Understanding the Town Centre Customer Experience (TCCE)

Abstract

This research enhances the understanding of consumer behaviour and customer experience in the context of town centres. First, it defines Town Centre Customer Experience (TCCE) as a multi-faceted journey that combines interactions with a diverse range of public and private organisations, including retailers and social and community elements; this results in a unique experience co-created with the consumer across a series of functional and experiential touch points. Second, combining qualitative and quantitative insights, this research reveals a series of specific functional and experiential TCCE touch points, which underpin the consumer internal response (motivation to visit) and outward behaviour (desire to stay and revisit intentions) in the town centre. In addition to enhancing town centre and customer experience knowledge, these findings offer important new insights to those managing town centres and seeking to retain customer loyalty in the high street. Above all, these findings can help identify the touch points that need to be reinforced and/or improved to differentiate a town from its competing centres and to create tailored marketing strategies. Taken together, such initiatives have the potential to positively impact the revitalisation of the high street and the town centre economy.

Key words: *Town centres, customer experience, consumer behaviour, consumer loyalty*.

1. Introduction

Town centres are important from a sociological and economic perspective, because of the multiple and diverse encounters experienced by, and offered to the consumer (Reimers & Chao, 2014). They include a broad range of retail and leisure facilities, services and functions meeting the needs of the wider public and communities. For instance, in the UK, town and city centres hold a vital role in the retail sector, employing over four million people and contributing to approximately £568 billion of the total economy (Property Magazine, 2015). Yet, research on consumer behaviour in the context of town centres is scarce and there is no comprehensive definition of what the customer experience entails in this context. This is concerning, because the lack of in-depth understanding of the town centre consumer has been identified as one of the main triggers of declining business activity in recent times (Stern, Zinkhan & Jaju, 2001; Wrigley & Lambiri, 2015).

To address this issue, this research draws on existing literature in retailing and services marketing to define and examine the Town Centre Customer Experience (TCCE). More specifically, through the combination of qualitative (self-reported consumer diaries) and quantitative (online survey data) insights, this research identifies a series of functional and experiential *touch points* that underpin the consumer's internal response (motivation to visit) and outward behaviour (desire to stay and revisit intentions) in town centres. This outcome has implications for theory and practice, because it enhances the understanding and management of the customer experience in the diverse town centre environment.

On the basis of the assumption that shopping behaviour is a response to how the consumer perceives retail environments (*see* Grossbart et al., 1975), existing research has focussed on consumer perceptions of town centres or town centre image (e.g. Downs, 1970; Nevin & Houston, 1980; Wee, 1986; Bell, 1999). Although conceptually linked to consumer loyalty (Downs & Haynes, 1984), satisfaction (Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977;

Gentry & Burns, 1977) and enjoyment (Hart et al., 2007), as Grossbart et al. (1975) noted, town centre image is only partially predictive of future consumer behaviour. For a better understanding of consumer behaviour in the context of town centres, it is necessary to consider other influencing factors, such as different shopping motives associated with a town centre (e.g. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). These aspects often determine the purpose of the town centre visit (e.g. recreational or convenience) as well as individual expectations and outcome behaviour (Teller et al., 2008; Reimers & Chao, 2014).

Furthermore, compared with conventional retailing environments such as individual retail stores and shopping malls, town centres involve a range of diverse behaviours, e.g. shopping, leisure, social interaction and so forth. This results in a wider customer experience, which is further enhanced by unique town centre features, such as historical buildings, markets and events (Runyan & Huddleston, 2006; Padilla & Eastlick, 2009). In fact, consumer behaviour in the context of town centres is far more complex than in conventional retail environments, due to the combined effect of elements such as layout, retail mix and social factors (Alzubaidi et al., 1997). Accordingly, the aim of this research is to uncover these aspects to enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour in this context. This will contribute to advancing retailing and marketing knowledge of town centres, which is essential to arresting the decline of the high street.

Additionally, whilst the retail industry generates considerable market research data at the retailer level, consumer behaviour measures in town centres primarily include aggregated footfall and catchment appraisal (Astbury & Thurstain-Goodwin, 2014). Although important, such measures offer limited explanation for the drivers of individual consumer behaviour in these environments (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013). More specifically, they do not provide sufficient understanding of the *holistic* customer experience that characterises town centre visits and drives consumer behaviour outcomes, such as town centre loyalty. Therefore, this

research identifies a level of analysis of consumer behaviour in the context of town centres, which practitioners and policy makers currently overlook. In particular, it highlights which aspects need to be monitored for the effective management of town centres; it also presents implications relevant to a broad range of stakeholders, including public sector organisations such as local authorities and town centre management teams.

The paper is organised as follows. First, it draws upon relevant strands of existing research in retailing and services marketing literature, touching on the key concepts of *customer experience*, *customer journey* and *servicescape*. As illustrated, the selected strands are pertinent to defining and understanding the TCCE as well as identifying useful research questions and hypotheses, which this research addresses through the combination of qualitative (Study 1) and quantitative (Study 2) analyses. Finally, the paper includes an overview of implications and practical recommendations for town centre management, thus highlighting the potential practical impact of this research.

2. Background

To develop a definition of the customer experience in a town centre context, this section assesses multiple areas of existing research that can suitably capture two distinct and important aspects of town centres. First, unlike any other retailing environment, town centres are the locus of consumers' interactions with a diverse range of organisations - e.g. retailers, public and private service providers, entertainment and leisure services; at the same time, they are also the locus of social and community interactions (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013). Hence, it is necessary to consider literature that theorises customer experience in a broader, social sense while accounting for the consumer's active involvement as co-creator of the experience. Second, more than for any other retailing or service environment, customer

experience in town centres is dynamic, given that consumers undertake unique journeys during each town centre visit (*ibid*). Accordingly, it is important to consider research that explains the complex and multi-faceted nature of such customer journeys as a whole.

2.1 Customer Experience and Customer Journey

According to research in the services marketing literature, *customer experience* in a service setting comprises the entirety of the shopping process (Haytko & Baker, 2004). This engages the customer in an act, which progresses over time and includes anticipation and emotional involvement (Pullman & Gross, 2004). Building on this baseline notion, Meyer and Schwager (2007) added that customer experience is best viewed as the combination of the consumer's internal and subjective response to any direct or indirect contact with an organisation. The direct contact with the customer generally occurs at the point of purchase, including the service delivery and/or the consumption process, as initiated by the customer. The indirect contact most often involves unplanned and intangible encounters, such as additional services and the exposure to branding, advertising and other forms of communications such as word of mouth.

