Journal of Services Marketing

Commercial, social and experiential convergence: Fashion's third places

Journal:	*Journal of Services Marketing*
Manuscript ID	JSM-04-2018-0116.R1
Manuscript Type:	Article
Keywords:	third place, servicescape, customer experience, fashion, retail, Loyalty

Commercial, social and experiential convergence: Fashion's third places

Purpose
This paper examines the third place phenomenon, within a fashion context, through the theoretical lens of servicescape and experiential retailing. The study identifies typologies of third places, their evolution and adoption. It explores the opportunities third places offer to retailers when attempting to better connect with consumers.

Design/methodology/approach
Taking a qualitative approach, research was conducted using secondary data sources, observation of 98 retail stores, and the shopping with consumers (SWC) technique with 42 informants. Manual thematic analysis and magnitude coding was conducted.

Findings
Third place fashion practices are prevalent and growing. The major functions served include sociability, experiential, restorative and commercial. Variances inherent in third places are expounded and a Third Place Dimensions Model proposed.

Research limitations/implications
Due to the chosen research approach, the results are limited in transferability to other settings and should be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions. Many research directions are elucidated including exploration of fashion third places on consumers' place attachment within specific sectors; impact of differing age, gender, geographies on third place meaning; virtual and hybrid forms; retailer motivations and third place alliances.

Practical implications
The study serves as a practical guide for retailers to assess the planning and execution of third places within their retail environments.

Originality/value
The research makes a valuable contribution to the dearth of extant literature on third place within the fashion field. It offers a new theoretical perspective on form, function and benefits of third places as a conduit of social, experiential and commercial experience consumption.

Keywords: Third place, servicescape, customer experience, fashion, retail, loyalty

Article type: Research paper

1. Introduction

This paper examines the burgeoning concept of the third place as commercial, cultural and experiential places that provide social interaction outside of home and work, within a fashion context. It identifies typologies of third places, their evolution and increasing adoption by fashion retail brands. It explores the opportunities third places offer to fashion organisations when attempting to better connect and engage with contemporary consumers.

Digital is transforming retail with the traditional notion of *retail place* being disrupted within a consumer centric omnichannel environment (Grewal *et al.,* 2017; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Whilst originally experts argued that physical retail would be diminished or even displaced by online, it is now broadly accepted that the physical store plays a crucial role within the connected shopping experience. However, online and the increasing demands of empowered consumers has created seismic shifts in the form and function of the retail servicescape (Alexander and Kent, 2016). With the proliferation in digital touchpoints, channels and media consumption, retailers are fighting to be seen and heard by consumers who don't have the listening attention span (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Szymanska *et al.,* 2017). Thus innovative, value adding experiences have grown in prominence, offering customers a compelling reason to patronage a retailer's physical place. Creating social and not just economic value is becoming a requirement, exemplified by Lululemon's mindfulness spaces, Apple's 'Town Squares' stores and M&S's 'Frazzled café' (Gay, 2017; Marian, 2018; Saunter, 2018). Today, retail success is being redefined by those who offer transformative experiences. As Stephens asserts (2018), *"In a world where almost every aspect of our lives is somehow tethered to technology, experiences that engage our bodies, our senses and our souls are at a premium. Digital is what we've become but visceral is what we crave."* Whilst retailer practices of experimenting with experiential retail are common and growing, the attention given to the phenomenon within scholarly research is scarce (Khan and Rahman, 2016; Manlow and Nobbs, 2013). It is therefore within this experiential servicescape domain, that the prevalence and opportunities of third places will be explained and empirically explored to draw theoretical and managerial implications.

The concept of the third place was introduced by sociologist Oldenburg (1989 p.2) to describe a place that is *"…a setting beyond home and work"* (the first and second places, respectively).

Whilst extant studies have focused on discussing third place typologies (Crick, 2011); third place meaning, attachment and their impact on brand – consumer relationship (Rosenbaum, 2006; Waxman, 2006), these have tended to be restricted in venue variety to libraries, bookshops, pubs/wine bars, coffee shops, shopping malls, health-centers, virtual social networks and more recently arts contexts (Debendetti, *et al.,* 2014; Fialkoff, 2010; Goode and Anderson, 2015; Jeffres *et al.,* 2009; Johnson, 2010; Laing and Royle, 2013; Lawson, 2004; Rosenbaum, 2006; Rosenbaum and Smallwood, 2013; Slater and Koo, 2010; Soukup, 2006; Thompson and Arsel, 2004; Waxman, *et al*., 2007) and to more marginalized consumer groups (e.g. elderly, vulnerable, disabled) (Johnstone, 2012; Meshram and O'Cass, 2013; Rosenbaum *et al.,* 2007; Rosenbaum, 2009). Whilst Manlow and Nobbs (2013) attempted to explore the form and function of third place within luxury flagship stores, their approach was limited to the store manager's perspective only. To the authors knowledge no studies have investigated the fashion retail context more broadly to explore the phenomenon from a consumer standpoint.

First, this paper examines extant typologies of third place and their application by fashion retailers. In doing so, it provides a historical context to the traditional third place, conceived by Oldenburg (1999) and the shift to what Mikunda (2007) refers to as a more experiential third place, encompassed and contextualized within Pine and Gilmore's (2011) realms of experience theory. Second, the paper examines the meanings ascribed to fashion's third places by consumers and how they use and interact with such places within fashion retail environments. Thirdly, it seeks to identify the functional and emotional benefits of third places, by exploring the applicability of Rosenbaum's (2006) proposed types of consumer loyalty arising from patronizing them. This study focuses on fashion retail environments to examine third place qualities, a sector and phenomenon which has received little scholarly attention yet is receiving increasing recognition within popular and trade publications (Bell, 2015; Manlow and Nobbs; 2013; Saunter, 2015). This research diverges from extant literature by firmly cementing third place within the realm of experiential servicescape discourse, arguing that fashion consumers demand immersive experiences that engage them on an emotional, physical, intellectual or spiritual level (Kim *et al.,* 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 2011). In an increasingly consumer centric, competitive and digitally driven fashion retail landscape, the necessity to emotionally connect with consumers in physical environments has never been greater (Brakus *et al*., 2009; Ellis, 2014) and this study suggests the adoption of retail third places is one way of facilitating this.

The first section presents an overview of the literature on servicescapes, third places and experiential retailing. This is followed by an analysis of empirical exploratory research leading to a discussion of the qualitative findings and their theoretical and managerial implications.

2. Theoretical background

Since Bitner's seminal study (1992), marketing theorists are universal in their recognition of the importance of servicescape in facilitating service offerings (Meshram and O'Cass, 2013), that is, the impact of physical surroundings on customers. Much of extant literature centres on atmospherics and less so on the notion of place or tangible aspects of servicescape to help deliver customer experience (Rosenbaum, 2006). This is important when contextualised within the shift from a product to service dominant logic, in which customers co-create in a company's value offering (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). This study therefore explores the notion of *physical place* as *"lived experience"* (Rosenbaum, 2006) through the context of the third place - situated within the broader experiential servicescape domain - in generating and amplifying customer experience.

2.1. Servicescapes

Within the marketing discipline, many studies have explained the reasons why people visit and form store preferences (e.g. Darden and Babin, 1994; Johnstone, 2012), however consumer's relationship with 'servicescapes', a term coined by Bitner (1992) to assess the role of the physical environment in consumption settings, is less developed (Johnstone, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2006). This term may also be used interchangeably with the *retail environment*, which can be defined as a place where goods and services are directly sold to the final customer (Johnstone and Todd, 2012; Kotler, 1973). Existing studies in the marketing domain tend to be restricted to the stimulus - response aspects of the retail environment. For example, Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Donovan and Rossiter (1982) and Turley and Milliman (2000) assert that customer's respond to places with approach and avoidance (approach includes positive behaviors such as enjoyment, desire to stay and avoidance reflecting the opposite); that these behaviors are influenced by perceptions of the environment and that the environment can influence their response: cognitively, emotionally and physiologically. Whilst extensive research has been dedicated to behavorial perspectives, the social nature of the retail environment has received less attention (Johnstone *et al.,* 2006; Johnstone, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2006, Tombs and McColl -Kennedy, 2003). Some sociologists argue that the retail environment is predominantly a social setting, with Johnstone (2012) claiming that the reasons consumers become attached to physical places extend beyond the physical characteristics, product offer or level of service provided, giving credence to the social context in which servicescapes are consumed.

Bennett and Bennett (1970, cited by Bitner, 1992), posit that the physical environment affects the nature, duration and progression of social interaction. Moreover Johnstone (2012) recognizes that place is a social construct and that the servicescape is moulded by the people who occupy it, suggesting that retail managers cannot assume total ownership of this space, since it is the consumer who ascribes meaning to place. The importance afforded to the social dimension draws parallels with Simmel's (1949) earlier study, highlighting the significance of *sociability* and social engagement amongst people through places and spatial settings and is situated within the broader place-related identify construct (Johnstone *et al.,* 2006; Lalli, 1992). Sherry (1998) posits that servicescapes are the co-creation of designer, marketer and consumer, yet within a retail context, less is known about how consumers use social space and assign meanings to such places, therein differentiating between space and place: space being the physical environment and place the aura that we assign to space (Johnstone *et al*., 2006; Tuan, 2001). This notion of how people consume space and their relationship with place is expounded by Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) in their conception of the third place, which is discussed next.

2.2. The third place within retail environments

Oldenburg's (1999) conceptualization of third places as service settings that provide customers with an opportunity to commune, socially interact and foster relationships is related to the social construction of place (Johnstone, 2012), providing spatial boundaries that bring people together with a desire to socialize and develop place associations (Oldenburg and Brisset, 1982). He conceives third place as somewhere that is not home, the first place, or work, the second place, but as a comfortable space to browse, relax and meet people. Defining it as '*public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and* *happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realm of home and work'* (Oldenburg 1999, p.16), it can include outdoor markets, bookstores, garden stores, gyms and pubs. Social scientists have explored third place purpose (Oldenburg, 1999; 2002), function (Debendetti, *et al.,* 2014; Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Oldenburg 1999) meaning (Rosenbaum, 2006, 2007, 2009; Waxman, 2006); benefits (Johnstone, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2006, 2007) and adoption (Goode and Anderson, 2015; Johnson, 2010; Laing and Royle, 2013; Lawson, 2004; Rosenbaum, 2006; Waxman, *et al*. 2007). Yet these studies tend to be limited in venue variety (Fialkoff, 2010; Goode and Anderson, 2015; Jeffres *et al*., 2009; Johnson, 2010; Waxman, *et al*. 2007; Laing and Royle, 2013; Lawson, 2004; Lin, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2006; Thompson and Arsel, 2004; Rosenbaum and Smallwood, 2013; Rosenbaum *et al*., 2016 Slater and Koo, 2010; Soukup, 2006) and to more marginalized consumer groups like the elderly, vulnerable and disabled (Johnstone, 2012; Meshram and O'Cass, 2013; Rosenbaum, 2007; Rosenbaum *et al*., 2009). Moreover, these studies draw upon Oldenburg's original conceptualization of third place, without recognizing its evolution, which warrants further explanation.

