian aspects and the 'fun' motive the hedonic aspects as elaborated above. The 'run' motive mainly concerns the daily groceries at the supermarket, the 'fun' motive concerns the shopping for luxury goods without a goal and the 'goal' shopping concerns the domestic appliance and furniture with a direct goal (Oort et al., 2006 in: Reith, 2011). This last statement can be looked upon with some scepticisms, while is it not clear if customers are only goal orientated when going to a peripheral shopping area aimed on domestic appliances and furniture for example.

When addressing the subject of shopping motivation a large variety of literature has become available during the last decade. Lately, 2010, Wagner et al. screened the existing literature on this topic and revealed that shoppers' motives range from very abstract, over more concrete, to rather specific ones (Wagner et al., 2010). In their study they attempted to develop a hierarchical theory specific to the domain of shopping motivation. But more importantly they developed a conceptual model, based on the available literature, in which three types of shopping motivations are distinguished. They tested their model by means of a cross-contextual survey design, in which more than five hundred consumers were approached to fill in a questionnaire. The model is used in this present research to get a better understanding of the shopping motivations of consumers, and can be seen in the figure 3.3.

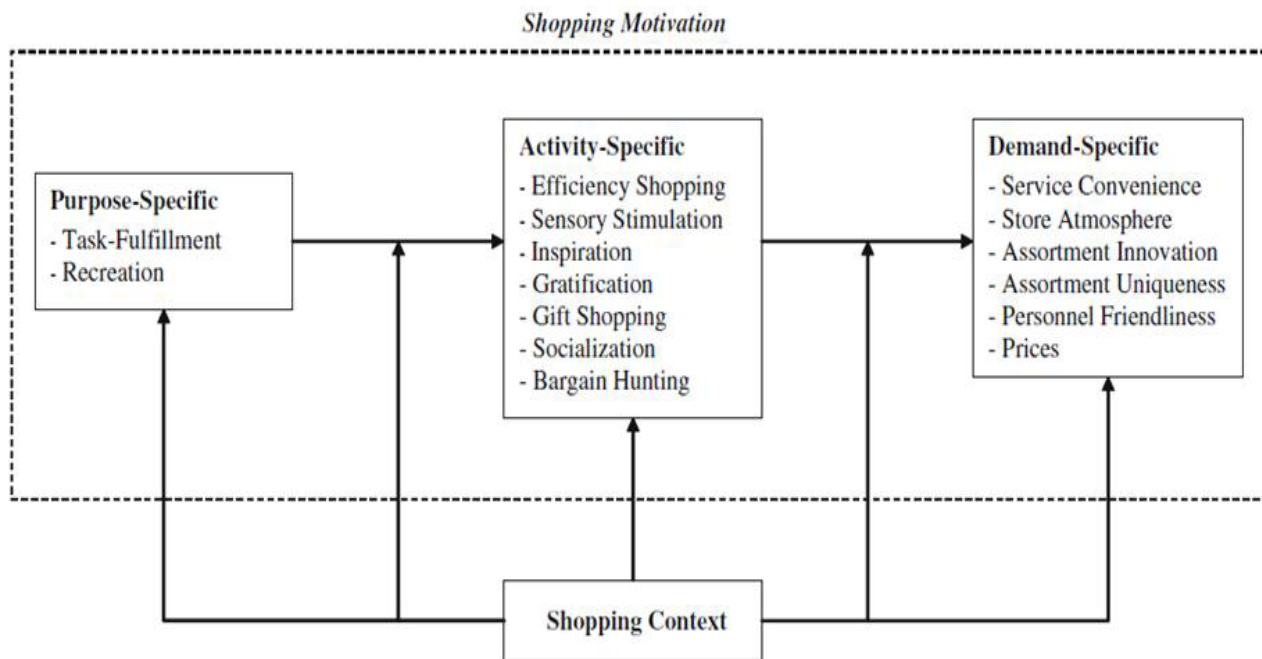


Figure 3.3, **Conceptual model of shopping motivation.**

Source: Wagner et al., 2010.

As figure 3.3 shows there are three ways to divide shopping motivations, which Wagner et al. 2010 base on existing research findings, namely the purpose-specific, activity-specific and the demand-specific motivations. Thereby, each of these three motivations contains a generic dimension which means that there is a distinction in task-fulfilment and recreational activities. The first shopping motivation, that of purpose-specific, corresponds to the most abstract form of motivation, which can be formulated as the overall underlying objective of a shopping trip (Wagner et al, 2010). The activity-specific level is some more concrete, and refers to consumers' activity goals or desired behaviours when visiting a shopping area. These types of motivations sketch the way consumers anticipate to fulfil the overall aim of a shopping trip. The final shopping motivation concerns the demand-specific motivations, which can be defined as the most concrete and operational level of shopping motivation and relates to consumers' particular expectations placed upon retail facilities like store accessibility (Wagner et al, 2010). Additionally, the context of shopping affects the relationships among eventual shopping motives because some motives are predominantly activated in varying shopping contexts. For example, Wagner et al. show that the impact of gratification shopping tends to be superior in a food shopping context where it can create enjoyment. They also address the fact that gratification shopping for non-food products seems to be a more holistic experience where consumers may derive positive affect likewise from the assortment, store atmosphere, and service convenience (Wagner et al., 2010).

3.3.3 Social goals

One of the main advantages a district shopping centre could have is the fact that these kinds of shopping centres are appreciated more than inner-city shopping centres by means of social value. Especially the 'fun' shoppers are more likely using the district shopping centre to enjoy and interact with other customers according to Reith (2011), but it can be questioned if these types of customers will visit district shopping centres. So besides the opportunity to shop, the possibility of interacting with other customers or district inhabitants could be valued. When comparing this to the inner city shopping centres where the number of customers lies at a significant higher level, the chance of running into a fellow district

inhabitant is much smaller. A district shopping centre can be the centre of a district, and therefore collaborate with the district by means of social activities like supporting a district sports club or organising an event with such district orientated associations.

3.4 Situational aspects

Up until now the situational aspects of district shopping centres have not been enlightened clearly, while this is an important part in concretizing the amenity of district shopping centres. While discussing the types of shops, amount, retail-mix and area they are supposed to support, the physical aspects have not been mentioned yet. It eventually comes down to the consumers' perception of the retail environment, which depends on many different factors. A lot of these factors are very obvious like the architectural style of the shopping centre or the exterior window displays. However, it seems to be quite difficult to provide an overview in which all the aspects that matter are represented.

Oppewal et al. (1999) provided a clear base to these aspects, when looking into factors that influence the evaluation of the appearance, layout, and furnishing of shopping centres. They finally formulated ten aspects, based on extant literature, personal interviews and pilot tests with consumers. The ten aspects they found to be of influence on the appearance, layout and furnishing of shopping centres were: 'compactness', 'proportion indoors', 'proportion reserved for pedestrians', 'crowding', 'decorations and furnishing', 'amount of greenery', 'maintenance of streets and buildings', 'attractiveness storefronts', 'number of activities' and 'number of coffee shops, cafes and restaurants' (Oppewal et al., 1999). To test all these attributes and thereafter rank them in degrees of importance, they used a conjoint approach in which hypothetical alternatives are represented to participants who are asked to either to rate their preferences or to choose from a set of alternatives. They concluded that the 'amount of greenery', 'level of maintenance of streets, hallways and buildings', 'proportion of storefronts with attractive window displays', and 'number of activities in the streets' had a significant impact on the pleasantness of the public space. To a lesser extent, the value of the 'proportion of shopping area indoors' and 'proportion of shopping area that is reserved for pedestrians' was endorsed (Oppewal et al., 1999). While their study merely focussed on the public space it omitted the in-store aspects, which also influence the amenity of a shopping area, which could be a distinction that will have to be made in this particular research as well.

Regarding the in-store aspects some more research is done in relation to the retail environment. As Karam refers in his thesis on atmospherics and experiences in shopping centres, Bermans et al. made a list of fifty-seven variables that influence the atmospherics of a retail environment (Bermans et al, 1988 in: Karam, 2005). The list consisted of 5 categories, namely; external variables, general interior variables, layout and design variables, point-of-purchase and decoration variables and human variables. The first category, that of external variables, showed some similarities with the research of Oppewal et al. as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Variables like 'exterior window display' and 'lawns and gardens' are included which correspond to the variables in the research of Oppewal et al. (1999). The second, third and fourth category concern the in-store variables. Some general interior variables are lighting, music and wall composition, while layout and design variables concern the grouping of merchandise and waiting rooms for example were decoration variables concern pictures, artwork or price displays. The fifth category concerns the human variables like crowding, customer characteristics or privacy. With fifty-seven variables this overview is quit extensive and thereby also confusing due to the large amount of variables. Some useful insights can be drawn from this research whereby, as stated in the previous paragraph, it seems wise to make a distinction between the variables that are useful for this research and the ones that are not. External, in-store and human variables can not be measured all at ones.

With the description given in the paragraphs above some light has been shed on the situational aspects

of retail environments in general. But before creating an overview of the aspects that matter for this particular research, including the distinctions that will have to be made, the dimensions of district shopping centres will have to be reported in order to retrieve the characteristics that concern district shopping centres. Chapter four will then cover the synthesis of the literature on the experience economy and the district shopping centres.

3.5 The dimensions of a district shopping centre

In the previous paragraphs the dimensions of shopping centres in general are partially mentioned but were not focused on district shopping centres. Zwetheul (2009) refers in her masterproof to a research of the ‘Stichting Studiecentrum Marktontwikkeling Retailplatform’ (2008), who elaborated these dimensions of shopping centres in general in their research. This particular research is based on interviews with Dutch consumers and therefore provides a useful insight. Zwetheul subsequently adapted the structure of the results to make them more applicable for district shopping centres by means of removing an irrelevant category and combining two categories. The first category concerned the special retail offer in which only special and different goods were sold which has no sufficient relevance for district shopping centres. Secondly, the categories accessibility and parking were combined while they, in this case, covered subjects that were closely related. With the current insight drawn from the literature study in the previous chapters, a couple of minor adjustments are made in the table (3.2), which can be seen below. The ‘kindness of personnel’ aspect is joined with the ‘level of service’. Subsequently the aspect of ‘variety’ is joined with the ‘retail-mix’. Based on the research mentioned above the following five dimensions of a district shopping centre can be identified.

Table 3.2, Overview dimensions of district shopping centres.

Source: Zwetheul, 2009.

	Supermarket offer	Remaining retail offer	Services and facilities	Interior	Accessibility and parking
	Supermarket formula	Level of service	Possibility to eat and drink	Cleanness of environment	Accessibility
	Complementarity	Completeness of the offer	Commercial facilities	Lighting	Proper public transport
	Fresh products offer	Quality of shops	Organisation of events	Atmosphere	Routing / orientation
		Quantity of shops	Public toilets	Security	Proximity
		Retail-mix	Meeting places	Design and architecture	Opening hours
		Price level	Resting places	Enclosure	Quantity of parking lots
		Presence of independent shops	Health-care facilities		Free parking lots
			ATM		Proximity parking lots
					Safety and security

1. Supermarket offer: the offer of supermarkets is an independent dimension that cannot be categorized together with the retail offer, due to the fact that a supermarket has strong relevance with district shopping centres. Features of supermarket offers are the supermarket formula, complementarity and the offer of fresh products.
2. Remaining retail offer: the retail offer contains the features of shops as well as the composition of retail branches. Features are level of service, completeness of the offer, quality, quantity and retail-mix, price level and offer of independent shops.
3. Services and facilities: public toilets, resting areas, presence of an ATM, organisation of events, possibility to drink and eat, and possibly commercial facilities like a postal office or bank and healthcare facilities like a pharmacy.
4. Interior: concerns the appearance of the public area of the district shopping centre. It involves the cleanness, atmosphere, lighting, design and architecture.
5. Accessibility and parking: concerns the accessibility by means of public transport, routing, orientation, distance towards the dwelling, opening hours and finally the quantity and price of parking lots.

3.6 Conclusion

The first systematically planned Dutch shopping centres were built in the 1960's, partially due to the demographic growth and the re-construction of the county after World War II. The theory of geographer Christaller influenced these developments, while he designed a theory in which shopping centres could be ranked and are supposed to facilitate a certain area. Dutch district shopping centres distinguish themselves by the leading role of supermarkets, have a composition of shops that offer about 40% to 50% daily groceries and consist of approximately 15 to 50 shops. The leading role of daily groceries provides a very important insight in the functional aspects of Dutch district shopping centres. The goal for visiting this type of shopping centres therefore differs from other types of shopping centres, like the inner-city. Consumers have three types of considerations when visiting a shopping centre, namely the choice, goals and motivation but also the social goal. When discussing the motivation of customers to visit a certain type of shopping, which is closely related to the goal one has, there are three main motivations that can be distinguished, namely the purpose-specific, activity-specific and demand-specific shopping motivations. Additionally, there are many situational variables that can influence the amenity of district shopping centre. Together with the characteristics of Dutch district shopping centres a couple of dimensions can be distinguished, which will be linked to the influence on customer experiences in the following chapter.

Chapter **four**

The Experience Economy in District Shopping Centres

4. The Experience Economy in District Shopping Centres

As the previous chapters elaborated on respectively the experience economy and the Dutch district shopping centres, this chapter will match these two topics to see which characteristics seem to influence the amenity of a Dutch district shopping centre. A few steps will be taken to concretize the concepts of amenity and district shopping centres. Subsequently, a nuance is applied to the synthesis by means of looking further into managing experiences in a retail environment and aspects that provoke experiences.

4.1 Measuring experience

As mentioned in chapter one, customer experience consists of many different aspect like the social environment, service-interface, retail atmosphere, assortment and price but also depends on situational or consumer moderators. Just this summation shows the multidisciplinary character of the concept of experience. The question that remains is; how can this be measured and linked to district shopping centres? Before these questions can be answered, a couple of decisions are made which will simultaneously serve as a delineation.

Verhoef et al (2009) distinguished eight determinants of customer experience and two types of moderators that affect the influence of the determinants on customer experience. The eight determinants of customer experience are generally formulated and give the impression that they mainly address the in-store aspects. When looked upon from an environmental perspective, the determinant 'retail atmosphere' corresponds the most with the aim of the present research. The consumer moderators concern a different part of the customer experience, namely the goal of shopping. The situational moderators, like the type of store, location and culture, on the other hand seem to have a big effect on these experiences as well. So a first distinction can be made in the way the concept of customer experience is approached. Considering the more general applicability for the Dutch retail market, combined with the possible effects on the built environment, it seems wise to focus on the public area rather than the in-store aspects of customer experience.

In the second chapter of this research, the Dutch retail structure is discussed where district shopping centres were defined as: supporting shopping centres with a size of about 15 to 50 shops, that serve a district of about 10.000 to 30.000 inhabitants and has a retail-mix that offers about 40% to 50% daily groceries and contains no department stores. With this definition in mind, a selection has to be made out of the attributes, variables and dimensions that are given in paragraph 3.4 and 3.5, regarding the aim on district shopping centres. Oppewal et al. (1999) provided an overview of ten attributes which influenced the appearance, layout and furnishing of shopping areas. Thereby Karam (2005) mentioned an extensive overview of Bermans et al. (1988), who gave fifty-seven variables that influenced retail atmosphere, which can be divided into three main categories, namely; the built environment, in-store variables and human variables. Finally, the table given in paragraph 3.5, which contains five dimensions of district shopping centres, gave some more insight in these characteristics. These five dimensions of district shopping centres are: supermarket offer, remaining retail offer, services and facilities, interior and accessibility and parking.

The three sources mentioned above show some similarities but again it seems wise to separate the aspects that do not relate to the public areas of the built environment from the ones that do relate to public areas. If such a division still results in a wide range of aspects, a selection of the 'most important' aspects should be made based on 1) the level of importance of each aspect according to the authors of these particular researches and 2) the applicability for district shopping centres.

Since the division in paragraph 3.5 is concentrated on district shopping centres it will serve as a general base. Unfortunately, the overview was not set up to measure the perceived value of experiences. So there is a duality in the dimensions of district shopping centres and the amenity for customers which has to be solved by means of creating a way to combine these two in an overview in which they both are represented. The difficulty lies in the concept of experience, while it is holistic in nature which means it consists of many different aspects. It is known that the customer experience concerns the cognitive, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer (Verhoef et al., 2009). If this observation is taken as a fact, the next step is to determine which factors provoke these responses. This is where the determinants of customer experience come in. As stated before, these determinants can be looked upon from an in-store perspective or contrary from an outer-store perspective. Otherwise it can be looked upon from a single shop perspective or a multiple shop (shopping centre) perspective. While this study is aimed at entire (district) shopping centres and therefore to a lesser extent concerns the in-store aspects, the decision is made to focus more on the aspect that occur outdoors, which therefore require a multiple shop perspective and simultaneously a public area approach. So, for example, the atmosphere of the retail environment, which includes the design, scents and music, is more important than the service-level of the shop personnel or the variety of the assortment. While we do not exclude and ignore the influence of these channels, a delineation has to be made to create a clear and manageable overview. Alternative channels like shopping on the internet are excluded as well, while these aspects do not directly influence the public area and atmosphere of the actual shopping centre. The influence of the internet, in this specific manner concerning the concept of 'cross-channel shopping', is not considered here because it probably influences the on-site experience to a lesser extent when visiting a district shopping centre.

4.2 Synthesis

At first, a general division is made. With the assumptions denoted in the previous paragraph and besides that the knowledge gained during the literature study, a division can be made into two five main dimensions. These main categories in their turn contain multiple characteristics. Together these characteristics create a composition of the aspects that matter when discussing the influence of experiences on district shopping centres.

The dimensions that influence the customer experience are 'supermarket / retail offer', 'services and facilities', 'external / appearance', 'interior / layout' and 'accessibility and parking'. The five dimensions that are implemented in this research therefore can be described as follows:

1. *Supermarket / retail offer*: This dimension contains the supermarket formulas as well as the remaining retail offer. The supermarket formulas are mentioned separately because they serve as the main attraction in Dutch district shopping centres. Other characteristics are fresh products offer, retail-mix and quality / quantity of shops.
2. *Services and facilities*: The kind of stores in this dimension include bars and restaurants. Additionally, the characteristics that can influence the customer experience are the number of activities in the streets (markets, musicians, parades and so on), number of meeting places, number of resting places (benches) and the pedestrian traffic flow. This latter characteristic is tricky because it is hard to classify it as functional or spatial while it in fact belongs to the 'human variables'. However, because of its impact on the eventual customer experience, and thereby the functional character of the district shopping centre, it is included in this dimension.
3. *External / appearance*: This dimension contains the most logical functional aspects. At first the design and architecture (possible thematically) have a big impact on the external aspects and the appearance of a district shopping centre. The proportion of

storefronts with attractive window displays, interruptions of the window displays (dwelling entrances, sealed displays, vacancy), atmosphere and maintenance of streets, hall ways and buildings, decorations and furnishing, proportion of the shopping area that is indoor or roofed and exterior signs complete the external characteristics.

