

SHOPPING 24 HOURS A DAY: *A Consumer Need or a Losing Strategy?*

Carol Felker Kaufman,

Associate Professor of Marketing, Rutgers University, School of Business,
Camden, NJ

Paul M. Lane,

Associate Professor of Marketing, Haworth College of Business, Western
Michigan University, Grand Rapids, MI

Introduction to Issues and Problems

Time is thought to be the currency of the '90s and beyond. Frequent reports of "time-compressed consumers," "role-overloaded shoppers," "24-hour shopping," and "checkout in the fast lane," all suggest that both shoppers and retailers are attempting to make shopping times fit the busy and demanding lifestyles of today's consumers. However, observations of frustrated shoppers, empty stores, and "ghost-town" shopping centers suggest that such a match is not happening. Our research addressed this problem through developing a set of research methods designed to uncover shopping schedule problems. In addition, possible adjustments are suggested which return profits to store and center alike.

Shopping centers face increasing amounts of time-based competition, from shoppers' work schedules, responsibilities to their families, and desire for leisure time. People today work round the clock, are juggling careers and family, and often have to squeeze shopping somewhere into their days, between everything else. Shopping centers maintain standard schedules, which seem to be related to the "Leave It to Beaver" household of the '50s, when shopping could be done in a planned, routine fashion. However, consumers of the '90s operate on a 24-hour schedule, and often admit to shopping in a very haphazard way, filling in when they need things, on their way home from other activities.

Since many traditional store schedules are not meeting their around-the-clock needs, consumers are increasingly turning to schedule-independent retail methods, such as telephone ordering, self-paced catalogs, television-based home shopping networks, and interactive computer shopping. These alternatives are "open" and available when consumers

have time to shop, whether before work, after work, or in the wee hours of the morning. Shopping center planners must address this growing "time discrepancy" in order to maintain their competitive edge.

Shopping centers generally have some variable-hour retailers which also differ from the overall center schedule, such as restaurants, bakeries, medical services, movies, and other entertainment. The popularity of automated teller machines suggests that consumers often do not operate on conventional "banker's hours," and welcome the opportunity to obtain cash at all hours of the day. Retail offerings which deviate from the standard 9 or 10 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m. have achieved substantial acceptance, with 24-hour pharmacies and supermarkets becoming more widespread in response to consumer demand.

This growing response among today's retailers must be done with caution, however. The implementation of 24-hour shopping does not automatically mean additional sales dollars if shoppers are not willing to shop at these times. While some stores, such as Meijers in Michigan, have found this to be a workable, profitable strategy, others find that their needed volume of consumers simply has not materialized, and instead they have lost money on extra employees and operating costs.

Even within these more expansive time schedules, however, there is room for more fine-tuning. For example, 24-hour supermarkets frequently have specialty areas such as delis, pharmacies, and photofinishing departments which close at 9 or 10 p.m. Frustrated shoppers have been observed on many occasions who arrive at the supermarket after work to find that they can not purchase many needed items from the departments that are open. Clearly, the retailers have created an expectation of shopping for all their products around the clock, rather than a part of their assortment.

Society is changing today, with everyone's busy schedules and commitments. Many people are shopping today as well, from housewives, to husbands, to children, and employed parents. Given these conditions, it is important to shopping center managers to understand how people fit shopping into their daily schedules, and whether store and department hours really meet their needs. A hypothesis for retail analysts of the '90s is that time is going to play an increasing role in consumers' decisions of where and when to shop.

Our basic premise in time research has been that people, stores, and organizations all have unique, reportable preferences and patterns for using and scheduling time. The shoppers and retailers in this study have clearly demonstrated this. Further, it is apparent that management does not know their customers as an aggregate group as well as they may think they do.

Our study, *Shopping 24 Hours a Day*, found that shoppers and retailers have contrasting ideas regarding some shopping hour preferences.

Retailers clearly felt that the majority of their customers did not experience conflict with shopping schedules, while the shoppers reported just the opposite, as they experience conflict on a frequent basis when shopping at those very centers. Retailers felt that their customers would not shop if both earlier and later hours were implemented, yet some shoppers indicated that such hours would be preferred. The shoppers indicated they would go elsewhere or seek alternative methods of shopping when an errand could not be completed; the retailers, however, expected that their customers would return to their stores to complete the sale. Our methods were designed to capture discrepancies of this sort, both through interviews with retailers and their customers, as well as through detailed observation of the actual "culture" of several selected shopping centers.

An Exploration of 24 Hours a Day.

The project is set up around three major sections and a group of six supportive appendices. The major areas are:

- Methods
- Findings
- Implications

The **Methods** section provides a close examination of the complexity of the research methods employed, including the focus groups, the anthropological approach, and the results of the nearly six hundred shopper and retailer interviews.

The **Findings** section provides 36 exhibits, and explanations of what the authors consider to be the highlights of the studies.

The **Implications** section outlines the researchers suggestions of what these results may mean to management in retail development, shopping center management, store management, chain management, and to shopping center associations.

Methods

This section is divided into four phases moving from the qualitative to the analysis of the quantitative data. Phase One of the process is extensive qualitative work conducted at the East Coast location. This was followed by a complex process of selection of community shopping centers, development of a workable instrument, and administering a matched sam-

ple to retailers and shoppers, known as Phase Two. Phase Three began at the completion of the collection of the surveys and is the job of coding, cleaning, and processing the data. The next set of tasks are focused on matching the retailer and the shopper databases, comprising Phase Four. Thus there are four phases: one, the qualitative work; two, the sampling and collection; three, the coding and processing; and four, matching the retailer and the shopper data.

■ Phase One: Letting the Shoppers Talk

A good way to start any research into a new area, such as a fresh look at shopping times, is to let the customer or shoppers talk. In this study, the research process was started by going to the shoppers with an open-ended format, to attempt to learn as much as possible about any problems which they have encountered in scheduling their shopping, or with shopping times.

Focus Groups

Ninety-two people representing a wide demographic mix participated in focus groups; their characteristics are shown in **Exhibit 1: Focus Group Demographics**. There was a wide span of ages within the sample, ranging from the youngest at 20 years to the eldest, at 78 years, with an average age of 39 years. The sample was approximately half male (43) and half female (49). The majority of the sample reported being employed, with only 18% not working. Numerous income levels were also found in the sample, ranging from under \$10,000 all the way through over \$200,000. The average reported income fell in the range from \$50,000 to \$69,999.

The shoppers were involved in focus groups on the topic of shopping time. The idea was to encourage an open discussion among a wide variety of shoppers, of various ages, income levels, and genders. The topics of discussion ranged from reasons for selecting certain shopping hours, to shopping conflicts, through store hour modifications. This process was achieved through using the well-trained moderators available from an undergraduate class at Rutgers University during Summer 1993. The students' extensive training involved participating in different roles in a practice focus group; developing focus group scripts, warmups, and participant information sheets; selecting focus group members, and much more. The goal was to achieve well-trained and prepared moderators capable of focusing the participants on the topic, while letting the shoppers talk.

Exhibit 1:

Focus Group Demographics		
Total	92	
Age		
20-34	47	51%
35-49	21	23%
50-64	17	18%
65+	7	8%
Gender		
Male	43	47%
Female	49	53%
Income		
<10K	1	1%
10-29.9K	11	12%
30-49.9K	23	25%
50-69.9K	22	24%
70-89.9K	19	21%
90-149.9K	7	8%
150-199.9K	4	4%
200K+	2	2%
Employed		
Yes	75	82%
No	17	18%

Phase One involved the identification of problems which consumers face with retail shopping hours, why they exist, and what consumers propose as actual solutions. Thirteen focus groups were conducted with shoppers in the Southern New Jersey area. While time is a key issue, we realize that we are often unaware of what people are really experiencing with their time. While popular press stereotypes the harried shopper, conflicts are occurring with fitting shopping into the day. Our goal was to hear it from the people, in their own words, as they accounted for their own problems as they perceived them.

When the focus group summaries were analyzed, several problem areas were identified. The most frequently-reported problems state that stores are closed when consumers want to shop and that consumers have conflicts with existing store hours. In addition, consumers have trouble identifying individual stores' hours in specific shopping centers. Another predominant issue centered on concern with safe parking facilities, underscoring a more general concern that stores need increased security at night. Crowds, heavy traffic, inadequate public transportation, and in-

adequate sales help also were mentioned. Finally, consumers are concerned that they must drive to numerous locations to accomplish their shopping goals.

Customer Explanations for Shopping Time Problems

After identifying problems that consumers experience with shopping times, the participants were asked to suggest reasons they feel contribute to those problems. The most-frequently mentioned reason simply stated that customers are often busy during store hours, with obligations, such as employment, that make it difficult to shop when stores are open. Consumers felt that store hours did not match their needs, and that hours were chosen for the store's convenience, rather than that of the shopper. Participants also argued that shopping center stores do not agree upon hours of operation nor do they adhere to posted hours, in effect wasting the time of consumers who have misinterpreted schedules.

Solutions from the Shoppers' Points of View

Finally, the participants were given the opportunity to suggest possible solutions which, in their opinion, provided a better match of shopping hours and consumer needs. The most popular response suggested that stores should be open later at night, while many groups argued in favor of early morning hours as well, and longer hours on Sundays. Many respondents said that hours of operation should be determined by customer preference, rather than retail preference alone, with a few recommending that stores should open early, close in afternoon, and re-open at night. Additional remarks suggested that similar stores should be grouped together, more employees should be hired, and stores should provide transportation.

Of course, the challenge occurs in separating consumers' "wish lists" from what would be their actual behaviors. It is of little value to determine that shoppers "wish" for certain schedules, when in actuality they would never really shop at those times. Instead, viable shopping modifications have to be identified, if they do exist, in terms of actual shopper behaviors, which also have potential to increase dollar volume, shopper satisfaction, and store profitability, while eliminating unnecessary hours of operation, without extending hours beyond the modifications which shoppers would actually desire.

■ Phase 2: Matching the Retailer and the Shopper Samples

Based on the results of Phase One, several industry contacts were consulted in Summer 1993 for assistance in the development of methods for Phase Two. All three of the contacts discussed here were made as a direct result of being International Council of Shopping Centers researchers. This was extremely helpful to advancing the research. In a meeting in his office, Mr. John Shanley, of Woolworth Corporation, gave recommendations for shopping center selection and the interview process. Mr. David Daleiden of Weingarten Realty Investors gave important advice over the phone. Nancy Veatch of the National Research Bureau provided important insights in a meeting in her office in Chicago.

The challenge was to develop a study in which we could track consumers' actual behaviors in the specific shopping centers. One which would let us "see" their problems, "hear" their answers, and observe what the retailers were really doing. Were the customers actually in the centers during the hours they suggest? Were they really waiting for stores to open? Were stores not opening on time? Were they closing too early? Were customers really being told to "stop shopping, pay, and leave" at a time set by the retailer to begin closeout for the day? Was there really such a mismatch between shoppers' preferences and retail schedules, as the focus group participants seemed to suggest?

The matched sample was also very important in understanding how well retailers understood their customers. Knowing your customers is one of the basic tenets of marketing. A matched sample would allow the study of whether specific retail managers understood their own customers.

The matched sample in this case referred to several kinds of matches, involving both retailers, centers, and shoppers. Four primary matches can be identified:

1. Matched centers. First, we attempted to select centers whose store groupings, size, and market positioning were similarly identified as community centers. Such centers should "match" each other, in that each center was well-established in the community, drew a substantial portion of its shoppers from the surrounding area, and was not undergoing significant structural change, such as remodeling or store closings. The goal was to find an objective method of determining a match of the participating centers.
2. A match was sought between New Jersey and Michigan shopping centers. That is, center comparability was desired between states as well. Centers should not be so different that comparisons were not possible.

3. A match was sought of shopper and retailers information. In other words there was a real effort to have interviews and observations from actual customers of all retailers interviewed. Retail interviews and on-site observations were conducted first to build interviewer familiarity with center traffic and shopping patterns of the "regular" customers. Interviewers were required to work in groups, varying day of week and time of day, so that representative information could be gotten which was not tied to any specific type of shopper.
4. A match was sought in the way that the interviews were handled between New Jersey and Michigan. Comparable decision rules, respondent selection procedures, and interview methods were required.

Sampling - Selecting Matched Centers

Given that studies were conducted in both New Jersey and in Michigan, the need to establish a comparable sampling frame was addressed. In addition, the purpose of the study suggested that shopping centers must include a sufficient mix of retailers operating on varied time schedules. In consultation with Dr. Lane, David Daleiden recommended that shopping centers be examined which contain at a minimum, a supermarket, a pharmacy, and another anchor. He felt that such a screening built in the necessary time variability which is sought in Phase Two. During the time of these discussions, Dr. Lane also visited the Southern New Jersey area to investigate several types of shopping center sites. In particular, several of those studied in Phase One were examined.

