

# The attractiveness of shopping areas with regard to fun shopping

A research to attraction factors related to funshopping

Studio

Heritage & Architecture  
Adapting 20th Century Heritage

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**1. Abstract** | This paper is part of the Master's graduation studio Heritage & Architecture Adapting 20th Century Heritage on Delft University of Technology. The paper explores the future of the physical shopping mall for the major cities in the Netherlands, and specifically, the future of funshopping in these shopping malls. Funshopping is recreational shopping. A mode of shopping where purchases are not targeted, but where the journey towards a purchase is at least as important as the product purchased. Fun shopping has changed in the past five years. Among other things, the advance of online shopping has seen a big growth in the Netherlands. This has had a negative impact on shopping malls in the Netherlands. Even though online shopping is on the rise, physical shops are still very important. Shops are their most important marketing tool, an indispensable link to offer your customers both experience and convenience. To keep attracting fun shoppers to the mall, the following research question is explored; *How can shopping areas be made more attractive for fun shoppers in the Netherlands?* The study makes a valuable contribution to how to make a shopping mall more attractive for consumers to visit.

**Keywords:** Shopping mall, Attractiveness, Atmosphere, Funshopping, Redesign, Heritage

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**2. Introduction** | Fun shopping consists of two separate words: fun (lively, joyous play or playfulness; amusement, sport, recreation, etc. (Collins, n.d.)) and shopping (the activity of visiting places where goods are sold in order to look at and buy things (Shopping Definition & Meaning | Britannica Dictionary, n.d.)). From this, the term funshopping can be defined as recreational shopping. Here, consumers are not concerned with targeted shopping only, but with the experience and the social aspect. This contrasts with targeted shopping ('runshopping'). The consumers increasingly do this at home, online via mobile, tablet or laptop.

### Problem statement

Nowadays, consumers are more easily to choose an online shop because of its convenience, speed and price. Physical shops are more likely to be preferred when consumers want to try something out or get advice. According to Henk Hofstede, retail sector banker, being able to take the item home immediately is also considered more important than the experience: "Apparently, consumers have a greater need for efficient shopping and 'funshopping' is losing popularity" (RetailTrends, 2020). Even though online shopping is on the rise, physical shops are still very important. Shops are brands' most important marketing tool, an indispensable link to offer your customers both experience and convenience (RetailSonar, 2022).

This is especially important after the corona pan-

demic. The corona pandemic has made people more aware of what they do in their leisure time. Fun shopping is becoming more of a 'day out' and the shopping mall is becoming more of a social public place to meet rather than just a location to purchase things.

Consumers' desire when visiting a shopping mall has therefore changed during this period. Shopping malls need to respond to these desires to continue attracting consumers. To prevent vacancy and the future existence of the shopping mall as a result.

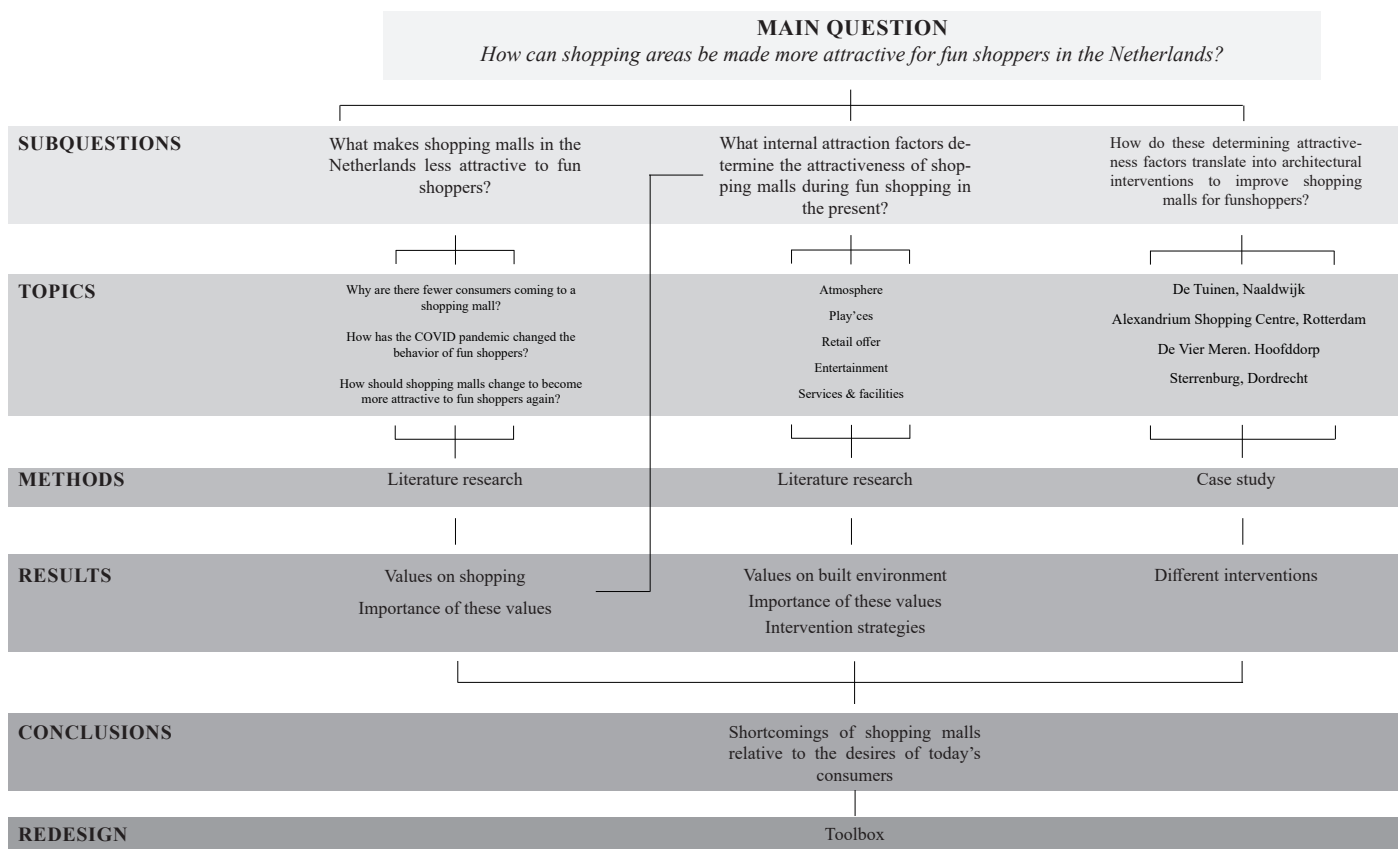
Therefore, this problem focuses on shopping malls that no longer meet the current needs of shoppers.