4. Interior / layout: This dimension is part of the spatial category, which contains the presence of shops on one or two sides of the walking routes (what is positioned on the other side if only one side contains shops?), the routing orientation, proportion of the shopping area that is reserved for pedestrians, the amount of greenery / lawns and gardens, the impression of crowding, security and safety, lighting / music and scents / temperature if applicable.
5. Accessibility and parking: The final dimension contains the accessibility and parking characteristics, which contains the accessibility of the shopping centres related to the entrances, connection with parking spots, connection with other stores (are there large squares between them), availability of public transport and quantity and price of parking.

Characteristics like health-care facilities, presence of ATM-machines, health-care facilities, commercial facilities etcetera, have not been included in the overview because they are likely to contribute more to the satisfaction than to the experiences of customers when visiting a district shopping centre.

Table 4.1, Characteristics that influence the customer experience of Dutch district shopping centres.

	Supermarket / Retail offer	Services and facilities	External / appearance	Interior / layout	Accessibility and parking
	Supermarket formula	Quality of service	Design and architecture (thematic)	Buildings on 1 or 2-sides of walking routes	Accessibility / entrances
	Fresh products offer	Number of shops like bars and restaurants	Proportion of attractive storefronts	Routing orientation	Connection with parking spots
	Retail-mix	Number of activities in the streets	Interruptions (vacancy, dwelling entry)	Proportion reserved for pedestrians	Connection with other stores
	Completeness of the offer	Number of meeting places	Atmosphere	Amount of greenery / lawns and gardens	Number of parking spots
	Quality of shops	Pedestrian traffic flow	Maintenance of streets, hallways and buildings	Crowding (impression)	Price of parking
	Quantity of shops	Number of resting places (benches)	Decorations and furnishing	Security and safety	Availability public transport
			Proportion indoor / roofed	Lighting / music	
			Exterior signs	Scents / temperature	

4.3 Basic- and additional conditions

In order to clarify the overview given in the previous paragraph and enlighten the characteristics that may be most important, the results of the research of Erdman (2008) on experience concepts for shopping centres are addressed. He concluded that an experience concept for Dutch shopping centres in general must contain the following four principles: realize harmony, create identity, avoid negative impressions and activate senses. The first principle is about the alignment of all the variables within a shopping area wherein a harmonious shopping area contributes to positive customer experiences. Secondly, the creation of identity is about the recognisability of a location and the fact that a location can provoke certain feelings. Avoiding negative impressions thereafter can help in creating a favourable experience, while a lot of negative signals can ruin this experience. Finally, the activation of senses is important because of the fact that a lot of experiences are perceived through sensorial stimulations (Erdman, 2008).

When thinking of ways to approach customers of district shopping centres with all the characteristics given in table 4.1, one would get discouraged quite rapidly. While it already serves as delineation, it would not be manageable to address all these aspects. One of the solutions lies in the approach of this research, where it focuses on the aspects that provoke experiences rather than the more general shopping centre related aspects. So due to the manageability of this research, the approaching of customers and thereby most importantly the aim of this particular research, a further delineation is made.

According to the research of Erdman (2008), managing experiences in a retail environment depends on four principles;

1. Realize harmony
2. Create identity
3. Avoid negative impressions
4. Activate senses.

To realize harmony stores need to be properly aligned, need to have the proper size and scale, should fit in the environment and have to support a convenient routing through the shopping centre. Finally, bars and restaurants have to be located appropriately in the shopping centre. The creation of identity on the other hand mainly focuses on creating a proper atmosphere and sense of security in the retail environment. Thereby the recognisability of the shopping area could prove to be of use as well. The avoidance of negative impressions points out that the retailers should deepen their knowledge on consumers in the preparation phase. Negative influences mainly concern the urban development aspects, integration of the bars and restaurants, accessibility and wind discomfort. Besides that, a clean and safe environment as a result of proper centre management is of importance as well. The final principle concerns the activation of senses, which means that retailers have to pay attention to the lighting, scents, sounds and acoustics in the shopping centre. Visual aspects like creating exiting and surprising routes are of importance as well. These four principles are set up for shopping centres in general. Therefore it might be interesting to see which of the characteristics of table 4.1 can be grouped to one of these four principles to see if there is any conformity.

The following division can be made:

1. *Realize harmony*: concern the characteristics of supermarket formula, fresh products offer, retail-mix, completeness of the offer, quality of shops, quantity of shops, quality of service, number of bars and restaurants, number of meeting places, number of resting places (benches), routing orientation, proportion reserved for pedestrians, amount of greenery / lawns and gardens, connection with other stores, number of parking spots and availability of public transport.

2. *Create identity*: design and architecture (thematic), atmosphere, decorations and furnishing, proportion indoor / roofed, buildings on 1 or 2-sides of walking routes and crowding (impression).
3. *Avoid negative impressions*: interruptions (vacancy, dwelling entry), maintenance of streets, hallways and buildings, crowding (impression), security and safety, accessibility / entrances, connection with parking spots, number of parking spots, price of parking and availability of public transport. In general every characteristic can be grouped in this principle due to the fact that if one is missing it could lead to negative impressions.
4. *Activate senses*: number of activities in the streets, proportions of attractive storefronts, exterior signs, lighting, music, scents and if applicable temperature.

Some interesting conclusions can be drawn from this overview. First of all, a larger number of characteristics can be seen with the first and third principle compared to the second and fourth. When looking at the content of these principles more closely, it seems as if these two principles are most important to the existence of a Dutch district shopping centre while they contain, for example, supermarket formula, the retail-mix, completeness of the offer, security and safety, interruptions (vacancy) and more negative impressions. These aspects seem crucial for the acceptance and existence of a district shopping centre, and therefore can be denoted as 'basic conditions.' This observation is interesting, while the principles and characteristics that are subject to the experience of a district shopping centre, like design, architecture, music, atmosphere or scents, do not belong to these two. While this observation is not scientifically founded, it is compatible with what we already know and expect of Dutch district shopping centres which concerns the major influence of supermarkets and thereby the goal of visiting. It therefore may serve as another slight support to the assumption made in the beginning of this particular research that these supermarkets have a big influence on Dutch district shopping centres. It is of importance to denote that the observations made above concern the present situation. Although this particular research is obviously conducted in the present, the future situation should be kept in mind and thereby the increasing role of experiences on such shopping centres. So it can be concluded that the characteristics that belong to the second and fourth principle, that of the creation of identity and activation of senses, might have a larger relation to addition of amenity to a Dutch district shopping centre. The other two seem to be more important to the survival and acceptance of a district shopping centre, and therefore appear to be of lesser influence when thinking of aspects that can influence experiences. Nonetheless they might serve as requirements to enable the other aspects to flourish.

Chapter **five**

Research Design

5. Research Design

To get a better understanding of the value that customers of Dutch district shopping centres give to experiences and more precise the aspects that contribute to these experiences, further research has to be done. As the literature study in the previous chapters showed there are a variety of aspects of Dutch district shopping centres that need to be explored more in depth. This chapter will address the content and design of the research.

5.1 Type of research

While this research examines the value that customers of Dutch district shopping centres give to certain determinants of customer experience, it is required to use a technique that can process these outcomes correctly. Conjoint analysis is a technique that is often used to measure these kinds of determinants, as in Oppewal et al. (1999) who used this methodology to measure the physical features of shopping centres on consumer perception or in Sands et al. (2009) who used conjoint analysis to measure the effect of in-store events on consumer choice decisions. Techniques like the conjoint analysis help in determining what combination of certain attributes influences the choice or decision making of respondents the most. In practice, these techniques are mostly used in combination with a quantitative analysis in which large numbers of respondents are needed. Due to these large numbers, researchers are able to scientifically analyse the outcomes and thereafter conclude if certain attributes significantly contribute to the assumed dependant variable. While such a quantitative approach could be suitable for this particular research as well, it does not fit the research goal precisely. To find out and learn about the attributes that customers of Dutch district shopping centres believe to be of influence on the amenity of district shopping centres, a qualitative approach will be more suitable. So while a quantitative approach would appoint the aspects that customers of Dutch district shopping centres find to be most influential on customer experience, a qualitative approach makes it possible to bring out more detailed background information on these particular aspects. In other words, when a quantitative analysis would, for example, bring forward that the lighting is considered to be of great importance on the amenity of district shopping centres, a qualitative analysis offers the opportunity to deepen on this finding through responding by means of asking subsequent questions on what kind of lighting is preferable or disturbing to the particular customer. A qualitative approach offers a degree of freedom to respond to aspects more in- depth, while a preset questionnaire has a fixed line. Such an approach brings forth a couple of difficulties, together with some advantages as well as disadvantages, which will be discussed in the following subparagraph.

One of the main reasons of using a qualitative instead of a quantitative approach is the way customers are approached. While a quantitative approach proposes so called 'close-ended questions' in which the answers must be given in, for example, a Likert-scale, a qualitative approach often uses open-ended questions. Therefore an important choice is made due to the fact that respondents in this way have to indicate the attributes themselves instead of answering to categories brought forward by the interviewer. The bias of the interviewer, although mostly based on an extensive literature review, is therefore bypassed. But more importantly, the aspects that concern respondents the most are brought forward. It is this tactical choice that fits the goal of this particular research and will bring up the information that is needed regardless own biases or assumptions gained from a literature study. Besides the main reason mentioned above, a number of other advantages but also disadvantages can be derived from such a qualitative approach. Therefore it seems wise to first get a better understanding of the structure of qualitative compared to quantitative research.

5.2 Qualitative research

Different types of research require different types of methodology. Therefore it is of importance to get an understanding of the underlying assumptions and methodologies used in these kinds of research designs. The research design of qualitative research contains four main elements, consecutively the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods, as can be seen in figure 5.1. Each of these elements will be enlightened below.

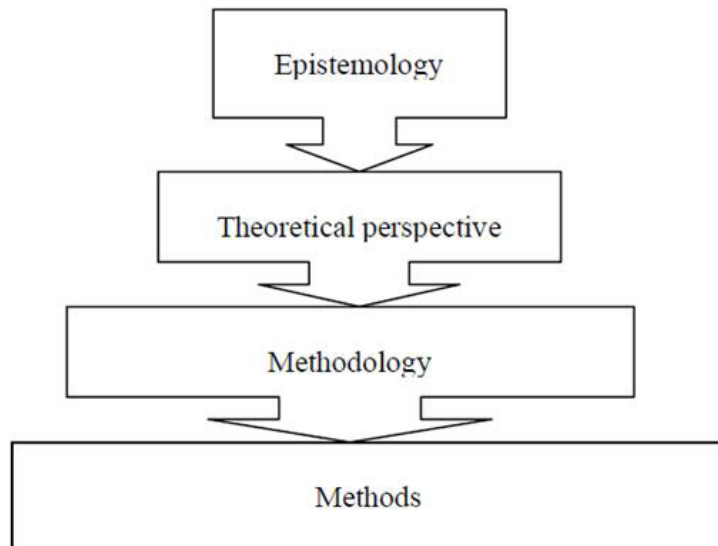


Figure 5.1; **The four elements of research design**

Source: Crotty (1998) in: Levy, 2006.

The epistemology concerns the philosophical base which is used to determine how and what kind of knowledge can be used, but also how it can be ensured that it is both adequate and legitimate (Levy, 2006). In other words, does the research design lead to conclusions that discover the objective truth? According to Levy there are two types of epistemological viewpoints, that of the constructionism and objectivism. These two viewpoints can be related to quantitative and qualitative research designs. The constructionism rejects the objectivists' view of human knowledge conflicting that there is no objective truth waiting to be discovered (Levy, 2006). It assumes that meaning is constructed rather than discovered. Constructionism on the other hand permits the researcher to explore the views and opinions of the different participants and recognize that each may have experienced a different understanding of the same situation, which is a flexibility that is not available to objectivists (Levy, 2006). This distinction leads to the division shown in figure 5.2, with on the left-hand side the qualitative and on the right-hand side the quantitative research design.

As can be seen in figure 5.2, a theoretical perspective can be derived from the epistemology. It concerns another two terms, respectively the 'interpretivism' and the 'positivism'. These two terms can help in understanding the kind of studies and techniques that are derived from it. According to Levy et al. (2005), positivist studies tend to test theory in order to increase the predictive understanding of certain phenomena. So it relates to facts or causes and attempts to explain casual relationships by means of objective facts, while concentrating on description and explanation. Interpretivism on the other hand is inspired by a series of qualitative concepts and approaches, while focussing on understanding what is happening (Levy, 2006). So it is seeking to understand a specific context and considers multiple realities rather than trying to be emotionally neutral and maintain a clear distinction between facts and values.

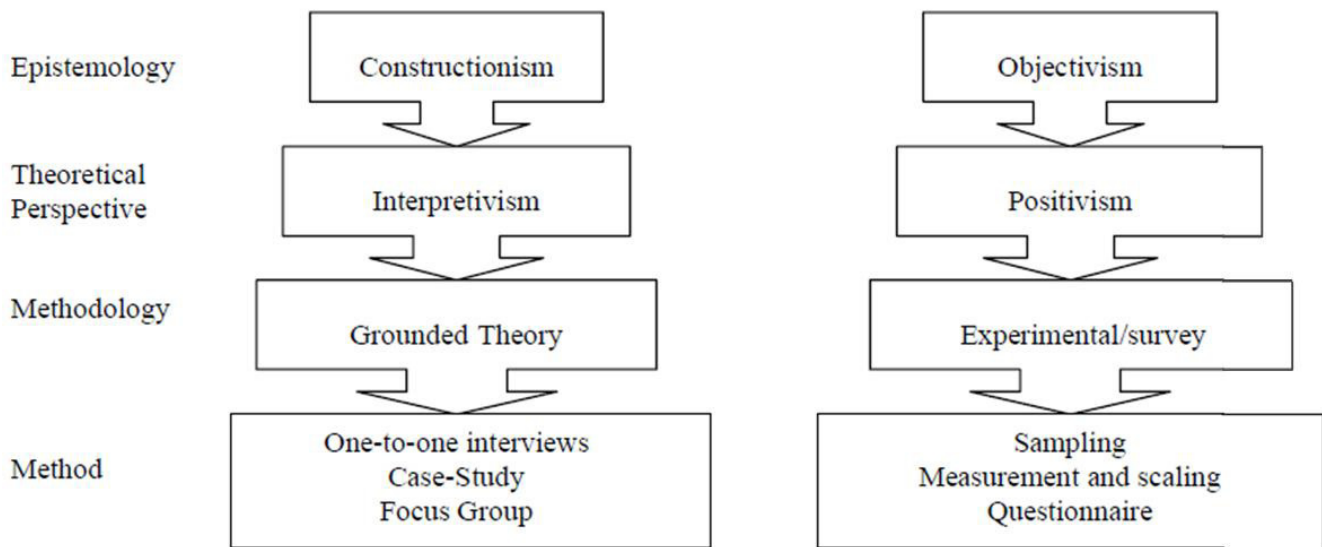


Figure 5.2; **The four elements of research design relating to qualitative and quantitative methodology**
 Source: Levy, 2006.

The corresponding methodologies result into more recognizable differences. Qualitative research is characterised by the fact that the gathered data is not accessible for immediate analysis and requires some processing while it is often audio-taped which implies some transcription and correction. The ‘Grounded Theory’ as depicted in figure 5.2 is a frequently used methodology which is used when the aim of a study is on building theory. The gathered literature can be used in developing theory by means of; providing a source for comparing data, familiarity with relevant literature enables enhanced sensitivity to subtle nuances of data, increases the awareness of the researcher and makes it possible for the researcher to turn to the literature to formulate questions that act as a starting point (Levy, 2006).

Finally, the research methods concern the techniques that are used to gather and analyse data. Figure 5.2 shows the three most frequently used qualitative methods, respectively the one-to-one or in-depth interviews, case-study method or the use of focus groups. In-depth interviews have the advantage of creating an environment where participants would be likely to speak more openly and frankly, encourages personal thoughts, keeps respondents attentiveness when asking questions and makes it possible for the interviewer to sense non-verbal feedback (Levy, 2006). The case study method is used to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context whereby data can be collected through documentation review or interviews. Finally, the focus groups are used when the researcher is interested in the outcomes of brainstorming sessions and is not worried about the effect of others in a small group influencing opinions (Levy, 2006). The quantitative methods on the contrary are characterised by formalised statistical and mathematical techniques and are set-up to address larger groups of respondents.

With this last observation an interesting topic is appointed. While it is known that quantitative research derives its significance out of the large number of respondents, qualitative research characterizes itself by means of longer in-depth, on-to-one interviews where nothing is said on the number of respondents. The answer to this issue is actually quite understandable as a general rule is provided by Strauss et al., 1998 (in: Levy, 2006). The final number of interviews can be determined when the outcomes of each category become saturated, or in other words when the interviews become repetitive and no new themes emerge from the analysis.

One of the last aspects that need to be taken into consideration is the trustworthiness of qualitative findings. It is not uncommon for findings from qualitative research to be criticised by academics as failing

to meet certain standards of trustworthiness (Levy, 2006). This trustworthiness can however be gathered through:

- 1) Careful use, interpretation and examination of appropriate literature
- 2) Careful justification of the qualitative research methodologies employed
- 3) Careful structuring of the data analysis to ensure full and descriptive evaluation and assessment, particularly in relation to data of key significance
(Carson et al, 2001 in: Levy, 2006).

A final difference between qualitative and quantitative research lies in the fact that quantitative data can be generalised to a certain degree. Qualitative research is unfortunately less suitable for such generalisations while it is not aimed to provide such answers. It on the contrary concerns the gaining of a deeper understanding of the participants with the assumption that it will be context and time specific (Boyce et al., 2006). So it is not aimed to be generalized but instead adds knowledge to the understanding of the field and can be used to test, support or question data gained from larger populations (Levy, 2006).

5.3 Recapitulation

The previous paragraph contained a large number of characteristics of qualitative research. Before continuing with the elaboration of the approach for this particular research it seems wise to enumerate the advantages as well as the disadvantages to get a complete view of the qualitative research approach;

Advantages: qualitative research provides more detailed information than what is available through quantitative methods such as surveys, makes it possible to bring up preferences on particular aspects, makes it possible to let the respondents indicate the attributes themselves instead of letting them choose and therefore bias is partly bypassed, encourages personal thoughts and interviewer can sense non-verbal feedback.

Disadvantages: strict control on bias from the respondent or interviewer, interviews will be time-intensive (conducting, transcribing and analysing), demands proper preparation and use proper interview techniques such as avoiding yes/no questions, generalizations about the results are usually not able to be made and the trustworthiness has to be considered.

As stated before, a quantitative approach could have been conducted as well, but considering the aim of the research a qualitative approach is more suitable due to the fact that characteristics of Dutch district shopping centres will be enlightened more in-depth which will help in getting a rich understanding of the influence of experiences on these kinds of shopping centres. Thus using a qualitative research design implies that the eventual results cannot be generalized very easily. In order to do that, the findings and conclusions of this particular research will have to be quantitatively tested. This study therefore does not purport to be generalisable to other context and suggests further research to do make it generalisable.