Existing works characterise the customer experience as the interaction with one brand, retailer or organisation, albeit across multiple channels (Verhoef et al., 2009). However, within town centres, consumers engage with a much wider variety of retail brands, physical environments and social interactions (Hart et al. 2007). Hence, to understand customer experience in a town centre context it is useful to consider research that theorises customer experience in a broader social sense. Specifically, as Tynan and McKechnie (2009) remark, it is possible to expand the meaning of customer experience by considering the notion of *customer value*. Customer value is embedded in the personalized experience that can be triggered by the active participation of the consumer in the service delivery and consumption (Prahald, 2004). Accordingly, in a *customer-dominant logic*, customer experience is: i) co-

created within the sphere of the service provision through interactions with and active engagement of customers; ii) intrinsically personal and dependent on the social and cultural context in which it occurs (Heinonen et al., 2013; Tynan, McKechnie and Hartley, 2014).

Other authors suggest that greater understanding of customer experience can be obtained by analysing the *customer journey* concept, i.e. all interactions between the customer and retailer or service provider, which provoke an internal and subjective reaction by the customer (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Shaw & Ivens, 2005). This reaction implies the customer involvement and contact with the retail environment at different levels, e.g. emotional, sensorial and physical (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 1999). In fact, the customer journey includes the interactions with the broader social and community elements (Gilmore & Pine, 2002) in addition to the retail and service environment. This is particularly relevant to town centres because consumers often report a sense of attachment to the town and community (Runyan & Huddleston, 2002).

Throughout a customer journey, the consumer will be in contact with both direct (or tangible) cues (e.g. merchandise, products etc.) and indirect (or intangible) cues such as vivid, novel and memorable experiences, feelings and emotions (Voss, Roth & Chase, 2008; Berry & Carbone, 2007). These direct and indirect cues are encountered across the entirety of the customer journey and act as *touch points* shaping "the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience" (Verhoef et al., 2009, p.32). Furthermore, consumers rely on touch points to compare their expectations with the actual customer experience (LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Shaw & Ivens, 2005). Thus, the customer journey is typically described as multi-faceted, i.e. composed of a series of direct (tangible) and indirect (intangible) cues or *touch points* (*see also* Berry, Carbone & Haeckel, 2002).

However, to comprehend what types of direct and indirect touch points determine customer experience, it is necessary to consider another stream of research: *servicescape*.

2.2 Servicescape

The concept of servicescape is based on the simple assumption that the environment in which a service encounter occurs will have an impact on the consumer (*see* Bitner, 1992). This is consistent with *cue utilization theory* (Olson, 1972), according to which products and services consist of an array of cues that act as indicators of quality (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1999; Baker et al., 2002). Cues can be extrinsic or intrinsic to the product/service.

Extrinsic cues are physical attributes (Babin et al., 1994; Price et al., 1995) perceived with the human senses (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999) through direct customer contact. Direct contact generally occurs during the course of purchase, use of facilities and engagement with the service, as initiated by the consumer in an attempt to fulfil needs (Verhoef et al., 2009). Johnston and Kong (2011) argued that direct touch points are pervasive and ubiquitous. Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009) as well as Meyer and Schwager (2007), emphasised the importance of functional value, particularly for habitual shoppers. More specifically, extrinsic cues are known to stimulate habitual purchasing behaviour and repeat patronage, as the consumer will continue drawing on previous direct experiences (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). Therefore, one could argue that a blanket interpretation of extrinsic (direct) cues in the context of the customer journey could be as *functional touch points*.

Intrinsic cues are related to the broadest social and environmental context where the consumption process takes place (Zajonc, 1965); they also relate to the feelings and emotions that the context is likely to trigger such as empathy, reliability, responsiveness and so forth (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Importantly, intrinsic (intangible) cues are a crucial component of any customer journey, because they underpin both the customer's internal response and outward behaviour. For example, crowded retail environments have been associated with feelings like loss of control and displeasure, which result in negative behavioural responses,

such as a reduction in the time spent in the environment (Hui & Bateson, 1991) or in the average amount purchased (Harrell et al., 1980).

Unlike functional touch points, indirect (intangible or intrinsic) touch points are inherently subject to customer's feelings and emotions that are stimulated from the environment. Such indirect encounters create a memorable experience; for instance, according to Schmitt (1999) customers want to be "entertained, stimulated, emotionally affected and creatively challenged" (p.29). Moreover, unique and entertaining offerings such as element of surprise, unpredictability and sensation are typically associated with emotional involvement (Voss, Roth & Chase, 2008) and strong emotional reactions (Palmer, 2010). These aspects are encompassed by the term *experiential touch points*, to represent the nature of indirect (intangible or intrinsic) touch points in a customer journey.

Taken together, i) the broad definition of customer experience based on a customer-dominant logic combined with the dynamic notion of customer journey and ii) the serviscape notion of functional and experiential touch points represent a useful theoretical basis to understand and describe the Town Centre Customer Experience (TCCE), thus leading to the following definition:

TCCE is a multi-faceted journey that combines interactions with a diverse range of public and private organisations, including retailers and social and community elements; this results in a unique experience co-created with the consumer across a series of functional as well experiential touch points, which influence the consumer's internal response and outward behaviour in the town centre.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is a first attempt to provide a definition that captures the *holistic* TCCE on the basis of the unique features of the town centres' environments. Thus, the above definition contributes to knowledge on consumer behaviour in

the context of town centres; it also contributes to knowledge on customer experience and customer journey more generally. To date, the majority of existing research examining customer experience and customer journeys focuses on analysing the general importance of either type of touch point, especially the relevance of the experiential component. For example, past research has conceptualised experience at a broad aggregate level and referred to aspects of consumption such as fantasies, feelings and excitement (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Other research has categorised emotional aspects of customer experience as marketing activities aimed at stimulating consumer attention through sensorial and emotional interactions (Verhoef et al., 2009; LaSalle & Britton, 2003 Addis & Holbrook, 2001). Gentile, Spiller and Noci (2007) and Verhoef et al. (2009) examined social interactions as antecedents of general customer perceptions and beliefs. Moreover, Parasuraman et al. (1988; 1991) argued that tangible touch points influence the level of service quality that consumers perceive (Zeithaml et al., 1990). However, no existing research has specifically examined and/or compared both types of touch points in relation to a specific service or retailing environment in the same study, as the present research does in relation to town centres.

3. Research Objectives and Design

This research uses the definition of TCCE introduced above to address two main research objectives. First, to identify the individual functional and experiential touch points that the TCCE comprises and to determine their relative importance, as perceived by consumers. Second, to appraise the influence of the TCCE on the consumer internal response (e.g. motivation to visit the town centre) and outward behaviour (e.g. desire to stay and intention to revisit). Both aspects are currently absent from town centre research and dispersed across different strands of services marketing and retailing literature.

In relation to the first objective, the main purpose is to create an *inventory* of functional and experiential TCCE touch points, and to identify clear patterns in the relative importance of all touch points. This is pursued through a *qualitative* research phase (**Study 1**) aimed at addressing the following research questions:

Rq1a: Which *functional* touch points does the TCCE comprise?

