TOURIST-ORIENTED SHOPPING CENTERS:

Investigating Customers' Evaluation of Attribute Importance

Scarlett C. Wesley, Ph.D.*
Assistant Professor, Retailing, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

Melody L.A. LeHew, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Apparel, Textiles and Interior Design, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas

Overview

Traveling has become part of the American lifestyle. In the United States, destination travel has become more popular and affordable than ever before. From 1994 to 1999, domestic travel increased seven percent to 1.42 billion persons traveling over 50 miles away from their homes en route to travel destinations. Acknowledging this travel explosion, as well as the number of activity options available to travelers, it is surprising to note that shopping is continuously cited as the most popular trip activity by U.S. adult travelers. As traveling increases, the number of visitors patronizing shopping areas outside of their usual environment expands. Managers of these shopping areas must satisfy not only the needs of local customers, but also the needs of a new consumer segment. Shopping center marketing strategies have evolved to meet the changed marketplace. In this evolution, shopping centers

*swesley@gwm.sc.edu

have begun targeting the preferences and desires of today's shoppers. Shopping centers have adapted to become "more of an out-of-home, entertainment-based experience, than an old-line traditional one."

It is clear that shoppers today expect centers to have the right combination of fashion, food, entertainment and services available to meet their needs and desires, and these new experience-based centers have realized that they must do whatever they can to draw traffic from the widest audience possible. This movement towards an entertainment-based experience logically opens the door to promote shopping as a motivation for travel and the visitors as a viable target market for these centers. However, to date, very little non-proprietary research has focused on investigating the shopping center attributes attractive to the travel customer market. Research in this area would provide potential tourist shopping centers with guidance in the development of their design, merchandise and service mix, and direction for reaching these customer groups.

■ Introduction

Shopping is continuously cited as the most popular trip activity by U.S. adult travelers (TIA TravelScope®, 2000), and for many travelers, a trip is not complete without having spent time shopping (Hudman and Hawkins, 1989). Specifically, 91 million people or 63% of adult travelers in 2000 included shopping as an activity on a trip (TIA TravelScope®, 2000). Clearly, individuals are traveling and shopping.

The travel industry defines persons who travel as visitors (Paci, 1992). These visitors are persons who travel outside their usual environment for leisure, business, or other purposes, and when they go outside this environment, the act of traveling becomes tourism (Paci, 1992). In 1993, the World Tourism Organization defined tourism as "the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment." The term visitor encompasses two distinct classes of travelers: the tourist and the excursionist. A tourist is a temporary visitor who stays at least 24 hours in the place being visited, while an excursionist is a temporary visitor who stays less than 24 hours in the destination visited and does not make an overnight stay (Paci, 1992).

As traveling has increased, so has shopping. With many options available to travelers today, shopping currently accounts for 33% of all trips taken in the U.S., followed by outdoor activities (17%), visits to historical sites and museums (14%) and travel to beaches, cultural events and festivals and national and state parks (10% each) (TIA TravelScope®, 2000). Furthermore, these travelers are spending money when they travel. For example, in 2001, General Growth Properties, which is one of the nation's largest shopping center owners, reported that an estimated 31% of its annual sales came from tourist customers ("General Growth Properties Announces," 2001). Similarly, a study conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America and Taubman Centers (TIA and Taubman Centers Release, 2001) found that for more than half (51%) of U.S. adults traveling, 51% named shopping as their primary or secondary reason for travel. They also found that these traveling shoppers tended to spend a lot on their purchases—an average of $333 during each trip taken, with 22% spending more than $500 during each trip (TIA and Taubman Centers Release, 2001). From these results, shopping is clearly a dynamic force in the travel industry today, but this has not always been the case. William S. Norman, president and CEO of the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA and Taubman Centers Release, 2001) states that "as recently as the mid-1980s, the so-called 'traditional' travel industry thought of itself as a competitor, not a partner, of retail outlets, shopping centers and malls for consumer dollars. Now, it can be submitted that shopping is a cause, not an effect, of the decision to travel and the travel experience."

The entertainment component of shopping centers has also gained momentum since the early 1990s, when "technological advances allowed shopping center developments to foster the same magical experiences that were once only seen in national amusement parks such as Disney World" (International Council of Shopping Centers, 2000, p. 3). Shopping centers have entered an age of destination retailing, which has triggered a fundamental rethinking of what it means to go shopping and what a shopping center should be (Ginsburg, 1999). These new shopping centers are striving to position themselves as places to spend leisure and recreation time, as well as fun and interesting places to shop (Ginsburg, 1999). Customers today expect to find not only elegance, drama and attention to detail, but they also expect these shopping centers to have a wide retail variety, exceptional customer service and special amenities that are always available (Ross, 2000). It is clear that shoppers today want shopping centers to have the right combination of fashion, food, entertainment and services available to meet their needs and desires, and these new experience-based centers have realized that they must do whatever they can to draw traffic from the widest audience possible (International Council of Shopping Centers, 2000). This movement towards an entertainment-based experience logically opens the door to promote shopping as a motivation for travel and the tourist and excursionist visitors as a viable target market for these centers. However, to date, very little non-proprietary research has focused on investigating the shopping center attributes attractive to the travel customer market.

■ Purpose of Research

With this in mind, the purpose of the study was to examine the attributes of four shopping centers in which tourists and excursionists were a major customer group. Two of the centers were considered to be travel destinations in themselves and two of the centers were located near travel destinations. The following research objectives were proposed:

1. Identify the presence of tourist and excursionist shopper groups at shopping centers serving travelers as a major customer group and profile their key characteristics using demographic data.
2. Determine the shopping center attributes that are most important to the shoppers patronizing these shopping centers.
3. Determine significant differences in shopping-center attribute importance between three shopper groups: tourists, excursionists and other shoppers.
4. Determine significant differences in shopping center attribute importance between the two types of travel-oriented shopping centers: shopping centers that are travel destinations and shopping centers located near travel destinations.

