THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTERTAINMENT IN THE SHOPPING CENTER EXPERIENCE:

Evidence from Singapore

★ AMERICAN REAL ESTATE SOCIETY (ARES)

2002 ICSC Research Best Paper Award

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Overview

Entertainment in the shopping experience has been investigated often in previous research; nevertheless, few studies have examined thoroughly the factors that induce these experiences. Using a sequential mixed-method design, involving a qualitative and quantitative sequence, this research has provided insights into the factors that influence entertaining shopping experiences. Using the principal component analysis and weighted factor rating, this research has shown the salient dimensions of entertaining shopping experiences, as well as their respective importance ratings. The results suggested that beside retailer and customer factors, transport mode/travel factors also play an important role in inducing shoppers' entertaining shopping experiences. Retailer factors include "shopping center features," "atmosphere" and "value-

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added features." Customer factors are "hedonic-oriented" and "utilitarian-oriented" while transport mode/travel factors incorporate "effort," "protection," "comfort," "enjoyment" and "tension."

■ Introduction

Over the years, the competition between shopping malls has increased significantly, possibly due to the overbuilding of retail centers and changing consumer shopping activities. Advancement in the transportation system has further accelerated the level of competition. Another contributing factor is the similarity of the attributes of most shopping malls, with too many stores offering too much of the same merchandise (Ashley, 1997; Templin, 1997).

It would appear logical to anticipate that, given the apparent similarity in shopping center attributes, shoppers will probably choose to visit the nearest shopping mall when faced with the existence of more than one shopping mall within "reasonable" travelling distance. However, not all shoppers seem to conform to such normative behavior. Past research has revealed that many consumers make a decision regarding where to shop on the basis of their attitude toward a mix of stores, the shopping center environment and an entertaining shopping experience (Finn and Louviere, 1990; Donovan et al., 1994; Burns and Warren, 1995; Jones, 1999).

This study represents a replication and extension of the exploratory research carried out by Jones (1999). Adopting the critical incidence technique, two broad factors, namely, retailer and customer factors were found to be characteristic of entertaining shopping experiences. Retailer factors include selection, prices, store environment and salespeople, while customer factors include social, task, time, involvement and financial resources.

In Singapore (Map 1), rapid development and modernization of the retail scene started in the late 1960s. The development of retail centers continued into the 1970s and 1980s with more centers built in the Orchard Road area. To avoid overcrowding of the central area, the 1991 Revised Concept Plan sets out the development of regional centers and sub-regional centers. This has brought about tremendous changes in the retail scene in the 1990s. The "suburbia" experience in the 1990s is not peculiar to Singapore. Urban sprawl and the sprouting of regional shopping centers and suburban office parks are well documented in many other major cities. In the case of Singapore, this phenomenon is accelerated and guided by the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and expressway/arterial road network system.

Over the years, suburban shopping malls have grown larger and their one-stop convenience has extended to include service outlets and entertainment providers. By using creative merchandising and aggressive promotions to take advantage of consumer trends, suburban malls are positioning themselves to attract recreational shoppers beyond their retail trade area. The challenge to both the downtown and suburban shopping malls at present is to battle in this relatively saturated market to retain their share of customers. The underlying determinants of retail patronage are important in helping retailers to understand the critical success factor unique to their retail trade area. For that reason, it is important to find a niche to satisfy consumers and focusing on their shopping experience to transform something ordinary into the extraordinary.

■ Literature Review

Retailing Literature

The literature is full of studies showing that consumers may view either shopping in general or specific shopping experiences as entertainment or recreational (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994). Generally, studies involving shopping and entertainment can be categorized into two research streams: (a) as an enduring tendency or trait, (b) as a motive for a particular shopping trip.

Enduring Tendency or Trait

One consideration in people's orientation toward shopping is their view of alternative uses and expenditure of time. Do they enjoy spending time

MAP 1. SINGAPORE

Source: Singapore Hotels Online

shopping, or do other alternative uses of their time have higher priority? Previous research into shopper orientations has typically created a category reflecting an entertainment orientation, supporting the notion that some shoppers have an enduring tendency to shop for entertainment purposes.

Stone (1954) identified four types of shoppers in his exploratory research: namely, the economic shopper, the personalizing shopper, the ethical shopper and the apathetic shopper. Stone's typology still has considerable merit; however, the changing consumers as well as the changing environment may have altered these basic orientations. Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg (1977) suggested that much could be learned about retail patronage behavior from the study of consumers' general shopping orientations and they introduced this dichotomy of recreational and economic shopping. Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980) contributed additional insights into the characteristics of recreational shoppers. They defined recreational shoppers as those who enjoy shopping as a leisure-time activity, while economic shoppers dislike shopping or are neutral toward it.

Lesser and Hughes (1986) found, both in their multi-market study and in the review of shopper typology literature, that active and inactive shoppers were two types of shoppers that appear most often. Recreational shopping (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980) and purchasing involvement (Slama and Tashchian, 1985) are two traits that distinguish active shoppers from inactive shoppers, and both traits have proven to be important predictors of consumer behavior. This stream of research emphasizes that shoppers possess general tendencies regarding the shopping process that are consistent across situations. This research tradition on shopper orientations has typically uncovered a host of weird and wonderful shopper types ranging from those who "like" to those who "dislike" shopping (Table 1).

