Teens and Shopping Mall Preferences:
A Conjoint Analysis Approach to Understanding the Generational Shift Toward an Experience Economy

Wendy Bryce Wilhelm* and Sandra Mottner**

This study focuses on the shopping mall preferences of teens 12-17, a trendsetting segment that tends to be heavy users of enclosed shopping malls. Conjoint analysis and a web survey are used to address the primary research questions or objectives: (1) What are the important attributes that teens consider when choosing among shopping malls?; (2) What does the "ideal" shopping mall look like to teens?; and (3) What trade-offs are teens willing to make among different mall attributes and attribute levels? A representative sample of 918 U.S. teens completed an online conjoint task that asked them to choose among hypothetical mall products. The findings indicated that the most important attributes in teens' choice of a mall to frequent are how friendly and welcoming the mall is to teens and whether the mall contains "cool" stores. Further, the most preferred or "ideal" mall (i.e., the one with the greatest overall utility), across all respondents, is one that has "lots of" everything (cool stores, entertainment options, etc.), is a good place to hang out with friends, and is very attractively designed. Teens are also almost twenty times more likely to choose to go to a mall with lots of experiential characteristics (skateboard and theme parks, cultural and live music events, theaters, etc.) than to go to the typical status quo mall with a movie theater (76% versus 4%, respectively), everything else being equal. This paper concludes with a discussion of the need for malls to develop a comprehensive experiential retail strategy that meets the needs of the teen recreational shopper.

Introduction

Our research focuses on the shopping mall preferences of teens 12-17 (middle and high school aged individuals of both genders). We have chosen to focus on teens because: (1) this segment tends to be heavy users of enclosed shopping malls (Baker and Haytko, 2000), (2) teens are trendsetters, and the number of teens aged 12-17 is expected to grow significantly, to over 27 million by 2010, (3) this generation is the first to embrace the concept of the "experience economy" (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), with a resultant shift in preferred shopping mall attributes, and (4) there is little research conducted on teen shopping mall behavior and preferences (Baker and Haytko, 2000). If shopping malls are to meet the challenges inherent in the "third retail revolution" that combines retailing, leisure and urban entertainment (e.g., Mall of America; Kooijman, 2002), they must understand the link between teen (trendsetter) shopping preferences and mall design (retail mix, concepts and formats)—in other words, they must become more "customer-centered" (Knee, 2002) and learn to better manage the "total customer experience" (Berry et al., 2002).

* Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225 or Wendy.Wilhelm@wwu.edu
** Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225 or Sandra.Mottner@wwu.edu

Conjoint analysis and a web survey are used to address four primary research questions or objectives:

(1)   What are the important attributes that teens consider when choosing among shopping malls?

(2)   What does the "ideal" shopping mall look like to teens?

(3)   What trade-offs are teens willing to make among different mall attributes and attribute levels?

(4)   Do findings for research questions #1-3 differ as a function of demographic or psychographic characteristics?

Previous studies have typically used convenience samples, traditional surveys and importance or desirability rating scales to collect attribute data on shopping mall preferences, and have frequently found that most of the attributes examined are rated as "important" or "desired" (Eastlake et al., 1998; Ibrahim and Ng, 2002; Kinley et al., 2003; Wesley and LeHew, 2002). See Finn and Louviere (1996) for a review of this literature. Conjoint analysis —the approach used in the present study— is superior to these research methods because it permits us to realistically and quantitatively examine trade-offs consumers make among attributes ("I am willing to go to a smaller mall with fewer stores because it has places for teens like me to hang out with my friends"). The findings from conjoint analysis (individual part-worth utilities for each attribute and attribute level) have implications for the development of new retail concepts and formats.

The next section of the paper reviews the empirical and conceptual research on shopping mall preferences/choice and experiential consumption with particular attention to how the findings might relate to teen shopping behavior and preferences. From this review we derive the shopping mall attributes to be included in the conjoint (choice) experiment.

Literature Review

Today's teens have a plethora of shopping and experiential consumption options. The enclosed shopping mall is a significant venue for teens in that it is capable of offering both a shopping and an experiential environment. Although noticeable differences among age groups have been reported with respect to preferences for mall attributes and mall concepts (Anderson et al., 2003), no large scale quantitative studies of teen preferences have been conducted. The preferences discussed in the following literature review are all associated with enclosed shopping malls.

Teens' Shopping Mall Preferences

Preferences with respect to shopping mall choices among the general population have been researched both quantitatively and qualitatively and this research has led to the development of an attribute list (Table 1), which forms the basis of this research. The attributes are organized around groups that occur based on prior research and a model of experiential consumption developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999).

Teens seem to be concerned with how "cool" (up-to-date or trendy) stores are within a mall. As DeMarco (2004) notes in a recent Washington Times article, teens are looking for "cool stuff." Baker and Haytko (2000) in their qualitative study of teen girls and their mall shopping experiences, find that the teens are looking for stores that carry specific merchandise, especially the latest fashions. "Coolness" of the mall is tied to the types of clothes and the merchandise the stores carried (Baker and Haytko, 2000). Tourists, including high schoolers, are attracted to unique, contemporary and sophisticated merchandise in stores (Kinley et al., 2002). Shoppers in general are attracted to "novelty" (Wang et al., 2000). All of these qualities are interpreted as meaning a perceived level of trendiness, uniqueness or coolness. The prevailing word for this characteristic, according to a random sample of interviews conducted with teens, is cool – or a level of coolness. Coolness is related to a certain level of fashion, but is not necessarily "image" related; e.g. cool merchandise may be trendy clothes OR trendy cell phones (DeMarco, 2004). Coolness is associated with certain stores such as American Eagle Outfitters, Abercrombie & Fitch OR Target stores that carry merchandise considered trendy for teens but at a value price (DeMarco, 2004).

The variety and number of different stores is also identified as a decisive issue for teens as well as shoppers in general when choosing a mall. Baker and Haytko's research (2000) indicates that the number of stores is important for teenage girls in their mall patronage decision. While number of stores is important, variety within the number of stores is also a key factor for a number of shoppers, including teens (Baker and Haytko, 2000; Kinley et al., 2002). Wakefield and Baker (1998) identified the variety of stores in a mall as a significant factor affecting customers' desire to stay in a mall and the level of excitement about the mall. The cross-shopping mall study by Wang et al. (2000) identified the assortment of stores and services as an important construct as well. The variety of stores included choices of food options (Baker and Haytko 2000). Less repetition of stores was also a desirable feature for Generation Y shoppers (Anderson et al., 2003).

Teens like to "hang-out" at malls and meet their friends (Baker and Haytko, 2000; Mangleburg et al., 2004). Indeed, the social aspects of the mall, such as visiting and shopping with friends, are major activities for teens. How conducive the mall is to these activities seems to make a difference in the level of mall spending on the part of teens (Mangleburg et al., 2004). Girls like to come to malls and meet or just observe boys (Baker and Haytko, 2000) and presumably vice versa. In fact, meeting and spending time with friends makes a difference in mall choice (Wang et al., 2000).