The next step involved the selection of a sampling frame with well-defined characteristics in the Southern New Jersey and Grand Rapids, Michigan, trading areas. In particular, a nationwide listing with detailed shopping center composition was sought. After consultation with Susan Pistilli, International Council of Shopping Centers of Library Services, the 1993 Shopping Center Directory, published by the National Research Bureau, was identified as a resource for this study. She further recommended that Nancy D. Veatch, President of NRB, be contacted to discuss and select our criteria for sampling.

In September 1993, preliminary criteria were established based on these discussions. We made the initial decision to select community shopping centers, as listed in the NRB directory, which also had at least a supermarket, a pharmacy, and another anchor, plus several other stores. In addition, shopping centers were judged ineligible that were under construction or renovation, had an unusually-high level of vacancies, or were experiencing any other change which would be likely to affect shopping patterns. Moreover, the center must have a grouping of stores with a great

variety of store hour potential, such as video rental stores, movie theaters, banks, and so forth. However, there were a few unanswered questions about these choices.

In order to address those questions, we met with Nancy Veatch, of the National Research Bureau, in Chicago. Nancy explained the measures profiled in the database, and cautioned us about other potential biases in shopping center studies, such as proper identification of outparcels, correct designation of shopping center type, and comparability of measures across shopping centers.

The 1993 Shopping Center Directory, published by the National Research Bureau, was used as a sampling frame to select five shopping centers for this study. Based on recommendations from several industry experts, the decision was made to study community shopping centers, as listed in the NRB directory. These centers had at least a supermarket, a pharmacy, and another anchor, plus several other stores. The centers were also chosen so that scheduling variability in the actual retail stores would be maximized, and that duplicate store ownership would be minimized.

Matching New Jersey and Michigan

Using the above criteria, three representative centers were chosen in Southern New Jersey and two from the Grand Rapids area. These centers were in different trading areas, so that overlap of customers would be minimized, or possibly nonexistent. Drs. Kaufman and Lane examined the centers in Michigan for eligibility, and Dr. Kaufman confirmed the usefulness of the New Jersey sites. The centers were also chosen so that scheduling variability in the actual retail stores would be maximized, a wide variety of store types would be included, and duplicate store ownership would be minimized.

Matching Shopper Interviews to Center Retailers

A total of sixty stores were surveyed across the five shopping centers, with the majority of interviews conducted with management or store owners. A wide variety of stores are represented in the study, from nationwide and regional anchors and nonanchors, to local "mom and pop" single store operations. The assortment of stores in each center is thought to have captured the image and diversity which characterize each site.

Interviews with both retailers and with shoppers were completed at the same shopping centers. A goal was to establish a matched base of information, which enables both comparisons and contrasts to be drawn

among retailers and shoppers. This was important to the idea of investigating how well retailers know their shoppers and a key to understanding differences and similarities in shoppers' and retailers' perceptions of time scheduling issues.

Matching Interview Methodologies

Having designed matched samples of shopping centers in the two states, and planned for matches of retailers and shoppers, the challenges became how to match the actual collection of data across two very different classes at two different universities, in two different communities. These administrations were scheduled to allow for the following:

1. Adequate time for pretesting.
2. Time for student training and practice.
3. Minimizing research effects.
4. Completion before the impact of holiday shopping is felt.

Adequate Time for Pretesting

Because of the nature of the sampling that was occurring in two very different locations, Southern New Jersey and Western Michigan, it was necessary to pretest the survey in both locations. This was to reduce ambiguity and regional bias. Additionally the surveys needed to work for administrators who were advanced undergraduates in retailing and MBA's for whom this might be their first exposure. Finally, because the survey was to be administered in person in a shopping center setting, it was necessary to pretest to establish a reasonable length of time in administration.

Thus it was necessary to schedule a number of pretests at both locations in order to develop the final form that would be administered. As any researcher knows, this is not a perfect science but substantial improvements were made with each round of pretesting. The surveys moved from initial open-ended versions of questions, to a workable set of closed-end options, having obtained the input from both New Jersey and Michigan students, at several age levels.

Time for Student Training and Practice

Related to pretesting but a separate topic is the training and practicing by research assistants in the administration of the survey. Great efficiencies were gained through this method, as the average administration time for the first practice was 22 minutes, and after all rounds of pretest, practice,

and revision had been completed, the actual administration time in the field had been streamlined to an average of 8 to 10 minutes per survey.

In short, the student administrators spent class time discussing the survey and its administration, were given detailed instructions, and actually practiced in as realistic a situation as the researchers could construct. The students worked in roleplay dyads, with one acting as administrator and the other as respondent. They were required to stand for the duration of the interview, and indicate when they were confused, tired, irritated, and so forth, in order to capture the realities of the interview process in the field setting. This technique of practicing serves to improve the consistency of answers and reduce the time of administration in the actual survey.

Minimizing Research Effects: Center Observations, Retailer Interviews, and Shopper Interviews

The approach to each center was anthropological in nature. That is, it was designed to capture the rhythms, shopping patterns, retailer "gossip," store schedule interactions, and so forth, creating a complete set of data which mirrored the realities of each center as perceived by both retailers and shoppers. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to allow for time for shopping center observation, including tracing shoppers' order of stores patronized, shoppers waiting before stores opened, mass transit availability, understandability and accuracy of posted hours, checking on multiple aspects of disabled access and so forth, retailer interviews, and shopper interviews without creating problems for the center or for the research. This was made more complex by the necessity to accomplish all pretest, training, and actual on-site procedures during a single Fall semester, completing all research before changes due to holiday shopping schedules.

Completion before Holiday Shopping Impact

One of the problems the researchers faced was the desire to acquire good information getting a whole picture of the shopping center. Using the anthropological approach requires time to observe actual processes and repeated behaviors. However, the calendar hemmed in the process. It was a goal to collect all data before Thanksgiving, as it was felt that shopping during the Holiday season was probably very different for shoppers and retailers alike. Thus there was an attempt to do all data collection in October and November. All retailer surveys and observations were com-

pleted by October 28th; all consumer surveys were completed before Thanksgiving.

Data Collection Methods

There were a number of different methods used in collection of information for this study. The researchers not only wanted the matched surveys of retailers and shoppers but as much information as possible about the shopping center. This involves what has been called the anthropological approach. Because the situations at each shopping center were different, and the resources in Michigan and New Jersey were different, the methods for collection of some data were similar but not exactly the same. Some of the types of research collected included:

1. Videos of the shopping centers
2. Photographic records of the shopping centers
3. Detailed schematics, depicting all stores, parking, entrances and exits, lighting, signage
4. Posted hours of all the stores, and informal non-posted hours
5. Access to the centers (mass transit, disabled in and out of store mobility and assistance)
6. Vacancy records
7. Surveys of retailers
8. Surveys of shoppers
9. Sample advertisements, flyers, and other communications with customers
10. Non-store sites, such as mailboxes, donation boxes, ATMs, etc.
11. Availability of accurate telephone listings, answering machines, etc.

Retail Observations in the New Jersey Sample

Three groups of trained research assistants were assigned to the three New Jersey Centers. They were each assigned specific roles in identifying the patterns of operation and time use in the centers. Their tasks included the development of schematics of the center; accurate listings of changes, renovations, and vacancies; video and still photographic records of center and store-specific atmospherics, shopper pedestrian patterns, overall safety and ambiance; collections of communications media used; and a detailed overview of access, traffic patterns, and mass transit availabilities. Weekly observations were done so that changes were recorded and identified. In addition, each research assistant administered an in-depth interview with a specific retailer to whom they have been assigned, and also completed ten shopper surveys at a later time.

Retail Observations in the Michigan Sample

In Michigan the data was collected by three different collection groups. The shopper survey was done by trained students from a graduate class. The Retailer information was collected by a graduate research assistant, and the photographic record, posted hours, and schematic drawings, posted hours, access and vacancy rates were handled by another graduate assistant.

Consumer Survey Methods

A consumer survey was developed, using the focus group material as a foundation. It was pretested both in New Jersey and in Michigan, to eliminate ambiguities and regional bias. The survey was administered to a sample of shoppers intercepted at each designated shopping center. Shoppers were asked to report on their awareness of store and department hours and their satisfaction with them. Shoppers were interviewed at several different hours during the day; that is, shoppers were interviewed who regularly shop during morning, afternoon, evening, and late night hours.

Interviewers were instructed that shopper interviews should be conducted at varying times of day and days of the week, during October and November, 1993, up until one week before Thanksgiving. Care was taken that shoppers interviewed were regular shoppers of the center, to ensure representativeness of their answers. Of the 586 respondents, 328 were New Jersey shoppers and 258 were from Michigan. Sixty-three percent were female, the average age was 39.4 years, 58.4% were married, and approximately 43% had children under 18 living at home. Their average incomes were in the \$40,000 to \$49,000 range. Ninety percent had completed high school, with slightly over 30% having completed college. Approximately 83% reported some hours of employment, with an average of 33.6 hours per week. **Exhibit 2: Shopper Demographics** is a comparison of the Survey Respondents to National Figures.

■ Phase Three: Preparing the Data

Once the data collection had been completed using all the anthropological methods, the next phase focused on building this diverse collection of data into a complete, meaningful picture of the fabric of each center's daily operation, benefits, and problems. A two-state team of student researchers was recruited to assist Drs. Lane and Kaufman in the process.

Exhibit 2:



Shopper Demographics		
	Survey Respondents	National Figures
Average Age	39.4	34.1
Gender		
Male	37%	49%
Female	64%	51%
Average Income	\$39,370	\$30,056
Employed		
All hours	82%	65%
Over 35 hours	61%	51%
Education		
No H.S. Degree	4%	25%
H.S. Degree	24%	30%
Some College	29%	19%
College Degree	39%	27%
Number in Household		
1	15%	25%
2	29%	32%
3	19%	17%
4	21%	15%
5+	16%	11%
Living Arrangement		
Single	35%	38%
Married	59%	55%
Widowed	4%	7%
Other	2%	0%

Coding the Survey Data

A major task in preparing the retail data involved translating the surveys, which often included substantial open-ended responses, into a format which would allow the comparisons among and within centers, as well as between retailers and consumers.

Since much of the data was open-ended, coding decision rules were developed which maximized the interpretability of the data, while preserving the character of the samples of both retailers and consumers. For instance, it was important to verify that the majority of customers participating in the study were actually routine shoppers at the center where they were interviewed, had relevant perceptions and opinions, and had the potential to have actually experienced problems with their shopping schedules. In this instance, several questions were used to make the judgment that such shoppers were eligible for the sample. Questions such as frequency of shopping at that particular center, regularity of shopping there, and time to travel to the center were used.

Comparable decision rules were developed for use when processing the retail surveys. For instance, the retailers were asked to describe their customers. Some did so by indicating where the customers lived such as a given residential development, while others identified the towns or geographical areas from which their shoppers commuted. Still other retailers reported neighborhoods, zip codes, telephone exchanges, and so forth. They essentially responded in terms of their meaningful measures of customer identity and location, and what methods they might use to reach those customers. Again, the goal was to ensure that the customers were actually from the trading areas adjacent to the center, and also to identify any special groups, such as shoppers coming from retirement facilities.

Use of the Anthropological Data

Much of the information collected was able to serve as a very useful complement to the surveys. In fact, the multiple methods provided the opportunity to verify that actual unexpected data was really accurate. For instance, the consumer surveys indicated that a considerable proportion of shoppers at each center reported waiting in the shopping centers for the stores to open. We were curious to determine whether this was a substantial problem. Interestingly, the student videos and pictures provided a useful confirmation of such activity.

One of the assignments of the student photographers in each team was to go to the centers at different times of day, in varying weather conditions, on each day of the week. Two of the New Jersey centers which were videotaped captured multiple shots of shoppers approaching retailer outlets well before the scheduled opening times, with the shoppers waiting there in long lines, even though other stores in the center were open and presented available alternative places to wait or to shop. Such pictorial records provides strong evidence that shoppers did arrive at the centers long before certain stores opened.

Confidentiality of the Data

In conducting the study, anonymity had been promised each retailer and center management, as a condition of participation in this study. Thus, both the identities of the shopping centers and the actual store names are not used in this report. Along with meeting the agreement of anonymity, the purpose of the study was not to track any specific center or a particular retailer, but instead to capture patterns of shopping schedule issues reported by actual consumers within a set of well-defined centers.