Motive For A Particular Shopping Trip

Besides consumer orientations, another research stream has focused on consumer motivations for specific shopping trips. In contrast with the shoppers' enduring tendencies to enjoy the shopping process, the typologies focusing on consumer shopping motivations are more situational-specific. The variety of shopping motives that have been suggested in the literature (e.g., Tauber, 1972) are summarized and framed by the motivational typology described by Westbrook and Black (1985). This typology postulates that shopping motives can be grouped into three categories; namely, product-oriented, experiential and a combination of product and experiential. In the first case, a store visit is motivated by purchase needs or the desire to acquire product information. The second class of motives in the typology has a hedonic or recreational orientation. Here,

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF SHOPPER TYPOLOGIES

Author (Date)	Population	Sample Size	Research Format	Shopper Types (%)
Stone (1954)	Department store shoppers	124	Questionnaire Cluster analysis	Economic (33) Personalizing (28) Ethical (18) Apathetic (17) Indeterminate (4)
Darden and Aston (1975)	Middle class suburban housewives	116	Self-administered questionnaire: MONOVA	Apathetic (22) Demanding (9) Quality (19) Fastidious (15) Stamp preferrer (12) Convenience (15) Stamp haters (8)
Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980)	Adult shoppers	324	Self-administered questionnaire; Discriminate analysis	Economic (31) Recreational (69)
Westbrook and Black (1985)	Adult shoppers	203	Structured questionnaire; Factor analysis	Shopping process involved (12) Choice optimizing (18) Shopping process apathetic (20) Apathetic (10) Economic (31) Nondescript (9)
Lesser and Hughes (1986)	Heads of household	6,808	Telephone interview; Q-factor analysis	Inactive (15) Active (13) Service (10) Traditional (14) Dedicated fringe (9) Price (10) Transitional (7) Convenience (5) Coupon saver (5) Innovator (4) Unclassified (8)
Cullen (1990)	Principal household shoppers	2,484	Postal questionnaire; Factor analysis	Shopping affect (n/a) Economic (n/a) Apathetic (n/a) Shopping snob (n/a)

Adapted from: Reid and Brown (1996)

the attention is on store or mall visits made for the pleasure inherent in the visit itself. The last motive category occurs when the store visitor seeks to satisfy a purchase need, as well as enjoying a pleasurable recreational experience in the outlet.

Likewise, Dawson, Bloch and Ridgway (1990) stated that some consumers have experiential motives for shopping which result from hedonic or recreational motivations. Through a survey of visitors to a large outdoor crafts market, the results clearly show that consumers with strong product or experiential motives report the most pleasure and arousal in the marketplace. Thus, consumers who purposely come to the market to experience sights, sounds and people reported higher arousal and pleasure than those who did not have strong experiential motives. A positive emotional state that consists of high levels of pleasure and arousal is a key part of the shopping experience for consumers.

Researchers have discovered that people typically shop for both hedonic or recreational outcomes, and utilitarian outcomes, and that positive mood can result from consumers pursuing either type of shopping value (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Martineau, 1958). Hedonic shopping motives are based on the quality of the shopping experience itself rather than towards information gathering or on purchasing products (Boedeker, 1995; Jarboe and McDaniel, 1987). Finally, Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson (1994) found that consumers view malls as a place not only for shopping, but also for other activities, such as entertainment, socializing with friends and browsing with no intentions of buying. These multiple motives inherent within a single shopping trip clearly indicate the entertaining capabilities of shopping.

Factors Inducing Entertaining Shopping Experiences

Several characteristics of entertaining shopping experiences have been previously investigated in isolation; for example, browsing (Bloch, Ridgway and Sherrell, 1989), the retail environment (Kotler, 1973; Donovan et al, 1994), social interactions (Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson, 1994) and bargains (Schindler, 1989). However, a first attempt at organizing a framework to help understand entertaining shopping experiences further was carried out by Jones (1999). He adopted the critical incident technique in his exploratory research in identifying the factors contributing to the entertaining nature of shopping. He collected 724 incidents, and two broad groups including nine unique factors were found to be characteristic of entertaining shopping experiences. The two broad groups were retailer factors and customer factors. Retailer factors include selection,

prices, store environment and salespeople, while customer factors include social, task, time, involvement and financial resources. Interestingly, customer factors were mentioned more often than retailer factors in respondents' descriptions of entertaining shopping experiences.

Shopping and Traveling Literature

Although earlier shopping center choice models, such as Reilly's Law of Retail Gravitation and Spatial Interaction models have dealt with the transport element, represented by distance, travel time and cost, linkages between traveling and retailing have been a neglected area of research in the investigation of the shopping experience. Most of the existing studies have not looked at the travel component comprehensively. In addition to the conventional measures of transport/travel factors, namely, distance, travel time and cost, other attributes, such as effort, tension and comfort should be included to improve the accuracy of the models being developed.

Spiggle and Sewall (1987) suggested that studies of retail selection have focused on three conceptually distinct, though not mutually exclusive, constructs. Drawing on the results from previous studies, these authors propose a model in which retail patronage, retail choice and retail preference are influenced by retail outlet features such as distance, assortment, travel time, consumer psychological states and consumer characteristics. It illustrated that most of the models and theories have used distance, travel cost and travel time as the deterrent factors. However, it must be acknowledged that travel attributes comprise many other factors, which may be more important than the conventional measures. These include the effort, tension, reliability, comfort, safety, etc., of the available modes of transportation to each retail facility in the choice set.