### 3. Theoretical framework

This research focuses on attractiveness factors (needs and preferences) for funshoppers for a modern shopping mall. The theoretical framework of this research will serve as the fundamental basis for a toolbox. This toolbox will eventually serve as the foundation in the redesign of the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen.

The structure of the research (**Scheme 1**), shows all the sub-questions with their topics and methods used to collect, process, analyse and visualise the data to answer the sub-questions. These results form the basis for the development of the toolbox.

The subquestions provide the framework for the study. This research investigates the effect of shopping mall attraction factors on visitors' behaviour during fun



**Scheme 1.** Research structure

shopping. Due to the limited time frame of this studio, this study excluded aspects that could, however, contribute to the attractiveness of the shopping mall for consumers. This includes aspects such as safety, hygiene, accessibility for the disabled, and the layout of individual shops were excluded.

The aspects that will be focused on include human behavior in funshopping, the desired functions and shops in a shopping mall, the layout of the entire shopping mall, the interior design (atmosphere), and the typologies of shopping malls.

Several reference case studies of a shopping mall in the Netherlands are looked at to see what interventions have been made to meet consumers' requirements. With this, they will form the basis for a toolbox. Through this method of investigation, the main question was answered through this toolbox. It serves as the foundation for redesigning the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen.

### Literature research

First, by a literature research investigates, the first two sub-question will be answered. The literature focuses on the change of peoples behavior while shopping and how this is connected to the atmosphere of a mall. With this, the problem of unattractive shopping malls, becomes apparent.

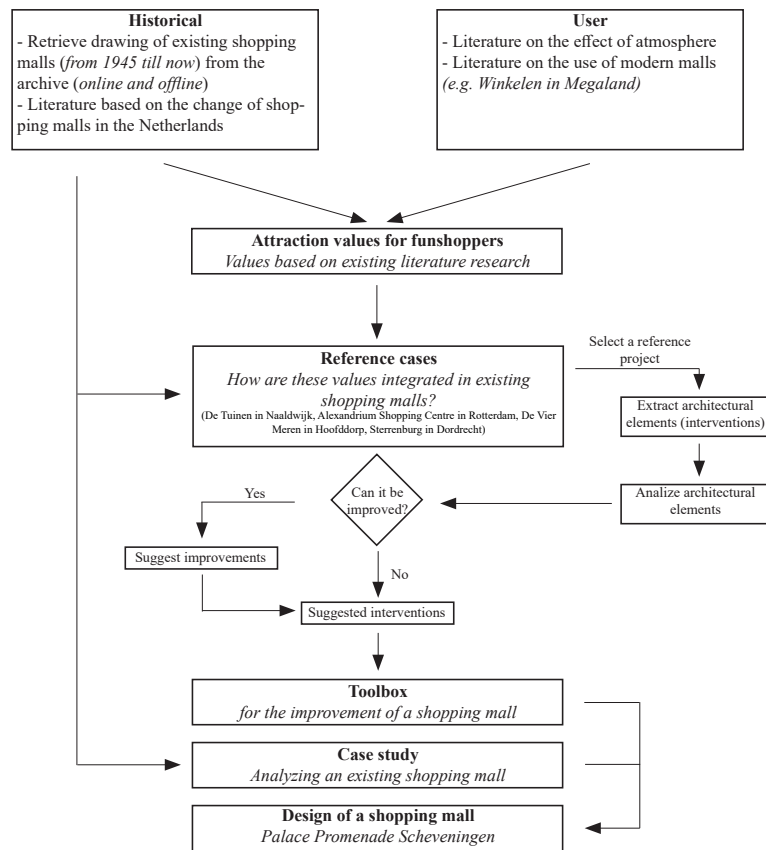
### Reference cases

The attraction factors, formed in subquestions 1 and 2, forms the base for the analysis of the reference cases. The following malls are used as reference cases: De Tuinen in Naaldwijk, Alexandrium in Rotterdam, De Vier Meren in Hoofddorp, and Sterrenburg in Dordrecht. Interventions

