MONASH UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

WHAT IS RETAIL CENTRE CONVENIENCE? A MODEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow

Working Paper 59/00
October 2000

Abstract

Across many markets, the unplanned centre (also referred to as the downtown or town centre) continues to lose market share to the planned shopping centre. This trend is not new. Some unplanned centres have been forfeiting market share for more than half a century.

Efforts to revive the unplanned centre have often proven less than successful. One possible explanation is that convenience has been largely ignored as a strategy for rejuvenation. Research into retail centre patronage has consistently found that convenience does not serve as a salient determinant over consumer spatial behaviour. Yet other studies continue to suggest the emergence of a convenience-oriented society.

This paper offers a more conclusive definition of retail centre convenience to its predecessors; one that incorporates its dimensions and its attributes. In doing so, it highlights the need to treat existing patronage studies with caution, and the need for research to revisit the convenience concept.

WHAT IS RETAIL CENTRE CONVENIENCE? A MODEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

The unplanned centre has historically served as the economic and social centre of its hinterland. Its supremacy however has been challenged. While the products it sells have changed dramatically, the unplanned centre itself has changed little (Davies and Champion 1983). Faced with increasing congestion, large numbers of stores exceeding the possibilities of choice, and spread over such an area that walking distances became prohibitive (Agergard, Olsen and Allpass 1970), the opportunity for a competitor to offer an improved shopping environment was ripe. Although the unplanned unplanned centre remains a major force in retailing, its share of overall sales has declined substantially relative to those of the planned shopping centre, often resulting in its demise and decay (Carlson 1991; Schiller 1994).

Some fifty years ago, a new retailing phenomenon began to appear.

> "In contrast with the uncontrolled center is the controlled shopping center ... so planned that all its development may be regulated for the benefit of both the community and the center itself ... Through their utilization there would be no reason for the shopper to cruise up and down the main shopping areas of the city, burning up gasoline and exhausting patience, seeking a suitable parking space; nor would he be forced to spend half the day riding the bus to and from town, finally stumbling home, exhausted, with arms full of packages. How pleased he would be to reach the center quickly, park easily, and shop for all needed merchandise with a minimum expenditure of time and temper" (Mertes 1953, p 375-6).

Before the unprecedented growth of planned centres, the unplanned centre was characterised by its large department stores and numerous shopping stores. These occupied choice street level frontage, with service establishments relegated to upper story offices (Proudfoot 1937). Fifty years later, planned centres had become the preferred environment for retailers of shopping goods, with unplanned centres dominated by service functions (Morrill 1987).

In the USA, in the period 1964-1980, the number of planned shopping centres surged from 7600 to 22050 (Davies and Rogers 1984), equating to one planned centre for every 10000 consumers. In the same period, sales jumped from $8 billion to $38 billion, accounting for 13% of G.N.P (Feinberg & Meoli 1991), and more than 50% of total retail sales (Ghosh 1994). In a typical month, 174.4 million adults or 94% of the population aged over eighteen, shopped at planned centres in the U.S.A. The American consumer spent more time in planned centres than anywhere else outside of home and work (Stoffel 1988). By comparison, in the period 1977-1984, while overall retail expenditure was increasing by 12%, sales in unplanned centres fell by 50% (Alzubaidi, Vignali, Davies and Schmidt 1997). As a result, the planned centre came to be known as the "Main Street of America" (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1993).

In Canada, it is estimated that planned centres account for 60% of all retail sales; the West Edmonton Mall accounting for 1% of all retail sales on its own (Jones and Simmons 1990). Planned centres have had a similar impact in Australia, with the retail share of its largest cities plummeting as a result of the growth of planned suburban centres (Watkins and Whitlock 1990).

While the planned shopping centre industry may have matured in the USA, it is still evolving in other markets (Prendergast, Marr and Jarratt 1998), and this includes Australia. Planning bodies have taken heart in the expectation that the wheel of retailing will bring to Australia the same demise of the planned centre, that occured in the USA. There are however two significant differences between Australian and American planned centres; (1) whereas many American malls are inconveniently located some distance from shoppers homes (Engel et al 1993; Roy 1994), Australia's planned centres are typically located in affluent, densely populated areas; and (2) whereas the American planned centre is often characterised by its excessive size and parking difficulties (Loudon and Della-Bitta 1993), Australia's planned centres are smaller than their

American counterparts, and it is her unplanned centres that are characterised by parking problems (Jamieson 1999). As such, it is Australia's unplanned centres that continue to show symptoms of retail blight. Without significant intervention, the imminent demise of the planned centre that many planning bodies saw as the salvation of the unplanned centre, may never eventuate in Australia.

WHY PLANNED CENTRES WON

The planned centre emerged as the dominant retail environment due to the numerous advantages it offers investors, owners, retailers, and most importantly, consumers. These advantages are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of planned and unplanned centre attributes

The Planned Centre	The Unplanned Centre
* easier access and minimal traffic friction	* traffic barriers and traffic congestion
* parking provision in proportion to centre size	* poor parking provision
* climate control	* vulnerable to weather elements
* coordinated decor	* decor determined by individual retailers
* better quality consumer amenities	* limited amenities: often poorly maintained
* ability to plan the "ideal" mix	* tenant mix determined by market forces
* higher order goods provide for comparison shopping	* shoppers often forced to visit multiple centres due to insufficient depth of higher order goods
* minimal duplication of lower order goods	* excessive duplication of lower order goods
* recreational appeal serves as key drawcard	* "crowded, noisy, stressful, un-safe"
* controlled competition	* excessive competition
* merchandise variety within a compact area	* stores are often spread over a large area
* retailers separated from service providers	* retailers often dispersed by dead frontage
* compatible stores are located together	* location is determined by market forces
* unified management, marketing and image	* laissez-faire approach
* greater spatial flexibility	* fragmented land ownership limits flexibility
* the centre provides many shopping services	* service is limited to actions of single retailers
* coordinated and extended trading hours	* limited and varied trading hours
* renovations are coordinated to minimise impact	* number of stakeholders complicates renovations
* can coordinate response to market change	* unified change almost impossible
* designed to accommodate major stores	* high cost & limited land flexibility deters majors
* pedestrian friendly environment	* heavy traffic & physical layout increase the effort involved in pedestrian shopping
* dedicated delivery zones	* delivery congestion
* modern appearance	* aging retail facilities

(Adapted from Berry 1979; Yale and Venkatesh 1986; Rees 1987; Gransby 1988; Alexander 1988; Berman and Evans 1989; Miller 1995; Ander 1998; Evans, Christiansen and Gill 1996; Dholakia 1999).