In another study, Gautschi (1981) explored the probable specification biases of conventional patronage models, resulting from the omission of two important constructs: descriptors of retail centers and descriptors of transportation conditions. Based on the responses of 350 individuals, the respondents were asked to evaluate 10 shopping centers and transportation characteristics. Testing on a set of planned suburban shopping centers and traditional, unplanned shopping centers, he found strong evidence to conclude that, when the shoppers considered both transportation and center attributes together, they engaged in a rather complex evaluation of the patronage alternatives.

In addition to the shopping center attributes, McCarthy (1980) attempted to include transport mode/travel attributes in studying the role of qualitative characteristics in shopping destination choice behavior. Using the factor analytical technique, five sets of qualitative generalized attri-

butes were generated. These generalized attributes consist of generalized trip convenience, generalized trip comfort, generalized trip safety, generalized shopping area attraction and generalized shopping area mobility. He found that these generalized attributes, which were obtained from attitudinal information, are significant in the individual's choice of shopping area.

Utilizing a form of methodological triangulation, Ibrahim (2000) attempted to evaluate the significance of transport mode/travel attributes in shopping center choice in a suburban/decentralized environment with public transport options. Using the discrete choice (multinomial logit) modeling technique, the study found that a composite model, which includes traditional measures of deterrence (i.e., travel time, travel cost, distance) as well as other transport mode/travel factors, recorded higher predictability and better fit than models that only adopt the traditional factors of deterrence. In addition, the study concluded that transport mode/travel attributes are significant in respondents' choices of shopping center in a suburban/decentralized region with public transport options.

The review of the literature shows two significant conclusions. Firstly, research on the entertaining shopping experience has generally been well covered. However, other than Jones (1999), few studies have been done on the detailed investigation of the factors affecting an entertaining shopping experience. Secondly, the majority of researchers have identified the existence of entertaining shopping experiences (for example, Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Burns and Warren, 1995; Jones, 1999); however, little attention has been paid to the role of travel in affecting entertaining shopping experiences. In view of the above, this study attempts to examine the importance of retailer attributes, customer attributes and transport mode/travel attributes in affecting shoppers' entertaining shopping experiences in Singapore. In addition, it will also investigate how shoppers of different socioeconomic background perceive the entertainment effect of the respective factors.

■ Research Methodology

Mixed Method Designs

In this study, the researchers have adopted the sequential mixed methods designs consisting of a two-phase sequential design. The investigators began with qualitative data collection and analysis on a relatively unexplored topic, using the results to design a subsequent quantitative phase

of the study. This is a form of methodological triangulation to enhance the internal validity of the research findings (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Qualitative Research Phase

The exploratory nature of this investigation into shoppers' entertaining shopping experiences required the researchers to carry out in-depth interviews with shoppers before undertaking the quantitative research. The findings of the qualitative research are important in refining the scope of the research, as well as the development of the questionnaire. In this research phase, convenience samples of 30 shoppers were asked to complete open-ended questions on a standard form. Walker (1985) states that a sample size of between 20 to 40 in-depth interviews is necessary for the qualitative studies that are undertaken prior to quantitative studies. The researchers had interviewed the shoppers segmented according to the respective classes of shopping centers. The alternative classes of shopping center include shopping centers in the downtown, regional center, sub-regional center/town center, neighborhood center and precinct shop in Singapore. The following issues were discussed:

1. Description of a recent shopping trip that respondents recall as being very entertaining.
2. What factors affect an entertaining shopping experience?
3. Role of transport mode/travel attributes in an entertaining shopping experience.

In the initial stage of the data analysis, the researchers read the data thoroughly to prepare the ground for analysis. The next step involves the identification and labeling the sets of data that represent some general concepts and themes pertaining to the research issues. The induction of categories from the basic data in the form of incidents is a task requiring insight, experience and judgment (Flanagan, 1954). No simple rules are available, and the quality and usability of the final product are largely dependent on the skill and sophistication of the formulator. However, one rule to gain objectivity is to submit the tentative categories to others for review. After these tentative categories have been established, brief definitions of them are made. During this process, the need for redefinition and for the development of new categories is noted.

Quantitative Research Phase

The researchers have adopted the use of the questionnaire in the quantitative phase of the research. Using cluster sampling, a total of 300

respondents were interviewed in Jurong East New Town, a typical new town in Singapore. The questionnaire sought to measure the importance of the retailer, customer and transport/travel attributes in contributing to the shopper's entertaining experience. Using a Likert scale, these attributes are operationalized on a seven point scale, where "1" = Not important at all, "4" = Neutral and "7" = Very important. The respondents were also asked for their demographic structure.

The principal component analysis, independent sample t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are used to analyze the data. Factor analysis is used to reduce a large number of variables to a smaller number of factors, to describe concisely (and perhaps understand) the relationships among observed variables. Factor analysis is used to identify the relevant factors that affect the entertaining shopping experience. Thus it is important to determine the appropriateness of the data set for factor analysis. As a rule of thumb, there should be at least four to five times as many observations as there are variables to be analyzed. Comrey and Lee (1992) regard a sample size of 300 to be good enough for factor analysis.

Following the factor analysis, independent sample t-test and ANOVA are adopted to test the null hypothesis (Ho) of equality of two or more population means. The independent sample t-test is adopted for determining if there is a statistically significant difference between two population means of independent samples. ANOVA techniques are designed to test differences between the means of several (>2) groups of scores.

