

# Motivations for choosing brick-and-mortar stores between urban commerce and shopping centers: the case of Logroño retail

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## Abstract

The aim of this work is to identify the reasons behind the choice of brick-and-mortar stores to make purchases and provide new evidence of the role that such establishments play in the omnichannel environment. An empirical study carried out in the city of Logroño (Spain) shows that utilitarian and hedonic motives are intertwined and differ according to age. Young people opt for shopping centers and the range of products and services they have to offer. Adults and elderly customers associate personal attention with shops located in the city center. The fundamental conclusion of the present work is that the establishments located in shopping centers and urban centers can coexist, each developing their own strengths. Both types of establishments provide interesting benefits for consumers who, in certain situations, opt for brick-and-mortar stores and value the offline shopping experience.

## Key words

Motivation, shopping behavior, personal attention, brick-and-mortar store, urban commerce, shopping center.

## How to cite this article

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Commerce with brick-and-mortar stores continues to be relevant and forms part of today's omnichannel movement

## 1. Introduction

Only four decades ago, the retail sector in cities evolved towards new forms of sales, such as specialized stores and shopping centers. This caused shoppers to shift towards more peripheral areas (O'Callaghan & O'Riordan, 2003; Hernández & Jones, 2005; Medrano, Olarte-Pascual, Pelegrín-Borondo & Sierra-Murillo, 2016). Later, innovations in technology and the media promoted the development of different means of sales without a physical store, such as in the case of mail order, telephone, television and online sales. This eventually led to multichannel distribution as a means of reaching and satisfying the needs of different segments of consumers (for example, Neslin et al., 2006; Verhoef, Neslin & Vroomen, 2007).

The emergence of smart mobile telephones, along with the development and democratization of the Internet have given way to omnichannel retail sales. This provides a broader perspective of the channels, by considering how today's consumers, with their various smart mobile devices (wearable and *insideable*), can sift among numerous alternative offers, from offline channels to online ones, and passing through the social networks, blogs and numerous applications that facilitate contact with their favorite brands and meeting their needs (Verhoef, Kannan & Inman, 2015; Juaneda, Mosquera & Sierra, 2016; Melero, Sese & Verhoef, 2016; Mosquera, Olarte & Juaneda, 2017).

The rapid evolution of this new context produced fateful omens for traditional brick-and-mortar stores. However, among the omnichannel options, different shopping combinations emerged, in which brick-and-mortar stores continued to be present (for example, showrooming and webrooming). In addition, successful businesses that emerged online have also seen the need to establish a physical point of contact with customers, and have complemented their business by opening brick-and-mortar stores. Pauwels and Neslin (2015) examined one company's database and found that when said company added a physical store to its distribution channels (catalog and Internet sales), their annual income experienced a net increase of 19.8%.

As a result, commerce with brick-and-mortar stores still remains and forms part of the current omnichannel movement (Mosquera et al., 2018). Stores in cities will continue to have a future, as long as they are capable of providing some value to consumers. But what are the factors that prompt consumers to go to a shopping center (SC) or out shopping around the city (urban commerce, UC)? The answer lies in the motivations of the customers. The aim of the present work is to investigate the motivations that cause consumers to opt for one type of physical store over another when shopping.

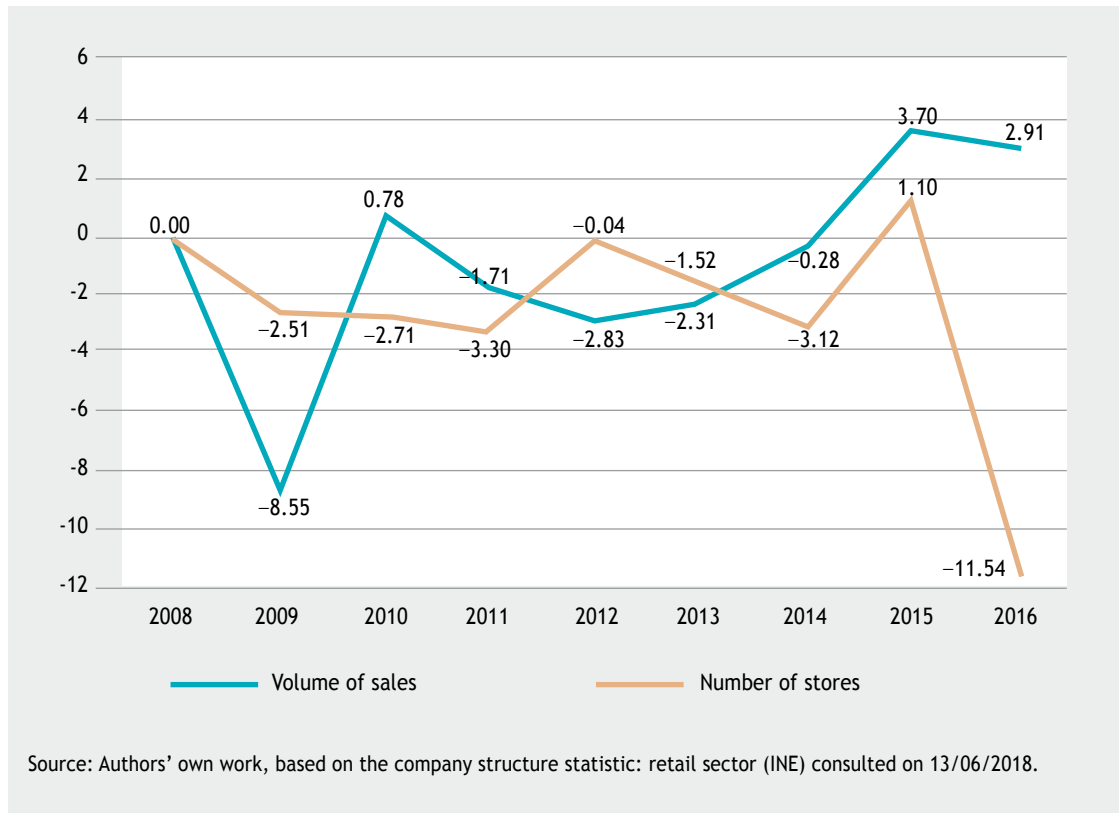
## 2. Retail commerce with brick-and-mortar stores: traditional city commerce versus shopping centers

The economic crisis was accompanied by a drastic reduction in consumption and many urban retail stores were forced to close (Medrano & Olarte-Pascual, 2016a, 2016b). This affected smaller shops more than it did larger stores. As seen in Table 1, in Spain the number of stores decreased constantly between 2008 and 2016. While sales have decreased prior to 2012, they have held steady and even increased over the last two years for which data are available (2015 and 2016). This represents the substitution of small shops with few sales with stores with larger sales, which are almost certainly larger in size.