2.3. Evolution in form and function of third places

In a classification of third places Crick (2011), claims that definitions of home and work have changed with the proliferation of information technologies that facilitate working at any time and place, and thus the concept and meaning of a third place has evolved from Oldenburg's definition. This paper adopts the four typologies of third place discussed by Crick (2011) - traditional, commercial, spectacular, virtual (and hybrid – combination of the same) as new forms of space. As such, Figure 1 represents the key third place forms and their essential functions.

<<Insert Figure 1 about here >>

2.3.1. Traditional

Interactions in third places are characterized by inclusion, democratic conversation and *pure sociability* (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Simmel, 1949). A third place serves as an anchor of community life, distinctive and informal, where people feel at home. They are appropriated by people as *their own*, nourishing relationships and shared experience. They offer a place to assemble, become familiar, be playful, where conversation freely takes place and the existence of *flow* (complete immersion) is present (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975 cited by Waxman *et al.,* 2007). They provide possibilities for serendipity, companionship and relaxation (Lawson, 2004). Collectively, creating opportunities for the development of place association and attachment (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Waxman *et al*, 2007).

2.3.2. Commercial

The commercial third place is designed to proactively attract customers, understand their behavior and increase their time and money spent in store (Crick, 2011). Starbucks envisions this typology, serving as a place for casual social interaction (Crick 2011; Lin, 2012). Similarly, bookstores came to exemplify commercial third places. By presenting a lifestyle environment they became successful in generating a more comfortable and less intimidating space to dwell, and in doing so, promoting a sense of community (Laing and

Royle, 2006). Yet, one of the key differences with this typology is that it enables choice in whether to connect with others or not – what the author coins as "connected aloofness" (Crick, 2011).

2.3.3. Spectacular

The third place as a homely environment can be contrasted with more experiential, "spectacular" staged spaces, temporary in nature, that fulfil consumers' emotional as well as consumption needs (Mikunda, 2007). Mikunda conceived four functions for this type of third place: as landmarks (that attract attention), designed for malling (encouraging browsing), concept specific and as magnetic (must-see) places that have the ability to attract consumers. He cites museums, concept stores and fairs as serving the new third place because they are places where people feel momentarily at home, they can consume and reconnect emotionally. Seemingly, the antithesis of Oldenburg's understated third place (Crick, 2011).

2.3.4. Virtual

Digital disruption has given rise to the virtual third place (Crick, 2011; Klang and Olsson 1999), where a network of like-minded individuals converge in a virtual environment to converse. Consequently, place shifts from being conceived through its physical dimensions to a virtual one. Crick (2011) infers this form most resembles Oldenburg's traditional third place – both involving regulars, on neutral ground and with shared common interests. As the focus of this paper is on physical spaces, the presence of the virtual third place will be studied within the context of the retail setting only.

Encompassed within this definition evolution is a shift from a focus on community and sociability to commerce and consumption (Nobbs, 2014). It is therefore interesting to explore which forms and functions are most prevalent within fashion retail settings and if, how and why these places are meaningful to consumers. These third place forms are not discrete entities but in reality, are likely to convergence (Crick, 2011). The fifth form - *hybrid* will also therefore be included in this study.

2.4. Benefits of third place

Much has been studied on the relaxation, restorative and socializing benefits of third places within servicescapes with the potential to enhance consumer well-being (Laing and Royle, 2013; Meshram and O'Cass, 2013; Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Oldenburg, 1999; Rosenbaum, 2009; Rosenbaum *et al*., 2016); the ability to induce and enrich *communitas* (Goode and Anderson, 2015; Johnstone, 2012; Rosenbaum and Smallwood, 2013; Waxman *et al*., 2007); person-place relationships arising from third place adoption (Laing and Royle, 2013; Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Waxman *et al.,* 2007); the potential economic benefits to retailers (Laing and Royle, 2013) and the advantage offline has over online retailers in showcasing third places (Laing and Royle, 2013). Rosenbaum (2006) proposed a framework that supports a relational third-place theory, showing a positive relationship between the social supportive role of a third place and his/her loyalty to the place. He posits three types of loyalty – cognitive, community and ultimate. Customers will develop cognitive loyalty when the third place has a practical meaning by meeting their core needs. Community loyalty thrives when the place assumes meaning as a place to gather. Ultimate loyalty occurs when the place becomes like home and meets the consumer's emotional needs. However, whilst their potential to create loyalty is acknowledged, Crick (2011) asserts that third places must go beyond this and encourage economic value, contradicting Oldenburg's original notion (1999). Whilst within the current competitive landscape, the merits of third places to physical settings in the co-creation of experiential value may be obvious, a key trade-off is the associated cost and risk in displacing traditional selling space to third places within commercial settings (Goode and Anderson, 2015; Nobbs, 2014). Thus, the consumer benefits ensued from the appropriation of third places will be explored to advance our understanding of third place consumption and the implications for servicescape providers.

2.5. Third places within experiential marketing

It is widely recognized that retailers create value not merely on the benefits of a purchase but also in the experiential consumption, regardless of whether it leads to purchase or not. (Bitner 1992; Carbone and Haeckel 1994; Carù and Cova 2003; Gentile *et al.* 2007; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Kent, 2007; Kotler 1973; Schmitt, 1999; Verhoef *et al*. 2009). The experiential perspective is particularly compelling to marketing literature because consumers' form emotional links with their environments based upon their experiences with the environment (Johnstone *et al*., 2006) and experiences are shaped by social activities. An understanding of the experiential nature of consumption may therefore reveal why consumers patronize specific servicescapes and their meaning to them (ibid). In today's marketplace, retailers generally acknowledge experience as a critical component in emotionally connecting and engaging with customers whilst driving competitive advantage (Brakus *et al*., 2009; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Stein and Ramaseshan, 2016). Pine and Gilmore (1999, 2011) argue that consumers' search for meaning goes beyond merely product and service consumption and that memory making should be central. Customer experience is widely accepted as the response consumers have to an encounter with a retail brand (Lemke *et al*., 2011; Stein and Ramaseshan, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2009), with Pine and Gilmore (1999, p.99) giving credence to the personal, subjective nature of experiences, they are*…"inherently personal existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual or even spiritual level".* Their "Realms of experience" model embodies these responses, which attempt to categorize four experiences based on the level of customer involvement and participation as shown in Figure 2. This paper applies Pine and Gilmore's (2011) experiential typologies to fashion third places, and in doing so, attempts to merge experiential servicecape and third place theory to make a valid contribute to this nascent and novel research field (Crick, 2011; Khan and Rahman, 2016; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2015).

<<Insert figure 2 about here >>

The provision for consumption, experience and sociability within one retail environment, expressed as a third place are recognized to be desirable and practical for consumers (Gay, 2017; Nobbs 2014; Saunter, 2015; Szymanska *et al*., 2017). Third place practices in fashion stores are diverse and are categorized in Table 1 according to Crick's (2011) third place and Pine and Gilmore's (2011) experience typologies.

<<Insert table 1 about here >>

Adopting a multidisciplinary approach, the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the significance and impact of third places in fashion retail settings and how these places might be leveraged by fashion retailers to better connect and engage with consumers. The aim was achieved through the following three objectives: through a systematic literature review, linking theories of third place, servicescape and experiential marketing, to better understand how the retail environment contributes to customer experience; to explore the significance and impact of third places within fashion retail servicescapes; and finally, to explicate the opportunities third places offer to fashion organisations to facilitate customer experience propagation. In doing so, it responds to Manlow and Nobbs (2016) and Crick's (2011) call for further research into third places from a consumer perspective. The research questions (RQ's) guiding the study are as follows:

1. How prevalent are third places within fashion retail settings?
2. What are the forms and functions of third places adopted by fashion retailers
3. How and why are fashion third places meaningful to consumers?
4. How does third place contribute to the customer experience?
5. What opportunities do third places offer to fashion retailers, from a consumer perspective?

3. Methodology

As this study was interested in consumers' experiences in the retail servicescape, an interpretivist exploratory perspective was adopted, and qualitative methods were used. The strength of qualitative research is that it enables depth of information from participants and evidences rationale for actions and perspectives that would be difficult to achieve if a quantitative research method would be employed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Fashion is the chosen domain of study, defined as comprising footwear, men's, women's, children's, sportswear, beauty, jewellery, accessories, luggage and bags, hair products and lingerie sectors, and ranging from luxury to discount value segments (British Fashion Council, 2016, BoF and McKinsey, 2018). Directly contributing c.2% to UK GDP, it is considered on par with other major economic sectors (British Fashion Council, 2015). Within this industry, UK clothing retail sales were £57.7bn in 2017 (Mintel, 2017) and forms the scope of this study. It was important to achieve a broad perspective of third place activity in fashion physical stores across different market segments to track and assess variance. Today, consumers shop across levels, segments are often interconnected and transient and the number of opinions and sources with varying definitions on fashion market segments are extensive rendering this a challenge (BoF and McKinsey, 2017; Jackson and Shaw, 2009; Mintel, 2017). The study therefore adopts McKinsey-BoF's Sales Price Index approach to classify the mass, mid, and luxury fashion segments used. The retailer database was categorized according to a range of prices for a standard product basket within each segment and the following segment descriptors were then deduced for this study: *Mass-market* –affordably priced products to a broad consumer base (including value and high street multiple retailers e.g. Primark, Zara); *Mid-market* – mid range retailers, neither very affordable or very expensive products to a mainstream consumer base (includes premium retailers e.g. Nike, COS); *Luxury-market* – expensively priced products to a narrower consumer base (includes affordable luxury e.g. Coach, Gucci) (BoF and McKinsey, 2017; Mintel, 2017, Stevens, 2017) (see Appendix 1 for full retailer list).