Table 1. Development of attribute set for conjoint experiment.

Mall Attribute	Literature Review	Exploratory Research (n=17)	Pretest (n=110)	Final Instrument
Coolness Level of Mall Stores		X	X	X
Specific stores and specific merchandise, favorite stores and latest fashions	Baker and Haytko 2000	X		
Fashionable, unique merchandise, sophisticated, contemporary	Kinley, Kim and Forney 2002	X		
Novelty level	Wang, Gomez-Insausti, Biasiotto, Barbiero and McNally 2000	X		
# of Different Kinds of Stores		X	X	X
Number of stores, favorite stores, quality of stores, size of the mall and stores, variety of choices/stores including quality, service, size and price	Baker and Haytko 2000	X		
Variety of stores	Kinley, Kim and Forney 2002	X		
Tenant variety	Wakefield and Baker 1998	X		
Good assortment of stores and services	Wang, Gomez-Insausti, Biasiotto, Barbiero and McNally 2000	X		
Lack of repetition of stores	Anderson, Burns and Reid 2003			
Teen Friendliness		X	X	X
Teen shopping with friends associated with sentiments towards retailers.	Mangleburg, Doney and Bristol 2004			
Meeting friends and salespeople as friends, girls and boys meeting	Baker and Haytko 2000	X		
Meet and spend time with friends	Wang, Gomez-Insausti, Biasiotto, Barbiero and McNally 2000	X		
Mall Design		X	X	X
Physical cues and physical attributes and multi-store shopping	Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal and Voss 20002			
Décor, ability to sit down and a place to eat and drink	Baker and Haytko 2000	X		
Unique architecture, reflects local culture, natural and scenic, exotic, elegant, popular/famous, creative	Kinley, Kim and Forney 2002	X		

Table 1. (continued)

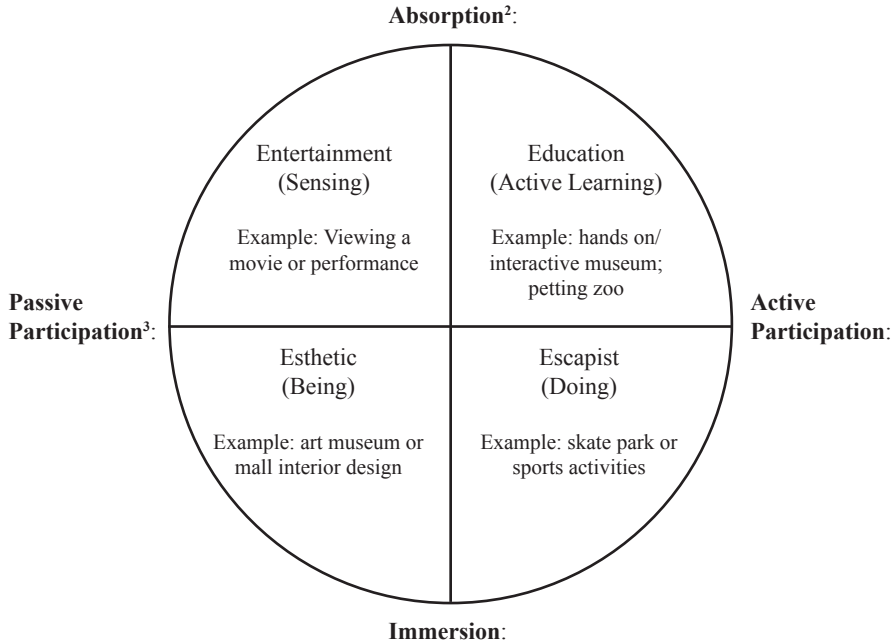| Mall Attribute	Literature Review	Exploratory Research (n=17)	Pretest (n=110)	Final Instrument
Mall environment	Wakefield and Baker 1998	X		
Odor and mall shopping	Michon, Chebat and Turley 2005	X		
Immersion-Passive Participation Realm of Experience	Pine and Gilmore 1999	X		
Entertainment Options		X	X	X
Entertaining	Baker and Haytko 2000; Kinley, Kim and Forney 2002	X		
Shopping center entertainment typology	International Council of Shopping Centers 1995			
Unusual, special stores as entertainment	Anderson, Burns and Reid 2003	X		
Good entertainment facilities	Wang, Gomez-Insausti, Biasiotto, Barbiero and McNally 2000	X		
Absorption-Passive Participation Realm of Experience	Pine and Gilmore 1999	X		
Educational Options				X
Educational	Kinley, Kim and Forney 2002			
Absorption-Active Participation Realm of Experience	Pine and Gilmore 1999			
Sports/Play Options		X	X	X
Excitement	Wakefield and Baker 1998	X		
Entertaining, recreational, exciting	Kinley, Kim and Forney 2002	X		
Ice skating, arcades, etc.	Baker and Haytko 2000	X		
Activity based entertainment and shopping	Haynes and Talpade 1996	X		
Immersion-Active Participation Realm of Experience	Pine and Gilmore 1999	X		

Beyond the "cool" factor, the number and variety of stores, the level of friendliness to teens, and the degree to which teens feel comfortable "hanging out" in the mall, there are some additional mall attributes that surface in the literature. Two fairly traditional issues include the perceived price level of the stores in the mall (Anderson et al., 2003) and the distance of the mall from teens' homes (Baker and Haytko, 2000). However, some of the emerging issues for malls are those related to the mall as an entertainment destination, the mall with an atmosphere that is distinctive or evokes certain feelings, or the mall as a source and venue for recreation. Indeed, retailers who combine retail, leisure and entertainment provide a value-added experience for consumers as described by Koojman (2002), and suggest additional experiential mall attributes that might be important determinants of teens' mall preferences or choice.

The Experience Economy and Teens' Mall Preferences

An experience product is one in which the primary benefit derived from the product-service by the shopper is the experience of purchasing and using it. Pine and Gilmore (1999) take this one step further by making an actual distinction among commodities, goods, services and experiences. In an experience economy a mall or store uses services as the "stage" and goods as "props" to engage an individual in a memorable, personal experience that is unique to the individual. Consumers value these experiences more highly because of these unique qualities and are willing to pay more for them vis a vis goods or services. Driven by rising affluence and variety-seeking needs, consumers are increasingly searching for new and unusual experiences that will engage them and not just entertain them (Berry et al., 2002). The popularity of the Mall of America, with its theme park, ice skating rink, and huge variety of stores and experiences is consistent with this trend toward an experience economy.

A mall staging an experience may engage consumers ("guests") on many dimensions, but two of the most important are the level of guest participation (passive-active) and the kind of connection or environmental relationship that unites customers with the event/performance (immersion – absorption). Figure 1 depicts the four experience realms or types that result from the interaction of these two dimensions – overlapping domains that may combine to form a unique personal experience for the individual customer – and provides concrete examples of each of the experience realms. Teens, in particular, may explicitly seek out shopping malls that can deliver one or more of these four types of experiences: entertainment, esthetic, escapist or educational.