The subject of small UC establishments continues to be a constant concern for governments and researchers alike. Governments have implemented plans to support traditional retail trade

Different smart mobile devices allow consumers to shift between offline and online channels

Table 1  
Evolution of commerce



and to promote commercial areas in UC. Researchers, on the other hand, have focused their work on different aspects. Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009) stress the idea that survival in a climate of crisis and in such a competitive environment as retail requires more than just low prices and innovative products. In this sense, numerous studies have evidenced the importance of the shopping experience in choosing from among the different types of establishments (Gentile, Spiller & Noci, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2007; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009; Rose, Clark, Samouel & Hair, 2012). The search for pleasurable experiences is often much more important than the mere acquisition of products (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003, 2012).

At the same time as commercial establishments are being closed, new formats are appearing and other traditional ones are being brought back in response to new consumer trends. For example, bartering, group purchases and second-hand goods are seen at buying and selling stores (e.g., at *Cash Converters*, you can enter with a bike and leave with an e-book). Concern for health and the environment has resulted in health stores specialized in organic and/or sustainable products. In addition, the commerce presided over by the Chinese community has also evolved, contributing new types of stores in different sectors, such as fashion, at very competitive prices.

Along with the traditional stores in the cities, shopping centers continue to account for a large amount of sales area, continuing to attract a large number of consumers. They have also had a

**Many studies have provided evidence of the importance of the shopping experience in the selection of establishment**

great influence on the reconfiguration of leisure activities and the cities. The difficult economic situation has also affected the evolution of these centers, which have experienced a clear reduction in growth after 2009 (Martín de la Cruz & Martín Cerdeño, 2013).

Several researchers have compared the factors of attraction of shopping streets and shopping centers. Among them, Reimers and Clulow (2004) believe that shopping centers provide greater spatial convenience than shopping streets. Teller and Reutterer (2008) establish that in the commercial mix, the price-quality ratio and entertainment have an influence on the attractiveness of both the shopping street and the shopping center. The ease of getting around at the place visited is mentioned as an attractive aspect of shopping centers. The environment (odor, temperature, air) is an attractive factor of both, but is more intense for shopping centers. Reimers (2013) establishes that policies to dissuade people from driving would affect shopping habits in retail establishments; he finds that this dissuasive effect would have a more negative effect on purchases made at shopping centers.

In this scenario, urban retail management requires adapting to new trends and poses new challenges in order to continue to maintain the confidence of their customers.

### 3. Purchasing motivation in retail establishments

In light of the deteriorating situation of commerce in terms of brick-and-mortar stores, the question was raised whether this sector had any sort of competitive advantage that could be exploited. To answer this question, the purchasing motivations of consumers are analyzed. As indicated above, the aim is to investigate the motivations that lead consumers to make their purchases in brick-and-mortar stores in the UC or SC.

Motivation can be defined as a dynamic and internal process that activates, directs and maintains the behavior towards obtaining a goal (Ferguson, 2000). The study of motivation requires analyzing why people initiate actions aimed at specific goals, the intensity with which they participate in the activity and how persistent they are in their attempts to reach their goals (Dawson, Bloch & Ridgeway, 1990; Usín, 2013). The motivations, as determining factors of shopping behavior, have been approached from different conceptual frameworks.

- a) In terms of their origin, considering internal and external motivations (Benabou & Tirole, 2003). Internal motivations constitute the intrinsic motivation that the individual activates himself when desired and for the objective that he deems appropriate. External motivations are those triggered from outside the individual, either by other people or by the environment. While extrinsic motivation influences the behavior based on rewards and benefits, individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to perform an activity due to a desire to perform the activity that comes from within themselves and not to the external reinforcement. Intrinsic motivation implies participating in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from it (Barberá Heredia, 2002; Watchravesringkan, Hodges & Kim, 2010).
- b) According to their nature, we can identify:
  - **Cognitive and affective motivations.** Cognitive motivations correspond to the search for tangible, rational or utilitarian attributes (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994), while affective motivations are related to emotions like feeling pleasure, for example (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1992; Spangenberg, Crowley & Henderson, 1996; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000).

54.09% of those responding prefer to shop at shopping centers located on the outskirts of the cities

- **Utilitarian and hedonic motivations.** The utilitarian motivation represents the more rational part of the motivation and includes cognitive and functional factors of behavior (for example, shopping around, comparing prices, looking for sales or discounts). Utilitarian shopping behavior is defined as a rational process that seeks the maximum possible efficiency; shopping is understood as a task (Babin, Chebat & Michon, 2004). The dimensions of the utilitarian motivation are to reach the goal and efficiency. The hedonic motivation is related to sensations, fantasy or emotions surrounding the purchase (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Gardner, 1998; Childers, Carr, Peck & Carson, 2001; Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). Shopping is seen as a positive experience where consumers enjoy and feel satisfied with the entire experience, without taking into account whether the purchase is ultimately made or not. The store environment is associated with this dimension, since it can influence the positive emotions surrounding the purchase. Examples of this dimension are entertainment or socialization. Arnold and Reynolds (2003) examined the purchases in brick-and-mortar stores and identified six groups of hedonic motivations: (1) adventure shopping (going shopping is an adventure and is stimulating; p. 82); (2) social shopping (shopping to socialize with friends and family); (3) gratification shopping (shopping as stress relief or to improve your mood); (4) shopping to stay current or idea shopping (keeping up-to-date on trends, seeing new products and innovations); (5) role shopping (enjoyment derived from shopping for others, enjoyment from finding the perfect gift for others, as a social function); (6) value shopping (enjoyment that comes from finding sales, discounts or special offers).