and renovations have taken place at all these malls to once again meet the needs of visitors. These reference cases are in line with the research on post-war shopping centres because they were also built during this period. These case studies must have undergone interventions that had a positive impact on the mall. After analyzing the interventions, we will see if they can be improved. If this is the case, improvements will be proposed. If no improvements are needed, the intervention will be translated into an element for the toolbox.

### Research to design

The research will continue throughout the academic year including a design case (**Scheme 2**). In the redesign of the Palace Promenade multiple toolbox proposals are integrated in order to ensure attractiveness factors of funshoppers are considered.



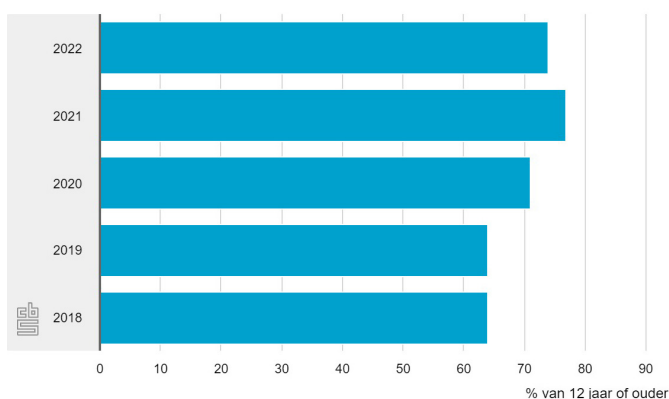
**Scheme 2.** Research-design structure

## 4. Results

### Behavior of funshoppers

For the retail shops in a shopping mall, it is important that it is considered as attractive by consumers in order for them to willingly shop there. Shopping malls that are outdated are no longer perceived as being highly attractive by consumers (Monster, 2022). Also shopping malls with vacancy are found less attractive and therefore have a negative impact on visitor numbers (de Snaijer, 2017).

Shopping areas and shopping malls must compete with online department stores. In the recent years, the percentage of people shopping online has grown (Figure 1). These numbers are only expected to increase further in the future according to CBS (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic also plays a big role in this increase of online purchases. Over the whole of 2020, 70% of retail web shop purchases were made by customers who had never bought through this webshop before (RetailSonar, 2022).



**Figure 1.** Percentage of people shopping online (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022)

E-commerce continues to grow every month, according to RetailSonar, and this is also the expectation for the future. This applies to both food and non-food products. Here, the strongest growth is seen in the 55-64 age group (2022).

As a result, people no longer necessarily have to go to the mall to shop. This can eventually lead to bankruptcy and vacancy for the shops inside the mall. If the physical shop does not change with consumer desire. (Wesseling, 2022).

Partly due to the change in consumer behavior like online shopping, it is a necessity that shopping malls continue to redevelop to keep them attractive. In a study by Charles Lieber on the effect of an obsolete shopping mall on its immediate surroundings concluded that especially in times of online shopping, redevelopment or transformation is in order. ‘‘Malls built ten years ago are considered mature, those completed fifteen years ago being old, and malls completed twenty years ago being ancient’’ (1981).

A study following on the effect of an obsolete shopping mall on its immediate surroundings concluded that especially in times of online shopping, redevelopment or transformation is in order (Zhang et al., 2018).

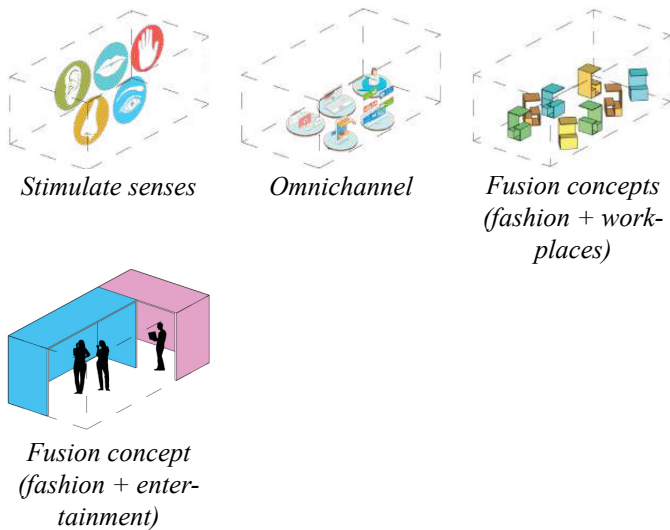
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic more people now shop shorter, more focused, and closer to home, and their needs while shopping has changed. Fun shoppers have thus become more like run shoppers. Therefore their needs have also changed. The four main needs of mall customers are now convenience, experience, visibility and omnichannel. (RetailSonar, 2022)