The research draws on an examination of extant third place, servicescape and experiential marketing literature, combined with direct store observations and deployment of the shopping with consumers technique (SWC) (Lowrey *et al*., 2005; Silberer and Wang, 2009). Adopting a quasi-ethnographic approach of how things work in situ (Watson, 2011) provided opportunities of studying the complex, interactive and personal nature of the experience inside the store (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Quasi or audience ethnography methods have been increasingly used by marketeers and commercial researchers to develop a "thick description" of the lived experience of consumers and to overcome problems associated with other methods concerning limitations of asking and people not always doing what they say (Elliot and Jankel-Elliot, 2003). There is increasing acknowledgement of the importance of ethnographical approaches in management research, with the main forms of data generally being observation and interviews (Agafonoff, 2006; Goulding, 2005). Applied to this study, it provided the opportunity to visit retail locations to understand how fashion retailers, across multiple market levels are utilizing third places and explore consumer perceptions, usage and loyalty towards these fashion third places using observation and interview techniques. Adopting a longitudinal approach, data was collected systematically over a one-month period in 2016 and 2018 in order to trace and assess any change in third place adoption and consumer response. Triangulation enabled cross-checking of the qualitative data, giving greater validity and a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Denzin, 1978; Jonsen and Jehn, 2009). The theory offered in the literature review underpinned the research methodology in two ways: it orientated the retailer sample selection and gave grounds for structuring the research protocol and specifying the constructs identified as relevant in terms of empirical observations and interview questions. The research comprised two phases, executed sequentially as follows.

3.1. Phase one

Without an official list of clothing retailers using third places, the sample was selected from a database developed by the author since 2015, based on a systematic review of trade and newspaper articles, plus trade associations and consultancies fashion retailer listings (e.g. Mintel, BoF, Drapers, FashionUnited etc.). The sample was purposively selected, based on the following criteria: clothing retailers operating in mass, mid and premium segments, London based in key designated fashion locations (e.g. Oxford Street, Regent Street, Mayfair, Covent Garden etc.). Up to 100 fashion retail environments were observed, across market levels - mass (22), mid (37) and luxury (39) - to ascertain third place prevalence, types of third places, consumption, social and experiential aspects of third places and observation of consumer interaction with third places offered. As the author wanted to ascertain the prevalence of third places across the sector, the retailers observed did not need to contain a third place to be included in the study. Pictures were taken of each third place observed to act as an *aide memorie* for interviewees in phase two (Parker, 2009). The retailer sample remained consistent over the research period to ensure standardization of data collection and analysis (except for those that had closed down).

Store observations resulted in the identification of stores with third places, which activated phase two, whereby 42 consumers were enlisted (2016 and 2018 combined), to conduct the shopping with consumers (SWC) technique (Lowrey *et al.,* 2005; Silberer and Wang, 2009). The method has been used extensively since the 1990's to elicit rich data sets and illuminate consumer shopping behaviour and experiences in specific contexts (Lowrey *et al.*, 2005). Consumers were selected using convenience and snowball sampling according to the following criteria: male or female, aged 18+, had purchased clothing in the last three-months and were willing to volunteer up to two hours of their time. Refreshments were offered as an incentive to recruit volunteers. Email was used to screen potential informants against the criteria. Due to the two-year period of study, participating consumers differed. The resulting consumer profile comprised 42 informants (22, 2016; 20, 2018) 34 female and 8 male, between 21-41 years of age with a mean age of 28. In terms of occupation, 27 were students and 15 were in employment (E.g. creative, marketing, retail and management roles). All lived in London and depicted a relatively high frequency of fashion purchase consumption, ranging from weekly to every 3-months. Due to the longitudinal and qualitative nature of this study, the sample size was deemed acceptable (Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2014).

3.2.Phase two

The SWC comprised three parts; a one-to-one pre-interview at a pre-determined location (e.g. café near to the stores) to build rapport with the researcher, explain the purpose and mechanics of the study (e.g. the taking of field notes during the trips, the use of prompting to elicit in-situ response etc.) and specifically ascertain consumers' propensity to purchase fashion, their familiarity with the sample retailers and to explore their notion of third place. This was followed by participant observation of the retail environments, which sought to gain informant insight on third place forms and function and their impressions and interactions with them. All were offered an explanation of third places prior to commencing to ensure a baseline understanding. Probing was used to elicit deeper insight. Informants were asked to visit up to five retailers from the same market segment successively, limiting the number helped minimise fatigue (Lowrey *et al*., 2005). 42 retail trips were made with 42 individual informants, to the same 98 clothing stores over the 2 year period. Field notes were taken, capturing informant interactions with the third places and their opinions (including their body language and facial expressions). Finally, a post interview completed the technique to validate the qualities and behaviours observed and specifically garner consumer perception on the consumption, social and experiential aspects of the third places, their emotional response and loyalty impact. Photo-elicitation was used, where necessary, during the interviews (taken during phase 1) to remind and evoke participants to think more deeply about the third places they visited (Heisley *et. al.,* 1991; Johnstone and Todd, 2012). The benefits of SWC are widely acknowledged, as it combines methods it invigorates each technique used, allowing the research to observe actual behaviour and then clarify the interpretation of that behaviour through the interview; the method hastens trust between researcher and informant and enables additional insights to emerge than through passive observation or interviews in isolation and generates a rich variety of text especially within retail experience contexts (Lowrey *et al.* 2005). The saliency of the technique to this study was therefore compelling. Table 2 depicts the retailer and consumer participating sample over the time-period of study.

<<Insert table 2 about here>>

Field notes were taken and interviews audio recorded, from which full transcripts were developed. Thematic analysis was predominantly applied, recognized as appropriate for all qualitative studies (Saldana, 2016). Themes arising were identified, analysed, categorized, relationships between themes identified and key quotes added, in order to gain interpretive understanding. (Miles and Huberman, 2013; Saldana, 2016; Silverman, 2014). Thematic analysis was supplemented with magnitude coding, considered appropriate for descriptive qualitative social science study's that serve to present frequency or percentage information and add "texture to (thematic) categories" (Saldana, 2016 p.86). In this way, magnitude coding offers the possibility of 'quantitizing' qualitative data. As Saldana asserts, it is difficult to avoid quantitative representation in qualitative research (e.g. with phrases like "most participants"). Magnitude codes are therefore represented as frequency tables and word-clouds for at-a-glance analysis within the next section alongside the theoretical constructs derived from the thematic analysis (Miles et al., 2014). The results are presented in accordance with the research questions in the next section.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Prevalence of third places within fashion retail settings

23 (out of 98) in 2016 and 30 (out of 95) fashion stores were observed as possessing a third place, showing an adoption increase of 30.4% over the period. Between 1-5 third places within the one retail setting were observed (e.g. Topshop had the most). In total, 40 third places were observed in 2016 compared to 53 in 2018, highlighting a growth in prevalence of 32.5% over the period. These findings serve to reinforce the strategic relevance and importance of third places to fashion retailers. They are most widespread in the mid and luxury markets where brand prestige, distinction and relationship is acknowledged as being important (Nobbs, 2014). Table 3 displays the prevalence of fashion third places between 2016-2018. It is interesting to note within market level the change in third place usage; a minimal increase in the mass market (9%) and slight reduction in the mid-market (-9.5%). However, it is in the luxury market we see the biggest increase in the number of third places 8 (2016) to 22 (2018) (175%) and in the number of stores hosting them, 5 to 12 (140%).

<<insert table 3 about here >>

4.2. Form and function of third places adopted by fashion retailers

A critique of Crick's (2011) third place typology showed that all five forms were identified through the store observations, with the traditional and commercial third place most dominant and significantly increasing over the period of study. This correlates to the growth in the café format and more transactional service based third places available (see Table 4). These are places to enjoy community, conversation, for casual social interaction, to attract customers and increase dwell time, reinforcing Oldenburg (1999), Crick (2011) and trade press (Saunter, 2015; Szymanska *et al*., 2017). The spectacular form has marginally increased (1-4 counts) over the period (e.g. Galeria Melissa, LNCC, Chanel) manifest in exhibition and music spaces. This suggests further opportunities exist to develop more experientially based third places to trigger emotional connections (Mikunda, 2007). Virtual (technology based) forms were limited to touch screens, providing little opportunity to fully converge and converse virtually within the retail environment and have declined over the period of study (4 to 2 counts). This insight was strengthened in the SWC findings, with an overriding recognition that third places were about relaxation, as illustrated, *"a place to relax" "unwind" "escape the daily routine".* The tech lounges observed however, point to the emergence of the hybrid third place, by converging forms, they may offer a more flexible and salient approach for retailers and would be interesting to experiment with further.

15 different formats of third place were detected within fashion stores, ranging from the most popular -café/bar/restaurant, beauty/grooming and barbers/hairdressers, to the more novel – instore workshops. However, it is interesting to note that the form seeing the biggest growth (2016-2018) is the active sports zone (400%) (e.g. Nike, Lulu Lemon, Sweaty Betty) and the personalisation station (233%) (e.g. Jimmy Choo, Coach, Bally). Table 4 depicts the variety of third places observed and are further illustrated in figures 3-5, across market levels.

<<insert table 4 about here>>
<<insert figures 3,4,5 about here>>

Relaxation and community resonated highly with consumers when asked to offer a definition of third places and how they use their third places, which aligns with Oldenburg and Brissett's traditional typology (1982). Seen as a place predominantly to *"relax", "restore", "have personal time", "space to read";* as a social space - *"chat with friends"* and as a treat – to *"pamper myself".*

A mix of public and private spaces were perceived as "their third places", ranging from *"cafes"* to *"a private space… a place where I can dream".* This partially conflicts with Oldenburg's original conceptualisation of third place as one based on a mutual gathering, to share in community and resonates with Carù and Cova's (2003) notion of more contemplative servicescapes. It indicates opportunities to develop meaningful intimate as well as social experiences through their adoption.

Once a definition of third place was given to informants to ensure a baseline understanding of the phenomena within retail settings, consumers were asked to share their perspective on their function. Fourteen functions of third place were offered (see Table 5), categorised into four according to the main theoretical themes – a place for sociability (Bitner, 1982) a place to experience (Pine and Gilmore, 2011), a restorative place (Rosenbaum, 2006) and a commercial place (Mikunda, 2007). Table 5 depicts the supporting informant quotes from which the categories were derived. It is significant that all four depictions of experiential servicescapes deduced from the literature were evidenced in fashion third place settings and offers new empirical insights on their functional qualities.

<<insert table 5 about here>>

Consumers impressions of the fashion third places were diverse, ranging from *"dull/empty"* to *"immersive/engaging",* highlighting the importance of selecting the right third place, congruent with the target market (see Figure 6). Most consumers perceived a good fit between the fashion retailer and the third place however, consumer interactions with the third places were dependant on the format offered. For example, many participants did not interact with the third place because they required pre-booking, were *"empty", "uninspiring"* places which discouraged interaction. This is at odds with the notion of third places enabling social serendipity (Oldenburg, 1999) and engendering experiential value (Mikunda, 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 2011). The remainder interacted mainly through the café, tech screens or music lounge. Interestingly, whilst the majority of participants in 2016 found the third places positively surprising rather than expected, *You don't expect to find a spa within a clothing store" (Bluebird); "never seen a café and virtual reality concept in one store before" (TOMS)*, the reverse is apparent in 2018, with an even split between expected and surprised, as illustrated, "*I was unaware of them before" "didn't expect a cycle shop to have events and a café", "unusual" "nothing new" "other retailers have them too".* This highlights the challenge of continually reinventing third places to avoid the *normalising effect* associated with consuming repetitive experiences (Crick, 2011) and the challenge posed from the growing adoption of third places by fashion retailers which risks reducing them to customary in the consumers' mind.