Kim (2006), based on Babin et al. (1994) and Arnold and Reynolds (2003), concludes that UC consumers place greater emphasis on hedonic motivations. In the SC, the motivation may be oriented towards the purchase, leisure and social relations (see for example Lotz, Eastlick, Mishra & Shim, 2010; Baker & Wakefield, 2012).

- **Ethical motivation.** In recent years, the presence of a new dimension related to the appearance of the moral aspect has increased (see for example Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, Zwick & Neville, 2015). Its introduction is intended to increase the understanding of the complex set of variables that influence shopping behavior. Ethical consumers are ready to put their money where their morals are (Cowe & Williams, 2000).

#### 4. Methodology

As commented in the beginning, commerce with brick-and-mortar stores continues to be relevant and forms part of today's omnichannel movement. But what are the motivations that lead consumers to make their purchases in brick-and-mortar stores in the UC or SC? To answer this question, an exploratory methodology has been proposed, using personal interviews with open-ended questions (Malhotra, 2004; Valles, 2014). Its open-ended structure ensures the identification of unexpected motivations. Qualitative research produces descriptive data, works with the individual's own words and with observations of their conduct (Martínez Rodríguez, 2011, p.18). This type of interview is very demanding and depends on the ability of the interviewer to achieve an environment of trust and credibility during the early moments of the interview and then to maintain this environment. To achieve these conditions, the methodology followed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) in their study of hedonic motivations was used as a reference, but with a sample that was 2.25 times larger (see Table 2).

The geographical area of study, Logroño, has a single shopping district in the center of the city. Its city center has shopping streets with numerous independent stores (70.02%) (La Rioja

34.55% prefer to shop in the urban center of the city

Table 2  
Technical data

<b>Population:</b> shoppers.		
<b>Information gathering method used:</b> personal survey with open-ended questions.		
<b>Sample size:</b> 220 valid interviews.		
<b>Sampling:</b> according to gender and age quotas.		
<b>Date of the field work:</b> March-April 2013.		
<b>Characteristics of the sample:</b>		
• Gender:		
-Men: 43.18%		
-Women: 56.82%		
• Age:		
-25 and younger (young people): 35.10%		
-26-65 years old (adults): 41.50%		
-65 and older (senior citizens): 28.30%		
<b>Characteristics of the geographical area of the study:</b>	UC	SC
Logroño, La Rioja (Spain).		
• Number of stores in the study areas	336	116
• Average size of the stores	112.36 m <sup>2</sup>	594.74 m <sup>2</sup>
• Ownership: - Sole proprietor	70.02%	5.17%
- Company	29.98%	94.83%
• Number of hypermarkets	0	2

Chamber of Commerce, 2013). They tend to be small family businesses, specialized and run by workers who have in-depth knowledge of the products and who pride themselves on providing excellent customer service. The average size of the stores in the UC is 112.36 m<sup>2</sup>.

In the outskirts of Logroño are two SC characterized by each having a hypermarket and several large specialized stores (*category killers*) that act as generators of customer traffic. The average size of the stores in the SC is 594.74 m<sup>2</sup>, and 94.83% of them belong to business groups.

With regard to the field work, the interviewers were carefully trained and given specific instructions on how to conduct the interviews in order to identify the true motivations for shopping. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. To ensure and verify the quality of the data, the name of each person interviewed was requested, along with a telephone number.

The interviews were viewed, listened to and read several times by the authors for encoding purposes. Each member of the team (individually) identified and encoded the motivations contained in the information collected, using the categorization process developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The authors then met to discuss the key motivations and select the most illustrative quotes from the information collected. At this point, the objective was to find points in common, in order to achieve the most exact representation possible of each domain and to develop the conceptual definitions of the motivations.

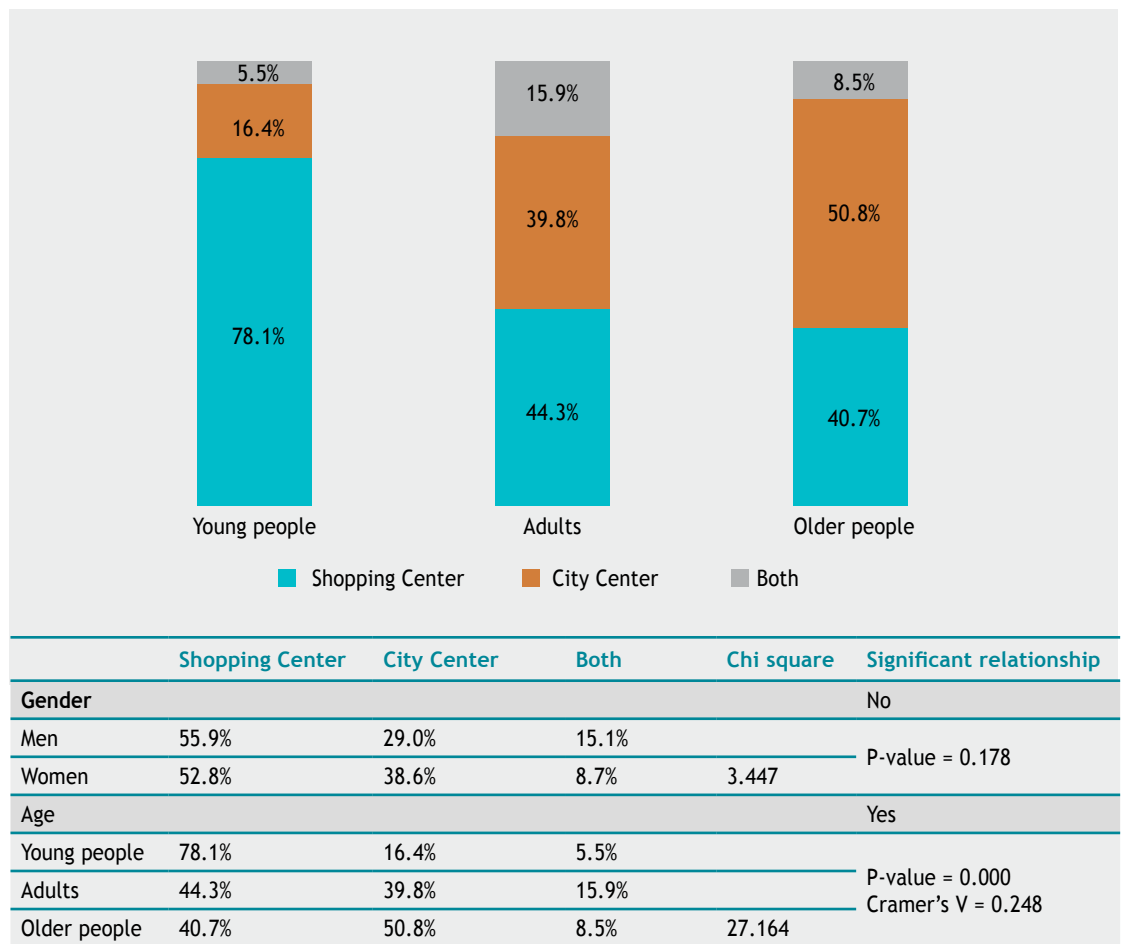
To analyze whether there is a relationship between the preference for brick-and-mortar stores in the SC or UC and the gender and age, the chi square contrast was applied, and if appropriate, Cramer's V was calculated for tables larger than 2x2.