Rq1b: Which *experiential* touch points does the TCCE comprise?

Rq2a: Which *functional* touch points do consumers perceive as more important as determinants of the overall TCCE?

Rq2b: Which *experiential* touch points do consumers perceive as more important as determinants of the overall TCCE?

The use of a qualitative research approach is justified by the need to gather a rich description of the consumer views and perceptions for a broad range of potential interactions in a variety of settings offered by town centres.

In relation to the second objective, the main purpose is to illustrate empirically the usefulness of the TCCE definition. This is pursued with a *quantitative* research phase (**Study 2**) aimed at testing some foundational research hypotheses as follows.

In line with baseline consumer behaviour theory of motivation (Malone & Lepper, 1987), the TCCE should somewhat underpin the consumer *internal response* or willingness to visit a town centre. More specifically, the TCCE functional touch points should provide the consumer with extrinsic motivation, while the TCCE experiential touch points should provide the consumer with intrinsic motivation and emotional involvement. Hence, how the consumer evaluates each individual TCCE functional and experiential touch point will determine higher (or lower) willingness to visit the town centre. Put formally:

H1: As the consumer evaluation of the TCCE *functional* touch points increases, the

willingness to visit the town centre will also increase.

H2: As the consumer evaluation of the TCCE *experiential* touch points increases, the

willingness to visit the town centre will also increase.

 In line with existing research (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994; Grewal, Levy & Kumar, 2009), it

can be assumed that both types of TCCE touch points should also influence *outward*

consumer behaviour, such as the desire to stay in a town centre and the intention to visit it

again in the future. Put formally:

H3: As the consumer evaluation of the TCCE touch points increases, the desire to

stay in the town centre will also increase.

H4: As the consumer evaluation of the TCCE touch points increases, the intention to

revisit the town centre in the future will also increase.

Comprehensively, this research therefore uses a mixed method research approach across two

studies, one qualitative and one quantitative, to meet the above research objectives and

triangulate results. Both studies were conducted in the UK, which is a suitable context to

investigate the TCCE, due to the complex urban environments with multifaceted functions

that comprise both direct and indirect customer encounters (Hart, Stachow & Cadogan, 2013).

4. Study 1

4.1 Methods

Study 1 is based on the collection and qualitative analysis of online consumer diaries (*see also* Bitner, 1990) reporting on the overall TCCE and recording critical incidents (*see also* Deshpande, 1983) of multiple town centre visits over a four-week period. Diaries reflect personal experiences, behaviours and events, as recorded by the consumer (Milligan, Bingley, & Gattrell, 2005). As such, they were identified as a suitable way to uncover the various functional and experiential TCCE touch points from the consumer perspective.

The data included the views of 180 consumers across six town centres (see list of the town centres in Appendix A) located broadly in the north, midlands and south of England. The sample town centres were selected to provide a spread across size, geographic regions, urban and rural catchments, market profile and range of retail and service offer. The centres surveyed included market towns as well as large settlements with a population ranging between 18,000 (e.g. Sandbach) and over 185,000 (e.g. Swindon) inhabitants.

Participants were recruited by a professional market research agency. The sample criteria included an even spread across ages (ranging from 18-65 years) and socioeconomic profiles, while considering primarily respondents with a minimum town centre shopping frequency of twice per month. Incentives were paid at the end of the four-week study period to encourage completion. Diaries were solicited with a full disclosure of the research purpose. To guide the completion of the diaries, participants completed an online template following each shopping visit (see Appendix A). All questions were open ended to capture the key interactions as experienced by the respondent when visiting the town centre. Additionally, at the end of each week participants were asked to report a critical incident, i.e. to describe one particularly satisfying (or dissatisfying) and memorable occasion experienced during the

previous week. The aim was to record qualitative insights of the cognitive and affective processes that underpin consumer perceptions (Flanagan, 1954).

Importantly, in order to capture the immediacy and spontaneity of a particular experience, diarists were asked to record commentaries in their own words, with the purpose of facilitating the accuracy of recall and minimizing retrospection bias (Alaszewski, 2006; Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003). Respondents were also encouraged to provide as much detail as possible to gather a rich description of all interactions and critical incidences in a variety of settings offered by the town centre.

The analysis of all diaries' entries followed Spiggle's (1994) steps for the analysis (interpretation and evaluation) of qualitative data in consumer research. These steps include *categorization* (classifying/labelling units of data), *abstraction* (identifying higher order conceptual classes and recurring themes), *comparison* (exploring similarities and differences across the data), *dimensionalisation* (identifying characteristics of categories and structures), *integration* (identifying contexts), *iteration* (moving back and forward across all stages) and *refutation* (validating findings with subsequent research). This approach is consistent with content analysis (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Kassarjian, 1977), the partial open coded method (Straus, 1989) and the 'part to whole strategy' (Haytko, 2004), whereby earlier readings of the diaries entries were used to inform later readings and later readings allowed the researchers to recognize and explore patterns not noted in the initial analysis.

To reduce research bias and ensure reliability, three independent researchers coded and examined the diary entries using a coding template (*see also* Altheide, 1996). The coding template was aimed at identifying verbatim expressions of touch points constituting the TCCE. Verbatim expressions that could not be categorized within the initial coding categories were given a new code. All coders' interpretations were compared against one another and reviewed by a fourth independent researcher.

4.2 Results

In total, 445 diary entries and 1,869 shopping trips were recorded and analysed. The process resulted in the identification of the following inventory of the TCCE functional and experiential touch points (Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

More specifically, through the analysis of the qualitative data available, it was possible to address Rq1a and identify the following **functional TCCE touch points**: *stores* (variety and quality), *products* (availability, range and depth), *ease of access* to the town centre, *layout* of the town centre, *parking* (availability and convenience of parking), *information and signage*.

In relation to stores, many respondents indicated that their desire to visit a town centre was often prompted by the variety and number of stores, which they viewed as an opportunity to explore the town centre and a choice driver. This is exemplified by respondent quotes such as: "*The range of shops in shopping centre is what is attractive to me*". Similarly, it was clear that customers would visit a town centre if expecting to find the right quality and priced products available within broad product assortments*, "I'd gone into town with a list of shops I wanted to visit and presents I wanted to buy and was able to do exactly that*". Thus, they would travel to a specific town centre to select from stores offering a choice of products to fit their needs.

In terms of access to the town centre, the findings illustrate that the ease of physical access is a crucial functional touch point. That is, accessibility is essential to achieve and maintain a regular patronage and footfall of consumers to the town, in order to create the customer experience. Results also highlight that the spatial layout, density and physical route

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through the town centre, together with information provision and signage, facilitate the town centre customer experience, because they determine the ease of navigation and dwell time. More specifically, the layout can encourage routine and planned shopping behaviour, which can provide consumers with flexibility and speed in fulfilling their needs. In contrast, structurally inconvenient layout was often linked to negative perceptions of town centres.