In summary, these attributes provide the planned centre with a substantial competitive advantage. While its many strengths are diverse, there is one underlying theme that characterises the planned centre - convenience (Kaufman 1996; Eppli & Shilling 1995). The shift in preference from the unplanned to the planned centre, and the increasing threat of the internet are attributed to consumers growing demand for convenience. At the micro level, retailers have also recognised consumers' growing need for convenience (Salmon 1996; Ander 1998), and begun reducing transaction times, offering credit services and extending

trading hours. And yet, efforts to rejuvenate the unplanned centre have often ignored convenience. Traditional efforts to revitalise the unplanned centre include;

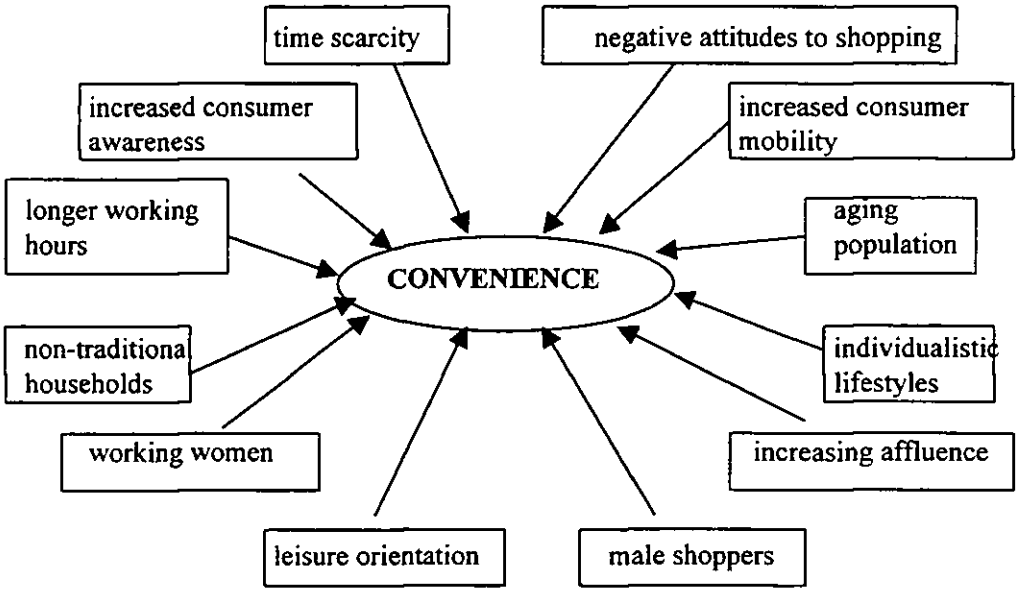
1. infrastructural strategies (eg parking, enclosure, pedestrianisation etc);
2. changing the tenant mix (eg including a major attractor, food courts etc);
3. aesthetic and lifestyle strategies (eg adopting a recreational focus);
4. promotion (eg advertising, special events);
5. town centre management (TCM).

Implementation of many of these strategies has however, often proved disastrous (Worthington 1998). Pedestrianisation has resulted in urban wastelands, advertising has failed to persuade a more discerning consumer, and the unplanned centre often lacks the necessary retail elements to attract the recreational shopper. And while TCM provides the unplanned centre with some degree of control, it serves more as a mechanism for implementing strategies, than as a strategy in itself. Most importantly, each of these strategies fails to address the major disadvantage, convenience.

CONVENIENCE IS THE KEY

The importance of convenience is emphasised not only by competitive forces, but other environmental forces as well (refer figure 1). In combination, these factors suggest that convenience should provide a realistic strategy for the revitalisation of unplanned centres.

Figure 1: Environmental trends behind the emergence of a convenience oriented society



Despite representing a key difference between the planned and unplanned centre (Reimers & Clulow 2000B;C;D;E;F), convenience has received little academic attention. Scholars have traditionally viewed convenience as a concept favoured only by the time or cost conscious consumer with a negative attitude to shopping (refer Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg 1977; Bellenger and Korgaonkar 1980). As such, convenience oriented behaviour is often equated with rational behaviour, and its theoretical imperfections (refer Harrison 1995). For this reason, convenience has been tainted as a theoretical concept with limited purposeful application in the "real world" of retailing.

CONVENIENCE: AN ILL-DEFINED CONCEPT

Although its importance has been noted in retail literature, convenience has yet to be properly defined and operationalised by marketers (Brown 1989; Kaufman 1996). In fact, the majority of studies have failed to even offer a definition of convenience. Rather than actually define it, scholars have typically used the term "convenience" to describe what is often a loose association or narrow group of attributes. Furthermore, instead of beginning with an operational definition of convenience, its attributes are often only identified in the final process of factor analysis. Hence by working backwards, studies have simply identified some of its attributes, rather than actually define its meaning or purpose.

A collated definition from the Collins, Oxford and Webster dictionaries portrays convenience as that which is agreeable to the needs or purpose, ease in use, favourable to comfort or savings of trouble, at hand or easily accessible. It would appear however that the majority of studies have only seized upon the last descriptor, *"at hand or easily accessible"*, because academic definitions are often limited to spatial descriptions. As Brown (1989) points out, dictionary definitions of convenience include a reference to comfort, and therefore a psychological dimension. In fact the greater part of its definition suggests that convenience occurs when the barriers to the enjoyment of an activity are removed. In other words, convenience occurs when the costs of an action are reduced or eliminated. As such, before proceeding to identify the attributes that constitute shopping convenience, it is first necessary to identify its costs, or dimensions as they are referred to by Gehrt and Yale (1993).

THE COSTS OF SHOPPING

Retail literature identifies the costs of shopping as; (1) the effort or energy expended; (2) the economic cost or price of a product; (3) the cost of obtaining information about alternatives; (4) the opportunity cost of having to forego competing activities; (5) spatial costs; and (6) temporal costs (Downs 1961; West, Von Hohenbalken and Kroner 1985); Ingene and Ghosh 1990; Eppli and Benjamin 1994; Salmon 1996). It is interesting to note that while earlier studies failed to identify its costs, academics have long recognised their importance. Temporal and effort factors (Bellenger and Korgaonkar 1980), temporal and economic factors (Lentnek, Harwitz and Narula 1981), spatial and economic factors (Narula, Harwitz and Lentek 1983), and spatial and temporal factors (Hudson 1974) have all been recognised for their influence over shopping behaviour. Many of these costs are also inter-related. Time not only consists of a temporal aspect, but economic and spatial aspects as well (Feldman and Hornik 1981). Temporal and economic costs are linked in that consumers will discontinue shopping once the marginal expected costs of search time exceed the marginal expected gains in price saving (Stigler 1961).

