

User's Perceptions of the Communal Space in the SDC Area as a Study and Work Venue Choice

Michelle Orlena¹, Wiwik Nirmala Sari²

¹ Universitas Pradita, Indonesia;

² Universitas Pradita, Indonesia

* Correspondence e-mail: michelle.ortena@student.pradita.ac.id

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Abstract

The growing flexibility in study and work patterns has encouraged people to seek alternative venues beyond their homes or formal workplaces, thereby increasing the use of communal spaces for daily activities. This phenomenon is evident in the Summarecon Digital Center (SDC) Gading Serpong area, where a communal space originally intended to support commercial activity is now increasingly used by users as a place for studying and working. This study aims to describe users' perceptions of the use of this communal space based on the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of the tricomponent attitude model. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Informants were determined through purposive sampling technique, involving 30 users of the SDC communal space. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model. The results show that users perceive the SDC communal space as supportive of study and work activities due to its open access without purchase obligations, adequate facilities, and a comfortable atmosphere for both activity and socializing. However, unstable Wi-Fi quality and limited power outlets remain concerns for some users. These findings are expected to serve as input for area managers without diminishing the social and commercial functions of the area.

Keywords

Visitor Perception; Communal Space; Summarecon Digital Center; Studying and Working



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INTRODUCTION

Changes in learning and working patterns have expanded the range of spaces used for productive activities. Learning and working are increasingly conducted not only at home, in offices, or on campuses, but also in cafés, libraries, parks, and communal spaces. This shift reflects preferences for accessible and comfortable environments that can support productive activities (Rhamadana & Bachtiar, 2022). The phenomenon is closely related to

the concept of the third place, which refers to spaces outside the home and formal workplaces or institutional settings. As work and learning become more flexible, third places may accommodate not only social interaction but also studying, working, meetings, and other productive activities (Mimoun & Gruen, 2021).

Communal spaces have similar potential because they accommodate shared activities, social interaction, and diverse needs. Their functions may extend beyond their original design as visitors adapt spaces to changing patterns of activity (Satria et al., 2024). This phenomenon is particularly relevant in commercial areas, where freely accessible communal spaces may be used for learning and working even when they are not specifically designed as coworking or study facilities.

One example is Summarecon Digital Center (SDC) Gading Serpong, developed by PT Summarecon Agung Tbk in the Scientia area of Summarecon Serpong. SDC provides several outdoor communal areas, including Garden Walk, Garden Balcony, Garden View, and Garden Pads, which serve as hangout and meeting areas (PT Summarecon Agung Tbk, 2024; Secure Parking, 2023). Unlike coworking spaces intentionally designed for productive activities and which may require payment or membership, these communal areas are freely accessible without requiring purchases. Their use for studying and working therefore appears to emerge from visitors' everyday practices.

To establish the relevance of SDC as the research setting, preliminary observations conducted on July 5, 2026, compared SDC with Downtown Walk at Summarecon Mall Serpong (SMS) and Lawson Summarecon Gading Serpong. Based on the communal-space characteristics proposed by Putri et al. (2023), particularly accessibility and activity functions, SDC showed a more prominent pattern of use for studying and working. Seating at SDC was freely accessible and accommodated studying, working, socializing, eating, and waiting. In contrast, Downtown Walk primarily supported shopping, eating, socializing, and recreation, while Lawson had more limited seating and was primarily used by customers.

Table 1. Comparison of Communal Space Characteristics

Aspect	SDC	Downtown Walk, SMS	Lawson Summarecon Serpong	Gading
Seating accessibility	Freely accessible without purchase	Supporting facility of shopping center	Primarily customers	for
Dominant activities	Studying, working, socializing, eating, waiting	Shopping, eating, socializing, recreation	Eating, socializing, limited studying/working	

Observed phenomenon	Increasing use for studying and working	No dominant study/work use	Study/work occurs but is not dominant
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Source: Processed by the researchers, 2026.

The preliminary comparison also indicated that visitors at SDC tended to remain longer when engaging in studying or working activities. Therefore, this study focuses on Garden Walk, a covered open communal area surrounded by Food and Beverage (F&B) tenants. The area extends along the pedestrian circulation space in front of the SDC building and can be accessed through West Lobby 1, West Lobby 2, and South Lobby.