5.4 In-depth interviews

Due to the fact that this research is designed to retrieve information on the amenity of Dutch district shopping centres from its customers, a one-to-one approach is adopted. In combination with the qualitative approach described above, in-depth interviews are most suitable. As stated in the previous paragraph, one of the conditions is that it requires a well grounded base in which every step has to be reflected thoroughly. This subparagraph will elaborate on the set-up of in-depth interviews and connect it with this particular research. According to Boyce et al. (2006), the process for conducting in-depth interviews follows the same general process as is followed for other research: plan, develop instruments, collect data, analyse data, and disseminate findings. Each of these steps will be shortly enlightened in the following

subparagraphs, in which the second, 'develop instruments', will be elaborated on more thoroughly because it involves the most important part of the research design: the interview guide.

5.4.1 Plan

One of the things to do when setting up in-depth interviews is determining which stakeholders are involved. In this case the stakeholders are customers of Dutch district shopping centres. Subsequently, one has to identify what kind of information is needed and from whom. For whom is clear in this case, the customers of Dutch district shopping centres, but the kind of information is somewhat more complicated. It is strongly related to the delineation that has to be made concerning the aspects which will be included in the interview. In general it is clear that it concerns those aspects that customers of Dutch district shopping centres indicate to be of importance when discussing the amenity of those centres. The categories that customers will appoint in the interviews may concern a large variety, but will probably be covered by the characteristics mentioned in table 4.1.

Thereafter a list of stakeholders to be interviewed must be made from national, facility and beneficiary levels. Once more it is obvious to select the aforementioned groups as stakeholders, but on the other hand a difference in individuals within those groups can be made. In combination with the observation made in the previous paragraph concerning the saturation of the results, it seems wise to select respondents within the customers of Dutch district shopping centres different on aspects like age, gender, ethnic background, occupation, household income, goal of shopping and role in the household. Therefore it can be excluded that a respondent from one of these groups will come up with new categories, and therefore the validity on that part will be covered. Due to the manageability the choice is made to only select respondents who differ in age or gender. A single responded in turn will not validate one group so multiple respondents per group are needed. Gender will be divided into male or female, age on the other hand will be divided into four groups, namely 1) 25 years or younger, 2) 26 to 54 years of age, 3) 55 to 74 years of age and 4) 75 years or older. This will lead to eight different categories in which a number of respondents must be selected. Unfortunately, selecting respondents of these different groups requires a certain approach while judging human appearances will not meet all the categories named above. So in selecting respondents some preliminary questions may have to be asked first, in order to estimate if the respondent meets the requirements drawn above.

5.4.2 Develop instruments

This second step concerns the development of an interview protocol which include the rules that guide the implementation and administration of the interviews (Boyce et al., 2006). In other words, the instructions that have to be followed for each interview will contribute to the consistency between interviews and therefore will increase the reliability of the findings. Answers will have to be given to questions like, what to say to interviewees when setting up, beginning and concluding? Or what to do during the interview? The following subparagraph will go through the main stages of an interview guide and reflect to this particular research.

In many ways, the introduction is the most important component of an interview (PSI, 2004). In this phase the interviewer has the opportunity to make informants feel comfortable and explain the purpose of the study. It should be clear but not exhaustive. The introduction should include the following aspects: introducing the interviewer, explain the purpose of the interview, explain that there are no right or wrong answers, acknowledge a tape-recorder when used, reassure that it will be confidential, tell the respondent how long the interview will probably last, ask the respondent to introduce him or herself and finally obtain general information from the respondent. A list with too many questions will discourage the

respondents. The general introduction and questions that belong to the introduction of the respondent will be elaborated in the actual interview guide, which can be seen in Appendix I.

When starting with the formal part of the in-depth interview an ‘icebreaker’, as in a general question, should be asked to make respondents feel comfortable and should never be too serious. Such a question could be: “When I say experiences, what’s the first thing that comes to mind?”. According to PSI, the icebreaker should be followed by the key questions of the interview, which contains the general discussion. These questions should be some more general in the beginning and more specific towards the end. At the end of the interview a wrap-up should be provided to bring closure to the discussion, and should make the respondents feel that they contributed to the study.

5.4.3 *Collect data*

This step obviously contains the set-up of the interviews with the customers of Dutch district shopping centres. During this data collection it is of importance to seek informed consent of the interviewee (written or documented oral), explain that the information will be treated confidentially, re-explaining the purpose of the interview and mention the use of a tape recorder (Boyce, 2006). Besides the tape recorder the interviewer should write down the main aspects in key words so an overview of the mentioned subjects is available. Further information on the data collection can be seen in Appendix I.

5.4.4 *Analyse data*

As stated before, during the data analysis one must look for patterns or themes. Therefore all interviews must first be transcribed. When a variety of themes are emerging it is useful to see if they can be grouped in a meaningful way such as sorting them by age to see if younger respondents think and feel differently from older respondents. Besides that the responses that have been given with enthusiasm or the ones that were only answered with a few words can be identified. An interesting subject has been attended with this last statement, while the answers given by the respondents could have different ‘values’, meaning the same aspects can differ in level of importance. So a way has to be found in which the level of importance can be extracted from each subject mentioned by the respondents. While a qualitative in-depth interview is characterised by open-end questions, one of the first questions should give the respondent the opportunity to mention the aspects that he or she finds to be of importance when discussing the amenity of Dutch district shopping centres. This set-up is profitable compared to quantitative research, while the interviewer does not put forward any aspects he or she extracted from the literature study. Instead, the respondents can appoint the aspects that are important to them, on which the interviewer can subsequently elaborate on and go more in detail.

Some important decisions have to be made on this part. At first it is expected that respondents will appoint aspects like presence of supermarkets and sufficient parking spots to be of importance when discussing district shopping centres. This is logical while they have proven to be of great importance to these kinds of shopping centres. While these aspects are obvious, it seems wise to not elaborate on these aspects any further while they do not contribute to possible new findings. On the contrary, the interview should be used to address other aspects of which we want to get a better understanding, like the influence of architecture or decorations. In this way, respondents can appoint their points of interest themselves, while the interviewer can still navigate and control the interview.

5.4.5 *Disseminate findings*

When concluding, the key findings should be attended. Furthermore, the strengths and limitations of the information should be provided, as denoted in paragraph 5.2. Finally the results can be compared to the findings in the literature study to see if there are any similarities or differences and what could be the explanation for it.

5.5 Strategic set-up

It is of importance to get a grounded view of the customers shopping motivation in the start of the interview. A lot of decisions and answers customers will give can be subtracted from these motives. In other words, the goals, motives and mindset a customer has when visiting a Dutch district shopping centre will influence the perspective of certain attributes of a shopping centre, and therefore the value of them. These attributes can in turn affect the customer experience. Subparagraph 3.3.2 provided a detailed elaboration on the goals for shopping and adds that the shopping context affects these goals as well. This also refers to the hedonic or utilitarian shopping values as elaborated in paragraph 2.3. The way these motives and thereby values will be extracted from respondents will be enlightened in the following subparagraph.

5.5.1 Shopping motivation

In order to figure out the shopping motives of customers, a set-up of Ruiz et.al. (2004) is used. In their research on a segmentation of shopping mall customers, eight statements were denoted in order to find out if their shopping motivations were more hedonic or utilitarian. The figure below shows these statements, which will be used in this particular research as well. The statements will be translated in Dutch while the respondents are most probably Dutch.

State your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
(a) This shopping trip was truly a joy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) This shopping trip truly felt like an escape.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Compared with other things I could have done, the time spent shopping was truly enjoyable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) I accomplished just what I wanted to on this shopping trip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) I couldn't buy what I really needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) While shopping, I found just the item(s) I was looking for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5.3; Shopping motivations

Source: Ruiz et.al., 2004.

When the respondents have answered the statements on a five-point Likert scale, some subsequent questions should be asked. These questions are asked because of two different reasons. At first, these questions are aimed at getting a better understanding of the reason why people shop at the concerning district shopping centre. Therefore the questions will cover the buying process of daily groceries but also the more recreational activities like buying clothes. Secondly, these questions are meant to let the respondents feel comfortable in speaking about the subject and answering questions. This is essential for the remaining part of the interview, which will be elaborated in the upcoming subparagraph.

5.5.2 Cognitive mapping

In order to meet the aim of this particular research, which concerns acquiring new insights, getting a better understanding and therefore building theory, an alternative methodology has to be addressed. While the amenity of Dutch district shopping centres is investigated in this research, a methodology is found in the 'cognitive mapping'. Cognitive mapping has a long tradition in environmental cognition, but the origin lies in the cognitive psychology which examines how humans receive, record and use information.

According to Tikkanen et al (2006), cognitive mapping is a method enabling the researchers to clarify and save people's view regarding their environment. So ideas are denoted in graphic form resulting in a "cognitive map" showing the concepts and their interconnections (Sheetz et al., 1994 in: Tikkanen et al., 2006). Over the last years a couple of variations on cognitive mapping have appeared. A few interesting variations will be enlightened below.

One type of cognitive mapping is called the 'Conceptual Content Cognitive Map-method' (3CM), which is an implementation of cognitive mapping to measure perspectives or objectives on complex domains. This method is a form of a more general type of cognitive mapping called 'concept mapping'. The underlying idea is to make a visual representation of knowledge structures. The focus however is on the language, which means texts, sentences and descriptions are taken as depictions of an externally given world, or as realisations of underlying cognitive descriptions of the world (Soini, 2001). Tikkanen et al. (2006) used this method with forest owners in which they first asked the respondents to list all the possible matters which they considered to be important. Some subsequent questions were asked, where after the interviewer wrote down the objectives onto slips of paper. Then, the interviewee was asked to group the objectives so the matters closely related to each other. Finally, the respondents were asked to provide their groups with titles, explain their reasoning, and place the groups in order of importance (Tikkanen et al., 2006). The result is a visual display that expresses a respondent's unique knowledge structure. The use of cards allows the respondents to generate and organize a large number of concepts without losing track of them (Kearney et al., 1997), which is a big advantage. An example of such a cognitive map can be seen the figure below.

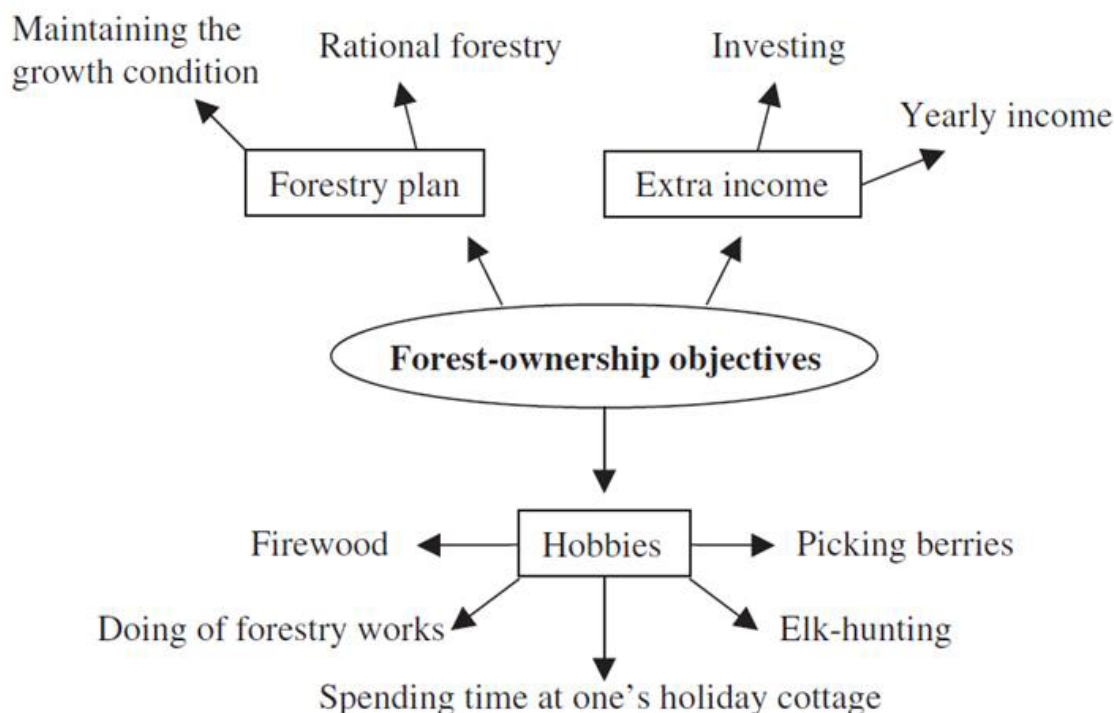


Figure 5.4; Example of a cognitive map using the 3CM-method

Source: Tikkanen et al., 2006.

Another type of cognitive mapping is called 'mental mapping'. Traditionally it is used to explore spatial cognition but have been primarily used in describing routes, places or complementing verbal descriptions of space (Soini, 2001). In mental mapping, respondents are asked to draw a map of the environment, which can be a specific area but also an entire city.

In this case, mental maps are externalisations of the mind which are put onto paper in a complete and observable form, whereby the things that are essential to the respondents will be drawn on the map according to their goals (Soino, 2001). The method of mental mapping is characterised by the fact that the focus is on the choice of elements and the order in which subjects draw them. The location of these elements is of lesser importance. The disadvantages of mental mapping can be found in the difficulty of the analysis or the possible lack of drawing motivation of respondents. An example of a mental map can be seen in figure 5.5, which is drawn by a student in Paris who was asked to draw a map of Paris in which he was supposed to mention all the elements of the city that came to mind. The places were numbered in drawing order.

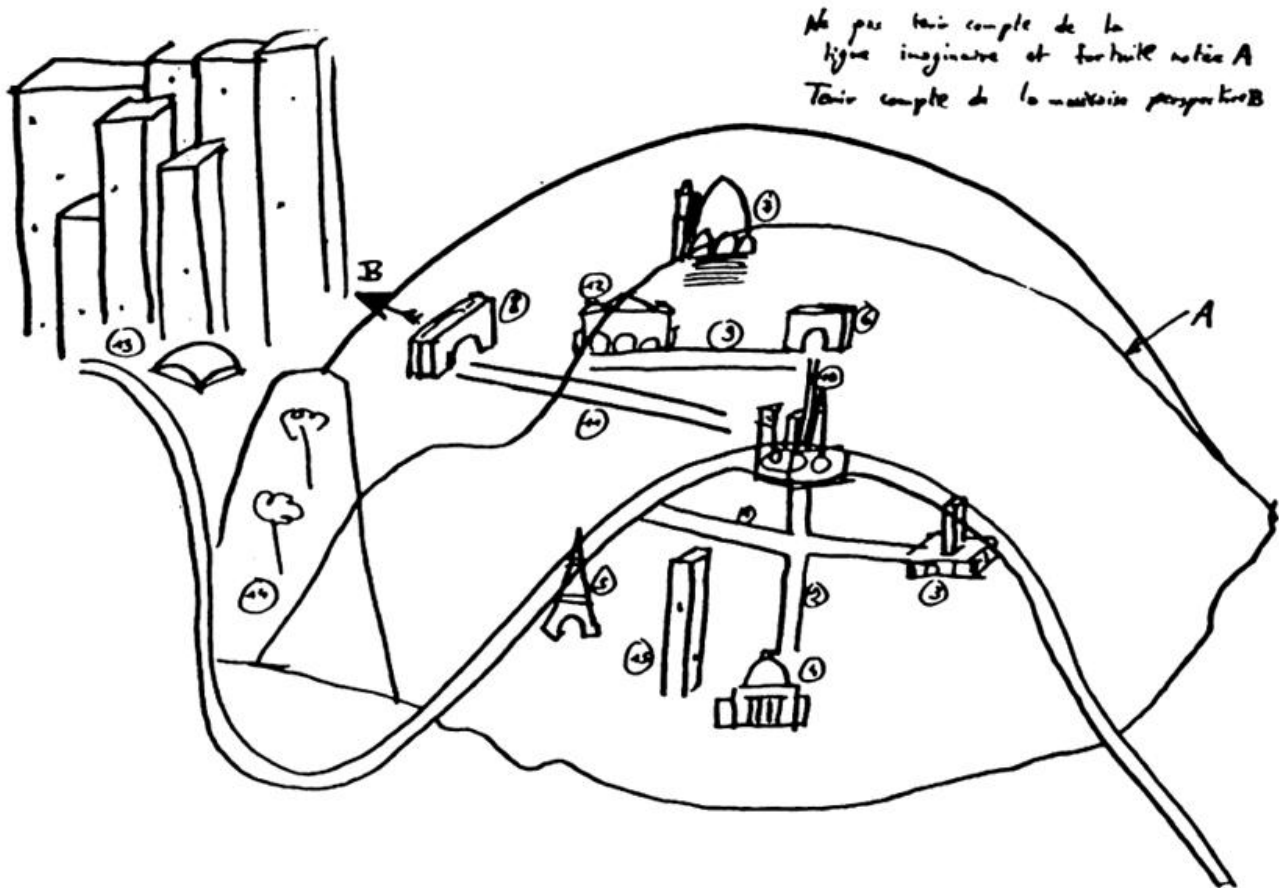


Figure 5.5; Example of a mental map of Paris, drawn by a 25-year-old student
Source: Soini., 2001.

A more general cognitive mapping technique is called ‘semantic proximity (word association) tasks’. It can be compared to concept mapping while it uses word clusters, word associations or linear graphs. With word association, respondents are given a list of words related to a certain subject and are asked to list as many associated words as possible (Kearney et al., 1997). The word ‘given’ in the previous sentence denotes an important aspect, while one of the aims of this particular research, depicted in the previous paragraph, determined that presenting predetermined variables should be avoided. Respondents are in such cases presented with key concepts of a particular topic, according to the researchers. Unfortunately, these techniques are likely to result in a distorted image of knowledge structures both because respondents are required to consider concepts they might not understand or denote as important and on the other hand unique respondents structures are ignored (Kearney et al., 1997). Due to this important observation, ‘semantic proximity tasks’ will not be used in this research if applied like described above.

A final form of cognitive mapping that will be addressed here is called ‘affective mapping’. This type of cognitive mapping is often used in boundary identification, but progress for other uses has been made in recent decades. Syme et al. (2002), for example, used affective mapping in exploring spatial dimensions of environmental responsibility. In their study, respondents were provided with a street map which showed the service area in which they lived and were asked to identify the areas with which they had a close relationship (Syme et al., 2002). In other words, a map was provided by the researchers which allowed them to bypass a lack of drawing ability. Results of their study showed that the larger the perception of one’s neighbourhood, the more likely that wider environmental responsibility was acknowledged. Syme et al used this mapping method in order to compare spatial characteristics with public involvement. The main difference compared to mental mapping is in providing a map or asking a respondent to draw a map themselves.

5.5.3 Application cognitive mapping

Due to the difficult analysis of mental mapping techniques, which firstly depends on the drawing abilities but also on the fact that the drawings cannot easily be compared, it is decided not to use mental mapping in this particular research. On the contrary, the cognitive mapping technique called the ‘3CM-method’ is suitable. As explained in subparagraph 5.5.2 this technique provides a base on which respondents can be guided to insights they possibly were not aware of before. The advantages and development of this technique are elaborated in subparagraph 5.5.2 as well. For a large part, the set-up of Tikkanen et al. (2006) will be adopted. Logically, it will be transformed so it suits this particular research. Below, a detailed version will be illustrated.