■ Findings of Qualitative Research

The exploratory investigation specifically draws out the attributes that are reported to be important aspects of inducing shoppers' entertaining experiences. Three broad groups and a total of 34 attributes emerged from the classification procedure (Table 2). It should be noted that all these attributes did not appear in each reported experience. The qualitative research found that the entertaining shopping experience is influenced by three broad categories, namely, the retailer attributes, customer attributes and the transport/travel attributes. The general model for an entertaining shopping experience is shown in Figure 1. The transport/travel attributes represents an addition to the model developed by Jones (1999).

■ Results

Importance Rating

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the attributes (Table 2) using 1 for "not important at all" to 7 for "very important." Twenty-eight

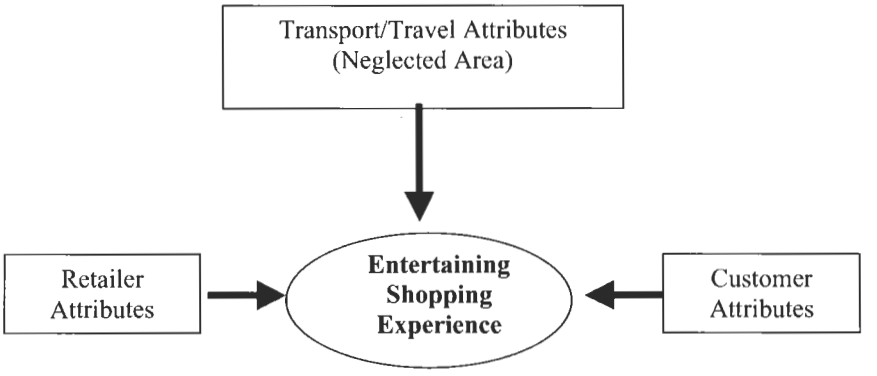
TABLE 2. MEAN SCORES IMPORTANCE RATING

Attributes	Mean	Std	Types of Attributes
1) Availability of financial resources	5.28	1.47	Customer
2) Absence of waiting time	5.17	1.31	Transport
3) Absence of congestion	5.17	1.33	Transport
4) Absence of crowd in transport mode	5.15	1.32	Transport
5) Traveling time to shopping center	5.15	1.44	Transport
6) Directness of travel to shopping center	5.15	1.52	Transport
7) Safety of travel	5.13	1.29	Transport
8) Transport mode/travel's protection from weather	5.05	1.23	Transport
9) High quality sales service	4.98	1.42	Retailer
10) Low cost traveling	4.97	1.46	Transport
11) Ability to socialize with friends and family	4.97	1.62	Customer
12) Availability of sales, promotions, discounts and bargains	4.85	1.71	Retailer
13) Shortness of walking distance	4.83	1.46	Transport
14) Wide variety of stores	4.79	1.63	Retailer
15) Availability of food court/restaurants/café	4.78	1.33	Retailer
16) Reliability of transport mode	4.72	1.37	Transport
17) Temperature comfort of transport mode	4.67	1.35	Transport
18) Wide variety of products	4.66	1.70	Retailer
19) Spaciousness of internal layout of shopping center	4.62	1.26	Retailer
20) Availability of free time to shop	4.58	1.62	Customer
21) Good air quality in shopping center	4.46	1.45	Retailer
22) Cleanliness of transport mode/travel surroundings	4.41	1.36	Transport
23) Smoothness of travel	4.39	1.22	Transport
24) Cleanliness of shopping center	4.38	1.35	Retailer
25) Good lighting in shopping center	4.36	1.35	Retailer
26) Ability to perform intended purpose	4.34	1.84	Customer
27) Ability to accomplish the act of purchasing	4.10	1.81	Customer
28) Availability of entertainment facilities	4.07	1.72	Retailer
29) Absence from stress	3.99	1.40	Transport
30) Availability of celebrations, activities and functions in shopping center	3.95	1.80	Retailer
31) Ability to learn about trends and product features	3.78	1.97	Customer
32) Enjoyment of travel	3.74	1.31	Transport
33) Availability of unique store design	3.72	1.73	Retailer
34) Ease of finding car parking lot	3.03	2.06	Retailer

of the 34 attributes have mean scores of more than 4. This implies the importance of these variables in influencing respondents' entertaining shopping experiences.

The mean scores range from the lowest value of 3.03 to the highest

FIGURE 1. MODEL OF AN ENTERTAINING SHOPPING EXPERIENCE



of 5.28. The variable "availability of financial resources" has the highest importance mean score in influencing respondents' entertaining shopping experiences. Given the high standard of living in Singapore, it may seem intuitive that possessing the means to make purchases greatly influences shoppers' enjoyment. However, the other customer attributes have relatively low mean scores, probably due to their sensitivity to specific characteristics of the respondents.

Interestingly, seven variables with mean scores above 5 belong to transport/travel attributes. These variables mainly concern the time issues and also the comfort level during the journey to the shopping center. It is not surprising that these variables have high mean scores due to the humid weather in Singapore and the perception of time poverty among Singaporeans. Relating to the rest of the transport attributes, most have a mean score of above 4 while "absence from stress" and "enjoyment of travel" score a low 3.99 and 3.74, respectively.

Relating to the retailer attributes, the variables "high quality sales service," "availability of sales, promotions, discounts and bargains," "wide variety of stores" and "availability of food court /restaurants" top the list of importance ratings. Most of the variables relate to the atmosphere of the shopping center, such as "spaciousness of internal layout of shopping center," "good air quality in shopping center," etc., appear in the middle of the list. Variables such as the "availability of entertainment facilities," "availability of celebrations, activities and functions," "availability of unique store design" and "ease of finding car parking lot" have relatively low mean scores rating. However, it should be noted that these variables might be directly related to specific characteristics of the respondents.

