THE ELDERMALL:

Exploring New Ways to Position the Aging Retail Shopping Center for Aging Consumers

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Overview

The U.S. population is aging and the shopping center format is aging as well. Older consumers are more likely to patronize retail stores than other modes of retailing. The current older market is active, healthy and has greater disposable income than other, younger age groups. The shopping center industry and retailers who are located in shopping malls need to be aware of the needs and concerns of older shoppers in order to serve them better.

This research, sponsored by the International Council of Shopping Centers Educational Foundation, investigated older consumers' shopping mall patronage and their response to changes in mall design and retailer mix. The focus of this study is whether older consumers are interested in change and what kinds of changes they may consider important.

Ten older consumers were interviewed individually or in groups in the first phase of the research. They discussed their shopping behavior, mall likes and dislikes, and their ideal mall. Three malls were chosen in the Oklahoma City, OK metro area in which to conduct the survey. Three hundred eight (308) older consumers were intercepted in the malls (approximately 100 older shoppers per mall) and administered a questionnaire. Data collection took place during the Thanksgiving/Christmas season. The overall response rate was 48.8%.

The mall survey found no significant differences in shopping behavior or attitudes toward innovative change in the mall based on age or mobility. However, the shopping orientation of older consumers was a significant differentiating factor. Recreational as opposed to economic shoppers were more likely to shop more frequently, spend more on average, and patronize an innovative mall with features designed to their specifications. Retailers and mall managers would please more loyal older consumers who patronize their shopping center by soliciting their opinions for retail mix and store design. Satisfying the older, recreational shopper would appear to be a very profitable strategy.

Research Problem

The elderly population is the fastest growing demographic segment in the U.S. and will continue to be into the 21st century. Elderly consumers' needs are not currently being met by retailers. Regional shopping centers and smaller malls are in the mature phase of the retail life cycle and need to be revitalized. The revision of these retail formats can capitalize on elderly shoppers' needs and recycle themselves at the same time.

The research objective of this study is to evaluate elderly shoppers' specifications for an ideal retailer and mix of retailers for a shopping center. When presented with innovative retail formats designed specifically for addressing elderly shoppers' needs, it is expected that elderly shoppers will evaluate these formats positively.

Literature Review

There are currently 32.5 million or 13% of Americans over the age of 65. Older age groups are the fastest growing segments of the population. Baby Boomers will contribute soon to this age wave. By 2010, one quarter of the population will be over 55. In 2030, one out of five Americans will be 65 and over (Torrey, Kinsella, and Tauber 1987). Clearly we are living in an aging society and yet many businesses have failed to adjust their strategies to compensate for this demographic change. Retailers need to be particularly mindful of aging consumers. The elderly have more time to shop, more disposable income, and are smarter than younger buyers, more concerned about quality and price, and more likely to remember being satisfied with a retailer (Bivins 1988; Fletcher 1990). They are also more likely to be store loyal. As soon as retailers recognize and act upon the needs of this growing group, they will be able to address some of the problems that afflict retailing at the end of the 20th century.

Increased competition from new formats and non-store retailers, over-saturation, and over-leveraging of department stores have all affected shopping center traffic and sales. The malls built to serve the consumers of the Sixties and Seventies need to be revamped in order to serve those same, but now older consumers. These mature retail formats may be revitalized through repositioning.

Research in the past *has* examined the unmet needs of older consumers (Bearden and Mason 1979; Lambert 1979; Lumpkin and Hite 1988), yet few changes can be seen in the retail landscape which reflect the findings of these studies. Retail store shopping is the most frequently used mode of purchase by elders (relative to mail-order, door-to-door sales or telephone order), but a great deal of anxiety and alienation is experienced (Barnes and Peters 1982). Quality merchandise, attractive prices, and store reputation are important to the older shopper (Lumpkin, Greenberg, and Goldstucker 1985). Both dependent (or less mobile) and self-reliant elderly are active store patrons, but the former group places greater importance on the physical aspects of the store (Lumpkin and Hunt 1989). Elderly consumers place a greater importance on rest areas, convenient parking, and being close to a variety of other stores than do retailers (Lumpkin and Hite 1988).

Not all older consumers are alike however. The heterogeneity of the mature market is well documented (Pol, May, and Hartranft 1992; Sorce, Tyler, and Loomis 1989). Retailers would benefit from understanding the shopping orientation of their older target market, rather than making assumptions based on age. Just as younger consumers may enjoy or dislike shopping, there are also older consumers who may be identified as recreational or economic shoppers. If older shoppers could be identified as recreational shoppers (who enjoy shopping as a leisure pursuit) vs. economic shoppers (who view shopping as a necessary evil) (Bellenger and Korgaonkar 1980), it would provide insight into their mall patronage behavior and how they could be better served.

The Older Consumer: Priorities and Problems

The elderly consumer goes to the marketplace in search of many things: fashion, fitness, and fun, to name a few. However, they may have difficulty in getting to the shopping center, often do not find helpful personnel, rest areas or rest rooms, and cannot find apparel that is fashionable and fits. These are just some of the problems encountered by the elderly shopper. Retailers are missing the boat by placing more importance on fast checkout, credit, and having a wide variety of products.

