

A case study on borders in retail spaces

Borders in
retail spaces

Salih Ceylan

Faculty of Architecture and Design, Bahcesehir Universitesi, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract

Purpose – The existence of retail spaces lies far back in history. However, retail design as an academic field of work is relatively recent and available for development. The common points and differences between commercial spaces and retail spaces, as well as the relationship between private and public spaces, require academic attention from a retail perspective. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the academic knowledge on retail design by interpreting retail spaces according to their relationship with their surroundings and their way of defining borders.

Design/methodology/approach – The focal point of the paper lies on a case study based on built examples of retail spaces in Turkey. An actual perspective, along with the historical background of retail design, provides the theoretical framework of the study, as the term “border” is being interpreted according to encountered restrictions and intentions throughout the retail design process.

Findings – The case study conducted in the scope of this paper has shown that borders are an important component in retail design and they are affected by various factors like the limitations of the surroundings and atmospheric tools such as colours, lighting, sound or scent.

Originality/value – Although there are existing studies on retail design from various perspectives, the interpretation of retail spaces in relationship with their borders is missing in academic literature. This paper provides a definition of borders in retail design including the elements that describe them and the knowledge of borders according to different corporate tendencies.

Keywords Atmospheric tools, Borders in design, Commercial space, Interior architecture, Retail design, Retail space

Paper type Research paper

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1. Introduction – commercial spaces

Commercial spaces are basically places where financial transactions are executed. However, the definition of commercial space has been changing throughout the time, transforming them into places of socialization and public gathering as well. Langman (1992) states that commercial space is not only a place of commercial transactions but also functions as a meeting-place, a site of communication and social exchange which often transcends the limits of propinquitous community. Consumption of goods and services may not be the only reason for individuals' visits to commercial space, as visitors could be taking a walk through a shopping centre (Kato, 2009). Even in the history, commercial spaces have defined more than just financial dealings, creating opportunities for social and cultural involvements so that they included aesthetic and image-oriented concerns as well. The earliest commercial areas – porticoes, basilicas or market halls dating from a time when merchants and their gestures created their own spaces – are thus not without beauty (Lefebvre, 1974).

In the present days, the definition of commercial spaces is going through a significant transformation under the effects of developing technologies. The traditional spaces of retail, such as city centres and outlying shopping malls, are either increasing in size or disappearing, producing new urban types and whole environments totally dedicated to retail (Karrholm, 2012). Purchasing habits of people are changing according to the emerging media and growing opportunities. Online channels are becoming an alternative method for shopping with a growing preference rate year by year. E-commerce almost tripled its share on the total retail trade in the world in seven years, getting from 3.6 per cent in 2011 to 9.6 per cent in the year 2017 (TUSIAD, 2017). Even social media has become a platform for trading goods and shopping through convenient applications and websites. However,



despite the raising share of online shopping channels, retailers are finding new ways to offer customers something unique or special in order to encourage traffic to physical stores (Sachdeva and Goel, 2015) (Figure 1).

Additionally, the predominant sectors in retail are changing according to people's needs and preferences. For example, the share of consumer electronics stores in total number of retail stores in Europe raised from 6.3 per cent in 2015 to 12.5 per cent in 2018 (Retail Index, 2018) as the share of fashion and clothing sector has decreased in the meantime. Peoples' motivations for shopping range from personal ones like self-gratification, roleplaying, meeting obligations to social ones such as interaction, communication, peer group attraction (Tauber, 1972), and these motivations affect the types and numbers of stores in retail market in different times.

2. Consumer habits and retail spaces

Throughout the last decades, a new concept of shopping is being established. It is characterized by a combination of essential shopping functions and the non-commercial or even recreational attributes of shopping areas (Kunc *et al.*, 2012). This new concept of shopping is referred to as "leisure shopping" which is emphasized as an important form of the currently widely understood shopping process in the classification of consumer behaviour (Guy, 1998). Why people shop is a complex process and where they shop is often influenced by a combination of their personal preferences and their response to developmental, planning and political decisions of which they are not always aware of (Buliung and Hernandez, 2009). These psychological and sociological preferences combined with the emerging developments in technology necessitate strategies for the design of commercial spaces, in this case "retail spaces" which meet actual requirements of the industries are able to be kept up to date. As consumers looked for more personalized shopping experiences, the concept of engaging customers with memorable, three-dimensional sensory experiences emerged (Kent, 2007). Thence, the concept of "retail design" moves in as the practice for planning retail spaces. Fitch and Knobel (1990) state that through good retail design, the store can become more relevant, more enduring and often more profitable. Gregson *et al.* (2002) see shopping space as a tapestry of particularity and generality, comprising specific places and generic types of shops, woven together through practice. Therefore, the effect of retail design is not only in an aesthetic and

