Summary:

In 1992, the retail market in China was opened to foreign investment. Since then, foreign retailers and investors, attracted by China's large consumer market, have established joint venture retail enterprises in major cities. However, the joint venture retail enterprises have not run smoothly. One important reason is the lack of knowledge of Chinese consumer behaviour which has been changing dramatically and continuously since China's economic reform began in 1978.

The main task of this research is to study Chinese consumers' perception of the performance of joint venture shopping centres (JVSCs). The specific objectives of this study are: to explore Chinese consumers' consideration when selecting a joint venture shopping centre (JVSC) to visit; to find out their perceived attractiveness of a joint venture shopping centre (JVSC); and to forecast the future opportunities and challenges in China's joint venture shopping centre industry.

Applying data from shoppers' questionnaire survey in three joint venture shopping centres in China, this study has fulfilled its tasks. Quality of merchandise and service, and shopping environment tend to be important criteria for Chinese consumers' store choice of joint venture shopping centers (JVSCs). A multi-attribute model, namely SCATTR model, with five dimensions, has been developed for assessing a joint venture shopping centre's attractiveness which is essential for shopping centre patronage and economic performance. Finally, based on recent government policies regarding the development of joint venture retail enterprises and other socio-economic development trends in China, this study predicts that there will be more location opportunities and less policy restrictions. However, due to some macro-economic reasons, difficulties and obstacles will remain for the development and success of joint venture shopping centers (JVSCs).