Although economic factors, such as the price of a product, have been identified as a cost of shopping (Downs 1961; Ingene and Ghosh 1990), they are largely beyond the control of the retail centre and therefore do not relate directly to retail centre convenience. Those elements of the retail centre that do bare an economic cost (eg the cost of intra-centre travel, increased fuel consumed while trying to locate a parking bay), are encapsulated within the spatial dimension and the economic costs it carries. Shopping also involves an opportunity cost (West, Von Hohenbalken and Kroner 1985; Eppli and Benjamin 1994), particularly for those consumers who regard it as a chore (Fram and Axelrod 1990; Meyer 1990; Fram 1992; Salmon 1996). However, as the opportunity cost is time that could be spent partaking in other activities, it is encaptured by the temporal dimension. At the level of the retail centre, search or information costs are incorporated within the spatial dimension. When a compact retail environment, complete with compatible clusters is created, it assists the shopper in the acquisition of information. Hence information costs are also included within the spatial dimension. Therefore, it is Gehrt and Yale's (1993) spatial, temporal and effort costs that are significant to the study of retail centre convenience. While previous studies have endeavoured to address many of the spatial and temporal costs of shopping, the inclusion of the energy/effort dimension is particularly important. Unplanned centres are often regarded as stressful shopping environments (Uzzell 1995). Because stress can influence patronage behaviour (Schultz 1997; Lewis and Bridger 1999), the effort involved in shopping represents a key dimension.

PAUCITY OF RESEARCH INTO THE CONCEPT OF "CONVENIENCE"

The potential contribution of many studies has been limited by their failure to link these dimensions to convenience. It was not until the late 1980's that scholars recognised the need to identify the dimensions of convenience before proceeding to measure its importance. This fact is important because the vast majority of research that downplays the significance of convenience, preceded this period. The one exception was the work of Downs (1961). Downs noted that in seeking convenience, the shopper sought to minimise three costs of consumption; money, time and energy. But it was nearly three decades before the dimensions of convenience were revisited. By this time, Brown (1989) proposed that convenience consisted of five dimensions; (1) time; (2) place; (3) ease of purchase; (4) ease of use; and (5) ease of execution. However, while important, Brown's contribution focused on the convenience of obtaining and using a product, rather than retail centre convenience. Gehrt and Yale (1993) were the first to specifically identify the temporal, spatial and energy/effort dimensions as they related to convenience. With each dimension consisting of several convenience oriented behaviours, their work did not relate specifically to retail centre convenience. It did however provide the first real academic description of convenience, and the foundation for its continued development.

The contribution made by Gehrt and Yale was an important one. Without an understanding of the dimensions of convenience, preceding studies had disagreed as to what constitutes the meaning of convenience. Some studies portrayed convenience as a conflicting term that incorporated opposing motives such as lower prices and negative attitudes towards shopping (see Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg 1977; Roy 1994). This contradicted other studies showing that the motivation to save time and money lay at opposite ends of a continuum (Gehrt, Yale and Lawson 1996), because many consumers are prepared to spend more to attain convenience (Stephenson and Willett 1969). As a result, the economic shopper typology utilised by Bellenger and associates has been further divided into price- and convenience-oriented typologies in subsequent studies (eg refer Schneider 1995). By moving prematurely from qualitative discovery to quantitative confirmation of the convenience construct, past research has over emphasised some dimensions and ignored others. This has led to its incomplete theoretical development (Yale and Venkatesh 1986; Gehrt and Yale 1993) and counter-intuitive findings (Reilly 1982).

RETAIL CENTRE CONVENIENCE

The ideal definition of convenience depends on the extent to which its attributes satisfy all dimensions of convenience. These dimensions have been identified as spatial costs, temporal costs and effort costs. However, endeavours to define convenience at the level of the retail centre have often been limited to spatial terms. In this context, the convenience afforded by location has been described as;

* the cost of travelling to a centre in terms of its location and access (Bellenger et al 1977);

* the distance between stores (Bucklin and Gautschi 1983);

The utilisation of such narrow descriptions has resulted in some contentious conclusions. For example, in defining convenience in terms of proximity to home, scholars have concluded that convenience is of limited appeal to an urbanised, mobile society (see Gentry and Burns 1977-78; Blakney and Sekely 1994). Such studies propose that outshoppers assign convenience lesser value, presumably on the basis that they are willing to incur greater spatial and temporal costs. Conclusions such as this however, contradict numerous other studies that have found consumers will out-shop in order to attain the convenience of greater merchandise variety (Lillis and Hawkins 1974), extended trading hours (Thompson 1971), and better parking facilities (Reynolds and Darden 1972; Samli and Uhr 1974). The question must also be asked: even if a retail centre is within close proximity, can it be considered convenient if stores are strung out over vast distances, or stores typically patronised in the same trip are geographically dispersed?

Others adopted a different perspective, defining convenience in terms of;

* merchandise variety (Berrell 1995; Kaufman 1996);
* proximity weighted by merchandise variety (Spencer 1978);
* access factors such as ease of arrival, parking and departure (Cymrot, Gelber and Cole 1982);
* proximity to home, parking, internal organisation, enclosure and cleanliness (Timmermans 1982);
* general availability, degree of traffic congestion, and general degree of difficulty in shopping (Howell and Rogers 1980);
* parking costs, parking convenience, travel time and public transport accessibility (Oppewal, Louviere and Timmermans 1994);
* location, parking, ease of way finding and trading hours (Bell 1999).

In spite of their broader scope, even these definitions are too narrow, or too ambiguous to serve any real academic purpose. This has undermined the potential contribution of several studies. For example:

1. In limiting the scope of convenience to "trip convenience", McCarthy (1980) ignored other convenience-oriented variables in his study such as trip comfort, trading hours, store-to-store access, merchandise variety and parking;

2. retail centre attributes such as merchandise variety, parking availability, traffic congestion, store hours and distances between shops have been identified as key attributes (see Timmermans 1980), but never defined as integral components of shopping convenience. For example, Gentry and Burns (1977-78) found that trading hours, parking, merchandise factors and comparative shopping are among the ten most important attributes influencing retail centre patronage. Due to their limited definition however, these attributes were never linked to convenience. Instead, convenience factors such as parking, convenience of layout, and availability of eating facilities and comfort areas, have been incorporated under entirely separate headings such as "overall dimension of facilities" (Nevin & Houston 1980; Houston & Nevin 1980);

3. Boedeker (1995) used "shopping efficiency" rather than convenience to describe the ability to complete all shopping in the one centre. Others have correctly identified one stop shopping as an essential component of convenience (Kaufman 1996), but ignored its other facets;

4. Bellenger et al's (1977) definition of convenience lead them to conclude that convenience shoppers do not assign the same value to merchandise variety as recreational shoppers, and that to attract the latter, a centre must offer "a wide variety under one roof" (pg 37-38). This is a somewhat contentious conclusion given that merchandise variety is essential to the provision of one stop shopping;

5. Timmermans, Van Der Heidjen and Westerveld (1982) were amongst the first to recognise the diverse nature of convenience, extending its meaning to include proximity to home, parking, internal organisation and enclosure. Indicative of the confused nature of earlier definitions however, they also included the attribute "cleanliness";

6. Some of the attributes used to describe and measure convenience were less than concise. For example, Howell and Rogers (1980) used the attributes "general availability" and "general degree of difficulty in shopping". The latter measure for example, could apply to shopping barriers with little or no association with convenience, such as crime. The attribute "internal organisation" (see Timmermans 1982) is also ambiguous because it could describe multiple attributes (eg the clustering of compatible stores, centre

layout, road or pedestrian networks, or the degree to which retail and non-retail businesses are separated).