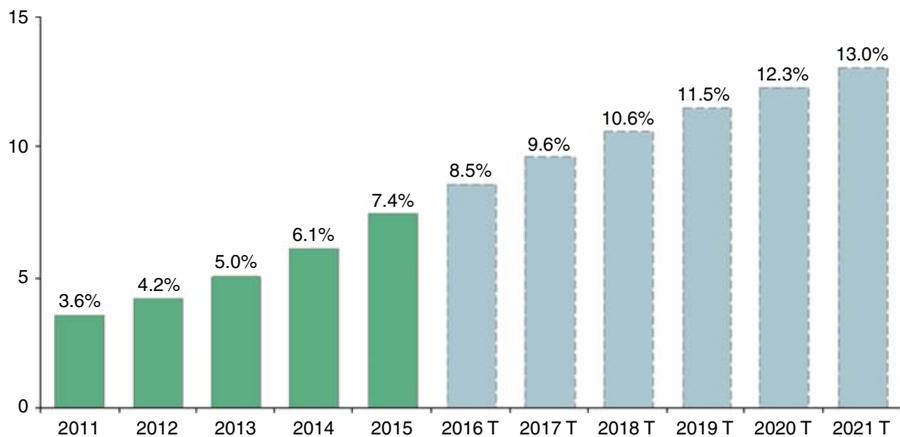


Figure 1.
E-commerce share in the total retail trade in the world by years

Source: TUSIAD (2017)

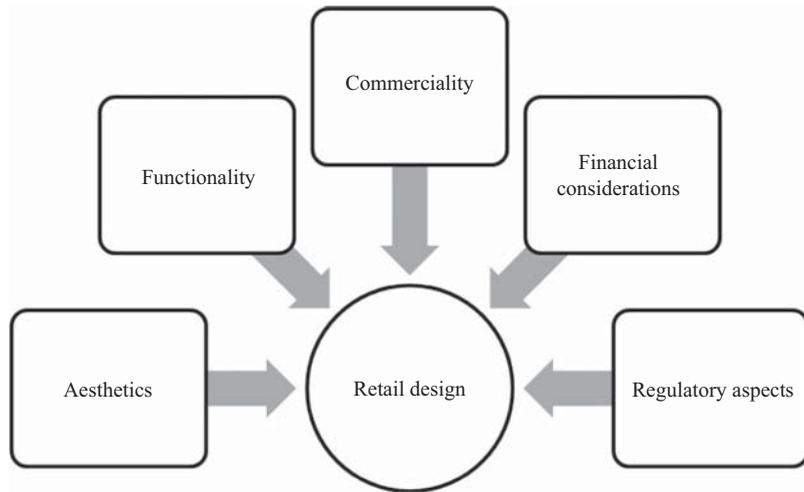
functional level, but also measurable through financial data and consumer behaviours. Additionally a warm relation between the customer and the brand can be smoothly established through the design of the retail space. Nowadays, the relationship between the customer and the brand comprises of emotional and sensible values more than of quantitative features. Directing the retail store's design towards the creation of memorable customer experiences by appealing to customers' senses, emotions and values can contribute to the creation of a personal, intuitive relationship between company and client (Petermans and Van Cloempoel, 2010).

3. Retail design

Retail design is the activity or process of designing a space that is used for selling goods or services. Although it can be considered a subcategory of interior design, retail design as an independent field of academic research is relatively recent in the literature. The rise of retail design as an area of interest in interior architecture goes hand in hand with the socio-cultural, demographical and technological changes which our society has experienced over the last few decades (Kent, 2007). However, visual merchandising or product arrangement as a part of retail design has been visible in retail or commercial spaces throughout history. Retail design can be recognized in its most basic, primitive level for ages, such as market merchants trying to sell their products by drawing attention through clever displays that look appealing to the eye and, in case of food, look fresh (Quartier *et al.*, 2009).