For example, many mall developers and managers have focused on making the shopping experience more entertaining or amusing, by adding movie theaters or live performances that consumers passively view. Further, findings from previous research demonstrate that perceptions about the entertainment value of a mall are key determinants of mall evaluation (Table 1). Indeed, an entertainment typology has been developed by the International Council of Shopping Centers (1995), which includes center entertainment, shopping experiences, and owner/developer-driven entertainment.

Figure 1. Experience realms and teens' preferences[1].

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Absorption[2]:

Entertainment (Sensing)	Education (Active Learning)
Example: Viewing a movie or performance	Example: hands on/ interactive museum; petting zoo
Esthetic (Being)	Escapist (Doing)
Example: art museum or mall interior design	Example: skate park or sports activities

Passive Participation[3]:   Active Participation:

Immersion:

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1. Adapted from *The Experience Economy*, Pine and Gilmore, 1999, Figure 2-1, page 30.
2. Absorption-Immersion dimension of experience refers to the kind of connection or environmental relationship that unites consumers with the event.
3. Active-Passive dimension of experience refers to the level of audience participation.

As Baker and Haytko (2000) note, teenage girls do not necessarily separate the two activities of shopping and entertainment. In fact, the entertainment portion of the shopping mall does not need to be necessarily outside of the shopping experience—finding unusual or special stores is often entertaining (Anderson et al., 2003) Although Pine and Gilmore (1999) describe entertainment as an absorptive and passive experience, shopping in itself can be described as both an activity as well as a passive (just looking) experience. For the purposes of this research, entertainment is described as a passive-absorptive experience.   For example, a Starbucks where "the innovation of bringing books and coffee together creates a place worth escaping to, for hanging out, browsing, sipping and talking," (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) is a form of entertainment.   Entertainment, in general, is important to tourists (including teens) visiting malls (Kinley et al., 2002) and makes a difference in mall choice (Wang et al., 2000).

Teens, however, may be just as interested in escapist or play experiences that allow them to actively immerse themselves in consumption (either physically or virtually), e.g., theme park, virtual reality games or skateboard parks. Teen girls evidence a strong interest in malls with "roller coasters, roller skating rinks, putt putt golf and game rooms," (Baker and Haytko, 2001). Tourists (including teens) are looking for exciting and recreational activities (Kinley et al., 2002).

Excitement is linked to shopping mall patronage (Wakefield and Baker, 1998) and the presence of activity-based experiences should relate highly to the level of excitement generated at a mall. However, as Haynes and Talpade (1996) note, an activity based entertainment center (an escapist or play experience) has only a modest effect on shopping.

In addition, mall developers should not ignore the contribution that esthetic experiences might add to teens' shopping enjoyment. The simulated rainforest of the Rainforest Café or a mall area with comfortable couches in the midst of fountains and trees can add to the sense of immersion in a shopping experience and encourage consumers to linger. This type of experience may be best captured through mall interior design, layout, lighting, music, etc. Indeed, the physical attributes of the mall offer physical clues to the experiential environment (Baker et al., 2002). The malls' physical environment has been shown to be positively related to a desire to stay and the "excitement" level of the mall (Wakefield and Baker, 1998). As seen in a smaller study, one element of the environment, smell, has a distinct relationship to mall shopping (Michon, Chebat and Turley, 2005). Or as Berry et al. (2002) noted, "anything that can be perceived or sensed – or recognized by its absence – is an experience clue" (p.86). The esthetic experience of the mall includes all the elements of atmospherics, thus engaging all of the customer's senses (Michon et al., 2005). Teen girls indicated that the décor or look of the mall was important to them (Baker and Haytko,2000), while tourists found that the overall environment and image were important (Kinley et al., 2002).

Finally, the fourth experience realm, the educational experience, may be more mean-ingfully labeled edutainment in the context of teens and their consumption preferences. Interactive or "hands-on" science museums, pet stores that feature talks on various topics, petting zoos, skateboard parks that offer instruction – all these are examples of active learning that might appeal to teens. Tourists (including teens) are receptive to an educational and cultural experience in a mall (Kinley et al., 2002).

The most engaging experiences encompass aspects of all four realms. As Pine and Gilmore (1999) state: "When all four realms abide within a single setting, then and only then does plain space become a distinctive place for staging an experience. Occurring over a period of time, staged experiences require a sense of place to entice guests to spend more time engaged in the offering" (p. 42). Clearly, mall developers and managers can benefit from understanding how teens perceive these experience realms within the context of shopping mall choice. To determine the relative importance of these dimensions in determining teens' preferences for different shopping malls, we included these four experience realms as attributes in the conjoint experiment, as described in the next section.

Methodology

Research Design

Teens' stated preferences for mall characteristics or attributes were evaluated using conjoint analysis. Conjoint has become one of the most popular multivariate techniques, with both marketing academics and marketing research practitioners, for understanding how consumers develop preferences for products because of its ability to realistically model many choice processes (Caroll and Green, 1995; Green and Krieger, 2002; Orme, 2002). It is based on the premise that consumers evaluate the overall utility of a hypothetical product (e.g., XYZ mall) by combining the separate amounts of utility provided by each attribute (e.g., # of "cool" stores, # of entertainment options). It thus portrays consumers' decisions realistically as trade-offs among multiattribute products (e.g., "I want to go to XYZ mall because it has lots of cool stores, even though there aren't a lot of other entertainment options").

A questionnaire is used to obtain a respondent's overall evaluation of a set of product concepts that are pre-specified by the levels of different attributes. External validity is enhanced to the extent that the product attributes reflect important attributes consumers consider in their decision-making process. As a decompositional model, conjoint analysis then "decomposes" the respondent's overall evaluations to uncover the utility value or importance weight he/she places on each attribute and attribute level (Green and Srinivasan, 1990). Since the goal of the present study is to understand what attributes influence teens' preferences for hypothetical mall "products," conjoint analysis was selected as the most appropriate means of addressing the research questions.

Use of Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) Analysis

A particular type of conjoint analysis, experimental choice or "choice-based conjoint" (CBC) analysis, was developed in the 1980s in response to industry desires to consider explicit competitive contexts (Carroll and Green, 1995). More recently, the use of CBC by marketing research practitioners has experienced significant growth (relative to ratings-based conjoint analysis), as "more companies want to understand how people make choices" (Vence, 2003). Rather than rate each product concept/profile one at a time on a measure of attractiveness or likelihood of purchase ("ratings-based" conjoint), respondents are asked to choose, i.e., make a preference judgment, between a series of two or more competitive product profiles. This approach to measuring preferences combines discrete choice responses, a logit model that is applied to these responses, and a fractional factorial design in order to minimize the number of choices respondents have to make. Unlike more traditional conjoint software, CBC analysis produces aggregate part-worth or utilities for each attribute and level; it does not generate a set of individual utilities for each respondent. This shortcoming was overcome in the present study by using Herarchical Bayes (HB) to estimate part-worths at the individual level (HB will be discussed more fully in the Results section, under Analysis of Conjoint Data using Logit and Hierarchical Bayes).