<<Insert Figure 6 about here>>

4.3. Third place contribution to customer experience

An application of Pine and Gilmore's (2011) experiential model to fashion third places infers that the most common realm of experience utilised was esthetic and escapist in 2016 but this shifted to entertainment and escapist in 2018, as Table 6 illustrates. Interestingly, each providing passive and active participation – receiving sensory pleasure (e.g. Cafes), fun (e.g. games zone) as well as being part of the instore experience (e.g. beauty/grooming), SWC findings strongly suggest that consumers want to be increasingly involved in the experience rather than passive recipients of it, which reinforces industry reports (Bell, 2015; Gay, 2017; Szymanska *et al.*, 2017). This supports yet diverges with Mikunda's (2007) assertion that third places are environments where people can recharge their emotions, as it was found they are also places to socialize, immerse and participate, not just spectate. Thus, aligning more with Oldenburg's notion of third place (1982, 1999). Moreover, the importance of the social dimension in fashion third place experiences is explicit, with the majority of formats perceived by participants as having a social function and with a clear shift to incorporate more sociability between 2016-2018, which aligns with Simmel (1949) and Johnstone (2012). It serves to highlight the opportunities that exist to extend the experiential offer into more educational third place expressions. The use of workshops for example, was noticeably limited to a single store in 2016, yet offering a schedule of events / workshops on shared interests to attract like-minded consumers would be worthy of exploring. This would harness the sociability and participation aspects consumers appear to crave in the creation of experiential value.

<<Insert table 6 about here>>

In terms of participants response to third places, these varied from mostly pleasure and arousal to non-arousal and indifference in a few, as evidenced - *Really relaxing”, “comfortable”, “thoughtful brand”, “made me want to engage more with the brand*”, *“it’s convenient to have a café in-store but it doesn’t make me want to buy the retailer’s product”, “I wouldn’t have noticed it (third place) if you hadn’t have told me”.* Third places were perceived to be of variable importance to participants. Most saw them as important, particularly in mid-luxury retailers, a few as very important and a minority as unimportant, as reflected in the quotes. *“My main aim is to shop, not rest”, “usually I shop online, the idea of a spa in store would definitely encourage me to visit the store more often”*. In 2016, 7 (out of 22) participants made a purchase from the third place and this increased to 13 (out of 20) in 2018, reflecting the shift to more commercial forms of third place across market levels (café the most popular as mentioned). However, despite its growing ubiquity, most participants struggled to give examples of third place good practices. Selfridges, Arket and Burberry were amongst the most praised – all centred on the café / restaurant third place format. The importance of the café is evidenced in the observations as the primary form of third place used by fashion retail settings, increasing over the review period from 11 (2016) to 21 (2018). This emphasizes the credence of social servicescapes to generating positive emotional response (Bitner, 1992) but also suggests an opportunity exists to make third places more explicit, to better utilise them as social experiential spaces (Mikunda, 2007; Nobbs, 2014; Saunter, 2015).

4.4. Fashion third place meaning to consumer

The most liked elements of third places were the ambience, the comfort and the welcome, suggested as *“best of both worlds”*. Conversely, the most disliked facets were that they were *“uninspiring”, “boring”, “unstaffed”, “too small”,* with “*no real impact”*. Inferring they exist to create spurious rather than actual experience (see Figures 7 and 8). Of the 98 third places observed collectively, just less than half were unstaffed. This conflicts with Oldenburg (1999) Rosenbaum (2006) and Johnstone’s (2012) assertion of third places being relational which help stimulate place-meaning associations. It also offers an opportunity for retailers to respond to consumer’s suggestions for third place improvements, recognized firstly, in *“better servicing”* of third places, secondly, balancing private versus public third places and thirdly, offering “*gender specific*” third places. This is underpinned from observing either empty or very few customers within the third places. Moreover, raising issues concerning inefficient third place utilization and experiential and economic value generation (Nobbs, 2014).

<<insert figures 7 and 8 about here>>

In terms of the meaning ascribed and potential loyalty impact arising from third places, the majority of respondents interacting with the third place did not translate to patronage or purchase behaviour. In terms of Rosenbaum's (2006) relational third-place schema, *place as practical* was realised in over half of respondents. Cognitive (shallow) loyalty is inferred, evidenced in, they…*"have no real impact", "I found it boring", "wouldn't make me visit again", "it's convenient to have a café but that's about it", "I couldn't relate to it", "it's pointless"* (e.g. Hunter, Ben Sherman). *Place as gathering* was seen in less than half of respondents. Community loyalty is inferred, apparent in, *"it made me want to stay longer", "I felt relaxed and happy", "it was engaging", "it was good to hang out with friends", "fun", "interactive"* (e.g. Hackett, Burberry, Oasis, Nike). *Place as home* was observable in 3 informants, inferring that ultimate loyalty within fashion retail settings is almost negligible, illustrated in, *"I felt at home there", "I like to just go and hang out there all day"* (e.g. Rapha, TOMS). Further research is needed to test the relationship between place meaning and loyalty to extend Rosenbaum's (2006) theory within a fashion context. What is clear from the results is that third places within fashion retail settings need to go beyond merely stimulating and make a deeper connection with consumers to engender authentic rather than specious loyalty (Crick, 2011).

4.5. Opportunities offered by third places to fashion retailers

The aim of this paper was to extend the third-place paradigm (Crick, 2011; Oldenburg, 1999; Rosenbaum, 2006, 2009) into the fashion retail domain by supporting the perspective that third places offer opportunities to fashion retailers to facilitate customer experience propagation. This has been demonstrated through the findings. In a multichannel retail environment, third places have proven to be an increasingly important differentiator in fashion servicescapes as a creator of experiential and social value (Crick, 2011; Nobbs, 2014; Saunter, 2015).

From a consumer perspective, social, experiential, restorative and commercial dimensions of third places were evidenced yet response in terms of place meaning proved variable (Johnstone, 2006; Rosenbaum, 2006). A firm platform exists on which to develop more experimental forms of third place, specifically spectacular, virtual, hybrid (Crick, 2011; Mikunda, 2007) and educational (Pine and Gilmore, 2011), that engage and connect with consumers on a deeper level. By offering more participatory third places, it is likely that this will heighten immersion, involvement and encourage co-created servicescapes (Johnstone, 2012; Pine and Gilmore, 2011; Sherry, 1998). This in turn, may support the translation of third places to patronage and purchase behavior (Johnstone *et al*., 2006), which was not fully apparent from this study.

From observations, mid and luxury markets were the most active in third place utilization, yet with only 30 (out of 98) fashion retail stores featuring a third place, there is an opportunity to further leverage them, as long as they are congruent with the brand and target market. It serves to also elucidate that more consideration could be given by retailers to *place* rather than *space*, within the context of Sherry's (1998) delineation that place is the aura we assign to space and how we consume space demands attention. SWC findings implied that customer service elevates the third place experience received so greater focus on the 'human' connection within these spaces should be considered. The

hybrid third place – by combining forms – offers the chance to meet consumers' private .v. public third place needs and should be further explored by retailers (Crick, 2011). Observations revealed that analogue rather than digital third places were most prevalent, echoing the notion of quiet experiences (Carù and Cova, 2003) and restorative servicescapes (Rosenbaum, 2009) - places to connect, socialize, build community and restore and should be further considered.
Whilst the benefits of third places are acknowledged, the associated challenges are also expounded through the study - costs, risks and need for continual reinvention to avoid them becoming customary to consumers, necessitating a compelling third place business case, which the proposed Third place dimensions model facilities. As Figure 9 shows, in terms of third place features, five possible consumer tensions were revealed from the study – consumer desire for private yet public spaces; social yet intimate; contemplative yet conversational; to spectate yet interact and for passive yet active experiences. Retailers should consider which features are most desirable by their customers, alongside the functional categories of sociability, experiential, restorative or commercial to inform the selection of the most appropriate format of third place. The Third place dimensions model therefore acts as a strategic guide to retailers when creating and delivering a third place strategy.

<<insert figure 9 about here>>

5. Implications, limitations and future directions

The research makes a valuable contribution to the dearth of extant literature on third place specifically within the fashion field. The three objectives and five research questions proposed have been fully explored through the research. It sheds light on the prevalence of third places within fashion retail settings, and offers new insight on the forms, functions and features of them, conceived in the Third Place Dimensions Model. Drawing on theories of third place, servicescape and experimental marketing it offers new understanding on how the retail environment contributes to customer experience within a fashion context. The study affirms the sociologist view of the credence given to sociability and restoration within third place servicescapes (Bitner, 1982; Johnstone *et al*., 2006, Johnstone, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2006; Sherry, 1998; Simmel, 1949) yet extends their qualities to offer two additional categories of third place function – experiential and commercial, thus affirming marketing theorists perspectives (Manlow and Nobbs, 2016; Mikunda, 2007, Pine and Gilmore, 2011), and in doing so, merges differing theoretical perspectives. The study highlights the possible tensions inherent in activating third places, due to the variability in third place preferences and the challenge that brings in generating customer satisfaction. If retailer capabilities do not extend to the new service proposition the merits of collaborating on a third place venture could be explored. Whilst we see examples of such practices (e.g. Jigsaw and Fernandez and Wells café) there is a lack of scholarly research on third place collaborations and would be worthy of further research. The study elucidates the significance of third places within fashion servicescapes, offering new insight on their variable impact on place meaning and consumer loyalty. Finally, the study explicates the opportunities that third places offer to fashion retailers to facilitate customer experience.

5.1. Managerial Implications

The study serves as a practical guide for retailers to assess the planning and execution of third places within their physical retail environments. There are a wealth of aspects that retail managers may consider in relation to experiential third place servicescapes arising from the study:

1. Congruence of third place to brand and target market
2. Applicability of third place forms, features and functions to improve customer experience
3. Improving customer patronage through community (social) engagement
4. Redesigning servicescape (specifically third place) to deliver meaningful customer experiences
5. Potential in collaborative third places

5.2. Limitations

There are several issues that need to be recognized when interpreting the results of the study. The findings are restricted to fashion retailers within London, UK and the consumer sample comprises primarily students, thus they are limited in transferability to other settings and consumer segments. The narrow geographical focus, relatively small sample size and qualitative orientation should therefore be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions. Whilst limited empirical insight is in keeping with the exploratory approach, there is scope to extend the study to quantitatively verify consumer response to experiential third places, specifically their impact on place meaning and loyalty which was inconclusive in this study.