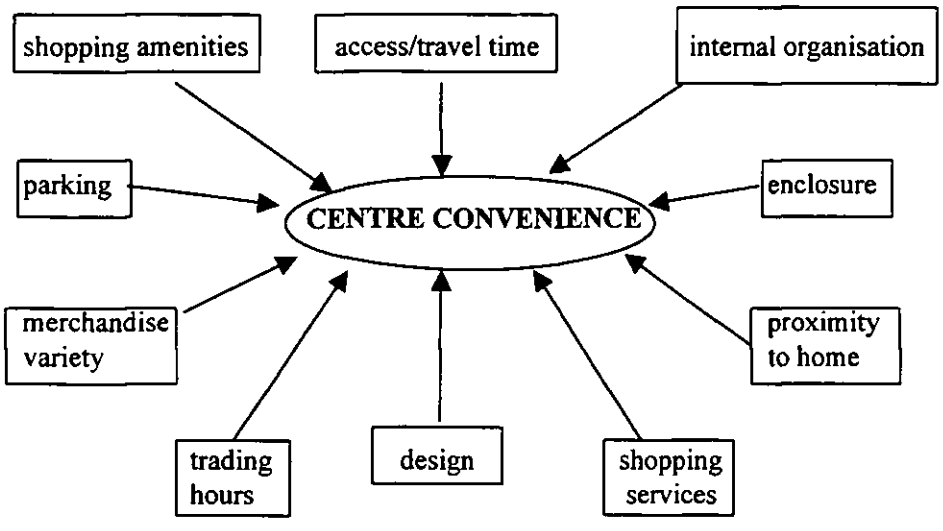
As the list of definitions illustrates, scholars have applied many diverse meanings to convenience. Cox's notion of aggregate convenience (1959, p 360) suggests that existing definitions fail to encapsulate the essence of retail centre convenience.

> "What marketing men seem to have in mind when they speak of consumer convenience in marketing relates to the physical aspects of the problem of clustering. But convenience relates to the consumer's whole structure of living, not to the isolated bits and pieces such as purchases of particular units of goods. The consumer buys many items, not one. What he should and presumably does do is to economize as best he can the cost or effort he expends in acquiring a varied assortment of goods and services over a long period, not the cost of effort expended on individual units. This can be put another way be (sic) saying that the consumer seeks aggregate convenience."

When existing definitions are evaluated in light of the spatial, temporal and effort dimensions, it becomes clear that no single description provides an adequate definition of retail centre convenience. Although a collated summary from retail literature offers a more detailed description (refer figure 2), it fails to provide a conclusive definition. For example, while attributes such as store compatibility (Eppli and Benjamin 1994), shopping services (Northern 1987) and centre layout contribute to shopping convenience, they have been largely overlooked in academic definitions. In fact of the nine aforementioned definitions of retail centre convenience, only one included four or more of the ten attributes. This could explain why convenience has been largely ignored as a means for retail centre rejuvenation.

Convenience occurs when the costs of an activity are reduced or eliminated. The cost of patronising a retail centre originates from spatial, temporal and energy/effort dimensions. The level of convenience offered by a retail centre is dependent upon the presence and nature of specific attributes minimising these costs. The review of retail literature has provided a basic framework for the relationship between these variables (refer figure 2).

Figure 2: Convenience attributes as identified by a review of literature



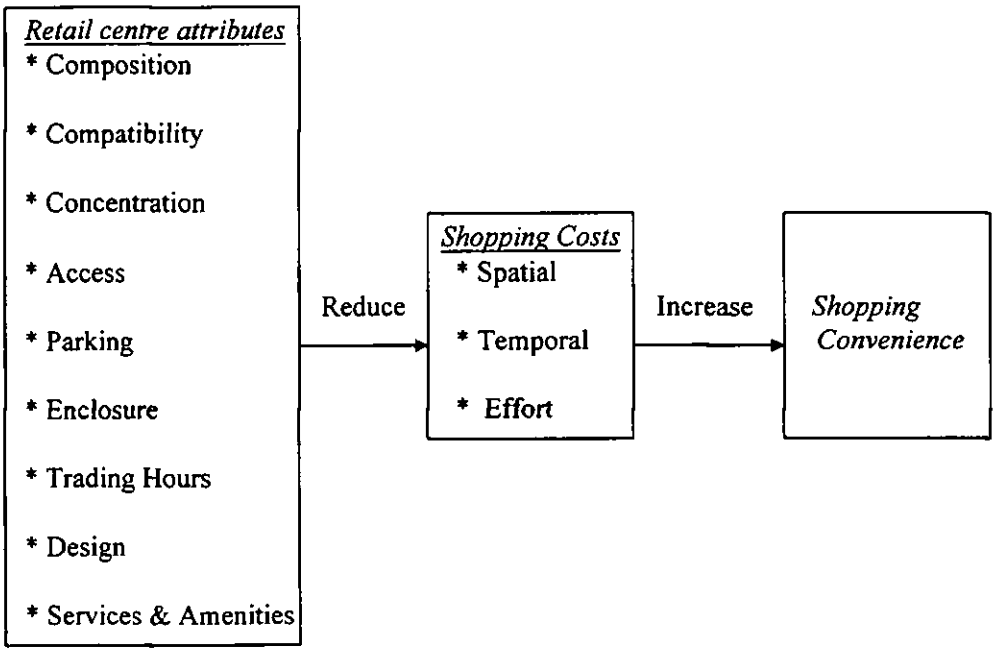
Although some minor modifications are necessary, this model represents the majority of convenience attributes identified by researchers over the past two decades. The ambiguous nature of the term "internal organisation" however, undermines its usefelness as a valid measure. In the proposed model it has therefore been divided into 3 separate forms of spatial convenience; *compatibility, retail concentration* and *design*. The attribute *proximity to home* also fails to serve as a valid measure of convenience. There are several

reasons for this. Firstly, our mobile population is less sensitive to distance, and more willing to bypass their nearest centre for greater convenience. Secondly, except for the initial decision to construct a retail centre, this attribute is beyond the control of retail planners. And thirdly, this measure would only be valid if either unplanned or planned centres consistently occupied remote locations. As both retail forms typically choose to locate in areas of high population density (Alexander and Muhlebach 1992), proximity to home does not offer any significant means of analysis. It is also necessary to distinguish between the attributes, *access* and *travel time*. Whereas *access* comprises such measures as traffic barriers and road infrastructure, *travel time* is a less descriptive measure due to the indirect nature of its relationship with the attributes of convenience. For example, while travel time will be influenced by the traffic logistics of a centre, it will also be determined by extraneous factors such as preferred driving speed, preferred shopping time, choice of route etc.