The main part of the in-depth interview will start with a short explanation of the set-up. Widely taken, it is said that this study intends to find out which aspects of a district shopping centre, according to its customers, influence the experience of it. Therefore it is explained that a shopping centre can provoke negative as well as positive emotions, which indirectly influence the experience. To start off, respondents are asked to mark their level of agreement to the statements as described in subparagraph 5.5.1. To get the conversation started respondents are firstly asked some easy to answer questions concerning the awareness of the other district shopping centre nearby and other locations they would shop. Respondents are then asked to sum up all possible aspects they can think of that influence, in their perception, the shopping experience. The second step is to ask subsequent but also directing questions to bring out more aspects. These questions should not contain attributes because the respondents should think of it themselves. According to the delineation made in paragraph 4.3, concerning point two and four, the respondents can be directed in thinking of more categories. So which aspects contribute to the 1) identity of this shopping centre and 2) activation of senses? Questions like ‘is there something to do?’, ‘is there something to see?’ or ‘how does it make you feel?’ should guide respondents to their final set of attributes. Appendix I shows the complete interview guide.

The second step will be an important one. All of the aspects that the respondents mentioned during the first step should be written on slips of paper by the interviewer. These slips of paper should then be given back to the respondent while they are asked to make groups out of the aspects they mentioned. The interviewer should ask what their motivations are for the groups they made. Thereafter the respondents must provide names for these groups and order them in level of importance. The visual results should look like figure 5.4. Analysis of this technique will be addressed in the following chapter.

Apart from the finishing questions at the end of the in-depth interview, there is one more subject that needs some special attention. It concerns the use of district shopping centres as a ‘meeting place’. While the literature study revealed that meeting places are one of many attributes of a district shopping centre

that can influence the amenity of it, research on this subject related to retail and district shopping centres in particular is not yet available. While it is a separate part, these interviews are well suited to address this issue. So when a customer mentions the aspects of ‘meeting place’ during the execution of the 3CM-method, a short side-step is taken to further elaborate on this issue. Some more questions will be asked on the number of times they meet people, if they like it or not, who they meet and where. This latter aspect will be addressed some more specifically, while they are asked to mark the spot (on a map) at which they meet the people they know. This technique is mentioned before and is called affective mapping.

The closing questions will give respondents the opportunity to mention the things they missed or haven’t been able to say. They are also asked if they would like to receive the results of the research. If so, their email-address will be noted. Some additional questions will be asked concerning other necessary respondents information like age, gender and place of residence. The complete interview guide can be seen in Appendix I.

5.6 Research locations

This paragraph will elaborate on the potential research locations. The selection of suitable district shopping centres depend on a lot of different variables. First of all the size (number of shops), supporting- instead of central- or peripheral shopping area, catchment and the percentage of shops that offer groceries should be checked. Subsequently a choice has to be made in selecting newly build district shopping centres, outdated ones or both. Other important variables are the shops that serve as attraction (should they be equal in both cases or different?), paid or free / sufficient amount of parking lots and the fact if the shopping centre is roofed, partly roofed or open air. Finally a choice can be made in selecting district shopping centres that have another district shopping centre as direct competitor in a radius of one kilometre.

The choice is made to select two district shopping centres, respectively ‘Admiraalsplein’ and ‘Crabbehof’ in the city of Dordrecht, which are uniquely located: only 700 meters are separating the two district shopping centres. This unique feature allows us to examine what motivations consumers have when going to one of these two district shopping centres, while it can be assumed that all visitors are aware of the other district shopping centre located ‘around the corner’. Furthermore it is interesting to compare the characteristics, related to the amenity, that are mentioned in both district shopping centres. Does the same characteristic provoke a different experience in the other centre because it is designed in a different manner? To gain some more insight in the situation of the research locations, an overview will be given on the catchment area and other spatial aspects.

The city of Dordrecht has 120.000 inhabitants. Relatively, Dordrecht has a large amount of lower educated inhabitants and thereby a lot of social assistance recipients. According to the CBS (Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics), the average dwelling price of € 1.700 per square meter is way below the average of the fifty biggest cities in The Netherlands (CBS, 2011). Compared to other similar cities the amount of dwellings in the cheaper segment is overrepresented. The two district shopping centres that are used in this research are located in the South-West part of Dordrecht. Figure 5.6 shows the districts in which the two shopping centres are located.

The district shopping centre on the left hand side in figure 5.6, in the blue section, is located in the district called Wielwijk. The concerning shopping centre, Admiraalsplein, has Wielwijk as catchment area which has about 6.300 inhabitants. About 29% of these inhabitants are non-western immigrants and approximately 68% of the existing dwellings are rental-dwellings. The second district shopping centre, Crabbehof, is located in a district with a corresponding name: Crabbehof. The district Crabbehof has about

8.000 inhabitants with about 30% non-western immigrants. Approximately 70% of the existing dwellings are rental-dwellings.



Figure 5.6; Map of Dordrecht with the concerning districts

Source: Under layer: Google maps, 2012.

The two district shopping centres are located surprisingly close to each other, with only 700 meters separating them. Besides that they show more similarities like the features of the catchment area, but the difference in the amount of shops is worth mentioning. Crabbehof has thirty-nine shops, Admiraalsplein has twenty-one shops, which is considerably less. While they are not exactly the same, which would be curious, the comparison is unique in The Netherlands because there are no natural barriers separating the two. Both district shopping centres will be enlightened some more in-depth below. Table 5.1 compares the two districts on a number of basic features.

A number of short conclusions can be drawn from table 5.1. Firstly, the two districts show a lot of similarities, while the aspects mentioned with points 2 to 5 are nearly the same. Furthermore the ratio of owner occupied dwellings and rental dwellings are roughly identical as well. As stated before, the district of Crabbehof is somewhat bigger with 8435 inhabitants, but the average dwelling price (denoted as the 'WOZ-waarde' in The Netherlands) is more than €20.000 lower in Crabbehof than in Wielwijk.

The second part of the table shows some statistical features concerning the liveability of both districts according to a report of the municipality of Dordrecht, carried out in 2007. It shows that both districts have a relatively low score on almost every aspect. Wielwijk has a slightly better score than Crabbehof. It has to be addressed that these figures date from 2007, which means that things could have changed for the better in recent years. Nonetheless it has to be said that both district can be denoted as some of the worst in the municipality of Dordrecht.

Table 5.1; **Basic features of the concerning districts**

Source: *Gemeente op maat, Dordrecht (2011) and Wijk Actie Plan Dordrecht (2007).*

	Wielwijk	Crabbehof
1. Inhabitants	6300	8435
- Male	3095	3990
- Female	3205	4440
2. Western-immigrants	11 %	12%
3. Non western-immigrants	29%	29%
4. Marital status: married	34%	32%
- unmarried	50%	49%
- divorced	10%	10%
5. Motor vehicles per household	0.6	0.6
6. Housing stock (amount)	3.030	4.440
7. Property value (WOZ)	€145.000	€123.000
8. Owner occupied dwellings	30%	32%
9. Rental dwellings	70%	68%
10. General impression score	6.2	5.9
11. District atmosphere score	6.5	6.0
12. Liveability score	6.3	5.9
13. Percent of inhabitants involved in improving district	18%	10%

To even closer compare the two district shopping centres, table 5.2 (in Appendix VI; Overview retail offer Admiraalsplein and Crabbehof) shows the type and amount of shops in each of the two district shopping centres. One of the obvious observations that can be made is in the different number of shops; Crabbehof contains a lot more shops than Admiraalsplein. On the other hand, the amount of super markets is equally distributed, which shows that Admiraalsplein can compete with Crabbehof. Moreover, they both contain two well-known supermarkets and one relatively small supermarket, but Admiraalsplein offers a qualitatively better supermarket by means of the Albert Heijn, while Crabbehof contains two bigger supermarkets in the lower segment. Therefore it is interesting to see that Admiraalsplein offers more diversity in the supermarket segment than Crabbehof, while having a smaller total size. Additionally, both district shopping centres offer fresh products, bars or restaurants and domestic articles.

As can be seen in figure 5.7 the two district shopping centres are located within a range of 700 meters. The 'Savornin Lohmanweg' and 'Abel Tasmanstraat' offer a direct connection between the two district shopping centres. The lay-out of the two centres is considerably different. Admiraalsplein is characterized by a road that separates the two corridors, Crabbehof on the other hand has only one entrance for vehicles and offers parking lots in the middle of its centre, while 'Admiraalsplein' offers parking lots on the east and south side of the shopping centre. The lay-out of Crabbehof could be called 'carré-shaped'. In terms of design and architecture the two shopping centres are somewhat different. The photos in figure 5.8 illustrate the current appearance. Admiraalsplein has been renovated more recently (2005) than Crabbehof (1998). It is most clearly expressed in the facade, were Admiraalsplein brings forward a tidy and well-maintained appearance, Crabbehof is characterized by discoloured and weathered materials.

The parking in Crabbehof is situated in the middle of the shopping centre. There is only one entrance /

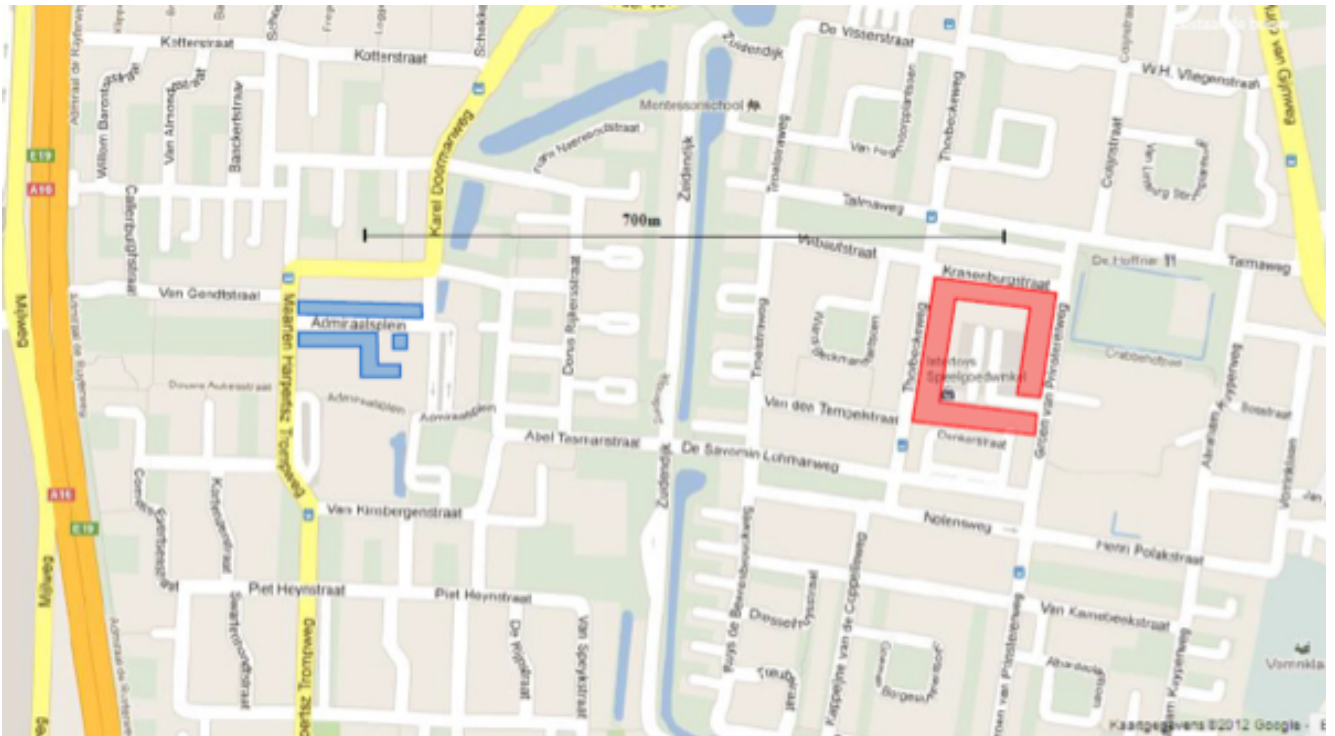


Figure 5.7; Streetmap with Admiraalsplein and Crabbehof
 Source: Under layer: Google maps, 2012.



Figure 5.8; Appearance of Admiraalsplein (left) and Crabbehof (right)

exit. Admiraalsplein offers a limited amount of parking lots in the street that crosses the shopping centre and has two car parks at the east- and south side of the shopping centre. The noise level therefore is higher in Crabbefhof then in Admiraalsplein, as well as the nuisance of exhaust fumes. Both district shopping centres have roofed corridors, sufficient parking lots, free parking, resting places and great accessibility / proximity.

5.7 Conducting interviews

On the 17th, 18th, 19th of April and the 3rd of May 2012, nine interviews have been conducted in the district shopping centre Admiraalsplein. On the 24th and 27th of April and the 1st and 4th of May 2012, another nine interviews have been conducted in the district shopping centre Crabbefhof. The weather was typical for this time of year in The Netherlands, meaning temperatures between 12°C and 17°C (degrees Celsius), at times slight showers and wind speeds of about 15 kilometres per hour. With the exception of the 1st and 4th of May, the sun accompanied the interviewer and respondents several times during the day creating a slightly more favourable atmosphere for conducting the interviews. What can be derived from the information given above is that it was very hard to entuse potential respondents to participate in an interview. More specifically; most potential respondents backed-down when the word 'interview' was mentioned. Therefore it was tried to avoid words or sentences like 'interview' or 'takes approximately 45 minutes' but instead was focussed on phrases like 'graduation', 'helping out' and mentioning that they could sit down and have a drink on the interviewers costs. The average number of respondents on one day was 2.25, with a minimum of one interview and a maximum of 4 interviews per day. The interviews mostly took place between 10:00 a.m. and 17:00 p.m. on weekdays.

As figure 5.9 point out, the final 18 respondents led to a relatively balanced sample, consisting of 8 males and 10 females. It was hard to entuse respondents being younger than 25 years of age, therefore this group is underrepresented. It is also interesting to see that the majority of the respondents was born in the Netherlands. Only two respondents had a different origin. The educational level of the respondents was relatively low, while no respondent completed university. 33% Finished an 'HBO-study', 56% an 'MBO-study' and 11% only finished high school. In line with these numbers, the average household income, for the majority lies on or beneath the national average income of The Netherlands. A complete overview of the all the respondents' information can be seen in Appendix II.

5.8 Conclusions

This chapter elaborated on the design of this particular research, apart from the literature study. A qualitative approach is chosen instead of a quantitative one due to the fact that it fits the goal of this research better; not only appoint the aspects that influence the amenity but bring out more detailed information on these particular aspects. Therefore open-ended instead of close-ended questions can be asked, the bias of an interviewer can be bypassed and respondents can bring forward the aspect of which they think are most important. Besides the advantages mentioned above, qualitative research is meant to 'build theory' instead of testing one. This will automatically result into a more intensive interviewing method. One-to-one interviews are very likely to be used. An important disadvantages of qualitative research is the inability to generalise the results.

To comply with the ambition of acquiring new insights, an alternative methodology is adopted. The 'Conceptual Content Cognitive Map-method' or '3CM-method' is chosen to achieve this aim. Visual representations of knowledge structures could provide new perspectives. Two uniquely located shopping centres in the city of Dordrecht, Admiraalsplein and Crabbefhof, are chosen as research locations. A total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted in April / May of 2012.

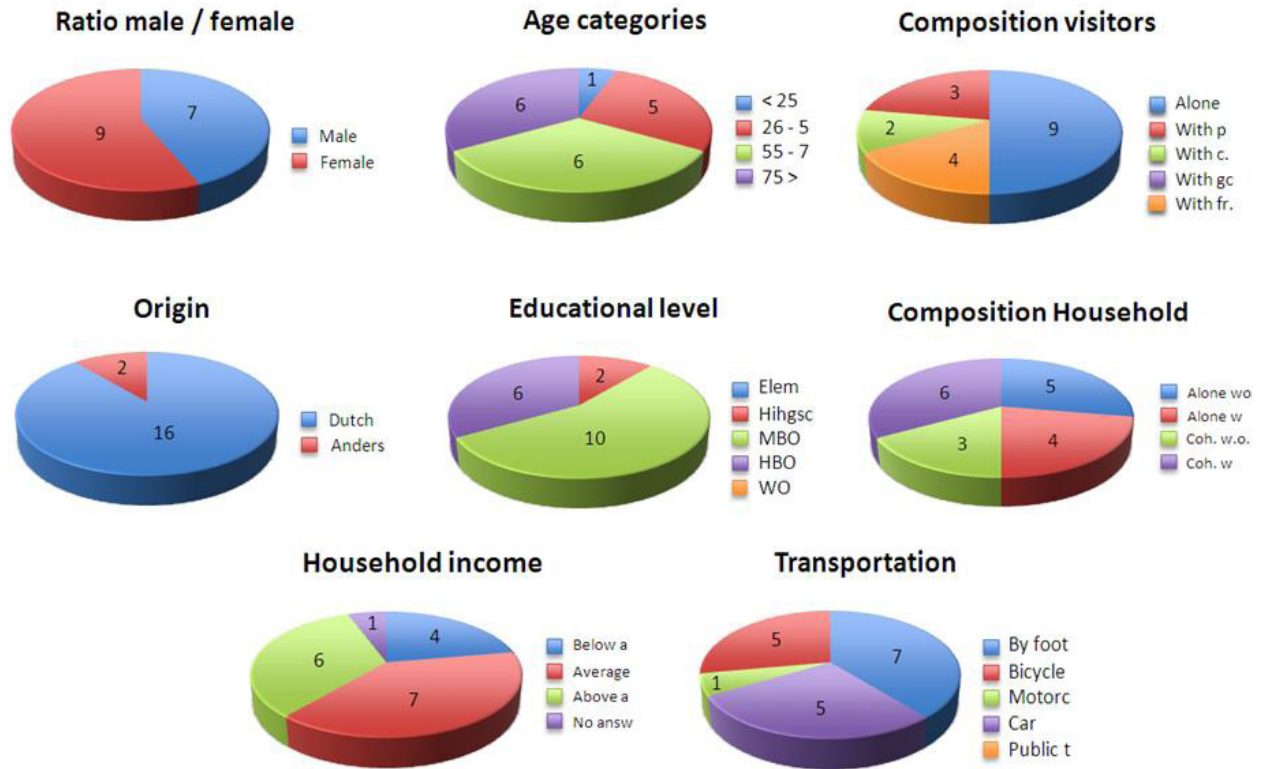


Figure 5.9; Charts representing the partitioning of respondents personal information

Chapter **six**

Research Results

6. Research Results

This chapter elaborates on the findings of the conducted interviews. It focuses on describing and identifying the results. Moreover the research findings are set off against the literature study in order to find out which aspects underexposed in recent literature on customer experience. Additionally it is interesting to see if the qualitative research method that was used led to new insights.