Thus, while the identities of each center were provided to the Sponsor, the following set of code names are used throughout the report:

Twin City Center, New Jersey
 Lakeside Center, New Jersey
 Fashion Plaza, New Jersey
 River City Mall, Michigan
 Maple Village, Michigan

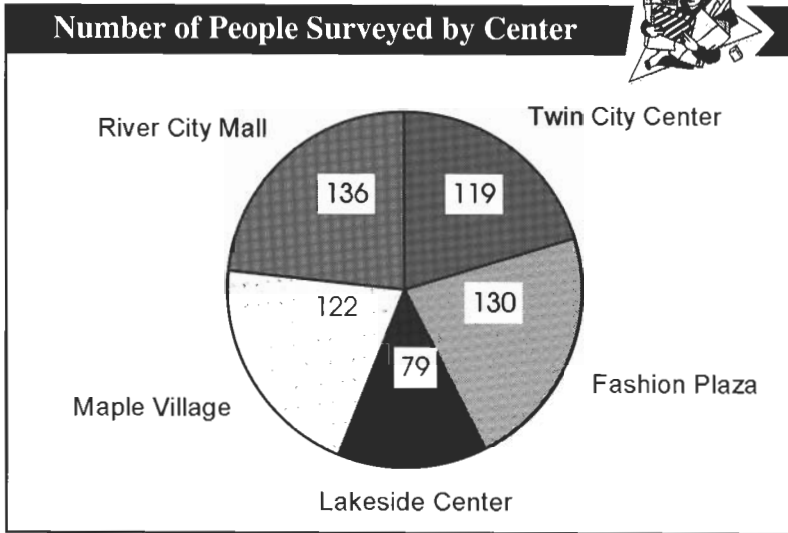
Exhibit 3: Number of People Surveyed by Center is a pie chart of the distribution of respondents per center.

Preserving the confidentiality of the retailers required the development of a workable “store-type” code. Twelve major categories were developed, which attempted to preserve the community center criteria of supermarket, anchor, and pharmacy, while also allowing for the diversity of stores which potentially relate to shopping hours and schedules. These major categories are:

Primary Store Type Classifications

1. Department stores/multi-assortment centers
2. Fashion apparel
3. Specialty stores
4. Groceries and non-prepared food
5. Fast food/takeout/restaurant
6. Home improvement/housewares
7. Price segment
8. Infrastructure (e.g. Post Office, gas station)
9. Entertainment
10. Drug/health/medical/dental
11. Services
12. Other (e.g. ATMs, catalog store)

The entire set of retail translation and coding was done by a graduate student in Michigan, who worked from detailed listings of store identities and types of merchandise. Approximately 100 different types

Exhibit 3:

of stores were recorded under the 12 major categories, so that the diversity of stores and matching of centers both within and between states could be verified.

Eliminating Bias in the Data

In order to better interpret any possible regional variations, coders in each state were used to process that state's shopper surveys, so that store-specific information would be clearly understood. Thus coders in New Jersey interpreted all the New Jersey interviews, and coders in Michigan interpreted the Michigan interviews. After the database was established, one individual, working with Dr. Kaufman, checked for consistency in coding and variations by individual coder, by center, and by state. No patterns were found which could introduce bias.

The data from the retailers and the consumers were first investigated to determine whether any significant patterns occurred in the responses which might bias the results. No such patterns were found, as the responses were well-dispersed.

A significant number of shoppers interviewed shopped at their respective center at least a few times a month. When the five centers were considered, the shoppers were found to have very similar patterns of behavior on their general shopping behavior. Shoppers at all centers reported comparable patterns of shopping on the spur of the moment and when they had a specific need to fill. Interestingly, the majority of shoppers at all five centers did not come to that center at a regular time, with

few reporting that they came at the same time every week. Similarly, few of the shoppers reported shopping at that center only on weekends.

As might be expected, however, some differences were found by center among the types of shopping schedules which were preferred and the types of shopping problems which were encountered. However, the patterns did not appear to be driven by any specific event, store, or special problem at any of the centers in particular, but instead were differences attributable to the consumers themselves.

Two areas of non-response must be noted. First, some of the retailers contacted were unable to participate as stipulated by their corporate management policy. Second, debriefing with the interviewers uncovered their concern that perhaps an important group of shoppers had not been interviewed. The interviewers both in Michigan and in New Jersey suggested that a possible pattern could be found in those persons who refused to be interviewed in the centers. When asked to describe such shoppers, the students suggested that these were persons who appeared to be in a hurry, or who had small children with them, or who just did not want to interrupt what they were doing.

Coding Efficiency

Other parts of the survey required the development of decision rules to maximize the respondents' meanings, while condensing the data into efficient formats. An example is found in the question regarding shoppers' reasons why they could not finish their intended shopping. The respondents were provided a list of multiple reasons, ranging from stock-outs to assortment problems, to wrong brand and wrong size problems. Embedded in the list were several problems associated with time and scheduling, such as "the store closed before I was finished." Our goal was to encourage the respondent to answer in their own terms and not to lead them to the time-related responses. However, in coding the data, our interest lay primarily in the scheduling problems, rather than the other issues which impede shopping completion. Thus the coders were instructed to process the information preserving the detail of the time-related responses, while grouping all other problems in a "non-time" related problem category.

■ Phase Four: Matching the Retailer and Shopper Databases

The entire retail and consumer databases have been processed at Rutgers University by a team of research assistants, together with Dr. Kaufman,

using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to investigate patterns in the data and to test the relationships among the variables which were measured.

The major goal of the analysis was to identify whether shoppers and retailers reported similar perceptions of problems and scheduling issues. A set of critical key variables were selected from the shopper and retailer databases, which would allow comparisons and contrasts to be drawn when considering the matches outlined above. These issues were addressed by the shoppers in terms of their own behavior. The retailers reported on substantially the same issues, in terms of the behaviors which their shoppers exhibit and the freedom which they retailers had in setting their own store hours. These comparisons and contrasts, combined with the anthropological data, form the primary set of information which was examined in order to identify the findings reported in this summary.

We first looked for patterns of problems by shopping center in both the shopper and the retailer data, to ensure that the responses were not affected by some particular problem which dominated behaviors at that center. Nothing was found in either the shoppers' or retailers' responses to indicate that any particular shopping center was significantly better or worse in terms of meeting their customers' shopping needs. However, the impact of the Meijers chain in Michigan cannot be overlooked, as shown in **Exhibit 4: The Role of Meijers in the Michigan Market**.

We then considered the retailers' responses regarding establishing their store schedules and their perceptions of customer response. While relatively uniform proportions of retailer knowledge was evident in the survey data, the anthropological data provided a wealth of insight through the stories, anecdotes, and pictorial evidence which the interviewers had assembled. Several of the retailers were willing to comment on their own scheduling issues and responses to customer demand in a free-form pattern, which would not have been captured on a traditional survey. In addition, some of the retailers spoke of frustration with other retailers in their specific shopping centers, whose lack of attention to their own posted hours of operation caused great frustration for center shoppers.

The retailers reported that customers came to their stores to browse while waiting for a destination store to open, often leaving the center without completing their tasks. This type of information was gained by the trust generated by the trained student interviewers' professional approach, the use of the International Council of Shopping Centers introductory letter, and the guarantee of confidentiality. Several of the retailers indicated that they were pleased and complimented to participate in this research, since the problems being addressed were critical to their business. Their interviews with the students often went beyond the survey

Exhibit 4:**The Role of Meijers in the Michigan Market**

One of the confounding problems that the researchers knew that they confronted from the beginning of this research is the role of Meijers. Meijers is a thriving super store or hypermarket that originated in Grand Rapids and now exists in three states; Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. In the greater Grand Rapids area, Meijers almost all stand alone in the middle of their own parking lots. All Meijers that the researchers have observed contain a large supermarket, including bulk food section, a substantial pharmacy, and the equivalent of a large discount store selling clothing for the family, electronics, flower shops, garden center, hardware department, housewares, stationery, toy department, and white goods. There are usually over 100,000 items to choose from in even the smallest Meijers stores. In addition Meijers frequently offer bakeries, specialty butcher shops, check cashing, cleaning, coffee shops, gas stations, Levi's Jean's stores, post office services, video rental, and more.

Meijers proved difficult in our initial search for "community centers," since it does not fit the definition in terms of numbers of stores. The researchers realized its effect in the Grand Rapids Market when they found it difficult to find community centers with supermarkets, pharmacies, and a large anchor. The importance of Meijers cannot be overlooked in the time and grouping studies in Michigan.

Meijers is open 24 hours a day. This influences those who shop there and those who don't. Anyone who has lived more than a few weeks in Western Michigan knows that if they get stuck for almost anything from apples to zinnia seeds, boots to yo-yos, cards to xylophones etc. all they have to do is head down the street to the nearest Meijers. People know that they have an around-the-clock back up seven days a week. For many who have lived their lives in Western Michigan, Meijers is a given, something they take for granted.

In terms of grouping of stores Meijers is also a potent force. In Western Michigan Meijers provides a formidable grouping of products and services in one store, and in one building. This may impact the expectations of Western Michigan shoppers in terms of groupings. The researchers found a large number of shopping centers that did not have a supermarket, or a pharmacy, probably because of the proximity of a Meijers.

into a personal, detailed discussion of the center as a whole, and schedule-related interactions among the retailers.

The shopper survey data were next analyzed, to determine the problems which were related to the scheduling issues. The key variables given in the **Exhibit 5: Key Variables in Matching the Retailer and Shopper Data** received a wide variety of responses within each center, indicating that such problems occurred among shoppers in general. In addition, we considered whether specific measurable shopper characteristics may be related, in part, to their own experiences of shopping schedule matches and mismatches. Specifically, we also grouped shoppers by age, employment hours per week, and gender to determine if any significant patterns would emerge.

Finally, both the retailer and the shopper survey data were cross-tabulated by shopping center for each specific key variable. The patterns of their responses were compared and contrasted to suggest whether the retailers were aware of the realities of their shoppers' schedule-related behaviors and preferences. Basically, we were seeking to identify whether there were any particular scheduling issues which were noticeably well-addressed by the shopping centers and the retailers in the sample. In addition, we wanted to identify whether any specific shopping problems occurred which were not being considered by the retailers, or were being overlooked by corporate management or center planners.

Findings

The major areas of mismatch include preferred hours for shopping, shoppers' scheduling conflicts, and strategies when errands cannot be completed. While only one-fourth of the retailers acknowledge that their customers complain about store hour conflicts, the responses to our survey suggest that a much more complicated situation actually takes place.

As you read these findings think about what they represent. This is not a purely quantitative study, even though there is large sample size and considerable statistical data. The reader is reminded that there were 13 focus groups conducted, a large anthropological collection of data, and finally the surveys of shoppers and retailers. To look at any one of these alone is to miss the opportunity to find explanation and relationships. This kind of multi-level approach has helped the researchers on other occasions.

The research provided a vast amount of material for analysis. It is presented in two major areas. First, problems are examined, including shopping schedules in conflict, finishing errands, store openings and closings, and scheduling activities. Second, there are a number of issues

Exhibit 5:

Key Variables in Matching the Retailer and Shopper Data

Shopper Variables



1. Time and day shopper would come to this center if they were free to choose any time of day.
 - a. Experience of not finishing shopping
 - b. Reasons for not finishing shopping
 - c. Shopper strategy when shopping is not finished
2. Finishing shopping at that center:
 - a. Experience of not finishing shopping
 - b. Reasons for not finishing shopping
 - c. Shopper strategy when shopping is not finished
3. Shopper problems:
 - a. Stores closing before finished shopping
 - b. Stores not open when customer goes to shop
 - c. Would shop if stores open later in evening

Retailer Variables



1. Retailer selection of store hours
 - a. Control of store hours
 - b. Reason for store hours
 - c. Requests from shoppers to change hours
 - d. Complaints about store hours
2. Shoppers' abilities to finish errands:
 - a. Perception that shoppers cannot finish their errands
 - b. Perception of shopper strategy when errands are not finished
3. Retailer perceptions of shopper problems:
 - a. Shoppers come when store is ready to close
 - b. Shoppers come after store is closed
 - c. Shoppers come before store is open

<p>d. Would shop if stores open earlier in morning</p> <p>e. Shopper's activities conflicting with store hours</p> <p>f. Shopper interrupting activities to go shopping</p> <p>g. Customer changing schedule in order to go shopping</p> <p>h. Shopping on way home from activities</p>	<p>d. Retailer's own customers would shop if store open later</p> <p>e. Retailer's own customers would shop if store open earlier</p> <p>f. Shoppers take off from activities in order to shop</p> <p>g. Customers shop on their way home</p> <p>h. Customers shop during lunch time</p>
<p>4. Posting of store schedule information</p> <p>a. Shopper knowledge of store schedule information</p> <p>b. Importance of store schedule information to shopper</p>	<p>4. Store schedule information</p> <p>a. Shopper knowledge of center and stores' schedules</p> <p>b. Availability of store schedule information</p> <p>c. Shopper requests for information on store hours</p>

revolving around the topics of shopping habits, including some comparisons by state, by center, and by demographics.

■ Problem 1: Shopping Schedules in Conflict

The reality is that the shoppers felt that they often came to these centers, yet were not able to shop in a way which allowed them to finish their errands. They had great difficulty in matching their time available to shop with the actual hours that stores were open.