Considering the limitations of past attempts at a definition of convenience and taking account of the current influences over shopper behaviour, it is proposed that the following features represent the nine attributes of retail centre convenience (refer Figure 3). These are composition, compatibility, concentration, access, parking, trading hours, design, enclosure and shopping services and amenities. The importance of each of these attributes is determined by the value a consumer attaches to the three costs of shopping. When consumers are faced with the need to reduce the costs of shopping, it is likely they will seek out retail environments capable of minimising the spatial, temporal and effort costs of shopping. In Australia, it is the planned centre which is the most sort after retail environment for an ever emerging convenience-oriented society.

By manipulating these nine attributes, retail planners can reduce the costs of shopping and therefore increase shopping convenience.

Figure 3: The 9 attributes of retail centre convenience



Composition

The term composition refers to the size of a retail centre and its retail mix. Composition, or merchandise variety as it is otherwise known, is vital to convenience because it determines whether a retail centre can offer one stop shopping. By allowing the consumer to complete all their shopping in the one centre, it minimises the spatial, temporal and effort costs of shopping.

Compatibility

Compatibility refers to the degree to which two businesses interchange customers. When compatible stores are located together it minimises the distance the shopper must travel to compare and purchase goods typically purchased in the same trip. It also makes travelling between stores to compare prices, brands, styles and sizes more convenient. In reducing the spatial cost of intra-centre travel, it also reduces the time and effort involved in shopping.

Concentration

Concentration measures the degree to which store and non-store functions are segregated. By devolving non-store functions to the periphery of a centre, it creates a compact retail environment that minimises the spatial costs of shopping in much the same way as compatibility. Whereas compatibility offers convenience for single-purpose shopping, concentration simplifies the act of multipurpose shopping. Retail concentration encourages multipurpose shopping, comparison shopping, and impulse buying. This benefits consumer, retailer and retail centre alike. Conversely, a retail centre interspersed with numerous non-retail functions in its core complicates these actions, increasing the spatial, temporal and effort costs of shopping.

Access

Access refers to the convenience afforded by the traffic logistics of a retail centre, and its resultant impact upon the costs involved in travelling both to, and within, a retail centre. Traffic barriers such as traffic congestion, single lane roads, low speed limits and traffic lights increase the temporal and energy / effort costs of shopping. Public transport can remove effort costs almost entirely by transferring the effort involved in access from the consumer to the service provider.

Parking

Increasing the number of parking sites can reduce the time and distance necessary to locate a parking bay. The type of parking available (eg off road parking versus parking lots) influences the effort involved in parking itself. Parking therefore influences the temporal, spatial and effort dimensions of convenience.

Trading Hours

Although extended trading hours provide obvious temporal advantages, they can also minimise shopping effort by allowing consumers to shop during less congested periods.

Design

The physical size and layout of the centre determines the extent to which a compact retail core can be created. It therefore has the same influence over temporal, spatial and effort costs as concentration. For example, all things being equal, a consumer will have to travel further in a retail centre with a linear design, than one organised into a grid network.

Enclosure

By providing shoppers with protection from extreme weather elements, enclosure minimises the effort expended while shopping by enhancing personal comfort.

Shopping services and amenities

Shopping services and amenities such as baby sitting, coat checking, diaper changing stations and seating are designed primarily to reduce the effort involved in shopping. They can also exert an indirect influence over its other costs as well. For example, a baby sitting service, by freeing parents from the distraction of supervising children, can reduce the temporal cost of shopping.

Retail centre convenience can be defined as those attributes of a retail centre that minimise the involuntary expenditure of the temporal, spatial and energy/effort costs of shopping. When the nine attributes in figure 3 are compared with existing definitions, it provides an alternative rationale to the counter-intuitive research on the convenience concept. No existing definition incorporates more than two of the nine attributes. Hence, the low importance assigned to convenience may have more to do with academic definitions than consumer attitudes.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A key objective of this paper is to provide a more conclusive definition of retail centre convenience. If convenience is to serve as a valid means of rejuvenating the unplanned centre however, research must go much further. While several scholars have postulated that the planned centre offers consumers a more convenient shopping environment (eg see Eppli and Shilling 1995; Kaufman 1996), there is a dearth of quantitative research to empirically prove this notion. Even if planned and unplanned centres differ in terms of the provision of shopping convenience, further research is necessary to determine whether consumers perceive such a difference, and how important it is, in influencing their patronage decisions. Most importantly, many of the studies that have served to dismiss convenience as a key influence over patronage, have employed less than conclusive definitions. Armed with a more encompassing definition, it is time to re-visit the convenience construct.

SUMMARY

The passing of the last millenium heralded the end of an era where convenience-oriented consumers were prepared to patronise inconvenient retail facilities. First the emergence of the planned centre, and then the arrival of the internet bore testimony to this fact. Individual stores have also responded to consumers growing need for convenience by providing store directories, price scanners in aisles, and improved credit and checkout services. And yet convenience has traditionally been overlooked as a means of rejuvenating the unplanned centre.

Such a counter-intuitive mindset can be attributed almost entirely to earlier research on the convenience construct. Such research must however, be treated with caution. Almost without exception, these studies endeavored to measure the importance of convenience, before properly defining it. Rather than identify its purpose and dimensions, definitions of convenience have typically represented a limited set of often incompatible attributes.

It has been four decades since Cox (1959), through his notion of aggregate convenience, highlighted the depth and complexity of the convenience construct. Subsequent research has failed to provide a definition of retail centre convenience capable of translating this notion into a working model. This paper attempts to redress this imbalance by providing a more conclusive definition. Through its nine attributes, it seeks to minimise the shopping costs that have continued to perturb consumers like Cox, for almost half a century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agergard, E., Olsen, P., and Allpass, J. (1970), "The interaction between retailing and the urban centre structure: a theory of spiral movement", Environment and Planning, Vol. 2, pp 55-71.