5.3. Future directions

This nascent field of study offers many avenues for future research and specifically within the fashion field, where retail practices of the phenomenon precedes scholarly insight.

The impact of third places on place meaning and loyalty was only one aspect of this study and the results arising were variable. It would be interesting therefore to explore fashion third places specifically within the realm of place attachment (e.g. Brocato *et al*., 2015; Inalhan and Finch, 2004; Johnstone and Conroy, 2008) to assess the association between individuals and the retail environment setting and the reactions that '*place*' stimulates for a consumer. Moreover, Rosenbaum (2009; 2016) and Rosenbaum and Smallwood (2013) highlight the significance of restorative servicescapes and their impact upon directed attention. It would be interesting to extend this research to the fashion context and specifically sports-fashion retail environments where consumer well-being and restoration are increasingly being recognised as important (Saunter, 2015).

This study chose to take a broad perspective to third place adoption, given the dearth of studies within the fashion context it was deemed important to take this approach. However, it would be interesting to interrogate third places within a particular sector, taking a case study approach to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon within a real life setting. The impact of consumer age and gender on third place experiences and specifically an interrogation of market level differences on the same could be considered, especially given that participant's highlighted gender specific third places as one area for third place improvement. As this study was restricted to London, variance between international fashion cities and differing cultural perspectives on the forms, functions and operations of fashion third place would be interesting to examine. Moreover, given that digital is disrupting traditional notions of third place, further research into specific virtual or hybrid third places would be worthy of further exploration. It would also be useful to understand retailers' motivations for adopting third places, thus an industry perspective would add further insight to this burgeoning field of study. Lastly, given the growing prevalence of third place adoption and variety of formats, it is assumed not all retailers will have the core capabilities to extend to these new services. Therefore, there is merit in researching the growing practice of alliance formation with other commercial third places and/or businesses to operationalise third places (Crick, 2011).

References

Agafonoff, N. (2006), "Adapting ethnographic research methods to ad hoc commercial market research", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 9 (2), pp.115-125.

Alexander, B. and Kent, A. (2016), "*Retail Environments*". In Petermans, A., Kent, A. Eds. Retail Design. Routledge Publishing.

Bell, A. (17 Mar, 2015). *Doing Beats Buying*, WGSN.

Bitner, M.J. (1992), "Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees", *The Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 (2), pp. 57-71.

Brakus, J., Schmitt, B., and Zarantonello, L. (2009), "Brand Experience: What is it? How is it Measured? Does it Affect Loyalty?" *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 (3), 52-68.

British Fashion Council. (2015), *The economic value of the UK's fashion industry in 2015*, Oxford Economics and the British Fashion Council.http://www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk/uploads/files/1/J2089%20Economic%20Value%20Report_V04.pdf (accessed 30 Aug, 2018).

Brocato, E.D., Baker, J. and Voorhees, C.M. (2015), "Creating consumer attachment to retail service firms through sense of place," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* Vol.43, pp. 200–220.

Carbone, L.P. and Haeckel S.H. (1994) "Engineering customer experiences", *Marketing Management*, Vol. 3 (3), pp.8-19.

BoF and McKinsey. (2017), *The state of fashion 2017*, Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company.

BoF and McKinsey. (2018), *The state of fashion 2018*, Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company.

Carú, A. and Cova, B. (2003), "Revisiting Consumption Experience: A More Humble but Complete View of the Concept," *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 3, pp.267-86.

Crick, A.P. (2011), "New Third Places: Opportunities and Challenges", in Arch G. Woodside (Ed.), *Tourism Sensemaking: Strategies to Give Meaning to Experience*.

(Advances in Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Vol. 5) Emerald Group publishing, pp. 63-77.
Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975), *Beyond boredom and anxiety*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Ellis, M. (2014). The Evolution of the Internet and Its Impact on Retail Spaces (online) *WIRED.*
Darden, W.R. and Babin, B.J. (1994), "Exploring the concept of affective quality: expanding the concept of retail personality", *Journal of Business Research,* Vol. 29, pp.101-109.
Debenedetti, A., Oppewal, H. and Arsel, Z. (2014), "Place attachment in commercial settings: A gift economy perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 40 (5), pp.904-923.
Denzin, N.K. (1978), *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, 2nd ed., McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005), *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Donovan, R.J. and Rossiter, J.R. (1982), "Store atmosphere: An environmental psychology approach", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 58, pp.34-57.
Elliott, R. and Jankel-Elliott, N. (2003), "Using ethnography in strategic consumer research", *Qualitative market research : An international journal*, Vol.6 (4), pp.215-223.
Fialkoff, F. (2010), "Third place or thinking space", *Library Journal*, Vol. 135 No.2, p.8.
Gay, W. (2017), "Apple's new Town Square store may be a blueprint for winning millennials back to retail", *Forbes*. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/wesgay/2017/10/23/apple-town-square-retail-millennials/#5b9632a929b2.
Gentile, C., Spiller, N. and Noci, G. (2007), "How to sustain the customer experience: An overview of experience components that co-create value with the customer", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 25 (5), pp.395-410.
Goode, A. and Anderson, S. (2015), "It's like somebody else's pun: Understanding conflict in third place", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 43, pp.346-351.
Goulding, C. (2005), "Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 39 (3/4), pp.294-308.
Grewal, D., Roggeveen, A. L. and Nordfält, J. (2017), "The future of retailing", *Journal of Retailing,* Vol. 93 (1), pp.1-6.
Heisley, D.D. and Levy, S.J. (1991), "Autodriving: A photoelicitation technique", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.18, pp. 257-272.
Holbrook, M.B. and Hirschman, E.C. (1982), "The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.9 (2), pp.132–140.
Inalhan, G. and Finch, E. (2004),"Place attachment and sense of belonging", *Facilities*, Vol. 22 (5/6), pp. 120-128.
Jackson, T., Shaw, D. (2009), *Mastering fashion marketing*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK
Jeffres, L., Bracken, C., Jian, G., and Casey, M. (2009), "The impact of third places on community quality of life", *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, Vol. 4 (4), pp.333–345. Retrieved from http://www.springerlink.com/content/k6717p4461p140k0/fulltext.pdf.

Johnson, D. (2010), “School libraries as a third place”, *Library Media Connection*, Vol. 29 (1), p.106.
Johnstone, M-L. (2012), “The Sevicescape: The social dimension of place”, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 28 (11-12), pp.1399-1418.
Johnstone, M-L. and Conroy, D.M. (2008), “Place attachment: The social dimensions of the retail environment and the need for further exploration,” *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol.35, pp. 381-386.
Johnstone, M-L. and Todd, S. (2012), “Servicescapes: The role that place plays in stay-at-home mothers’ lives”, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 11, pp. 443-453.
Johnstone, M-L., Todd, S. and Buchanan-Oliver, M. (2006), “Consuming Space: Finding Meaning within the servicescape – a research agenda”, *European Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 7, pp.477-484.
Jonsen, K. and Jehn, K.A. (2009), "Using triangulation to validate themes in qualitative studies", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 4 (2), pp.123-150.
Kent, T. (2007), "Creative space: design and the retail environment", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 35 (9), pp.734-745.
Khan, I. and Rahman, Z. (2016), "Retail brand experience: scale development and validation", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 25 (5) pp. 435 – 451.
Kim, Y., Sullivan, P. and Forney, J.C. (2007), *Experiential Retailing*. New York, NY: Fairchild Publications.
Klang, M. and Olsson, S. (1999), “Virtual communities”. Proceedings of the 22nd information systems conference, Penn State University.
Kotler, P. (1973), “Atmospherics as a marketing tool”, *Journal of Retailing*, Vol.49 (Winter), pp.48-61.
Laing, A. and Royle, J. (2006), “Marketing and the bookselling brand: current strategy and the manager’s perspective”, *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,* Vol. 34 (3), pp.198-211.
Laing, A. and Royle, J. (2013), “Examining chain bookshops in the context of third place”, *International Journal of Retail &Distribution Management*, Vol. 41 (1), pp.27-44.
Lalli, M. (1992), “Urban-related identity: Theory, measurement, and empirical findings”, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol.12, pp.285-303.
Lawson, K. (2004), “Libaries in the USA as traditional and virtual “third places””, *New Library World*, Vol. 105 (3/4) pp.125-130.
Lemke, F., Clark, M. and Wilson, H. (2011), “Customer experience quality: an exploration in business and consumer contexts using repertory grid technique”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 39 (6), pp.846-869.
Lemon, K.N. and Verhoef, P.C. (2016), “Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey”, Journal of Marketing, AMA/MSI Special issue, Vol. 80, pp.69-96.
Lin, E-Y. (2012), “Starbucks as the third place: Gimpses into Taiwan’s consumer culture and lifestyles”, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 24, pp.119-128.
Lowrey, T.M., Otnes, C.C., McGrath, M.A. (2005) "Shopping with consumers: reflections and innovations", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 8 (2), pp.176-18.

Manlow, V., Nobbs, K. (2013), “The Third Space” (online) Available at https://veronicamanlow.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/third-space-paper-lim-oct-2013.pptx
Manlow, V. and Nobbs, K. (2016), *“An exploration of the form and function of ‘third space’ within luxury flagship store format”*, In Fashion Spaces Geographical, Physical and Virtual, Isabel Cantista Ed. Portugal, Almedina.
Marian, P. (2018), “Retail priorities 2018”, *WGSN.*
Mehrabian, A. and Russell, J.A. (1974), *An approach to environmental psychology.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Meshram, K. and O’Cass, A. (2013), “Empowering senior citizens via third places: research driven model development of seniors’ empowerment and social engagement in social places, *Journal of Services Marketing”,* Vol. 27 (2), pp.141-154.
Mikunda, C. (2007), *Brand lands, hot spots and cool spaces: welcome to the third place and the total marketing experience*. London. Kogan Page.
Miles, M.B. and Huberman, M.A. (2013), *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd Edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Miles, M.B., Huberman, M.A. and Saldana, J. (2014), *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*, 3rd Edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Mintel. (2017), *Clothing Retailing UK*, Mintel Group Ltd, October 2017.
Nobbs, K. (2014), “Dwelling Time: On examining experience economy and the third space in fashion”, *Vestoj – The Journal of Satorial Matters* (5 – On Slowness).
Oldenburg, R. and Brissett, D. (1982), “The third place”, *Qualitative Sociology*, pp.265-284.
Oldenburg, R. (1989), *The great good place.* New York: Marlowe and Company.
Oldenburg, R. (1999), *The great good place,* 2nd Ed. New York: Marlowe and Company.
Oldenburg, R. (2002), *Celebrating the third place: Inspiring stories about the “great good places” at the heart of our communities.* New York: Marlowe.
Parker, L.D. (2009) "Photo-elicitation: an ethno- historical accounting and management research prospect", *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal,* Vol. 22 (7), pp.1111-1129.
Patton, M.Q. (2002), *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Pine, J.B. and Gilmore, J.H. (1999), *The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
Pine, J.B. and Gilmore, J.H. (2011), *The Experience Economy*. Revised Edition. Boston MA: Harvard Business School Press.
Prahalad, C.K. and Ramaswamy, V. (2004), “Co-creating unique value with customers”, *Strategy and Leadership*, Vol. 32 (3), pp.4-9.
Rosenbaum, M.S. (2006), “Exploring the social supportive role of third space in consumers’ lives”, *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 9 (1), pp.59-72.
Rosenbaum, M.S., Ward, J., Walker, B.A. and Ostrom, A.L. (2007), “A cup of coffee with a dash of love: An investigation of commercial social support and third-place attachment,” *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 10 (1), pp.43-59.
Rosenbaum, M.S. (2009), “Restorative Servicescapes: restoring directed attention in third places”, *Journal of Service Management,* Vol. 20 (2) 173-191.