Figure 1. Garden Walk Communal Area at SDC Gading Serpong



Source:
Researchers’

documentation, 2026.

Observations conducted on July 10, 2026, showed frequent weekday use of laptops for assignments, work, online meetings, and group activities. Some visitors remained in the area for extended periods, while weekend use was more crowded, particularly due to visitors accessing Scientia Square Park. Despite limitations such as limited visual privacy, exposure to sunlight, insufficient electrical outlets, and unstable Wi-Fi, the space continued to be used for relatively long periods.

Figure 2. Visitor Activities in Garden Walk on Weekdays



Information from the observations indicates that communal tables and chairs were frequently used for studying and working, sometimes for more than two hours, without visitors necessarily making purchases. These interviews were used as supporting information to provide context regarding the relationship between communal-space use and surrounding commercial activity. The observations and supporting interviews indicate that the communal space is being used for productive activities beyond

its commercial context.

Previous studies have examined communal and public spaces in relation to user needs, spatial quality, accessibility, comfort, visual characteristics, lighting, facilities, and visitor perceptions (Leo & Yuono, 2022; Lestari et al., 2022; Fudali & Santosa, 2022; Wijaya & Pranata, 2023; Elvareta & Dwisusanto, 2023; Masrurah et al., 2024; Oktavia et al., 2025; Jaelani et al., 2025; Wijaya & Ratnasari, 2026). However, limited attention has been given to visitors' perceptions of the spontaneous use of an openly accessible commercial communal space as an alternative place for learning and working. Unlike coworking or study spaces intentionally designed for such purposes, the use of Garden Walk for learning and working appears to emerge through visitors' everyday practices.

This study addresses this gap by examining visitor perceptions through the three components of the Tricomponent Attitude Model: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component concerns visitors' understanding of the space and its suitability for learning and working; the affective component concerns comfort and emotional responses; and the conative component concerns behavioral tendencies and continued use. Accordingly, this study aims to describe visitors' cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions of the communal space at SDC Gading Serpong as an alternative place for learning and working. The findings are expected to contribute to an understanding of how commercial communal spaces may acquire additional functions through visitors' everyday practices..

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to understand and describe visitors' perceptions of the use of communal space at Summarecon Digital Center (SDC) Gading Serpong as a place for studying and working. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on visitors' experiences, perspectives, and meanings associated with the space they use for study and work activities. According to Sugiyono (2023), qualitative research examines objects in natural settings with the researcher serving as the primary instrument, while emphasizing an understanding of meaning rather than generalization. Visitors' perceptions were analyzed based on the three components of the Tricomponent Attitude Model: cognitive, affective, and conative.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, in which participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research focus (Prasmono & Sari, 2025). The informants were SDC visitors who used the communal space for studying and/or working. The inclusion criteria were: (1) having used the SDC communal space for studying and/or working at least once; (2) being at least 17 years old; (3) being a university student or worker active in or around the SDC area; and (4) being willing to participate in an interview. The number of informants was determined based on information adequacy until data saturation was reached, referring to a condition in which additional informants no longer

generate new information or findings and the emerging patterns become repetitive (Lu et al., 2024). Based on these criteria, the study involved 30 informants, consisting of university students, employees, and freelancers with experience using the SDC communal space for studying and working.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. The interviews used a question guide developed based on the cognitive, affective, and conative components of the Tricomponent Attitude Model. The interviews allowed informants to describe their experiences, evaluations, feelings, and behavioral tendencies when using the SDC communal space. Direct observation was conducted to identify the physical conditions of the space, the atmosphere of the area, patterns of space use, visitor activities, and facilities supporting studying and working. Documentation was used to collect photographs, field notes, information on facility conditions, spatial layouts, and records of visitor activities. These three techniques were integrated to obtain more comprehensive data (Subagyo & Kristian, 2023).

Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis based on the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Septiana et al., 2024). During data condensation, interview, observation, and documentation data were selected, focused, and categorized according to the three components of the Tricomponent Attitude Model. The data were then systematically displayed to identify patterns, themes, and meanings emerging from the informants' experiences. Conclusions were subsequently drawn inductively to address the research focus concerning visitors' perceptions of the SDC communal space as a place for studying and working. Data trustworthiness was strengthened through method triangulation by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Location and Characteristics of the Communal Space

Scientia Garden is an integrated area developed by PT Summarecon Agung Tbk in Gading Serpong, Tangerang Regency. The area integrates residential, commercial, educational, office, and recreational functions within an interconnected environment. Several facilities located within the area include Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN), Universitas Pradita, Scientia Business Park, Scientia Square Park, and Summarecon Digital Center (SDC) as one of the commercial activity centers. The development concept is intended to accommodate various community activities through interconnected facilities (PT Summarecon Agung Tbk, 2022; PT Summarecon Agung Tbk, 2024).

Summarecon Digital Center is a commercial area that accommodates various business and trading activities in Gading Serpong. Its location within an environment comprising educational institutions, offices, recreational facilities, and public facilities makes SDC accessible to diverse groups of visitors. Along with the development of the Scientia area, SDC has also developed as one of the spaces supporting the economic and lifestyle activities

of the surrounding community (PT Summarecon Agung Tbk, 2024; Summarecon Serpong, 2026).

Based on field observations, the communal space at SDC consists of open seating areas distributed at several points among rows of food and beverage tenants. The areas are equipped with tables and chairs that can be used freely without requiring visitors to make purchases. Some seating areas are located under canopies that provide protection from heat and rain, while others are situated in open areas. The communal space is surrounded by 28 food and beverage tenants, creating an interaction between commercial functions and shared spaces accessible to visitors.

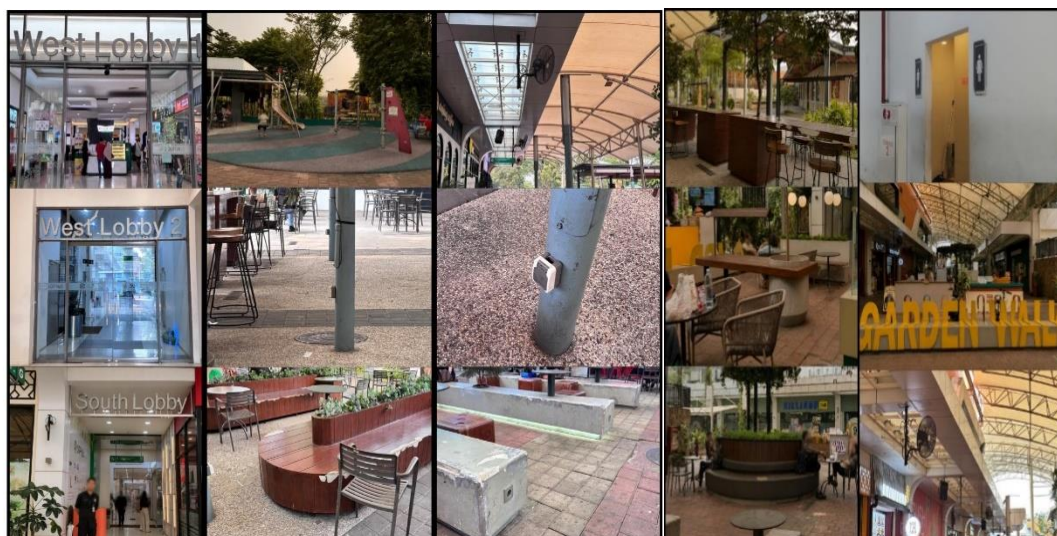
Figure 1. Condition of the Communal Space at Summarecon Digital Center



Source: Researchers' documentation, 2026.

Available facilities include various types of tables and chairs, fans, electrical outlets at several points, free Wi-Fi, pedestrian paths, parking areas, a prayer room, a children's play area, and toilets located inside the SDC building, particularly near the West Lobby 2 and South Lobby access points. These facilities allow the communal space to accommodate activities beyond consumption, including social and productive activities.

Figure 2. Physical Conditions and Facilities of the SDC Communal Space



Source: Researchers' documentation, 2026.