Many changes in the retail mix have been suggested by researchers in order to meet the needs of the growing elderly market. However, few have been radical in scope nor do they fully explore all the possibilities for long-term planning. Many of the suggestions to assist older shoppers have been in the area of packaging design, signage, discounts, and customer service in general (Wilson 1991). However, this market has not been served in other, more significant ways. This research explored older consumers' retail needs and wants and the ways they can be achieved through retail store mix and innovative shopping center design. Specifically older consumers were asked what changes in mix and design would be attractive to them. And, would an "Eldermall" designed to their specifications satisfy older shoppers?

■ Methodology

The research design included two separate phases of data collection, one qualitative and one quantitative. Each phase was designed to elicit the richest possible data regarding older consumers' attitudes toward shopping malls.

Interviews

First, in order to explore the full range of possibilities for an ideal, elderly-oriented, retail shopping center, individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. The informants were drawn from the University of Oklahoma's Elderlearn Program, Adult Fitness Program, and from the surrounding community. The researcher conducted the interviews in a professional conference room setting and also traveled to two homes to conduct separate interviews. Ten people were interviewed either individually or in groups of twos and three. Participation was strictly voluntary and participants were paid for their time. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and used as the basis of a content analysis of elderly consumers' patronage behavior and retail concerns.

During this phase of the research, the research questions of interest were: How do older consumers shop? What are their perceptions of shopping malls? What do they like/dislike about mall shopping? What would their ideal shopping mall include? These interview data were used to develop the shopping mall survey instrument and an artist's rendering of an "Eldermall of the Future." The researcher provided a professional artist with a summary of themes derived from the interviews, including a list of well-liked and disliked features. The full-color drawing represented a composite of preferred retailers and mall design features of those interviewed. (See Appendix 1.)

Questionnaire Development

The second phase of the research involved the design of a survey instrument. (See Appendix 2.) A questionnaire was constructed with items pertaining to mall shopping behavior: mode of transportation used by the shopper, whether shopping alone or with someone, frequency of mall shopping, whether a preference existed for shopping on certain days of the week and times of the day, and average dollar amount spent per shopping trip at that mall. Following the work of Zimmer and Golden (1988), shoppers were also asked their impression or image of the mall where they were being interviewed. This open-ended question would allow respondents to offer their own unprompted description without referring to a predetermined list of attributes.

The questionnaire also included a list of proposed retailers and services that could be offered by the mall. Respondents were asked to rate the likelihood of their using the proposed retailers/services on a scale of 1–5 from "Very unlikely" to "Very likely." Then an overall assessment of the importance of the proposed retailers/services was solicited on a scale where 1 = "Not important at all" and 5 = "Very important." This exercise, in some respects, refers to the older consumers' current satisfaction with the mall. The more likely they are to use the retail innovations or feel the changes are important, the less satisfying they find the current mall mix/services.

Demographic data (age, gender, income, education, etc.), and comparative health status (Lichtenstein and Thomas 1987) were requested for descriptive purposes. To ascertain shopping orientation, the following question was asked: "How would you describe your feelings toward shopping?" Shoppers responded on a scale from 1 = "Enjoy it very much" to 5 = "Strongly dislike it." According to Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980), recreational shoppers will be more likely than economic or convenience-driven consumers to make unplanned purchases, shop longer, and continue shopping after making a purchase. Therefore several items related to these shopping behaviors were included to compare older recreational shoppers to older economic shoppers.

Finally, the survey solicited a response to the Eldermall design. The interviewer would lead the respondent to an easel supporting a poster-sized, full color drawing of a mall interior. (Again, see Appendix 1.) The respondent would be asked to point out any appealing and unappealing aspects of the mall design, and their likelihood of patronizing that mall.

The sample was categorized by age and separately by mobility (dependent or self-reliant, based on mode of transportation) and shopping orientation (recreational or economic). The categories created groups for comparison. Analysis of variance was used to compare differences between groups with respect to their patronage behaviors, rating of innovations and their importance, and response to the Eldermall concept.

Survey Data Collection

Prior to on-site data collection, two undergraduates and one graduate student assistant conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire. The student assistants were trained to identify prospective participants. They then practiced their approach toward older consumers with a script provided by the researcher. First, data collectors would identify themselves by giving their name and pointing to a University of Oklahoma name tag. They would carry a University of Oklahoma clipboard and be professionally dressed. Potential participants would be asked if they had 5–10 minutes to answer questions regarding their shopping mall experience and to evaluate a shopping mall design. They would be assured that their participation in the study was voluntary, they would not be identified in the study, and the information they provided would be aggregated with other responses.

A convenience sample of three older consumers from the University community participated in (and were compensated for) a role playing exercise to determine whether the survey questions were clearly worded and understandable. The participants pointed out some awkwardness in item wording and potentially sensitive questions (e.g. related to health and income), the wording of which was changed accordingly.

Site Selection

The researcher arranged with shopping center managers (and their respective owners) to collect data using the mall intercept technique at 3 regional shopping malls in the Oklahoma City (OKC) metro area. A copy of the study's proposal was sent to each mall manager and/or marketing director for advanced approval. The mall management was offered a copy of the results of the study in return for their cooperation. Only one mall contacted declined to participate due to an internal policy against any sort of solicitation conducted on their premises.

