

# A child play-and-learn area contributing to urban regeneration: A case in Christchurch, New Zealand

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## Abstract

This study regards a Child Play-and-Learn Area (CPLA) in a library as a third place and investigates its relationships with visitors through the concept of place attachment. To understand the influence of the CPLA, the study examined the relationships among visitors' place attachment, servicescape and behavioural intentions involving place scales. A survey was conducted in a CPLA in Christchurch, New Zealand (The Imagination Station in the central library) and collected 406 questionnaires. The results indicate that the physical and social servicescape of the CPLA can enhance visitors' place attachment and influence their behavioural intentions in the library and the city. The findings suggest that community-oriented places like CPLAs and libraries should be used as social infrastructure in urban regeneration strategies.

## KEYWORDS

behavioural intention, geographical scales, library, place attachment, servicescape, third place, urban regeneration

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Urban communities require public places for informal meetings to nurture human associations and bonding. Oldenburg (1999) conceptualised the notion of a “third place”, a setting beyond home and work (the “first” and “second” places, respectively), in which people meet on a regular basis and satisfy their needs for sociability

and relaxation. Examples of such places include public libraries (Buszard et al., 2016), urban parks (Mak & Jim, 2019), museums (Cantillon & Baker, 2018), urban waterfronts (Mandal & Das, 2016), festivals/event venues (Jacke, 2009), restaurants and café (Hanks et al., 2020) and specialised precincts (Esmaeilpoorarabi et al., 2018). There is growing evidence that third places have benefits for urban regeneration. For example, Luo

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et al. (2016) identified cultural creative districts as third places, which offer high-quality social encounters with a suitable mix of physical, cultural and entertainment amenities to reinforce urban regeneration strategies. Thomas and Rosemary (2000) identified a broader range of leisure and cultural activities offered by urban third places that contribute to positioning the city centre as the commercial and social hub of a city region and extending visitors' length of stay in the city centre. Similarly, Amore and Hall (2016) in a study of CBD redevelopment in Christchurch, New Zealand, claimed that the process of urban regeneration in a context of post-disaster recovery mainly focuses on rebuilding the leisure-oriented third places as "anchor" or "flagship" projects, such as libraries, shopping malls, convention centres, art galleries, museums, stadia and design or cultural precincts/quarters. Such measures are often tied to the goal of attracting and retaining people in the city, as part of urban redevelopment strategies and emphasise how people-place relationships could influence individual behaviours at various geographical scales.

However, among previous research on various urban third places, few have regarded the Child Play-and-Learn area (CPLA) as a third place. Nevertheless, such areas are crucial in child development for it is where youth get the necessary preparation to take their place in the city and live there as adult citizens (O'Brien, 2003). The use of CPLAs is also associated with increases in caregiver and child conversation and interaction (Hassinger-Das et al., 2020). Considering the nature of CPLAs, this study claims that CPLAs could be regarded as third places that affect not only children's but also caregivers' experiences, given that children are often influencers/co-deciders at the time of choosing products or services while caregivers are the final decision makers (Flurry, 2007; Walia Sharma & Dasgupta, 2009).

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to examine whether a CPLA could act as an urban third place to affect visitors' experiences and contribute to urban regeneration as other third places do. Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), this study employed *servicescape* as stimulus, *place attachment* as organism and *behavioural intentions* as response to investigate visitors' experiences at a CPLA. Furthermore, urban regeneration could be reflected in a series of visitor behaviours, including purchase intention, revisit intention and desire to stay at the urban spaces (e.g., Lee et al., 2014; Nam et al., 2022; Pan & Cobbinah, 2023). To investigate the influences of CPLAs on urban regeneration, this study examined visitors' behavioural intentions across geographical scales, including non-manipulable object space, environmental space and geographical space (Freundschuh, 2000). Thereby, this study could investigate the influences of servicescape

in a CPLA context on visitors' place attachment and behaviours. The study highlights the importance of CPLAs as an urban third place as well as their potential role in enhancing urban regeneration.

## 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 | Child play-and-learn areas (CPLAs) as a third place

Places as "meaningful locations" are essential in individuals' environmental experiences and have both physical and social dimensions (Cresswell, 2015; Tuan, 1977). Oldenburg (1999, p. 16) defined third places as "a generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work". Within this perspective, CPLAs could be regarded as a third place, because they provides space for community gathering and interaction. Hassinger-Das et al. (2020) examined play-and-learn installations in a library (e.g., climbing walls, perching towers, magnetic play surfaces and blocks and nooks) and found that the use of a CPLA could support caregiver-child and child-child interactions, as well as children's self-development, including language, literacy and STEM skills. A CPLA designed in a library usually has five characteristics, including social interaction, familiarity, newness, ease and joy (Wang et al., 2019). Several studies have identified that some libraries go beyond the traditional approach to library services to target community concerns and needs, in what can be regarded as third places (e.g., Lin et al., 2015; Williams, 2018; Wood, 2021).