Nevertheless, observations identified several limitations, particularly the limited number of electrical outlets, unstable Wi-Fi connectivity, thermal discomfort at certain times, and noise levels. These conditions form part of visitors' experiences when using the communal space for studying and working.

Visitors' Cognitive, Affective, and Conative Perceptions

The interview findings were analyzed using the *Tricomponent Attitude Model*, which consists of three components: cognitive, affective, and conative. These components were used to examine how visitors understand, feel about, and demonstrate behavioral tendencies toward the SDC communal space as a place for studying and working.

Table 1. Visitors' Cognitive Perceptions

Aspect	Interview Findings
Knowledge of facilities	Most informants were aware of the availability of tables and chairs, electrical outlets, Wi-Fi, toilets, waste bins, a children's play area, and bicycle parking.
Understanding of facility conditions	The facilities were generally considered adequate, although Wi-Fi was perceived as insufficiently stable for studying and working.
Knowledge of usage rules	All informants knew that the space could be used without time restrictions and without an obligation to purchase products from tenants.
Perceptions of tenant prices	Most informants considered the prices relatively affordable, while some students considered them relatively expensive.
Understanding of space functions	The space was perceived as suitable for socializing, studying, working, resting, and other activities.

Source: Processed by the researchers, 2026.

The cognitive findings indicate that visitors had a relatively good understanding of the facilities, accessibility, usage rules, and functions of the communal space. All informants understood that the space could be used without time restrictions and without an obligation

to make purchases. This understanding contributed to the perception that the SDC communal space was flexible and could accommodate various needs.

Visitors also did not perceive the communal space solely as a supporting facility for tenants. Instead, they viewed it as a multifunctional environment that could be used for studying, working, gathering, and resting. This finding indicates an expanded interpretation of the space's function, from supporting commercial activities to accommodating multiple communal activities. This finding is consistent with Swarjana's (2022) concept of perception, in which knowledge and interpretation of environmental stimuli contribute to the formation of perception. It is also consistent with the cognitive component of the *Tricomponent Attitude Model*, which relates to individuals' knowledge, beliefs, and understanding of an object (Pradana et al., 2023). The finding further supports Satria et al. (2024) regarding the ability of communal spaces to accommodate various activities and Rhamadana and Bachtiar (2022), who found that facilities and comfort are among the considerations in selecting a place for studying.

Table 2. Visitors' Affective Perceptions

Aspect	Interview Findings
Comfort	Visitors generally felt comfortable because of the open atmosphere, the presence of friends, the surrounding environment, and the freedom to engage in activities.
Feelings when not making a purchase	Most informants felt comfortable not purchasing anything, although some felt hesitant due to perceived social norms.
Response to paid access	Most informants expressed reservations about the communal space becoming a paid area.
Social atmosphere	All informants felt accepted and did not feel excessively monitored.

Source: Processed by the researchers, 2026.

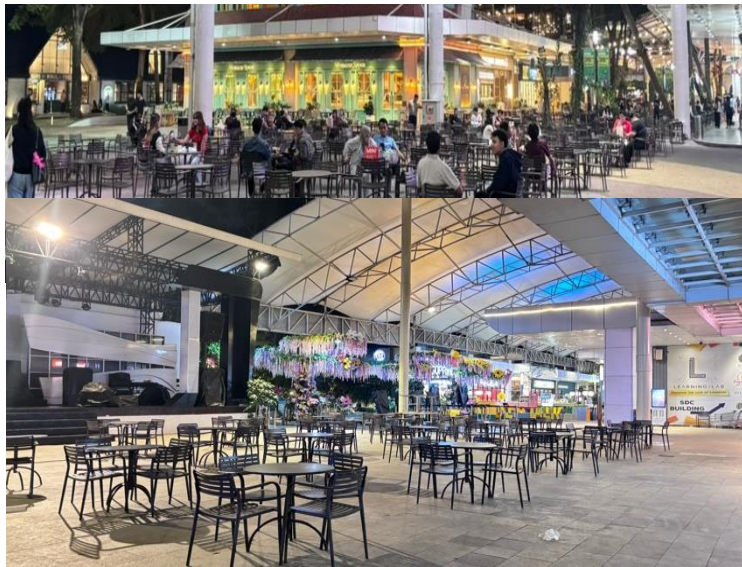
In the affective component, visitors generally demonstrated positive emotional responses toward the communal space. Comfort was associated not only with the physical condition of the space but also with social interaction, the surrounding atmosphere, and freedom of activity. Most informants did not feel pressured to make purchases when using the communal space, although some felt hesitant because the space was situated within a commercial environment.