According to *The 1992 Directory of Shopping Centers in the United States,* two of the malls chosen were among the largest malls in the state of Oklahoma including two super-regional malls (Crossroads Mall (1.3 million GLA) and Quail Springs Mall (999,236 GLA)). The third was the

Sooner Fashion Mall in Norman (where the University is located) and it is the smallest mall sampled (505,285 GLA). The malls are located at three distinct points (approximately 15 miles apart) in the OKC metro area and represent different types of retailers and shoppers. Therefore the study was expected to include a demographic cross-section of consumers.

The researcher and student assistants visited each mall to introduce themselves to mall management and to schedule data collection. Each mall was to be visited on different days of the week and at different times of the day by different interviewers (the students and the researcher) in accordance with methodological suggestions by Blair (1983). Data collection took place during a five week period around the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. Table 1 lists the dates and times of data collection, total number of questionnaires administered, and the response rates achieved at each mall.

TABLE 1. DATA COLLECTION RECORD FOR ICSC ELDERMALL STUDY

QUAIL SPRINGS MALL		
Date	*Time*	*Response rate*
Friday, November 19, 1993	10AM–3PM	
Monday, November 22, 1993	10AM–2PM	
Tuesday, November 23, 1993	3:30PM–7:30PM	
Wednesday, December 1, 1993	1PM–4PM	
Total: 102		45.18%
CROSSROADS MALL		
Date	*Time*	*Response rate*
Thursday, December 2, 1993	5PM–9PM	
Friday, December 3, 1993	10AM–2PM	
Saturday, December 4, 1993	12:30PM–4:30PM	
Sunday, December 5, 1993	2PM–6PM	
Total: 106		51.96%
SOONER FASHION MALL		
Date	*Time*	*Response rate*
Thursday, December 9	7PM–9PM	
Friday, December 10	10AM–2PM	
Sunday, December 12	2PM–6PM	
Tuesday, December 14	12PM–4PM	
Wednesday, December 22	6–9PM	
Total: 100		49.26%

■ Data Analysis

Interview Data

The participants in the interview phase of the study represented a range of occupations, income, and social activity levels. Their participation in the University Elderlearn Program and/or Adult Fitness Program suggests they are an unusual sample of healthy, active, older adults. The sample's activity level did not appear to bias either positively or negatively their attitudes toward mall shopping. The occupations (or former occupations) of participants included a homemaker, bookkeeper, schoolteacher, physician, chemist, cosmetologist, psychiatric social worker, nurse, market researcher, and home economist. The participants were single, married, and widowed. Some were active within the community and with their friends and families, while others were dependent on family members for transportation and social activity. Shopping orientations were made clear by the informants. Some like to browse:

> *I like to look at all the different shops for whatever they have . . . I browse a lot. I enjoy that . . . I enjoy browsing . . . I always did . . . I like to look in all the windows and so forth.*

Others shop purposefully:

1. *When I go out, it's either for a specific item or a gift for a specific person.*
2. *I don't usually go to a mall just for the sake of a social event, to go around and see the mall, or whatever. I don't know if most men feel as I do or not, but I go because I want a particular thing, at a particular store, and I will go to the mall where the store is . . . If you want to buy another shirt, you go to the store where you bought shirts for the last 30 years.*

Many spoke of their limited needs at this stage of their life. They were buying gifts or accompanying their adult children on shopping trips. Some shopped alone or when visiting relatives and travelling. In fact, one couple travelled to places like Hong Kong *in order to shop*. Most tried to shop during the day to avoid crowds and others avoided weekends for the same reason. Several liked to meet friends for lunch mid-day but not necessarily to shop. For them, the shopping mall was a meeting place and a visit there did not always involve making a purchase.

Design and Service Issues

Pointed suggestions were made regarding mall design and services. Older consumers said they wanted to feel comfortable in a mall and appreciated a map or directory as soon as they entered. Color coding of the mall floors/wings on the map or in the building materials was considered helpful. They avoid malls with confusing designs, without directories and ones with enormous parking lots, for fear of getting lost or having to carry packages a long way.

1. *I don't frequent (Mall X) anymore primarily because I get lost. (Laughs) I have very little sense of direction and all the diagonal jet outs totally confuse me . . . I can park my car and go in and then I don't know where my car is and that's - I'm not proud of that but it's a fact.*
2. *I'm very aware - and, of course, I worry a lot. I read so many horrible things happening that makes me that much more aware of -parking lots and the ladies room. All these sorts of things.*

Fear was expressed also regarding parking garages, elevators, and lack of security. One woman had been accosted recently in a local mall parking lot and warned the other focus group members. Peace of mind would be achieved with a visible security patrol, shuttle services in the parking lot, and for the ultimate convenience, a van service to transport older shoppers from home to the mall. Public transportation to the mall is limited in the OKC metro area. Those who were dependent on others felt such a service would increase their independence immeasurably.

Mall designs which included an atrium or atria with natural lighting, fountains, and plants were cited as aesthetically pleasing. Temperature control was important i.e. to be cool in summer and warm in winter. Air conditioning and good air circulation helped those with allergies and breathing difficulties. Most of the interviewees expressed great delight with window displays and holiday decorations. One woman had a particular interest in ice skating rinks:

And we moved to Portland, Oregon, and they had the Lloyd Center Mall with an ice rink and I am an ice skater, so I would go over there to shop, not skating at that particular time, but I found that an ice rink in any mall will attract me to it. I find it very relaxing.