Factor Analysis

Logically, it is important that all relevant attributes are included in the modeling of an entertaining shopping experience. However, the problem

of multi-collinearity among the attributes may pose a serious threat to its interpretation. Factor analysis serves two specific purposes: firstly, it links correlated variables into factors; secondly, it serves as a solution for multi-collinearity so as to provide a better understanding of the underlying dimensions influencing the entertaining shopping experience. Tables 3 to 5 summarize the solutions to the principal component analysis of the retailer, customer and transport mode/travel attributes. The factor loadings of the attributes, percentage of variance explained, coefficient alpha, the Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy are listed in each table.

The Bartlett's test of sphericity and KMO are adopted to determine the appropriateness of the data set for factor analysis (Kline, 1996; Malhotra, 1996). High values (between 0.5 and 1.0) indicate that factor analysis is appropriate, while values below 0.5 imply that factor analysis may not be appropriate. On the other hand, the alpha value measures the reliability of the attributes in contributing to each factor (Cronbach, 1951). The latent root criterion (eigenvalues greater than one) has been adopted as the main method in extracting the number of factors for the analysis. Hair et al. (1998) regard the latent root criterion as the most appropriate and most reliable method when the number of variables involved in the factor analysis is in the range of 20 to 50.

Relating to the issue of factor loadings, which would be regarded as important for consideration in the factor analysis, Hair et al. (1998) state that factor loadings of 0.30 would be considered significant if the sample size is 350 or greater. Thus, as the sample size of this study is 300, the attributes listed in association with each factor are those loading at or above 0.30.

In analyzing the factor solutions, there are attributes that load more than 0.30 on more than one factor. In these cases, we have indicated the lower loading by an asterisk next to the factor loading of the particular attributes. Finally, in most instances the labels given to the factors are chosen to reflect the properties shared by the set of attributes loading above 0.30 within each factor. In addition, we have referred to the literature and the results of the qualitative research in labelling the factors; however, it should be recognized that these labels are the outcome of subjective interpretation of the researchers.

Retailer Factors

The values of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (.000) and KMO (.695) indicate that the data are appropriate for factor analysis. Factor analysis (principal component) using varimax rotation yielded four retailer factors with eigenvalues greater than one. These accounted for 21.61%, 19.69%, 12.57% and 9.87%, respectively, of the variance. In the (varimax-rotated) factor solution, Factor 1 consists solely of shopping center features. Factor

2 consists of variables that are related to the atmosphere of the shopping center while Factor 3 could be labeled as value-added features. Factor 4 principally relates to ancillary facilities in the shopping center. The researchers drop the last factor in view of the low proportion of variance and low coefficient alpha accounted for by the fourth dimension. All in all, the three factors account for 53.88% of the variance within the original variables. Coefficient alpha estimates for the three factors exceed 0.65, which indicate acceptable reliability. Dawson, Bloch and Ridgway (1990) stated in their study that the coefficient alpha must exceed 0.65 to yield reliability.

Customer Factors

The values of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (.000) and KMO (.616) indicate that the data are appropriate for factor analysis. Factor analysis using varimax rotation yielded two customer factors with eigenvalues greater than one, and the cumulative percentage of variance amounts to 53%. Coefficient alpha estimates for the two factors are 0.73 and 0.66, respectively, which indicate acceptable reliability. Factor 1 accounts for 29.68% of the variance within the original sets of variables and comprises variables relating to hedonic shopping values. This value results more from fun and enjoyment than pure task completion. Factor 2 includes the variables that could be labeled as utilitarian-oriented. Utilitarian value has been described as task-related or some type of conscious pursuit of an intended consequences (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994). It accounts for 21.71% of the variance within the original set of variables.

Transport Mode/Travel Attributes

Factor analysis using varimax rotation yielded five transport mode/travel factors with eigenvalues greater than one. Table 5 shows that the five factors extracted account for 64.77% of the variance. The values of the Bartlett's test of sphericity (.000) and KMO (.733) show that the data are appropriate for factor analysis. Coefficient alpha estimates for the five factors exceed the desirable levels, therefore indicating acceptable reliability.

Factor 1 comprises variables relating to the physical and mental efforts that the shoppers need to make during the shopping trip. It accounts for 17.66% of the variance within the original sets of variables. Factor 2 consists of variables that are related to the degree of protection of the shoppers from undesirable elements during the shopping trip. It accounts for 12.55% of the variance within the original sets of variables. Factor 3 consists solely of variables that influence shoppers' comfort level in the shopping trip; 12.19% of the variance is accounted for by the third dimension. Factor 4 accounts for 11.44% of the variance within the original sets of variables and comprises variables relating to the enjoyment of travel. Factor 5 incorporates variables that affect the level of tension of