To study different space experiences of CPLAs and libraries, the scale of place should be considered, which may significantly impact understanding of a place (Lewicka, 2010). Using a more general place scale proposed by Freundschuh and Egenhofer (1997), Scannell and Gifford (2017) found that people are more likely to regard three types of space as meaningful places, including: (1) non-manipulable object space, which is larger than the human body and smaller than a house, like a CPLA in a library; (2) environmental space, which includes the inside of building spaces, like a library, and neighbourhoods; and (3) geographical space, which could be cities or states, like the city and region where a library is located. According to the different scale at which place is understood and the research objective, this study examined visitor's perceptions of servicescape and place attachment towards a CPLA in a library and three behavioural intentions towards the CPLA, the library and the city respectively.

## 2.2 | Organism: Place attachment

This study employed place attachment as organism to investigate visitors' attitude towards a CPLA. Place attachment, focusing on human–place bonding (Kyle et al., 2005), is an attitudinal and multidimensional concept with cognitive, affective and conative components (Kyle et al., 2005). As the broadest and most established dimension of place attachment (Brocato, 2006), *place identity* is regarded as a cognitive substructure of self-identity (Proshansky et al., 1983). In a service context, identity congruence plays an important role in customer visitation choice (Line et al., 2018). *Place dependence* is equated with the conative component, which indicates the functionality and specificity of a particular place and reflects the substitutability and compatibility of the spatial settings (Chen et al., 2014). *Affective attachment* is regarded as an affective component, stimulated by emotional benefits, trust and attractiveness (Tsai, 2012). *Social bonding* is regarded as having both a conative dimension, emphasising individual behaviours of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships within this setting, and an affective dimension, highlighting the experiences with close social relationships (Kyle et al., 2004; Lin & Lockwood, 2014).

## 2.3 | Stimulus: Perceived Servicescape

Both physical and social servicescape are employed as stimulus to examine how CPLA environments influence visitors' attitudes. Perceived physical servicescape describes the ability of the physical surroundings to facilitate achievement of (internal) organisational and (external) marketing goals (Bitner, 1992). Visitors evaluated the physical servicescape of third place via its functionality and aesthetics (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011), with reference to issues such as *design, equipment* and *ambiance* (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999). Perceived physical servicescape could influence individuals' cognitions and perceptions about the place or service provider, as well as the emotional responses from customers, leading to place attachment towards third places (Line et al., 2018). This study thus establishes the hypothesis that:

**Hypothesis 1.** Perceived physical servicescape at the CPLA positively influences place attachment.

Perceived social servicescape emphasises the social interactions of the service environment and regards them as a form of environmental stimulus to evaluate third places (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). According

to the Other Customer Perception scale (Brocato et al., 2012), other customers' *perceived similarity, physical appearance* and *suitable behaviour* were proposed to evaluate the other social entities in terms of the extent to which they are perceived to be socially similar to the person experiencing the phenomenon, as well as their appearance and behaviours (Line & Hanks, 2019). Studies have identified the positive relationship between perceived social servicescape and third place attachment (Hanks & Line, 2018; Sun et al., 2021), while Xu and Gursoy (2020) found that each dimension have various impacts. Therefore, this study argues that the three dimensions would have different impacts on customer experience, indicating three different types of perceived social servicescape, and establishes the hypothesis that:

**Hypothesis 2a.** Perceived similarity at the CPLA positively influences place attachment.

**Hypothesis 2b.** Physical appearance at the CPLA positively influences place attachment.

**Hypothesis 2c.** Perceived suitable behaviour at the CPLA positively influences place attachment.

## 2.4 | Responses: Behavioural intentions across different geographical scales

Studies have identified that place attachment positively influences some favourable behavioural intentions in third places, including purchase intention (Florek, 2011), revisit intention (Mohamed et al., 2022) and desire to stay (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). *Purchase intention* refers to consumption activities, providing both utilitarian and hedonic outcomes (Babin et al., 1994). The place where purchase activities occur could be classified as non-manipulable object spaces that are “conducive to activities, privacy, personal growth and freedom” (Scannell & Gifford, 2017, p. 266). Thus, visitor's purchase intention towards services provided by the CPLA is studied. *Revisit intention*, related to destination loyalty, may be evoked by place attachment (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). When people attach to a place with specific activities, they are more likely to revisit the surrounding region as environmental spaces (Brown et al., 2016; Scannell & Gifford, 2017). In this study's context, revisit intention towards the library where the CPLA is located is examined. *Desire to stay* refers to the emotional closeness felt towards a place (Randolph, 2005). The socio-territorial belonging of geographic spaces and place attachment are interrelated at the community level (Pollini, 2005; Scannell & Gifford, 2017), motivating

people to stay closer and longer in meaningful places (Trell et al., 2012). Therefore, desire to stay in the city where the library is located is investigated. Accordingly, this study establishes the hypotheses that:

**Hypothesis 3.** Place attachment positively influences purchase intention in the CPLA.

**Hypothesis 4.** Place attachment positively influences revisit intention in the library.

**Hypothesis 5.** Place attachment positively influences desire to stay in the city.

These behavioural intentions could also reflect the success of urban regeneration from the perspective of consumers/visitors. Strong purchase intention can facilitate economic dimensions of urban regeneration (Mariotti & Riganti, 2021). Those who want to revisit a place tend to support further development, contributing to urban regeneration (Lee et al., 2014). The success of urban regeneration is also reflected in people's desire to stay longer in regenerated urban spaces (Thomas & Rosemary, 2000).