Beyond Shopping

An important draw to any mall was an adequate number of benches, bathrooms, and desirable retailers. The benefit of mall shopping, they claimed was that once you got there, you didn't have to go somewhere else. Several older women wished there were more retailers who sold age appropriate clothing i.e. clothing that fit, was comfortable, fashionable, and of good quality. Many of the stores they see in the malls are catering to a youth-oriented market. (They did *not* favor a mall expressly for older people. They wanted to see all ages represented at the mall.) More specialty retailers and specifically dress shops were desired, not expensive boutiques however. Others suggested adding a hardware store, a "five and dime" variety store, a place to buy notions, and a coffee shop. Two people suggested putting all like retailers in separate sections of the mall.

1. *Clothing in one area, novelties stocked in another. It just drives me nuts to have to walk miles to find what I need, where, if you know all the clothing shops from one area, but, as it is here, there's a lot of stuff in between.*
2. *I would like to see a little satellite mall where you could drive up and have your watch fixed, have new heels put on your shoes, have your dry cleaning ready, that kind of thing. Drop off your portable TV to be fixed, and have sort of a service adjunct to the big mall. At the big mall, I would like to see all the soft goods put to one side, and all the whatevers put somewhere else.*

If today's shopping malls looked like yesterday's downtown, many of the older shoppers would be satisfied. Many got nostalgic recalling window shopping, meeting friends in the city, having coffee in the department store restaurant. There was an element of class in shopping downtown, whereas today the mall does not conjure the same feeling nor does it appear to be catering to them.

As for retail store management, older shoppers complained about salesclerks who could not or would not help them. They remembered the close relationships they may have had with sales personnel in the past, someone who remembered them, who knew their size, and who brought new items to them in the dressing room. According to one woman: "there's just not enough clerks (sic) and they don't know what they're selling." They feel the displays are much too crowded and that the merchandise is crammed on the racks. It is difficult for some to move around in the store and often difficult to inspect merchandise because of cramped quarters and lighting which does not reflect the true colors of the merchandise. They would like a spacious, airy atmosphere without the store or mall being too big. They want good quality merchandise and service and are willing to pay for it. These comments were taken into account when the shopping mall survey was designed and are manifested in the innovations older consumers would like to see in the mall.

Survey Data

Shopping mall data collection took place at each location, both during the week and on weekends in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Interviewers were positioned near different exits each time they collected data. They had a chair to offer respondents if they preferred to sit and an easel with the Eldermall poster.

Sampling method. A judgmental sampling procedure was used and only shoppers presumed to be over fifty years of age were approached by the interviewers. This was to avoid embarrassing a potential respondent. As a result, in no case was a shopper younger than fifty interviewed. Older shoppers were approached as they exited the mall and were asked whether they had 10 minutes to participate in a University of Oklahoma survey. (Again, the data collection schedule and response rates by mall are listed in Table 1.) The overall (average) response rate for the study was 48.8%.

There exists a possible "holiday effect" given data were collected around Thanksgiving and before Christmas. It is possible there was greater compliance on the part of the respondents because of general goodwill at this time of year. Also, the mall intercept method is expected to have a higher response rate than other data collection methods (Bush and Hair 1985). If this were the case, we should expect a greater number of people responding to a face-to-face administered survey who might otherwise not have participated. However, a less than 50% response rate suggests no such halo effect occurred during the administration of this survey. There is no strong indication that shoppers were more or less likely to agree to participate. And as for particular questionnaire items, shopping frequency and spending patterns were reported on an annual basis, rather than one reflecting holiday shopping patterns.

Sample Characteristics

A profile of the sample is found in Table 2. The largest groups sampled were the 60–64 year olds (32.8%) and the 65–74 year olds (38.3%). (Age was presumed to be a sensitive question and so respondents were asked to point to their age group listed on the questionnaire.) The male to female ratio was unexpectedly almost even, 47.4%:52.6%. Most of the respondents were either in excellent (25%) or good health (58.8%). A majority of the sample lived alone (21.1%) or with one other person (72.7%) and the average annual household income was $31,950.[1] Most of the sample were retired (78.8%) with 19.9% still working either full- or part-time. A majority had at least a high school education and 29.5% were college graduates.

A comparison was made of the shoppers at each mall on the basis of age, health, employment status, income, and whether they were shopping alone or with others (suggesting a mobility difference). A significant income difference was found among the older shoppers at the three malls. The three malls represent different trade areas within the Oklahoma City Metro area. Consumers were in fact expected to represent different income levels and in this study, the income levels at each mall corresponded to expectations based on their location. The Sooner Fashion Mall in Norman, OK (the University community) had the highest average an-

TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT OF SAMPLE		FREQUENCY	PERCENT OF SAMPLE
AGE (n = 308)			**ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME**		
50–59	54	(17.5%)	>$10,000	11	(3.7%)
60–64	101	(32.8%)	$10–20,000	30	(10.0%)
65–74	118	(38.3%)	$20–30,000	102	(34.0%)
75–84	31	(10.1%)	$30–40,000	89	(29.7%)
85+	4	(1.3%)	$40–50,000	38	(12.7%)
			$50,000+	30	(10.0%)
GENDER			(8 missing cases)		
Male	146	(47.4%)	**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**		
Female	162	(52.6%)	Working full-time	30	(9.8%)
COMPARATIVE HEALTH			Working part-time	31	(10.1%)
Excellent	77	(25.0%)	Retired	242	(78.8%)
Good	181	(58.8%)	Not employed	4	(1.3%)
Fair	46	(14.9%)	(1 missing case)		
Poor	4	(1.3%)	**EDUCATION**		
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD SIZE			No high school	2	(0.6%)
1 person	65	(21.1%)	Some high school	11	(3.6%)
2 persons	224	(72.7%)	High School grad	207	(67.2%)
3 persons	14	(4.5%)	Some college	88	(28.6%)
4 persons	4	(1.3%)	College grad	91	(29.5%)
5 persons	1	(0.3%)	Graduate Degree	20	(6.5%)

nual income ($34,040). Quail Springs Mall in affluent northern OKC had the next highest average income ($32,857). And the Crossroads Mall in south central OKC (a mixed residential and commercial area) had the lowest average annual household income ($29,078). It was not expected that the income differences found would significantly affect the consumers' response to the proposed changes to their respective malls nor in their response to the Eldermall design. Therefore regardless of this difference, the data were pooled to conduct further analyses.

Patronage Behavior

Of the 308 shoppers surveyed, 130 or 42.2% were shopping alone when interviewed and 178 were shopping with a spouse, adult child, grandchild, friend or relative. The spouse was most likely to be the shopping companion. The average number of miles traveled to reach the mall was 21, exclusive of outliers.[2] A majority of the sample was categorized as mobile. Seventy percent of the sample drove themselves to the mall, while twenty-eight percent were driven by a friend or family member. One person took public transportation and one shopper lived within walking distance. The frequency of shopping at the mall where surveyed was 51.8 times per year or once per week.[3] Sixty five percent identified the mall where surveyed as their primary shopping mall. Other area malls were cited as popular shopping destinations but not necessarily the other malls included in this survey. No strong time preferences for shopping were indicated by those surveyed. The response was spread out: day time preference (29.3%), afternoon preference (32.2%), evening preference (14.7%), some combination of these three (20.2%), and no preference (3.6%). Likewise no strong preference emerged for shopping on certain days of the week. "No preference" accounted for 37% of the responses.

Older shoppers spend a significant amount of time shopping. Only 7.8% spent less than one hour at the mall, whereas 52.6% spent one to two hours, and 39.6% spent more than two hours on average. The average dollar amount spent during a mall visit ranged from $0–$2000. The extreme values were eliminated to yield a mean value of $80.46 with median and mode values of $50. Given that the average shopping frequency is once per week and the average amount spent is $80, one can conclude that older shoppers are actively consuming material goods as well as "consuming" the mall environment.

Mall Image

The images used to describe the malls where surveyed are listed in Table 3. The greatest number of comments are positive overall and deal with

TABLE 3. MALL IMAGES
Frequencies (greater than 2) of open-ended responses to: What is your image of this mall? or What comes to mind when you think of this mall?

DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Nice/Pleasant	71
Clean	41
Pretty	34
Okay/alright/satisfactory/sufficient/adequate/suitable/average	27
Variety/has everything	24
Very nice/real nice/pretty nice	21
Like it/enjoy it/enjoyable	15
Big/spacious	14
Open	11
Friendly people/friendly	10
Beautiful	9
Great	8
Convenient	8
Safe	6
Ordinary/typical/like any other mall/plain/same as others	6
Great variety/great selection/good selection	6
Relaxing/pretty relaxed	5
Satisfying	4
Quiet/peaceful	4
Not busy/no congestion/uncrowded	4
Nice atmosphere/pleasant atmosphere	4
Great appearance/great decor/nice decor	4
Attractive	4
Very pretty/very attractive	3
Up-to-date/new	3
Upscale/classy	3
Unique/different	3
Stores/adequate stores/shops	3
Large but not too big/not too large	3
Good decorations	3
Easy access/accessible	3
Comfortable	3
Bright/well lit	3

the pleasantness, attractiveness, and satisfactory nature of the mall. Older people responded to the mall on a physiological level remarking about the mall's size, spaciousness, openness, lack of congestion and being bright or well lighted. Some of the impressions shoppers had related to their psychological response to the mall; that it was safe, peaceful, and comfortable. A convenience factor emerged in comments related to the adequacy of the shops and accessibility. Another theme referred to marketing efforts by the mall or of individual retailers: friendly people, nice decor, and good decorations were all noted. These images will be communicated to mall managers in their respective reports so they can compare older shoppers' impressions of their mall relative to others in the area.

Comparison of Groups

The sample was categorized on the basis of age, mobility, and shopping orientation. The dependent variables of interest in this study are the importance shoppers attributed to hypothetical mall innovations and the likelihood of their patronizing the proposed Eldermall. Other patronage variables such as average length of time spent in the mall and average dollar amount spent were also analyzed by shopper type. It was expected that younger, more mobile and recreational type shoppers would be more likely to place importance on changes and favor the Eldermall design. Also, they would be likely to spend more time and money shopping because of their active lifestyle and interest in shopping.