The popularity of CBC, relative to other ratings-based conjoint approaches, is due to a number of factors: (1) the realism of the choice task for both high and low involvement products, i.e., consumers make choices among products all the time (Green and Krieger, 2002); (2) the fact that interactions among product attributes can be estimated without the necessity of defining the interaction terms a priori (Chrzan and Orme 2000); (3) the development of a strong theoretical foundation for choice-based conjoint analysis, based on a multinomial logit model of choice (Louviere et al., 2000; Louviere and Woodworth, 1983); and (4) recent empirical studies that demonstrate the superior predictive accuracy of choice-based analysis relative to ratings- or rankings-based conjoint approaches (Vriens et al., 1998). For these reasons, the present study utilized Sawtooth Software's CBC System to conduct a full profile conjoint analysis study (see Carroll and Green (1995) and Deal (2002) for a review of this company's products). A web-based survey was used to collect the choice data.

Selection of Attributes: Focus Groups and Pilot Study

The selection of appropriate mall attributes to include in the choice task is important to the study's external validity. Focus groups with teens 12-17 were conducted at a local mall to confirm the importance of the attributes identified by previous research as being potentially the most important in mall choice (Table 1) and to uncover any other attributes that the subject population deemed important (see Table 2 for a list of focus group questions). A web survey was then designed that included a conjoint task with the attributes selected based on findings from the secondary and focus group research (Table 1). The six attributes identified as key determinants of mall choice are: # of different kinds of stores, teen friendliness level, "coolness" level of mall stores, mall layout and interior design, # of entertainment options, and # of sports/play options (e.g., theme park). A seventh attribute, # of educational options (e.g., interactive museums, cultural events), was included because one of the purposes of this research is to study experiential consumption, and educational activities represent one quadrant of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) Experience Realms (Figure 1).

A sample of 110 teens on both the West and East coasts of the continental U.S. participated in the pilot study. Respondents completed the conjoint task and other survey questions online, and also provided written (hard copy) feedback on: (1) the importance of each of the attributes included in the choice task; (2) the importance of any additional attributes they identified; (3) the ease of understanding instructions and questions, (4) satisfaction with the visual layout and suggestions for change, and (5) any problems with accessing and moving through the web questionnaire.

Based on the conjoint results and other respondent feedback from the pilot study, modifications were made to the instructions and layout of the conjoint instrument and to the wording and levels of attributes. The data revealed no "new" attributes, and there was a general consensus that the seven mall attributes displayed in Table 3 are the most important ones in teens' choice of a mall. Each of the attributes used in the

Table 2. Focus group questions used to identify key mall attributes ($n = 17$).

1.	Why did you decide to come to the mall today? What are you going to do at *(mall name)* today? Probe: shopping, hangout out, meeting friends, movies, etc.
2.	What are some of the other reasons you sometimes come to *(mall name)*?
3.	Were you looking forward to coming here today? Are you happy to be here? What kind of experience is it? (probe: fun, exciting, social, educational, etc.)
4.	Why did you come to *(mall name)* today and not to some other mall or shopping center?
5.	What are some of the things you consider when you are trying to decide where to go shopping or to hang out for the afternoon or evening? What's important to you when you are trying to decide what to do with your free time?
6.	What do you like about *(mall name)*?
7.	What don't you like about *(mall name)*?
8.	What would you do to make this mall better for you and your friends to come to, if you could make any changes to it that you wanted to? What would your "ideal" mall look like? Probe: anything you would add? Take away?
9.	How often do you come here? How long do you usually stay when you come?
10.	Can I ask you are few questions about yourself – all of your answers will remain completely anonymous: a. Gender (record); Race (record) b. Age c. Year in school d. About how much do you spend when you come here?

main study had three levels. The same number of levels was used for all attributes to effect a balanced design (an unequal number of attribute levels can bias estimation of importance weights (Johnson and Orme, 2003).

Experimental Design and Dependent Measure

Rather than having each respondent evaluate all possible pairs of product concepts (a practically impossible cognitive task), a fractional factorial, randomized experimental design is typically used to select an optimal set of concepts. The particular randomized design approach used in the present study is the balanced overlap method. This experimental design employs random sampling with replacement for choosing concepts,

Table 3. Attributes and attribute levels employed in conjoint experiment.

Mall Attributes	Expanded Definition/Examples	Attribute Levels
Number of Different Kinds of Stores	Number of different clothing, shoe, food, music stores, etc.	Hardly any, Some, Lots (of different kinds of stores)
Teen Friendliness Level	Whether the mall feels friendly and welcoming to teenagers	Poor, O.K., Good (place to hang out with friends)
Number of Cool Mall Stores	Whether the mall stores are hip, trendy, fashionable, etc.	Hardly any, Some, Lots (of cool stores)
Mall Interior Design (provides aesthetic experiences)	Mall colors, sitting areas, lighting, decorations, etc.	Unattractive, Just O.K., Very Attractive (mall design)
Entertainment Experiences	Whether the mall has movie theaters, live music shows, fashion shows, etc.	Hardly any, Some, Lots (of entertainment options)
Educational Experiences	Whether the mall has a "hands on" science museum, petting zoo, etc.	Hardly any, Some, Lots (of educational options)
Sport/Play Experiences (provides Escapist experiences)	Whether the mall has a theme or amusement park, skating, sports activities, etc.	Hardly any, Some, Lots (of sports/play options)

permitting some level overlap within the same task (i.e., respondents may have to choose between two malls where both have attractive mall designs but differ with respect to # of different kinds of stores, etc.). This overlap increases the statistical power of the design/test when testing for attribute interactions by minimizing any potential Type II errors associated with a fractional factorial design (Chrzan and Orme, 2000; Vriens et al., 1998). Another one of the strengths of the conjoint software employed, Sawtooth's CBC System, is its ability to develop conjoint questionnaires/designs that are nearly orthogonal, using a randomized design to develop a unique set of questions/concepts for each respondent. Such designs are slightly less efficient than truly orthogonal designs, but they have the offsetting advantage that all two-way interactions between attributes/levels can be measured, an important consideration in the present study.

The experimental design included 10 different pairs of product concepts, or 10 randomized choice tasks, that were unique to each respondent. One fixed choice task was also included in the design, i.e., the two mall "products" presented in each fixed task were the same for all respondents. The fixed task was used as a holdout task to provide an indication of how well the utility data generated from the randomized tasks predict choices not used in their estimation.

For each choice task, two different product concepts, representing different mall descriptions, were presented side-by-side, and respondents were asked to indicate which

one they would choose if they "imagined that they had decided to go to the Mall today." The actual instructions to the respondents and an example of a choice task can be seen in Table 4. Within each choice task, the presentation order of the attributes was randomized; in other words, the value taken by the Coolness Level of Mall Stores attribute was not always presented first, as it is in Table 2.