Urban store consumers give importance to hedonic motivations

### 5. Results

54.09% of the sample prefers SC for their purchases, 34.55% opts for the shopping streets of the UC and the rest, 11,36%, has no preference between the two types (See Table 3). SC are preferred by young people (78.1%) and adults (44.2%). The UC is the favorite of older people (49.18%) and is more attractive for women (38.6%) than for men (29.0%). There are no statistically significant differences in the preferences between the UC and SC according to gender.

Table 3  
Relationship between the preference for the UC/SC and gender and age



#### 5.1. Motivations

When asked open-ended questions about the motivations, the interviewees provided a total of 352 arguments. The first motivations of each interviewee have been grouped into codes or primary domains (see Table 4). Their hedonic and/or utilitarian nature is supported in the previous literature.

Shoppers who prefer shopping centers do so for more utilitarian motivations than hedonic ones

Table 4  
Classification of the motivations for brick-and-mortar store selection

Domain / motivation	%	Illustrative arguments	Type of motivation
Accessibility	4.63	“Opening hours, ease of access,” “ease of parking,” “extended opening hours,” “lack of time,” “faster.”	Utilitarian
Personal attention	14.81	“The merchant is nicer,” “you are treated better” and “they serve me better,” “the relationship is more personal,” “friendlier attention,” “more personalized attention,” “they know you,” “you know the merchant,” “I’ve known him forever,” “closer attention,” “I talk to the merchants,” “trust in the lifelong merchant,” “there is less stress and more personalized attention,” “it is more pleasant, they know you, they give you advice,” “I like that they serve and assist me” and “they give me information.”	Hedonic / utilitarian
Spatial convenience	26.39	“It is more convenient for me,” “it is close by,” “I can walk there,” “the shopping centers are far away from me,” “everything is in the same place,” “different stores in the same place, you don’t have to move,” “several stores together, you don’t have to move.”	Utilitarian
Entertainment	1.39	“I like to walk around and see things,” “it is more pleasant,” “it is more fun to go from store to store,” and “it is more entertaining to shop in the city.”	Hedonic (positive)
Commercial offer	38.43	“Greater variety of stores,” “there are more stores,” “greater variety of products” and “there are more brands,” “large purchases,” “monthly shopping,” “I find everything” and “there are more things in the shopping center than in the neighborhood,” “there are more clothes,” “there is more to choose from.”	Utilitarian / hedonic
Price	9.26	“It’s cheaper,” “sales,” “variety of prices,” “it’s a better deal,” “better prices.”	Utilitarian
Supportiveness	3.70	“We have to help small businessmen,” “I prefer to help traditional stores,” “I like to activate movement in the city,” and “the profits stay in the neighborhood.”	Hedonic / ethical
Negative attitude towards SC	1.39	“I don’t like department stores,” “large shopping centers daze me” and “shopping centers overwhelm me.”	Hedonic (negative)

Below are the motivations that were identified, taking into account the preference of the interviewee for the UC, SC or both (see Table 5). In the UC, the following motivations were given by the interviewees, in order of importance:

**1. Personal attention** (43.26%), which is related to:

- Friendly, courteous attention: expressions were recorded such as “the merchant is nicer” and “you are treated better.”
- Advice: for example, “they give me information.”
- Personal relationship understood as:
  - A relationship in the strictest sense: “the relationship is more personal” and “closer attention.”
  - Previous knowledge: “they know you” and “you know the merchant.”
  - Attention and confidence: for example, “there is less stress and more personalized attention” and “it is more pleasant, they give you advice.”
- Service attitude, “I like that they serve me and assist me.”