In order to verify these reports, the New Jersey research teams were required to go to the centers several times a week, at different times of day, to observe the customers' actual behaviors. They were required to take detailed notes on what they saw, and also to supplement their observations with photographs and video records. Such methods were found to shed considerable light on the responses in the surveys, and enabled us to understand culture of each center from an anthropological point of view.

Shopper Surveys: Schedules in Conflict

Our shopper surveys indicate that store hours do not appear to fit with actual shoppers' daily lives. Over 40% of the responses indicated that shoppers interviewed are not able to shop on a regular schedule, see **Exhibit 6: When Do You Usually Come to this Shopping Center**. Shoppers were asked to indicate which of these categories applied to them (multiple responses were typical). Most of the Michigan and New Jersey shoppers did not shop at the same time every week. Instead, spur of the moment shopping and need-based shopping were the prevalent patterns.

The shoppers were surveyed regarding the day and the time which they would prefer to come to the center where they were interviewed, if they were free to choose any time of day. An interesting pattern is found in looking at the responses. While all the shoppers were encouraged to provide both day and time preferences, only 24% selected certain days of the week, with Thursday being the least frequently preferred shopping day and Saturday the most popular preference.

Interestingly, the majority of the overall sample reported preferences associated with time of day, with the largest group of the shoppers indicating that they would choose one of the two morning categories between 6 a.m. and 11 a.m. followed by the two afternoon categories between 11



Exhibit 6:

When Do You Usually Come to this Shopping Center

	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Spur of the moment	49 41%	51 40%	32 41%	57 47%	60 45%	249 43%
Regular schedule	33 29%	24 21%	22 19%	20 17%	16 14%	115 20%
Same time every week	9 8%	11 9%	10 13%	12 10%	14 10%	56 10%
Only on weekends	14 12%	13 10%	14 17%	9 7%	20 15%	70 12%
When you need to	61 51%	60 47%	33 42%	44 36%	43 32%	241 41%
Other	6 5%	10 8%	7 9%	8 7%	15 11%	46 8%

a.m. to 5 p.m. as the next choice. A minority of the overall sample selected times after 5 p.m. as their preferred shopping time. The interviews were dispersed throughout all times of day and all seven days of the week, and the respondents did not automatically prefer the times at which they were interviewed. **Exhibit 7: What Time Would You Come to this Center** arrays the entire Michigan and New Jersey sample by an even wider breakdown of hours, in order to illustrate the wide variety of times which were reported.

Retailer Surveys: Schedules in Conflict

Store hours followed a traditional pattern, with most stores opening between 9 and 10 a.m. The majority of the retailers reported that store hours were largely determined by their corporate headquarters, by upper management, or by shopping center management, with only a few indicating that store hours had been set with their customers in mind. There appeared to be little attention paid to any regional or local differences among chains, in that the hours of operation followed regional or nationwide patterns. **Exhibit 8: Retailer Hours by Center** presents this information. In total, 34% of the retailers could select their own hours and 66% could not.

Interestingly, over half of the surveyed retailers reported that their customers take off from their activities in order to shop. Moreover, half stated that their customers changed their schedules in order to shop. Thus, the retailers were aware that their customers had difficulty in fitting shopping into their everyday lives. However, with the exception of a few local stores, few retailers had the flexibility to adjust their schedules to the needs of their particular target consumers. **Exhibit 9: Retailers' Reasons for Store Hours** summarizes these reasons.

Anthropological Information: Schedules in Conflict

The shoppers at Lakeside Center clearly had a wide amount of choices in terms of times of day for shopping. This center had a coin laundry which opened at 6 am, a Post Office opening at 7:30 a.m., all the way through a 12:30 am closing for the cinema and midnight closing for the fast food restaurant, on selected days of the week. However, the actual range of store hours was limited by the center management. Video records indicated that evening was the least popular center shopping time, which was verified by the "preferred time" question in the survey.

Exhibit 7:

What Time Would You Come to this Center



	6-8:59a.m.	9-10:59a.m.	11-1:59a.m.	2-4:59a.m.	5-6:59a.m.	7-10:00p.m.	after 10:00	Total
Twin City Center	16 16%	24 24%	11 11%	21 21%	3 3%	10 10%	13 13%	98
Fashion Plaza	6 8%	20 26%	4 5%	32 41%	4 5%	10 13%	2 3%	78
Lakeside Center	13 21%	15 25%	6 10%	22 36%	1 2%	1 2%	3 5%	61
Maple Village	8 8%	33 34%	9 9%	20 21%	10 10%	16 16%	1 1%	97
River City Mall	5 5%	35 34%	14 14%	13 13%	11 11%	21 20%	4 4%	103
Total	48 11%	127 29%	44 10%	108 25%	29 7%	58 13%	23 5%	

Exhibit 8:

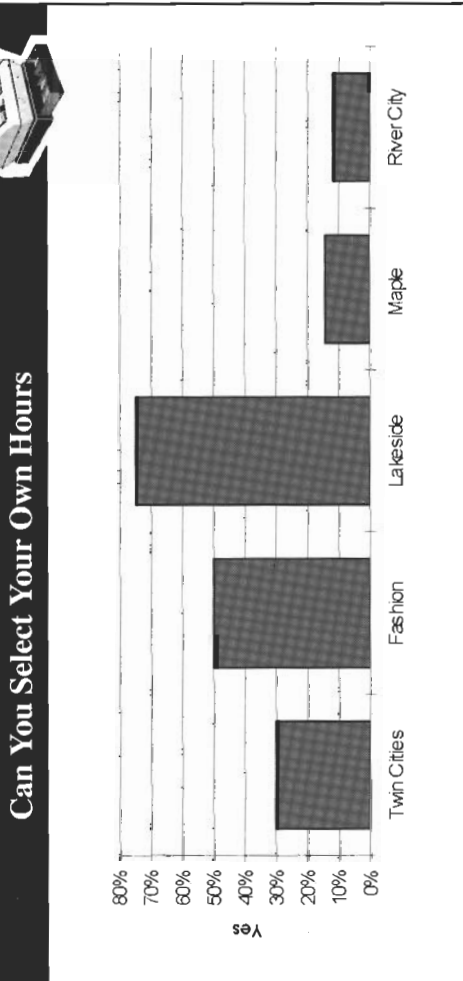


Exhibit 9:

Retailers' Reasons for Store Hours

	Twin Cities	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Popular hours	3	4	3	1	1	12
	50%	31%	50%	13%	6%	24%
Set by corporation	3	6	1	7	0	17
	50%	46%	17%	88%	0%	35%
Matches center hours	0	3	2	0	15	20
	0%	23%	33%	0%	94%	41%
Total	6	13	6	8	16	

In Michigan, the anthropological approach brought out a couple of major factors that had to do with schedules and conflict. First, as mentioned elsewhere, there is what the graduate student researchers called the “Meijers’ Factor.” This huge community shopping center under one roof and one management is open twenty four hours a day. This store is so prevalent in Western Michigan that it actually reduces scheduling conflicts, as almost everyone knows they can go get it at Meijers any time of day or night.

Second, the “Dutch” culture has been the predominant culture in the greater Grand Rapids area. The traditional culture of this group is strongly opposed to doing business on Sunday. Therefore, many stores and centers are closed, such as the enclosed part of the River City mall. Another factor in this culture, being relatively strict in a lot of areas, such as drinking, church participation, and so forth, is the willingness to adjust one’s schedule to the requirements. This might lead to more of a willingness to adjust to the existing schedules of stores rather than suggest that the stores should change.

In contrast to Lakeside Center in New Jersey with its wide amount of hours is the River City Mall in Western Michigan. It may be different in part because a large portion of this center is enclosed. It is important to note that it qualifies as a community center because it meets the qualifications of external access, strip center, or free standing, the necessary ingredients to qualify this as a community shopping center. The enclosed part of this center is open only six days a week and closed on Sunday.

Summary: Schedules in Conflict

Many of the shoppers related to the interviewers their problems in trying to get everything done. One of the problems was having to go to so many locations. However, one-stop shopping is more than having the right combination of stores at the right place. It is also having the right combination of stores open at the same or overlapping times, so that the shopper’s actual preferred one-stop trip can actually be accomplished at the time of day which the shopper chooses.

■ Problem 2: Finishing Errands at the Shopping Center

Shopper Surveys: Finishing Errands

Approximately half of Michigan and New Jersey shoppers interviewed reported not being able to finish the shopping they intended to do. Only 40% claim that they return to the original store at another time, while a

small percent go to another store in the same center, and half go outside the center to complete their errand. Typically, one might suspect that the major reasons why shoppers do not accomplish their goals have to do with lack of selection, insufficient choice of products, wrong sizes, brands, and so forth. However, half of those reporting said that their reasons for not finishing errands had to do with store closure and other time factors (such as store closed before finished and store not opened early enough). Thus, the "right" products and brands may have been in the stores, and the purchase would have been made if the consumer could get into the store or perhaps finish the shopping which they had begun. **Exhibit 10: Not Finishing My Shopping** and **Exhibit 11: What Happens When Shoppers Cannot Finish Shopping** outline some of the responses.

Retailer Surveys: Finishing Errands

What they do, however, is likely to cost retailers money, since retailers appear to be unaware of shoppers' likely actions. Only a few of the retailers interviewed report that their customers do not finish errands in their own stores. While the majority of the retailers say that the purchase will eventually be made from their own store, shoppers report that they go elsewhere to complete the purchase. Thus retailers are losing on these sales, without apparently realizing the magnitude of the problem among consumers. **Exhibit 12: Do Retailers Think Their Customers Finish Shopping** and **Exhibit 13: What Do Retailers Think Customers Do** list retailers' responses to these issues.

Anthropological Information: Finishing Errands

One of the student interviewers reported a shopper's frustration that a preferred shoe store had recently vacated Twin City Center II. The shopper explained that this particular center had routinely been chosen for wardrobe purchases, since an entire ensemble could be put together with a single trip to this center. That is, the mix of stores in the center were a satisfactory blend of the outfits, shoes, belts, and accessories, so that matches of shades, styles, and brands could easily be made. However, when the shoe store moved to another location, the shopper felt that it had now become impossible to complete the errand of "purchasing" an entire matching ensemble at this particular site, and time would be wasted traveling to another location in order to search for matching shoes. The shopper considered alternative centers where the complete package could be obtained.

Exhibit 10:

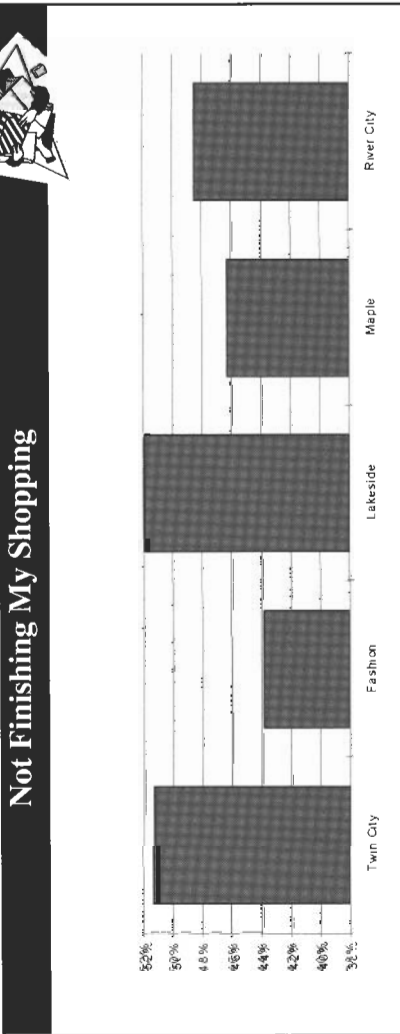


Exhibit 11:

What Happens When Shoppers Cannot Finish Shopping

	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Come back to store	25	25	18	28	24	120
Visit different store in same center	41%	40%	43%	46%	33%	40%
Visit different store outside center	4	0	5	5	7	21
	7%	0%	12%	8%	10%	7%
	32	38	19	28	42	159
	52%	60%	45%	46%	58%	53%
Total	61	63	42	61	73	

Exhibit 12:

Do Retailers Think Their Customers Finish Shopping



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Yes	4	4	3	6	12	29
	67%	100%	75%	75%	71%	74%
No	2	0	1	2	5	10
	33%	0%	25%	25%	29%	26%
Total	6	4	4	8	17	

Exhibit 13:

What Do Retailers Think Customers Do



	Twin City	Fashion	Lake Side	Maple	River City	Total
Purchased from other store	2	0	0	1	0	3
	50%	0%	0%	17%	0%	11%
Purchased from this store	2	4	2	5	12	25
	50%	100%	100%	83%	100%	89%
Total	4	4	2	6	12	

Another part of Twin City Center's shopping culture was that tickets for popular events were routinely sold at the video rental store, part of a nationwide chain, located in the middle of a busy strip of stores. Customers would form huge lines early in the morning waiting for ticket sales to begin, especially sales held on Saturdays, according to management. However, these lines extended down the sidewalk to partially block access to a major pharmacy at the center, much to the annoyance of the pharmacy's management and its customers. In observing the actual layout of the center, the pharmacy was found to be four stores away from the video store, indicating quite a large line had to form in order to block access to the store. When such lines were present, customers did not want to take the time to navigate through the lines, and put off their errands, or went to another location to complete them.