Retail design is a complex and multidisciplinary practice which puts together different disciplines and fields of research like psychology and sociology. Additionally because of its involvement in financial activities, retail design is being also handled as a field of work in marketing-related disciplines. Dubuisson-Quellier (2007) defines retail design as the spatial expression of the envisioned relationship between customers and shop staff. It integrates needs linked to the intangible representation of the brand with those linked to the realization of tangible components, directly connected to the product's sales (Morone, 2016). Inquiries indicate that the collaboration between different domains is extremely important in retail design because it is a process too complicated and multidirectional in terms of both theory and practice. The integration of design into the overall business strategy causes a number of business areas, such as design, marketing, strategic planning and communications, to deviate from a prescribed hierarchy and to adopt more equitable functions (Laurel and Lunenfeld, 2003) (Figure 2).

In terms of effectiveness, retail design comprises a number of different concerns such as functional, aesthetic, financial and regulatory ones. Therefore, the nature of retail design seems quite complicated. There are also some factors affecting retail design's nature. Among these factors are social or political context, atmospherics, senses, emotions and previous experiences. Retail atmospherics are all physical or non-physical elements to be found in a retail environment that affect customers' behaviours. Kotler (1974) studied atmospherics related with their influence on consumers' attitudes and behaviour. Researchers from different disciplines focus on different atmospherics' effects on the nature or retail spaces. For example, as Yalch and Spangenberg (1990) focus on the effects of music, Brengman (2002) emphasizes the impact of colour in the retail design, or Quartier *et al.* (2009) introduce lighting as an atmospheric tool in retail spaces. Many design features – either individually or integrated – exert influence on behaviour in retail environments (Quartier *et al.*, 2009). It is possible to handle the effects of specific factors separately, but in a retail environment the stimuli cannot be isolated from each other. Although individual atmospheric variables are important in the development of a customer experience, in retail practice, multiple stimuli interact and influence the customer experience (Petermans *et al.*, 2013). It is well accepted in psychology and other disciplines that humans perceive their environments holistically and while variances in a single element may drive differences in behaviour at a localized level, people will generally base their overall impressions on a mix of factors (Greenthal, 2014).



Source: Petermans and Van Cloempoel (2010)

Figure 2.
Retail design
components

3.1 Border in retail design

Border in retail design is a phenomenon that is defined by a combination of different elements in a retail space both tangible and intangible. Tangible elements are concrete physical elements which affect customers' perception and experience in the store in a direct way, e.g. furniture, floor finishes and display elements. Intangible elements refer to more abstract values which can also influence customers in an indirect way. Intangible elements are lighting, sound, scent and colours in a retail space. Essentially, border itself can be referred to an intangible element of the retail space.

The true start of a retail design discipline began when retailers and design companies together developed a new style of shop (Petermans, 2012). Design decisions in retail spaces are generally studied from a point of view which takes their influence on buying behaviour of consumers and sales numbers into the focal point. Borders, however, are phenomena which keep elements apart from each other, physically or conceptually. In retail perspective, they keep customers from approaching the retail space, and that is why in retail practice designers are trying to find different ways to make them invisible in most of the cases. There are a number of different strategies for this purpose, especially in the storefronts, as they are the parts of a retail space where the borders show up most significantly. From material selection to visual merchandising, lighting or indoor air quality, all the strategies have one thing in the focal point: to eliminate all the physical, sensory and psychological borders between the retail space and the customer. However, caused by several reasons, borders must exist and sometimes even emphasized in retail spaces. On the other hand, the existence of the borders is not caused by the intention to push the customers away from the retail space; contrarily those cases are generally caused by the demand to attract the customers with an isolated and appealing environment inside the space. The other reasons for the existence of borders in retail spaces vary from security to physical comfort or psychological reasons. The emergence of borders in retail spaces needs to be handled differently in two different types of immediate environment; street side retail spaces and shopping mall retail spaces as they create distinct physical characteristics. Although the retail design approach in both of the situations tends towards the same objective of attracting attention of the customers to the retail space, they require different types of actions to achieve it. Street side retail spaces – mostly outdoors – require precautions to be

taken about the limitations caused by the surrounding natural or artificial elements. In retail spaces at shopping malls – mostly indoors – however, the design decisions are generally made according to the intentions of the designer, defining what kind of an atmosphere needs to be created in the retail space. The forthcoming examples are designed and built works of an Istanbul-based Turkish retail design group which includes the author of this paper.