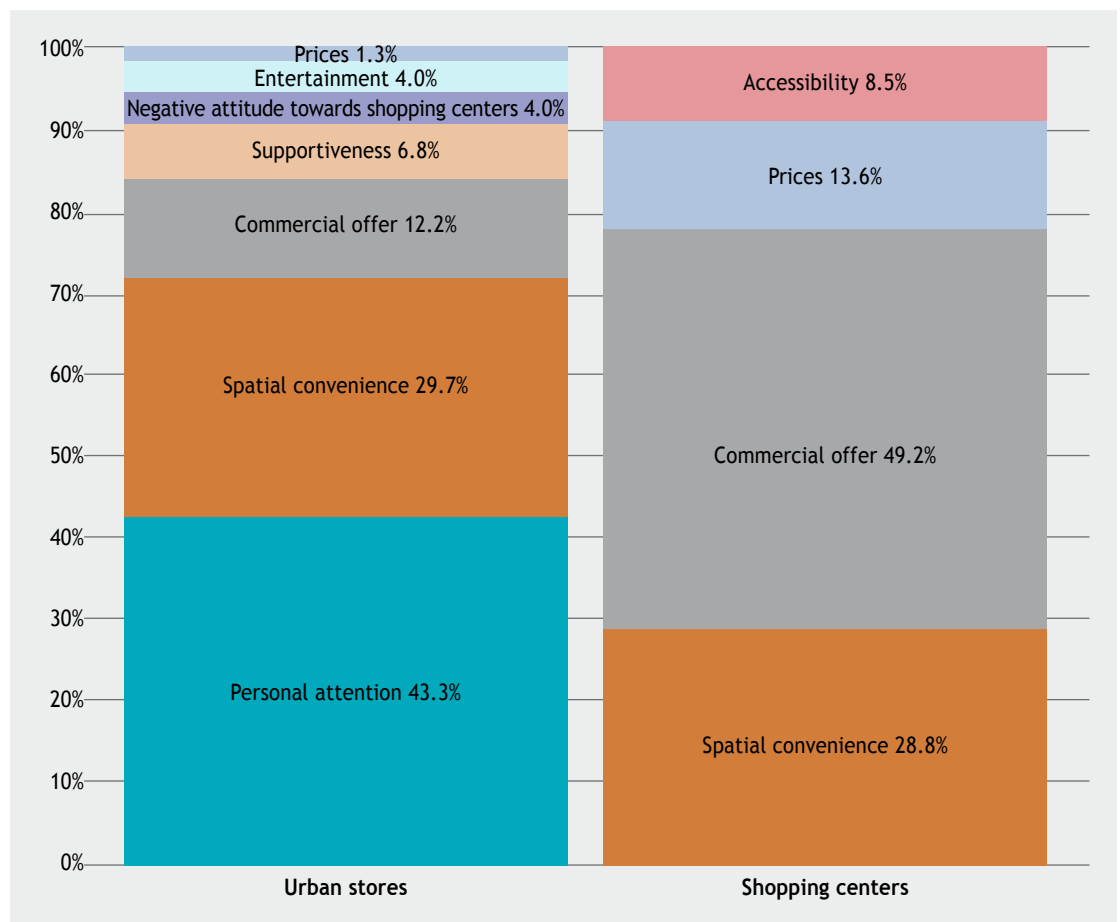
Shopping centers are perceived as being more stimulating because there are more things to see (shopping as an adventure)

Within this domain, utilitarian and hedonic motivations are observed to be basically complementary and interrelated to one another (Babin et al., 1994; Scarpi, 2006; Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). Consumers look for both types of benefits simultaneously.

2. **Spatial convenience** (29.69%): expressions like “it’s more convenient for me” or “I can walk there” show the utilitarian nature of this category.
3. **Commercial offer** (12.16%): the idea of “fresher products” is associated with traditional food stores; supermarkets belonging to the large chains like Mercadona and Simply (the Auchan Group) that have arisen in the city center are also mentioned. Furthermore, and for non-food products, it is argued that there is “a greater variety of stores” and “more brands.” All the comments show essentially utilitarian motivations, while in non-food shopping, hedonic motivations are also recorded.
4. **Supportiveness** (6.79%): expressions were recorded such as “I prefer to help traditional stores” and “it shows greater solidarity” that reflect in a certain way ethical motivations offered primarily by young people and that support the previous literature (Cowe & Williams, 2000).

Table 5

**Distribution of the main motivations for brick-and-mortar store preference**



**Ethical consumers prefer to put their money where their morals are**

5. **Entertainment** (4.05%): “it is more fun to go from store to store” and “it is more entertaining to shop in the city” are some of the hedonic motivations. Among them is the idea of shopping as an “adventure” (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).
6. **Negative attitude towards shopping centers** (4.05%): “large shopping centers dazzle me.” The motivations are hedonic in this case too, as they are negative emotions that explain motivations for avoidance.

In the SC, the following motivations were given by the interviewees, in order of importance:

1. **Commercial offer** (49.15%): expressions like “large purchases” and “monthly shopping” are utilitarian motivations. Another key idea appears, which is the vast offering, indicated by expressions like “there is greater variety of products,” “more clothes” and “there is more to choose from.” The arguments reflected in this category for the SC are very similar to those that appear in the UC, in other words, they are essentially utilitarian. However, there are hedonic indications derived from the gratification that results from the capacity to choose from a larger set.
2. **Spatial convenience** (28.81%): shopping centers are understood as a place with “different stores in the same place; you don’t have to move,” which is associated with a utilitarian meaning.
3. **Price** (13.56%) is associated with expressions like “it’s cheaper” or the importance of “sales,” generally in connection with a vast offering. These arguments can respond to more utilitarian motivations, although the quest for sales and/or the best price may respond to hedonic motivations (value shopping, as described by Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).
4. **Accessibility** (8.56%) understood as “opening hours, ease of access,” “ease of parking,” along with “lack of time” are utilitarian motivations.

Finally, there are shoppers without a clear preference, who shop at both the UC and the SC. In this case, the following motivations were observed:

1. **Commercial offer** (80.00%):
  - Shoppers who want to see everything, “I look for variety”, and visit both SC and UC.
  - These shoppers divide their purchases according to product categories:
    - In SC, large purchases of large consumption items (“large purchases, food and cleaning products”) and clothes and shoes.
    - In the UC, daily purchases of perishable products (“fruits and vegetables”) and/or more selective purchases.
2. **Those who are looking for good prices and sales** (15.00%): “I always look for sales” and “I shop wherever it’s the cheapest.”
3. **Those who are looking for convenience** (5.00%): organize their purchases according to what suits them at the time.