OLS was used to test the efficiency of the conjoint experimental design, i.e., the precision with which the worth of each part for each attribute and level can be estimated. This randomized experimental design had a median statistical efficiency of about 98% relative to a generalized orthogonal design. Further, there was little difference among the standard errors for each main effect (0.04-0.05), suggesting that heterogeneity of variance is not a problem.

Table 4. Example of choice task.

Imagine you have decided to got the Mall today, and you have a choice between the two Malls below. Which one would you choose to go to?

	Mall Description	**Mall Description**
Coolness Level of Mall Stores (like whether the stores are hip, trendy, fashionable, etc.)	Hardly any cool stores	Lots of cool stores
Entertainment Options (like movie theaters, live music shows, fashion shows, etc.)	Lots of entertainment options	Hardly any entertainment options
# of Different Kinds of Stores (# of clothing, shoe, food, music stores, etc.)	Lots of different kinds of stores	Hardly any different kinds of stores
Teen Friendliness (like whether the mall feels friendly and welcoming to teenagers)	Is a poor place to hang out with friends	Is a good place to hang out with friends
Mall Design (colors, sitting areas, lighting, decorations, etc.)	Very Attractive mall design	Very Attractive mall design
Educational Options (like a "hands on" science museum or petting zoo)	Lots of educational options	Hardly any educational options

Data Collection Procedure

A web-based survey technique was chosen for several reasons. First, the choice-based conjoint tasks can be easily randomized and adapted for each respondent. Second, this form of conjoint data collection is much faster and easier for the respondent, and data collection/coding errors are minimized. Third, the subject population – teenagers -- is Internet literate and enjoys web-based entertainment; we felt response rates would be higher relative to a paper-and-pencil survey. Based on the findings of Bristol and Mangleburg (2005), with respect to teen deception, it was important to find a testing method where teen's self reported with minimal parental monitoring.

The web survey itself took an average of fifteen minutes to complete. One introductory screen was devoted to describing the purpose of the study, assuring anonymity, and explaining the choice task. The 11 choice tasks were interspersed with several questions regarding respondents' store preferences and mall purchase behaviors; demographic questions were placed last. An open-ended question soliciting respondents' comments about shopping malls was also included. The survey concluded with a link back to the market research firm from whom the sample was purchased (see below). The survey instrument can be accessed at: http://www.cbe.wwu.edu/survey/teen/teenlogn.htm.

Sample

The target population for this study consisted of U.S. teens 12-17, who live within one hour of an enclosed shopping mall. A random sample of U.S. households with teens 12-17, balanced across the regions of the U.S., was purchased from a commercial research firm Survey Sampling Incorporation (SSI). SSI maintains a representative panel of U.S. households who opt in to respond to email and web-based surveys in return for a small fee and a chance to win a significant cash prize. The invitation to participate in the present study, while written by the authors, was emailed to panelists by SSI, along with the URL and password for accessing the survey. The invitation contained the request for the teenagers who lived in the household to complete the study, provided some brief background information on the subject of the survey, and explained the contingent reward system (cash prizes for survey completion).
A screening question eliminated any respondents who lived more than one hour away from an enclosed mall. Data collection occurred during one week in January 2005. Of the 23,000 invitations to participate that were sent out via email, 918 individuals completed the survey, for a response rate of 4%.

Results

Sample Characteristics

A profile of the sample is presented in Table 5; respondents are fairly representative of the U.S. population of teens 12-17 (US Census Bureau, 2001). Each age and year in school is equally represented, similar to the general 12-17 population, and the average age of respondents is about 15 years. Teen girls are somewhat overrepresented (60%) compared to the general population (approximately 50%), but we expected that teen girls would be more interested than teen boys in completing a survey about shopping malls. Respondents reside in all regions of the country, although the Mountain and Pacific regions were slightly underrepresented. Fifty-five percent live within 15 minutes of an enclosed shopping mall; 100% live within one hour of a mall.

Sixty-three percent of the teens visit a mall less than once a week, while 30% visit a mall 1-2 times a week. They stay at the mall about three hours per visit and spend an average of $69; however the variability around these means is considerable, as indicated by the high standard deviations reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Sample profile.

Characteristic	Sample	
Gender	40% Male; 60% Female	
Age	91% between 12-17; mean age = 14.8 years	
Year in School	7th Grade: 20%	10th grade: 16%
	8th Grade: 20%	11th grade: 13%
	9th Grade: 14%	12th grade: 10%
Region	New England: 5%	North Central: 28%
	Middle Atlantic: 16%	Mountain: 6%
	South Atlantic: 17%	Pacific: 12%
	South Central: 16%	
Distance Live from Mall	55% within 15 minutes or less	
	100% within 60 minutes or less	
# of Mall Visits per Week (99% do not work at the mall presently)	63% less than once a week	
	30% 1-2 times a week	
	6% 3-4 times a week	
	1% 5 times a week or more	
Hours at Mall per Visit	Average = 2.78 hours (s.d. = 2.35)	
$ Spent per Mall Visit (26% pay for own purchases; 26% parents pay; 48% parents or teen pay)	Average = $69 (s.d. = $179)	

Analysis of Conjoint Data using Logit and Hierarchical Bayes

Multinomial logit (MNL) and Hierarchical Bayes (HB) statistical techniques were used to estimate individual part worth utilities from the choice data. Logit has traditionally been used to analyze choice-based conjoint data because the form of the dependent and independent variables is categorical, and because its structure mimics the non-linear nature of the impact of marketing effects on choice. Like multiple regression and discriminant analysis, logit seeks "weights" for attribute levels (or for combinations of them, if interactions are included in addition to main effects) that maximize the likelihood of the observed pattern of respondent choices, using probabilities derived from these weights. These weights are analogous to "preference scores" or "part-worth utilities" in conjoint analysis, and are computed so that when the weights corresponding to the attribute levels in each concept are added up, the sums for each concept are related to respondents' choices among concepts (see Ben-Akiva et al., 1985; Johnson and Orme, 2003). This type of aggregate data analysis, however, may obscure important aspects of the data because it precludes a consideration of differences in choice behavior and preferences among market segments or individuals. HB eliminates this problem by allowing us to estimate part-worths at the individual level, using a model based on Bayesian analysis and a Monte Carlo Markov chain algorithm.

Research Objective #1: Relative Attribute and Attribute Level Importances

The relative importance of each product attribute is displayed in Table 6. All of the attributes have a statistically significant influence on mall choice. The most important attributes in teens' choice of a mall to frequent are how friendly and welcoming the mall is to teens and whether the mall contains "cool" stores. The number of different kinds (e.g., clothes, shoes, music) of stores is the third most important mall attribute, followed closely by the number of different entertainment options (e.g., movie theaters, live music shows). The number of sports/play options (e.g., theme or skateboard park) and mall design/interior décor have approximately equal but less important influences on mall choice. Finally, whether or not the mall includes educational activities like an interactive science museum or cultural events is three times less important in mall choice than whether the mall is a teen friendly hangout or has cool stores. Males and females differ somewhat in the relative importance they assign to these mall attributes: teen boys consider the number of sports/play and entertainment options to be significantly more important, and whether the mall is 'teen friendly' and has 'cool' stores less important than teen girls. The Regional differences in relative attribute importance were minimal.