These types of center "life" are not readily identifiable through a traditional survey, since the researchers are not likely to know in advance that such events occur. They are not readily visible, unless the researcher luckily selects the day in which the event happens. The usefulness of such information, however, strongly points to the value of incorporating anthropological methods into the study, providing a useful longitudinal picture of the center and its processes.

Many of the shoppers relayed to interviewers their problems in trying to get everything done in one shopping trip. One of the problems was having to go to so many locations. They report that they can not finish shopping at one center, and have to go through the time consuming process of going to another center. This is particularly interesting since the Michigan shoppers reported that they took longer to get to their centers than did the New Jersey shoppers, suggesting that the time investment of a multi-center trip would be a considerable impact on the shopper's day.

The "Meijers factor" really fits into the picture of the Michigan shopper. Shoppers will attempt to find things at other centers, but they say that they know if they get stuck, they can go to Meijers twenty-four hours a day. Interviewers reported this to be the case whether or not the person was a regular Meijers shopper.

Summary: Finishing Errands

When customers cannot finish their errands, the overall center loses as well. Approximately half of shoppers went to another store outside the center. As disappointed shoppers take their sales dollars to other shopping centers, new shopping loyalties are likely to be established. Center management should take notice of this pattern, since not only is the store

losing the sale, but the center as well is losing the sale, while an alternative center is getting a chance to capture a new customer for the long term.

It is important to identify what the expectation of the shopper is who comes to the center late in the evening, and what closing times actually mean to the shopper. If the shopper has seen a posted store schedule which indicates the closing time of 9:30 p.m., for example, what does this mean to the shopper? Does it mean that the individual can actively shop up until 9:30, with the full range of the store available? Does it mean that the shopper can enter the store up until 9:30, when the doors are closed? Does it mean that business transactions stop at 9:30, so that actual shopping is terminated about a half hour before, in order to "herd" the shoppers toward the registers? If so, a shopper who had expected shopping and possibly comparison time up until 9:30 may become frustrated by such experiences, which according to our interviews, do occur at the 5 centers in this study.

The concept of not finishing errands is important to everyone in the retail channel. On the front line, the local retail management should be concerned not only with the direct sales loss, but the long term implications of teaching the customers to fill their needs elsewhere or through non-store shopping methods, available 24 hours a day.

This is not a suggestion that store or center hours should be extended unilaterally. It is rather suggesting that retailers look at how closing time is handled to make the shopping center as positive an experience as possible. This is important at a time when most centers face extensive shopping center competition as well as increasing competition from alternative forms of retailing.

■ Problem 3: Store Openings and Closings

Shopper Surveys: Behaviors Related to Openings and Closings

The shoppers indicated that they were not able to match their shopping times to those established by the retailers. Approximately 40% reported that when they are shopping, the store closes before they are finished at some time, 11% reported that this was more than a few times a month. Similarly 40% percent complain that when they go to shop, the store is not open yet. While store policy may determine opening and closing procedures, such as directing customers to the registers up to 1/2 hour before closing, the effect of lost sales does not appear to be adequately addressed. **Exhibit 14: When I Shop, Store Closes Before I Finish** and **Exhibit 15: When I Shop, Stores Are Not Open Yet** shows shoppers' responses

Exhibit 14:

When I Shop, Store Closes Before I Finish



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Once a week or more	3 3%	2 2%	1 1%	2 2%	3 4%	11 2%
A few times a month	6 5%	13 11%	7 9%	10 9%	10 12%	46 9%
Once a month or less	31 27%	29 24%	18 24%	36 31%	45 53%	159 31%
Never	74 65%	78 64%	50 66%	67 58%	27 32%	296 58%
Total	114	122	76	115	85	

Exhibit 15:

When I Shop, Stores Are Not Open Yet



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Once a week or more	2 2%	2 2%	4 5%	4 3%	5 4%	17 3%
A few times a month	15 13%	7 5%	11 14%	16 14%	17 13%	66 12%
Once a month or less	31 28%	27 21%	20 26%	30 26%	33 25%	141 25%
Never	64 57%	93 72%	43 55%	67 57%	76 58%	343 60%
Total	112	129	78	117	131	

to these issues. **Exhibit 16: Do Customers Come When the Store is Ready to Close**, **Exhibit 17: Do Customers Come After the Store Closes** and **Exhibit 18: Do Customers Come Before the Store is Open** present retailers' responses to these issues.

Retailer Surveys: Behaviors Related to Openings and Closings

The retailers are reporting that customers do come to their stores to find that they cannot shop. Ninety percent of the 59 retailers participating in the study report that customers come "just before the retailer is ready to close," a few times a month or more. Interestingly, almost all of the retailers report that customers come to their store after they are closed. Additionally, most of the retailers report that customers also come to the store before they are ready to open. Thus the shoppers' actual behaviors suggest that some shopping schedule extensions should at least be investigated, especially if such before- and after-hours customers represent lost sales.

Anthropological Information: Behaviors Related to Openings and Closings

The video record of Twin City Center, New Jersey, showed shoppers lined up at the major discount anchor on several occasions, regardless of weather. Shoppers were in the habit of frequenting the center early in the day. Several senior citizen communities along the major highway provide part of a loyal customer base.

Supplemental interviews with the merchants of that center and the research team's analysis of transit schedules revealed that a heavily-used city bus picked up passengers at the center. Many of these passengers were employed in the major metropolitan area, 15 miles away. The passengers were allowed to leave their cars in a side parking lot, and were offered coffee and space to wait in the free-standing restaurant at that center.

Surprisingly, even with this regular, predictable group of individuals arriving early at the center, this restaurant was the only retailer who had tailored its schedule to their needs, and gave special service. It would be expected that such a known group of early-arrivers could be profitably served with early prescription hours from the two competing drug stores, or that they could possibly be attracted by a one-day early shopping event or special. Interestingly, Twin Cities Center did implement a 7 a.m. "Black Friday" opening by the major discount anchor, and drew massive crowds to the center in response.

Exhibit 16:

Do Customers Come When the Store is Ready to Close



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	3 27%	2 14%	2 25%	1 13%	3 17%	11 19%
A few times a week	6 55%	7 50%	0 0%	1 13%	8 44%	22 37%
A few times a month	2 18%	3 21%	4 50%	5 63%	6 33%	20 34%
Less than once a month	0 0%	2 14%	2 25%	1 13%	1 6%	6 10%
Total	11	14	8	8	18	

Exhibit 17:

Do Customers Come After the Store is Closed



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	2 22%	0 0%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	4 9%
A few times a week	2 22%	3 30%	0 0%	2 29%	1 8%	8 17%
A few times a month	4 44%	3 30%	4 50%	1 14%	1 8%	13 28%
Less than once a month	1 11%	4 40%	2 25%	4 57%	11 85%	22 47%
Total	9	10	8	7	13	

Exhibit 18:

Do Customers Come Before the Store is Open



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	2 20%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4 7%
A few times a week	3 30%	4 29%	2 25%	2 25%	5 31%	16 29%
A few times a month	3 30%	4 29%	3 38%	2 25%	3 19%	15 27%
Less than once a month	2 20%	4 29%	3 38%	4 50%	8 50%	21 38%
Total	10	14	8	8	16	

In Michigan there are some additional insights to be gained from the anthropological data set in terms of openings and closing. First, a major portion of the River City Mall is a pleasant enclosed space, with room for browsing, walking, and sitting, protected from the weather. There are a couple of things that can be observed that may influence shoppers' and retailers' thoughts on openings and closing:

1. It may become a destination center. This would draw people from farther away who would be more likely to check with the center's office to be sure of the hours of operation before committing the time to the trip. If the reader has not visited Michigan after the last warm days of September, when the cold rains and early snow flurries foretell the coming of the hard winter, they might not appreciate how a largely enclosed community shopping center could be a draw.
2. Mall walkers get there early and therefore there may be a perception by store management that people are waiting for them to open. Those visiting the center may think that it is open earlier than the actual hours of operation.
3. Acceptance of openings and closing is more likely to be thought of based on the center as a whole. This is true even though a number of shops have created their own exterior entrances.

Second, Maple Village sits at an important cross roads in the Michigan community. Located very near the center is an extended hours combination gas station, laundromat, and convenience store, a party store, a major video store, and in the next block several fast food franchises. Shoppers would not need to sit and wait if they got there early, nor is it unlikely that they would continue their errands after the center stores were closed, by filling the car, purchasing take-out, or finishing the laundry.

Summary: Behaviors Related to Openings and Closings

There are clearly problems with openings and closings that have been observed. The video records show people arriving at centers early waiting to shop. People do express a willingness to come out early for mall walking, etc. A center would do well to ask the question, "Is there enough interest in hours at either end of the normal schedule to consider extending those hours?"

Shopper Surveys: Preferences Related to Openings and Closings

Of the almost 100 shoppers from Twin Cities Center who reported a preferred time of day to shop, 40% suggested before 11 a.m. Over 70% of Fashion Plaza's shoppers preferred hours before 5 p.m., with the afternoon being the most popular response. Of all five centers, Lakeside had the smallest proportion preferring evening hours, with a low 9% of the responding customers selecting hours after 5 p.m. as their favorite time to shop there.

However, the shoppers clearly gave several indications of willingness to shop during extended retail hours. When asked regarding their likelihood of shopping if store hours were extended later or earlier, 64% of shoppers said they would shop if stores were open later in the evening, and 53% would shop if stores were open earlier in the morning. The shoppers' responses to questions on this issues are illustrated in **Exhibit 19: I Would Shop If Stores Were Open Later** and **Exhibit 20: I Would Shop If Stores Were Open Earlier**. The retailers' opinions are summarized in **Exhibit 21: My Customers Would Shop If Stores Were Open Later** and **Exhibit 22: My Customers Would Shop If Stores Were Open Earlier**.

Retailer Surveys: Preferences Related to Openings and Closings

Even more disparity is found when comparing retailers' and shoppers' evaluations of early and late hour shopping potential. Fifty-six percent of the retailers reporting disagreed that their customers would shop if stores were open later in the evening, and most disagreed with the idea that their customers would shop if stores were open earlier in the day.

Anthropological Information: Preferences Related to Openings and Closings

One particular retailer, the owner of a card and gift shop, was especially popular with customers at Lakeside Center, New Jersey. The customers were observed coming in to the store to discuss their personal and their shopping problems; such personal interactions were also reported by the store owner. The owner had actually moved the store's opening time half an hour earlier due to customer demand, since customers had been observed coming to the store before the store's scheduled opening time. As a result, the owner moved the opening from 10:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., and

Exhibit 19:

I Would Shop If Stores Were Open Later



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	9 9%	8 7%	1 2%	9 8%	5 4%	32 6%
Once a week	15 14%	17 15%	10 16%	22 21%	21 17%	85 17%
A few times a month	28 27%	24 21%	15 25%	21 20%	33 27%	121 24%
Once a month or less	16 15%	20 17%	12 20%	19 18%	21 17%	88 17%
Never	36 35%	48 41%	23 38%	36 34%	43 35%	186 36%
Total	104	117	61	107	123	

Exhibit 20:

I Would Shop If Stores Were Open Earlier



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	8 8%	8 7%	3 4%	9 8%	4 3%	32 6%
Once a week	16 15%	10 9%	7 10%	9 8%	16 12%	58 11%
A few times a month	23 22%	18 15%	16 23%	25 22%	26 20%	108 20%
Once a month or less	18 17%	22 19%	9 13%	11 10%	29 22%	89 17%
Never	40 38%	59 50%	35 50%	61 53%	56 43%	251 47%
Total	105	117	70	115	131	

Exhibit 21:

My Customers Would Shop If Stores Were Open Later



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	1 13%	1 8%	0 0%	1 14%	2 12%	5 10%
Disagree	0 0%	7 58%	2 33%	3 43%	11 65%	23 46%
Neutral	4 50%	1 8%	2 33%	1 14%	2 12%	10 20%
Agree	3 38%	3 25%	2 33%	2 29%	2 12%	12 24%
Total	8	12	6	7	17	

Exhibit 22:

My Customers Would Shop If Stores Were Open Earlier



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	1 14%	1 9%	0 0%	1 14%	2 13%	5 11%
Disagree	6 86%	8 73%	5 83%	2 29%	10 63%	31 66%
Neutral	0 0%	1 9%	1 17%	0 0%	1 6%	3 6%
Agree	0 0%	1 9%	0 0%	4 57%	3 19%	8 17%
Total	7	11	6	7	16	

found that the shoppers were responsive to the change. The owner reported that in her opinion, her store's popularity was linked with its proximity to the Post Office, which was also open early, since customers came for cards, which they then wrote out in the store, and proceeded to the Post Office to mail them.