TABLE 3. LATENT DIMENSIONS OF RETAILER ATTRIBUTES

Factor/Label	Factor Loadings	Coefficient Alpha
Factor 1—Shopping center feature		
-Wide variety of products	.907	.079
-Wide variety of stores	.894	
-Availability of sales, promotions, discounts and bargains	.795	
-Availability of unique store design	.492*	
-Availability of entertainment facilities	.333*	
Variance 21.61%		
Factor 2—Atmosphere		
-Good air quality in shopping center	.840	0.67
-Good lighting in shopping center	.772	
-Spaciousness of internal layout in shopping center	.554	
-High quality sales service	.553	
-Cleanliness of shopping center	.457*	
-Ease of finding car parking lot	.302*	
Variance 19.69%		
Factor 3—Value-added features		
-Availability of food court/restaurants	.757	0.65
-Cleanliness of shopping center	.576	
-Availability of celebrations, activities & functions in shopping center	.537	
-Spaciousness of internal layout in shopping center	.480*	
-Availability of entertainment facilities	.383*	
Variance 12.57%		
Factor 4—Ancillary facilities		
-Ease of finding car parking lot	.767	0.39
-Availability of unique store design	.591	
-Availability of entertainment facilities	.449	
Variance 9.87%		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		.000
Kaiser-Meyer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.695
Total variance		63.74%

*Denotes an attribute with a higher loading within another factor.

the shoppers in their shopping trip. It accounts for 10.93% of the variance within the original sets of variables.

Weighted Factor Rating

Although the principal component analysis has produced the importance dimension structures of the various modes of transportation, it does not

TABLE 4. LATENT DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER ATTRIBUTES

Factor/Label	Factor Loadings	Coefficient Alpha
Factor 1—Hedonic oriented		
-Ability to learn about trends and product features	.785	0.73
-Availability of free time	.687	
-Ability to accomplish the act of purchasing	.677	
-Availability of financial resources	.447	
Variance		
29.68%		
Factor 2—Utilitarian oriented		
-Ability to perform intended purpose	.852	0.66
-Ability to socialize with friends and family	.717	
Variance		
21.71%		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		.000
Kaiser-Meyer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.616
Total variance		51.39%

indicate the importance ratings of the factors that it produces. In addition, the factor scores and factor loadings that are produced by the principal component analysis have no clear equivalence to the importance ratings by the shoppers. Therefore, we adopt an index, Weighted Factor Rating (WFR) (Ibrahim, 2002), which transforms the factor loadings of the variables in each factor into a weighted mean rating of each factor. The WFR is computed as follows:

$$\text{Weighted Factor Rating of Factor k} = \frac{\sum_{j=1} \mu_{jk} f_{jk}}{\sum_{j=1} f_{jk}} \qquad (1)$$

Where

μ_{jk} = mean score rating of variable j in factor k.
f_{jk} = factor loading of variable j in factor k.

The weighted factor rating (WFR) shows the weighted mean scores of the factors produced by the principal component analysis. In essence, it presents the respondents' perceptions of the importance of the retailer, customer and transport mode/travel factors produced by the principal component analysis. The weighted mean scores range from "1" (not important at all) to "7" (very important) with "4" as the mid-point of the scale. Table 6 shows the weighted factor ratings of all the factors. The factors "effort" and "protection" recorded higher WFRs than the rest of the factors. The factor "ancillary facilities" recorded the lowest WFRs, with a

TABLE 5. LATENT DIMENSIONS OF TRANSPORT MODE/TRAVEL ATTRIBUTES

Factor/Label	Factor Loadings	Coefficient Alpha
Factor 1—Effort		
-Traveling time to shopping center	.854	0.80
-Absence of waiting time	.813	
-Shortness of walking distance	.778	
-Directness of travel to shopping center	.694	
Variance		
17.66%		
Factor 2—Protection		
-Safety of travel	.832	0.67
-Transport mode/travel protection from weather	.743	
-Absence of congestion	.551	
Variance		
12.55%		
Factor 3—Comfort		
-Cleanliness of transport mode/travel surroundings	.829	0.65
-Temperature comfort of transport mode	.793	
-Absence of crowd in transport mode	.641	
Variance		
12.19%		
Factor 4—Enjoyment		
-Enjoyment of travel	.821	0.65
-Smoothness of travel	.698	
-Low cost traveling	.629	
Variance		
11.44%		
Factor 5—Tension		
-Absence from stress	.828	0.71
-Reliability of transport mode	.792	
Variance		
10.93%		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		.000
Kaiser-Meyer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.733
Total variance		64.77%

score of 3.51. However, although Table 6 shows the relative weighted importance ratings of the various factors, it shows that almost all the factors tested in this study are important in affecting the entertaining shopping experience of shoppers in Singapore.

Analysis of Factor Ratings by Demographics

This section presents the result of the hypothesis testing via the ANOVA and the independent t-tests to analyze the effects of the various socioeco-

TABLE 6. WEIGHTED FACTOR RATINGS

Factors	Weighted Factor Rating
Retailer Attributes	
Shopping center features	4.54
Atmosphere	4.40
Value-added features	4.40
Ancillary facilities	3.51
Customer Attributes	
Hedonic–oriented	4.33
Utilitarian–oriented	4.62
Transport Mode/Travel	
Effort	5.06
Protection	5.11
Comfort	4.69
Enjoyment	4.24
Tension	4.33

nomic groups on the mean importance ratings of the respondents. The null hypothesis (Ho) states that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean scores of the various groups of respondents in the sample. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis (H1) indicates that there is significant difference in the means. Tables 7 to 9 exhibit the research findings.

Table 7 summarizes the research findings for the analysis of retailer factors by the various socioeconomic groups. At 0.05 level of significance, the t-test and ANOVA procedures indicate that 13 out of 24 cases show statistically significant differences. For mean score ratings of "shopping center features" and "atmosphere," the differences occur in marital status, age, personal monthly income, occupation, transport ownership and gender. The findings also demonstrate that significant differences in the mean score ratings for "value added features" occur when respondents are grouped by room type. The comparative analysis for the rest of the social economic factors shows no significant difference in the mean score ratings.