Most informants also expressed reservations about the communal space being converted into a paid area. This response indicates the importance they placed on the free access they currently experience. Although limitations remained, including the limited

number of electrical outlets, unstable Wi-Fi, noise, and exposure to heat at certain times, these conditions did not prevent visitors from continuing to use the space.

The preliminary comparison with Downtown Walk at Summarecon Mall Serpong (SMS) and Lawson Scientia provides additional contextual information. Downtown Walk has a larger seating capacity.

Figure 3. Comparison of Seating Capacity between Garden Walk SDC and Downtown Walk SMS



Source: Researchers' documentation, 2026.

The availability of electrical outlets at Downtown Walk SMS was also greater, partly because of its larger seating area. Electrical outlets are installed on poles along the Downtown Walk pedestrian corridor, as shown in Figure 4.

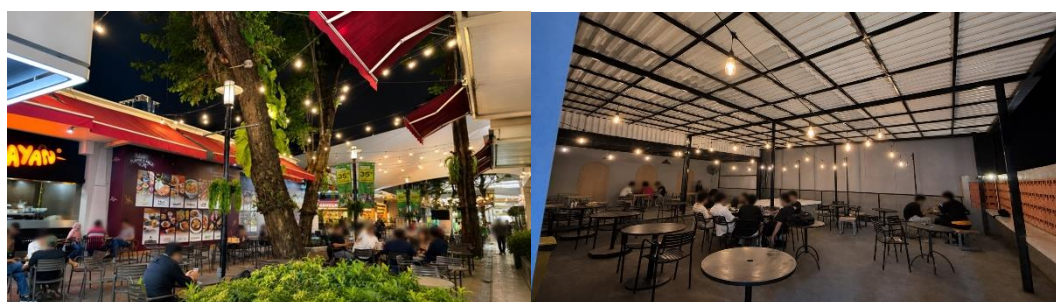
Figure 4. Comparison of Electrical Outlet Availability between Garden Walk SDC and Downtown Walk SMS



Source: Researchers' documentation, 2026.

In terms of thermal conditions, SDC was perceived as warmer than Lawson because Lawson has a more enclosed canopy that provides greater protection from direct sunlight. Although the canopy conditions at SMS are relatively similar to those at SDC, the seating area at SMS was perceived as cooler because surrounding trees provide natural shade, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Comparison of Canopy Conditions and Shading in the Communal Spaces



at Downtown Walk SMS and Lawson Scientia

Source: Researchers' documentation, 2026.

These comparisons indicate that several facility limitations at SDC are related to physical conditions that could still be improved. However, continued use of the space suggests that visitors' comfort is not determined solely by the completeness of physical facilities. Freedom of access and the social atmosphere also contribute to visitors' emotional responses. This finding is consistent with the affective component of the *Tricomponent Attitude Model* (Pradana et al., 2023) and is in line with Habibullah and Sakya (2025), Candra and Sari (2024), Ivada and Sari (2024), and Wahyu and Sari (2025), who highlight the relationship between spatial quality, facilities, and user comfort. The present study extends these findings by indicating that freedom of access may also contribute to visitors' positive responses toward communal space.

Table 3. Visitors' Conative Perceptions

Aspect	Interview Findings
Activities	Studying, working, gathering, using social media, playing games, and other activities according to individual needs.

Reasons for purchasing	Purchases were primarily made based on personal needs, such as hunger or thirst.
Intention to shop	Influenced by needs, financial circumstances, mood, promotions, and personal preferences.
Intention to recommend	Almost all informants had invited friends to use the communal space, including when there was no plan to make a purchase.

Source: Processed by the researchers, 2026.