None of the dependent variables of interest are significantly related to age. How long one spends in the mall, how much they spend when there, their rating of importance of the changes suggested or their likelihood of shopping at the Eldermall did not differ on the basis of age. Upon further exploration, gender-related differences did exist. Women were more likely to spend more time, approve of the changes suggested, and consider patronizing the Eldermall, (but not spend more) than the older male shoppers.

Mobility (simply defined by whether one drove oneself to the mall or walked versus having been driven by others) was not significantly associated with health, average amount spent, importance of proposed changes, nor likelihood of shopping at the Eldermall. Mobile individuals were more likely to spend more time at the mall than those who were driven to the mall (Chi square = 10.89, p-value = .0279). Those categorized as less mobile were significantly more likely to have been driven a longer distance (28.13 miles) than those who drove themselves (18.37 miles). This may mean shopping trips and family outings are being combined. Additionally, people in good-excellent health are more likely to spend more time (Chi square = 24.59, p-value = .0004) and more money (Chi square = 22.90, p-value = .0280) at the mall.

The second section of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate their likelihood of using the hypothetical mall innovations in retailer mix and services. Table 4 lists the mean values and standard deviations of respondents' ratings. While the response was not overwhelmingly positive, the mall features older shoppers were most likely to use were new types of retailers or ones that were not currently in the OKC area mall.

TABLE 4. VARIABLE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

MEAN[1] (STD DEV)	VARIABLE
1.581 (1.038)	a layaway plan[2]
1.808 (1.199)	a do-it-yourself gift wrapping center
2.620 (1.444)	an elegant restaurant
1.682 (1.047)	a public library branch
1.445 (0.881)	a health and fitness club
2.042 (1.233)	a parking lot shuttle service[2]
2.451 (1.361)	a moving sidewalk inside the mall
2.864 (1.521)	a hardware store
2.107 (1.316)	a grocery store
1.442 (0.869)	a home delivery service[2]
3.208 (1.356)	a post office branch
2.942 (1.383)	a gourmet food store
3.640 (1.298)	a variety store
1.435 (0.869)	a drycleaning service
1.799 (1.215)	a small appliance repair service
3.834 (1.131)	a cafe/bakery
1.468 (0.960)	attend literary or poetry readings at a bookstore[2]
1.403 (0.807)	dental services
1.643 (1.050)	travel services
1.740 (1.191)	hair styling services
2.607 (1.622)	health screening services (e.g., blood pressure check)[2]

[1]On a scale where 1 = "Very unlikely to use" and 5 = "Very likely to use."
[2]Services which could be offered by mall management or sponsored by an individual retailer.

Mall Features Most Likely to Use	Mall Features Least Likely to Use
cafe/bakery	dental services
variety store	dry cleaner
post office branch	home delivery
gourmet food store	health club
hardware store	literary/poetry readings
elegant restaurant	layaway plan
health screening services	travel services

(Many people were not aware of postal services that are currently offered). Health screening services was rated as the only desirable service (among those listed) that could be offered by mall management or individual retailers. Those features least likely to be used included services such as home delivery, literary readings, and layaway plans. The less popular features also included retail services older consumers are either not interested in, already have available in the mall they currently patronize, or don't believe belong in a mall setting (i.e. dental and travel services, a dry cleaner, and a health club).

Again the list of innovations was not exceptionally appealing to the general older sample. Shopping orientation (or how one feels about shopping) may be a better indicator of how attractive these features are to a more specific audience.

Shopping Orientation

Shopping orientation was determined in the following way. The sample was divided into two groups based on their response to the questions: "How would you describe your feelings toward shopping?." Those who "enjoy it" or "enjoy it very much" were categorized as recreational shoppers and those who claimed they were "neutral," "dislike it," or "strongly dislike it" were categorized as economic shoppers. There were a greater number of recreational shoppers (70% vs. 30%) whom we might expect to find in the mall. Those who dislike shopping will minimize both their time spent shopping and their time responding to questions about shopping. The results of a comparison of the two types relative to their shopping behavior is found in Table 5.

Contrary to Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980), recreational shoppers were not significantly less likely to have an idea of what they were going to buy. The hypothesis that they shop for the sake of shopping was not supported. Recreational shoppers do continue to shop after making a purchase and significantly more so than economic shoppers. Indeed the average length of time recreational shoppers spend mall shopping is greater than economic shoppers.

The hypothesis that recreational shoppers experience greater success and satisfaction (in response to "I usually buy what I would like to have") was not supported for that group but rather for economic shoppers. One possible explanation for this contrary finding is that the economic shopper shops purposefully more often and gets what she wants, whereas the recreational shopper may shop longer and buy items she doesn't need or want. The expectation that recreational shoppers may buy things they don't need right away was supported. Economic shoppers do not take the time nor want to spend their time buying unnecessary items.

The older shoppers' response to the list of mall innovations reported in Table 4 was analyzed by shopping orientation. The analysis of variance revealed significant differences (at the .05 level) in the ratings of six mall features. Recreational shoppers were more likely to rate the following features higher (i.e. they were more likely to say they would use them):

- a layaway plan
- a post office branch
- a gourmet food store
- a variety store
- a cafe/bakery
- hair styling services

This is important for a number of reasons. Recreational shoppers are shopping significantly longer, shopping more frequently (at the .001 level of significance), and spending more than economic shoppers ($86.50 vs.