Table 6. Relative attribute importances derived from Hierarchical Bayes estimation of utilities[1].

Mall Attribute	Relative Importance[1]	Within Attribute χ^2 (df = 2)
Teen Friendliness (mall seen as teen friendly place)	20.92	531.58 (p < .01)
# of Cool Mall Stores	20.37	483.92 (p < .01)
# of Different Kinds of Mall Stores	15.52	280.29 (p < .01)
# of Entertainment Options	13.88	173.45 (p < .01)
# of Sports/Play Options	10.14	93.11 (p < .01)
Mall Design (interior décor, lighting, etc.)	9.46	79.58 (p < .01)

[1] The relative importance of each attribute reflects how large an influence a product attribute has on choice of a shopping mall.   Importance weights are calculated by computing the difference between the largest and smallest part worth for each respondent for each attribute, summing the differences, and normalizing to 100.   Attribute importances are ratio data.   One attribute is deleted from this table (Mall Description, a dummy attribute), so that the importance weights do not add up to exactly 100.

Research Objective #2: "Ideal" Shopping Mall Configuration

Preferences for particular attribute levels, ranked according to the size of their effects or average utility values, are displayed in Table 7. Consistent with theories of utility maximization and consumer rationality, the most preferred or "ideal" mall (i.e., the one with the greatest overall utility), across all respondents, is one that has "lots of" everything (cool stores, entertainment options, etc.), is a good place to hang out with friends, and very attractively designed.

Table 7. Ranking of attribute level preferences by average utility[1] (derived from HB estimation).

Rank	Teen Friendliness	Cool Stores	Different Stores	Entertainment Options	Sports/Play Options	Mall Design	Educational Options
1	Good (65.79)	Lots (72.61)	Lots (57.89)	Lots (47.19)	Lots (30.32)	Very Attractive (26.36)	Lots (14.1)
2	Just O.K. (25.97)	Some (11.4)	Some (0.49)	Some (7.24)	Some (4.95)	Just O.K. (7.82)	Some (6.08)
3	Poor (-91.75)	Hardly Any (-84.01)	Hardly Any (-58.38)	Hardly Any (-54.42)	Hardly Any (-35.28)	Unattractive (-34.18)	Hardly Any (-20.18)

[1]   These utilities are interval data. Within each attribute, utilities sum to zero. A negative part-worth for a level does not indicate that this level is unattractive, but that it is less preferred than a level with a positive number. A main effects model was used to generate the utilities presented here, because this type of effects coding (zero-centered diffs) with a main effects model allows us to assess the relative attractiveness of a concept by adding up the effects (or utilities) for its components. All effects are significantly different from 0 and from each other.

Research Objective #3: Trade-offs Among Mall Attributes and Attribute Levels

A market simulator was used to convert the raw conjoint data (individual part-worths from HB estimation) into simulated market choices (shares of preferences) for different mall "products." Share of preference is defined as what percent of the respondents would prefer or choose each mall, given a specified set of different mall "products." The randomized first choice (RFC) simulation method (Huber et al., 1999) was used to estimate shares of preference. It assumes the respondent will choose that product with the highest overall utility ("first choice rule"), but it adds unique random error to the utilities in order to recognize the fact that individuals do not invariably choose the product that optimizes their utility. Each respondent is sampled many times to stabilize the share estimates (9,000 times in this study). RFC also corrects for product similarity due to correlated sums of errors among products defined on many of the same attributes. The appropriateness of this method for the present study was validated with one holdout (fixed) task; RFC correctly estimated actual choice or preference within one percentage point.

Status Quo Mall versus an Experiential Mall

The typical enclosed mall in the U.S. has limited experiential consumption options (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), and may be described by the following attribute levels: (1) some different kinds of stores, some of which are considered cool, (2) hardly any entertainment options other than a movie theater, (3) hardly any sports/play or educational activities, and (4) "just O.K." in terms of mall design and as a place to hang out with friends. Findings from a market simulation that compares shares of preference for this status quo mall with two malls with different levels of experiential consumption characteristics (moderate, high) can be found in Table 8. Other attributes (teen friendliness, # of cool stores, # of different stores, and mall design) were held constant.

Overall, teens are 19 times more likely to choose to go to a mall with lots of experiential characteristics (skateboard and theme parks, cultural and live music events, theaters, etc.) than to go to the typical status quo mall with a movie theater (76% versus 4%, respectively), everything else being equal. As teens age, the preference for such characteristics decreases slightly, from 78% of teens 14 and under to 72% of teens 17 and over, but a mall with lots of experiential activities, if available within one hour of home, will still be their first choice. This preference structure holds true for both teen boys and girls.

Table 8. Share of preference for status quo versus two levels of experiential malls.

Mall Attributes	Mall #1 Status Quo (Low Experiential)	Mall #2 Moderate Experiential	Mall #3 High Experiential
Teen Friendliness (mall seen as teen friendly place)	Just O.K.	Just O.K.	Just O.K.
# of Cool Mall Stores	Some	Some	Some
# of Different Kinds of Mall Stores	Some	Some	Some
# of Entertainment Options	Hardly Any	Some	Lots
# of Sports/Play Options	Hardly Any	Some	Lots
# of Educational Options	Hardly Any	Some	Lots
Mall Design (interior décor, lighting, etc.)	Just O.K.	Just O.K.	Just O.K.
Share of Preference:			
Overall (n=918):	4%	20%	76%
Teens ages 14 & younger (n=419):	3%	19%	78%
Teens ages 15-16 (n=288):	4%	19%	77%
Teens ages 17 & over (n=211):	5%	23%	72%

Note: Share of Preference represents that percent of the respondents who would prefer or choose each mall "product," assuming these are the only three choices available. Shares of preference are ratio data.

Teen Friendly "Cool" Mall versus one with Many Stores and Experiential Options

Table 9 presents the shares of preference for teen girls versus boys for two hypothetical malls – one with lots of cool stores that is also a good place to hang out with friends versus one that has lots of experiential activity options (entertainment, sports/play or educational). The data indicate that, when trade-offs among these mall attribute levels must be made, boys and girls value different mall characteristics. Sixty four percent of teen boys prefer a mall that has lots of stores and experiential activity options, even if it is a poor place to hang out with friends and very few of the stores are considered "cool." Sixty percent of the girls, on the other hand, prefer a mall that has cool stores and is a good place to hang out with friends, even if there are very few experiential consumption alternatives. Further analysis indicates that girls' preference for a teen friendly mall with cool stores does not change as a function of age, while boys' preference for a mall with these characteristics increases as they age and become more interested in the opposite sex (from 33% of boys 12-14 to 39% of boys 15 and older).