6.1 Results

The results will firstly be elaborated and discussed. As explained in the strategic set-up (paragraph 5.5), respondents were asked to write down all characteristics they could come up with (regarding the aspects that could, in their perception, influence the shopping experience) on slips of papers, of which the interviewee could construct cognitive maps.

6.1.1 Cognitive maps

The ability of visitors of district shopping centres to perceive the task given during the interview varied quite a lot. Especially the older respondents had difficulties with formulating group names for the characteristics they brought together. The number of characteristics respondents came up with varied from 6 to 11 per interviewee, with the average being 7.9. Eventually all the respondents were able to come up with group names, while some of them needed some directing questions to formulate them. The number of groups respondents came up with varied from 2 to 5 per interviewee, with the average being 2.8. The average number of characteristics per group was 2.9. In total, the 18 respondents named 143 characteristics and 50 groups. The figure below shows one of the cognitive maps, which is fully based on the characteristics and groups brought forward by the respondent (in this case respondent number 9).

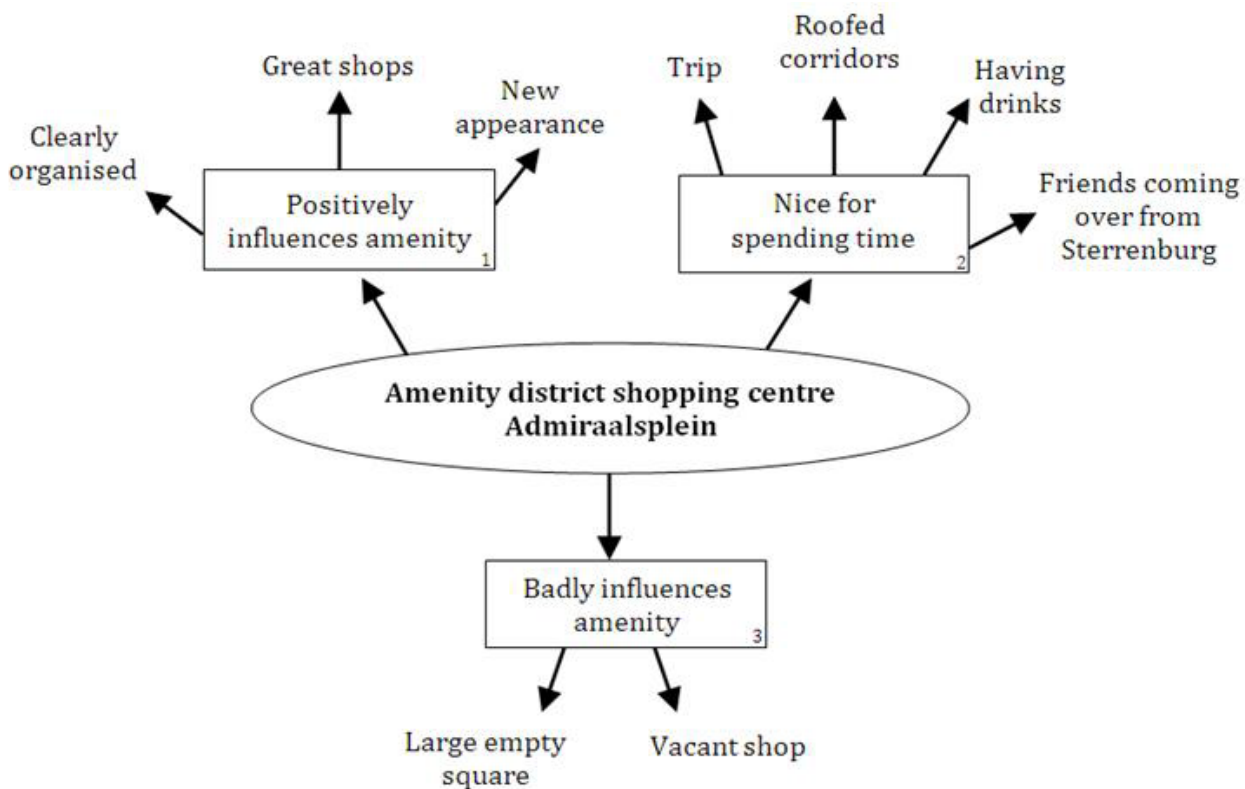


Figure 6.1; Cognitive map of interview 9 (Admiraalsplein)

A complete overview of the 18 constructed cognitive maps can be seen in Appendix III. A lot of respondents created groups with general terms like 'positive', 'negative' or 'fun'. Luckily, most respondents were able to formulate groups that had a stronger connection with the concerning district shopping centre like 'main visiting motive' or 'requirements to go shopping'. Only a few respondents were able to formulate groups that had a relationship with the amenity of the shopping centres like 'positively influences amenity' or 'positive for experience'. The extensive elaboration of all the characteristics and groups is enclosed in Appendix IV.

In the second part of the 3CM-method respondents were asked to rank the groups they made in order of importance. By doing this, the respondents were forced to choose a group of which they thought was most important when discussing the amenity of the district shopping centre. The group, and thereby the characteristics belonging to this group, that was considered most important was ranked '1', the second most important group '2' and so on. It is noteworthy that these statistics can be deceptive, while the amount of groups made by the respondents differs from 2 to 5 per interviewee. So one could question; is a group ranked '5' less important than a group ranked '2' by another respondent who only formulated 2 groups? This is an important observation because the goal of this part of the 3CM-method was to put the all the groups, and therefore the characteristics, in perspective. What do the respondents find to be most important? Due to the fact that respondents are free to formulate their groups of characteristics, the interviewer is not supposed to interfere and navigate every respondent to the same number of groups. Once more, the goal is to identify the groups and characteristics that are 'most important' to the interviewees and therefore the analysis of these rankings should be considered with care. Hence, a straightforward equation cannot be made, but it does tell us something about the groups and characteristics respondents found most important in relation with the other groups and characteristics they mentioned.

Afterwards, without the interviewees, it was denoted if the characteristics the respondents mentioned were meant positive or negative. This is important, while a characteristic like 'accessibility', for example, can be interpreted in both ways. The column 'positive (+) or negative (-)' in Appendix IV provides this insight. To be sure a characteristic was mentioned in a positive or negative way the recording of the concerning interview was attended. In most cases characteristics could only be interpreted negative like 'unfriendly visitors' and 'unsafe in the evenings', or positive like 'great accessibility' and 'nice appearance'. Characteristics belonging to groups that were named 'negative' or 'badly influencing amenity' served as indicators as well. In total, 96 of the 143 characteristics were mentioned in a positive way, were 47 characteristics were denoted as negative. When looking at the same statistics for both district shopping centres separately, it can be seen that the characteristics mentioned in *Admiraalsplein* were denoted more positively compared to those mentioned in *Crabbehof*; 57 to 39. Therefore the amount of characteristics that were denoted as negative in *Admiraalsplein* came down to 16, and to 31 in *Crabbehof*, which means that 78% of the characteristics mentioned in *Admiraalsplein* can be denoted as positive against 55% in *Crabbehof*. This first observation tells us something about the sentiment that prevails in both district shopping centres. Any well-founded conclusions cannot be drawn from it, but it will be taken into account in the further analysis.

As described in subparagraph 5.5.3 respondents were also asked if they were aware of the other district shopping centre located nearby and if they would shop, for example, in *Crabbehof* if *Admiraalsplein* was closed. Fourteen out of the eighteen respondents answered that they would shop in *Crabbehof* if *Admiraalsplein* was closed and vice versa. The other four chose the district shopping centre of *Sterrenburg* to go shopping despite of it being located three miles to the east. Main reasons for shopping at *Sterrenburg* were because of it being entirely roofed and experiencing something else. Main reasons for shopping at *Crabbehof* or *Admiraalsplein* were due to the sufficient offer and parking facilities.

Another component of the interviews was the special attention for using the district shopping centre as a 'meeting place'. Only three respondents denoted that they sometimes used the concerning district shopping centre as a meeting place. Two of them stated they only used it as a meeting place when they accidentally bumped into people they knew, the third respondents used it to meet and subsequently go elsewhere. Due to the fact that only three respondents mentioned using the district shopping centre as a meeting place and thereby mostly on an accidental base, the technique of affective mapping could not be applied. The technique will therefore will not be discussed any further in this chapter.

6.1.2 Merging classes

The next step in analysing the results lies in congregating the characteristics that have the same meaning into so called 'classes', observing Tikkanen et al. (2006). In this case: amenity classes. An 'amenity class' contains all the characteristics that respondents have mentioned during the interviews that, for example, concern the influence of 'parking facilities' on the amenity of a district shopping centre. A total of 27 amenity classes were obtained by connecting these characteristics (Table 6.1). It is of importance to mention that these so called amenity classes cannot be entangled with the groups as discussed in the previous subparagraph. Those groups were completely made by the respondents, the amenity classes that are discussed in this subparagraph are constructed afterwards during the analysis of the results. Classes contain characteristics having the same meaning and are therefore brought together into one class with a comprehensive name.

Most often characteristics were coded into the class 'retail offer for daily / weekly groceries'. The characteristics mostly mentioned in this amenity class were about the offer, presence of supermarkets and enough / sufficient shops. 15 Out of the 16 characteristics of this group were denoted positive. The second most frequently mentioned characteristics were placed in the class 'safety of district shopping centre'. This is a remarkable observation while it wasn't expected, according to the literature study, to end up second in this ranking. Safety issues were considered very important in experiencing a district shopping centre. Mostly the characteristics in this class were mentioned as safety in general, but also some more specific like unsafe in the evenings or related to skimming ATM's. These feelings belonging to feeling safe or on the contrary unsafe were often related to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

If therefore the 11th class in table 6.1 is considered, one can see that the aspects concerning the safety of these district shopping centres, influenced by the type and behaviour of its visitors, is considered to be of great influence on the amenity. According to the associated 'importance rankings', these two classes score relatively high with 7 times rank '1', 10 times rank '2' and only 1 time respectively rank '3' and '4'. Characteristics of the safety class are mostly mentioned in a positive way (9 against 4), while the characteristics belonging to behaviour are predominantly mentioned in a negative way (5 against 1). Just to underline the importance; when these two classes are combined they would have a frequency score of 19, which would put it on top of the table.

Third in the table is the class 'appearance as general impression'. While the interview was set up to identify the aspects that created this overall impression separately, it was hard for respondents to not mention the appearance in general. Characteristics that were mentioned dealt with the architecture, recent renovations and tidy or cheerless appearances. The majority of the characteristics (six out of eight) were ranked '1' which shows that general appearance has a big influence experiencing an environment in this case study. The following two classes that were also mentioned 8 times are 'influence of colours / materials to appearance' and 'parking facilities'. The influence of colours was mostly mentioned in a negative way, while it was about the pale colours and the cheerless appearance of grey concrete. Parking on the other hand was mostly mentioned in a positive way while it included free parking or parking close by.

Table 6.1; Frequency of amenity classes denoted in both shopping centres

Amenity class	Frequency	Percent of all messages
1. Retail offer for daily / weekly groceries	16	11,2
2. Safety of district shopping centre	13	9,1
3. Appearance as general impression	8	5,6
4. Influence of colours / materials to appearance	8	5,6
5. Parking facilities	8	5,6
6. Accessibility / proximity	7	4,9
7. Inconvenience of cars	7	4,9
8. Influence of lay-out	7	4,9
9. Crowding of shopping area	7	4,9
10. Roofing of corridors	6	4,2
11. Behaviour / type of visitors	6	4,2
12. Presence of resting places	6	4,2
13. Activities	6	4,2
14. Use of district-s.c. as a recreational trip	5	3,5
15. Mixture of shops	5	3,5
16. Openness	3	2,1
17. Additional recreational facilities	3	2,1
18. Maintenance	3	2,1
19. Presence of music	3	2,1
20. Meeting place	3	2,1
21. Share of restaurants and bars	3	2,1
22. Vacancy levels	3	2,1
23. Diversity of visitors	2	1,4
24. Lighting	2	1,4
25. Influence of greenery	1	0,7
26. Behaviour of retailers	1	0,7
27. No place to stay	1	0,7
Total	143	100,0

One amenity class can contain several characteristics of one respondent

More characteristics that were frequently mentioned belong to the classes of ‘accessibility’, ‘inconvenience of cars’, ‘influence of lay-out’ and ‘crowding’. The high frequency of accessibility and crowding is no big surprise and is mainly mentioned in a positive way. So the accessibility in both district shopping centres is sufficient and the level of crowding is perceived as convenient. Accessibility is looked upon as an important item; it is in 6th place in the table just like the ‘crowding’ class. The other two classes that have also been mentioned 7 times by the respondents are perhaps a bit more unusual. The inconvenience of cars for example may be caused by the lay-out of the shopping centre. If cars are parked in the middle of the shopping centre it is obvious that it will create more inconvenience than when the cars are parked out of sight. So these two classes can maybe looked upon from one perspective, saying that the lay-out of a shopping centre can directly influence the amenity of it. Characteristics mentioned with the lay-out class were about creating order, advantages of a big square and positioning of shops.

The roofing of corridors was mentioned by $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents as being a positive aspect of these two district shopping centres. Presence of resting places and activities in or around the shopping centre were valued by a lot of visitors as well. These latter two were not ranked as most important but were

nonetheless mentioned by 1/3 of the respondents. Resting places were mostly denoted negative while there were none / insufficient. Activities that are organised once or multiple times a year were in all cases denoted as positive. The use of a district shopping centre as a 'meeting place' was only mentioned by 3 respondents. This could be the result of the lack of decent and cosy 'bars and restaurants' or other favourable meeting places. Some respondents in Admiraalsplein mentioned using the community centre to meet their friends, which is located just next to the district shopping centre.

6.1.3 Admiraalsplein vs Crabbehof

Apart from the observations that can be made by means of analysing table 6.1, more specific observations can be made when the amenity classes are arranged according to where (in which of the two district shopping centres) the corresponding characteristics were mentioned. Table 6.2 and 6.3 provide this insight.

Some interesting observations can be made when analysing these two tables. First of all, in Admiraalsplein, the amenity class with the highest frequency is 'Safety of district shopping centre'. Note that the amenity class 'Retail offer for daily / weekly groceries' does not have the highest frequency. It indicates the importance of these safety issues. Interesting to see is that 10 out of the 13 times safety is mentioned during the interviews can be traced back to Admiraalsplein. Therefore, in the table of Crabbehof, safety has dropped to the eighth place. One of the reasons for these large numbers in Admiraalsplein was the increased safety level, while a lot of respondents referred to the former situation (before the large redevelopment) where most people felt really unsafe. The reason most characteristics were denoted as positive refers to this development where people appreciate the improvements that have been realised.

Another interesting observation can be seen with a group of three classes, namely the 'influence of colours / materials to appearance', 'inconvenience of cars' and 'behaviour / type of visitors', which are placed 23rd, 24th and 25th in the frequency table of Admiraalsplein with no score at all. Remarkable, while the same three groups are placed 2nd, 3rd and 4th in the frequency table of Crabbehof. These three amenity classes are therefore completely attributable to the district shopping centre of Crabbehof.

Lets first take a look at the influence of colours / materials to appearance. With one exception, all the corresponding characteristics were denoted negative. Apparently, respondents are able to notice aspects that are negative (in this case the pale colours or grey concrete) but have difficulties with mentioning it when it is more positive like in Admiraalsplein where not a single respondent denoted the use of colours or materials as negative. It seems that it is considered naturally or obvious when it meets their standards and therefore does not stand out. Respondents in Admiraalsplein appreciated the use of colours and materials indirectly, while they subsequently mentioned it on a more general level, see 'appearance in general' which is placed 4th in table 6.2.

The 'inconvenience of cars' is mentioned only in a negative manner, which could directly be assigned to the lay-out of Crabbehof. As can be seen in figure 5.7, Crabbehof is carré-shaped with a car park in the middle. Result of this type of lay-out is that one will always see, smell and hear cars. It irritates a lot of people, while cars in Admiraalsplein are also parked next to the sidewalks. The numbers are, on the contrary, a lot smaller and most of the parking is positioned out of sight. Lay-out can therefore have an obvious influence on the amenity.

The third class contained the 'behaviour / type of visitors'. This could be a very important issue. Remarkably, every denotation is related to Crabbehof and they are all mentioned in a negative manner. Most people were unhappy about the visitors in Crabbehof because they often behave unfriendly and asocial. A reasonable amount of respondents in Admiraalsplein indicated that this was one of the reasons they did not like shopping in Crabbehof. Disturbing behaviour was often expressed by shouting, impatience, offensive use of horn (car) and aggressiveness. It seems that the behaviour of visitors of a district shopping

centre and therefore the type of visitors' influences the experience one has to a large extent. Moreover, it influences the choice of shopping at a certain shopping centre. One is willing to travel further to avoid negative experiences. This observation is striking, while it has not been mentioned before.

Table 6.2; Amenity classes in Admiraalsplein

Amenity class	Frequency	Percent of all messages
1. Safety of district shopping centre	10	13,7
2. Retail offer for daily / weekly groceries	7	9,6
3. Parking facilities	6	8,2
4. Appearance as general impression	5	6,8
5. Influence of lay-out	5	6,8
6. Activities	5	6,8
7. Mixture of shops	5	6,8
8. Accessibility / proximity	4	5,5
9. Openness	3	4,1
10. Roofing of corridors	3	4,1
11. Use of district-s.c. as a recreational trip	3	4,1
12. Crowding of shopping area	3	4,1
13. Diversity of visitors	2	2,7
14. Presence of resting places	2	2,7
15. Vacancy levels	2	2,7
16. Meeting place	2	2,7
17. Share of restaurants and bars	2	2,7
18. Additional recreational facilities	1	1,4
19. Maintenance	1	1,4
20. Lighting	1	1,4
21. No place to stay	1	1,4
22. Presence of music	0	0,0
23. Influence of colours / materials to appearance	0	0,0
24. Inconvenience of cars	0	0,0
25. Behaviour / type of visitors	0	0,0
26. Behaviour of retailers	0	0,0
27. Influence of greenery	0	0,0
Total	73	100,0

One amenity class can contain several characteristics of one respondent

Table 6.3; Amenity classes in Crabbehof

Amenity class	Frequency	Percent of all messages
1. Retail offer for daily / weekly groceries	9	12,9
2. Influence of colours / materials to appearance	8	11,4
3. Inconvenience of cars	7	10,0
4. Behaviour / type of visitors	6	8,6
5. Presence of resting places	4	5,7
6. Crowding of shopping area	4	5,7
7. Appearance as general impression	3	4,3
8. Safety of district shopping centre	3	4,3
9. Roofing of corridors	3	4,3
10. Accessibility / proximity	3	4,3
11. Presence of music	3	4,3
12. Parking facilities	2	2,9
13. Use of district-s.c. as a recreational trip	2	2,9
14. Maintenance	2	2,9
15. Additional recreational facilities	2	2,9
16. Influence of lay-out	2	2,9
17. Share of restaurants and bars	1	1,4
18. Meeting place	1	1,4
19. Influence of greenery	1	1,4
20. Lighting	1	1,4
21. Activities	1	1,4
22. Vacancy levels	1	1,4
23. Behaviour of retailers	1	1,4
24. No place to stay	0	0,0
25. Diversity of visitors	0	0,0
26. Mixture of shops	0	0,0
27. Openness	0	0,0
Total	70	100,0

One amenity class can contain several characteristics of one respondent

The division of amenity classes show some more disparities. Worth mentioning are 'mixture of shops', 'openness' and 'parking facilities'. The mixture of shops is mentioned quite often in the overview of Admiraalsplein, but it drops 19 places for the case of Crabbehof. A first look shows that all the characteristics corresponding to this amenity class can be traced back to Admiraalsplein. When looking at the content of these characteristics it can be seen that they are about the lack of specialized shops and are therefore denoted as negative. The reason they all occur in Admiraalsplein and not in Crabbehof is because the retail offer in Crabbehof is much more comprehensive with simply more shops.