Alexander, J. (1988), "Tomorrow's shopper", Retail and Distribution Management, Mar/April, pp 19-21.

Alexander, A., and Muhlebach, R. (1992), "Shopping Centre Management", IREM, Chicago.

Alzubaidi, H., Vignali, C., Davies, B., and Schmidt, R. (1997), "Town centre versus out-of-town shopping: a consumer perspective", International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp 78-89.

Ander, W. (1998), "Retailing's next frontier: the efficient consumer", International Trends in Retailing, pp 51-60.

Bell, D., Ho, T.H., and Tang, C. (1998), "Determining where to shop: Fixed and variable costs of shopping", Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 35, pp 352-69.

Bellenger, D.N., and Korgaonkar, P.K. (1980), "Profiling the recreational shopper", Journal of Retailing, Fall, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp77-92.

Bellenger, D.N., Robertson, D.H., and Greenberg, B.A. (1977), "Shopping center patronage motives", Journal of Retailing, Summer, Vol. 53, No. 2, pp 29-38.

Berman, B., and Evans, J.R. (1992), "Retail Management: A strategic approach", 5th Edition, Mac Millan, USA.

Berrell, J. (1995), "Just-in-time shoppers", Retail World, June, Vol. 48, No. 12, pp 26.

Berry, L.L. (1979), "The time-buying consumer", Journal of Retailing, Winter, Vol. 55, No. 4, pp 58-69.

Blakney, V., and Sekely, W. (1994), "Retail attributes: Influence on shopping mode choice behaviour", Journal of Managerial Issues, Spring, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp 101-118.

Brown, L. (1989), "The strategic and tactical implications of convenience in consumer product marketing", The Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp 13-19.

Bucklin, L., and Gautschi, D. (1983), "The importance of travel mode factors in the patronage of retail centers" in Darden.W and Lusch.R, Patronage Behavior (eds), North Holland, New York.

Carlson, H.J. (1991), "The role of the shopping centre in US retailing", International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, Vol. 19, No. 6, pp 13-20.

Cox, R. (1959), "Consumer convenience and the retail structure of cities", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 23, pp 355-62.

Cymrot, A., Gelber, A., and Cole, L.L. (1982), "How to invest in office building and shopping centers", Real Estate Review, Summer, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp 75-82.

Davies, R., and Champion, A. (1983), "The future for the city centre", Editions, Academic Press, Sydney.

Davies, R., and Rogers, D. (1984), "Store location and store assessment research", Chichester, Wiley.

Dholakia, R. (1999), "Going shopping: key determinants of shopping behaviours and motivations", International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp 154-65

Downs, A. (1961), "A theory of consumer efficiency", Journal of Retailing, Spring, pp 6-12 and 50.

Engel, J., Blackwell, R., and Miniard, P. (1993), "Consumer Behavior", 7th Ed, Dryden Press, U.S.A

Eppli, M., and Benjamin, J. (1994), "The evolution of Shopping Center research: A review and analysis", The Journal of Real Estate Research, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp 5-32.

Eppli, M., and Shilling, J. (1995), "Large scale shopping center development opportunities", Land Economics, Vol. 71, No. 1, pp 35-41.

Evans, K., Christiansen, T., and Gill, J. (1996), "The impact of social influence and role expectations on shopping center patronage intentions", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp 208-18.

Feinberg, R.A., and Meoli, J., (1991), "A brief history of the Mall", in Advances in Consumer Research, V18, Holman, R., and Solomon,M., (eds), Provo, UT, Assoc. for Consumer Research.

Feldman, L., and Hornik, J. (1981), "The use of time: An integrated conceptual model", Journal of Consumer Research, March, Vol. 7, pp 407-419.

Fram, E.H. (1992), "Stressed-Out consumers need timesaving innovations; Innovations in hospitality, retailing and banking", Marketing News, March 2, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp 10-11.

Fram, E., and Axelrod, J. (1990), "The distressed shopper", American Demo-graphics, Oct, pp 44-45.

Gehrt, K.C. and Yale, L.J. (1993), "The dimensionality of the convenience phenomenon: A qualitative re-examination", Journal of Business and Psychology, Winter, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp 163-80.

Gehrt, K.C., Yale, L.J., and Lawson, D.A., (1996), "The convenience of catalog shopping: Is there more to it than time?", Journal of Direct Marketing, Autumn, Vol. 10, pp 19-28.

Gentry, J., and Burns, A. (1977-78), "How important are evaluative criteria in shopping centre patronage?", Journal of Retailing, Winter, Vol. 53, No. 4, pp 73-87.

Ghosh, A. (1994), "Retail Management", 2nd ed, Dryden, Sydney.

Gransby, D.M. (1988), "The coexistence of high street and out-of-town retailing from a retailing perspective", The Geographical Journal, March, Vol. 154, No. 1, pp 13-16.

Harrison, E.F. (1995), "The Managerial Decision-Making Process", 4th Ed, Houghton-Mifflin, USA

Houston, M., and Nevin, J. (1980), "Retail shopping area image: structure and congruency between unplanned areas and shopping centers", Advances in Consumer Research, pp 677-81.

Howell, R., and Rogers, J. (1980), "Research into shopping mall choice behaviour", Advances in Consumer Research, pp 671-66.

Hudson, R. (1974), "Images of the retailing environment", Environment and Behavior, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp 470-94.

Ingene, C.A., and Ghosh. A. (1990), "Consumer and producer behaviour in a multipurpose shopping environment", Geographical Analysis, Vol. 22, No. 1, p 70-93.

Jamieson, T. (1999), "Park Fines Soar", Herald-Sun, Dec 20, pp 1 and 4.

Jones, K., and Simmons, J. (1990), "Location, Location, Location: Analyzing the retail environment", Nelson, Canada.

Kaufman, C. (1996), "A new look at one stop shopping: a TIMES model approach to matching store hours and shopping schedules", Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp 4-25.

Lentnek, B., Harwitz, M., and Narula, S.C., (1981), "Spatial choice in consumer behaviour", Economic Geography, Oct, Vol. 57, pp 362-372.

Lewis, D., and Bridger, D. (1999), "No health risk from shopping", Psychologist, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp 116-17.

Lillis, C., and Hawkins, D. (1974), "Retail expenditure flows in contiguous trade areas", Journal of Retailing, Summer, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp 30-42.

Loudon, D., and Della Bitta, A. (1993), "Consumer Behavior", 4th Ed, McGraw Hill, Singapore.

McCarthy, P. (1980), "A study of the importance of generalised attributes in shopping choice behaviour", Environment and Planning, Vol. 12, pp 1269-86.

Mertes, J. (1953), "The shopping center - a new trend in retailing", Journal of Marketing, p 374-79.

Meyer, E.H. (1990), "Retail on the rebound", Direct Marketing, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp 52-53, 62, 95.