Table 9. Share of preference for teen boys versus teen girls for two hypothetical mall "products."

Mall Attributes	Mall #1: Many Stores and Activities	Mall #2: Cool and Friendly
Teen Friendliness (mall seen as teen friendly place)	Poor	Good
# of Cool Mall Stores	Hardly Any	Lots
# of Different Kinds of Mall Stores	Lots	Hardly Any
# of Entertainment Options	Lots	Hardly Any
# of Sports/Play Options	Lots	Hardly Any
# of Educational Options	Lots	Hardly Any
Mall Design (interior décor, lighting, etc.)	Very Attractive	Very Attractive.
Share of Preference		
Overall (*n*=918):	49%	51%
Boys (*n*=366)	64%	36%
Girls (*n*=552)	40%	60%

Note: Share of Preference represents that percent of the respondents who would prefer or choose each mall "product", assuming these are the only two choices available. Shares of preference are ratio data.

Teen Friendliness versus "Cool" Stores

Since these two mall attributes were considered the most important determinants of mall choice by all respondents, an assessment of the trade-off teens would make between these two characteristics may have implications for mall configurations. In this market simulation, two hypothetical malls are specified: (1) a teen friendly mall with few cool stores and (2) a teen unfriendly mall with lots of cool stores. Levels of the remaining attributes were held constant at moderate/intermediate levels. Overall shares of preference for these two mall products, presented in Table 10, are about the same: 50% of respondents prefer the 'teen friendly' mall and 50% prefer the 'cool stores' mall. These aggregate shares obscure important subgroup differences, however, because of the statistically significant Teen Friendly Cool Stores interaction effect (χ^2 = 42.7, $p < .01$, $df = 2$).

While the findings for teen girls more or less mirror the aggregate findings, with just a slight preference for cool stores over a teen friendly mall regardless of age, mall preferences for teen boys change as they grow older. Younger boys (14 and younger) have a strong preference for a teen friendly mall, compared to one with cool stores (62% versus 38%, respectively). As they grow older, however, the coolness level of

Table 10, Panel A. Attribute levels for a teen friendly mall versus a cool stores mall.

Mall Attributes	Mall #1 Very Teen Friendly (good place to hang out w/friends)	Mall #2: Lots of Cool Stores
Teen Friendliness (mall seen as teen friendly place)	Good	Poor
# of Cool Mall Stores	Hardly any	Lots
# of Different Kinds of Mall Stores	Some	Some
# of Entertainment Options	Some	Some
# of Sports/Play Options	Some	Some
# of Educational Options	Some	Some
Mall Design (interior décor, lighting, etc.)	Just O.K.	Just O.K.

Table 10, Panel B. Shares of preference for a teen friendly mall versus a cool stores mall.

Share of Preferences		Mall #1: Very Teen Friendly (good place to hang out w/friends)	Mall #2: Lost of Cool Stores
Overall	(n=918)	51%	49%
Boys 14 and under	(n=169)	62%	38%
15-16	(n=129)	56%	44%
17 and older	(n=68)	48%	52%
Girls 14 and under	(n=250)	49%	51%
15-16	(n=159)	44%	56%
17 and over	(n=143)	47%	53%

the stores becomes more important, so that teen boys 17 and older develop a preference structure similar to that of teen girls, with slightly more than half of them preferring a mall with cool stores even if it is not a particularly friendly place to hangout.   This is consistent with expectations, since as teens grow older they are more likely to act as young adults and are thus less subject to discrimination by mall employees; as a consequence, there is less need to be concerned about whether a mall is welcoming to teens.

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

Importance of "Cool" Stores in Mall Choice

Our findings confirm the importance that teens place on the rather uncontrollable (from a mall's perspective) and changeable perception of "coolness" when choosing a mall to frequent -- i.e., how trendy, unique, up-to-date, contemporary, and fashionable the mall stores are.   Which stores do teens consider "cool?" Table 11 lists the stores by name, according to the percentage of respondents that checked each one as "cool"

Table 11. Store "brands" considered cool.

Checked by 40-65% of Respondents	Checked by 30-39% of Respondents	Checked by 20-29% of Respondents	Checked by 10-19% of Respondents
Abercrombie (42%)	Aeropostale (33%)	Adidas (27%)	Athletic Warehouse (14%)
American Eagle (42%)	Bed Bath & Beyond (33%)	Athletes Foot (24%)	Bloomingdale's (13%)
Barnes & Noble (45%)	Ben & Jerry's (38%)	Auntie Anne's (22%)	Buckle (13%)
Baskin-Robbins (46%)	Build-a-Bear Workshop (30%)	Banana Republic (29%)	Champs Sport (19%)
Bath & Body Works (52%)	Cheesecake Factory (33%)	Body Shop (23%)	Coach (11%)
Best Buy (55%)	EB Games (35%)	Borders (28%)	Coca Cola Red Lounge (10%)
Burger King (44%)	Gameworks (32%)	DKNY (23%)	Dave & Busters (17%)
Claires (40%)	Hot Topic (39%)	Express (20%)	dELiAs (14%)
Foot Locker (47%)	JC Penny (37%)	Finish Line (21%)	Diesel (11%)
Gap (51%)	The Limited (30%)	Gadzooks (21%)	Forever 21 (17%)
McDonald's (52%)	Mrs. Field's Cookies (38%)	Guess? (28%)	Godiva (16%)
Old Navy (64%)	Sam Goody (38%)	Levi's Store (28%)	Hollister (16%)
Spencer Gifts (50%)	Tommy Hilfiger (38%)	Macy's (20%)	J Crew (16%)
Starbucks (42%)	Tower Records (32%)	Niketown (22%)	Nautica (18%)
Taco Bell (53%)		Pacific Sunwear (28%)	Nordstrom (14%)
Target (49%)		Polo/Ralph Lauren (23%)	NY&Co. (13%)
Victoria's Secret (44%)		Rainforest Café (28%)	Red Robin (12%)
Walmart (46%)		Sharper Image (24%)	Suncoast (18%)
Wendy's (42%)		Sunglasses Hut (22%)	Swatch (10%)
		Wet Seal (22%)	Urban Outfitters (17%)
			Van's Skate Park (15%)
			Virgin Megastore (14%)
			Wicks 'n' Sticks (13%)

from a list of 98 stores included in the questionnaire. Similarly, Table 12 ranks the types of stores that teens consider cool according to what percentage of respondents checked each type from a list provided.

Interestingly, while 81% of respondents feel that CD and music stores are generally cool, none of the top 20 store "brands" noted by respondents included this type of store. Instead, teens' favorite stores include clothing stores (e.g., Old Navy, The Gap), fast food outlets (e.g, Taco Bell, MacDonald's), discount stores (Target, Wal-Mart), and accessory/gift stores/lingerie stores (e.g., Claires, Spencer Gifts, Victoria's Secret). Stores that feature a coffee shop (for "hanging out in") are also popular (e.g., Starbucks, Barnes & Noble).