3.2 *Street side retail spaces*

First examples of retail spaces in history can be found in the street sides, starting with street vendors in ancient cities. The use of streets as social and functional spaces necessitated the existence of street side retail spaces as they provide the opportunity to present and sell products to passers-by. Nowadays, almost all urban areas enclose streets with commercial and retail purposes. New urbanists have joined the movement to humanize the shopping experience, looking to main street for inspiration (Southworth, 2005). Some cities in the world are famous with their so-called “shopping streets” as they also function as attraction points of an urban area. Although street side retail spaces do not offer the most appropriate facilities in terms of physical conditions, they are still being preferred by the customers and brands as they provide ease of access and moreover are suitable for human habits of socializing.

3.2.1 Restrictions in street side retail spaces. Most of the contemporary retail brands are tending towards the removal of the borders between the outer environment and the interiors of the retail space, so that every obstacle creating a difference between the inside and outside is endeavoured to be eliminated. However, especially in street side retail spaces, it is mostly about restrictions and limitations caused by natural or artificial elements of the existing environment. Every element of restriction appears as a challenge for the designer of the retail space, as they must be eliminated in order to create a better physical and environmental quality in the interiors, as well as to reflect the brand’s identity on the retail space which functions as an interface to welcome the customers. Among these restrictions are topography, climate conditions, rain, noise, security, structural issues of the existing buildings and regulations. All of them arise as elements that define the borders between the inside and outside, as well as the customer and brand.

Topography. Topography, causing a height difference between two elements, appears as a point of focus in many design cases, either as a problem or an opportunity. In retail perspective, the height difference between the interior and exterior space creates a natural border between the two. To eliminate that border, the designer tries to come up with ideas which attract the customers to get inside the retail space. Wide staircases with remarkable storefronts on the end ornamented with natural or human-made elements can be used as the elements to eliminate the problems caused by the topography (Plate 1).

Due to the conditions of the existing host building, the level difference between the retail space and the street can be so high sometimes that it is no more possible to create an open storefront because of safety and visibility issues. The storefront must be limited by a physical element such as railings or, in case of the need for a shop window for display, glass. There is a direct proportion between the height difference of the levels and the width of the shop window, as the number of steps also means a setback and reduction of the useful area of the retail space.

Structural issues. Structural elements are the most important elements that provide the integrity of a building. Thence, it is not likely to change them in time according to the various function spaces in the building acquire. The structural elements in a building stay the same even when other elements are subject to change depending on time. Stores established in an existing building need to accommodate themselves with the building’s structural characteristics. Especially existing buildings in the historic urban districts are



Plate 1.
A case where the height difference creates a border in retail space

Source: Author

quite aged and do not offer convenient conditions for storefronts. The distance between two structural elements might strain the composition of the storefront, so that it is not very likely for the borders to become invisible (Plate 2).

Climatic conditions. Another issue about borders in street side retail spaces is about the climatic difference between the interior and exterior environments. In either cold or hot weather, the inner temperature must be maintained in an average level for the physical comfort of the users. Additionally there are other issues about the air such as humidity, hygiene and scent. Thence, a barrier between the interior and exterior environment must be established in order to protect the indoor air quality. The barrier cannot be something physical like a door when the storefront is intended to be completely open to the customers. For the solution of the problem air conditioners or air curtains are being utilized, but only with limited performance, especially in wide openings.

Rainy or snowy weathers create even more problems in the design of retail spaces. Due to the direct contact with the unconditioned and unprotected environment in the outside, the



Plate 2.
Open storefront in a street side retail space

Source: Author

retail space becomes even more inappropriate both in hygienic and aesthetic aspects. For this case, the retail designer might choose to create some transition space between the interior and exterior areas.

Security. One other issue that forms the borders in retail spaces is about the security, as there is no dissuasive factor in a street side store about criminal cases. In open border stores it is completely personnel related as there are no physical border between the inside and the outside. It can be decided to decrease the opening in the storefront with some doors or shop windows, but it creates a physical border in the same time, so it is not preferred in retail spaces mostly. In many shops, anti-theft systems are being installed to provide security of the products, but the antennas as the detectors of the system can also be considered as elements that create borders, physically, as well as psychologically, between the customer and the retail space.

Noise. Using sound, especially music as an atmospheric tool in a retail environment by the designers is a strategy that gets used more effectively in the last decades. The most frequently used type is ambient music which refers to music being played in the background (Biswas *et al.*, 2019). However, in street side stores there is another dominant type of sound source, which is the background noise rising from the outside environment. The noise from the outside environment needs to be blocked, but complete isolation of the interior space from the exterior requires a concrete border between the inside and outside, which is generally not intended by the designer. Thus, it is important to maintain balance between the ambient music and the background noise.