As regards parking, results highlighted that it is an early consumer touch point upon arrival to the town centre, given that the most common travel mode is by car. Importantly, many consumers doubted the town centres' car parking provision. This suggested that the car parking facilities and the time required for parking are a critical cue towards the overall TCCE, as illustrated by the following quote: "*I was very disappointed with the parking because I spent hours looking for a parking space and by the time I found one I was quite frustrated*". Respondents referred to the relevance of signage and information as helping them to identify locations of interest, particularly when the route is unfamiliar to the customer, for example: "*Finding your way around a new town centre can be daunting, as you don't know where anything is, where it's best to park*".

The qualitative analysis of all diaries' entries addressed Rq1b and identified the following **experiential TCCE touch points**: the likelihood of finding *savings and bargains*, the *customer service* experienced, the variety and quality of *refreshments and entertainment*, the overall town centre *atmosphere*, the presence of *markets*, the occurrence of *special events* and the overall opportunity for *social interaction*.

In relation to savings and bargains, the findings highlighted that bargain hunting is a key experiential aspect of consumers' time in the town centre, due to the high level of emotional involvement and excitement perceived (i.e. reduced prices were linked to elements of surprise and unpredictability). This is exemplified by the following quotes: "*I always like to grab a bargain*" and "*I enjoy getting a bargain when out shopping*".

Another important experiential touch point was the range of refreshments and entertainment. Specifically, the majority of respondents stated that they always supplement a town centre visit with refreshments. This finding complemented another experiential factor, i.e. liking and enjoying the overall atmosphere and environment of the town centre, in line with the following quote: "*I like the atmosphere, having a slow walk and enjoying a coffee*".

Additionally, the results highlighted outdoor markets as a further experiential component of the TCCE, due to their distinctive and entertaining offerings such as fresh produce, unique products and vintage items, and the thrill of bargain hunting. This is summarized by quotes such as: "*I love the markets, I always find something at a bargain*" and "*I often get my fresh produce from the markets; it is always fresher and cheaper than supermarkets*". Markets were additionally viewed as a means of bringing the community, together, irrespective of age and cultural differences or social group membership, e.g. "*I always to try go to town when the market is on, because I like the buzz it creates and how it brings everyone together*".

Customer service was characterised by the consumer interaction with service employees, whether in a retail store, leisure or entertainment provider. Importantly, respondents viewed it as a determinant of satisfaction with a town centre visit, as illustrated by the following quote: "*I really liked the customer service here, staff are very friendly and really understood my needs*".

Respondents remarked the importance of special events, which attract tourists, stimulate local curiosity and excitement, and encourage consumer engagement with additional leisure and entertainment activities in the town centre. For instance, respondents value the contribution of special events to the town centre community, claiming that they add to the social and cultural identity: "*I like to be surprised with events in town [...]. The different foods and antiques that are sold remind me of the heritage and also I love it when*

all families are out". Finally, the respondents valued the social interaction resulting from visiting a town centre, whether as a public place to meet socially with friends and acquaintances or interacting with retail personnel, other shoppers and the wider community. For some individuals, this reinforced the connection and sense of belonging with the community or town: "*Someone offering to help when they don't have to is really important when shopping, especially when you hear it from someone who doesn't work in the store*". Comprehensively, the inventory of TCCE touch points contributes to deepening the understanding of consumer behaviour and customer experience in the context of town centres. However, another objective of this research is to appraise the relative importance of functional and experiential touch points as well as empirically appraising their impact on the consumer's internal response (motivation to visit the town centre) and outward behaviour (desire to stay and future intentions). These aims are attained in Study 2

5. Study 2

5.1 Methods

Study 2 involved a large-scale online consumer survey, collecting the views and behaviours of 1,530 UK consumers across 10 town centres of different size (see Appendix B). The town centres examined included three of the town centres from Study 1 for comparison and seven new town centres to expand the geographical area across England. While still including market towns (e.g. Huntingdon, Huddersfield and Loughborough), Study 2 additionally included larger towns (e.g. Reading) and cities (e.g. Coventry, Sunderland and Bath). The selection of towns and cities were based on similar criteria to Study 1 (e.g. size, geographic location, market profile, mix of retailing and services). The population of the centres ranged between 23,000 (e.g. Huntingdon) to over 337,000 (e.g. Coventry). Respondents were

recruited within the panel of a commercial market research provider with the main selection criteria being over 18 years old and having visited the town centre in the past six months. Data were collected in 2014 using quotas to ensure a good representation across four age brackets (i.e. 18-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51 or older).

The online questionnaire gathered essential information about the respondents, including their demographic profile, their current shopping behaviour in the town centre (e.g. frequency of visits, average amount of money spent in the town centre, mode of travel, etc.) and, importantly, the following aspects linked to the TCCE touch points:

1) *Consumers' ratings of all individual functional and experiential TCCE touch points*. This was measured by presenting respondents with a random sub-set of functional and experiential touch points from Study 1's inventory and asking them to pick out of the sub-set the *most* and *least* relevant one as motivating factor to visit the town centre. The random appearance of the sub-sets of TCCE touch points mimicked a Balanced Block Incomplete Design (BBID), commonly used in Best/Worst discrete choice analytical approaches (Lee, Soutar & Louviere, 2007).

2) *Consumers' rating in relation to two consumer behaviour outcome variables*: desire to stay in the town centre and revisit intentions. All of these were measured as scale items derived from the literature and using a 7-point Likert scale (see Appendix B).

In order to address Rq2a and Rq2b as well as H1 and H2, the responses gathered in relation to consumers' ratings of all individual functional and experiential TCCE touch points were used to score and rank the touch points from most to least motivating towards visiting a town centre. Each TCCE touch point's score was computed as the ratio between two values: (i) the difference between the total number of times that specific touch point was indicated as *most* and the total number of times it was indicated as *least* motivating; and (ii) the sample size times the frequency of appearance of each touch point in the consumer survey design (4 times

in this specific instance, as a result of mimicking a BBID). Then, the scores were used to rank the functional and experiential TCCE touch points from the *most* (highest positive score) to the *least* (highest negative score) motivating factors towards visiting the town centre. The scores were also used to conduct the analysis of the Sum of the Least Square Errors, in order to identify the level of internal consistency (or 'agreement') across the sample in indicating the various touch points as influential motivators to visit the town centre.

