

## **The pivotal role of shopping**

Extended abstract prepared for the 4<sup>th</sup> Nordic Retail and Wholesale Conference

Michael Björn<sup>a b</sup>

- a) Center for Retail Research  
Lund University, Sweden
- b) Ericsson ConsumerLab

E-mail: michael.bjorn@ericsson.com

### **Extended abstract**

In 2011 and 2012, Ericsson ConsumerLab conducted two online surveys across a total of 27 major cities around the world. We asked consumers about a combined 30 areas of satisfaction with city life, including a wide range of topics such as education, crime, and garbage collection, etc.

Although there is variation among the cities studied, some key patterns become very clear.

Firstly, although the rising importance of the service sector is thoroughly documented and often stands for the largest overall contribution to GDP, our research shows clear differences in consumer satisfaction with different types of services. More specifically, areas with services typically provided by the private sector, with the three areas shopping, restaurants/ cafés, and entertainment/leisure ranking highest of all areas tested, and the three areas with services typically provided by the public sector, child/elderly care, communication with authorities, and traffic ranking lowest.

Secondly, of all areas tested, our research shows that shopping provides consumers with the highest overall satisfaction. In other words, attractive cities provide a wide range of shopping opportunities.

Thirdly, the overall increasing importance of the service sector leads to an increasing overall importance of service interaction, i.e. interaction with consumers of the specific services during the process of delivering those services. With the continuing rise of Internet use across increasingly mobile devices, Internet becomes an increasingly important part of such service interaction.

In order to better understand how Internet delivery of the top and bottom ranked areas mentioned above potentially influences satisfaction, an online follow-up study testing service concepts was carried out in five mega-cities 2013. Results clearly show high consumer interest in online service delivery across all areas.

Of 18 internet service concepts tested in the follow up study, same-day delivery of goods

was the concept most highly rated, indicating shopping as the area most relevant for combining online and offline aspects of service delivery.

## **Conclusion**

Since consumers are more satisfied with services typically provided by the private sector than by the public sector, cities offering a wide range of private sector services may be more attractive to citizens. As such services are increasingly delivered via Internet, availability of shopping was the highest driver of satisfaction with city life and same-day delivery of goods was the most popular internet concept tested, shopping behaviour may play a pivotal role in how cities as well as retail structures change over the coming decade.