In some cases where the retail space is intended to be isolated from the outside environment, total blockage of sound, as well as the sight from the outside can be preferred by the designer. Even in street side stores, isolation from the exterior space does not show up only because of obligations. Sometimes it is the objective of the retail brand to isolate the customer and the products from the outside world by creating the most appealing atmosphere in the inside, e.g. with a strong ambient music or with a strong dramatic lighting system implication. Climatic requirements or hygienic concerns can be also the reasons for this kind of attitude in stores.

3.3 Shopping mall retail spaces

The concerns in retail spaces at shopping malls are quite different than the ones on a street side. In shopping malls which mostly define interior spaces for stores, retail designers are much more independent about their design approach as there are not many physical problems to be dealt with. Shopping malls are constructed consciously to host retail spaces and their infrastructure is built according to the needs of the stores in the area. For example, the ventilation system for the food court in a shopping mall is different than the one for the area of fashion and clothing shops. The physical constraints are fewer in shopping malls, but there is another issue that the competition between the retail designers rises proportionally as there are a number of retail brands with the same type of products in an area so that the designers need to create a difference with the atmosphere the retail space offers to the customers to stand out amongst others. Furthermore, the retail space is a combination of activities, operational and commercial, and the store design, visual appearance, layout and organization support these activities as independent elements in the store environment (Kent and Kirby, 2009). The borders in this kind of a retail space are mostly intuitive ones, more than physical.

Additionally, the border in this context can also be used as an element that attracts the customers towards the inside of the shop and isolates them from the rest of the spaces in the mall. The role of the border in a retail space can be defined by the brand identity, character of the products in the store and the intention of the designer. The character of the border defines the retail space to appear in two different types, namely, open and isolated spaces.

In open retail spaces, the intention is to remove all kinds of borders and obstacles between the retail space itself and its surroundings. The main goal is to attract the customers to the inside of the retail space with different elements such as colour, lighting, scent or sound. Continuity can also be utilized by using similar and familiar materials inside the retail space that are also seen around in the surroundings. For example, floor finishing material in the retail space can be chosen similar to the floor material of the public area of the mall, so that the physical borders become invisible for the people walking around. Even in cases where a shop window is needed and the physical entrance is limited, the shop can be inviting by creating depth through the shop window by using transparency. The interiors of the retail space there are perceived by the consumers from the outside, which appears as a visual attraction.

Isolated retail spaces in shopping malls are also mostly results of the designer's choice. Although there are some limitations, or so-called "regulations" of shopping malls, which describe the shape and size of some objects in the storefront, they generally do not require any certain type of closed surface of the retail space in the storefront. The main goal in isolated retail spaces is also the attraction of the customer into the retail space, but with a different strategy. The border between the inner and outer environments is more obvious and the shop window itself functions as an obstacle for the visual contact into the interior space. Some types of retail spaces require more privacy; therefore, the borders between the shop and the public space are more obvious. The privacy level and the visibility of the border are generally proportional to the price tags of the products sold in the store. In this kind of cases, the border is made stronger to provide security of the store, as well as to make the customers feel more comfortable and isolated inside.

3.3.1 Atmospheric tools in shopping mall retail spaces. The instruments that create the border between the retail space and its surroundings in shopping malls are the atmospheric tools rather than restrictions or limitations of the given environment. Atmosphere can be regarded as a multifaceted, latent construct, which is composed of different atmospheric stimuli or cues (Teller and Dennis, 2012). McGoldrick and Pieros (1998) define atmospheric as a valuable marketing tool to retailers on their quest for image differentiation. Any atmospheric element like sound, colour, lighting and scent or tangible elements such as material and furnishings can be employed to manipulate the borders between the public area and the shop for the customers, either to make them disappear or to emphasize them with the aim of creating an isolated environment within the retail space. Markin *et al.* (1976) state that a retail store is a "bundle of cues, messages and suggestions which communicate to the consumer". Atmospheric can be a key determinant of the image which the consumer may form about a store and it may likely affect the consumer's resulting behaviour (Smith and Burns, 1996).