The amenity class 'openness' can be explained quite easily. It is an interesting one while it is only mentioned three times, they are all three ranked with a '1'. The big square in Admiraalsplein is the main reason for the fact that all three characteristics are mentioned in this district shopping centre. It provides a pleasant feeling by means of feeling free and not trapped. Therefore it is placed 27th in Crabbehof and 9th in Admiraalsplein.

Parking facilities score relatively high in the general table and that of Admiraalsplein. In the frequency table of Crabbehof on the other hand it is placed 12th with only 2 respondents mentioning it. This relatively large drop may have a quite logical explanation. Thinking of the fact that most respondents in Crabbehof already paid attention to parking and cars with the amenity class 'inconvenience of cars' as discussed earlier, mentioning it again does not seem logical.

Finally, figure 6.2 visualises the importance ranks. Characteristics ranked '1' are shown in dark blue, characteristics ranked '2' in red and so on. As stated before, these statistics should be considered with some care. Rank '5' maybe just as unimportant as a rank '2' when a respondent has only made two groups. It can be seen that the top five is comparable with the top of the general frequency table and does not show any big surprises. Remarkable might be the amenity class 'roofing of corridors', which is placed 6th in this figure. This class has a very steady score in all of the frequency tables and is therefore an aspect that must be kept in mind. The 9th position of openness is an interesting one as well. Its importance is already explained in the previous subparagraph, while this score underlines it.

An extensive elaboration of all the characteristics and amenity classes, with an overview of the sub-divisions, rankings and positive versus negative denotations incorporated, can be found in Appendix V.

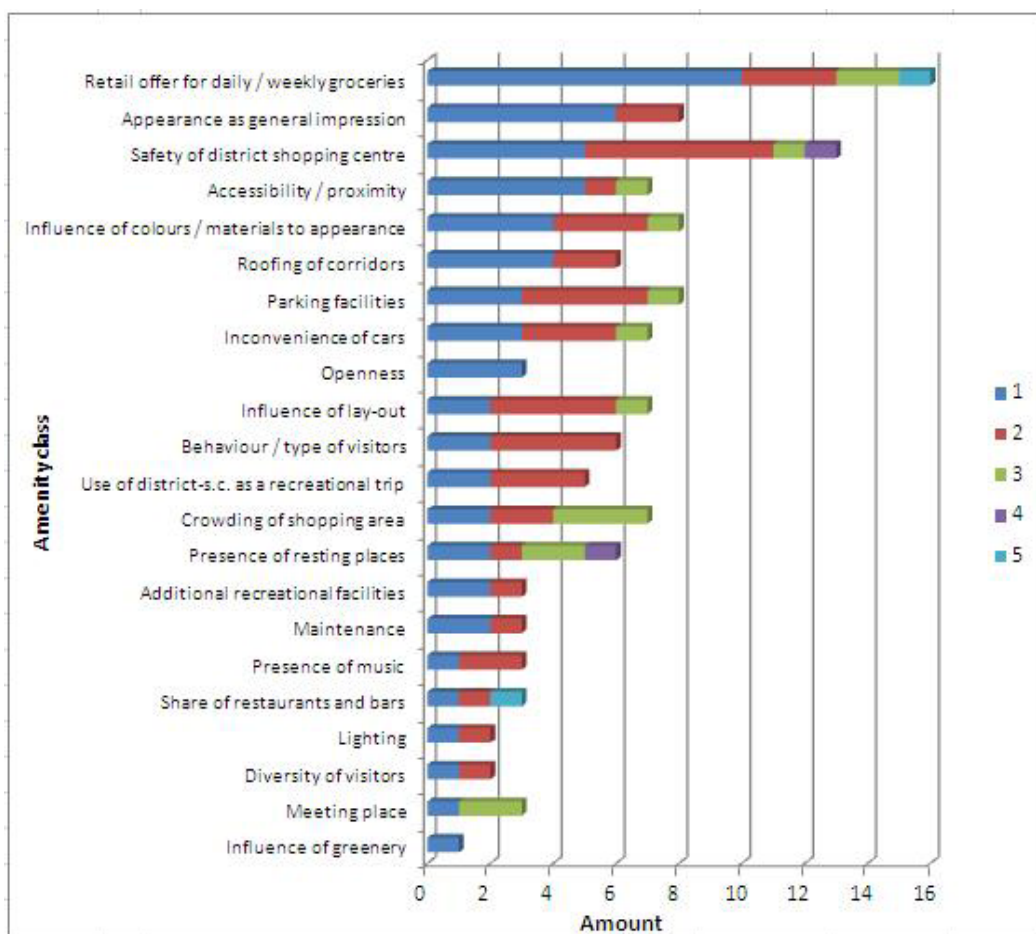


Figure 6.2; Order of importance of the amenity classes

6.2 Comparison with literature study

While the previous paragraph focussed on describing and explaining the results, this paragraph will serve as the final prelude to the conclusions. It is of great importance to this particular research to compare the results of the literature study with the research findings.

According to the literature study, one of the problems that occurred was the concretization of shopping centre characteristics that mostly influence the amenity of a district shopping centre. One could say that almost every characteristic influences the amenity. Therefore the decision was made to focus on the out-

door aspects, which concern a multiple shops perspective and simultaneously a public area approach. As a result of this concretization a table was constructed in which the characteristics are shown that, according to the available literature, mostly influence the amenity of a district shopping centre, see table 6.4.

Table 6.4; Characteristics that influence amenity according to literature study, most influential characteristics highlighted (§4.3).

	Supermarket / Retail offer	Services and facilities	External / appearance	Interior / layout	Accessibility and parking
	Supermarket formula	Quality of service	Design and architecture (thematic)	Buildings on 1 or 2-sides of walking routes	Accessibility / entrances
	Fresh products offer	Number of shops like bars and restaurants	Proportion of attractive storefronts	Routing orientation	Connection with parking spots
	Retail-mix	Number of activities in the streets	Interruptions (vacancy, dwelling entry)	Proportion reserved for pedestrians	Connection with other stores
	Completeness of the offer	Number of meeting places	Atmosphere	Amount of greenery / lawns and gardens	Number of parking spots
	Quality of shops	Pedestrian traffic flow	Maintenance of streets, hallways and buildings	Crowding (impression)	Price of parking
	Quantity of shops	Number of resting places (benches)	Decorations and furnishing	Security and safety	Availability public transport
			Proportion indoor / roofed	Lighting / music	
			Exterior signs	Scents / temperature	

A first observation that can be made is denoted in paragraph 3.3.3, which stressed that social goals could be of importance as when visiting district shopping centres. These social goals cannot be denoted as a characteristic of a district shopping centre while it is a goal instead of a tangible aspect. Nonetheless it was considered to be of importance and therefore was added to the research design by means of asking some additional questions on using the district shopping centre as a meeting place. As table 6.1 to 6.3 show, using a district shopping centre as a meeting place does not seem relevant in most cases. However, it appoints a part of experiencing a district shopping centre that has barely been paid attention to in the literature study. It could be called: ‘the social part of experiencing’ or ‘the social aspect of amenity’.

It is this aspect that arises in the research findings but is not highlighted in the results of the literature study. Not by means of meeting acquaintances or relatives but by means of feeling safe and being able to identify with other visitors. The characteristic ‘security and safety’ in table 6.4 is obviously best comparable with these feelings. When looking at that characteristic it seems that the literature has covered this part sufficiently, while in fact it was mentioned only shortly or indirectly in most literature (‘attitudes’ in Puchinelli et al., 2009; ‘consumer attitudes’ in Verhoef et al. 2009; ‘shopping context’ in Wagner et al.,

2010 or ‘customer characteristics’ in Bermans et al., 1988) to subsequently be surpassed by other aspects. The research findings on the other hand demonstrate that it is highly valued by the visitors of Admiraal-splein and Crabbehof.

Security and safety is also not included in the boxes that are shaded red in table 6.4. Therefore it was quite surprising that it came out to be of such importance. But that is not it. The research findings shed some more light on this issue. Feelings safe could mean the presence of many police officers or surveillance cameras but is formulated in its most general form. The respondents actually empathized that the type of visitors and the corresponding behaviour are most influential on their experiences.

When a more direct comparison is made, the shaded aspects from table 6.4 (11 aspects) can be plotted against the aspects with the highest frequency in table 6.1 (13 aspects). The line of demarcation of this latter one can be argued; in this case it is put after frequencies lower than 6. It thereafter is of lesser importance to denote the concerning amenity classes. A direct confrontation will lead to the following table (6.5). The 5 characteristics shown in this table are the characteristics from the literature study that can be, to a certain extent, compared to the ones of the research findings.

	Literature Study	Research Findings
	Design and architecture	Influence of colours / materials to appear.
	Atmosphere	Appearance as general impression
	Crowding (impression)	Crowding of shopping area
	Buildings on 1- or 2-sides of walking r.	Influence of lay-out
	Proportion indoor / roofed	Roofing of corridors

The design and architecture as meant in the literature study is comparable to the influence of colours / materials to appearance as meant by the respondents. Secondly, atmosphere is a quite general term, the same can be said for appearance as general impression. The characteristics of crowding are obviously comparable, buildings on 1- or 2-sides of the walking routes are indirectly attributable to the lay-out and finally the characteristics belonging to roofing corridors are comparable with those of proportion indoor / roofed.

Without analysing these first 5 any further, the differences are unfolding in the other 13 characteristics. From the literature study, the following 6 characteristics are highlighted but show no comparable characteristics like in table 6.5; ‘proportion of attractive storefronts’, ‘number of activities in the streets’, ‘decorations and furnishing’, ‘lighting / music’, ‘exterior signs’ and ‘scents / temperature’. The same can be done for the 7 characteristics of the research findings; ‘retail offer for daily / weekly groceries’, ‘safety of district shopping centre’, ‘parking facilities’, ‘accessibility / proximity’, ‘inconvenience of cars’, ‘activities’ and ‘behaviour / type of visitors’.

Interesting to see is that 5 out of the 7 characteristics that are left on the side of the research findings, respectively the retail offer, safety, parking facilities, accessibility and activities can be found in table 6.4. They are not highlighted, meaning the literature did not appoint them as being most influential, but they are mentioned. One of the two missing is ‘inconvenience of cars’ which is completely attributable to the district shopping centre of Crabbehof. On the other hand, table 6.4 does provide a characteristic named ‘connection with parking spots’, which could indirectly be related to ‘convenience or inconvenience of cars’. The second one is ‘behaviour / type of visitors’ which has no equivalent in table 6.4.

A few observations can be made. Firstly, the aspect of safety is only mentioned in general in the literature study, which might have some other explanations. In any case, there was no emphasis on it. Secondly, inconvenience of cars is mentioned indirectly but not in the way the literature emphasises it. Thirdly, the

behaviour / type of visitors is missing in the literature study. Fourthly, five characteristics with a high frequency correspond to the highlighted ones from the literature study. The remaining five do not appear in the highlighted sections, but are mentioned in the rest of the table. Looking to it from the literature study side, it can be concluded that the aspects that were expected to be most influential on the amenity of district shopping centres turned out to be less important in this particular research. Scents, temperature, exterior signs and proportions of attractive storefronts were not mentioned at all while lighting and music were barely mentioned. This is no guarantee that these aspects do not contribute to the amenity of a district shopping centre, as the sample of respondents is too small, but it does indicate that in this case the added value appears to be smaller than assumed.

These observations contribute to the awareness that the majority of the aspects mentioned in the literature study are comparable to those from the research findings. On the other hand there are also some differences that bring in interesting information on what visitors of district shopping centres are aware of, how they value certain aspects and what their perception of a district shopping centre is. An aspect that explicitly stands out: the social aspect of amenity.

6.3 Conclusions

By means of the cognitive mapping technique (3CM-method), 18 cognitive maps were generated. A total of 143 characteristics were mentioned, divided into 50 groups. In the next stage of analysis, these characteristics were reallocated into 27 so called 'amenity classes', which contain characteristics having the same meaning. The result of this division showed that the amenity class with the highest frequency was 'retail offer'. More surprisingly was the second highest ranked class, that of 'safety'. Together with 'behaviour / type of visitors' these two classes appoint an important issue; the social aspect of amenity. Differences in shopping centres emerge when the results are analysed per shopping centre. The use of colours and materials, inconvenience of cars and the behaviour / type of visitors highly influences the district shopping centre of Crabbehof, while safety issues are clearly emerging to the visitors of Admiraalsplein. When compared to the literature study there appear to be 5 characteristics that can, for the vast majority, be compared to characteristics from the research findings. Two characteristics are not found in the results of the literature study, respectively the inconvenience of cars and behaviour / type of visitors.

Chapter **seven**

Conclusions and Recommendations

7. Conclusions and recommendations

In this final chapter, the conclusions and recommendations are elaborated. To put the conclusions and recommendations in perspective, first a short recapitulation will be given on the research so far. With that fresh in mind, the results will be discussed on a theoretical- and practical level as well as the recommendations.

7.1 Recapitulation

The aim of this study was to get insight in the aspects that contribute to the experience of visiting Dutch district shopping centres. A Dutch district shopping centre can thereby be typified as a shopping centre that operates as a supporting shopping area, has supermarkets as main attractions, has a composition of shops that offer about 40% to 50% groceries and consist of 15 to 50 shops. Most likely the shopping values and motives of visitors of district shopping centres differ from other types of shopping centres which could have effect on the level of desired customer experience, or more in general the amenity. The concept of 'experience' was extensively researched in order to get a complete view on the subject matter. The 'experience economy' concerns the cognitive, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer and retail-environment. Experiences are strictly personal, holistic in nature and concern multiple determinants and moderators like situational aspects or previous customer experiences.

A total of 34 characteristics of Dutch district shopping centres that may affect the amenity were extracted from the literature. To assess the validity and completeness of this list of characteristics, interviews were conducted in two district shopping centres. To structure the interviews, the 'Conceptual Content Cognitive Map-method' (3CM) was used. A qualitative approach was chosen instead of a quantitative one due to the fact that it fits the goal of this research better; not only appoint the aspects that influence the amenity but bring out more detailed information on these particular aspects. According to this method the bias of an interviewer can be bypassed and respondents can bring forward the aspect of which they think are most important. Visual representations of knowledge structures could provide new perspectives. The uniquely located shopping centres in the city of Dordrecht, Admiraalsplein and Crabbhof, are chosen as research locations. A total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted in April / May of 2012.

7.2 Discussion and conclusions

Mapping the perception on the amenity of district shopping centres by its visitors produced some interesting observations. The intensive research method that was used, the 3CM-method, limited the sample size significantly. The sample of 18 respondents in this particular research is by no means sufficient for statistical generalisation. This statement has to be kept in mind when studying the results and conclusions. The main goal on the other hand was not to create a huge sample and follow up previous studies but instead obtain new insights that could have been overlooked in previous research. By using qualitative instead of the more usual quantitative research methods, this study provided new data that can serve as a base for new quantitative as well as quantitative studies.

7.2.1 Theoretical conclusions

When comparing the research findings to the literature on experiencing (district) shopping centres, the present study's results differ from it in a few aspects. The biggest difference lies in the 'social aspect of amenity'. Usually, general terms like safety and security are considered in recent literature but are subsequently surpassed very quickly by other aspects or characteristics of shopping centres. A reason for this could be due to the type of shopping centre investigated in this particular study. Most literature concern the large shopping centres while this study focussed on district shopping centres mainly serving

customers in their own district. As a consequence the mix of visitors of a district shopping centre may be quite particular, yielding specific results. In other words, this particular research is dependent to the two districts in the city of Dordrecht where the interviews were conducted. The residential districts of Wielwijk and Crabbehof are characterised by a large share of non-western immigrants, a relatively low percentage of owner occupied dwellings compared to the general level in the Netherlands, score relatively low on liveability and district atmosphere and are known for criminal and drug dealing youngsters. These characteristics seem to highly influence the amenity of the concerning district shopping centres. Conclusions from a similar study in other districts or cities may be quite different from the current conclusions. Thus, to get an overall picture, a representative set of shopping centres should be investigated. Especially differences between shopping centres may explain differences in the (aggregated) cognitive maps as was shown in this study.

The qualitative research method that was used did prove to be useful. While the majority of the research in the real estate market is done quantitatively, the qualitative approach in combination with the cognitive mapping method did lead to new insights. Respondents were all able to participate and a cognitive map could be constructed after every interview, it can be concluded that the set-up of the research was successful. It must be said that it was hard to enthuse and convince respondents to participate, so a big reward would probably ease the search of potential interviewees. The sample of respondents for this particular research is quite evenly distributed with one exception; the group of respondents with an age of 25 years or younger was underrepresented. Respondents who could have been part of this group were rarely prepared to participate in the interviews but on top of that were scarcely seen in both district shopping centres. It is not expected that this group, if being larger, would have come up with unexpected characteristics.

One of the conclusions made in chapter one was that ‘the experience economy’ is very comprehensive. It can hardly be compassed in a single sentence and has to do with a variety of subjects. The outcome of this particular research underlines these statements. A total of 143 characteristics were mentioned which are narrowed down to 27 groups, representing characteristics with the same meaning. It shows the comprehensiveness of ‘experiences’. The 27 groups display some more general categories that determine the amenity of a Dutch district shopping centre.

The subdivision in types of shopping centres makes it even more complex to generalise the results. While the Netherlands has its own unique retail hierarchy and structure, results cannot simply be translated to other countries. As stated before, even translating it to other district shopping centres in the Netherlands can be complicated. Therefore the supporting nature of district shopping centres in the Netherlands must be taken into account, meaning that it is no central- or peripheral shopping area. Shopping values in such shopping centres are more utilitarian than hedonic. The results of this particular study underline this, as can be seen in Appendix II, while respondents tend to agree more with utilitarian than hedonic statements. Therefore it certifies the observations in this particular research that the functional aspects of district shopping centres such as sufficient parking lots, accessibility and retail offer are valued highly.

The answers to the first five sub questions as described in subparagraph 1.3.4 are incorporated in the literature study, chapter two and three. Chapter two provides an answer to the first three sub questions, respectively what is meant by the experience economy, which determinants influence the customer experience and in which phase of the buying process a customer can be influenced by experiences. The experience economy is described as a new economic wave in which experience has got an economical value. Experiences are thereby strictly personal, holistic in nature and could involve the customer at a rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual level. The number of determinants that can influence

customer experience is huge and involve, for example, the social environment, service-interface and situational / consumer moderators. The experiences as denoted in this particular research applies to the 'evaluation-, purchase- and post purchase phase'.