### 3 | METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 | Study site

Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island of New Zealand and is a “trauma city” that suffered from two large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. The earthquake sequence inflicted massive destruction on the city centre, resulting in the loss of human lives and destruction of properties, and many residents moving out (Amore & Hall, 2021).

Christchurch City Council (2012) came up with the 2012 Christchurch Central Recovery Plan and identified several anchor projects to rebuild and “bring life back” to the city centre, including a public library, convention centre, art gallery, shopping mall, outdoor gathering place and a children's playground. These anchor projects are all third places generating social gatherings and have been used as post-disaster urban regeneration tools, concerned with urban design and improving quality of life (Finsterwalder & Hall, 2016). Tūranga Library (n.d.), one of the identified anchor projects to be rebuilt in the plan, was built and opened 7 years after the second major earthquake. It is now regarded as the city's hub for developing strong communities, offering five floors of collections as well as spaces for information, inspiration and entertainment.

Tūranga Library provides a CPLA for family groups, operated by a local charity organisation, namely the Imagination Station (n.d.). The CPLA provides public LEGO play space for free, while also introducing paid services for workshops, birthday parties, team-building sessions and private events. One of their purposes is to provide people, especially LEGO lovers and family groups, with LEGO-related activities to “bring life back” and revitalise the city centre. Tūranga Library and the Imagination Station are ‘anchor’ projects designed to extend a visitor's stay and rejuvenate the city centre. The geographical scale of study sites is illustrated in Figure 1.

#### 3.2 | Data collection

An on-site survey was distributed to the adult visitors at the Imagination Station between 27th November 2020 and 27th January 2021. Approximately 500 visitors at the Imagination Station were approached over the period, and 406 visitors provided valid responses for further analysis. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

#### 3.3 | Measurements

Wakefield and Blodgett's (1999) measurement of tangibility is applied to investigate the perceived physical servicescape in the dimensions of design, equipment and ambient elements. This study adopts the measurement of perceived social servicescape by Line and Hanks (2019), via perceived similarity, physical appearance of other customers and suitable behaviour. The measurement of place attachment dimensionality, place identity, place dependence, affective attachment and social bonding is adopted from Chen et al. (2019). For behavioural intentions, this study measures purchase intention to the Imagination Station's paid services from Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), revisit intention to Tūranga Library from Kim and Moon (2009), and desire to stay in the city centre from Wakefield and Baker (1998). Each item is presented in a five-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

### 4 | RESULTS

Considering the research objective, this study aims to identify the relationships among perceived servicescape, place attachment and behavioural intentions. Therefore, two-step Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used for data analysis, because it can “explain the relationships

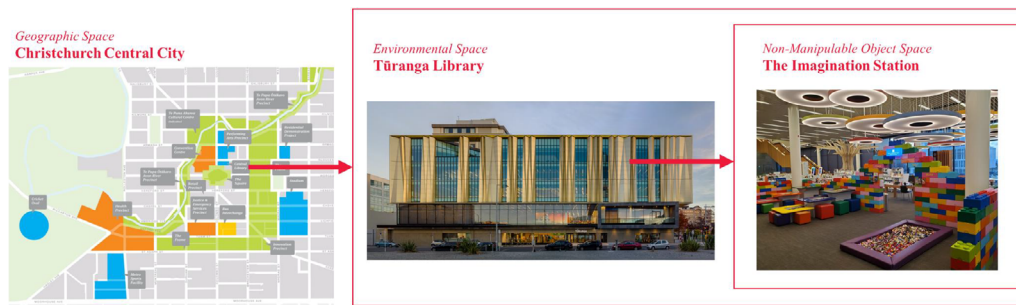


FIGURE 1 The geographical scale of study sites. Source: Christchurch City Council (2012); Christchurch City Libraries (n.d.); Imagination Station (n.d.).

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics.