■ Methodology

Instrument Development

A survey instrument was developed measuring the shopping center attributes most important to shoppers patronizing the center. The 70-item questionnaire was developed from a review of the existing academic and trade literature available. These 70 items represented the attributes believed to be most important to customers patronizing tourist-oriented shopping centers. There were three major groups in which each attribute could be classified: service attributes, shopping center environment attributes and tenant mix attributes. After development, the survey instrument was further refined from consultation with shopping center experts. The questionnaire was presented in booklet form with the shopping center attributes being measured using a five-point Likert-type scale. On a five-point scale, responses ranged from very important (1) to very unimportant (5).

Demographic data were requested from each respondent for descriptive purposes. To ascertain residency status, each respondent was asked if they were a permanent resident of the area in question. Of those who were not residents, to determine whether they were tourist or excursionist, they were asked to state how long they would be visiting the area. If they chose less than one day, they were classified as excursionist; otherwise, they were classified as tourist.

Site Selection

The shopping centers of interest to this study were the West Edmonton Mall (Alberta, Canada); the Mall of America (Bloomington, Minnesota); The Forum Shops (Las Vegas) and Pier 39 (San Francisco). The two shopping centers that were considered travel destinations were West Edmonton Mall and Mall of America. These centers are considered to be a main attraction, drawing visitors from around the world. Both were some of the earliest destination centers to mix traditional retail with exciting entertainment options.

Listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "largest shopping center in the world," the West Edmonton Mall covers 5.3 million square feet of shopping and entertainment space and is currently listed as Alberta's number one tourist attraction (Fast Facts, 2002). The mall, which opened in 1981, has expanded three times and now includes more than 800 stores, 110 restaurants, a casino, an amusement park, an indoor wave pool, a dolphin lagoon and 26 movie screens in two theater complexes. Shoppers to the West Edmonton Mall include 22 million visitors annually, both tourists and local residents (Hazel, 2000).

Located in Bloomington, Minnesota, the Mall of America is the largest retail and entertainment complex in the U.S., attracting more visitors annually than Disney World ("Mall of America Continues Its Nine-Year Reign," 2001). Opening in 1992, the Mall of America includes a seven-acre amusement park, an aquarium with walk-through tunnels, restaurants, nightclubs, and covers 4.2 million square feet, about half of which is devoted to retail space (Hazel, 1999). Even after 10 years in operation, the Mall of America is a major tourist destination, attracting around 43 million visitors a year and averaging sales around $860 million per year (Lisanti, 1998).

The remaining two shopping centers also attract tourist and excursionist shoppers, but these centers may not be the primary attraction destination for travelers. The Forum Shops and Pier 39 are centers located nearby very popular travel destinations: Las Vegas and San Francisco, respectively. The Forum Shops was also one of the earliest shopping-center-as-theme-park creations, and since its opening in 1992, it has continued to prosper, drawing in around $1,200 per square foot in annual sales, compared with a national average of around $300 (Ginsburg, 1999). Expanding three times, The Forum Shops will have a total gross leasable area of about 730,000 square feet by 2003 (Mander, 2000). The Forum Shops has a unique atmosphere that simulates ancient Roman streets with almost 100 high-fashion stores and 20 restaurants and specialty food retailers among dazzling surroundings. Shoppers delight in a 50,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, the Atlantis Show that consists of 400 moving parts in each of four animatronic characters and the Festival Fountain that features musical effects and a laser show (Gould, 1997).

The final shopping center of interest was Pier 39 located in San Francisco. Opening in 1978, Pier 39 is San Francisco's number one tourist attraction, with approximately 10.5 million visitors each year. Pier 39 is a 45-acre retail and entertainment complex that houses more than 110 shops and 11 restaurants and boasts such entertainment as a Venetian Carousel, K Dock (home to the renowned sea lions) and the Aquarium of the Bay. Located just two blocks from Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39 provides stunning views of the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, Angel Island and the San Francisco Bay (Pier 39, 2002).

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, each shopping center was contacted to request participation in the study. A copy of the survey and a short proposal were sent to each representative for their approval. Each shopping center was offered a copy of the results of the study in return for their cooperation.

The researchers arranged with shopping center representatives to collect data using the mall intercept technique. The intercept technique is a face-to-face survey collection method, which involves the physical presence of the researcher. The researchers were positioned in a central location of each shopping center, and an informational sign detailed the particulars of the study to passers-by. Shoppers were asked to participate in the study as they passed by the collection location. The questionnaires were self-administered by the respondents who were given a chair and a place in which to complete the task comfortably. Each respondent was given a participation gift of five dollars after completion of the questionnaire. The final customer sample was 582.

■ Data Analysis and Results

Objective 1: Identification and Profile of Tourist and Excursionist Shoppers

Constructing a table of the frequency percentages to identify whether tourist and excursionist shopper groups were present in the four shopping centers completed the first objective. The results are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. PRESENCE OF SHOPPER GROUPS IN SHOPPING CENTERS

	Customer Category			
Shopping Center	Resident Count	Excursionist Count	Tourist Count	TOTAL
West Edmonton	83 (54%)	10 (07%)	59 (39%)	152
Pier 39	22 (16%)	29 (22%)	83 (62%)	134
Mall of America	62 (41%)	35 (23%)	55 (36%)	152
The Forum Shops	16 (11%)	4 (03%)	124 (86%)	144
TOTAL	183 (31%)	78 (13%)	321 (55%)	582

The results from Table 1 indicate that in general there was a strong presence of tourist shoppers. Fifty-five percent of all respondents were classified as tourist, with Pier 39 and The Forum Shops, respectively, having 62% and 86% of customers surveyed falling into the tourist shopper group. We can conclude that tourist shoppers were present in the data collection shopping centers.

The results do not strongly support the presence of excursionist shoppers as major customer segments in the shopping centers where data were collected. Only 13% of respondents in all four centers were classified as excursionists, but when looking at shoppers in each center, 20% of Pier 39's and Mall of America's customers were classified as excursionists.