Miller, C. (1995), "Study dispels '80's stereotypes of women", Marketing News, May 22, Vol. 29, pp 3.

Morrill, R. (1987), "The structure of shopping in a metropolis", Urban Geography, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp 97-128.

Narula, S.C., Harwitz, M., and Lentnek, B. (1983), "Where shall we shop today?", Papers of the Regional Science Association, Vol. 53, pp 159-174.

Nevin, J.R., and Houston, M.J. (1980), "Image as a component of attraction to intraurban shopping areas", Journal of Retailing, Spring, No. 1, pp 77-93.

Northen, I. (1987), "The modernisation of shopping centres", The Planner, Feb, Vol. 73, No. 2, pp 81-85.

Oppewal, H., Louviere, J., and Timmermans, H. (1994), "Modelling hierarchical conjoint processes with integrated choice experiments", Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 31, pp 92-105.

Prendergast, G., Marr, N., and Jarratt, B. (1998), "Retailers' views of shopping centres: a comparison of tenants and non-tenants", International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp 162-71.

Proudfoot, M.J. (1937), "City retail structure", Economic Geography, Vol. 13, pp 425-28.

Rees, J. (1987), "Perspectives on retail planning issues", Planning Practice + Research, March, No. 2, pp 3-8.

Reilly, M. (1982), "Working wives and convenience consumption", Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 8, pp 407-18.

Reynolds, F.D., and Darden, W.R. (1972), "Intermarket patronage: a psychographic study of consumer outshoppers", Journal of Marketing, Oct, pp 50-54.

Roy, A. (1994), "Correlates of mall visit frequency", Journal of Retailing, Vol. 70, No. 2, pp 139-61.

Salmon, W.J. (1996), "Retailing at the millenium: how changes in consumer buying behavior are driving concentration", International Retailing, June, pp 41-51.

Samli, A.C., and Uhr, E.B. (1974), "The outshopping spectrum: key for analyzing intermarket leakages", Journal of Retailing, Summer, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp 70-76.

Schiller, R. (1994), "Vitality and viablity: Challenge to the town centre", International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, Vol. 22, No. 6, pp 46-50.

Schneider, F. (1995), "Retailing on the Internet", International Retailing, Dec, pp 67-80.

Schultz, D.P. (1997), "Panelists stress high expectations for neighborhood, on-line retailing", Stores, Vol. 79, No. 3, pp 32-322.

Spencer, A. (1978), "Deriving measures of attractiveness for shopping centres", Regional Studies, Vol. 12, pp 713-726.

Stephenson, R., and Willett, R. (1969), "Analysis of consumers' patronage strategies" in Marketing Involvement in Society and the Economy, McDonald.P (eds), Chicago, American Marketing Assoc, pp 316-22.

Stigler, G. (1961), "The economics of information", The Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 69, No. 3, pp 213-225.

Stoffel, J. (1988), "Where America goes for entertainment", New York Times, Aug 17, pp 11F.

Thompson, J.R. (1971), "Characteristics and behavior of out-shopping consumers", Journal of Retailing, Spring, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp 70-80.

Timmermans, H. (1980), "Consumer spatial choice strategies: a comparative study of some alternative behavioural spatial shopping models", Geoforum, Vol. 11, pp 123-31.

Timmermans, H. (1982), "Consumer choice of shopping centre: an Information Integration Approach", Regional Studies, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp 171-82.

Timmermans, H., Van Der Heidjen, R., and Westerveld, H. (1982), "Cognition of urban retailing structures: a Dutch case study", Tijdschrift voor Econ.en.Soc.Geografie, Vol. 73, p 2-12.

Uzzell, D. (1995), "The myth of the indoor city", Journal of Environmental Psychology, Vol. 15, pp 299-310.

Watkins, S., and Whitlock, F. (1990), "Death of the High Street salesmen", The Age, July 14, pp 4 (extra).

West, D., Von Hohenbalken, B., and Kroner, K. (1985), "Tests of intraurban central place theories", The Economic Journal, Vol. 95, pp 101-17.

Worthington, S. (1998), "Loyalty cards and the revitalisation of the town centre", International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp 68-77.

Yale, L., and Venkatesh, A. (1986), "Toward the construct of convenience in consumer research", Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 13, pp 403-08.

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

2000 WORKING PAPER SERIES

1/00 Amy Wong. "The Role of Relationship Strength in the Formation of the Customer-Contact Employee Relationship" (January, pp.26).

2/00 Paul Kalfadellis & Loong Wong "Labour of Burden: An Analysis of Occupational Change – The Domestic Worker (January, pp. 9).

3/00 Marjorie Jerrard "Organisation of the Roman Clothing and Textile Industry: Skill, Occupation, and the Gender-segmented Workforce" (January, pp. 11).

4/00 Marjorie Jerrard "Formation to Arbitration" – The Early Years of the Queensland Branch of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union 1889-1918" (January, pp. 14).

5/00 Jacintha Tan & Damian Morgan "Quality in Australian Tourism Education: Educator and Professional Views" (January, pp. 15).

6/00 Betty Weiler & Sam H Ham "Training Ecotour Guides in Developing Countries: Lessons Learned from Panama's First Guides Course" (January, pp. 9).

7/00 Rosemary Black, Sam Ham & Betty Weiler "Ecotour Guide Training in Less Developed Countries: Some Research Directions for the 21st Century" (January, pp. 12).

8/00 Jacintha Tan & Damian Morgan "Tourism Education: Views from Educator and the Tourism Industry" (January, pp.8).

9/00 Warwick Frost "Ecotourism and Rainforests" (February, pp.13).

10/00 Glenice J. Wood & Margaret Lindorff "Sex Differences in Managers' Explanations for Career Progress: A Test of Social Role Theory" (February, pp.15).

11/00 Yi-Ting Yu & Alison Dean "Including Emotions in Customer Satisfaction Measurement: a new Perspective on Loyalty" (March, pp.11).

12/00 Dianne Waddell & David Mallen "The Future for Quality Managers" (March, pp.13).

13/00 Di Waddell & Deb Stewart "Training and Management Development of Quality Managers" (March, pp.12).

14/00 Geraldine Khachan & Cornelis Reiman "Australia's Relationship with the Middle East – A Trade Perspective" (March, pp.16).

15/00 Lim Hong Hai, Ali Haidar & Len Pullin "Managerial Values of Penang Island Municipal Council Officers: A Preliminary Report" (March, pp.11).

16/00 Alison M. Dean & Dr. Milé Terziovski "Quality Practices and Customer/Supplier Management in Australian Service Organisations: Untapped Potential" (March, pp.12).