The behavior of this group follows more utilitarian than hedonic motivations. Among the hedonic motivations, the *value shopping* and *idea shopping* by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) were identified again.

**Urban stores  
are preferred  
by older people  
who value the  
personal  
attention**

Below is a logit binomial model analyzing the relationship between the dichotomous dependent variable preference for UC or SC and the independent variables age, gender and the eight domains related to the motivations for selection.

Table 6  
**Logit model of UC/SC selection**

	Beta	Wald	Sig.	Exp. (B)
Age		11.618	0.003	
Age (under 25)	-1.719	11.170	0.001	0.179
Age (26-65)	-1.081	5.161	0.023	0.339
Personal attention	3.184	9.110	0.003	24.141
Commercial offer	-1.929	17.610	0.000	0.145
Price	-2.517	9.363	0.002	0.081
Constant	0.978	5.816	0.016	2.660
Goodness of fit:	Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> = 51.1% Hosmer and Lemeshow's chi <sup>2</sup> test = 4.506 (sig = 0.609) Percent correctly classified = 81.0%			

The results show that the goodness of fit is adequate: a high Nagelkerke pseudo R<sup>2</sup> value of 51.1% is obtained (see Table 6). Hosmer and Lemeshow's chi square goodness of fit test shows that there are no differences between the observed values and those predicted based on the regression model. Furthermore, 81% of the cases are correctly classified.

It is observed that persons with the greatest probability of going to the UC are the oldest interviewees (over age 64), who are seeking personal attention and are not overly concerned about the commercial offer or price. Just the opposite, those with the greatest probability of going to the SC are the youngest interviewees (under age 25) and those who are 26-65 years of age; their main motivation is a vast commercial offer at a good price.

## 5.2. Age matters: an analysis of the different motivations by age

In light of the previous results, the motivations are analyzed, taking into account age (see Table 7).

Young people prefer the SC (78.1%) for two fundamental reasons: its commercial offer (59.65%) and spatial convenience (31.58%). In terms of the first motivation, they use expressions related to variety, such as "there are more products or brands to choose from" and "variety of clothes and shoes." The utilitarian and hedonic motivations are intertwined: the better offer provides greater possibilities of finding what you want (utilitarian) and also allows you to "get ideas" (hedonic, according to Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Spatial convenience is also important to young people (31.58%), since they understand the SC as a place where all the stores are grouped together (utilitarian motivations). Regarding the UC, young people highlight supportive motivations (hedonic), spatial convenience and commercial offer (utilitarian) and also cite entertainment (hedonic).