A descriptive frequency analysis profiled the key demographic characteristics of the tourist and excursionist shopper segments patronizing the four shopping centers. The results are presented in Table 2.

The demographic profile of customers surveyed in shopping centers serving travelers as a targeted segment did not reveal major differences between the three shopper segments. Resident shoppers were primarily young (18–24 years), white females with some college education, and are currently employed full time. Excursionist shoppers were classified as

TABLE 2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE BY SHOPPER SEGMENT

Characteristic	Resident %	Excursionist %	Tourist %	TOTAL %
Gender				
Female	67.2*	65.4	62.0*	64.1*
Male	29.5	34.6	36.1	33.8
Age				
18–24 years	38.3*	20.5*	28.3*	30.4*
25–34 years	19.1	16.7	23.4	21.1
35–44 years	17.5	32.1	24.0	23.0
45–54 years	13.7	11.5	13.1	13.1
55–64 years	5.5	9.0	7.5	7.0
65–74 years	2.7	3.9	2.2	2.6
75–84 years	1.1	2.6	0.6	1.0
Over 84	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2
Ethnic origin				
African-American	7.7*	0.0*	1.9*	3.4*
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	1.6	2.6	0.3	1.0
Asian, Pacific Islander	9.3	1.3	10.6	8.9
Hispanic	4.9	14.1	7.5	7.6
White	68.9	76.9	75.1	73.4
Other	5.5	3.9	3.1	4.0
Marital status				
Never married	47.5*	26.9*	42.4*	41.9*
Married	42.1	61.5	47.7	47.8
Divorced	7.7	9.0	7.2	7.6
Widowed	2.2	1.3	1.6	1.7
Education level				
Grade school	8.2*	7.7*	4.0*	5.8*
High school graduate, GED	26.8	15.4	19.0	21.0
Some college, no degree	32.8	42.3	26.5	30.6
Associate degree	5.5	9.0	7.2	6.9
Bachelor's degree	14.2	14.1	27.7	21.6
Graduate/professional degree	11.5	9.0	14.6	12.9
Occupation				
Managerial/professional specialty	28.4*	21.8*	37.1*	32.3
Technical/sales/administrative	15.9	16.7	12.8	14.3
Precision production/crafts/ repair	0.6	2.6	1.6	1.4
Laborer	2.2	3.9	3.7	3.3
Farming/forestry/fishing	0.0	1.3	0.6	0.5
Service	15.3	3.9	5.3	8.2
Operators/fabricators	1.1	0.0	2.2	1.5
Other	30.6	47.4	33.7	34.5

TABLE 2. (CONTINUED)

Characteristic	Resident %	Excursionist %	Tourist %	TOTAL %
Current work status				
Employed full time	45.4*	52.6*	57.9*	53.3*
Employed full time & student	7.7	3.9	3.7	5.0
Student, not employed	7.7	6.4	8.1	7.7
Employed part time	10.4	6.4	8.4	8.8
Employed part time & student	8.2	5.1	6.2	6.7
Work at home	6.0	7.7	4.4	5.3
Retired	6.0	10.3	5.3	6.2
Not employed	7.7	5.1	4.1	5.3
Household income				
Less than $10,000	17.5*	9.0*	10.0*	12.2
$10,000–14,999	5.5	2.6	2.5	3.4
$15,000–19,999	6.0	2.6	2.8	3.8
$20,000–29,999	11.5	9.0	10.6	10.7
$30,000–39,999	9.3	14.1	10.0	10.3
$40,000–49,999	7.7	9.0	9.0	8.6
$50,000–59,999	4.9	7.7	11.2	8.8
$60,000–74,999	6.6	14.1	9.7	9.3
$75,000–99,999	8.2	15.4	10.0	10.1
$100,000–124,999	4.9	5.1	6.9	6.0
$125,000–149,999	4.4	3.9	5.3	4.8
$150,000+	3.8	2.6	4.4	4.0

*Column total less than 100% due to missing cases.

middle-aged (35–44 years), white married females with some college education and currently employed full time. Tourist shoppers were also white females, ranging from 18 to 44 years old, with some college education or a bachelor's degree and currently employed full time. As can be seen, there was very little variation in the primary characteristics of each shopper segment, with age of shopper as the most varied characteristic. When viewing the demographic characteristics of the entire sample, it is even more evident that the three groups were very similar. Sixty-four percent of the total sample was female, 73% classified themselves as white and 53% were employed full time. The age of the sample was more evenly split between three age categories: 18–24 years, 25–34 years and 35–44 years. In general, these shopping centers did not attract the older population groups (45 and older). The education level of the sample was primarily split between high school graduate, some college and a bachelor's degree.

Objective 2: Attributes Important to Shoppers Patronizing Tourist-Oriented Shopping Centers

To determine the shopping center attributes that were reported as the most important by the customers surveyed in the travel oriented shopping centers, the mean score and standard deviation for each attribute was calculated and the results are listed in Table 3.

In general, the customers patronizing the four travel-oriented shopping centers reported that the presence of almost all the attributes listed were important for those centers. The only two attributes that were reported on average as neither important nor unimportant were the availability of valet parking and personal shoppers (mean = 3.39 and mean=3.01 respectively). The top 10 most important shopping center attributes for these centers include (1 = Very important on 5-point Likert scale):

1. A clean shopping center interior (mean=1.40).
2. Employees who give prompt service to customers (mean=1.43).
3. Clean and convenient public restrooms (mean=1.43).
4. Employees that have the knowledge to answer customers' questions (mean=1.44).
5. Feeling safe when walking to and from entrances (mean=1.50).
6. A safe and secure shopping center environment (mean=1.56).
7. Adequate security available in the shopping center (mean=1.58).
8. A comfortable temperature in the common shopping center areas (mean=1.62).
9. Adequate security in shopping center parking lot (mean=1.63).
10. A well-lighted parking area (mean=1.65).

This list suggests that customers patronizing the four tourist-oriented shopping centers prefer to have a clean, comfortable and safe environment in which to shop, as well as key services such as prompt and knowledgeable employees and adequate security guards posted inside and outside the center.