Gender	<i>n</i>	%
Female	280	68.97%
Male	126	31.03%
Age	<i>n</i>	%
18–30	76	18.72%
31–40	226	55.67%
41–50	83	20.44%
51–60	10	2.46%
Over 61	11	2.71%
Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	%
European	214	52.71%
Māori	18	4.43%
Pacific	10	2.46%
Asian	112	27.59%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	14	3.45%
Other	38	9.36%
Employment status	<i>n</i>	%
Full-time	176	43.35%
Part-time	104	25.62%
Students	35	8.62%
Retired	10	2.46%
Unemployed	81	19.95%
Number of children	<i>n</i>	%
0	23	5.67%
1	173	42.61%
2	153	37.68%
3	38	9.36%
More than 3	19	4.68%

among multiple variables” (Hair et al., 2013, p. 546). Data were analysed using IBM SPSS statistics 27 and Amos 27. The approach was conducted with maximum likelihood (ML) estimation (Byrne, 2016). Confirmatory factor

analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity of the indicator variables with the measurement model. SEM was thereafter used to identify relationships among the constructs proposed in the hypotheses.

#### 4.1 | Measurement model

The results of convergent validity are shown in Table 2. All standardised loadings are over 0.500, ranging from 0.532 to 0.927, and the *t*-values are significant at the 0.001 level. All values of CR are over 0.700. Most values of AVE are above the recommended level of 0.500 except the construct of perceived similarity. However, in cases where AVE is less than 0.500, but composite reliability is higher than 0.600, the convergent validity of the construct is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to the criteria provided by Hair et al. (2013), the measurement model meets the requirement of convergent validity.

The discriminant validity of the measurement model was tested, and the results are presented in Table 3. From the results, place identity, place dependence and affective attachment are strongly correlated, suggesting that people with high dependence on a place may also show high emotional attachment to the place, which commonly occurs in people's attachment to a place (Chen et al., 2018). For physical servicescape, design, equipment and ambience are correlated, as they are the essential components in service environment (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999), and visitors are more likely to evaluate them holistically within a small indoor space involving single core activity like the Imagination Station. For social servicescape, physical appearance and suitable behaviour are also strongly correlated, which could be explained that other visitors' physical appearance and suitable behaviours could be condensed into the factor of the other visitor's performance (Chen et al., 2014, 2018). However, the strong relationships between these

TABLE 2 Reliability and convergent validity.

Item	Factor loadings	t-value	CR	AVE
<b>Physical servicescape: design</b>			00.892	00.676
Outside appearance is attractive.	00.830	N/A		
Interior design is attractive.	00.899	22.386***		
Layout makes it easy to get around.	00.827	19.81***		
Seats are comfortable.	00.722	16.32***		
<b>Physical servicescape: equipment</b>			00.925	00.804
Equipment is of high quality.	00.918	N/A		
Equipment is excellent.	00.927	30.915***		
Equipment is modern-looking.	00.842	24.639***		
<b>Physical servicescape: ambience</b>			00.786	00.553
The Imagination Station is kept clean.	00.825	N/A		
Temperature is comfortable.	00.658	13.889***		
Employees are neat appearing.	00.738	16.044***		
<b>Social servicescape: perceived similarity</b>			00.772	00.465
I could identify with the other visitors.	00.594	N/A		
I am similar to the other visitors here.	00.727	10.646***		
The other visitors here are like me.	00.835	11.133***		
The others here come from a similar background to myself.	00.532	80.585***		
<b>Social servicescape: physical appearance</b>			00.803	00.508
I fit right in with the other visitors here.	00.588	N/A		
I liked the appearance of the other visitors here.	00.728	11.049***		
The other visitors here were dressed appropriately.	00.689	10.66***		
The other visitors here looked nice.	00.826	11.875***		
<b>Social servicescape: suitable behaviour</b>			00.870	00.630
Other visitors' behaviour here was appropriate.	00.716	N/A		
The other visitors here were friendly towards me.	00.659	12.751***		
I found that the other visitors here behaved well.	00.902	17.274***		
The other visitors' behaviour here was pleasant.	00.872	16.805***		
<b>Place attachment: Place Identity</b>			00.857	00.599
I identify strongly with the Imagination Station.	00.752	N/A		
I feel committed to the Imagination Station.	00.825	16.725***		
I feel I can really be myself when at the Imagination Station.	00.721	14.457***		
The Imagination Station is very special to me.	00.795	16.083***		
<b>Place attachment: place dependence</b>			00.868	00.687
I prefer the Imagination Station to others for the activities I enjoy.	00.764	N/A		
The Imagination Station is my favourite place to be.	00.849	18.08***		
I miss the Imagination Station when away from it for too long.	00.869	18.585***		
<b>Place attachment: affective attachment</b>			00.925	00.804
The Imagination Station means a lot to me.	00.899	N/A		
I feel a sense of belonging to the Imagination Station.	00.909	28.54***		