At the same time, one in three people spend their leisure time differently than before the COVID-19 pandemic. In research of CustomerFirst (2022) over half of those

surveyed said they felt more the need to meet physically with others. One of the popular places to do this is the mall. 71% of respondents said they experienced shopping as relaxing. In addition, dining and lunch also came high on the list as a pastime. They are also increasingly combined in the 18-37 age group. The mall has also become more of a location for socializing. Functions outside the retail shop, such as hospitality, have therefore gained importance. (RetailSonar, 2022)

The term fun shopping has been around for years. Whereas at first fun shopping was very much about shopping, now it is also about being entertained (Contributor, 2021). Stil (2021) describes this can be done by stimulating consumers' senses. Feeling, smelling, seeing, and trying on products. New fusion concepts are thus emerging, especially in the fashion industry. This creates an inspiring and creative atmosphere and space for professional meetings.

Based on what consumers perceive as attractive during fun shopping, the following toolboxes (Figure 2) have been generated that can be applied in redesigning a shopping mall.



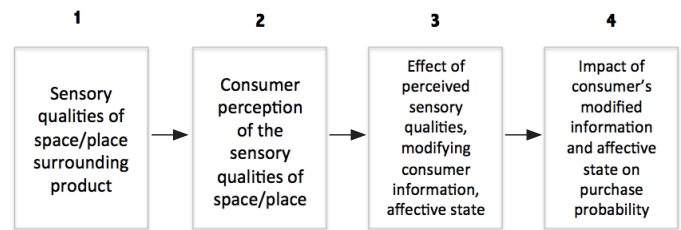
**Figure 2.** Toolbox for redesigning shopping areas - made by author

#### 4.2. Attraction factors

Since shopping has increasingly become like a 'day out', consumers have become more discerning about which location is suitable for this purpose, resulting in different wants and demands (Reilly, 1931). As a result, consumer desires have become central to shopping mall developments. When consumers enjoy coming to a shopping mall, shops here will perform well.

Research by Verhoef et al. (2009) shows that customer experience is related to customers' intellectual, emotional, sensory, and behavioral responses to a shop or shopping mall.

Kotler (1974) argues that the shopping environment can be intentionally designed to influence certain emotional effects in customers in a positive way. In Figure 2 Kotler describes how the atmosphere of a place effects the purchase behavior.



**Figure 2.** Causal Chain Connecting Atmosphere and Purchase Probability (Kotler, 1974)

Turley and Milliman (2000), continuing Kotler's work, divided this into five different categories, including the external variables, general interior variables, layout variables, decorative variables, and human variables.

The factors of atmosphere, play'ces, retail offers, entertainment, and services & activities are examined along their attributes herewith how they can positively influence the attractiveness of the shopping mall to the fun shopper.

Factors	Attributes
Atmosphere	Color Layout
PLAY'ces	Agon (competition) Alea (change) Mimicry (simulation) Ilinx (vertigo)
Retail offer	Generator role shops Shared role shops Suscipient role shops
Entertainment	Enjoyment Promotions / special events
Services & facilities	Personal services Communal services

**Scheme 3.** Attraction factors and attributes

An attractive atmosphere in shopping areas and shopping malls can lead to an advantage in attracting more visitors or making them stay longer (Turley and Chebat, 2002). When a shopping mall can offer little differentiation in terms of products, location, and size, and certain atmosphere factors can be important to provide a unique experience (Turley and Milliman, 2000). These atmosphere factors include colours, layout, and lighting. Colour schemes applied in elements of the interior in a shopping mall have shown to have an effect on consumer shopping behavior. A shop's appearance with a certain type of color can make people more likely to be drawn to it. As a result, they are more likely to buy or spend more time here, depending on the color (P. Bohl, 2012). The effect of color schemes is related to the gender and the color. For example, men are twice as likely to choose shades of blue as their favorite color while women are more likely to choose pink or purple. (Ellis and Filek, 2001) In the study by Fahmy et al. (2014), the problem of designing a shopping mall is re-

lated to the assignment of shops in the available locations. In this study, a mathematical model is proposed that increases the attractiveness of all shops within a mall. When this mathematical model is applied, it will lead to balanced customer circulation around all mall areas. The model exploits the high appeal of some shops to draw a stream of customers past the less attractive shop. By thus making all locations in the mall attractive for consumers to visit, rental income can be increased, and hence the profitability and success of the mall. In this model, the mall should be divided into occupied locations and available locations. The occupied locations are usually assigned for entrances and exits, toilets, and attraction points (food court, cinema, shops of well-known brands, etc.). The available locations should be assigned to shops, classified as high, medium, and low according to their appeal. The layout will need to reserve space between these shops where attraction points will act as a magnet for visitors. This will increase the foot flow and attractiveness of the layout. (Fahmy et al., 2014)

Attractive shopping locations, such as malls and streets, can act as the hub of a city or citycenter. Shopping malls have the important function of acting as local social meeting places and as tourist destinations. As a result, social space is seen as a key element in the design of a shopping mall. Designing shopping entertainment in a social space can be one of the most rewarding aspects of creating a shopping mall as an urban destination. (Coleman, 2006, p.7) The element of play ensures that urban public spaces, or the public spaces within a shopping mall, provide new experiences and thus cause people to come together. This creates new social relationships (Stevens, 2007, p. 196). Caillois (1961) describes four types in which games can occur; competition, chance, simulation, and vertigo (agon, alea, mimicry, and ilinx).