When evaluating the mean scores of the 70 shopping center attributes, it is also possible to identify the attributes that customers viewed as less important. The following list ranks the least important attributes from the customers' perspective.

1. Valet parking available (mean=3.39).
2. Personal shoppers available (mean=3.01).
3. Directional signage in a language other than English (mean=2.99).
4. Tour services available in the shopping center (mean=2.95).

5. Special events (mean=2.81).
6. Lockers available for rent (mean=2.80).
7. Children's play area available (mean=2.79).
8. Concierge service available (mean=2.72).
9. Galleries available to purchase art or artifacts (mean=2.71).
10. Strollers for rent (mean=2.70).

Even though these attributes are considered less important than the top 10, they were still rated as important on average by the customers (excluding valet parking and personal shoppers). These less important attributes mostly consist of extra services that some shopping centers provide. Only one was related to the tenant mix.

It is also interesting to note that the standard deviation was greater for these attributes than for the ones rated as most important, suggesting that there is greater variation (or less agreement) between respondents. Some customers may have rated these attributes as slightly more important or perhaps unimportant, whereas the top 10 attributes had very little variation in customer responses (smaller standard deviation scores), suggesting greater cohesiveness in shoppers' expectations related to important attributes.

Objective 3: Differences in Attribute Importance Between Tourists, Excursionists and Residents

The third objective was completed using a t-test to determine which attributes were significantly more important to tourist shoppers when compared with excursionist shoppers and vice versa and the results are presented in Table 4.

Results indicate only two shopping-center attributes evaluated had significantly greater importance for one of the two shopper groups. The tourist shopper group rated the availability of clean and convenient public restrooms as being significantly more important than did the excursionist shoppers. The tourist group also rated the presence of adequate and clear directional signage as being more important than did the excursionist shoppers. By examining the means for each shopping center attribute, it appears that in general, traveling shoppers believe that almost all of these attributes are important. The exception is the availability of valet parking, which received mean scores of 3.36 (excursionist) and 3.17 (tourist) on a five-point scale indicating that traveling shoppers do not feel this service is either very important or very unimportant.

The importance of two attributes was significantly different between the tourist and excursionist shoppers, but due to the large sample size, this statistical significance does not translate into practical significance.

TABLE 3. RATINGS OF SHOPPING CENTER ATTRIBUTES BY SAMPLE (N = 582)

Attribute	Mean*	SD
Clean interior	1.3993	0.70
Bright lighting	1.6791	0.85
Food court	1.7550	0.96
Plenty of convenient parking	1.6750	0.98
Plenty of exterior entrances	1.8090	0.93
ATMs available	2.1781	1.26
Movie theater	2.6709	1.30
Convenient layout	1.7128	0.86
Open, uncrowded walkways	1.6469	0.87
Information directories	1.6996	0.89
Multiple information booths	2.0036	1.02
Clean, convenient restrooms	1.4327	0.81
Coupon books available	2.1618	1.19
Convenient operating hours	1.6966	0.90
Family restrooms available	2.0769	1.24
Children's play areas	2.7681	1.41
Lockers available for rent	2.7989	1.36
Adequate, clear directional signs	2.0181	1.05
Signage in other languages	2.9909	1.50
Comfortable seating areas	2.0108	1.03
Variety of places to sit	1.9529	0.99
Valet parking available	3.3913	1.43
Special events	2.8054	1.37
Music playing in center	2.5681	1.26
Value merchandise	1.8891	0.98
High-quality merchandise	1.8700	0.95
Well-known retail stores	2.0991	1.13
Well-known brands carried	2.0575	1.08
Well-known restaurant chains	2.2896	1.15
Unique, different merchandise	1.8786	0.96
Unique, different retail stores	1.8471	0.97
Highly fashionable merchandise	2.1541	1.14
Prompt service	1.4314	0.73
Knowledgeable employees	1.4411	0.71
Attractive décor in center	1.9242	0.92
Newest retailing concepts	2.0486	0.97
Modern looking interior	2.0271	0.99
Center layout easy to move around	1.6799	0.82
Bank available	2.3979	1.30
Feeling safe walking in and out	1.4973	0.82
Public telephones	1.9928	1.16
Adequate seating in food court	1.6839	0.92
Well-lighted parking area	1.6475	0.96
Comfortable temperature	1.6223	0.85
Concierge service available	2.7153	1.32
Personal shoppers available	3.0054	1.41

TABLE 3. (CONTINUED)

Attribute	Mean*	SD
Safe, secure environment	1.5566	0.86
Adequate security in center	1.5775	0.87
Adequate security in parking lot	1.6287	0.96
Hotels conveniently near center	2.5712	1.37
Tour services in center	2.9475	1.41
Wheelchair accessibility	2.1960	1.34
Effective crowd control	1.8901	1.00
Stores selling gifts under $50	1.7002	0.92
Stores selling gifts over $50	2.3913	1.25
Art/artifact gallery	2.7094	1.30
Stores selling local mementos	2.4664	1.21
Restaurants offering local cuisine	2.0557	1.07
Strollers for rent	2.7073	1.44
Map of shopping center	1.8354	0.99
Variety of retail stores	1.6407	0.78
Variety of themed restaurants	2.1960	1.16
Variety of sit-down restaurants	2.0108	1.09
Variety of entertainment choices	2.1005	1.12
Variety of food specialty retailers	2.1246	1.07
Variety of fast food choices	2.1460	1.11
Variety of apparel retailers	1.9587	0.98
Variety of gift/specialty shops	1.9910	1.02
Variety of health/beauty shops	2.2980	1.17
Variety of jewelry/accessories stores	2.3280	1.21

*Likert scale where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant.

One might ask "is there really a practical difference in tourist shoppers ranking convenient public restrooms as being 1.35 (on a five-point scale, with 1 being very important) than excursionist shoppers ranking it as 1.58?" Both groups find that attribute to be relatively important. Perhaps the more significant finding is that both shopper groups report that almost all of the shopping center attributes measured to be important to very important. The two groups may be considered similar and targeted with similar assortment of services, retailers and products, as well as with a similar atmosphere.