Rosenbaum, M.S., Sweeney, J.C. and Windhorst, C. (2009), “The restorative qualities of an activity-based, third place café for seniors”, *Seniors Housing and Care Journal*, Vol. 17 (1), pp.39-54.
Rosenbaum, M.S. and Smallwood, J. (2013), “Cancer resource centers as third places”, *Journal of Sevices Marketing*, Vol. 27 (6), pp.472-484.
Rosenbaum, M.S., Otalora, M.L. and Ramirez, G.C. (2016), “The restorative potential of shopping malls”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services,* Vol. 31, pp.157-165.
Saldana, J. (2016), *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, 3rd Edition, Sage.
Saunter, L. (5 Jul, 2015), “Hybrid Lifestyle Stores - Retail Update”, *WGSN.*
Saunter, L. (2018), “Shopper forecast 2018”, *WGSN.*
Schmitt, B. (1999), “Experiential marketing”, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 15, No.1-3, pp.53-67.
Schmitt, B. and Zarantonello, L. (2015), "Consumer Experience and Experiential Marketing: A Critical Review", *Review of Marketing Research*, Vol 10, pp. 25-61.
Silberer, G. and Wang, H. (2009). “Shopping With Consumers as a research method”, 8th International Congress of Marketing Trends.
Silverman, D. (2014), *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5th Ed. London: Sage Publications Limited
Simmel, G. (1949), “The sociology of sociability”, *American Journal of Sociology*, LV, pp.254-261.
Sherry Jr., J.F. (1998), *Introduction. Servicescapes: The concept of place in contemporary markets*, NTC Business Books.
Slater, A. and Koo, H.J. (2010), “A new type of third place?”, *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 3 (2), pp.99-112.
Soukup, C. (2006), “Computer-mediated communication as a virtual third place: building Oldenburg’s great good places on the world wide web”, *New Media and Society*, Vol. 8 (3), pp.421-440.
Stein, A. and Rameseshan, B. (2016), “Towards the identification of customer experience touch point elements”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 30, pp.8-19.
Stephens, D. (2018) “The future of retail and the offline escape”, Retail Prophet. http://www.retailprophet.com/future-retail-offline-escape/ (accessed 9 April, 2018).
Stevens, B. (2017), “Sector Wars: Can mid-market retailers survive without change?” Retail Gazette. https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2017/07/sector-wars-mid-market-retailers-survive-change/ (accessed 30 Aug, 2018).
Szymanska, A., Walker, J. and Van-Laere, S. (2017), “Experience 2020”, *LS:N Global.*
Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2010), *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research,* 2nd Ed. Sage Publications.
Thompson, C.J. and Arsel, Z. (2004), “The Starbucks brandscape and consumers (anticorporate) experiences of glocalization”, *Journal of consumer research,* Vol. 31(3), pp.631-642.
Tombs, A. and McColl-Kennedy, J.R. (2003), “The social servicescape: a conceptual model”, *EMAC Conference*, 2003.
Tuan, Y-F. (2001), *Space and Place*, 25th Ed. University of Minnesota, USA.
Turley, L.W. and Milliman, R.E. (2000), “Atmospheric Effects on Shopping Behavior”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vo. 49, pp.193-211.

Vargo, S. and Lusch, R. (2008), “Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 (1), pp.1-10.
Verhoef, P.C., Lemon, K.N, Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M. and Watson, T.J., (2011), “Ethnography, Reality, and Truth: The Vital Need for Studies of “How Things Work” in Organizations and Management”, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 48 (1), pp.202–217.
Waxman, L.K. (2006), “The coffee shop: social and physical factors influencing place attachment”, *Journal of Interior Design*, Vol. 31 (3), pp.35-53.
Waxman, L., Clemons, S., Banning, J. and McKelfresh, D. (2007), “The library as place: Providing students with opportunities for socialization, relaxation, and restoration”, *New Library World*, Vol. 108 (9/10), pp.424-434.

Figure 1: Third Place form & function dimensions model (authors own)

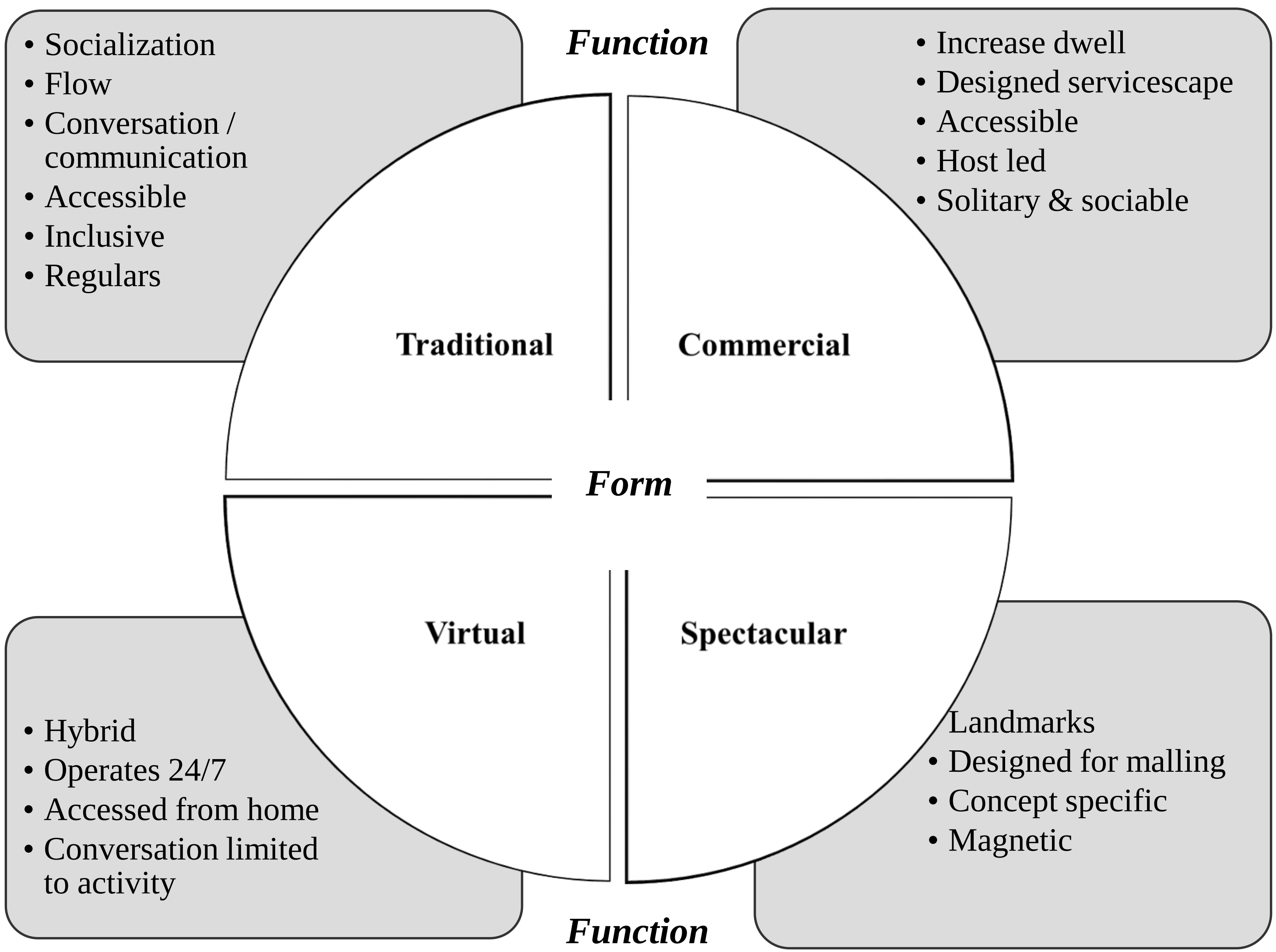


Figure 2: Pine and Gilmore's Realms of Experience Model (2011)