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Item	Factor loadings	t-value	CR	AVE
I feel an emotional attachment to the Imagination Station.	00.881	26.491***		
<b>Place attachment: social bonding</b>			00.879	00.709
I have made social connections at the Imagination Station.	00.835	N/A		
If I were to stop visiting the Imagination Station, I would lose some social contacts.	00.868	20.842***		
Many of my social connections prefer the Imagination Station over other similar places.	00.822	19.335***		
<b>Purchase intention</b>			00.841	00.639
I would buy the paid services provided by the Imagination Station rather than any other similar products as available.	00.882	N/A		
I am willing to recommend to others to purchase the paid services provided by the Imagination Station.	00.790	16.233***		
I intend to purchase the paid services provided by the Imagination Station in the future.	00.718	14.891***		
<b>Revisit intention</b>			00.817	00.691
I would like to revisit Tūranga Library in the near future.	00.791	N/A		
I have strong intentions to bring family to Tūranga Library again.	00.870	90.175***		
<b>Desire to stay</b>			00.827	00.707
I like to stay in the Christchurch Central City as long as possible.	00.921	N/A		
I enjoy spending time in the Christchurch Central City.	00.752	10.318***		

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

dimensions do not necessarily present the failure of conceptualisation and measure of constructs. The original measurement is thus retained to differentiate their impacts.

The measurement model returns acceptable GOF indices ( $\chi^2 = 1567.195$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.115 < 3$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.052 < 0.070$ ,  $SRMR = 0.055 < 0.080$ ,  $TLI = 0.915 < 0.900$ ,  $CFI = 0.927 < 0.900$ ). All GOF measures in the measurement model meet the criteria (Hair et al., 2013), considering the sample size and variables. Besides, all variables had acceptable ranges of skewness ( $-1; 1$ ) and kurtosis ( $-2; 2$ ), meeting normality requirements (Hair et al., 2013).

## 4.2 | Structural model

The structural model and hypotheses were tested on the refined sample. The results of GOF indices indicated the

model fit satisfies the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2013) ( $\chi^2 = 1736.184$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.206 < 3$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.055 < 0.070$ ,  $SRMR = 0.071 < 0.080$ ,  $TLI = 0.908 < 0.900$ ,  $CFI = 0.916 < 0.900$ ).

The structural model results are shown in Table 4 and Figure 2. The results indicate that perceived physical servicescape could significantly and positively influence place attachment, which supports H1 ( $\beta = 0.313$ ,  $t = 3.923$ ,  $p < .001$ ). For perceived social servicescape, perceived similarity does not significantly influence place attachment, so it fails to support H2a. Physical appearance has the strongest influence on place attachment in all stimulus factors, which thus supports H2b ( $\beta = 0.462$ ,  $t = 3.666$ ,  $p < .001$ ). By contrast, the relationship between suitable behaviour and place attachment is significant and negative, which is opposite to H2c ( $\beta = -0.453$ ,  $t = -3.778$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As for responses, all behavioural intentions investigated in the current study, including purchase intention, revisit intention and desire to stay,

TABLE 3 Testing discriminant validity.

	PS_DE	PS_EQ	PS_AM	SS_PS	SS_PA	SS_SB	PA_PI	PA_PD	PA_AA	PA_SB	PI	RI	DS
PS_DE	<b>00.822</b>												
PS_EQ	00.777***	<b>00.896</b>											
PS_AM	00.814***	00.869***	<b>00.743</b>										
SS_PS	00.301***	00.305***	00.246***	<b>00.682</b>									
SS_PA	00.525***	00.465***	00.541***	00.538***	<b>00.713</b>								
SS_SB	00.659***	00.541***	00.657***	00.330***	00.768***	<b>00.794</b>							
PA_PI	00.427***	00.393***	00.357***	00.362***	00.493***	00.338***	<b>00.774</b>						
PA_PD	00.202***	00.242***	00.180**	00.280***	00.274***	00.098	00.807***	<b>00.829</b>					
PA_AA	00.267***	00.286***	00.248***	00.283***	00.336***	00.143*	00.818***	00.906***	<b>00.896</b>				
PA_SB	00.160**	00.178**	00.105	00.214***	00.207***	00.026	00.611***	00.807***	00.844***	<b>00.842</b>			
PI	00.179**	00.237***	00.204***	00.218***	00.239***	00.167**	00.419***	00.357***	00.415***	00.346***	<b>00.799</b>		
RI	00.247***	00.238***	00.255***	00.162*	00.128*	00.204***	00.213***	00.133*	00.191**	00.153*	00.247***	<b>00.831</b>	
DS	00.199***	00.197***	00.187**	00.227***	00.199**	00.185**	00.329***	00.397***	00.374***	00.359***	00.233***	00.369***	<b>00.841</b>

Note: Square root of AVE is shown on the diagonal of the matrix in bold; inter-construct correlation is shown off the diagonal. Bold values on the diagonal are the square roots of the average variance extracted, shared between the constructs and their respective measures;  $n = 406$ .  
 Abbreviations: DS, desire to stay; PA\_AA, affective attachment; PA\_PD, place dependence; PA\_PI, place identity; PA\_SB, social bonding; PI, purchase intention; PS\_AM, ambience; PS\_DE, design; PS\_EQ, equipment; RI, revisit intention; SS\_PA, physical appearance; SS\_PS, perceived similarity; SS\_SB, suitable behaviour.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

TABLE 4 Hypotheses test of the structural model.