Due to the similarities between the excursionist and tourist shopper groups in their ranking of attribute importance, these two groups were combined and labeled as "travelers" and compared to responses from resident shoppers. The results are presented in Table 5. Additional analysis reveals many significant differences between the attribute importance reported by residents and travelers. Seven service attributes, six shopping center environment attributes and nine tenant mix attributes distinguish

TABLE 4. DIFFERENCE IN RATINGS OF SHOPPING-CENTER ATTRIBUTES' IMPORTANCE BY SHOPPER SEGMENT

Attribute	Excursionist Mean*	Tourist Mean*	t-value	Level of Significance
Clean interior	1.4359	1.3583	0.81	.416
Bright lighting	1.7180	1.6760	0.36	.721
Food court	1.7564	1.7009	0.44	.661
Plenty of convenient parking	1.5769	1.7134	−1.03	.303
Plenty of exterior entrances	1.7051	1.7882	−0.74[a]	.463
ATMs available	2.2308	2.1340	0.60	.550
Movie theater	2.7180	2.7227	−0.03	.978
Convenient layout	1.7308	1.6885	0.35	.724
Open, uncrowded walkways	1.7308	1.5981	1.10	.274
Information directories	1.7308	1.6355	0.80	.422
Multiple information booths	2.0897	1.9128	1.29	.199
Clean, convenient restrooms	1.5769	1.3520	2.07	.039
Coupon books available	1.9359	2.0623	−0.98[a]	.330
Convenient operating hours	1.6923	1.6729	0.16	.330
Family restrooms available	1.9487	1.9533	−0.03	.977
Children's play areas	2.4872	2.7383	−1.47[a]	.143
Lockers available for rent	2.8077	2.7601	0.29[a]	.773
Adequate, clear directional signs	2.2051	1.9097	2.10	.037
Signage in other languages	2.9231	2.8442	0.39	.694
Comfortable seating areas	1.9615	1.8660	0.72	.471
Variety of places to sit	1.8846	1.8598	0.19	.853
Valet parking available	3.3590	3.1745	0.94	.350
Special events	2.8590	2.8100	0.27	.790
Music playing in center	2.7308	2.4112	1.82	.070
Value merchandise	1.7308	1.8629	−1.03	.305
High-quality merchandise	1.8333	1.7851	0.38	.703
Well-known retail stores	1.9744	2.0405	−0.44	.660
Well-known brands carried	2.0385	2.0062	0.23	.818
Well-known restaurant chains	2.2564	2.2679	−0.08	.940
Unique, different merchandise	2.0385	1.8380	1.46	.144
Unique, different retail stores	1.9231	1.8380	0.65	.513
Highly fashionable merchandise	2.0513	2.1464	−0.63	.531
Prompt service	1.4103	1.4235	0.02	.983
Knowledgeable employees	1.4487	1.4237	0.25	.800
Attractive décor in center	1.8462	1.8629	−0.14	.891
Newest retailing concepts	2.0513	2.0062	0.35	.731
Modern looking interior	2.0897	1.9346	1.15	.250
Center layout easy to move around	1.6410	1.6293	0.10	.917
Bank available	2.3846	2.3894	−0.03[a]	.975
Feeling safe walking in and out	1.5000	1.4393	0.56	.575
Public telephones	1.7821	2.0062	−1.77[a]	.078
Adequate seating in food court	1.6410	1.6916	−0.47[a]	.637
Well-lighted parking area	1.6667	1.5919	0.58	.564
Comfortable temperature	1.6282	1.6168	0.08	.933

TABLE 4. (CONTINUED)

Attribute	Excursionist Mean*	Tourist Mean*	t-value	Level of Significance
Concierge service available	2.5641	2.6013	-0.21	.834
Personal shoppers available	2.9744	2.8816	0.50	.617
Safe, secure environment	1.7051	1.4922	1.81	.072
Adequate security in center	1.6667	1.5421	1.05	.296
Adequate security in parking lot	1.5897	1.5857	0.03	.975
Hotels conveniently near center	2.6282	2.3396	1.67	.096
Tour services in center	2.7949	2.7882	0.04	.972
Wheelchair accessibility	2.0128	2.1433	-0.75	.457
Effective crowd control	1.8333	1.8224	0.08	.935
Stores selling gifts under $50	1.5000	1.6667	-1.55[a]	.123
Stores selling gifts over $50	2.3462	2.3489	-0.02	.987
Art/artifact gallery	2.6154	2.6199	-0.03	.980
Stores selling local mementos	2.3846	2.3738	0.07	.948
Restaurants offering local cuisine	1.9103	2.0187	-0.87[a]	.387
Strollers for rent	2.4231	2.6324	-1.09	.275
Map of shopping center	1.7564	1.7321	0.19	.847
Variety of retail stores	1.5769	1.5888	-0.13[a]	.899
Variety of themed restaurants	2.0128	2.1215	-0.70	.485
Variety of sit-down restaurants	2.0769	1.9315	0.97	.331
Variety of entertainment choices	2.1154	2.0280	0.58	.561
Variety of food specialty retailers	2.1795	1.9969	1.26	.208
Variety of fast food choices	1.9872	2.1184	-0.86	.391
Variety of apparel retailers	1.8462	1.9502	-0.78	.436
Variety of gift/specialty shops	1.9359	1.9221	0.10	.920
Variety of health/beauty shops	2.3590	2.1932	1.04	.297
Variety of jewelry/accessories stores	2.3077	2.2586	0.30	.763

[a]Separate-variance t-test, otherwise pooled-variance t-test.
*Likert scale where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant.