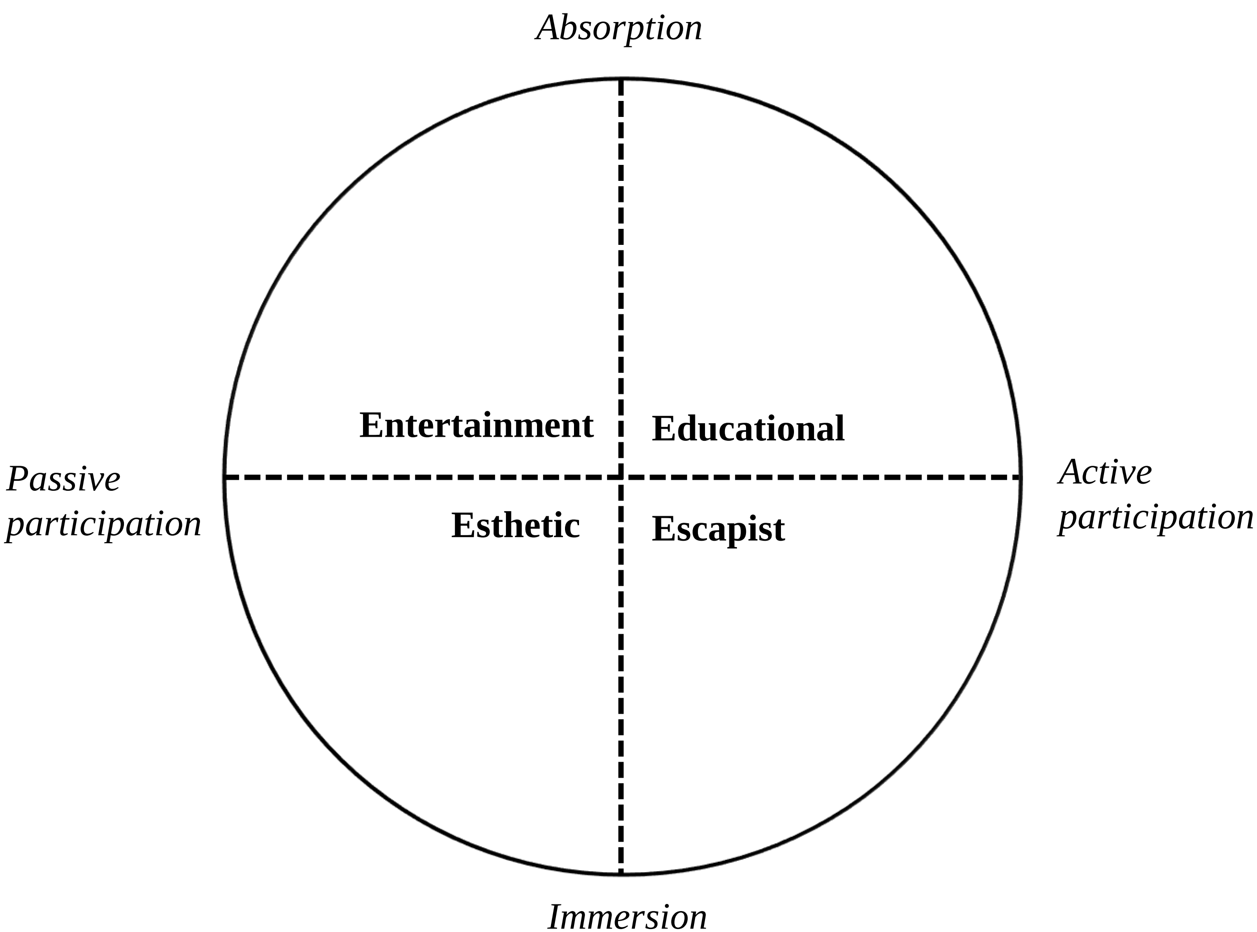
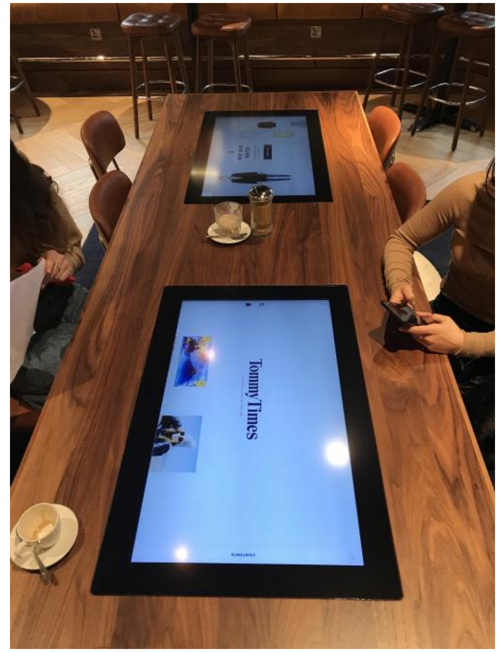


Figure 3: Third place, mass market, Topman's barbers, London

Figure 4: Third place, mid-market, Jigsaw's cafe, London

Figure 5: Third place, luxury market, Tommy Hilfiger's interactive café, London



N.B. pictures uploaded as separate jpeg files

Figure 6: consumer ‘impressions’ of third places word-cloud

Figure 7: third place 'likes' word-cloud

Figure 8: third place 'dislikes' word-cloud

Figure 9: Third place dimensions model

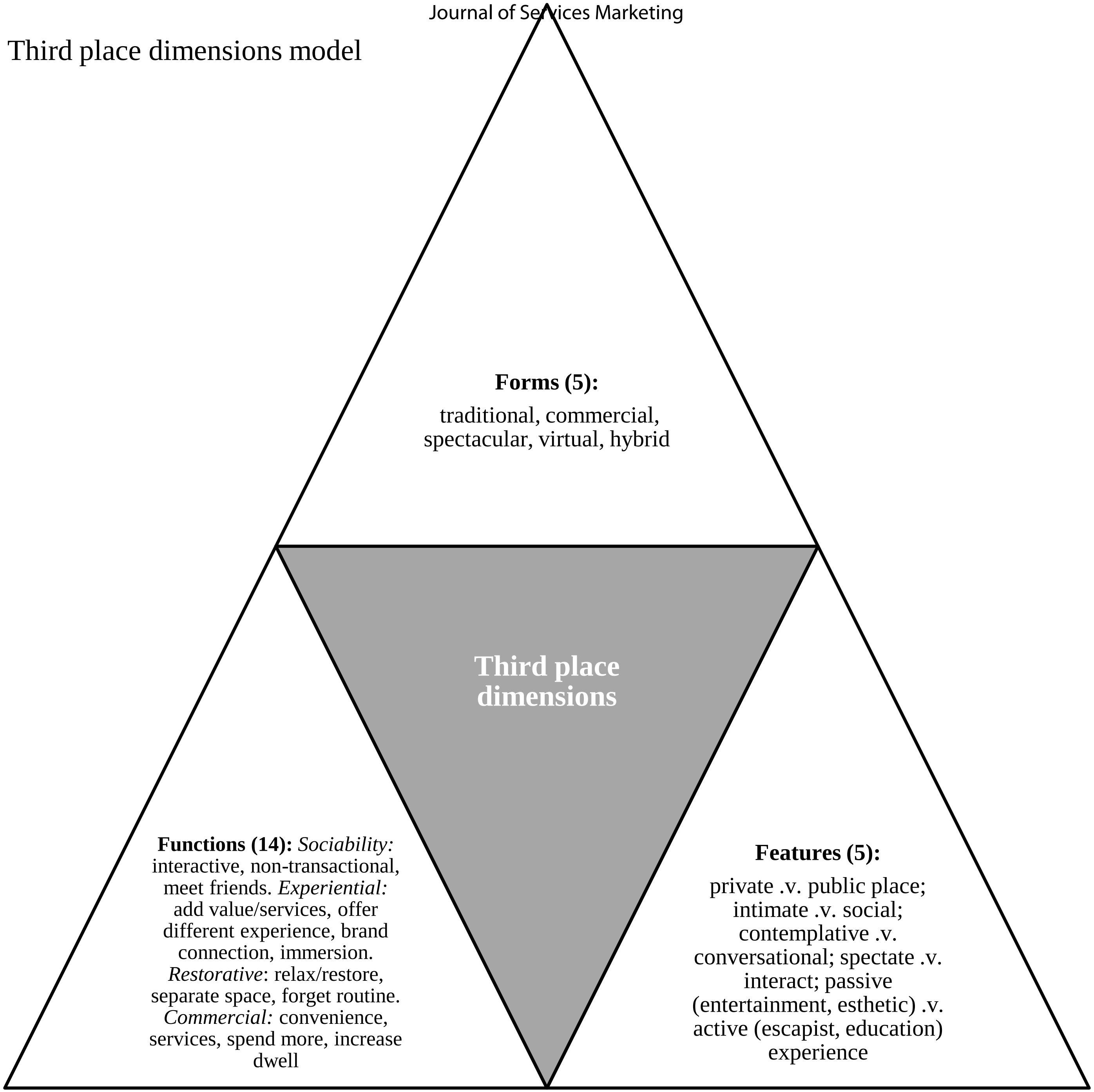


Table 1: Fashion practices of experiential third places

Retailer	Fashion 3rd places	3rd place typology (Crick, 2011)	Experience typology (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)
Patagonia, NY	cafe, yoga sessions, community work space, mending lessons	traditional, commercial, spectacular	educational, esthetic, escapist
Nike Town, NY, London	sports club/s, personal run analysis, museum (town square)	commercial, spectacular	entertainment, escapist, educational, esthetic
Alfred Dunhill, London	Screening room, barbers / male grooming, cafe	traditional, commercial, spectacular	entertainment, escapist, esthetic
Rapha Cycle Club	cafe, community hub	traditional, commercial	esthetic, escapist
Thomas's (Burberry), London	restaurant / cafe	traditional, commercial	esthetic
Ralph's (Ralph Lauren) & Polo Bar, NY	cafe & restaurant	traditional, commercial	esthetic
Sweaty Betty, London	yoga / sports club	traditional, commercial	escapist, entertainment
Space Ninety 8 (Urban Outfitters), NY	restaurant, 2 bars, gallery	traditional, commercial	esthetic, escapist, entertainment
Merci, Paris	cafe, restaurant, bookstore	traditional, commercial, spectacular	esthetic, escapist
10 Corso Como, Milan	restaurant, gallery, bookstore	traditional, commercial, spectacular	esthetic, escapist

(authors own, compiled from trade sources)

Table 2: Retail and consumer sample

Phase 1 - observation	2016	2018	Notes
Retailers – mass	22	22	*Difference in # stores: Store closures and/or closed for refurbishment
Retailers - mid	37	34	
Retailers - luxury	39	39	
Total # retailers	98	95	
Phase 2 – SWC # consumers	42		

Table 3: Prevalence of fashion third places - 2016-2018

Market level	mass	mid	luxury	total
# third places 2016	11	21	8	40
# stores with third places 2016	5 (22)	13 (37)	5 (39)	23 (98)
# third places within one store 2016	1 to 5	1 to 3	1 to 2	1 to 5
# third places 2018	12	19	22	53
# stores with third places 2018	6 (22)	12 (34)	12 (39)	30 (95)
# third places within one store 2018	1 to 5	1 to 2	1 to 3	1 to 5

Table 4: Frequency of fashion third place forms

3rd place	2016				2018			
	mass	mid	luxury	total	mass	mid	luxury	total
café/bar/restaurant	4	5	2	**11**	4	8	9	**21**
barbers/hairdressers	2	2	0	**4**	2	2	1	**5**
beauty/grooming	2	2	1	**5**	2	1	2	**5**
tech lounge	0	3	2	**5**	0	0	0	**0**
reading lounge/library	0	1	2	**3**	0	1	1	**2**
gallery/exhibition	0	1	0	**1**	0	1	1	**2**
music lounge	0	1	1	**2**	0	0	1	**1**
workshop	0	1	0	**1**	0	0	0	**0**
repair station	0	1	0	**1**	0	0	0	**0**
photobooth	1	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	**0**
outdoor relaxation zone	0	1	0	**1**	0	0	0	**0**
active sports zone	0	1	0	**1**	1	4	0	**5**
games/entertainment zone	0	1	0	**1**	0	0	1	**1**
craftmanship bar	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	1	**1**
personalisation station	2	1	0	**3**	3	2	5	**10**
Total	**11**	**21**	**8**	**40**	**12**	**19**	**22**	**53**