Finally, to address H3 and H4 the values of the consumer behaviour variables of the whole sample were compared against those of a series of sub-samples comprising respondents who indicated the various touch points as most motivating factors by considering Mean Absolute Deviation scores (see Kennedy and Ehrenberg, 2001) and using a value equal to or greater than 5% as cut-off value indicating meaningful differences between sub-samples (*ibid*). For example, the average scores of the behavioural variables for the whole sample were compared against the average scores of the same variables for the respondents who indicated *access* as the most motivating factor towards visiting the town centre; then for the sub-sample for respondents who indicated car parking as the most motivating factor, and so on. For further empirical support, the values of the behavioural variables available in the data set were also used in a logit regression analysis to cross-check the robustness of any potential underlying pattern in the data linking he TCCE touch points to the consumer behaviour variables considered.

5.2 Results

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the sample surveyed. The sample composition is in line with the demographic profile of the average UK town centre consumer (Wrigley & Lambiri, 2015).

Table 3 illustrates the most relevant current consumer behaviour trends displayed by the respondents surveyed. Importantly, the data captured well-established town centre consumers (nearly 80% of our respondents had been shopping in the town centres surveyed for over 4 to 5 years). Moreover, 60% of the sample included reasonably frequent shoppers (i.e. consumers who shopped at least monthly in the town centre), whose last visit took place within the previous week, with an average spend in the last visit of £50 or less (equivalent to approximately US$75). Finally, about 70% of the sample travelled to the town centre by car.

Referring to the analysis of the extent to which the TCCE touch points motivated the consumers towards visiting the town centre, the key insights that have emerged can be summarised as follows. The most motivating **functional touch points** were (in the order) *stores*, *products* and *access*. The least motivating functional touch points were *information and signage* (least motivating of all), *parking* (second least motivating of all) and the *layout of the town centre* (third least motivating of all); see Figure 1 for a visual representation of this pattern. The most motivating **experiential touch points** were (in the order) *savings and bargains*, *refreshments and entertainment*, and the town centre *atmosphere*. The least motivating experiential touch points were the *social interaction* (least motivating of all), *special events* (second least motivating of all), *customer service* and *markets* (third and fourth motivating of all); see Figure 2 for a visual representation of this pattern.

*** Insert Figure 1 about here ***

*** Insert Figure 2 about here ***

Table 4 features the detailed scores of all individual functional TCCE touch points and Table 5 reports those of the experiential touch points.

*** Insert Table 4 about here ***

*** Insert Table 5 about here ***

Additionally, the analysis of the SQRT showed that these results were consistent across the whole sample; that is, consumers consistently indicated the *same* most and least motivating TCCE touch points (R^2 was .98 for the functional touch points and .99 for the experiential touch points) as influential motivators to their willingness to visit the town centre. Taken together, these results address RQ2a and b and validate H1 and H2.

In relation to the analysis of the underlying effect of functional and experiential TCCE touch points on consumer outward behaviour (H3 and H4), the results highlighted the following. When considering the values of the two outcome consumer behaviour variables analysed (desire to stay in the town centre and revisit intentions), mean values were often different when considering the whole sample vs. the sub-samples of respondents who indicated the various individual functional and experiential touch points as most motivating than for the rest of the sample. Specifically, as shown in Table 6, 85% of the Mean Absolute Deviation scores were equal to or greater than 5% and ranged, on average, between 8% for functional touch points and 12% for experiential touch points. Additionally, in roughly half

of the instances, mean scores of desire to stay and revisit intention were higher for the sub-samples of consumers indicating the various touch points as most motivating to their willingness to visit the town centre (see again Table 6). This outcome suggests the presence of a positive underlying pattern, across all town centres examined, which links the consumers' assessment of the various TCCE touch points to the two behavioural variables considered.

*** Insert Table 6 about here ***

The result of the regression analysis explored this aspect in further detail and offered additional evidence to support this pattern. Specifically, most TCCE touch points significantly underpinned ($p < .05$) desire to stay and revisit intentions (see Table 7) except: i) special events, which was not a significant driver of the desire to stay, perhaps due to the occasional and temporary nature of special events; and ii) information, which did not appear to underpin revisit intention This may be due to the fact that consumers rely less on information when deciding whether to revisit the town centre.

*** Insert Table 7 about here ***

These findings corroborate the existence of an empirical pattern linking TCCE touch points to the consumers' outward behaviour; hence, they support, on a theoretical level, H3 and H4. Yet, all TCCE touch points explained in general, a limited percentage of the variance in the scores of desire to stay and revisit intention (R^2 values were, in fact, never greater than .6), possibly due to the binary nature of the values used in the regression.

6. Overall Discussion and Conclusions

This research has provided a new definition of the customer experience in the context of the multifaceted journey undertaken in a town centre. By focussing on the consumer perspective, the definition explains how the TCCE comprises a series of functional and experiential touch points, which will influence the consumer's internal response and outward behaviour in the town centre environment.

The usefulness of this TCCE definition has been illustrated through two complementary studies aimed at generating a list of all functional and experiential TCCE touch points, and at appraising their role in relation to consumer behaviour.

The results of a qualitative research phase (Study 1) clarified that the functional touch points of the TCCE include *stores* (variety and quality), *products* (availability, range and depth), *ease of access* to the town centre, *layout* of the town centre, *information and signage*, and *parking* (availability and convenience of parking). The experiential touch points of the TCCE include *savings and bargains*, the *customer service* received, the variety and quality of *refreshments and entertainment*, the overall town centre *atmosphere*, the presence of *markets*, the occurrence of *special events* and the overall opportunity for *social interaction*. This inventory of the TCCE touch points is important for a number of reasons. First, it contributes to advancing knowledge of consumer behaviour and customer experience in town centres, which is an under-researched area of high-priority for policy makers. Second, the inventory of TCCE touch points highlighted the largely intangible, experiential touch points, often overlooked by town centre management. Third, the touch points summarise customer driven areas of strategic focus for town centre management, local authorities and other stakeholders, including high street retailers. As such, it represents a simple 'tool' to understand how to satisfy proactively consumers' needs and enhance the economic value of town centres. In fact, identifying a town's unique mix of experiential and functional touch points valued by

customers would enable town centre management to focus resource on improving the often overlooked, experiential touch points that will strengthen the overall experience. For example, increasing the product range of outdoor markets and special events to drive footfall.

The outcome of a quantitative research phase (Study 2) corroborated the importance of the TCCE touch points with a set of useful empirical results. Above all, the results showed that the functional and experiential TCCE touch points underpin the consumer internal behaviour, i.e. they act as drivers of the motivation to visit the town centre. However, not all touch points are equally important. For example, stores, products and access to the town centre are considered the most important functional touch points; savings and bargains, refreshments and entertainment, and the town centre atmosphere are the most important experiential touch points. This outcome is valuable, because it guides prioritising managerial efforts and resource allocation in town centres. For instance, local authorities could use the touch points approach to identify the key areas for improvement and to create marketing strategies to enhance and communicate the overall offer to the catchment. Furthermore, these findings could be used to assess customer rated 'TCCE performance' by consumers scoring the town vs. competing centres against all TCCE touch points. Such an assessment will then provide experience based indicators to set strategic targets for differentiating the town centre. Above all, it will determine which aspects require regular monitoring for the effective management of the TCCE.