the preferences of residents versus travelers with regard to the most important attributes that must be present in these specific shopping centers. In all cases, the service attributes: plenty of convenient parking, convenient operating hours, lockers available for rent, special events, knowledgeable employees, public telephones and adequate security in the center were rated as more important by resident shoppers than by traveler shoppers. Likewise, the shopping center environment attributes: bright lighting, plenty of exterior entrances, convenient layout, open and uncrowded walkways, adequate seating in food court and a safe, secure environment were rated more important by residents than by travelers. Residents also rated the tenant mix attributes as more important than the ratings by travelers. Tenant mix attributes that were significant for residents include: movie theater, well-known restaurant chains, unique and

TABLE 5. DIFFERENCE IN RATINGS OF SHOPPING CENTER ATTRIBUTES' IMPORTANCE BY TRAVELER AND RESIDENT SHOPPERS

Attribute	Travelers Mean*	Residents Mean*	t-value	Level of Significance
Clean interior	1.4308	1.3315	1.63[a]	.105
Bright lighting	1.7500	1.5254	3.08[a]	.002
Food court	1.8021	1.6534	1.76	.079
Plenty of convenient parking	1.7572	1.4943	3.12[a]	.002
Plenty of exterior entrances	1.8654	1.6875	2.11	.063
ATMs available	2.2428	2.0347	1.81	.071
Movie theater	2.8730	2.2267	5.55	.000
Convenient layout	1.7816	1.5650	2.80	.005
Open, uncrowded walkways	1.7143	1.5028	2.87[a]	.004
Information directories	1.7278	1.6379	1.11	.270
Multiple information booths	2.0340	1.9364	1.04	.298
Clean, convenient restrooms	1.4581	1.3771	1.10	.274
Coupon books available	2.1565	2.1734	−0.15	.877
Convenient operating hours	1.7513	1.5771	2.13	.033
Family restrooms available	2.0773	2.0760	0.01	.991
Children's play areas	2.8237	2.6454	1.38	.170
Lockers available for rent	2.9310	2.5059	3.41	.001
Adequate, clear directional signs	2.0658	1.9133	1.59	.113
Signage in other languages	3.0427	2.8793	1.16[a]	.249
Comfortable seating areas	1.9842	2.0686	−0.85[a]	.399
Variety of places to sit	1.9631	1.9306	0.36	.720
Valet parking available	3.3622	3.4561	−0.71	.477
Special events	2.9450	2.4971	3.61	.000
Music playing in center	2.6250	2.4629	1.39	.165
Value merchandise	1.9089	1.8457	0.70	.482
High-quality merchandise	1.8842	1.8391	0.52	.605
Well-known retail stores	2.1234	2.0460	0.75	.456
Well-known brands carried	2.0066	1.9713	1.27	.204
Well-known restaurant chains	2.3603	2.1330	2.17	.031
Unique, different merchandise	1.9558	1.7086	2.83	.005
Unique, different retail stores	1.9372	1.6494	3.29	.001
Highly fashionable merchandise	2.2167	2.0171	1.93	.054
Prompt service	1.4635	1.3616	1.60[a]	.110
Knowledgeable employees	1.4844	1.3466	2.28[a]	.023
Attractive décor in center	1.9374	1.8947	0.50	.615
Newest retailing concepts	2.1047	1.9253	2.02	.044
Modern looking interior	2.0686	1.9374	1.45	.147
Center layout easy to move around	1.7222	1.5886	1.79	.074
Bank available	2.4818	2.2126	2.27	.023
Feeling safe walking in and out	1.5078	1.4745	0.45	.654
Public telephones	2.0605	1.8475	2.02	.044
Adequate seating in food court	1.7520	1.5367	2.60	.010

TABLE 5. (CONTINUED)

Attribute	Travelers Mean*	Residents Mean*	t-value	Level of Significance
Well-lighted parking area	1.6868	1.5625	1.42	.155
Comfortable temperature	1.6911	1.5402	1.70	.090
Concierge service available	2.7309	2.6818	0.41	.684
Personal shoppers available	3.0130	2.9886	0.18[a]	.854
Safe, secure environment	1.6021	1.4571	1.97[a]	.050
Adequate security in center	1.6276	1.4689	2.12[a]	.035
Adequate security in parking lot	1.6746	1.5200	1.88[a]	.061
Hotels conveniently near center	2.5158	2.6914	-1.33[a]	.184
Tour services in center	2.9290	2.9884	-0.46	.648
Wheelchair accessibility	2.2237	2.1364	0.71	.476
Effective crowd control	1.9158	1.8343	0.89	.372
Stores selling gifts under $50	1.7113	1.6762	0.42	.676
Stores selling gifts over $50	2.4788	2.2012	2.43	.015
Art/artifact gallery	2.7646	2.5910	1.46	.144
Stores selling local mementos	2.5079	2.3757	1.19	.236
Restaurants offering local cuisine	2.0974	1.9661	1.35	.177
Strollers for rent	2.7427	2.6301	0.85	.395
Map of shopping center	1.8094	1.8921	-0.92	.359
Variety of retail stores	1.6746	1.5665	1.52	.130
Variety of themed restaurants	2.2053	2.1761	0.28	.783
Variety of sit-down restaurants	2.0688	1.8870	1.84	.066
Variety of entertainment choices	2.1474	2.0000	1.45	.147
Variety of food specialty retailers	2.1398	2.0914	0.50	.620
Variety of fast food choices	2.1938	2.0343	1.69[a]	.092
Variety of apparel retailers	2.0210	1.8239	2.21	.028
Variety of gift/specialty shops	2.0158	1.9371	0.85	.398
Variety of health/beauty shops	2.3246	2.2400	0.79	.429
Variety of jewelry/accessories stores	2.3691	2.2386	1.18	.238

[a]Separate-variance t-test, otherwise pooled-variance t-test.
*Likert scale where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant.

different merchandise, unique and different retail stores, highly fashionable merchandise, newest retailing concepts, bank available, stores selling gifts over $50 and the variety of apparel retailers. Even though t-test results indicate that resident shoppers report greater importance given to specific shopping center attributes than the traveler segment, the degree of difference is relatively small for practical purposes. Shopping center attributes were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from very important (1) to very unimportant (5). For example, there was a significant difference in the importance ascribed to the presence of bright lighting in the shopping center between resident and traveler segments, with residents reporting greater importance. Realistically, both groups find the