*Competition* (Figure 4) represents competitive play in which people seek ways for people to use their knowledge and skills. In public space, this can be exhibited as a test of strength, agility, sophistication, intellect, and allure.



**Figure 4.** Competition - Hang challenge (Mister and Missis- K, 2019)

(Stevens, 2007, p. 37). *Change* contrasts with competition. Effort, skills or experience have no advantage here. Yet competition and chance often come together in play. The boundary of human behavior between two strangers in a public space is tested by spontaneous human interactions. This contributes to urban social life (Stevens, 2007,

p. 38). *Simulation* deals with putting yourself in a different character as in the real world. It involves ‘pretending’ or creating new meanings or a new reality. Seeing, hearing, touching, and wanting to taste are triggered by it. (Stevens, 2007, p. 40). In *vertigo*, people “lose themselves” and are transported into new forms of experience. These experiences are released by physical actions such as, for example; climbing, falling, dancing, jumping, and moving fast (Stevens, 2007, p. 41). For play to take place in public spaces, they do not need to have a programmed space. Play cannot always be predicted or designed for. Unprogrammed spaces and loose elements in spaces, because they often have no function, offer more play opportunities. These four types of play show how people capture space. This makes it attractive to people; this is what public space should be for.

According to Nelson (1958), shops can be distinguished into three types; the generator role, the shared role, and the suscipient role. Generator shops have high appeal. Regardless of where this shop is located, these shops attract customers. On a smaller scale such as a city neighborhood, this could be a supermarket. On a larger scale such as a shopping mall, this could be a clothing shop the generator role. According to Team Stadszaken.nl (2022), a supermarket acting as a generator role is crucial for a successful shopping mall due to its attractiveness and indispensable position. As similar shops cluster and thus become better known for one special product or segment, this area becomes more attractive to consumers and thus attracts more customers. Being able to view and compare similar products, makes it very attractive especially for funshoppers. (Meurs, 2018)

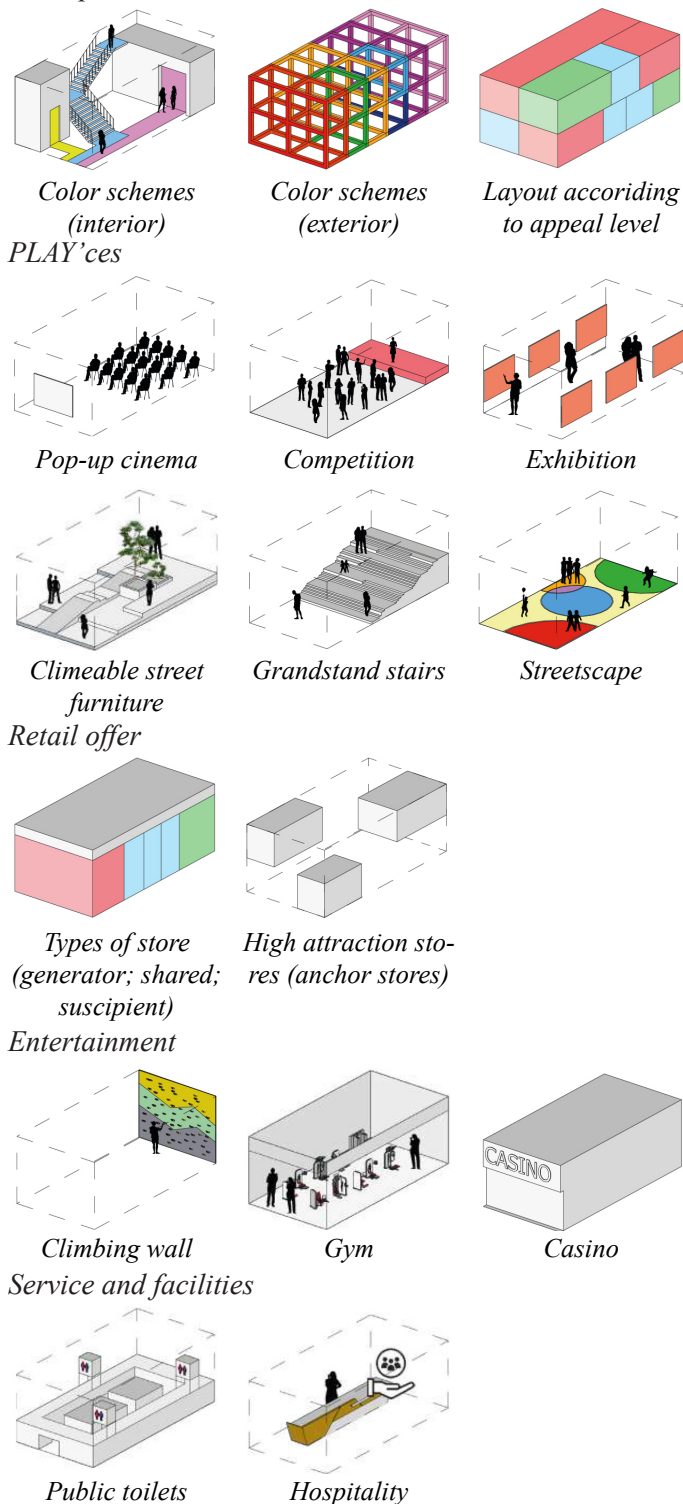
Since the shopping mall also serves as a local social meeting place, shopping is increasingly combined with leisure activities. When a range of good-quality leisure facilities can be found in the shopping mall, this will encourage consumers to stay longer. Leisure facilities build on the connection between fun and the feel-good factor. This encourages consumers to spend more money. (Coleman, 2006, p.9) These leisure facilities of entertainment include hospitality, cinemas, theatres, event spaces, gyms and health clubs, climbing walls, bowling alleys, casinos, electronic games, and sports. Entertainment and promotions around the holidays also have a positive impact on consumers. (Sit et al., 2003) Research from Coleman (2006) concludes that the effect of entertainment is greater in regional shopping malls compared to local shopping malls. Entertainment in the form of special events is positively valued in all shopping malls.