The quantitative analysis also clarified that there is an underlying impact of the TCCE touch points on the consumer outward behaviour. Specifically, all TCCE touch points contribute to explaining the variation in the consumers' desire to stay in the town centre and future revisit intentions. This is an incentive for town centre management to proactively improve the performance across all functional and experiential touch points, as a way to attract and retain customers in the town centre, to increase footfall, dwell time and

expenditure. Additionally, retailers, hospitality, services and property investors, could particularly benefit from such a customer driven assessment of town centres, i.e. to review product assortments, benchmark the value of services delivered and to support location investment decisions such as real estate and property management. Fundamentally, understanding the TCCE enables town centre management to better 'orchestrate' the touch points across the whole town centre environment, to help guide customers through the various stages of the decision making, purchasing and post experience processes of the journey, to maximise customer value from the holistic experience offered.

Finally, it is worth noting that the contribution of this research extends beyond the town centre context. That is, it addresses two important gaps in existing research on customer experience: (i) the absence of a comprehensive inventory and analysis of functional and experiential dimensions of the customer journey; and (ii) the absence of a simultaneous analysis of the consumer internal response (motivation) and outward behaviour (desire to stay and future revisit intentions). These are aspects that existing research has addressed separately; but never concurrently in one single piece of work.

7. Limitations and Future Research Direction

While the findings of this research contribute to the theoretical and empirical understanding of consumer behaviour and customer experience in town centres, as with all studies, this research has some limitations. For example, it is limited to the UK context and a sample of town centre locations. Future research could include a replication across different contexts and markets, such as other countries with different economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Similarly, the identification of the TCCE touch points has focused on the offline context, with no explicit consideration of Omnichannel dynamics such as synergies with and/or

cannibalization across channels (*see* Verhoef, Kannan & Inman, 2015). Future developments could consider how the digital domain is likely to affect and modify the TCCE.

There is also scope, in the future, to expand the quantitative analysis in a number of valuable directions. Above all, it is now possible to create a comprehensive TCCE measure to fully quantify the impact on consumer behaviour of the various tangible and intangible touch points that this research has identified. More specifically, to develop a town centre customer experience scale, it will be necessary to identify the following elements: i) potential antecedents of the TCCE touch points, i.e. additional attitudinal or behavioural aspects that are likely to drive each individual touch point; ii) suitable scale items to capture consumer attitudes in relation to each of the TCCE touch points; iii) potential moderating factors at the consumer level (e.g. demographic profile, and current behaviour) and at the town centre level (e.g. town centre size and geographic location); and iv) a broader spectrum of behavioural outcomes (e.g. including word-of-mouth recommendation).

8. Tables

Table 1: Inventory of all TCCE touch points (Study 1)

Functional		
Touch point	**Definition**	**Respondent quotes**
Stores	Denotes the number, types, variety and quality of retail stores in the town centre.	*"The range of shops in shopping centre is attractive to me"*. *"...I ordered online and collected in store – which is better for me because I rarely find my size of jeans in store"*. *"All shops easy walking distance, reasonable choice of stores to visit"*.
Products	Refers to the range and depth of items or goods that are available for immediate purchase or use.	*"I wanted to purchase a pair of trousers from Zara however the stitching had come away at the seam and there wasn't another pair in my size so I could not buy them. but luckily there were other stores that sold trousers – not as good as Zara but the opportunity was there"*. *"I needed to purchase an aftershave for my partner it was his birthday that day. The woman went out of her way to help me and showed me all the availability of stock with my budget"*.
Access	The ease of physical accessibility into the town centre, whether by road or public transport; it also includes constraints such as traffic, road works that hinder customers from getting to the town centre easily.	*"There are lots of roadwork on my route to town. Had I known, I may have bought from the Internet"*. *"I had a good journey there, not much traffic, and we got round the shops in good time and had a good family day out"*. *"I try to plan my journey by avoiding central routes because of traffic and for convenience purposes"*.

Layout	The ease of movement and navigation within the town centre, its layout and absence/presence of physical obstacles such as temporary retail kiosks or street closures, which may facilitate/impede an easy shopping trip.	*"A natural order in walking as I knew what I wanted to get and made sure the largest item was bought last".* *"All the necessary shops are within walking distance, I can browse for gifts at the same time in other shops nearby…".*
Parking	Denotes the convenience and availability of parking spaces, the price of parking and the perceived ease of access to car parking facilities.	*"I spent 40 minutes, first queuing to get into the small shopping centre… then trying to find a parking space at the location…"* *"Car parks are very expensive and do put me off visiting town centres most of the time". "I always have to plan where I'm going to park prior my visit because I don't want to walk back a long distance to my car after the town centre visit".*
Information and signage	Refers to the signage and display of information in town centres to facilitate navigation and locate places to visit on the route.	*"I always find signs useful across the town – especially if I'm looking for a particular landmark or a particular place – findings toilets is very useful… Even when I'm in the shop, signs like pay here or customer services here is always useful to me".*

Experiential		
Touch Point	**Definition**	**Respondent quotes**
Savings/Bargains	Represents the discount deals and bargains that contribute to the excitement and enjoyment of the shopping experience.	*"I needed to get Christmas gifts, I don't exactly know what to get but I want to see what bargains I can grab...".* *"I always like to grab a bargain but sometimes that can be hard to see when there is always a sale on or they have low priced goods.. I do like paying less but sometimes I do want to feel like I grabbed a bargain – the price is lower than usual".*

Refreshments/ Entertainment	Denotes the variety and quality of facilities to eat and drink with others (friends and family) in the town centre, which in part facilitate the social experience.	*"It was remembrance Sunday my dad was on parade for the veterans. It was a very proud moment. After this we looked around the shops and went for coffee in a small restaurant while we waited for the soldiers to come out of church, then went for lunch together in town".* *"Having him there we had lunch together and made a great day of a shopping experience".* *"Went to Costa Coffee for a drink with 2 toddlers, very accommodating for the children".*
Atmosphere	Refers to the intangible, sensory aspects of the customer experience in town centres such as sounds, smells and light. This also includes crowding and the impact of the presence of other shoppers	*"Very nice atmosphere with Christmas music and other entertainment it all looks so nice".* *"I was shopping and could smell fresh baked pretzels".* *"I walk through the underpass. I feel uncomfortable. It isn't a pleasant atmosphere for shoppers".* *"Town centre was too crowded I could barely move without knocking someone".*
Markets	Refers to the additional offer provided by open air or street markets. It also includes the unpredictability and excitement of finding different products at discounted prices on market stalls and the social atmosphere.	. *"Going to the market is like a complete different world. It's really raw and exciting. I often think to myself it's nice to be in a different environment once in a while where I feel more involved with the community because markets attracts everyone in town".* *"Markets always attract a crowd and its always around where the stalls are - the crowds frustrate me as I can't really access the shops around the markets I always see more people in town when the markets are on and I'm sure its attracting more people into town… but it just frustrates me".*

