

Book Review:

Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim and Peter J. Goldrick ***Shopping Choices with Public Transport Options*¹**

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This book has been motivated by the observation that by and large studies of spatial shopping behaviour have not taken into account transport mode, while most transport studies ignored the attributes of shopping centres. The study, described in this book represents an attempt to bridge this gap. To that effect, the authors try to identify and analyse the importance of different factors, which are taken into account by shoppers in their shopping centre choice in regions with a wide choice of public transport. In addition, they analyse shoppers' perceptions of transport modes in the context of shopping trips. They start however with a review of trends of retail decentralisation and transport planning.

The chapter on retail decentralisation is useful reading, but unfortunately the literature review seems to stop in the mid 1990s. This means that interested readers have to consult other recent books on retail planning to be informed about the most recent trends, which in many European countries diverge from the trends described in the present book.

The next chapter on shopping and transport behavioural models is also a little disappointing. Although most approaches are briefly mentioned, this chapter lacks sufficient details for readers less familiar with the various approaches. Given the objective to bridge the gap between the two literatures, a more in-depth discussion would have been useful.

The remaining chapters then discuss the findings of the studies, after a very basic and unappealing chapter on principles of qualitative research, sample size, survey administration, data analysis, etcetera. The results of the qualitative study, conducted in Singapore and the

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UK, suggest that the choice of shopping centre is influenced by the buying situation, socio-economic characteristics, shopping centre attributes and transport mode/travel attributes. Sample sizes however were small and the lack of structure makes it difficult to assess the significance of these findings. This qualitative analysis is completed with a quantitative study involving 1100 questionnaires and the remarkably high response rate of 94.9 percent. Importance ratings suggest that respondents find both transport and shopping centre important.

Respondents were also invited to complete part 2 of the questionnaire about their perception of transport modes for shopping purposes. In this case, the response was 61.3 percent; lower, but still many professional marketing firms and national bureaus of statistics would be jealous. Observations of respondents' images of 38 dimensions of the car, bus, MRT, taxi, walking and motorcycle were obtained. Although the evaluation of the practicality and suitability of different modes for shopping was statistically significant between the models, the average scores were more similar than I would expect. This probably reflects the specific transport situation in Singapore.

Overall then, this volume reads more like a research report than a balanced academic book. It is useful, interesting and easy reading for those interested in shopping behaviour. One will find basic information about shopping motivations and considerations for people in the UK and in Singapore. Especially information about shopping behaviour in Singapore is scarce, and this might be an important reason for reading this book. The book succeeds in filling the gap between transportation and shopping in that a wide range of variables describing transport modes and shopping environments is taken into account. However, the book has little to offer beyond that. The conceptual framework is developed superficially, there is no attempt to disentangle the specific contributions of the set of variables to shopping centre choice, the analyses are all very basic, implications for the models that were mentioned in the literature review are not discussed, and insightful guidelines for retail and transport planning beyond common intuition are not provided. Thus, although I am inclined to support the basic premise underlying this book that there is a considerable gap between the transport and retailing literatures on shopping behaviour, this book unfortunately does not provide any clues or guidelines, let alone innovative theoretical constructs or modelling approaches how to narrow this gap.