Table 8 summarizes the research findings for the analysis of customer factors by the various socioeconomic groups. At 0.05 level of significance, the t-test and ANOVA procedures indicate that 7 out of 16 cases reveal statistically significant differences. For mean score ratings of "hedonic oriented," the differences occur in marital status, age, occupation, transport ownership and gender. However, a significant difference in the mean score rating for "utilitarian oriented" occurs in occupation and gender.

Table 9 summarizes the research findings for the analysis of trans-

TABLE 7. SUMMARY OF BIVARIATE TESTS FOR RETAILER FACTORS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Factors	Shopping Center Features	Atmosphere	Value-Added Features
Room type	F = .973	F = .772	F = 3.435
	p = .406 (n.s.)	p = .511 (n.s.)	p = .017*
Marital status	F = 27.541	F = 27.784	F = 2.567
	p = .000*	p = .000*	p = .078 (n.s.)
Age	F = 18.858	F = 9.553	F = .726
	p = .000*	p = .000*	p = .604 (n.s.)
Race	F = .255	F = 2.860	F = .284
	p = .775 (n.s.)	p = .059 (n.s.)	p = .753 (n.s.)
Personal monthly income	F = 6.246	F = 5.680	F = 1.845
	p = .000*	p = .000*	p = .104 (n.s.)
Occupation	F = 14.122	F = 6.631	F = .537
	p = .000*	p = .000*	p = .806 (n.s.)
Transport ownership	F = 15.057	F = 16.939	F = 1.604
	p = .000*	p = .000*	p = .188 (n.s.)
Gender	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test:
	p = .002	p = .018	p = .078
	T = –8.610	T = –4.997	T = –1.319
	p = .000*	p = .000*	p = .188 (n.s.)

*denotes significant differences where $p < 0.05$.
n.s. denotes no significant difference where $p < 0.05$.

port/travel factors by the various socioeconomic groups. At 0.05 level of significance, the t-test and ANOVA procedures indicate that 20 out of 40 cases display statistically significant differences. For mean score ratings of "effort," the differences occur in room type, age and gender. For mean score ratings of "protection," the differences occur in marital status, age, occupation and transport ownership. In analyzing the various socioeconomic groups mean score ratings for "comfort," significant differences are found in room type, personal monthly income, occupation, transport ownership and gender. The findings also demonstrate that significant difference in the mean score ratings for "enjoyment" occurs when respondents are grouped by marital status, age and occupation. However, significant difference in the mean score rating for "tension" occurs in room type, age, personal monthly income, occupation and transport ownership.

■ Conclusion and Implications

All in all, three retailer factors, two customer factors and five transport mode/travel factors were extracted from the inventory set of attributes. Figure 2 models the factors depicted from the principal components analysis. This study found that apart from the retailer and customer factors,

TABLE 8. SUMMARY OF BIVARIATE TESTS FOR CUSTOMER FACTORS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Factors	Hedonic-Oriented	Utilitarian-Oriented
Room type	F = 1.044	F = .416
	p = .373 (n.s.)	p = .741 (n.s.)
Marital status	F = 22.838	F = .399
	p = .000*	p = .672 (n.s.)
Age	F = 19.379	F = .748
	p = .000*	p = .588 (n.s.)
Race	F = .710	F = 2.806
	p = .493 (n.s.)	p = .062 (n.s.)
Personal monthly income	F = 1.915	F = 1.103
	p = .092 (n.s.)	p = .359 (n.s.)
Occupation	F = 10.032	F = 3.157
	p = .000*	p = .003*
Transport ownership	F = 2.880	F = 1.719
	p = .036*	p = .161 (n.s.)
Gender	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test:
	p = .563	p = .129
	T = −4.309	T = 2.426
	p = .000*	p = .016*

*Denotes significant differences where $p < 0.05$.
(n.s.) denotes no significant difference where $p > 0.05$.

transport mode/travel factors contribute to an entertaining shopping experience. This research has attempted to replicate Jones (1999) exploratory investigation in the context of Singapore. Specifically, it aims to identify and analyze the factors that are significant in affecting entertaining shopping experiences in Singapore. In addition, it has extended the scope of entertaining shopping experience research by seeking to explore the significance of travel attributes in affecting the entertaining shopping experience.

The quantitative research supported the hypothesis that retailer attributes, customer attributes and transport mode/travel attributes are significant in affecting the entertaining shopping experience. In addition, this study also found that 28 of the 34 attributes have importance mean scores of more than four. This implies the importance of these variables in influencing shoppers' entertaining shopping experiences. In particular, respondents placed high importance on transport mode/travel attributes such as "absence of waiting time" (5.17), "absence of congestion" (5.17), "absence of crowd in transport mode" (5.15), "traveling time to shopping center" (5.15), "directness of travel to shopping center" (5.15) and "safety of travel" (5.13). This shows the significance of travel attributes in affecting the entertaining shopping experience. Finally, numerous independent sample t-test and ANOVA tests were carried out to analyze the effect of the