Table 5: Fashion third place functions from a consumer perspective

Theoretical category	Third place function	Informant quotes
Sociability (Bitner, 1982)	interactive place non-transactional place to meet friends	"fun to hang out", "relax with friends" "a place to eat/have a drink", "community building"
Experiential (Pine and Gilmore, 2011)	adds value / services different experience offered brand connection immersive space	"different to online experience", "gives feeling of luxury" "I like it personalised to me", "engages me", "brand gets me", "fun", "amusing"
Restorative (Rosenbaum, 2009)	place to relax/restore separate space to store place to forget daily routine	"to chill-out", "to rest, "refreshing", "to do yoga and have fresh smoothie in store is great", "quiet, peaceful spaces"
Commercial (Mikunda, 2007)	convenience complimentary services spend more money increase dwell-time	"spend more money", "spend more time" "give me a reason to visit the store", "convenient to have café in same place as shop", "increase social media presence"

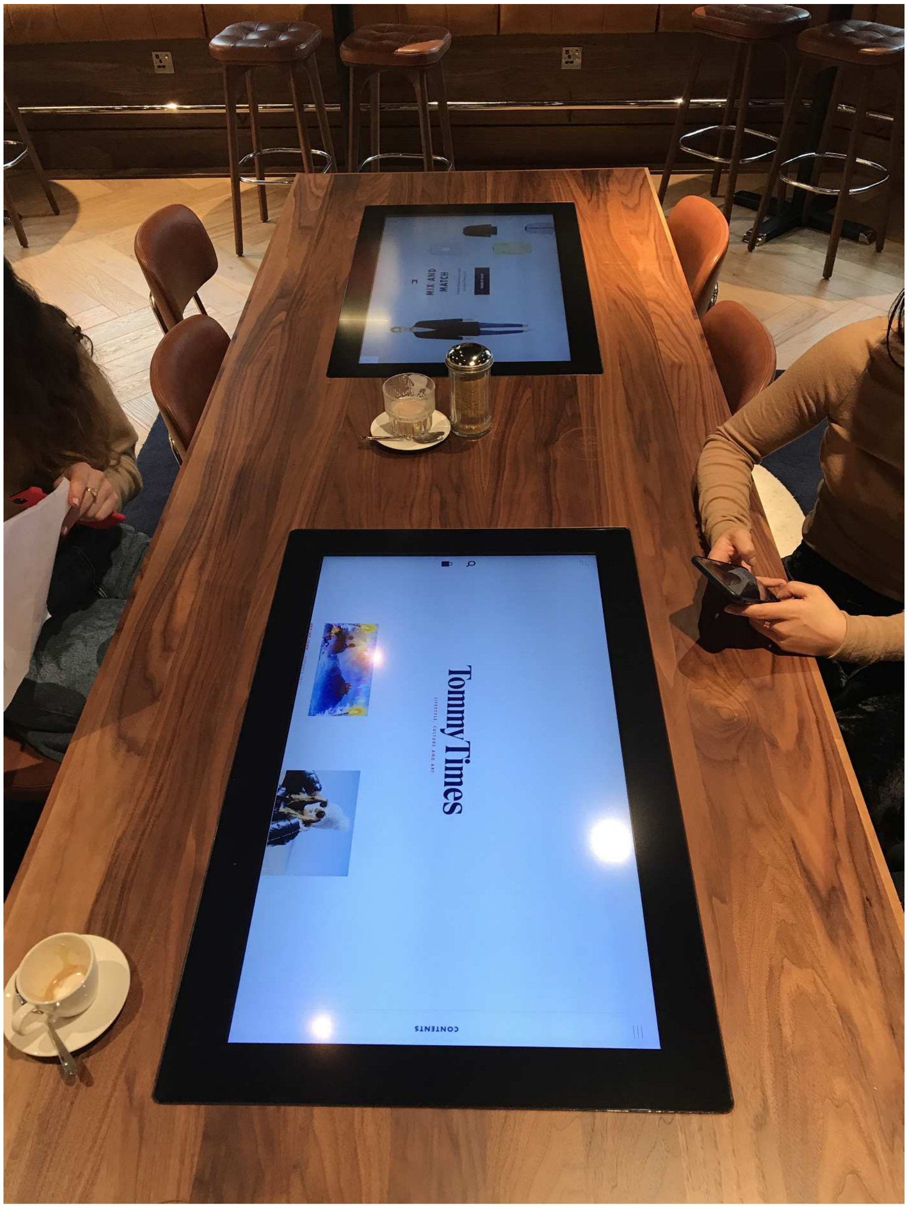
Table 6: Fashion third place typologies according to Crick (2011) and Pine and Gilmore (2011)

		2016		2018	
Retailer	**Third place**	**third place typology**	**experience typology**	**third place typology**	**experience typology**
Mass	café/bar/ restaurant, barbers/ hairdressers, beauty/grooming, photobooth, personalisation station	Traditional (4)	Entertainment (1)	Traditional (5)	Entertainment (3)
		Commercial (6)	Esthetic (5)	Commercial (6)	Esthetic (0)
		Spectacular (0)	Educational (0)	Spectacular (0)	Educational (1)
		Virtual (0)	Escapist (3)	Virtual (0)	Escapist (5)
		Hybrid (0)		Hybrid (0)	
Mid	café/bar/restaurant, barbers/hairdressers, beauty/grooming, tech lounge, reading lounge, music lounge, workshop, repair station, outdoor relaxation zone, games/entertainment zone, personalisation station	Traditional (9)	Entertainment (8)	Traditional (8)	Entertainment (10)
		Commercial (7)	Esthetic (12)	Commercial (10)	Esthetic (0)
		Spectacular (1)	Educational (2)	Spectacular (1)	Educational (5)
		Virtual (3)	Escapist (8)	Virtual (2)	Escapist (9)
		Hybrid (3)		Hybrid (2)	
Luxury	café/bar/restaurant, barbers/hairdressers, beauty/grooming, tech lounge, reading lounge, games/entertainment zone, craftmanship bar, personalisation station	Traditional (2)	Entertainment (4)	Traditional (9)	Entertainment (11)
		Commercial (5)	Esthetic (2)	Commercial (15)	Esthetic (4)
		Spectacular (0)	Educational (0)	Spectacular (3)	Educational (1)
		Virtual (1)	Escapist (4)	Virtual (0)	Escapist (5)
		Hybrid (1)		Hybrid (0)	
Overall	15 different formats of third place in retail settings	Traditional (14)	Entertainment (13)	Traditional (22)	Entertainment (24)
		Commercial (18)	Esthetic (19)	Commercial (31)	Esthetic (4)
		Spectacular (1)	Educational (2)	Spectacular (4)	Educational (7)
		Virtual (4)	Escapist (15)	Virtual (2)	Escapist (19)
		Hybrid (4)		Hybrid (2)	

typologies not mutually exclusive

341x457mm (72 x 72 DPI)

1151x863mm (72 x 72 DPI)



1066x1422mm (72 x 72 DPI)

Appendix 1: fashion retailer sample database

Mass (including value)		Mid/Premium		Luxury (including a
Retailer	**Location**	**Retailer**	**Location**	**Retailer**
Oasis	Tottenham Court Road	Jigsaw	Duke Street	Burberry
Topshop	Oxford Street	Whistles	South Moulton Street	Dover St. Market
Warehouse	Oxford Street	Hobbs	Regent Street	Alfred Dunhill
River Island	Oxford Street	Reiss	Barratt Street	Hunter
New Look	Oxford Street	J Crew	Regent Street	Alexander Wang
Mango	Regent Street	Arket	Regent Street	Balmain
Zara	Oxford Street	Levi's	Regent Street	Belstaff
Primark	Oxford Street	COS	Regent Street	D Squared
M&S	Oxford Street	& Other Stories	Regent Street	Hermes
Gap	Regent Street	French Connection	Oxford Street	Kenzo
H&M	Oxford Street	Rapha cycle club	Soho	Max Mara
Uniqlo	Oxford Street	Ted Baker & Moore	Shoreditch	Michael Kors
Bershka	Oxford Street	Niketown	Oxford Street	Coach
Footlocker	Oxford Street	Adidas	Oxford Street	Bally
Forever 21	Oxford Street	Anthropologie	Regent Street	Issey Miyake
Massimo Dutti	Oxford Street	Urban Outfitters	Oxford Street	Jimmy Choo
Miss Selfridge	Oxford Street	TOMS	Fouberts Place, Carnaby	Aquascutum
Monsoon	Oxford Street	Nudie Jeans	Shoreditch	Joseph
Next	Oxford Street	Lululemon	Regent Street	Chanel
Pull & Bear	Oxford Street	Superdry	Regent Street	Hardy Aimes
Topman	Oxford Street	Asics	Regent Street	LNCC
JD sports	Oxford Street	Diesel	Covent Garden	Bluebird (relocating)
22		Hackett	Regent Street	Alexander McQueen
		Karen Millen	Covent Garden	Paul Smith
		APC	Soho	Saint Laurent
		Abercrombie & Fitch	Saville Row	Christian Dior
		Melissa Galeria	Covent Garden	DKNY
		Folk	Soho	Emporio Armani
		Acne Studios	Duke Street	Gucci
		Wolf & Badger	Duke Street	Louis Vuitton
		All Saints	Regent Street	Mulberry
		Barbour	Regent Street	Ralph Lauren
		Calvin Klein	Regent Street	Prada
		Desigual	Regent Street	Stella McCartney
		34		Matches
		Jac & Jack (closed 20	Soho	Hugo Boss
		Ben Sherman (closed	Covent Garden	Tommy Hilifiger
		Alex Eagle (closed 20	Walton St. Chelsea	Kate Spade
				Longchamp
				39
95	3 stores closed down or closed for re-fit			

Appendix 1: fashion retailer sample database

ffordable luxury)
Location
Regent Street
Haymarket
Mayfair
Regent Street
Albemarle St, Mayfair
South Audley St, Mayfair
Lamb st, Shoreditch
Conduit St
New Bond Street
Bruton St, Mayfair
Old Bond Street
Bond Street
New Bond Street
New Bond Street
Brook St. Mayfair
New Bond Street
Brompton Road
Brompton Road
New Bond Street
Saville Row
Dalston
Kings Road
Dover Street
Covent Garden
Dover Street
Conduit St
Old Bond Street
New Bond Street
Old Bond Street
New Bond Street
New Bond Street
New Bond Street
Old Bond Street
Bruton St, Mayfair
Marylebone High St
Regent Street
Regent Street
Regent Street
Regent Street

Acknowledgements

I thank the postgraduate Fashion Retail Research group for their contribution to the data collection process of this research.