Table 7  
**Motivations for brick-and-mortar selection by age**

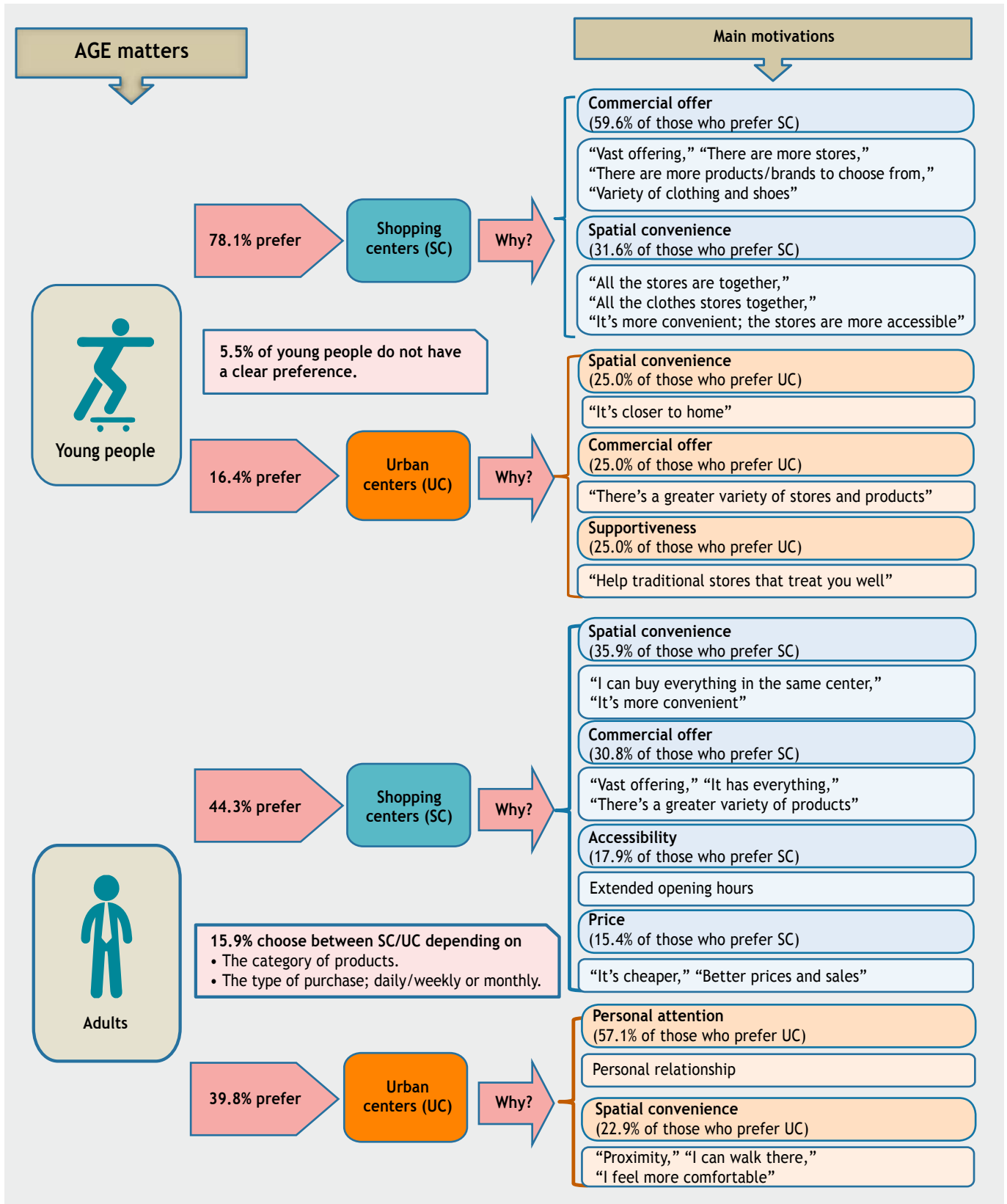
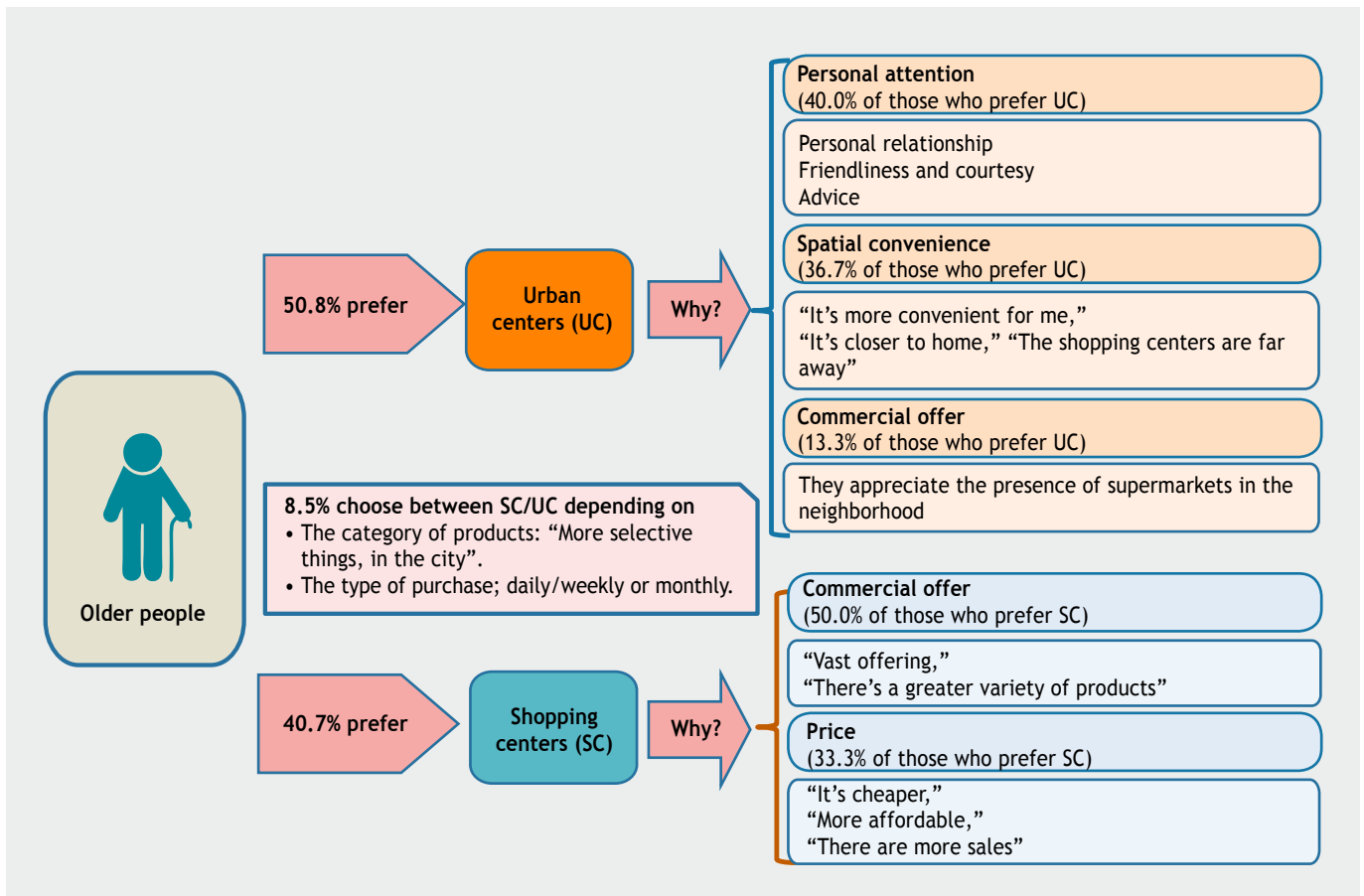


Table 7 (continued)  
**Motivations for brick-and-mortar selection by age**



Adults especially value the spatial convenience of the SC, verbalizing utilitarian expressions like “you find everything you are looking for in a small space” and they add the aspect of “convenience.” They later mention the commercial offer, which they express as follows, in order of importance: “it has everything” and “large purchases,” with a primarily utilitarian focus. This group primarily appreciates the “personal relationship” of the UC, as part of the personal attention.

Finally, older people, unlike the previous groups, prefer the stores in the UC and highlight the personal attention (relationship, advice and friendliness of the merchant). Those that prefer the SC point to the commercial offer, valuing its variety; they also give importance to price: “it’s cheaper” (utilitarian).

### 6. Conclusions and implications for management

The economic crisis triggered a drop in consumption and the closure of many stores in both the UC and SC. Most of the establishments in the UC of European cities are small independent businesses, without research departments. So it is interesting for their problems to be analyzed by universities, providing solutions aimed at attracting and maintaining customers. Thus the research question arises that intends to find out whether retail

**Shoppers  
can shop more  
efficiently  
in stores in  
the city center  
if they have  
an online  
presence**

businesses with brick-and-mortar stores have any competitive advantages. The answer is based on the study of the motivations that explain the choice of a brick-and-mortar store.