TABLE 9. SUMMARY OF BIVARIATE TESTS FOR TRAVEL FACTORS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

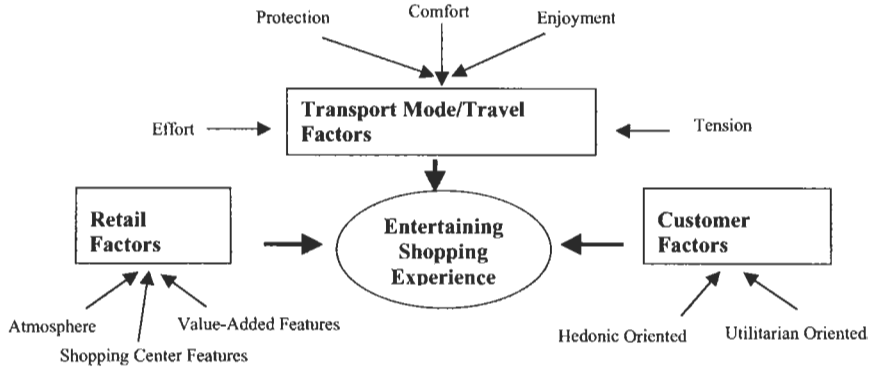
Factors	Effort	Protection	Comfort	Enjoyment	Tension
Room type	F = 2.985	F = 2.263	F = 4.880	F = 1.220	F = 7.820
	p = .032*	p = .081(n.s.)	p = .003*	p = .303(n.s.)	p = .000*
Marital status	F = 2.156	F = 3.758	F = 1.067	F = 3.477	F = 1.563
	p = .118 (n.s.)	p = .024*	p = .345 (n.s.)	p = .032*	p = .211 (n.s.)
Age	F = 2.338	F = 3.894	F = 1.081	F = 2.298	F = 5.649
	p = .042*	p = .002*	p = .371 (n.s.)	F = .045*	p = .000*
Race	F = .119	F = .014	F = .803	F = 1.846	F = .157
	p = .888 (n.s.)	p = .986 (n.s.)	p = .449 (n.s.)	p = .160 (n.s.)	p = .855 (n.s.)
Personal monthly income	F = 1.559	F = .499	F = 4.091	F = .760	F = 5.462
	p = .172 (n.s.)	p = .777 (n.s.)	p = .000*	p = .580 (n.s.)	p = .000*
Occupation	F = 1.487	F = 3.672	F = 2.839	F = 3.524	F = 2.623
	p = .171 (n.s.)	p = .001*	p = .007*	p = .001*	p = 0.12*
Transport ownership	F = 2.390	F = 7.855	F = 4.700	F = .521	F = 16.318
	p = .069 (n.s.)	p = .000*	p = .003*	p = .668 (n.s.)	p = .000*
Gender	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test:	Levene's Test
	p = .033	p = .994	p = .279	p = .009	p = .917
	T = 4.474	T = .174	T = −2.631	T = −1.792	T = .240
	p = .000*	p = .862 (n.s.)	p = .009*	p = .074 (n.s.)	p = .811 (n.s.)

*Denotes significant differences where $p < 0.05$.
(n.s.) denotes no significant difference where $p > 0.05$

various socioeconomic groups on the mean importance ratings of the respondents. It was found that respondents with different socioeconomic characteristics considered the importance of the factors affecting the entertaining shopping experience differently.

From a theoretical perspective, this study broadens the literature by demonstrating that transport mode/travel factors are significant in affecting the entertaining shopping experience. Other than customer factors that are unique to each individual, retailer and shopping center management could focus on the retailer and transport mode/travel factors in inducing an entertaining shopping experience. The preceding analysis has shown that entertaining shopping experiences derived from retailer and transport mode/travel factors significantly affect respondents' patronage behavior. One implication is for retailer and shopping center managers to examine the underlying attributes in their entertaining capabilities so as to develop competitive marketing strategies in attracting shoppers. For instance, it is imperative that there is availability of sales, promotions, discounts and a wide variety of products and stores to induce the entertaining shopping experience in Singapore. The research has also indicated the importance of traveling in contributing to this shopping experience. Therefore, the shopping center management should also look into store location, as well as the design of the transportation facilities, such that it introduces enjoyment into the shopping trip. For example, to reduce the tension and effort in grocery shopping, supermarkets in a shopping center should be located close to the parking lot and other transportation modes, interchanges or waiting areas. Similarly, appropriate safety features, shelter and other features for ease of traveling should be provided for shoppers to travel seamlessly from the stores to their transportation nodal points. These arrangements would involve collaborations among the shopping center owners, local councils and the relevant planning authori-

FIGURE 2. MODEL OF AN ENTERTAINING SHOPPING EXPERIENCE



ties, such as the land transport and urban planning agencies. This calls for greater integration in the land use and transport planning process.

As different socioeconomic groups differ in their preferences, shopping center management should focus on those factors that are important to their target market segments. For example, shoppers of different age groups and marital status seem to have different preferences in the retailer factors, particularly, the shopping center features and atmosphere. Therefore, the shopping center management can apply different marketing strategies in the design of store placement and tenant selection in meeting the needs of the younger and older shoppers, as well as those who are single and married.

There are additional fruitful avenues for future research that emerge from this study. Firstly, future research should investigate the entertaining shopping experience in other types of retail outlets or centers, such as hypermarkets, specialty "theme" centers, "power" centers and warehouse clubs. Secondly, future studies can explore the similarity and differences in the entertaining shopping experience between Internet shopping and on-site shopping. As this research has focused only on the factors affecting the entertaining shopping experience, future research should be carried out to examine the factors affecting the non-entertaining shopping experience. While this research leaves many unanswered questions, the authors hope that it will stimulate future research in providing a better understanding of this important retail phenomenon.

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