	Direct effects	Standardised coefficients	t-value	R <sup>2</sup>	Supported
	Place attachment			0.22	
H1	Perceived physical Servicescape	0.313***	3.923		YES
H2a	Perceived similarity	0.103 <sup>n.s.</sup>	1.424		NO
H2b	Physical appearance	0.462***	3.666		YES
H2c	Suitable behaviour	-0.453***	-3.778		NO
	→ Purchase intention			0.20	
H3	Place attachment	0.380***	5.851		YES
	Perceived physical Servicescape	0.066 <sup>n.s.</sup>	0.812		
	Perceived similarity	0.084 <sup>n.s.</sup>	1.149		
	Physical appearance	-0.037 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.293		
	Suitable behaviour	0.070 <sup>n.s.</sup>	0.565		
	→ Revisit intention			0.13	
H4	Place attachment	0.174*	2.593		YES
	Perceived physical Servicescape	0.177 <sup>n.s.</sup>	1.739		
	Perceived similarity	0.152 <sup>n.s.</sup>	1.855		
	Physical appearance	-0.330*	-2.174		
	Suitable behaviour	0.270 <sup>n.s.</sup>	1.929		
	→ Desire to stay			0.18	
H5	Place attachment	0.397***	6.285		YES
	Perceived physical Servicescape	-0.027 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.331		
	Perceived similarity	0.118 <sup>n.s.</sup>	1.608		
	Physical appearance	-0.197 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-1.558		
	Suitable behaviour	0.235*	1.971		

Abbreviation: n.s., not significant.

\*\*\**p* < .001; \**p* < .05.

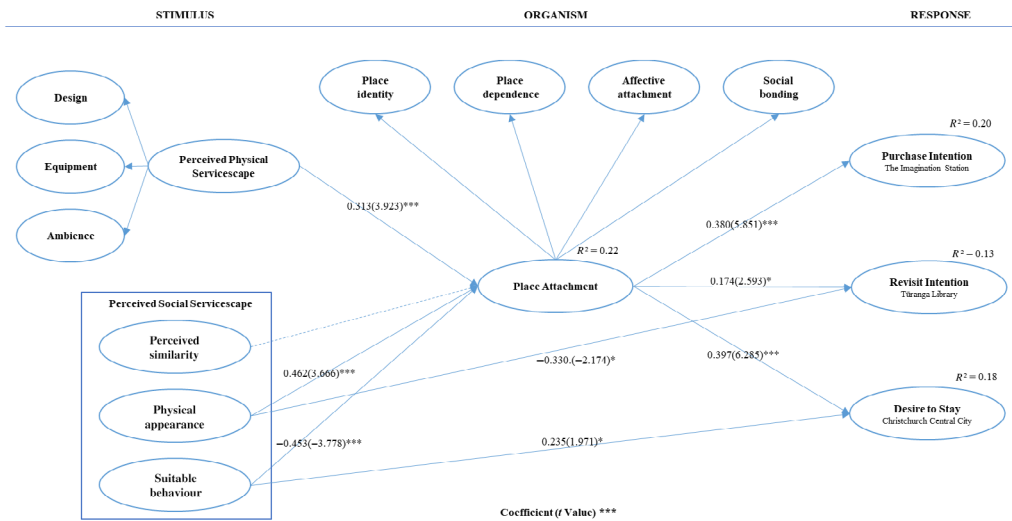


FIGURE 2 Standardised results of the structural model. \*\*\**p* < .001; \**p* < .05.

TABLE 5 Mediation tests.

Indirect path	Standardised estimate	Mediation confidence interval	
		Lower	Upper
PS → PA → PI	0.124***	0.063	0.330
PS → PA → RI	0.054*	0.000	0.261
PS → PA → DS	0.119***	0.060	0.226
SS_PS → PA → PI	0.041 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.024	0.103
SS_PS → PA → RI	0.018 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.005	0.070
SS_PS → PA → DS	0.039 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.036	0.110
SS_PA → PA → PI	0.183***	0.080	0.947
SS_PA → PA → RI	0.080 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.002	0.794
SS_PA → PA → DS	0.176***	0.075	0.442
SS_SB → PA → PI	-0.179***	-0.825	-0.078
SS_SB → PA → RI	-0.079 <sup>n.s.</sup>	-0.694	0.001
SS_SB → PA → DS	-0.172***	-0.392	-0.076

Abbreviations: DS, desire to stay; n.s., not significant; PA, place attachment; PI, purchase intention; PS, perceived physical servicescape; RI, revisit intention; SS\_PA, physical appearance; SS\_PS, perceived similarity; SS\_SB, suitable behaviour.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

are significantly and positively influenced by place attachment; H3 ( $\beta = 0.380$ ,  $t = 5.851$ ,  $p < .001$ ), H4 ( $\beta = 0.174$ ,  $t = 2.593$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and H5 ( $\beta = 0.397$ ,  $t = 6.285$ ,  $p < .001$ ) are thus supported. Desire to stay in the city centre receives the most significant influence from place attachment to the Imagination Station with the largest standardised coefficients.