The literature offers a wide variety of focuses on shopping motivations, with the utilitarian/hedonic classification being one of the ones most commonly used at the present time (for example, Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010; Arnold & Reynolds, 2012; Seo, Yoon & Vangelova, 2015; Chaparro-Peláez, Agudo-Peregrina & Pascual-Miguel, 2016). The contribution this work makes is to identify those first motivations that underlie the behaviors and cause a shopper to opt for a brick-and-mortar store in the UC or SC. In this sense, this study contributes the richness of the nuances obtained by directly asking consumers about their motivations, as opposed to presenting them with scales to evaluate the aspects being investigated. It is shown that similar expressions can be used to identify very different reasons, which is why it is recommended to add open-ended questions to research on consumer behavior.

The results show that SC continue to elicit the movement of customers to the outskirts of the cities. In fact, both young people and adults prefer the brick-and-mortar stores of SC for two basic reasons: the commercial offer and spatial convenience. Both hedonic and utilitarian motivations are identified in them. Of the 6 groups of hedonic motivations identified by Arnold and Reynolds (2003), brick-and-mortar store shoppers currently mention two: shopping at the SC is more stimulating, because there are more things to see (shopping as an adventure) and that makes it possible to collect more information on products and trends (shopping to get ideas). With spatial convenience, shoppers are supporting utilitarian motivations; the SC lets them be more efficient in their shopping tasks.

In the region of the study, like in most medium-sized European cities, there are more stores in the UC than in the SC. However, it is surprising to note that customers perceive a greater commercial offer in the SC, and as a result, they feel that they have a greater capacity for selection there. The implication for the management of UC is clear: work needs to be done on both online communication (for example, social networks and websites) and offline communication (for example, outdoor and indoor merchandising) so that consumers know about the products they offer. This conclusion is in line with the works by Neslin et al. (2006), Verhoef et al. (2007) and Bodur, Klein and Aroa (2015), which indicate the importance of the online channel for brick-and-mortar stores. Shoppers can shop more efficiently at stores in the UC if they have an online presence that communicates their products and brands in an attractive manner. In line with the above, the UC must also develop innovative commercial proposals for products and attractive displays.

As shown by Medrano et al. (2016), this work reveals that the strong suit of the UC is personal attention, since (1) it is the main reason why adults and older people shop in the UC and (2) no one who has a preference for the SC mentioned this motivation to explain their choice. Therefore, personal attention can be a competitive advantage for stores located in the UC to counteract the strong points of the SC, which are offer and prices.

Delving deeper into the arguments related to personal attention and in line with the findings of Haas and Kenning (2014), this work also reveals four factors of utilitarian and hedonic motivations that said authors introduce in their model to explain the reasons why shoppers consult sales assistants:

- Two are situational: (1) uncertainty about the purchase (utilitarian) (for example, they give me information or advice) and (2) the positive attitude on behalf of shoppers towards sales assistants (hedonic) (you are treated better or the merchant is nicer).

**Urban stores must also develop innovative proposals for products and attractive displays**

- Two are individual: (3) an orientation towards efficiency (utilitarian) (for example, I like them to serve and assist me) and (4) shopping enjoyment (hedonic) (it is more pleasant).

While the uncertainty and the perceived risk entailed by shopping is a motivator for seeking out personal attention, there is evidence of the important role played by the affective processes, such as a positive attitude towards the sales assistants. Therefore, the results of this work also support the research on shopping behavior done by Strack and Deutsch (2004), Arnold and Reynolds (2012) and Haas and Kenning (2014).

As a result, UC managers are recommended to foster personal attention through the professionalization of the sales assistants. The important investment made in sales assistants by stores as famous as Abercrombie is a significant example of this strategy. When someone decides to ask a question, generally speaking, they have the intention to buy. Friendliness, relational sales techniques and the proper use of personal communication can improve customer relations and the customer's shopping experience. Young people give no importance to personal attention and there are also adults who prefer self-service. In light of this reality, sales assistants must know how to read the non-verbal language of shoppers in order to transmit that they are available to help, but without annoying them.

Spatial convenience appears as an important utilitarian motivation for both SC, as already mentioned, and the UC. However, here it takes on a different meaning:

- For the UC, it means spatial proximity, and is highly valued by older persons who do not drive as much.
- For SC, it means finding everything the customer needs without having to leave the center. This motivation is important for young people and adults. Time is a scarce resource.

In an effort to energize brick-and-mortar stores, it is recommended to conduct communications campaigns aimed at pointing out the benefits of going for a walk and enjoying the variety of stores as opposed to the physical inactivity associated with Internet shopping.

SC managers are recommended to work on the idea of excursions to make large purchases and to strengthen their forte in terms of the range of products they offer. Their commercial communications campaigns should stress the advantages of their spatial convenience (everything in the same place) and accessibility (opening hours and parking).

It has been demonstrated that age matters. It is discovered that young people value, above all, the range of products offered at the SC and sometimes appear to be supportive (hedonic) of the UC. These results make it possible to recommend to brick-and-mortar stores that they hire young sales assistants and develop online distribution and communications channels that complement the offline alternative.

It might seem surprising that entertainment does not appear as a motivation when choosing shopping centers, when the works by Avello and García de Madariaga (2010) have concluded that this aspect is important to young people. The explanation is that the leisure offering at the SC in the study region is limited. The numerous bars, pubs, restaurants and other entertainment venues are located on the streets of the city center.

The present work contributes the fundamental conclusion that the stores in the SC and UC can coexist, each developing their own strengths. Both provide interesting benefits for today's

Stores in the city center can attract customers by conducting campaigns highlighting the benefits of going for a walk

consumers who, in certain situations, prefer brick-and-mortar stores and value the offline shopping experience.

### 6.1. Limitations and future lines of research

Although the results are considered to represent important progress, it is not known whether this is a peculiarity of stores in the study region or if they can be extrapolated. In spite of the fact that the number of retail establishments has continued to decrease in Spain since 2013, in La Rioja, it has remained practically constant. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to replicate the study in other Spanish cities and in other countries like the United States, India or Germany with different cultures.

In this work, all the stores in the study region have been considered as a whole; however, it would be interesting to investigate and compare by types of businesses, since there may be differences between the different categories and brands.

## 7. Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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