Colour. Colour is an atmospheric element that affects the visual perception. The use of a certain colour in a retail space creates an effect that distinguishes the retail space from the surroundings. It can be utilized to remove the emotional borders between the customer and the retail space. Bellizzi *et al.* (1983) studied the effects of colour in store design mentioning that colours have perceptual qualities that affect the shopper's perception of store and merchandise. Additionally, the use of colours in retail spaces serves also in symbolic ways as some colours stand for certain emotions or elements (Plate 3).

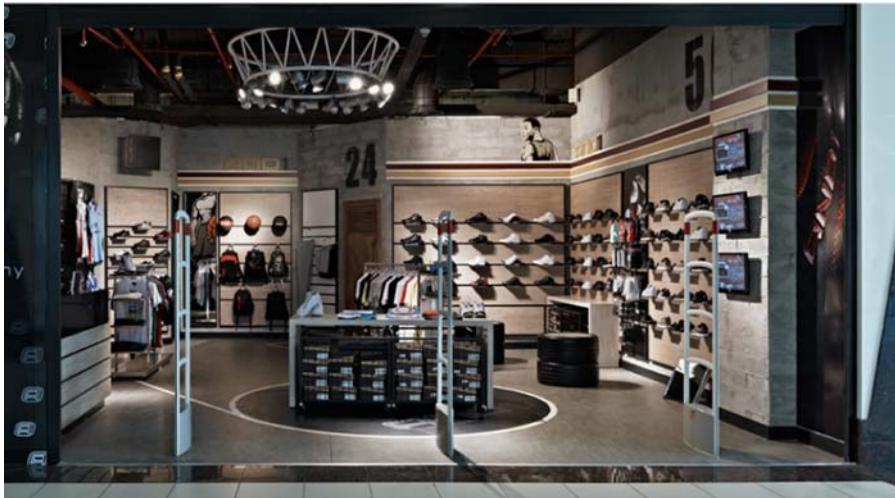
Lighting. Lighting is a strong tool for the manipulation of people's perception of the environment. Custers *et al.* (2010) state that lighting can influence emotions, mood and cognition as well as atmosphere and spatial impressions. Different attributes of lighting such as brightness, contrast or colour can change its effects as well. Lighting with a colour close to the daylight creates a fair environment as other colours of lighting have different effects. A lighting strategy with a high contrast creates a dramatic and tense atmosphere between the lit and shaded areas within the retail space. Consequently lighting can be employed with its different parameters, either to define or to eliminate the border between the retail space and its immediate environment (Plate 4).

Borders in retail spaces



Source: Author

Plate 3.
Storefront in a shopping mall expressing the use of colour as an atmospheric tool



Source: Author

Plate 4.
Storefront in a shopping mall expressing the use of lighting as an atmospheric tool

Sound. Sound in a retail environment is mostly employed as ambient music and it is a strong influencer on consumers' behaviour in a retail setting. Spangenberg *et al.* (2005) mention that musical stimuli are powerful elements influencing consumers' affective responses in retail environments. Studies show that there is a positive relationship between in-store music and customer responses (Michel *et al.*, 2017). Although it should have negative effects in the means of extreme situations such as high volume or improper choice of genre, background music or ambient music in a retail environment supports the attraction of the customers inside the store, so that it removes the sensible and emotional borders between the customer and the retail space.

Scent. Scent is a powerful trigger for human emotions. Aromas, if appropriate, can create a more stimulating and inviting retail environment (Ward *et al.*, 2007). The use of scent-based stimuli keeps getting increased interest in the last decades in retail environments and many brands start to use characterized scents within their corporate identities. The use of scent can be important for a retail space to eliminate the borders and attract the customer inside.

3.4 Storefronts as borders in retail space

Retail spaces are places where the corporate identity of a retail brand is reflected on the physical environment. It refers to the influence of designed environment on brand equity in general, namely, “brandscape”, a material and symbolic environment that consumers build with marketplace products, images and messages, that they invest with local meaning, and whose totemic significance largely shapes the adaptation consumers make to “the modern world” (Sherry, 1998). For this purpose, every element, tangible or intangible, atmospheric tools or concrete element can be utilized in order to enforce the reflection of the corporate identity on the retail space. Storefronts, in this case the place where the shop meets the outer environment, can be used as an element that defines the borders in retail space. The attitude shown in the storefront can also give a hint about the attitude of the brand about the intended consuming behaviours of the customers. The transparency, cover, physical accessibility or obstacles have some meaning about the identity of the brand. Table I shows the relationship between the physical parameters of shop windows and the brand characteristics (see Table I). The study consists of 13 different retail spaces in different places of Turkey that belong to different brands. “Total width” defines the total distance from one corner of the storefront to the other one; “Entrance %” defines the ratio of the physical accessible width into the retail space to the total distance of the storefront; “Display %” defines the ratio of the shop window to the total distance of the storefront; “Blocked %” defines the ratio of the blind walls to the total distance of the storefront; “Display bg” defines the transparency or opaqueness of the shop window background; “Shop type” defines the type of the products being sold in the shop; and “AUP” defines the average unit price or the products being sold the in shop in dollars.