As customers become guests, the level of customer care continues to raise from customer arrival through to departure. There are two types of services. The first is personal services. This, according to Sit et al (2003), includes staff behaviour such as courtesy, knowledge, and customer-friendliness of staff. Services such as seating, toilets, and facilities for the disabled are all important requirements that should be positioned as necessary in the design. These types of services belong to communal services. Hoftijzer & Korte (2012) describe that the need for longer opening hours has also increased. The extended

opening hours of supermarkets are therefore highly valued among consumers. Coleman (2006, p.8) sees both of these services as foundations in the planning and organization of a shopping mall and should be included in the design from the beginning. These types of services and facilities are both important for the attractiveness of the shopping mall by contributing to the consumer experience and supports merchandising (Sit et al., 2003).

These attraction factors have been translated into the following toolboxes (Figure 5).

*Atmosphere*



**Figure 5.** Toolbox for redesigning shopping areas - made by author

**Architectural interventions**

Four shopping malls in the Netherlands were selected and their interventions analysed to improve the current situation of the shopping mall for future consumers. A picture of the situation before (left) and the situation after the intervention (right) quickly shows what has changed. The text accompanying the photos describes the intervention with the reason behind it.

**De Tuinen, Naaldwijk**

*Type of intervention:* redesign of the entrance  
*Reason of intervention:* current entrance is outdated  
*First intervention since:* 25 years

De Tuinen in Naaldwijk will get a more prominent, transparent entrance. This will give them a more visible, modern, and brighter look that should ensure more consumers come to visit the mall.



**De Tuinen, Naaldwijk**

*Type of intervention:* Redesign of storefronts  
*Reason of intervention:* The relationship between height of the storefronts and height of the hall are not well matched

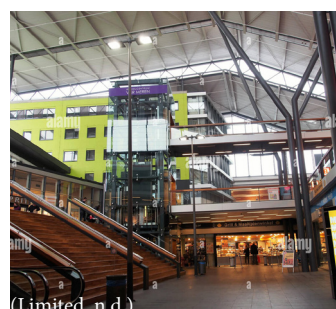
To make the ratio of storefronts to the overall height of the hall more attractive, they will be raised. Each shop will have the same new steel shopfronts ensuring unity in the mall.



**De Vier Meren, Hoofddorp**

*Type of intervention:* redesign of the basement  
*Reason of intervention:* clustering of food shops

The basement will be transformed into a fresh food market. A clustering of supermarket Albert Heijn, a seafood shop, a cheese shop, etc., among others, should attract more visitors.



**De Tuinen, Naaldwijk**

*Type of intervention:* redesign of the central square,  
*Reason of intervention:* to make the central square more attractive  
*First intervention since:* 25 years



The central square will make room for new catering terraces, public seating, and trees. The current floor and wall finishes are upgraded to a more prominent look. These will ensure a more pleasant shopping experience for visitors.



**Alexandrium Shopping Centre, Rotterdam**

*Type of intervention:* replacement of the roof in the passage  
*Reason of intervention:* to bring in more natural light



A new modern ceiling with glass provides more natural light in the passageway. The use of frittings, a solar coating, prevents it from getting too hot in the shopping mall.