Chapter three provides an insight into the characteristics of a Dutch district shopping centre and to what the shopping motivations of consumers of these kinds of shopping centres are. The characteristics of a Dutch district shopping centre are extensively discussed and can be seen in table 6.4. The shopping motivations of customers of Dutch district shopping centres are strongly connected to the retail mix (large share of supermarkets and fresh products offer) of these kinds of shopping centres, which means the motivations are more utilitarian than hedonic.

7.2.2. Practical conclusions

When discussing the results, a few interesting observations can be made besides the frequently mentioned safety in the district shopping centre. First of all, closely linked to these safety issues, the type and behaviour of visitors. This characteristic is missing in the literature addressed in this study. It must be said that it is no physical aspect of a shopping centre that can be adjusted, but it seems to be of great importance to the visitors of the two district shopping centres *Admiraalsplein* and *Crabbehof*. These safety issues that are partially caused by the type of visitors and their behaviour are negatively influencing the amenity and should be, if possible, taken away. Therewithal, it is difficult to compare with aspects that are positively influencing the amenity like, according to the literature study, decorations or attractive storefronts.

As stated in paragraph 4.3, aspects like the retail offer, sufficient parking spots or completeness of the offer are considered as 'basic conditions' to the success of a district shopping centre. They all need to be in place in order to add additional aspects that can positively influence experiences. The behaviour and type of visitors should be considered as one of these 'basic conditions' as well. Adding aspects to increase the amenity is one thing, but making sure the amenity is not distorted by not complying with these so called 'basic conditions' seem to be even more important in the case of *Admiraalsplein* and *Crabbehof*.

Building on this conclusion, a few more observations were made that are better comparable to the findings as referred to in the literature study, such as aspects that cannot be considered basic requirements but additional aspects that positively influence the amenity. The results of this research show that out-dated materials and pale colours can badly influence the experience one has when entering a district shopping centre. The general impression, which was denoted by the respondents very frequently, is affected by the use of these colours and materials. While being closely related, these two aspects should be taken into account when designing or renovating a district shopping centre. It can be expected that these aspects will affect other type of shopping centres equally.

Another noteworthy result of the present research is that the lay-out has a big impact on a lot of other features of a district shopping centre. In the case of *Crabbehof*, the carré-shaped lay-out directly influences the experience. The majority of the visitors traveling by car use the parking lots in the middle of the centre, which results into odor-, sight- and noise inconvenience. So not only did the exhaust fumes and nuisance of cars bothered the visitors, they also disliked the fact that the cars were always in sight and therefore were too emphatically present.

Interesting were also the observations that only occurred in one of the two district shopping centres. As stated in the previous paragraphs, mixture of shops and openness are only mentioned in *Admiraalsplein*, which in this case meant that the openness by means of a large square was appreciated and the mixture of shops was insufficient. This example again shows the two categories of 'basic needs' and 'additional aspects'; on the one side the basic needs like the mixture of shops that influences the amenity and on the other side the appreciation of the openness of the district shopping centre. It seems that the basic needs

are of bigger importance in a district shopping centre compared to, for example, an inner-city shopping centre while most visitors of a district shopping centre highly appreciate the presence and offer of supermarkets, want to be able to identify with other visitors and want it to be easily accessible.

The research goal as plotted in chapter one was based on this assumption. It denoted that there probably was a difference in the level of desired customer experience while the shopping motives and values were assumed to be different as well. This research confirms that assumption, although there are some refinements that have to be made. First of all, the majority of the aspects that were brought forward by studies from recent decades are confirmed. Hence, the accent seems to be on different aspects with district shopping centres compared to other, more hedonically driven, shopping centres. So adding experiences will probably also work with district shopping centres, but visitors will attach more value to basic needs like a sufficient retail offer and a great accessibility / proximity. Some extra attention has to be paid to the safety and social atmosphere, which is for a large part covered by the type of visitors. While a designer, developer or manager of a district shopping centre will probably have no influence on the type of inhabitants of the concerning district, he or she should surely reckon these issues and try to limit its influence. Possible solutions, brought forward by the respondents of this particular research, may be found in an open lay-out which improves the sake of clarity, deployment of district police officers, retain a high level of maintenance of streets but also buildings and avoid having huge amounts of cars in a shopping centre. The emphasis of this study was on these customers and therefore shows that there is yet a lot unknown about the preferences, feelings, motivations and values of these and visitors of other types of shopping centres.

The answer to the sixth sub question is elaborated in chapter 6, covering the characteristics of a Dutch district shopping centre that are important to their customers and affect customer experience. The frequency table (6.1) in subparagraph 6.1.2, shows the characteristics that are valued most by the respondents. The most important characteristics were retail offer, safety and general appearance.

The main research question as denoted in chapter one was; “to what extent do Dutch district shopping centres meet consumer’s requirements concerning the amenity?”. This main question is therefore answered by means of the case study and conducted interviews, shedding a light on the complex nature of the concept of ‘amenity’ and ‘experiences’. As concluded in the latter two subparagraphs of this chapter it seems that the ‘basic needs’ are valued most and may distort a pleasant shopping experience if they are not in place. The social aspects as depicted in this subparagraph thereby seem of great importance when discussing the amenity of a Dutch district shopping centre.

7.3 Recommendations

Derived from the results and conclusions given above some recommendations can be made. Firstly, on a theoretical level, the advantages of a qualitative research method were shown. It is therefore recommended to use the 3CM-method in combination with qualitative research in future research if new theories on concepts of consumer experience are required. It has proven its worth and besides that has a lot of variants that could be used, see paragraph 5.5.2. More focussed on this particular research there are some areas left that have not been exposed. While this study focussed on ‘district shopping centres’, practically the same study can be done for ‘city district shopping centres’ and ‘neighbourhood shopping centres’ or ‘peripheral shopping areas’ as denoted in paragraph 3.1. For city district shopping centres and neighbourhood shopping centres it is interesting to see how size and the number of shops affect the characteristics influencing the amenity. The peripheral shopping areas are quite different in nature and therefore it might be even more interesting to see to what extent customers of these kinds of shopping centre value experiences. In addition the research findings could be compared to retail centres in other countries.

To put the research findings in perspective the same type of study, so again with district shopping centres, should be done in different cities, with different district shopping centres. It might be hard to match the unique situation of Admiraalsplein and Crabbehof but it is of great importance to further strengthen the research findings. Furthermore, a quantitative analysis could be performed as well. With a much bigger sample of respondents one could test if the results of this particular research can be generalised or are just based on coincidence. Further research could also be done on the behaviour and type of visitors. It appears that people like to shop between likeminded people or 'people like us'. But how can these like-minded people be typified and what do they have to comply to?

In a practical sense it is recommended to certainly pay attention to the aspects concerning safety and behaviour / type of visitors. As described in the previous paragraph, one should find practical solutions to avoid or reduce the negative influence on the experience of customers. This research does not provide solutions while it was not intended and designed to do. It does provide some new insights a designer, developer or manager of a district shopping centre could benefit from.

In line of the recommendation made in the previous sub paragraph concerning safety issues, it shows that literature on these issues has been limited. The ones who did study the effect of safety issues argue that it is of great importance. Kajalo et al. (2009) denote that 5 percent of consumers in the USA regularly avoid malls for security reasons, and over 20 percent avoid them once-in-a-while. Their study showed that security problems have slightly increased in recent years and are currently a significant problem in the USA. It is important to notice that it concerns shopping malls in the USA, which differ from Dutch shopping centres, especially from Dutch district shopping centres. Nonetheless, studies on the influence of safety measures (Jim et al., 2006) and affect on shopping well-being (El Hedhli et al., 2011) show that there is yet a lot more to discover while shoppers cannot effectively engage in purchasing goods when they are concerned about their own safety or that of others (El Hedhli et al., 2011). The effect on Dutch district shopping centres will likely differ from other types of shopping centres so it seems wise to distinguish these types in future research.

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Appendices

Appendix I;	Interview guide
Appendix II;	Overview respondents' information
Appendix III;	Overview cognitive maps (3CM-Method)
Appendix IV;	Elaboration characteristics and groups
Appendix V;	Overview amenity classes; classified in location, importance ranks and positive / negative denotations
Appendix VI;	Overview retail offer Admiralsplein and Crabbehof

Appendix I; Interview guide

Created: 07-03-12
 Edited: 02-04-12

Elaboration interview guide

Due to the fact that the respondents will be Dutch, the questions are formulated in Dutch as well

	Type of question	Question	Comments	Subject	Dealt with?
Run-up	Anker point 1	De volgende stellingen gaan over motieven om te winkelen. In hoeverre bent u het eens met deze stellingen, waarbij 1 = erg oneens en 5 = erg eens	In general: mention tape-recorder and make sure it works / is activated!!		
		a) Deze winkelervaring was echt een genot	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens (Source: Ruiz et al., 2004)		
		b) Deze winkelervaring voelde echt als een ontsnapping aan de werkelijkheid	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		c) Vergeleken met andere dingen die ik had kunnen doen was deze tijdsbesteding echt een genot	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		d) Ik heb genoten van boeiende nieuwe producten	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		e) Het winkelen voelde als een avontuur	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		f) Ik heb bereikt wat ik wilde tijdens het winkelen	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		g) Ik kon niet kopen wat ik echt nodig had	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		h) Ik heb precies de artikelen gevonden die ik nodig had	Likert scale (1-5); Erg oneens ... Erg eens		
		Subquestion	Waar koopt u voornamelijk uw niet-dagelijkse aankopen zoals kleding? Waarom?	Icebreaker, respondents should feel comfortable in talking about the subject	
	Subquestion	Waar zou u de dagelijkse boodschappen doen indien dit wijkwinkelcentrum gesloten was? Waarom?			
Main	Anker point 2	COGNITIVE MAPPING (3CM-METHOD)			
	Introduce the task	1) Deze studie is bedoeld om te achterhalen welke aspecten van dit wijkwinkelcentrum een rol spelen bij de beleving daarvan volgens haar bezoekers. roept op allerlei manier een positieve of negatieve beleving bij u waarbij ik benieuwd ben naar de aspecten die dat gevoel, volgens u, veroorzaken / opwekken. Benoemt u alstublieft alle mogelijke aspecten die volgens u bijdragen aan die beleving.	- Present the task to each participant in the same way, but do it flexibly so additional questions can be asked - When a respondent has trouble with thinking of determinants, first ask some questions that can help in finding them		
	Subsequent directing questions	2) Welke aspecten van dit wijkwinkelcentrum dragen volgens u bij aan... - de identiteit? - het activeren van zittuigen?	- When they truly have difficulties with thinking of categories, the interviewer can explain they can be found in things like design and architecture, atmosphere, decorations, roofed, 1 or 2-sided, crowding, activities, attractive signs, lighting, music, scents and temperature. But the key is to let them think of it themselves! - These questions can be asked to stimulate the respondents to think of more categories.	3CM Method	
	Next steps	a) Hoe zou u alle genoemde aspecten in groepen indelen zodat aspecten die met elkaar te maken hebben in één groep zitten? b) Welke titel zou u deze groepen geven? Waarom? c) Hoe zou u de door u benoemde groepen ordenen in volgorde van belangrijkheid? Waarom?	All of the determinants that were mentioned should be written onto slips of paper and presented to the respondent Make sure that the slips of paper and given title are held together by means of paperclips. The ordered piles of slips should be denoted and held together in envelopes		
Supplementary	Anker point 3	In hoeverre gebruikt u dit wijkwinkelcentrum als ontmoetingsplek?			
	Subquestion	Wie ontmoet u dan in dit wijkwinkelcentrum? Hoe vaak?	(!): When a respondent mentions this subject during the execution of the 3CM-method, the questions at ankerpoint (5) can be asked, while functioning as a 'sidestep' of the 3CM-method	Use of district shopping centre: meeting places	
	Subquestion	Vindt u het prettig om hier bekenden te ontmoeten? Waarom? Verblijft u daardoor langer in dit wijkwinkelcentrum? Omcirkelt u alstublieft de plek op de plattegrond waar u het vaakst vrienden, familie of bekenden ontmoet. Waarom daar?	Make use of an actual, clear and readable map of the concerning district shopping centre so respondents can appoint or encircle the places they refer to		
Finishing	Anker point 5	Wat zouden we aan dit wijkwinkelcentrum moeten veranderen zodat u het nog prettiger vindt om hier naar toe te komen?			
	Subquestion	Wat zouden we dan als eerste aan moeten pakken?		Future advice	
	Anker point 6	Is er iets dat u, naar aanleiding van bovenstaande, nog wilt toevoegen of bespreken dat nog niet behandeld is?			
	Subquestion	Zou u het leuk vinden om de resultaten van dit onderzoek te ontvangen? Zo ja, uw e-mail adres:		Other	
Additional	Other necessary respondent information				
	Personal	informatie	Wat is uw geslacht?	1= man, 2= vrouw	
	Personal	informatie	Wat is uw leeftijd?	1= 17 of jonger, 2= 18 tot 24, 3= 25 tot 35, 4= 35 tot 44, 5= 45 tot 54, 6= 55 en ouder	
	Personal	informatie	Wat is uw geboorteland?	Open vraag	
	Personal	informatie	Wat is uw opleidingsniveau?	1= basis onderwijs, 2= middelbaar onderwijs, 3= MBO, 4= HBO, 5= WO	
	Personal	informatie	Wat is de postcode van uw woonadres?	Open vraag	
	Personal	informatie	Wat is de samenstelling van uw huishouden?	1= alleenstaand zonder kinderen, 2= alleenstaand met ... kinderen, 3= samenwonend/getrouwd zonder kinderen, 4= samenwonend/getrouwd met ... kinderen	Personal characteristics
	Personal		In welke categorie bevindt het inkomen van uw huishouden zich?	1= beneden modaal, 2= modaal, 3= boven modaal	
Personal		In welke samenstelling bezoekt u meestal dit wijkwinkelcentrum?	1= alleen, 2= met partner, 3= met kind(eren), 4= met kleinkind(eren) 5= met vriend of vriendin		
Personal		Met welk vervoersmiddel komt u het vaakst naar dit wijkwinkelcentrum?	1= te voet, 2= (brom)fiets, 3= scooter / motor, 4= auto, 5= openbaar vervoer		
Personal		Op welke dagen bezoekt u meestal dit wijkwinkelcentrum?	1= maandag, 2= dinsdag, 3= woensdag, 4= donderdag, 5= vrijdag, 6= zaterdag, 7= zondag		

Appendix II; Overview respondents' information

Verwerking vraag 1 interviewguide

Admiraalsplein

Crabbehof

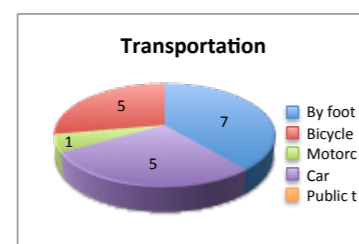
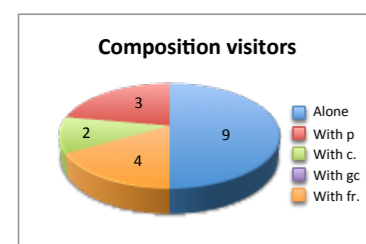
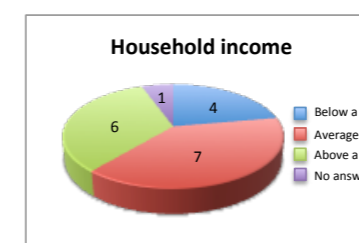
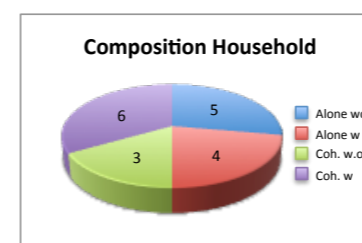
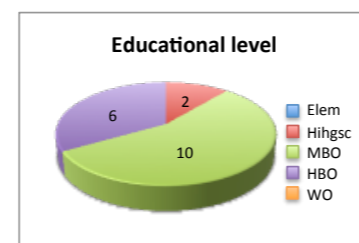
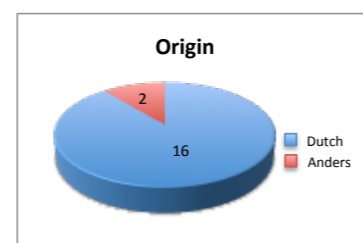
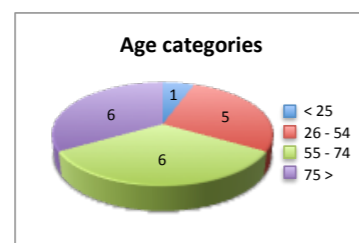
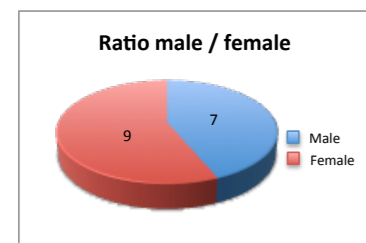
Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Average
* a) Deze winkelervaring was echt een genot	4	3	2	4	4	2	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2,9
b) Deze winkelervaring voelde echt als een ontsnapping aan de werkelijkheid	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2,2
c) Vergeleken met andere dingen die ik had kunnen doen was deze tijdsbesteding echt een genot	2	4	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2,7
d) Ik heb genoten van boeiende nieuwe producten	3	2	2	3	4	2	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3,1
e) Het winkelen voelde als een avontuur	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2,4
* f) Ik heb bereikt wat ik wilde tijdens het winkelen	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4,0
g) Ik kon niet kopen wat ik echt nodig had	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	1,7 (-> 3,3)
h) Ik heb precies de artikelen gevonden die ik nodig had	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4,0

1 = erg oneens
 2 = oneens
 3 = neutraal
 4 = eens
 5 = erg eens

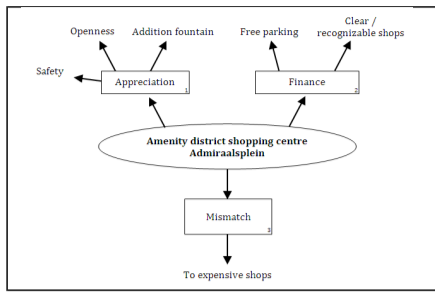
* a), b), c), d) and e) are statements testing the hedonic shopping motivation of respondents
 * f), g) and h) are statements testing the utilitarian shopping motivation of respondents