Table 12. Store types considered cool (ranked by % of respondents who chose each type as cool).

CD and Music Stores	81%
Food Courts	64%
Electronic Stores	56%
Book Stores	44%
Video Rental Stores	43%
Gift Stores	43%
Sporting Goods Stores	40%
Pet and Pet Supply Stores	38%
Cell Phone Stores	37%
Lingerie Stores	29%
Sunglass Shops	27%
Card and Stationary Stores	22%
Clothing Shops	68%
Shoe Stores	60%
Makeup and Bath/Beauty Stores	48%
Sit-Down Restaurants	43%
Discount Stores	43%
Department Stores	43%
Toy Stores	39%
Jewelry Stores	38%
Coffee Shops	33%
Swimwear Shops	28%
Prom Dress Stores	26%
Crafts/Fabric Stores	20%

While Table 11 offers a list of stores currently considered cool, there is a high probability that many of these stores would not appear on this list if the study was replicated in 2006. Additionally, the results indicated in Table 11 may be skewed by the national/regional and intensity of geographic distribution of many of the store "brands".

A single-minded focus on having the "right" mix of stores is unlikely to provide a mall with the long term competitive advantage it needs to win the teen market. Indeed, the mix of "cool stores" that meets the needs of the teen market is constantly changing with implications for malls in their leasing agendas. The presence of some stores that are not conventionally in malls also has implications for mall managers. The teens themselves contributed Target and Wal-Mart as desirable stores for malls. This flies in the face of conventional discounters on stand alone, "lower rent" sites and again has implications for mall managers. The popularity of Starbucks in Barnes and Noble stores also has implications for malls to think "outside the box" of traditional food court arrangements with respect to places to sit and talk and eat.

Table 13. Teens' suggestions for making malls more appealing.

Improve Safety and Security
…for themselves and to appease parents
Harassment by security guards was frequently mentioned
Provide lockers for backpacks, skateboards, etc.
Provide bike rack
Improve Parking/Pick-up Services
Provide designated place for parents to pick-up/drop off teens
Better lighting in the parking lot
Pick-up and drop off service provided by mall
Improve Mall Services
More bathrooms and ATM machines
Stay open later; no curfew
Frequent shopper card good for all mall stores
Junior/teen discount days; no sales tax weeks; lower prices in general
Mall stores online so can check prices/sales before go
Customer service center where can obtain a list of current sales in mall stores, discount coupons, activity schedule
Place for parents to hang out when teens are shopping
People movers, electric cars, tram – something to get around big malls
Free concerts, live music on weekend evenings so underage teens have a place to hang out w/o their parents that is still safe
Take away those center aisle kiosks – salespeople are too pushy and make it hard to navigate mall walkways

Table 13. (continued)

Create Teen Area for "hanging out"
Provide a safe place for teens to hang out without getting harassed and/or asked to leave
Separate from parents; "teens-only" area
Starbuck's type coffee shop with internet access and games Food court wth more comfortable cha More sit-down restaurants Areas with couches and comfortable seating, board/card gams, interactive video games, library with free internet access
Improve Mall Design and Layout
Widen walkways so don't have to fight crowds
Flowers, trees, water fountains, bright, cheerful
Play popular music or have a jukebox where teens can choose music
Sitting areas with couches and comfortable chairs
Big screen TV in food court
Circular design with food court/restaurants in the middle and stores around the outside – too confusing to have T designs, etc.
Experiential Activities and Store Types for Teens
Bookstore; Internet café; Dollar Store and other thrift shops; Pet shop
Indoor pool and water park; Skateboard park; Roller coaster; Virtual Reality Theme Park
Zoo; Museum; Library; Movie Theater
Paintball; Batting cage; Mechanical Bull; Rock Climbing; more male friendly activities
Fitness center; Indoor soccer field that turns into a dance floor at night
Live performance of music, jam sessions, plays – raised stage area

Importance of "Teen Friendliness" in Mall Choice

Fortunately, the somewhat more controllable perception of how "teen friendly" a mall is, i.e., how comfortable and secure teens feel hanging out there with their friends, is also a key determinant of mall choice. Malls and retailers may need to rethink some of their current policies regarding teens (e.g., curfews) and consider several design changes (e.g., lounge areas) if they wish to continue to attract the teen market. Many teens are avoiding malls and are instead gravitating toward rejuvenated downtown areas or neighborhood Starbuck's where they feel more welcomed.

The teen respondents in this study have many suggestions for making malls more teen friendly (Table 13). A significant number of respondents perceive a need for malls to provide a safe, comfortable area, separate from parents, for teens to "hang out" without getting harassed and/or asked to leave by mall/store employees. They have some creative ideas about services that malls could offer to attract teens: frequent shopper cards, pick-up and drop off services, a web site where they could check for activities

and sales before they come, etc. Many of the mall activities respondents suggest fall into one of the four experience realms as defined by Pine and Gilmore (1999) and shown in Figure 1: museums, skateboard parks, live music and theater performances, fitness centers, art classes, batting cages, paintball, etc. Of course, these experiential opportunities are offered currently by some malls, but the research indicates that teens feel a real need for more than is available to most of them.

Need for the Development of a Comprehensive Experiential Strategy

As stated earlier, our conjoint findings indicate that teens are almost 20 times more likely to choose to go to a mall with many experiential characteristics (skateboard and theme parks, cultural and live music events, theaters, etc.; see Figure 1) than to go to the typical status quo mall with a movie theater and a food court.   While entertain-ment (e.g. movies, watching a live performance) and escapist (skateboard park, sports activities) experiences were most preferred, the most engaging experiences would no doubt encompass aspects from all four of the experience realms depicted in Figure 1: escapist, entertainment, esthetic and educational (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

Malls are in a unique position to provide a customer experience environment compared to stand alone retailers, strip centers and other shopping venues because of their enclosed nature. Malls, which have traditionally been unable to compete on the basis of price with big box and discount retailers, may enjoy a competitive advantage as an "experience rich" alternative, particularly with teens who seek out such experiences. The nature of the experiences offered and the manner in which those experiences are themed (Koojiman, 2002) may also help to define the mall as a personality, a brand that can then be promoted as a whole.

A final note of caution here: the objective is to encourage teens to come to the mall and engage in recreational shopping, spending more time and more money while they are there.   Therefore, the stores themselves need to become the entertainment and experience venue, or the mall experiences need to lead or relate to shopping, and not detract from it. If teens come to a mall for entertainment, for instance, to hear a live band play in the food court, and then fail to go into the stores, the outcome may be higher mall attendance, but fewer sales dollars generated. Mall owners and managers need to be looking for or helping to develop retailers who understand the experiential needs of the teen shopper at the mall as well as how to satisfy the experiential needs of the teen shopper. Given the growth in size of the teen market and the fact that they are tomorrow's most lucrative target market for malls (18-34 year olds), it is in the interests of mall stakeholders to convert teens into satisfied and loyal mall customers.

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