TABLE 5. RECREATIONAL VS. ECONOMIC SHOPPERS CROSS TABULATION RESULTS

VARIABLE	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	PERCENTAGE OF RECREATIONAL SHOPPERS	PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMIC SHOPPERS	CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC	P-VALUE
I usually have an idea of what I am going to buy	YES	92.5%	94.6%	00.52	.7697
	NO	7.5%	5.4%		
I continue to shop after making a purchase	YES	92.1%	61.3%	43.28	**.0000**
	NO	7.9%	38.7%		
I usually buy what I would like to have	YES	80.4%	87.1%	6.61	**.0367**
	NO	19.6%	12.9%		
I usually buy products that I like but don't need immediately	YES	52.3%	33.3%	10.28	**.0059**
	NO	47.7%	66.7%		
Average length of time spent mall shopping	<1 hour	4.7%	15.1%	11.29	**.0235**
	1–2 hours	54.2%	49.5%		
	2+ hours	41.1%	35.4%		

$68.41; significant at the .10 level). Designing an Eldermall which they are more likely to patronize would be an effective strategic response. Those who don't enjoy shopping may *visit* an innovative mall, but if they are not more likely to spend time or money there, the effort would be wasted on those who don't appreciate it.

Response to Eldermall Design

The Eldermall design was evaluated by older shoppers for its appealing and unappealing aspects. Of those who said they were likely to patronize a mall of this type, the reasons were because of the features deliberately used in the design to attract older consumers: the different retailers (hardware store, upscale department store, bakery), the services offered (information booth, shuttle, post office and library), and the design aspects (color, lighting, the lounge area, and openness). Those unappealing aspects of the mall design included its square design, the apparent absence of a movie theater, skating rink, or escalator. Some felt it was too "busy" looking and too colorful.

Reasons cited for not patronizing this "mall of the future" included not being a shopper (economic shopping orientation), characterizing themselves as "old-fashioned," knowing their spouse would go instead, and the uncertainty of its location. Those who felt the design was appealing said they would go "because it's a mall" (recreational shopper), they liked everything in one location, that it was beautiful and different, and that it would meet their needs.

■ Conclusion

The majority of mature consumers enjoy shopping and mall shopping. It is an opportunity to gather information, meet friends, and enjoy the mall decor. Their complaints, when they have them are legitimate. The mall is not designed for them. They would like a new (actually old) mix of retailers in a comfortable setting, selling quality merchandise with as much customer service as possible. The recreational older shopper, especially would be satisfied with some changes specific to their concerns. They would spend more, stay longer, and remain mall loyal as a result.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The income question was also deemed a sensitive one and consumers were asked to point out the income category that best fit their household. (See survey in Appendix 2 for categories.) The categorical data were then recoded using the midpoint value of the range to represent an income level. The average income figures reported here were calculated by multiplying the midpoint value by the

number of consumers in that category and the resulting figure is thus an approximation and inexact.
[2]Five percent of the respondents ($n = 14$) were deemed outliers. Some mall shoppers were visiting family during the holiday season and lived as many as 1600 miles away.
[3]Again 5% of the respondents were deemed outliers including those who had never shopped at that particular mall and those who shopped seven days a week.

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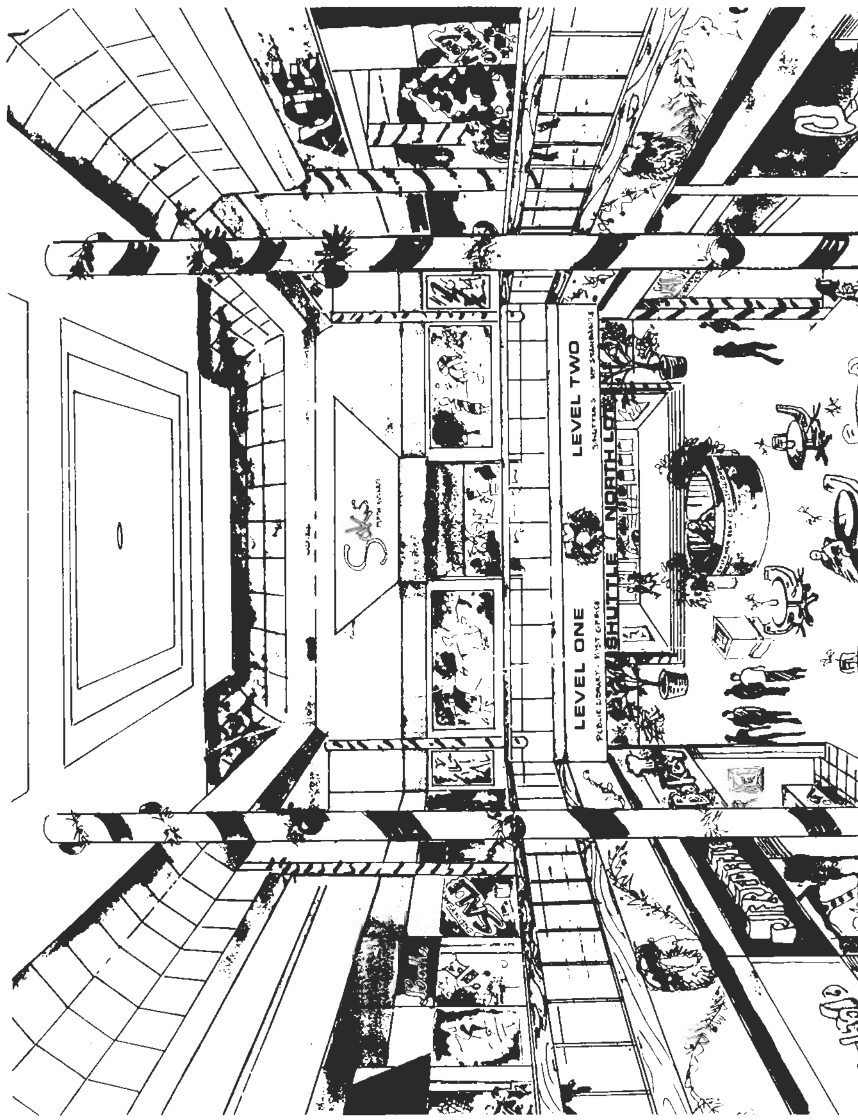
APPENDIX 1
ELDERMALL DESIGN