This study identifies some other relationships which were not hypothesised. Two perceived social servicescape dimensions also directly affect the responses: physical appearance negatively influenced revisit intention to Tūranga Library ( $\beta = -0.33$ ,  $t = -2.174$ ,  $p < .050$ ); suitable behaviour positively influenced desire to stay at the city centre ( $\beta = 0.235$ ,  $t = 1.971$ ,  $p < .050$ ).

### 4.3 | Mediation analysis

To identify the mechanism between servicescape and behavioural intentions, mediating effects of place attachment were further tested with bootstrapping, using a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI) and 2000 resamples (Hayes, 2017).

The bootstrapping results illustrate that the indirect effects of perceived physical servicescape on behavioural intentions via place attachment are significant (Table 5), including the effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = 0.063 to 0.330), revisit intention ( $\beta = 0.054$ ,  $p < .050$ , 95% CI = 0.000 to 0.261) and desire to stay ( $\beta = 0.119$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = 0.060 to 0.226).

The indirect effects of physical appearance on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.183$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = 0.080 to 0.947) and desire to stay ( $\beta = 0.176$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = 0.075 to 0.442) via place attachment are also significant, as are the indirect effects of suitable behaviour on purchase intention ( $\beta = -0.179$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = -0.825 to -0.078) and desire to stay ( $\beta = -0.172$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = -0.392 to -0.076). Place attachment thus is shown to mediate the effects of physical appearance and suitable behaviour on purchase intention and desire to stay.

## 5 | DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates the impacts of a CPLA's servicescape on visitors' place attachment, as well as further influencing visitors' different behavioural intentions towards the CPLA, the library and the city where the CPLA is located. The results also reveal whether the Imagination Station achieves its purposes of attracting members of the local community and revitalising central Christchurch by extending their length of stay in the city.

The results demonstrate the positive impact of *perceived physical servicescape* on "third place" attachment, which is also consistent with the findings of Line et al. (2018). The physical servicescape provides particular experiences and services for consumers that reflects their interactions with the place and which, in turn, could induce place attachment (Milligan, 1998). When visitors

regard the Imagination Station as an inclusive place with its physical elements (i.e., design, equipment and ambience), they may feel stronger place attachment. *Perceived similarity* of other customers' influences on place attachment are insignificant. One possible explanation is that their relationships might be indirectly and mediated by other factors (Lee et al., 2020; Line et al., 2018). It is also possible that perceived similarity might partly influence place attachment (i.e., place identity and dependence) (Xu & Gursoy, 2020). Considering the context of the Imagination Station, most of the respondents or their children have a common interest in LEGO (personal communication), which might lead to insignificant results in the relationships between perceived similarity and place attachment.

This study also finds that the visitors can form stronger place attachments to the Imagination Station when they positively evaluate others' *physical appearance*, further enhancing their purchase intention and desire to stay. However, a high evaluation of others' physical appearance decreases their revisit intention to the library. The results indicate that *suitable behaviour* of other visitors negatively influences place attachment, which is the opposite to the proposed hypothesis. The evaluation of suitable behaviour is related to the subjective standard appropriate in the context (Brocato et al., 2012). From the mediation analysis, evaluating others with appropriate behaviours may weaken the visitor's place attachment to the Imagination Station and further decrease the purchase intention and desire to stay. The findings indicate that the strong place attachment is reflected in the tolerance of diverse behaviours at the Imagination Station, which is consistent with studies of other libraries (Derr & Rhodes, 2010; Lin et al., 2015).

The results indicate the positive relationship between place attachment and *purchase intention* to the paid services of the Imagination Station. Those visitors with enhanced place attachment may like to experience more Imagination Station services, which can be regarded as proximity-maintaining behaviour, and support the non-for-profit organisation with personal investment (reconstruction behaviour) (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Place attachment positively influences *revisit intention* to Tūranga Library. As the Imagination Station is located in the library without a specific boundary with other areas, many visitors might enlarge the experience at the Imagination Station to the library. In addition, as the standardised coefficient of revisit intention is lowest in the values of behavioural intentions tested in this study, it is important to note that the other services and facilities provided in the library are also important for revisit intention, given that the Imagination Station is a part of the library. Place attachment to the Imagination Station

also positively influences *desire to stay* in the city centre, as some adult visitors went shopping, visited the café and went for a walk in the city centre when their children were playing at the Imagination Station (personal communication). The various activities in the city centre could increase the visitor's time there, even though these activities are different from their original visit purpose to the Imagination Station (Thomas & Rosemary, 2000). The Imagination Station therefore achieves its goals of "bringing life back" and revitalising the city centre.