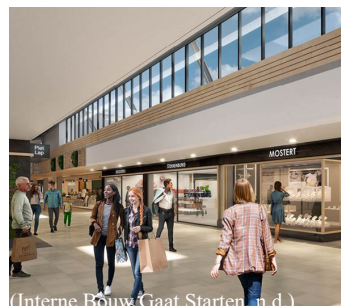


**Sterrenburg, Dordrecht**

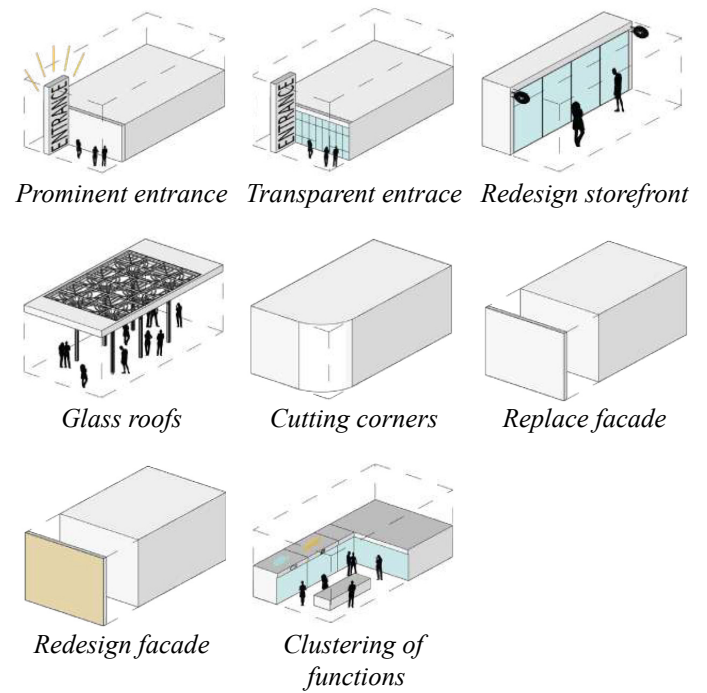
*Type of intervention:* facelift of the interior  
*Reason of intervention:* current interior is outdated



The Sterrenburg passage will be renovated. By tackling the ceilings, floors, lighting, shop fronts, and facades, among other things, the shopping mall will regain its modern look.



The underlying thoughts of the interventions were made to improve the atmosphere in the shopping mall to increase its attractiveness to consumers. Each analyzed intervention was translated into a toolbox (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Toolbox for redesigning shopping areas based on reference cases - made by author

**6. Discussion**

Several findings of the research help generate the principles for the redesign of the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen: space for social interaction, clear and transparent entrances, clustering functions, and improving the atmosphere.

The toolbox for making shopping areas and shopping malls more attractive formed after literature review and reference projects are universal. Compared with Stevens (2007) studies, it is much more specific with real-world examples. In future research, it is recommended to delve deeper into each ‘attraction factor’ and look more specifically at each attraction factor. In addition, an (on-line) survey could confirm the results of the research. At the moment, all results came from literature and reference research. While human behavior has changed in recent years partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the growth of online shopping. This ensures that some literature sources may be less relevant to this new period of shopping malls. Here, a large group of people will have to complete the survey to ensure that the toolbox interventions are representative for all shopping malls in the Netherlands. Future studies and design projects applying this developed toolbox should also take into account the current problems of the shopping mall in question.

Not all elements from the toolbox can be applied 1:1 to every shopping mall; this also applies to the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen. The collected data from the research suggest that this shopping mall’s main problems lay in its atmosphere and outdated appearance. The result is that the retail offering also suffered, and therefore requires specific solutions. Interventions from the

toolbox in the areas of atmosphere and facade renovation. At the Palace Promenade, the column structure offers the flexibility to change some elements to meet the future programs and atmosphere. Together with the desire for social locations revealed by research will therefore form the starting points for redeveloping this shopping mall.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper helps to understand the current problems that various shopping malls in the Netherlands anno 2023. With the developed toolbox, it is possible to improve these existing problems and thus future-proof the future for physical shops in shopping streets and shopping malls. Elements such as parking, safety, hygiene, accessibility for the disabled, and the layout of individual shops were excluded from the study.

As a result, the following attraction factors were investigated: Atmosphere, PLAY'ces, retail offers, entertainment, and services & facilities. Case studies were also examined to gather the desired information and translate it into design principles in the form of a toolbox. This was done through a literature and reference review.

To answer the research question; *How can shopping areas be made more attractive for fun shoppers in the Netherlands?* There is no specific answer to this question. Every shopping mall will have to meet the expectations of its consumers to keep them coming back. However, this is different for each shopping mall. The toolbox serves as a resource when redesigning existing shopping malls in the Netherlands on various architectural aspects. The toolbox is divided into several categories; Atmosphere, PLAY'ces, retail offers, behavior, entertainment, and services & facilities.

This toolbox (**Appendix 1**) can be further expanded in future studies in terms of the factors investigated in this study as well as the factors excluded. In addition, it is hereby recommended that an in-depth analysis of the existing shopping mall and vision is developed before applying the elements from the toolbox. Each shopping mall has its problems and needs and therefore requires a different approach.