In the conative component, the communal space was used for various productive and social activities. Studying and working took place alongside gathering, social media use, and recreational activities. Food and beverage purchases were generally made according to personal needs rather than as a requirement associated with using the communal space.

Almost all informants reported having invited friends to gather in the space, even when there was no prior intention to make a purchase. This finding suggests that the communal space has become one of the considerations in choosing SDC as a place to carry out activities. Visitors' behavior was therefore not oriented solely toward consumption but also toward using a freely accessible and flexible space for studying, working, and social interaction.

This finding is consistent with the conative component of the *Tricomponent Attitude Model*, which concerns behavioral tendencies following the formation of knowledge and emotional responses toward an object (Pradana et al., 2023). It is also consistent with Mimoun and Gruen (2021), who demonstrate that commercial spaces can develop into productive environments accommodating diverse activities. The present study further indicates that the use of communal space and tenant consumption do not necessarily occur simultaneously. Based on preliminary interviews with tenants, visitors frequently used communal seating for relatively long periods without making purchases. Thus, the use of the space for productive activities was not always accompanied by consumption at surrounding tenants.

Interrelationship of Cognitive, Affective, and Conative Perceptions

The three components were interconnected in the visitors' perceptions. Visitors' knowledge of free access and the flexible functions of the space provided a cognitive basis for viewing the SDC communal space as suitable for studying and working. This understanding was associated with affective responses such as comfort, a sense of acceptance, and appreciation of the freedom to use the space. These responses were subsequently reflected in conative tendencies, including repeated use of the space and recommendations to others.

The findings indicate an expanded interpretation of the function of the SDC communal space. Although physically situated within a commercial environment and initially serving as a supporting area for visitors and tenants, the space has acquired additional functions

through everyday use, including studying, working, and socializing. This expanded use occurs despite limitations such as exposure to heat at certain times, limited electrical outlets, and unstable Wi-Fi.

CONCLUSION

This study of visitors' perceptions of the Summarecon Digital Center (SDC) communal space as an alternative place for studying and working shows that Garden Walk has developed into a multifunctional space that not only supports commercial activities but also accommodates studying, working, resting, and socializing. Based on the Tricomponent Attitude Model, visitors' perceptions can be understood through three interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative.

In the cognitive component, visitors understood that the SDC communal space could be used freely without time restrictions or an obligation to make purchases. Knowledge of accessibility, space functions, and available facilities contributed to the perception that the space was suitable for studying and working. This condition indicates an expanded interpretation of the space, from an area supporting commercial activities to a space accommodating productive and social activities.

In the affective component, visitors' comfort was primarily associated with the open atmosphere, freedom of use, and a sense of acceptance while engaging in activities. Although limitations remained, including unstable Wi-Fi, limited electrical outlets, noise, and exposure to heat at certain times, most visitors continued to express positive responses. Their reservations about the possibility of introducing usage fees also indicate that free access is an important part of their experience.

In the conative component, visitors tended to use the space repeatedly for studying, working, and gathering and to recommend it to others. Food and beverage purchases were generally made based on personal needs rather than as an obligation associated with using the space. Thus, the intensity of space use was not always accompanied by consumption at surrounding tenants, indicating a distinction between the space's function as a setting for productive activities and the commercial function of the area.

Theoretically, this study extends discussions of third places and informal study and work spaces by applying the Tricomponent Attitude Model to explain the relationship between visitors' knowledge, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies. The findings indicate that freedom of access and the social atmosphere are important elements in shaping visitors' perceptions, alongside the quality of physical facilities.

Practically, SDC management should maintain free access while improving supporting facilities, particularly electrical outlets, Wi-Fi quality, shading or thermal comfort, and noise control. Tenants may also adapt their marketing strategies to visitor characteristics through affordable packages or relevant promotions without reducing visitors' freedom to use the

communal space.

This study is limited to visitors' perspectives, while tenant perspectives were used only as supporting data, and observations were conducted over a limited period. Future research could examine the perspectives of SDC management and tenants in greater depth, compare communal spaces in other commercial areas, and employ quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to examine the relationship between the intensity of space use, visitors' perceptions, and commercial activities.

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