17/00 Sarah Germaine Grant, Sonja Petrovic-Lazarevic & Mike Berrell "Significance of Recognition of Australian and Singaporean Cross-Cultural Differences in the Decision-Making Process" (April, 15.pp).

18/00 Michelle R. Greenwood "The Study of Business Ethics: A Case for Dr. Seuss" (April, 9.pp).

19/00 Bernadine Van Gramberg & Julian Teicher "Exploring Managerialism in Victorian Local Government" (April, pp.13).

20/00 Jan Schapper "Value Dissonance: A Case of the Pyschodynamics of Organisational Identity" (April, pp.15).

21/00 Alison M. Dean "Issues Inherent in Measuring and Monitoring Quality in Contracted Services" (April, pp.16)

22/00 Damien Power & Amrik S. Sohal "An Empirical Study of Human Resource Management Strategies and Practices in Australian Just-in-Time Environments" (April, pp.11).

23/00 Amrik S. Sohal & Mile Terziovski "Continuous Improvement Process Teams (CIP Teams) and Corrective Action Teams (CATs) at Varian Australia" (April, pp. 8).

24/00 Damien Power & Amrik S. Sohal "Human Resource Management Strategies and Practices in Just-in-Time Environments: Australian Case Study Evidence" (April, pp. 23).

25/00 Cherrie Jiuhua Zhu & Peter J. Dowling "Changes in the Role of Government in Human Resource Practices in China: Implications for Multinational Corporations" (April, pp. 14).

26/00 Ruth Barton & Julian Teicher "A Labor Government's Different than the Current Government" Telstra, Neo-Liberalism and Industrial Relations" (April, pp.17).

27/00 Owen E Hughes "New Public Management: A Parliamentary Perspective" (April, pp. 13).

28/00 Tui McKeown "Why do Professionals become Contractors?" (May, pp. 13).

29/00 Deb Stewart & Dianne Waddell "Quality Managers: Are their Personal and Professional Development Needs being fulfilled? (May, pp. 6).

2000 WORKING PAPER SERIES

30/00 Yvette Reisinger & Lindsay Turner "Cultural Differences between Mandarin Speaking Tourists and Australian Hosts and their impact on Cross-Cultural Tourist-Host Interaction" (May, pp. 21).

31/00 Yvette Reisinger & Lindsay Turner "A Cultural Analysis of Japanese Tourists: Challenges for Tourism Marketers" (May, pp. 22).

32/00 Yvette Reisinger & Lindsay Turner "Japanese Tourism Satisfaction: Gold Coast Versus Hawaii" (May, pp. 20).

33/00 Yvette Reisinger & Lindsay Turner "Asian and Western Cultural Differences: The New Challenge for Tourism Marketplaces" (May, pp.17). **(Reissued June, pp.12)**

34/00 Yvette Reisinger & Lindsay Turner "Tourist Satisfaction with Hosts: A Cultural Approach Comparing Thai Tourists and Australian Hosts" (June, pp.16).

35/00 Yvette Reisinger & Lindsay Turner "Structural Equation Modeling with Lisrel: Application in Tourism" (June, pp.29).

36/00 Helen De Cieri & Peter J. Dowling "Convergence and Divergence: Central Concepts in Strategic Human Resource Management and Marketing in an International Context" (June, pp.15).

37/00 Michelle R Greenwood "The Importance of Stakeholders According to Business Leaders" (June, pp.13).

38/00 Phyllis Tharenou "Consequences of Mentoring on Career Advancement: Does Protégé Gender Make a Difference" (June, pp.16).

39/00 Simon Moss, Tim Haslett & Charles Osborne "Bulls and Bears in the car park: An Application of Stock Market and Local Rule Theory to the Behaviour of Shoppers" (October, pp.10).

40/00 Warwick Frost "Golden Anniversaries: Tourism and the 150th Anniversary of the Gold Rushes in California and Victoria Festivals" (October, pp.10).

41/00 Sonja Petrovic-Lazarevic & Milé Terziovski "The Effects of Human Resources Management on Transitional Companies in the Globalisation System" (October, pp.8).

42/00 Amanda Pyman, Julian Teicher & Glennis Hanley "The Impact of the Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cth.) – The Views of Five Australian Trade Unions" (October, pp.11).

43/00 Margaret Lindorff & Michael Barnett "Gender Differences in Work Values: Testing Alternative Explanations" (October, pp.7).

44/00 Margaret Lindorff "Gender, Social Support, and Strain: What is Helpful to Whom?" (October, pp.19).

45/00 Tim Haslett & Marvin Oka "Using VSM to Integrate SD Modelling into an Organisation Context" (October, pp.6).

46/00 Beverly Walker & Tim Haslett "System Dynamics and Action Research in Aged Care" (October, pp.11).

47/00 Beverly C. Walker & Tim Haslett "The Dynamics of Local Rules in Hospital Admission Processes" (October, pp.8).

48/00 Tim Haslett, Gerard Moylan & Peter McKee "A System Dynamics Analysis of the Victorian Workcover Authority Insurer Scheme" (October, pp.5).

49/00 Melanie Bryant "New Management and Old Employees: The Implications of Group Differentiation on Employment Relations" (October, pp.9).

50/00 Julie Wolfram Cox "Remembrance of Things Past? Change, Development, and Paternalism" (October, pp.18).

51/00 Julie Wolfram Cox & Stella Minahan "Crafting Organisation" (October, pp.33).

52/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "Is Retail Compatibility a Natural Phenomenon?: A Comparison of Store Compatibility in Planned and Unplanned Retail Centres" (October, pp.11).

53/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "Convenience for the Car-Borne Shopper: A Comparison of Access and Parking in Planned and Unplanned Retail Centres" (October, pp.15).

54/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "Downtown Shopping: Is it Worth the Time and Effort?" (October, pp.8).

55/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "The Unplanned Retail Centre: Is it Designed for Convenience?" (October, pp.10).

56/00 Susan Hinton & Jan Schapper "Jobs.Com: Recruiting on the Net – A Critical Analysis of E-Cruitment" (October, pp.16).

57/00 Susan Hinton "Different and Always Lacking: The Discursive Construction of the 'Male Benchmark' Work Organisations" (October, pp.11).

58/00 Glennis Hanley "Union Satisfaction: An Australian Perspective" (October, pp.15).

59/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "What is Retail Centre Convenience? A Model for the 21st Century" (October, pp.14).

60/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "The Composition of Retail Centres: The Key to Competitive Advantage?" (October, pp.19).

2000 WORKING PAPER SERIES

61/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "Retail Concentration: A Comparison of Spatial Convenience in Planned and Un-planned Centres" (October, pp.17).

62/00 Vaughan Reimers & Val Clulow "Shopping and Convenience: A Model for Retail Centres" (October, pp.6).