The main limitation of this study is the depth in which it was conducted. As a result, important elements may be missed that could be of value when redesigning a shopping mall. Hereby, it is recommended to critically look at the toolbox and the literature behind it before applying it. From this, a follow-up study could be of value.

Specific selected toolbox elements were applied during the redesign of the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen. With the vision in alignment with the master plan developed by the municipality of The Hague called 'De Kust Gezond', this shopping mall can be converted into a more appealing and healthier place for fun shoppers.

Within the shopping mall, more social spaces will be created, freeing up space for play and interaction between people. This will improve both mental and physical health of fun shoppers. These spaces will make use of the toolbox elements *climeable street furniture, grandstand staircase, streetscape*, and space to host an *exhibition*.

In addition, *redesigning the facade and storefronts* with natural materials will not only make the shopping mall more attractive but also contribute to people's health. The use of wood in the interior and exterior has a stress-reducing effect on visitors. The physical and psychological properties of wood promote general well-being, healing, and work productivity.

A selection from the developed toolbox contributing to making the Palace Promenade in Scheveningen more attractive and healthy, this way, contributed to the redesign.



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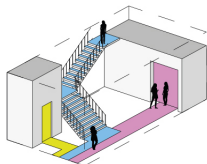
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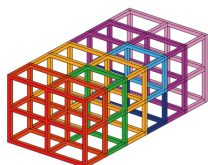
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# Appendix 1. Toolbox for redesigning shopping areas in the Netherlands

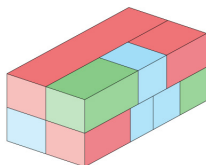
## Atmosphere



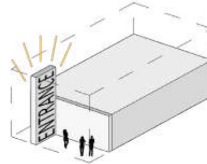
Color schemes (interior)



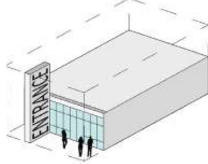
Color schemes (exterior)



Layout according to appeal level



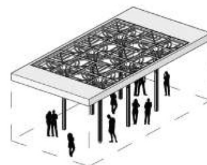
Prominent entrance



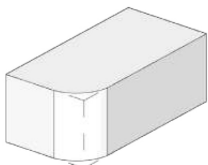
Transparent entrance



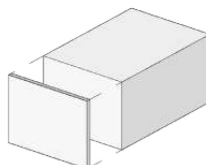
Redesign storefront



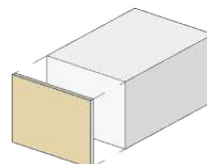
Glass roofs



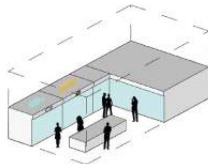
Cutting corners



Replace facade

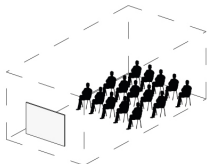


Redesign facade

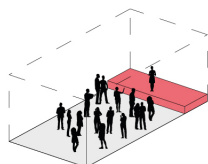


Clustering of functions

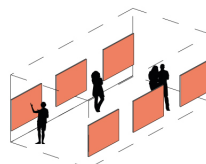
## PLAY'ces



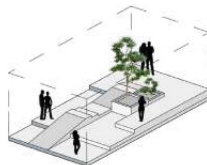
Pop-up cinema



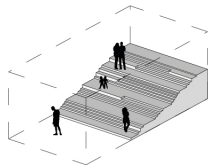
Competition



Exhibition



Climateable street furniture



Grandstand stairs

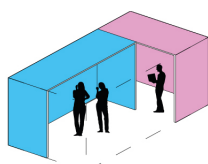


Streetscape

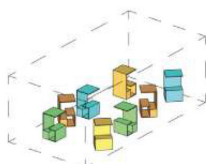
## Behavior



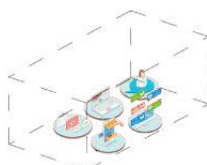
Stimulate senses



Fusion concept (fashion + entertainment)

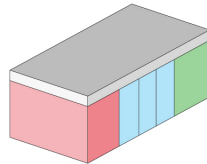


Fusion concepts (fashion + workplaces)

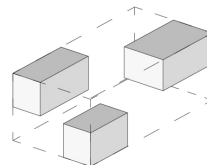


Omnichannel

## Retail offer

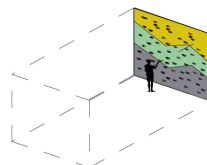


Types of store (generator; shared; suscipient)

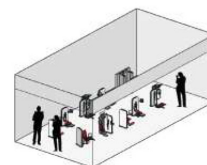


High attraction stores (anchor stores)

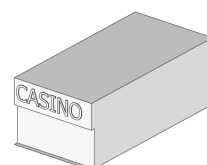
## Entertainment



Climbing wall

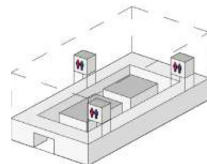


Gym



Casino

## Service and facilities



Public toilets



Hospitality