Verwerking persoonlijke informatie respondenten

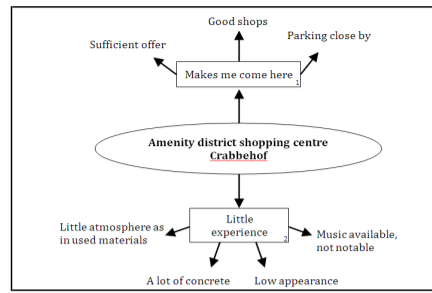
Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Wat is uw geslacht? (1) Man (2) Vrouw	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2
Wat is uw leeftijd? (1) 25 jaar of jonger (2) 26 to 54 jaar (3) 55 jaar tot 74 (4) 75 jaar of ouder	3	3	2	4	3	3	2	4	4	2	1	3	3	2	2	4	4	4
Wat is uw geboorteland? (open vraag)	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Indonesië	Suriname	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland	Nederland
Wat is uw opleidingsniveau? (1) Basis onderwijs (2) Middelbaar onderwijs (3) MBO (4) HBO (5) WO	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	3
Wat is uw woonadres en postcode? (open vraag)	3314 EH	3328 HH	3317 ZH	3317 NJ	3317 AJ	-	3311 WX	3317 NJ	3317 NJ	3317 LC	3317 KL	3317 TA	3317 TA	3317 TJ	3317 TJ	3317 ES	3317 KX	3317 RX
Wat is de samenstelling van uw huishouden? (1) Alleenstaand zonder kinderen (2) Alleenstaand met .. Kinderen (3) Samenwonend / getrouwd zonder kinderen (4) Samenwonend / getrouwd met .. kinderen	4	3	4	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	2	4	4	1	2	1	4	1
In welke categorie bevindt het inkomen van uw huishouden zich? (1) Beneden modaal (2) Modaal (3) Boven modaal (4) Geef liever geen antwoord	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	3	3	3	2	4	2	2
In welke samenstelling bezoekt u meestal dit winkelcentrum? (1) Alleen (2) Met partner (3) Met kind(eren) (4) Met kleindkind(eren) (5) Met vriend(en) of vriendin(nen)	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	5	5	2	3	5	5	1	3	1	2	1
Met welk vervoersmiddel bezoekt u meestal dit winkelcentrum? (1) Te voet (2) (brom)Fiets (3) Scooter / motor (4) Auto (5) Openbaar vervoer	4	4	2	1	1	2	4	1	1	4	1	2	2	4	2	3	1	1



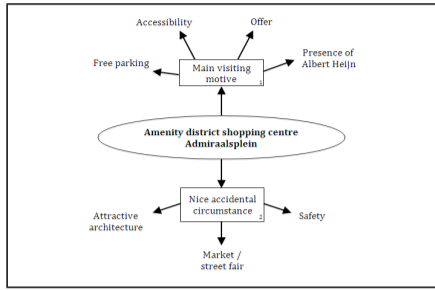
Appendix III; Overview cognitive maps (3CM-method)



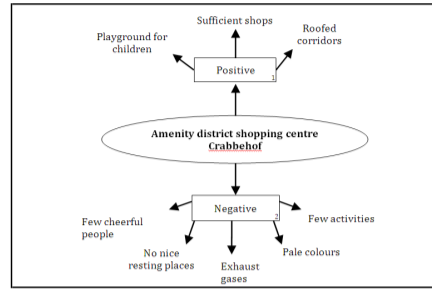
Cognitive map interview 1



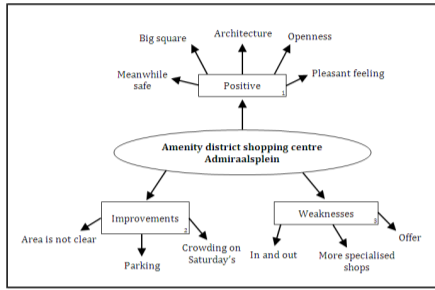
Cognitive map interview 10



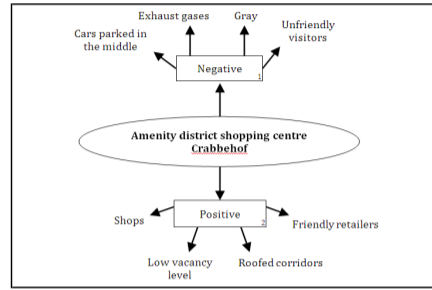
Cognitive map interview 2



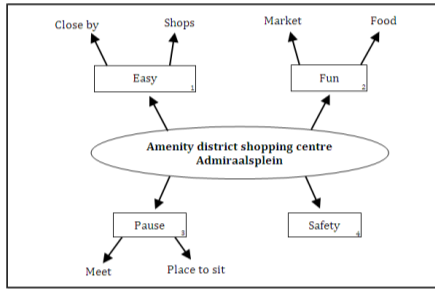
Cognitive map interview 11



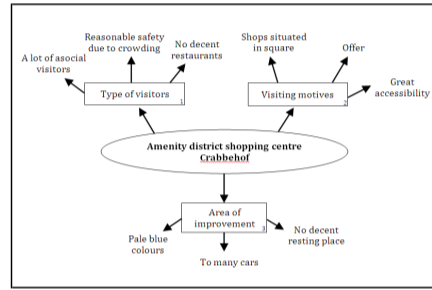
Cognitive map interview 3



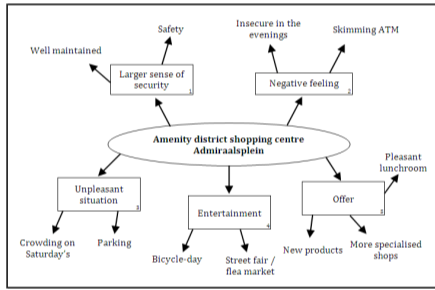
Cognitive map interview 12



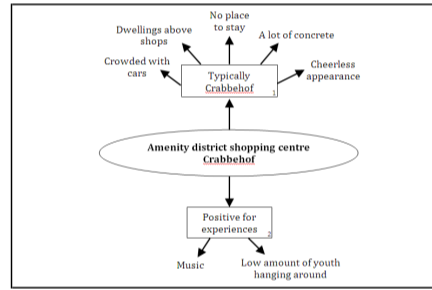
Cognitive map interview 4



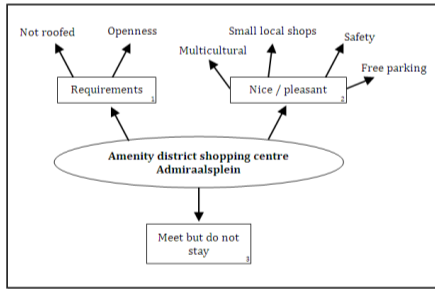
Cognitive map interview 13



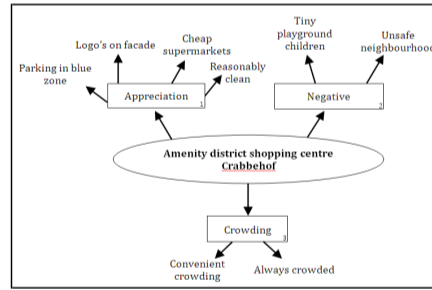
Cognitive map interview 5



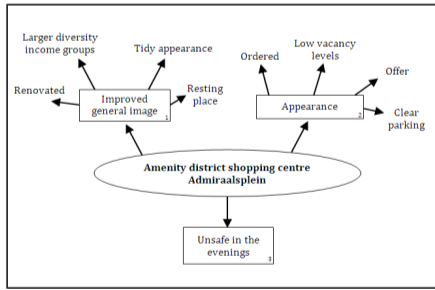
Cognitive map interview 14



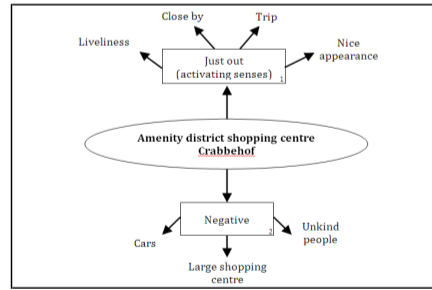
Cognitive map interview 6



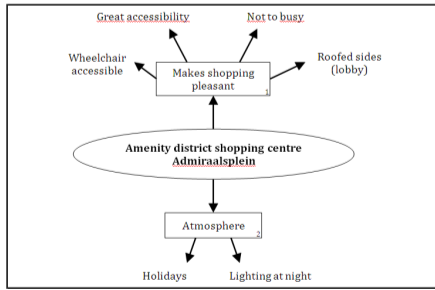
Cognitive map interview 15



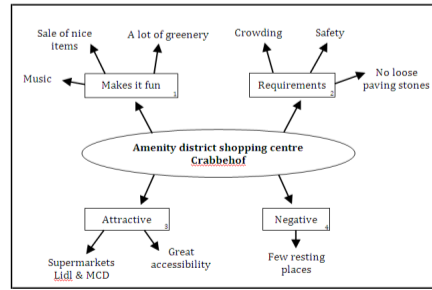
Cognitive map interview 7



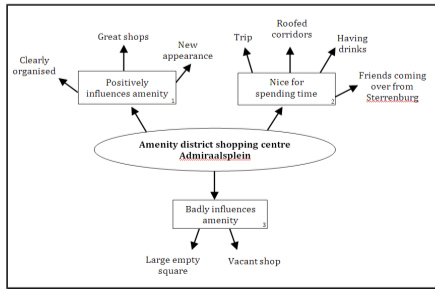
Cognitive map interview 16



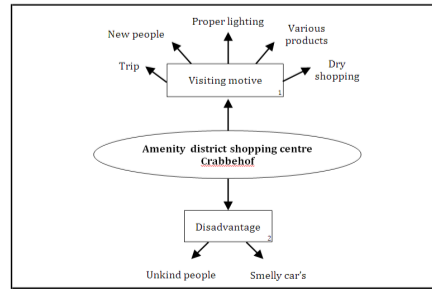
Cognitive map interview 8



Cognitive map interview 17



Cognitive map interview 9



Cognitive map interview 18

Appendix IV; Elaboration characteristics and groups

Outcome 3CM-method interviews

Interview No.	District shopping centre	Group no.	Groups	Charac. N.	Characteristic	Importance rank	Positive (+) or negative (-)
1	Admiraalsplein	1	Appreciation	1	Safety	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			2	Openness	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			3	Addition of fountain	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	2	Finance	4	Free parking	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			5	Clear / recognizable shops	2	+
	Admiraalsplein	3	Mismatch	6	Too expensive shops	3	-
2	Admiraalsplein	4	Main visiting motive	7	Free parking	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			8	Accessibility	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			9	Offer	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			10	Presence of Albert Heijn	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	5	Nice accidental circumstance	11	Attractive architecture	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			12	Market / street fair	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			13	Safety	2	+
3	Admiraalsplein	6	Positive	14	Meanwhile safe	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			15	Big square	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			16	Architecture	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			17	Openness	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			18	Pleasant feeling	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	7	Improvements	19	Area is not clear	2	-
	Admiraalsplein			20	Parking	2	-
	Admiraalsplein			21	Crowding on Saturday's	2	-
	Admiraalsplein	8	Weaknesses	22	In and out	3	-
	Admiraalsplein			23	More specialised shops	3	-
	Admiraalsplein			24	Offer	3	-
4	Admiraalsplein	9	Easy	25	Close by	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			26	Shops	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	10	Fun	27	Market	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			28	Food	2	+
	Admiraalsplein	11	Pause	29	Meet	3	+
	Admiraalsplein			30	Place to sit	3	+
	Admiraalsplein	12	Safety	31	Safety	4	+
5	Admiraalsplein	13	Larger sense of security	32	Well maintained	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			33	Safety	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	14	Negative feeling	34	Insecure in the evenings	2	-
	Admiraalsplein			35	Skimming ATM	2	-
	Admiraalsplein	15	Unpleasant situation	36	Crowding on Saturday's	3	-
	Admiraalsplein			37	Parking	3	-
	Admiraalsplein	16	Entertainment	38	Bicycle-day	4	+
	Admiraalsplein			39	Street fair / flea market	4	+
	Admiraalsplein	17	Offer	40	New products	5	+
	Admiraalsplein			41	More specialised shops	5	-
	Admiraalsplein			42	Pleasant lunchroom	5	+
6	Admiraalsplein	18	Requirements	43	Not roofed entirely	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			44	Openness	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	19	Nice / pleasant	45	Multicultural	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			46	Small local shops	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			47	Safety	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			48	Free parking	2	+
	Admiraalsplein	20	Meet but do not stay	49	Meet but do not stay	3	-
7	Admiraalsplein	21	Improved general image	50	Renovated	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			51	Larger diversity income groups	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			52	Tidy appearance	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			53	Resting place	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	22	Appearance	54	Ordered	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			55	Low vacancy levels	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			56	Offer	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			57	Clear parking	2	+
	Admiraalsplein	23	Unsafe in the evenings	58	Unsafe in the evenings	3	-
8	Admiraalsplein	24	Makes shopping pleasant	59	Wheelchair accessible	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			60	Great accessibility	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			61	Not too busy	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			62	Roofed corridors	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	25	Atmosphere	63	Holidays	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			64	Lighting at night	2	+
9	Admiraalsplein	26	Positively influences amenity	65	Clearly organised	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			66	Great shops	1	+
	Admiraalsplein			67	New appearance	1	+
	Admiraalsplein	27	Nice for spending time	68	Trip	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			69	Roofed corridors	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			70	Having drinks	2	+
	Admiraalsplein			71	Friends coming over from Sterrenburg	2	+
	Admiraalsplein	28	Badly influences amenity	72	Large empty square	3	-
	Admiraalsplein			73	Vacant shop	3	-
10	Crabbehof	29	Makes me come here	74	Sufficient offer	1	+
	Crabbehof			75	Good shops	1	+
	Crabbehof			76	Parking close by	1	+
	Crabbehof	30	Little experience	77	Little atmosphere as in used materials	2	-
	Crabbehof			78	A lot of concrete	2	-
	Crabbehof			79	Low appearance	2	-
	Crabbehof			80	Music available, not notable	2	-
11	Crabbehof	31	Positive	81	Playground for children	1	+
	Crabbehof			82	Sufficient shops	1	+
	Crabbehof			83	Roofed corridors	1	+
	Crabbehof	32	Negative	84	Few cheerful people	2	-
	Crabbehof			85	No nice resting places	2	-
	Crabbehof			86	Exhaust gases	2	-
	Crabbehof			87	Pale colours	2	-
	Crabbehof			88	Few activities	2	-
12	Crabbehof	33	Negative	89	Cars parked in the middle	1	-
	Crabbehof			90	Exhaust gases	1	-
	Crabbehof			91	Gray	1	-
	Crabbehof			92	Unfriendly visitors	1	-
	Crabbehof	34	Positive	93	Shops	2	+
	Crabbehof			94	Low vacancy levels	2	+
	Crabbehof			95	Roofed corridors	2	+
	Crabbehof			96	Friendly retailers	2	+
13	Crabbehof	35	Type of visitors	97	A lot of asocial visitors	1	-
	Crabbehof			98	Reasonable safety due to crowding	1	+
	Crabbehof			99	No decent restaurants	1	-
	Crabbehof	36	Visiting motives	100	Shops situated in square	2	+
	Crabbehof			101	Offer	2	+
	Crabbehof			102	Great accessibility	2	+
	Crabbehof	37	Area of improvement	103	Pale blue colours	3	-
	Crabbehof			104	Too many cars	3	-
	Crabbehof			105	No decent resting place	3	-
14	Crabbehof	38	Typically Crabbehof	106	Crowded with cars	1	-
	Crabbehof			107	Dwellings above shops	1	-
	Crabbehof			108	No place to stay	1	-
	Crabbehof			109	A lot of concrete	1	-
	Crabbehof			110	Cheerless appearance	1	-
	Crabbehof	39	Positive for experiences	111	Music	2	+
	Crabbehof			112	Low amount of youth hanging around	2	+
15	Crabbehof	40	Appreciation	113	Parking in blue zone	1	+
	Crabbehof			114	Logo's on facade	1	+
	Crabbehof			115	Cheap supermarkets	1	+
	Crabbehof			116	Reasonably clean	1	+
	Crabbehof	41	Negative	117	Tiny playground for children	2	-
	Crabbehof			118	Unsafe neighbourhood	2	-
	Crabbehof	42	Crowding	119	Convenient crowding	3	+
	Crabbehof			120	Always crowded	3	+
16	Crabbehof	43	Just out (activating senses)	121	Liveliness	1	+
	Crabbehof			122	Close by	1	+
	Crabbehof			123	Trip	1	+
	Crabbehof			124	Nice appearance	1	+
	Crabbehof	44	Negative	125	Cars	2	-
	Crabbehof			126	Large shopping centre	2	-
	Crabbehof			127	Unkind people	2	-
17	Crabbehof	45	Makes it fun	128	Music	1	+
	Crabbehof			129	Sale of nice items	1	+
	Crabbehof			130	A lot of greenery	1	+
	Crabbehof	46	Requirements	131	Crowding	2	+
	Crabbehof			132	Safety	2	+
	Crabbehof			133	No loose paving stones	2	+
	Crabbehof	47	Attractive	134	Supermarkets Lidl & MCD	3	+
	Crabbehof			135	Great accessibility	3	+
	Crabbehof	48	Negative	136	Few resting places	4	-
18	Crabbehof	49	Visiting motives	137	Trip	1	+
	Crabbehof			138	New people	1	+
	Crabbehof			139	Proper lighting	1	+
	Crabbehof			140	Various products	1	+
	Crabbehof			141	Dry shopping	1	+
	Crabbehof	50	Disadvantage	142	Unkind people	2	-
	Crabbehof			143	Smelly cars	2	-

Average no. of groups per interview: 2,8
 Average no. of charac. per interview: 7,9
 Average no. of charac. per group: 2,9

Admiraalsplein
 Times charc. denoted positive (+): 57
 Times charc. denoted negative (-): 16

Crabbehof
 Times charc. denoted positive (+): 39
 Times charc. denoted negative (-): 31

Total positive: 96
Total negative: 47

Appendix VI; Overview retail offer Admiraalsplein and Crabbehof

Admiraalsplein	Crabbehof
Supermarkets	
Albert Heijn	Lidl
Aldi	MCD
G-K Supermarkt	Ziezo supermarkt
Fresh offer	
Van der Breggen Bakkers	Bakker Korteweg
Scheveningse Vishandel	Bakkerij Medine
	Kaasspecialzaak Sabine Say Cheese
Cafés or restaurants	
Waterwiel	Café Bagatelle
Mie Wah	Chinees Indisch restaurant Pak Foon
Toko Y-Von	Domino's Pizza
	Eetcafé Crabbehof
Remaining retail offer	
Kruidvat	Blokker
Gall & Gall	De Heer Onderdelen Europart
Silk City	Expert
Bloem-x	Van Gemert Woonwinkel
Marskramer	DA
Apotheek	Drogisterij Trekpleister
De Haarfabriek	Europa hairstyling
Isendoorn Tweewielers	Hairmaxx
Bra Shop	Jola Mode
Reisbureau van Maren	Wibra
Van der Schans Bloembinders	Ado Bike Rijwielhandel
Zeeman	De Zilveren Naald
Tabak en Gifts Franciska	Ikkie Creatief
	Intertoys
	Kilinclar automaterialen
	Juwelier Retel
	Pearle Opticiens
	Primera
	Schoenenherstelbedrijf De Ster
	Stoomshop
	Struijk Opticiens
	Van der Schans bloembinders
	Wittekamp en Broos Schoencomfort
	GSM Shop
	Prefix Belhuis & Kennis Computer
	Tekpoint Computer Services
	Wijkwinkel Crabbehof