The main point that comes into prominence through the chart is that the transparency of the storefront which means more inviting attitude of the retail space is seen mostly in shops with a lower average unit price. That means the more expensive the products in the shop become, the more isolation or privacy is needed in the retail space. One exception on this perspective is the Shop 5, a sportswear shop, where the average unit price is relatively high (\$42), but the storefront is still quite transparent and accessible (70 per cent).

Table I.
The chart showing the relationship between the physical parameters of storefront and the corporate characteristics

Shop no.	Width (m)	Entrance %	Display %	Blocked %	Display bg	Shop type	AUP (\$)
Shop 1	9	75	0	25	None	Casual clothing	12
Shop 2	7	20	80	0	Open	Denim	17
Shop 3	14	15	60	25	Partial open	Denim	15
Shop 4	5	30	70	0	Closed	Women clothing	58
Shop 5	8	70	0	30	None	Sportswear	42
Shop 6	12	20	80	0	Closed	Women clothing	46
Shop 7	12	70	30	0	Open	Casual clothing	12
Shop 8	6	70	0	30	None	Restaurant	5
Shop 9	8	25	75	0	Open	Children clothing	25
Shop 10	8	70	0	30	None	Accessories	4
Shop 11	10	20	80	0	Open	Women clothing	30
Shop 12	6	15	75	10	Closed	Jewellery	150
Shop 13	5	30	70	0	Open	Women clothing	22

Note: bg, background

Another point is that the attitude towards isolation is more frequently seen in shops selling women clothing or jewellery (Shops 4, 6 and 12). The reason for that may cause from regional and cultural context as more privacy is required in women directed retail spaces. Additionally, in shops where mostly casual clothing, children clothing or denim products are sold, the attitude tends towards transparency as the products as well as the retail space itself are endeavoured to be easily attainable and approachable.

4. Conclusion

In retail design, the ultimate objective is to remove all types of borders between the brand and the customer in order to establish warm relationships between the two. In retail spaces, the border appears as a physical as well as psychological element which needs to be dealt with throughout the design process. However, removing the border between the brand and the customer does not have the same meaning with removing all the physical obstacles between the retail space and its surroundings. Sometimes creating an isolated and private environment inside the retail space by intentionally creating physical obstacles that separate the interior space from the outside helps with the creation of an intimate relationship between the brand and the customer by removing the emotional borders between the two. Border as an abstract notion is not the same as the border as a physical element.

Border as a physical element that sets the retail space apart from the outer environment can appear as a difference in the topography or issues based on structure, security or weather conditions. This kind of borders can be dealt with retail design decisions that accept border as an element of design in the built environment. Additionally, atmospheric tools such as lighting, colour, sound and scent need also to be utilized in order to define the borders in a retail space, either to emphasize them, or to make them disappear.

Corporate identity is an important aspect of retail design. From some perspectives, it is the very reason for the existence of a discipline like retail design in the first place. Therefore, borders in a retail space highly depend on the corporate identity. The strategies followed by the brand to define its relationships with the customers also define the environment to be created in the retail space, as well as its borders. The main goal is to ensure the attraction of the customer either by creating a mysterious isolated retail space with visible physical borders, or a transparent and inviting open retail space without visible borders. How the attraction is processed depends on the corporate strategy and the nature of the products to be provided in the retail space.

The development of retail design as an academic field of research is still in motion. The retail design practice which started in the second half of the twentieth century continues with the interdisciplinary collaboration of different domains such as interior architecture, marketing, psychology and sociology. The dynamic nature of the retail industry caused by the rapid changes in the society makes the academic field of retail design an attractive area of interest for the researchers. Especially in the developing countries, the number of academic works in this area is very low so that any contribution from any discipline for retail design is valuable for gaining perspectives from different geographic locations and local cultures.

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Corresponding author

Salih Ceylan can be contacted at: salih.ceylan@arc.bau.edu.tr

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