APPENDIX 2
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA/ ICSC SHOPPING MALL SURVEY

Date ________ **Researcher** ________________ **Mall:** QS CR SFM **Time** _______

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA/ICSC SHOPPING MALL SURVEY

1. Are you shopping alone or with somebody today? **Alone** **With somebody**

(IF "WITH SOMEBODY," ASK NEXT QUESTION)

2. With whom are you shopping?

Spouse **Adult Children** **Grandchildren** **Friend** **Relative**

3. How many miles do you live from this mall? ______________ **miles**
4. How did you get here today? _____ **Drove myself** _____ **Friend/family member drove** _____ **Public transportation** _____ **Taxi cab** _____ **Walked** _____ **Other** ______________________________
5. How often do you shop at *this* mall? ______________**/week/month/year**
6. Is this your primary shopping mall? **Yes** **No** (IF NO, ASK NEXT QUESTION)
7. In which other malls do you shop? ______________________________
8. What time of day do you prefer to shop? **Morning** **Afternoon** **Evening**
9. Which days of the week do you prefer to shop? ______________________
10. On average, how much time do you spend shopping once in *this* mall?
    less than 1 hour **1–2 hours** **2+ hours**
11. What is the average amount you spend per visit at *this* mall? $______________
12. Please describe your image of this mall.

____

____ (IF THE PERSON NEEDS A PROMPT, ASK, "WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF THIS MALL?")

Now I am going to present you with some proposed changes to this mall and ask you how likely you would be to use them. Here is a scale that will help you answer. (HAND THEM THE LIKELIHOOD SCALE CARD.)

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	**Neutral**	**Likely**	**Very Likely**

How likely would you be to use:

________ **a layaway plan**

________ **a do-it-yourself gift wrapping center**

________ **an elegant restaurant**

________ **a public library branch**

________ **a health and fitness club**

________ **a parking lot shuttle service**

________ **a moving sidewalk inside the mall**

________ **a hardware store**

________ **a grocery store**

________ **a home delivery service**

________ **a post office branch**

________ **a gourmet food store**

________ **a variety store**

________ **a drycleaning service**

________ **a small appliance repair service**

________ **a cafe/bakery**

________ **attend literary or poetry readings at a bookstore**

________ **dental services**

________ **travel services**

________ **hair styling services**

________ **health screening services (e.g., blood pressure check)**

Overall how important do you think these changes are for the shopping mall to make?

1 = Not important at all 2 = Not Very Important 3 = Neutral
4 = Somewhat Important 5 = Very Important

Please provide the following information about yourself:

Gender: **Male Female**

In which of the following age categories are you?:

55–59 60–64 65–74 75–84 85+ years

Compared to other persons your age, would you say your health is:

Excellent Good Fair Poor?

Some HS

Are you a: HS Graduate?

Some College

Are you a: College Graduate?

Do you have a: Graduate Degree?

Do you attend Continuing Education (such as Elderlearn) classes? **Yes** **No**

Are you employed on a: **Full-time basis?**
Part-time?
Retired?
Not employed?

Income: Is your total annual household income in one of these categories?
$10,000 or less **$10–20,000** **$20–30,000** **$30–40,000** **$40–50,000** **$50,000+**

Including yourself, how many people are in your household?: **1** **2** **3** **4** **5 or more**

How would you describe your feelings toward shopping?
Do you:

1	2	3	4	5
Enjoy it very much	**Enjoy it**	**Neutral**	**Dislike it**	**Strongly dislike it**

Do you usually have an idea of what you are going to buy?	YES	NO
Do you continue to shop after making a purchase?	YES	NO
Do you usually buy what you would like to have?	YES	NO
Do you usually buy products that you like but don't need immediately?	YES	NO
Is price the most significant factor in making your purchases?	YES	NO

We would like you to look at this drawing of a mall of the future. Please identify the three most appealing aspects of this design.

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Is there anything you dislike about this mall design?

____
____
____

What is the likelihood of your shopping at a mall like this?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	**Neutral**	**Likely**	**Very Likely**

Why (or why not) would you patronize such a shopping mall?

____
____
____

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