TABLE 6. RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF SHOPPING CENTER ATTRIBUTES BY SHOPPING CENTER TYPE

Attribute	Destination Mean*	Near Destination Mean*	t-value	Level of Significance
Clean interior	1.2895	1.4137	−2.01[a]	.045
Bright lighting	1.4967	1.7518	−3.42[a]	.001
Food court	1.5493	1.8094	−3.18[a]	.022
Plenty of convenient parking	1.4572	1.7626	−3.61[a]	.000
Plenty of exterior entrances	1.6480	1.8094	−1.97[a]	.050
ATMs available	2.0855	2.0755	0.09	.927
Movie theater	2.3454	2.7194	−3.24	.001
Convenient layout	1.5197	1.7698	−3.31[a]	.001
Open, uncrowded walkways	1.5033	1.6439	−1.84[a]	.066
Information directories	1.5658	1.6871	−1.55[a]	.122
Multiple information booths	1.8717	1.9532	−0.90[a]	.369
Clean, convenient restrooms	1.3322	1.4137	−1.15[a]	.251
Coupon books available	2.0197	2.0684	−0.47	.642
Convenient operating hours	1.5822	1.6691	−1.10[a]	.272
Family restrooms available	1.9803	1.9137	0.62	.537
Children's play areas	2.5822	2.6727	−0.72[a]	.472
Lockers available for rent	2.4309	2.8489	−3.44	.001
Adequate, clear directional signs	1.7993	2.0468	−2.67[a]	.008
Signage in other languages	2.8026	2.8417	−0.29	.770
Comfortable seating areas	1.9540	1.8705	0.91[a]	.361
Variety of places to sit	1.8487	1.8561	−0.08[a]	.933
Valet parking available	3.4770	2.9317	4.21	.000
Special events	2.7862	2.5540	1.92	.056
Music playing in center	2.5658	2.2950	2.39	.017
Value merchandise	1.7336	1.9029	−1.96[a]	.050
High-quality merchandise	1.7040	1.8633	−1.88[a]	.061
Well-known retail stores	1.9013	2.1115	−2.11[a]	.035
Well-known brands carried	1.8191	2.1331	−3.33[a]	.001
Well-known restaurant chains	2.0757	2.3094	−2.30[a]	.022
Unique, different merchandise	1.7007	1.9245	−2.65[a]	.008
Unique, different retail stores	1.6711	1.8669	−2.31[a]	.021
Highly fashionable merchandise	1.9967	2.1403	−1.44[a]	.150
Prompt service	1.3125	1.4532	−2.20[a]	.029
Knowledgeable employees	1.3224	1.4568	−2.14[a]	.033
Attractive décor in center	1.8092	1.8561	−0.57[a]	.571
Newest retailing concepts	1.9441	1.9712	−0.31[a]	.756
Modern looking interior	1.8849	1.9784	−1.05[a]	.294
Center layout easy to move around	1.5165	1.6835	−2.27[a]	.023
Bank available	2.2665	2.3345	−0.60	.547
Feeling safe walking in and out	1.4013	1.4892	−1.24[a]	.217
Public telephones	1.8224	2.0000	−1.76[a]	.078
Adequate seating in food court	1.5559	1.6907	−1.69[a]	.091

TABLE 6. (CONTINUED)

Attribute	Destination Mean*	Near Destination Mean*	t-value	Level of Significance
Well-lighted parking area	1.4342	1.7266	−3.51[a]	.001
Comfortable temperature	1.4967	1.6511	−1.84[a]	.066
Concierge service available	2.6513	2.5216	1.11	.268
Personal shoppers available	2.9803	2.7950	1.49	.136
Safe, secure environment	1.3816	1.6079	−3.01[a]	.003
Adequate security in center	1.4178	1.6331	−2.85[a]	.005
Adequate security in parking lot	1.4868	1.6079	−1.45[a]	.148
Hotels conveniently near center	2.6250	2.2626	3.05	.002
Tour services in center	3.0230	2.5468	3.81[a]	.000
Wheelchair accessibility	2.0526	2.1475	−0.82[a]	.413
Effective crowd control	1.7401	1.8705	−1.48[a]	.139
Stores selling gifts under $50	1.6086	1.6475	−0.48[a]	.631
Stores selling gifts over $50	2.2697	2.2332	0.03	.974
Art/artifact gallery	2.7204	2.4245	2.57	.011
Stores selling local mementos	2.4211	2.2410	1.67	.096
Restaurants offering local cuisine	2.0165	1.9137	1.10	.271
Strollers for rent	2.5263	2.5935	−0.53	.597
Map of shopping center	1.7072	1.8237	−1.35[a]	.178
Variety of retail stores	1.4770	1.6367	−2.27[a]	.024
Variety of themed restaurants	2.0822	2.1151	−0.32	.746
Variety of sit-down restaurants	1.8717	1.9676	−1.01	.312
Variety of entertainment choices	1.9901	2.0324	−0.43	.665
Variety of food specialty retailers	2.0526	1.9892	0.67	.502
Variety of fast food choices	2.0165	2.0791	−0.64[a]	.522
Variety of apparel retailers	1.7862	1.9712	−2.13[a]	.034
Variety of gift/specialty shops	1.8257	1.9856	−1.79	.073
Variety of health/beauty shops	2.1711	2.2302	−0.57[a]	.567
Variety of jewelry/accessories stores	2.2336	2.2302	0.30	.975

[a]Separate-variance t-test, otherwise pooled-variance t-test.
*Likert scale where 1 = very important and 5 = very unimportant.

lighting attribute to be important, with the means falling between 1 (very important) and 2 (important) on the Likert scale.

Objective 4: Differences Between Shopping Centers

A t-test was used to determine which attributes were significantly more important between shoppers patronizing a shopping center promoted as a travel destination and shoppers patronizing a shopping center located near a well-known travel destination. The results are presented in Table 6.