Fashion Plaza, New Jersey, had a wide variety of scheduled hours, from a 24-hour supermarket superstore, a late-night fast food outlet, a home improvement anchor on traditional hours, and a smattering of small shops which also had traditional hours. Video records showed a relatively busy center at various daytime hours, and a virtually deserted center at night, except for the supermarket, pizza store, and fast food chain.

The research team observed many irregularities in the actual hours of store openings in Fashion Plaza, especially with the fashion store, which often opened later than scheduled times indicated. The fashion store had unposted hours as well. Management revealed that shoppers could make an appointment to shop early in the day, when clerks were restocking the store. However, no information was apparent which would inform shoppers of this alternative. An interesting and puzzling finding was a men's apparel store with two signs of store hours which partially contradicted each other. Another was a beauty salon which had posted hours for the overall salon, yet each individual operator established their own hours within that overall schedule.

Summary: Preferences Related to Openings and Closings

Several of the student interviewers commented that many shoppers indicated some preference toward having stores open earlier in the morning. People in our surveys, for instance, reported that they would like to be able to do some errands on their way to work. In addition, others appear to prefer later hours at night, in order to avoid crowds and also take advantage of the shopping convenience of after-work hours. Shift workers as well indicate that early hours would make it possible for them to shop on their way home from work, in the early hours of the morning.

■ Problem 4: Problems with Scheduling and Activities

Shopper Surveys: Scheduling and Activities

There is clearly a difference between retailers and consumers on this issue of time. Approximately 60 percent of the shoppers surveyed state that

their activities conflict with the hours when stores are open; likewise, most of the shoppers have to interrupt their activities to go shopping and half change their schedules in order to shop. In order to accomplish all the other things which they have to do during their busy days, the majority state that they shop on the way home from activities.

Four exhibits summarize shoppers' opinions on scheduling and activities including **Exhibit 23: Activities Conflict With Store Hours**, **Exhibit 24: Interrupt Activities to Go Shopping**, **Exhibit 25: Change Schedules to Go Shopping** and **Exhibit 26: Shop on the Way Home**.

Retailer Surveys: Scheduling and Activities


Most of the retailers are aware that their customers shop on their way home from activities and on their lunch breaks, "sandwiched" between other activities. An interesting note was pointed out by several of the research assistants. There was considerable variation among several of the retailers regarding their store hours, and in many cases, the schedule information was presented in poor or unclear ways. Hours of operation could often be found barely visible in signs which were hidden in corners of store windows or on doors. Some signs were instead placed inside the store itself, which required that the shopper be actually in the store to read the sign, which certainly was not very useful after hours. In addition, some signs used very small print and were not readable from the parking lot or when shoppers approached in their automobiles. One interviewer found that none of the shoppers he interviewed in the center could report the actual shopping hours of the stores in that center. The retailers' feelings about scheduling and activities are contained in **Exhibit 27: My Customers Take-Off from Activities to Shop** and **Exhibit 28: My Customers Shop on the Way Home**.

Shoppers react in various ways to the issue of posting store hours of operation. Some shoppers feel that this is very important to them, while others appear to be indifferent. In addition, some shoppers admit to not knowing whether the hours are even posted at all; they know the hours, so posting is simply not relevant. Retailers do differ in whether they post signs detailing this information; in some cases, such as enclosed malls, individual store signs may not be seen as necessary.

A series of exhibits presents shoppers' perceptions and concerns about store hours. **Exhibit 29: Are Shopping Hours Posted at Stores** and **Exhibit 30: Do Shoppers Care if Hours are Posted** present information about the posting of store hours. **Exhibit 31: Are Shoppers Troubled if a Store is Not Open**, **Exhibit 32: It Is Difficult to Know Which Stores Are Open** and **Exhibit 33: Retailer Has a Sign Listing Store Hours** all expand on this topic.

Exhibit 23:


Activities Conflict With Store Hours



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	8 7%	6 5%	3 4%	4 4%	13 10%	34 6%
Once a week or more	20 19%	20 16%	2 3%	9 8%	13 10%	64 12%
A few times a month	27 25%	39 31%	16 21%	22 19%	35 27%	139 25%
Once a month or less	18 17%	16 13%	27 36%	21 19%	25 19%	107 19%
Never	34 32%	43 35%	28 37%	57 50%	44 34%	206 37%
Total	107	124	76	113	130	

Exhibit 24:

Interrupt Activities to Go Shopping



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	1 1%	3 2%	2 3%	2 2%	3 2%	11 2%
Once a week or more	12 11%	18 14%	3 4%	7 6%	16 12%	56 10%
A few times a month	21 20%	32 25%	15 20%	19 16%	21 16%	108 19%
Once a month or less	24 23%	27 21%	30 39%	32 27%	42 32%	155 28%
Never	48 45%	49 38%	26 34%	60 50%	49 37%	232 41%
Total	106	129	76	120	131	

Exhibit 25:

Change Schedules to Go Shopping



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	2 2%	2 2%	0 0%	1 1%	2 2%	7 1%
Once a week or more	6 5%	12 9%	2 3%	9 8%	15 11%	44 8%
A few times a month	12 11%	25 20%	8 10%	15 13%	29 22%	89 16%
Once a month or less	25 22%	36 28%	31 40%	22 18%	30 23%	144 25%
Never	69 61%	53 41%	37 47%	72 61%	55 42%	286 50%
Total	114	128	78	119	131	

Exhibit 26:

Shop On the Way Home



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Every day	6 5%	6 5%	3 4%	6 5%	6 4%	27 5%
Once a week or more	32 28%	41 32%	18 23%	36 31%	50 37%	177 31%
A few times a month	40 35%	48 38%	40 52%	40 34%	37 27%	205 36%
Once a month or less	16 14%	15 12%	9 12%	14 12%	24 18%	78 14%
Never	21 18%	17 13%	7 9%	20 17%	18 13%	83 15%
Total	115	127	77	116	135	

Exhibit 27:

My Customers Take-Off from Activities to Shop



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	0 0%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%
Disagree	4 57%	3 27%	0 0%	4 57%	6 38%	17 38%
Neutral	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 13%	2 4%
Agree	3 43%	6 55%	4 100%	3 43%	7 44%	23 51%
Strongly Agree	0 0%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	1 6%	2 4%
Total	7	11	4	7	16	

Exhibit 28:

My Customers Shop on the Way Home



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	0 0%	0 0%	1 14%	0 0%	2 13%	3 6%
Disagree	1 10%	1 8%	1 14%	1 13%	2 13%	6 11%
Neutral	0 0%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	1 6%	2 4%
Agree	4 40%	6 46%	4 57%	6 75%	7 44%	27 50%
Strongly agree	5 50%	5 38%	1 14%	1 13%	4 25%	16 30%
Total	10	13	7	8	16	

Exhibit 29:

Are Shopping Hours Posted at Stores



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
All	54 45%	50 40%	34 44%	60 50%	36 27%	234 41%
Some	16 13%	14 11%	15 19%	5 4%	7 5%	57 10%
None	1 1%	4 3%	0 0%	0 0%	4 3%	9 2%
I do not know	48 40%	56 45%	29 37%	56 46%	85 64%	274 48%
Total	119	124	78	121	132	

Exhibit 30:

Do Shoppers Care If Hours are Posted



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Yes	77 66%	75 60%	51 68%	83 70%	68 53%	354 63%
No	40 34%	50 40%	24 32%	36 30%	61 47%	211 37%
Total	117	125	75	119	129	

Exhibit 31:

Are Shoppers Troubled if a Store is Not Open



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Yes	92 95%	116 97%	71 99%	36 30%	28 23%	343 65%
No	5 5%	4 3%	1 1%	83 70%	95 77%	188 35%
Total	97	120	72	119	123	

Exhibit 32:


It is Difficult to Know Which Stores Are Open



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	8 8%	4 3%	6 8%	21 18%	14 11%	53 10%
Disagree	47 44%	54 43%	35 46%	51 44%	44 34%	231 42%
Neutral	31 29%	35 28%	15 20%	18 16%	24 19%	123 22%
Agree	18 17%	29 23%	18 24%	19 17%	34 27%	118 21%
Strongly agree	2 2%	3 2%	2 3%	6 5%	12 9%	25 5%
Total	106	125	76	115	128	

Exhibit 33:

Retailer Has a Sign Listing Store Hours



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Yes	10 91%	13 93%	6 75%	8 100%	6 33%	43 73%
No	1 9%	1 7%	2 25%	0 0%	12 67%	16 27%
Total	11	14	8	8	18	

Anthropological Information: Scheduling and Activities

The retailers at Lakeside Center, New Jersey, emphatically reported significant problems in terms of time of day for their shoppers and considerable overlap in customer shopping. One specific retailer, a major electronics and computer chain, regularly opened for business much later than the posted hours indicated, as reported by the student research team and by several other retailers in that center. Customers could be frequently seen waiting outside the store, and would eventually filter into other center stores to complain. The surrounding retailers felt that such actions gave the customers a very negative feeling about the center, since that particular store was often their major destination. While these other retailers appreciated the "run-off" business, they reported that the customers would wait for a while for the store to open, and then would eventually leave the center to shop elsewhere.

In understanding the scheduling of activities, it may be important to look at some of the environmental factors. In the case of Maple Village, Michigan, it is located in a community that has a large number of manufacturing plants and is heavily influenced by the culture of Western Michigan. Here there is a large discounter, a large crafts and nursery, a supermarket and several smaller stores. The "Meijers' factor" is probably very important here. The nearest Meijers is not far away and there are probably few things that could not be obtained there 24 hours a day that would be offered in the center. Thus the cost to the consumer is not great if the schedule of the center stores does not fit.

Looking at the River City Mall, Michigan, there is a different picture. This partially enclosed center is located in the middle of a nice bedroom community. Most of its shops are upscale in nature from the supermarket, through the several clothing stores. Many of the stores in this mall are true shopping stores where a shopper would really want to spend some time looking for a nice outfit, the perfect gift and so forth. The shopkeepers here cater very successfully to their affluent customers. For example, worth noting is that some of the exterior store entrances were constructed for the convenience of shoppers in terms of time and space. In the case of one store the researchers were told that exterior entrance allows the store to accommodate the shopping times of their regular customers, and the shopper does not have to walk through the enclosed portion of the center. Since the shop in question sells upscale women's clothing, scheduling may be complicated. They probably have a mix of the busy wealthy, and the professional women.

Exhibit 34:**Research Assistants' Perceptions**

These observations were made at Twin City Plaza:

"When I observed the parking lots between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. on various days, there were customers waiting to enter the discount store and the pharmacy. Obviously, customers would like to have the convenience of making one trip to finish their errands."

And in the words of another research assistant, at Lakeside Center in New Jersey:

"Stores in the shopper center should have similar hours of operation to maintain some level of consistency. This way consumers will not be disappointed in coming to the shopping center and finding some stores open and some closed. I found that consumers get very frustrated when they have to go to different shopping centers to get all of their errands done."

Summary: Scheduling and Activities

The research assistants reported a common theme in their summary reports following the completion of their interviews: that shoppers had an overwhelming desire to complete all their shopping in one day, and if possible, to "try to get as much shopping done in one center in less than one day's time." If not, they indicated that they would travel the least amount possible to get their shopping errands done for the day.

Shoppers also had clear preferences for the types of errands which they combined and also planned certain orders for visiting stores according to a plan which fit their needs. For instance, when asked to indicate the types of errands they frequently combined, shopping at supermarkets was a prevalent response. In addition, the shoppers emphatically chose to visit the supermarket last, which logically would preserve the freshness of their foods.

However, the store schedules are not generally uniform for each center, and instead, overlap which may be inconvenient. While the mix of stores may be able to provide one-stop shopping, certain combinations of stores were inaccessible for one-stop trips given the delayed opening hours of certain stores in the centers.

For example, if shoppers want to come to a center, patronize the pharmacy, discount anchor, and supermarket, in that order, such a combination could not begin at Twin Cities Plaza until 9 a.m., although the supermarket and a popular center restaurant both open at 7 a.m. The student observers report that parking lots were full at that center by 8 a.m., with patrons at both the restaurant and supermarket, and dissatisfied shoppers were prevented from completing their errands by the opening times of the other stores. **Exhibit 34: Research Assistants' Perceptions** presents comments from two research assistants about scheduling and activities.

■ Shopping Habits

Do Shoppers in Michigan and New Jersey View Shopping Hours Similarly?

