

Article

Social Dimension of Shopping Centers Operation: Managerial Perspectives

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Abstract: Shopping centers do not operate in a vacuum but in a society of diverse stakeholders who influence their profit and growth. Therefore, shopping centers management addresses the problem of incorporating social dimensions in their management. The paper aims to identify and evaluate managerial approaches and marketing strategies of shopping centers in the Czech Republic in the context of social dimensions leading to sustainable operation. The research builds methodologically on an online questionnaire survey with top management of shopping centers. It took place at the turn of the years 2019/2020. Out of 88 Czech existing shopping centers, 30 completed responses were received (response rate 34%). The managerial approaches and marketing activities of shopping centers aimed at customers, internal employees, and tenants of the shopping centers were assessed. In addition to profit, the main social aspect on which the management of shopping centers places an emphasis is also loyalty. A properly set working environment and working conditions are essential to achieve higher employee productivity and consequently higher profits. The shopping centers should increase their social roles to preserve the well-being of their employees and enhance customer satisfaction.



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1. Introduction

Shopping centers are a phenomenon in the whole world. They have become the places where people go not only to do their shopping but also to have new experiences, meet friends and spend their leisure time. They are popular public spaces with multifunctional use, full of stores, entertainment, and services. In consideration of the latest trends and consumer preferences, shopping centers are being constantly modernized and modified in line with new requirements. This need for continuous change stems from the retail sector being often referred to as the most dynamic economic sector. These changes also require them to incorporate sustainability principles in their management.

Many post-communist countries experienced significant changes in the retail sector and the shopping behavior of their citizens in the second half of the 1990s. The dynamic development of retail and adopting new consumer patterns in a relatively short period skipped over several decades of retail development in western European countries. Such accelerated development of retail had a strong impact not only on its spatial structure but also on consumer behavior, which had followed a completely different development model during the communist regime affected by a specific shortage of goods and lower quality of shopping opportunities [1–4]. The dynamics of shopping centers' development in the transition countries (post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe) included the process of catching up with the developed world in terms of quantity, concentration