## 5.1 | Theoretical implications

The current study enriches the place attachment literature by investigating and linking place attachment and behavioural intentions across different geographical scales. As place scale is important in studying people-place relationships (Lewicka, 2010), this study is among the first to provide empirical evidence for identifying meaningful places with the scale of non-manipulable objective spaces, environmental spaces and geographic spaces, emphasising the mediating role of "third place" attachment in the relationships between perceived servicescape and behavioural intentions across different geographical scales.

The research also demonstrates that a focus on the CPLA context provides a further angle to examine place attachment and its effects on visitor behaviours. Previous studies on CPLAs usually examined their impact on children's development and library activities (Hassinger-Das et al., 2020; Theodotou, 2017). By examining visitors' experiences with different scales of place, this study reinforces recognition of the positive impacts that CPLAs can have on the physical and socio-economic dimensions of urban regeneration (Hall, 2013). The Imagination Station represents a good "cultural and creative-led regeneration" practice (Amore & Hall, 2016, p. 189), given that it presents an appealing community-based servicescape, which has positive impacts from the immediate CPLA through to that of the surrounding places, including the library and the city centre. A positive physical servicescape provided by the CPLA can help reinforce the physical dimension of urban regeneration. Social servicescape and behavioural intentions in this study reflect the socio-economic dimensions of urban regeneration, i.e., a concern with improving the quality of life of areas targeted for regeneration and/or attracting visitors, as well as the attraction of business and capital (Hall, 2013). Moreover, the study also confirmed that community participation is a key component of place attachment (Falanga, 2022). Participation generated by community-oriented third places, like the Imagination Station, can therefore

reinforce place attachment and make substantial contributions to regeneration policy schemes by enlivening place.

## 5.2 | Practical implications

The findings suggest that urban planning and redevelopment strategies that look to bring people to city centres or hubs and lengthen their stay should incorporate place-making perspectives (Chen et al., 2021), that consider visitors, service providers and the needs of place. The CPLA and library should be regarded as significant urban social infrastructure (Latham & Layton, 2019). CPLAs can generate substantial psychological benefits and well-being for family groups, contributing to children's development and social cohesion in the long term (Alawadi, 2016; Hassinger-Das et al., 2020). The managers of CPLAs should consider both physical and social environments that are responsive to the needs of family groups. Considering the business of the Imagination Station, it also has the potential to forge partnerships with other organisations and government agencies to develop services and programs which have not yet been considered as core library business.

In addition, this work has also provided some insights into how CPLAs can play a significant part in facilitating social interaction and the (re)development of place relations in greatly altered physical space. Policymakers and city planners could pay more attention to the important socio-economic roles of CPLAs and libraries that provide cultural and knowledge services, and their anchor role in enlivening city space. Such urban services could therefore be encouraged, so as to add cultural value to urban space (Dinardi, 2015), creating a sustainable community based on people's interests (Lak & Hakimian, 2019) and contributing to community-oriented services clusters (Leorke et al., 2018).

## 6 | CONCLUSION

This study illustrates the mediating role of place attachment (organism) in the relationship between servicescape (stimulus) and behavioural intentions across different geographical scales (responses) in the context of the Imagination Station in central Christchurch. The results highlight that the physical and social servicescape provided by a CPLA can help improve the wider physical and socio-economic aspects of urban regeneration (Amore & Hall, 2016). The development of community-oriented third places that offer a broader range of cultural and creative activities in the city centre can clearly

assist in positioning the core commercial and social hub roles of a city centre to a wider region (Dyason et al., 2022). Such CPLAs could be regarded as a third place that are often tied to the goal of attracting and maintaining people in the city and as part of urban (re)development strategies. By attaching to such community-oriented places (e.g., a CPLA or library), visitors are more likely to spend more time, and usually, to provide a socio-economic return to service providers as well as to the central city as a whole. This study could thus indicate that places that provide a positive physical and social servicescape can act as urban regeneration focal points, attracting visitors participating in community activities and reinforcing feelings of place attachment, which may be especially important in a post-disaster context (Scannell et al., 2016).

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. First, this research is based on visitors to the Imagination Station, with its own specific servicescape. This limits the generalisability of the results to other types of servicescape. Second, concepts have been simplified in this study, excluding sign/symbols/artefacts for perceived physical servicescape (Bitner, 1992), perceived social servicescape between customers and employees (Line & Hanks, 2019), place memory and place expectation for place attachment (Chen et al., 2014).

Future research could investigate children's perspectives of place and their motivation to go to CPLAs or similar places that have a strong emphasis on children's activities. In addition, the adoption of qualitative research methods and observation techniques may also provide new and in-depth insights into the development of place relationships over time.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


The research was approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. The comments of the anonymous reviewers are gratefully acknowledged. Open access publishing facilitated by University of Canterbury, as part of the Wiley - University of Canterbury agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

## FUNDING INFORMATION

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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**How to cite this article:** Huang, Y., Chen, N. (C.), & Hall, C. M. (2024). A child play-and-learn area contributing to urban regeneration: A case in Christchurch, New Zealand. *New Zealand Geographer*, 80(1), 44–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nzg.12376>