Besides the "Meijers factor," there were few notable differences between the shopping habits and preferences, when the consumers and retailers were considered by state. The New Jersey shoppers patronized the respective centers on a more frequent basis, with over one half of the interviewees reporting that they shop at that particular center at least once a week. Michigan shoppers, however, were more likely to report shopping on a monthly basis instead. **Exhibit 35: When Do Shoppers Come to this Center** shows the differences by state.

A key similarity among both New Jersey and Michigan shoppers was that 40% of each stated that they would prefer shopping times before 11:00 a.m. The remainder, however, showed some differences. Forty percent of the remaining New Jersey shoppers preferred afternoon hours, with only 20% indicating that after 5 p.m. would be their choice of a time to shop. A more even split occurred among the Michigan sample, with 28% percent of the Michigan shoppers selecting the afternoon times, while the other thirty percent preferred evening shopping. The shoppers' time preferences are listed in **Exhibit 36: What Time Would You Come to this Center**.

As expected, however, there were no significant differences in occurrence of shopping problems between shoppers grouped by state. The National Research Bureau data suggested that such community shopping center schedules are relatively uniform nationwide, and barring some particular local event or store, we expected the experience of shoppers in both areas to be relatively similar. Interestingly, there were no significant differences between the Michigan and the New Jersey shoppers' concern regarding their safety.

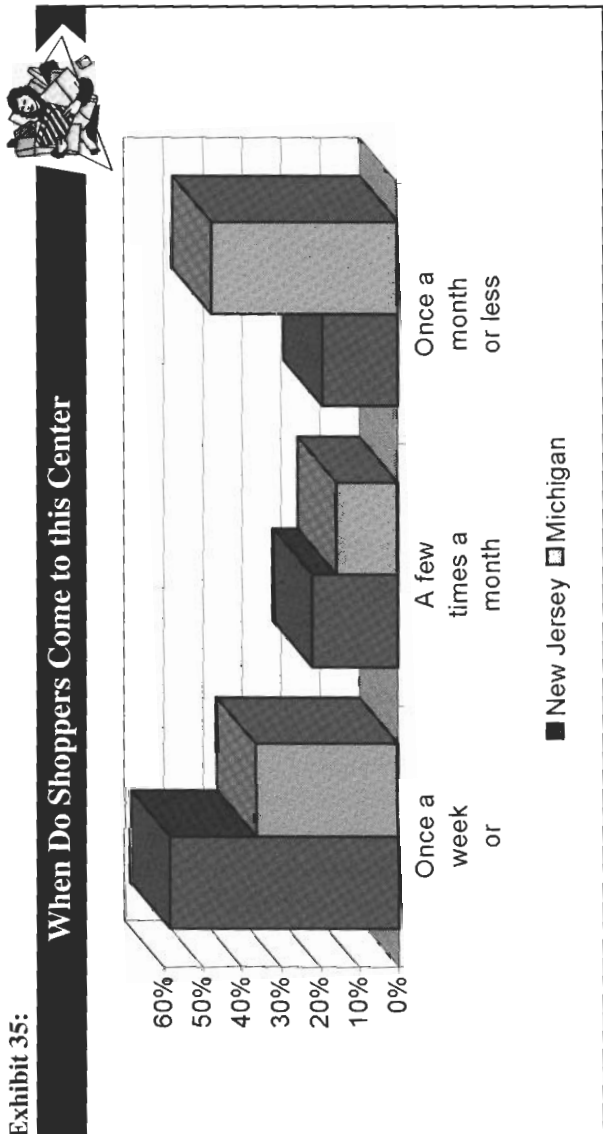
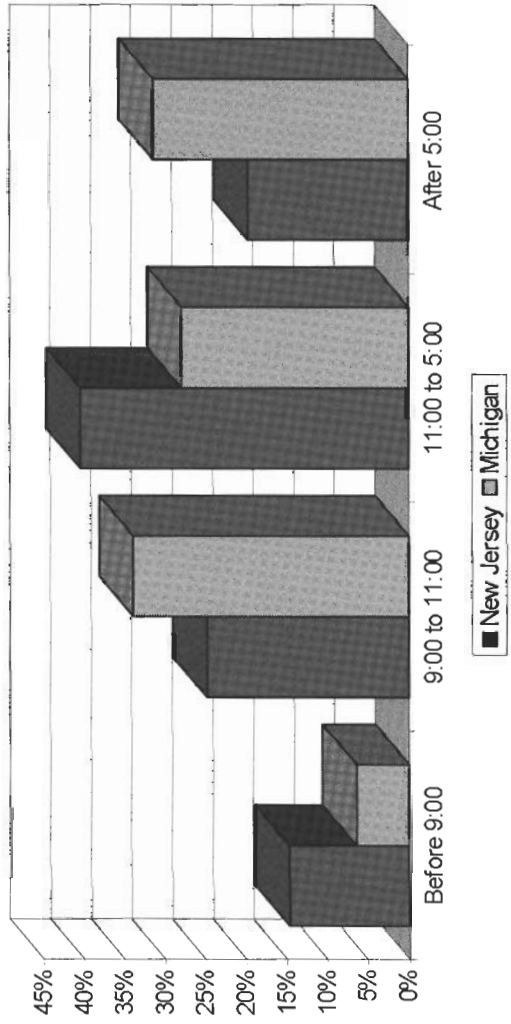


Exhibit 36:

What Time Would You Come to this Center



Comparisons Among the Five Centers

Early morning shopping times were clearly the preference among the entire sample of consumers. All except Fashion Plaza, New Jersey, found the largest group of consumers reporting that they would prefer shopping hours before 11 a.m. Fashion Plaza shoppers' most popular choice was between 11 and 5 a.m., with the morning hours coming in a close second (See **Exhibit 7: What Time Would You Come to This Center**).

When the shoppers are grouped by individual center, some interesting differences emerge. Recall that the shoppers were asked to comment, in part, on their behavior regarding the specific center in which they were interviewed. First, the New Jersey shoppers were much more likely to shop at that center on a frequent basis, with over 50% in all three New Jersey centers reporting shopping at that center at least once a week. The Michigan shoppers indicated an interesting split pattern: while shopping around once a month was the behavior reported by at least 40% of shoppers at both Michigan centers, the next most popular behavior among at least 30% of the shoppers was to visit that center at least once a week.

Second, shopping at a regular time was not a pattern among the majority of respondents at all centers, however. Much of the shopping behavior was need-driven, although more prevalently so among the New Jersey shoppers. The River City Mall shoppers were the least likely to follow any pattern at all regarding their shopping at that location (See **Exhibit 6: When Do You Usually Come to this Shopping Center**).

While shoppers' overall preference for shopping times at that center is found to be before 11:00 a.m., some interesting differences are found among the centers when considered independently. The shoppers at Lakeside Center, for instance, showed a marked distaste for evening shopping hours, with only 8.2% indicating that they would come to the center after 5:00 pm if they were free to choose a time to shop there. Shoppers at both Michigan centers were more favorable to evening hours, with around 30% of shoppers at those centers indicating a preference for shopping after 5 p.m. (See **Exhibit 7: What Time Would You Come to This Center**).

The retailers at the centers maintained some diversity of schedules, with several stores opening before the major anchors, or staying open longer hours. Some retailers had adjusted their hours for their particular target shoppers, such as the card and gift shop at Lakeside Center, but such changes were in the minority.

While retailers at all the centers had problems with customers coming when they were getting ready to close, the retailers at Twin City Center and Lakeside Center reported daily occurrences of customers coming after their stores were closed. Almost 30% of all the retailers also reported

that customers came before they were open a few times a week or more, with Twin City Center and Fashion Plaza retailers indicating that this was a daily happening.

Shopping Problems: Contrasts by Center

While shoppers at all five centers reported problems in scheduling and finishing their errands, some differences are found by center. Shoppers at Twin City Center-New Jersey, Fashion Plaza-New Jersey, and River City Mall-Michigan report that their activities conflict with the hours that stores are open. Maple Village shoppers appear to be the most satisfied with store hours, as over 50% report that store hours never conflict with their activities. Additionally, the majority of Maple Village and Twin City Center shoppers report never having to change their schedules to go shopping.

When the shoppers did not complete their errands, 50% of the shoppers report that they go outside the center to complete the errand. The remaining 50% were divided among going to another store in the center or returning at another time. The shopper responses were in stark contrast to the store or center loyalty which the retailers apparently felt existed. Lakeside shoppers were more likely to shop at another store within the center, as store affinities were clearly present there, while those at Fashion Plaza either returned at another time or went elsewhere. The research assistants confirmed that there was very little interaction among the retailers at that center, and shoppers appeared to choose one destination store, with no cross-shopping. Their consumer dollars were not redirected to another retailer at the center. Overall, only 7% of the shoppers attempted to complete their shopping at another center store (See **Exhibit 11: What Happens When Shoppers Cannot Finish Shopping**).

The retailers at all the centers, however, were convinced of the loyalty of their shoppers. Most of the retailers at all centers agreed that their shoppers did not get their errands completed, yet their view of their customers' actions differed somewhat (See **Exhibit 12: Do Retailers Think Their Customers Finish Shopping**).

1. Twin City Center retailers were divided equally between their customers shopping at another center, and returning at another time to complete their errands.
2. Fashion Plaza retailers instead felt that their shoppers were loyal, and would either return at another time or place an order at that store. In all cases, the business would remain within the center.

3. Lakeside Center retailers similarly predicted that their shoppers would come to the center at another time, or would come back to the store.
4. Most Maple Village retailers indicated that their shoppers would either return at another time, or would order from that store if a purchase could not be made. One retailer instead predicted that the shoppers were more likely to shop at another store.
5. Finally, River City mall retailers suggested that several behaviors were likely: shoppers would shop at other stores, return to the specific store at another time, or order from the store when the errand could not be completed.

Responsiveness of store hours and scheduling information was found to differ in the eyes of the retailers, when they are grouped by shopping center. Both Michigan centers apparently had much less control over their store hours, as over 85% of the Michigan retailers indicated that their store hours were controlled by the corporation or chain (See **Exhibit 8: Can You Select Your Own Hours** and **Exhibit 9: Retailers' Reasons for Store Hours**). In contrast, 75% of the Lakeside Center retailers reported that they could select their own hours, within a range of times set by the center management. The Fashion Plaza retailers were equally split in their control of hours, with only 30% of Twin City Center retailers able to select their own hours. The retailers were aware of customer dissatisfaction in some cases, as half of the retailers at Lakeside Center reported that their customers had asked them to change their hours.

The New Jersey retailers were almost unanimous in reporting that their customers would not be likely to shop if they were open earlier, while over half of the Maple Village retailers thought that earlier hours would appeal to their customers.

The retailers differed in their indication of store signage. While 100% of the Maple Village retailers reported having a sign depicting store hours, only 33% of the River City Mall retailers did so. This seems intuitive, however, since a substantial portion of River City Mall retailers share similar hours within the enclosed section; individual posting simply may not be needed. Over 75% of retailer at the three New Jersey centers did post their hours of operation. An interesting side note is that several of the signs at the New Jersey centers were incorrect or only provided partial information.

Early morning shopping times were clearly the preference among the entire sample of shoppers (See **Exhibit 7: What Time Would You Come to This Center**). Fashion Plaza shoppers' most popular choice was between 11 and 4:59 p.m., with the morning hours coming in a close second.

Shopping Habits: Shopping 24 Hours A Day

This was the original area of inquiry of this research. There was not as much support for this idea as the researchers expected. When asked how they felt about the statement "Stores which are open 24 hours are not necessary," shoppers tended to disagree as seen in **Exhibit 37: Shoppers: Stores Open 24 Hours Are Not Necessary**, however only 21% were in the strongest category. Retailers responded to the same question in **Exhibit 38: Retailers: Stores Open 24 Hours Are Not Necessary** with less enthusiasm than did the shoppers. **Exhibit 39: Stores Open 24 Hours Are Not Necessary** allows the reader to see the retailers and the shoppers compared for each of the possible answers.

When the individual centers are looked at in Exhibits 37 and 38 it is interesting to note the center differences. For example Lakeside shoppers and retailers seem to be less supportive than the other centers (43% of shoppers and 40% of the retailers agreed that it was not necessary). This suggests that there may be center-specific differences that should be explored individually.

Shopping Habits: Age-Related Shopping Problems and Preferences

When the shoppers were broken into groups by age, some interesting contrasts can be found in their shopping patterns, preferences, and reported problems as seen in **Exhibit 40: Shopping Habits: Age-Related Problems and Preferences**. For instance, older shoppers were least likely to shop on the spur of the moment, while almost half of those under 50 reported doing so. Instead, shoppers 65 and over were the most likely to follow a regular schedule when shopping at the center where they were interviewed. They were least likely to choose their shopping times based on need, while shoppers under 65 reported that need was a primary factor in their shopping.