Customer service	Service interactions reflect the quality of engagement between customers and retail staff during purchasing or responding to sales queries in the town centre visit.	*"Staff were disinterested in giving information; it felt they were only cooperative if a clear sale to be achieved. Poor customer service all round".* *"I really liked the customer service here, staff are very friendly and really understood my needs – I was getting frustrated as I was really disappointed with the quality of my jumper and was worried in case I can't exchange it – but the staff were so helpful and exchanged it for me".* "*The lady on the till was robotic, disingenuous and aloof and not interested in the customer at all".*
Special events	Indicates a one-off or seasonal activity that attracts customers' attention through an unexpected event and stimulates curiosity and excitement in a town centre.	*"I like it when it's the festive season because everyone is out especially when they put events out, it brings everyone together – all races and culture".* *"I like to be surprised with events in town because it's probably the only thing that brings everyone together. The different foods and different antiques that are sold remind me of the heritage and also I love it when all families are out".* "*I like special events like the Christmas fair because it brings all the families together, it's a nice atmosphere".*
Social interaction	Shopping provides a social interaction, and the company of friends or family that can enhance the town centre customer experience.	*"I met up with friends I hadn't seen for a while and had a lovely chat and catch up in Costa coffee…".* *"I was pushing my daughter in her pram and struggling to open the door to the shop when a kind lady came over and helped me".*

Table 2: Demographic profile (Study 2)

Demographic variables		*N*	% of sample
Age	51 – 65 y.o.	608	40
	41 – 50 y.o.	395	26
	31 – 40 y.o.	282	18
	18 -30 y.o.	245	16
Gender	Females	862	56
	Males	668	44
Occupation	Intermediate managerial / professional / administrative	363	24
	Clerical/ junior professional	364	24
	Skilled manual worker	266	17
	Semi or unskilled manual work	161	11
	Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative	122	8
	Unemployed or not working	82	5
	Retired and living on state pension	78	5
	Housewife / Homemaker	36	2
	Student	28	2
	Full-time carer	14	1
	Casual worker - not in permanent employment	9	1
	Prefer not to say/N.A.	7	0
Income	Less than 20k £	492	32
	Between 20k and 30k £	350	23
	Between 30k and 40k £	191	12
	Over 40k £	256	17
	Prefer not to say/N.A.	241	16
	TOTAL	1530	100

Table 3: Current behavioural trends (Study 2)

Variables		*N*	% of sample
Last visit	Last week	390	25
	Last month	317	21
	This week	286	19
	Today	279	18
	Between 3 - 6 months ago	160	10
	Two months ago	95	6
	N.A.	3	0
Frequency of visiting	Weekly	426	28
	Less than monthly	427	28
	Monthly	320	21
	Fortnightly	230	15
	Daily	88	6
	Other	39	2
Length of visiting	Over 4 to 5 years	1178	77
	Over 1 to 4 years	66	16
	Over 6 to 12 months	44	3
	Between 3 and 6 months	26	2
	Less than 3 months	29	2
Mode of transport	Car	1044	68
	Bus	219	14
	Walking	167	11
	Train	65	4
	Cycling	14	1
	Other	15	1
Last visit spend	£20-£40	390	25
	< £20	371	24
	£41-£50	392	19
	£51-£60	172	11
	>£81	172	11
	£61-70	83	5
	£71- £80	48	3
TOTAL		1530	100

Table 4: Best Worst scores of the functional touch points (Study 2)

Touch points	Best Worst Scores
Stores	0.09
Products	0.04
Access	0.03
Layout	-0.04
Parking	-0.05
Information	-0.07

Table 5: Best Worst scores of the experiential touch points (Study 2)

Touch Points	Best Worst Scores
Savings/Bargains	0.07
Refreshments/Entertainment	0.01
Atmosphere	0.01
Markets	-0.01
Customer Service	-0.01
Special Events	-0.02
Social Interaction	-0.05

Table 6: Mean scores of the outcome consumer behaviour variables (Study 2)

Touch points	Desire to stay (Mean score for the whole sample = 3.99)			Re-visitation intention (Mean score for the whole sample = 4.70)		
	Mean score*	Mean Absolute Deviation**	Mean score is higher for respondents selecting the touch point as most motivating	Mean score*	Mean Absolute Deviation**	Mean score is higher for respondents selecting the touch point as most motivating
Stores	4.06	**7%**	Yes	4.73	3%	Yes
Products	3.81	**18%**	No	4.68	2%	Yes
Access	4.05	**6%**	Yes	4.77	7%	Yes
Layout	4.07	**8%**	Yes	4.58	**12%**	No
Parking	3.94	**5%**	No	4.58	**12%**	No
Information	3.94	**5%**	No	4.61	**9%**	No
Savings/Bargains	3.92	**7%**	No	4.06	**64%**	No
Refreshments/Entertainment	3.98	1%	No	4.84	**14%**	Yes
Atmosphere	4.20	**21%**	Yes	4.75	**5%**	Yes
Markets	4.04	**5%**	Yes	4.58	**12%**	No
Customer Service	3.91	**8%**	No	4.69	1%	No
Special Events	3.99	0%	Same	4.78	**8%**	Yes
Social Interaction	4.08	**9%**	Yes	4.83	**13%**	Yes
Average	**4.00**	**8%**	**-**	**4.65**	**12%**	**-**

* For respondents selecting the touch point as most motivating   ** Comparison vs. whole sample

Table 7: Results of the Logit regression (Study 2)

Touch points	Desire to stay			Re-visitation intention		
	Sig.	*Level of Sig.*	*Nagelkerke R^2*	*Sig.*	*Level of Sig.*	*Nagelkerke R^2*
Stores	Yes	< .05	.003	Yes	< .05	.005
Products	Yes	< .05	.007	Yes	< .01	.007
Access	Yes	< .05	.033	Yes	< .05	.003
Layout	Yes	< .05	.004	Yes	< .01	.013
Parking	Yes	< .05	.004	Yes	< .01	.027
Information	Yes	< .05	.005	No	-	-
Savings/Bargains	Yes	< .05	.000	Yes	< .01	.002
Refreshments/Entertainment	Yes	< .05	.007	Yes	< .05	.027
Atmosphere	Yes	< .05	.061	Yes	< .01	.004
Markets	Yes	< .05	.000	Yes	< .01	.020
Customer Service	Yes	< .05	.016	Yes	< .01	.004
Special Events	No	-	-	Yes	< .01	.000
Social Interaction	Yes	< .05	.000	Yes	< .01	.012