There were 28 significant differences in shopping-center attribute importance between the two types of travel-oriented shopping centers: shopping centers that are travel destinations and shopping centers located near travel destinations. The shopping center attributes that were considered to be more important for destination centers than for centers located near a travel destination include: clean interior, bright lighting, food court, plenty of convenient parking, plenty of exterior entrances, movie theater, convenient layout, lockers available for rent, adequate and clear directional signage, value merchandise, well-known retail stores, brands and restaurant chains, unique and different merchandise and retail stores, prompt service and knowledgeable employees, layout that makes it easy to move around, well lighted parking area, a safe and secure environment with adequate security in the center and parking lot and a variety of retail stores, including apparel retailers. The shopping center attributes that were considered to be more important for customers of a shopping center located near a travel destination include: valet parking available, music playing in the shopping center, hotels located conveniently near the shopping center, tour services in the shopping center and galleries available to purchase art or artifacts. These findings suggest that shopping centers that are located in a popular tourist spot should offer extra services that may not be necessary at shopping centers that are the travel destination. Once again, these findings are statistically significant, but overall, the shopping center attributes were important to shoppers of both shopping center types: travel destination and near travel destination. Only one attribute was given a mean score that indicated a neutral level of importance (tour services in destination centers). Therefore, practical conclusions are limited.

■ Conclusions and Limitations

The lack of specific shopping center attributes being identified as more important than others was the most surprising and notable finding in this study. When asked to rate each attribute's importance, each attribute was found to be equally important to tourists, excursionists and residents. Furthermore, attribute importance was again equal for the two types of travel-oriented shopping centers: shopping centers that are travel destinations and shopping centers located near travel destinations. These findings suggest that a shopping center that targets tourists and excursionists may not be able to identify definitively specific attributes upon which to focus to reach these segments, but must concentrate on almost all of the attributes in question if it wants to attract tourist and excursionist customers.

It is interesting to note that the list of 10 attributes that ranked the least important were mainly comprised of very special extra services that some centers may provide. For example, the attributes of having valet parking and personal shoppers available, which ranked as neither important nor unimportant, are services that are only used by a small portion of the customers frequenting these establishments. A shopping center could use a list of the less important attributes when making decisions about where it might want to make changes. In turn, the shopping center could use the list of most important attributes when making decisions about where to focus its efforts in trying to attract tourist and excursionist shoppers. Shopping centers do not have an unlimited amount of resources; therefore, these lists would allow them to concentrate their efforts, even if the differences in importance are small.

The main limitation of this study is that the findings reported are not generalizable. The responses of each customer segment (tourist, excursionist and resident) reported are only for those days the researchers collected data as well as only those respondents in the center that agreed to fill out a survey. Furthermore, the selection of respondents was not random. Generally, those who wanted to participate were allowed. Therefore, cautionary conclusions are required.

A second limitation is the similarity of the demographic characteristics among the three respondent groups (tourist, excursionist and resident). Further research in this area should include respondents with a greater variety of demographic characteristics, including more males and a wider range of ages.

A third limitation was the small number of shopping centers and geographic regions included in the study. Due to monetary constraints, only four shopping centers that consider tourists and excursionists as target customers were considered. With this study, several major geographic regions were also omitted; for example, no data were collected in New England, the South or the Southwest. Additional research would benefit from the inclusion of more shopping centers in as many different geographic locations as possible.

■ References

"Fast Facts" (2002), *West Edmonton Mall* (March): http://westedmontonmall.com/info/fastfacts.html.

Ginsburg, J. (1999), "Xtreme Retailing: Stores Fight the Online Onslaught," *BusinessWeek* (December 20): Cover Story.

Gould, L.E. (1997), "Jackpot for Shoppers," *Travel Agent* (November 10): http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m0VOU/1997_Nov_10/48115392/print.jhtml.

Hazel, D. (1999), "Mall of America Planning Entertainment Expansion," *Shopping Centers Today* (September 1): http://www.icsc.org/srch/sct/current/sct9909/18.html.

———(2001), "World's Largest Mall at a Crossroads," *Shopping Centers Today* (April 1): http://www.icsc.org/srch/sct/current/sct0400/01.html.

Hudman, L.E. and D.E. Hawkins (1989), *Tourism in Contemporary Society*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

International Council of Shopping Centers (2000), "A Brief History of Shopping Centers," (June): http://www.icsc.org/srch/about/impactofshoppingcenters/briefhistory.html.

Lisanti, T. (1998), "A Mega Mall for the New Millennium," *Discount Store News* (September 7): http://findarticles.com/cf_0/m3092/n17_v37/21122322/print.jhtml.

Mander, E. (2000), "Jackpot! Retail Development Riding High in Las Vegas," *Shopping Centers Today* (April 1): http://www.icsc.org/srch/sct/current/sct0400/06.html.

PR Newswire (2001), "General Growth Properties Announces New Tourism Marketing Initiative – 'America's Favorite Shopping Destinations'," (April 17): http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m4PRN/2001_April_17/73302563/print.jhtml.

———(2001), "Mall of America Continues its Nine-Year Reign as Nation's Largest Mall," (August 9): http://findarticles.com/cf_0/m4PRN/2001_August_9?77089383/print.jhtml.

Paci, E. (1992), "International Issues Forum: Common Measures of Tourism," *Conference Proceedings, 23rd Annual Conference of the Travel and Tourism Research Association* (June 14–17).

Pier 39 (2002), "Pier 39 Press Priorities," (March): from http://www.pier39.com/pier30/english/press/index.html.

"The Mills Corporation Unveils Retail, Entertainment Trends for the Start of the 21st Century," (1999), *The Mills Corporation Press Release* (November 12): http://www.millscorp.com/enhanced/press.html.

"TIA and Taubman Centers Release First Ever Survey on U.S. Shopping and Travel Experience" (2001), *Travel Industry Association of America* (April 26): http://tia.org/Press.

TIA TravelScope® (2000), *Travel Industry Association of America*: http://www.tia.org/tiaweb/travel/domestictravel.asp.