10. Figures

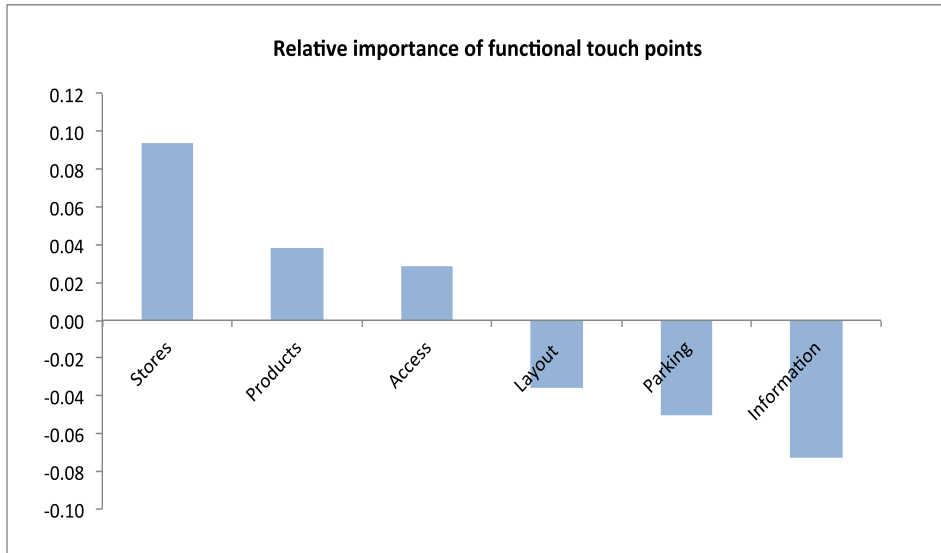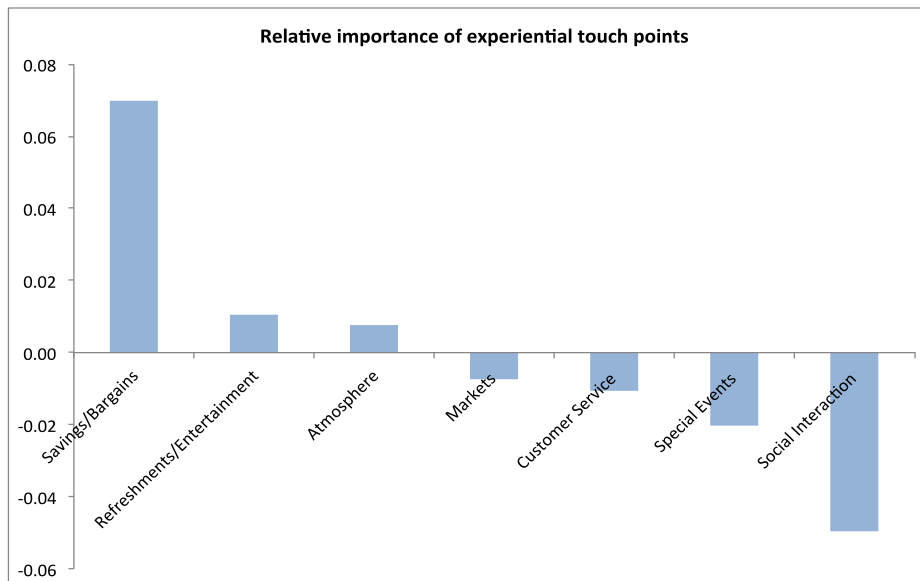Figure 1: Relative importance of functional touch points

Figure 2: Relative importance of experiential touch points

11. Appendix A

List of town centres

- Bury St. Edmunds
- Huddersfield
- Loughborough
- Watford
- Swindon
- Sandbach

Structured online diary format

Please complete questions 1-7 each time you shop, whether a physical or online shopping visit.

1. Date of visit?
2. Time visit started?
3. Where did you shop? Please give details of exactly where this was
4. If this was an actual shopping trip, how did you travel?
5. What was the purpose of your visit? Did you buy anything?
6. How much money did you spend overall on this visit?
7. How much time did you spend overall on this visit?

If you are reporting a visit to the town centre, please continue and complete the following questions.

8. Why did you choose this town centre?
9. Where else could you have chosen to make a comparable shopping trip?
10. If travelling by car, where did you park? How easy was it to find parking?
11. Which stores did you visit in the town centre? Please list them in the order you visited them.
12. Why did you choose to visit them in that order? Please explain your reasons in detail.
13. Please list any other services you used in the town centre, e.g. bank, food / drink, entertainment, leisure, dentist, hairdresser etc.
14. Did you shop alone or with someone else? If yes, who with and why?
15. did you use the Internet at any time, before, during or after your visit to the town centre? Please explain when and for what purpose.
16. Did you use your Smartphone at any point in the town centre? Please explain when and for what purpose.
17. Did you achieve what you wanted to on this visit? Please explain.
18. Do you have any other comments about your visit to this town centre?

Critical incident reporting (weekly)

Please think of a time when you were visiting the town centre over the last week when something happened that was particularly memorable in a positive way.

Where did this happen? Please specify exact location.
Please give the date and time.
Please describe exactly what happened.
What specific factors were responsible for making this occasion memorable for you?
What did you enjoy most about this occasion?
How did this occasion make you feel about visiting the same town centre again?
Did you mention anything about this town centre occasion to another person? If so, please explain what you said and why?

Now, please think of a time over the last week when you were visiting the town centre when something happened that was particularly dissatisfying or negative

Where did this happen? Please specify exact location.
Please give the date and time.
Please describe exactly what happened.
When did this happen?
What specific factors were responsible for making this occasion dissatisfying for you?
How did this occasion make you feel?
How did this occasion make you feel about shopping in the same town centre again?
Did you mention anything about this town centre occasion to another person? If so, please explain what you said and why?

12. Appendix B

List of town centres

- Carlisle
- Huddersfield
- Sunderland
- Worcester
- Loughborough
- Huntingdon
- Coventry
- Bath
- Reading
- Watford

Scale items

Variables	Items
Desire to stay (Adapted from Wakefield & Baker, 1990)	• I like to stay in [town centre name] as long as possible • I enjoy spending time here • I only want to do my shopping and leave
Revisit intention (Adapted from Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996 and Wakefield & Baker, 1990)	• I will shop less frequently in [town centre name] in the future • I will shop more often in another town centre which offers a better experience • I will switch to another town centre if I have a poorer experience in this one • I will complain to other customers if I have a poor experience in [town centre name] • In the future I will visit [town centre name] again • In the future I will visit [town centre name] for shopping • In the future I will visit [town centre name] for leisure and entertainment

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