Increasing age also appeared to have a strong relationship with shoppers' selection of preferred times to come to the center. While the majority of all shoppers preferred times before 5 p.m., those over 65 did not favor shopping after 5 p.m. The mornings and afternoons were clearly their preference.

Interestingly, around 50% of all shoppers except the oldest group reported problems with finishing their errands. Shoppers 65 and over were more likely to finish their shopping. In addition, these older shoppers were more likely to remain within the center to finish their shopping at another store, when an errand could not be completed as planned.

While younger shoppers under 65 had problems with stores closing before they were finished shopping, this problem was much less likely to

Exhibit 37:

Shoppers: Stores Open 24 Hours Are Not Necessary



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	22	25	10	29	31	117
	20%	20%	13%	25%	24%	21%
Disagree	56	61	23	42	35	217
	50%	48%	30%	37%	27%	39%
Neutral	15	20	11	14	20	80
Agree	9	18	27	18	30	102
Strongly agree	9	4	5	12	14	44
	8%	3%	7%	10%	11%	8%
Total	111	128	76	115	130	

Exhibit 38:

Retailers: Stores Open 24 Hours Are Not Necessary



	Twin City	Fashion	Lakeside	Maple	River City	Total
Strongly disagree	3	2	0	0	2	7
	30%	14%	0%	0%	11%	13%
Disagree	2	5	2	4	4	17
	20%	36%	40%	67%	22%	32%
Neutral	3	3	1	1	3	11
Agree	1	4	2	0	5	12
Strongly agree	1	0	0	1	4	6
	10%	0%	0%	17%	22%	11%
Total	10	14	5	6	18	

Exhibit 39:

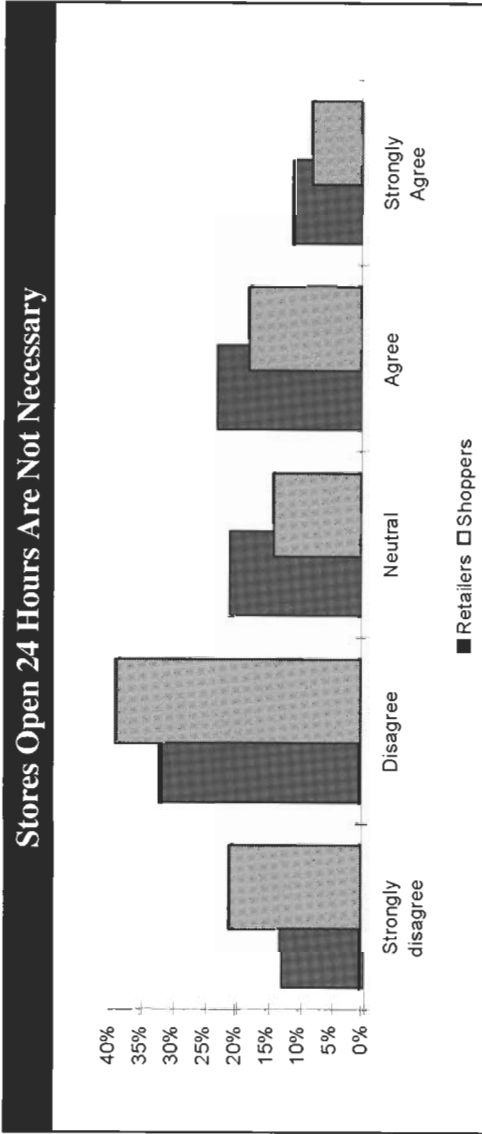


Exhibit 40:

Shopping Habits: Age-Related Problems and Preferences

Questions	Total	Age											
		<18	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
When do you usually come to this shopping center? (Customer could have more than one response)													
Spur of the moment	43%	10%	53%	48%	35%	43%	57%	43%	46%	32%	19%	35%	24%
Regular schedule	19%	0%	10%	19%	22%	25%	5%	30%	6%	26%	29%	40%	35%
Some time every week	9%	20%	9%	8%	10%	7%	4%	14%	4%	16%	5%	10%	14%
Only on weekends	12%	20%	12%	11%	12%	14%	14%	19%	5%	10%	10%	10%	3%
When you need to	41%	30%	56%	30%	46%	42%	55%	36%	42%	42%	48%	20%	27%
What time would you like to shop													
Before 9:00	10%	0%	15%	7%	5%	7%	11%	22%	6%	17%	8%	20%	7%
9:00 to 11:00	29%	11%	15%	27%	36%	38%	31%	30%	31%	25%	33%	27%	39%
11:00 to 5:00	35%	44%	47%	30%	29%	22%	33%	33%	33%	25%	50%	27%	54%
After 5:00	26%	44%	24%	37%	29%	30%	14%	25%	33%	33%	8%	27%	0%
I sometimes come to the center and do not finish errands													
Yes	48%	40%	48%	46%	47%	60%	51%	57%	49%	52%	45%	35%	26%
No	52%	60%	52%	51%	40%	49%	43%	43%	52%	48%	55%	65%	74%
The store closes before I finish													
Once a week or more	2%	0%	2%	4%	4%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
A few times a week	8%	13%	11%	12%	10%	7%	10%	10%	6%	10%	10%	6%	3%
Once a month or less	29%	13%	40%	34%	28%	34%	24%	33%	33%	20%	20%	6%	9%
Never	61%	75%	48%	53%	59%	59%	62%	60%	70%	70%	89%	86%	88%
When I go to shop, the store is not open yet													
Once a week or more	3%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	14%	2%	5%	0%	5%	3%
A few times a week	9%	11%	4%	11%	10%	21%	7%	7%	19%	15%	19%	12%	9%
Once a month or less	9%	0%	28%	26%	25%	27%	29%	46%	25%	24%	24%	12%	9%
Never	79%	89%	63%	61%	64%	52%	50%	50%	55%	57%	63%	79%	79%
I would shop if stores were open later													
Once a week or more	23%	70%	32%	23%	19%	28%	16%	8%	24%	24%	6%	11%	0%
A few times a week	25%	10%	39%	26%	25%	15%	27%	20%	12%	22%	5%	5%	6%
Once a month or less	17%	0%	17%	25%	19%	21%	16%	20%	0%	11%	5%	6%	6%
Never	36%	78%	63%	45%	45%	31%	36%	38%	65%	61%	79%	88%	88%

Exhibit 40:

Shopping Habits: Age-Related Problems and Preferences

Questions	Age												
	Total	<18	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
I would shop if stores were open earlier													
Once a week or more	17%	0%	2%	10%	22%	21%	17%	28%	22%	11%	29%	39%	30%
A few times a week	20%	22%	17%	11%	16%	19%	29%	23%	29%	32%	29%	6%	31%
Once a month or less	17%	18%	18%	24%	19%	15%	24%	14%	11%	5%	18%	11%	6%
Never	47%	78%	63%	55%	43%	45%	31%	35%	38%	53%	24%	44%	43%
I care if shopping hours are posted													
Yes	63%	56%	65%	68%	65%	62%	48%	74%	68%	74%	74%	45%	41%
No	37%	44%	35%	32%	35%	39%	52%	26%	32%	26%	26%	55%	59%
My activities conflict with store hours													
Once a week or more	17%	33%	23%	24%	20%	14%	19%	19%	9%	15%	14%	11%	3%
A few times a week	24%	11%	26%	32%	27%	31%	24%	26%	26%	15%	14%	28%	7%
Once a month or less	20%	22%	28%	19%	24%	22%	29%	14%	19%	5%	14%	0%	13%
Never	37%	33%	24%	26%	29%	33%	32%	41%	47%	65%	57%	61%	77%
I interrupt activities to shop													
Once a week or more	13%	20%	6%	19%	20%	13%	16%	7%	13%	11%	5%	0%	6%
A few times a week	19%	0%	24%	15%	19%	23%	27%	31%	13%	21%	10%	0%	6%
Once a month or less	27%	0%	30%	32%	31%	30%	23%	26%	24%	26%	24%	12%	23%
Never	42%	80%	40%	34%	31%	34%	34%	36%	50%	42%	62%	88%	66%
I change my schedule to shop													
Once a week or more	9%	30%	2%	13%	15%	2%	11%	7%	11%	5%	10%	0%	9%
A few times a week	16%	10%	14%	18%	15%	26%	14%	14%	16%	30%	19%	10%	3%
Once a month or less	24%	0%	33%	24%	32%	25%	27%	33%	11%	20%	14%	10%	15%
Never	51%	60%	51%	45%	39%	47%	48%	47%	62%	45%	57%	80%	74%
I shop on my way home													
Once a week or more	37%	20%	40%	50%	41%	42%	39%	36%	21%	24%	19%	20%	19%
A few times a week	35%	20%	37%	36%	38%	31%	43%	36%	44%	38%	24%	30%	16%
Once a month or less	14%	30%	16%	8%	12%	17%	11%	9%	13%	24%	29%	10%	13%
Never	15%	30%	7%	6%	9%	10%	7%	18%	23%	14%	29%	40%	52%

happen to older shoppers. Similarly, only the older groups of shoppers reported finding the stores not open yet when they go shopping.

The low incidence of these time-related problems seems intuitively logical, since the oldest customers shop at regular times, and would be expected to encounter less problems with store hour conflicts. Conflicts with store hours are the greatest among younger shoppers and seem to ease with age. Similarly, younger shoppers tend to interrupt their activities to go shopping, and these interruptions decrease with age. Older shoppers clearly plan their shopping as a major activity, so their behaviors are more likely to match the store schedules, which they know already. Younger shoppers are fitting shopping in between other activities, shop when they need something, and so tend to encounter conflicts when their schedules do not match store hours.

Older shoppers clearly do not want to go shopping later in the evenings. A substantial 85% responded that they would never be likely to shop if stores were open later in the evening. This is in direct contrast with those under 29, almost 90% of whom said that they would shop later. The acceptance of later hours appears to clearly decline with age. In direct contrast, the older shoppers do want to shop earlier in the day, while the younger shoppers are not as likely to do so.

These patterns can be useful to consider if the target shoppers in a community are able to be segmented by age. For instance, Twin City Center had regular coordinated shopping trips for senior citizens from a local retirement community. Store management may find it profitable to adjust hours and "senior citizen specials" to the earlier hours of the day, similar to successful strategies in areas of the country such as Florida.

Exhibit 40: Shopping Habits: Age-Related Problems and Preferences summarized some of this information.

Shopping Habits: Scheduling Issues Related to Employment

Respondents who were not employed at the time of the survey shopped more frequently; frequency of shopping appears to decrease with increased hours of employment. Those not working at all, and those working the most (over 60 hours a week) interestingly had the strongest preferences for shopping before 11 a.m., with evening shopping the least preferred by those unemployed or working less than 20 hours a week. Those working the most hours (over 50 hours a week) were more likely to report that when they go to shop, the stores are not open yet.

Weekly employment hours clearly was related to the conflict between activities and store hours. While 65% of those unemployed never experienced such conflict, an increasing number of those employed felt

just the opposite. In fact, between 60 and 75% of those working 20 hours or more a week agreed that their activities conflicted with store hours. A similar pattern is found, as hours of employment is directly related to the need to interrupt activities to go shopping. People working long hours report having to change their schedules to go shopping and also are much more likely to shop on the way home from activities.

The unemployed respondents were much less likely to want to shop later if stores were open, while the majority of those with substantial work demands reported that they would shop late at least once a week. Earlier store hours were preferred by over half the sample, with no apparent correlation with employment hours. **Exhibit 41: Shopping Habits: Scheduling Issues Related to Employment** illustrates these trends.

Exhibit 41:

Shopping Habits: Scheduling Issues Related to Employment									
Questions	Total	Employment Hours							
		None	<10	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
What time would you like to shop?									
Before 9:00	46	7	0	3	6	5	15	6	4
9:00 to 11:00	109	30	1	7	5	12	37	10	7
11:00 to 5:00	144	27	4	8	11	23	49	17	5
After 5:00	109	8	0	0	14	11	50	20	6
When I shop, stores are not open									
Once a week or more	16	3	1	1	0	2	6	2	1
A few times a week	63	13	1	1	9	4	19	11	5
Once a month or less	128	16	1	6	7	17	48	27	6
Never	323	59	2	14	37	43	128	27	13
I interrupt activities to shop									
Once a week or more	60	7	0	2	8	8	20	10	5
A few times a week	103	13	3	4	9	15	37	12	10
Once a month or less	149	20	0	4	15	18	64	24	4
Never	213	51	2	13	21	23	76	21	6
I change my schedule to shop									
Once a week or more	46	7	0	2	4	8	13	9	3
A few times a week	85	8	1	3	7	12	34	16	4
Once a month or less	137	17	3	8	17	16	49	21	6
Never	267	60	1	11	25	31	104	23	12
I shop on the way home from activities									
Once a week or more	193	18	2	7	18	21	84	33	10
A few times a week	199	26	1	11	19	31	76	26	9
Once a month or less	67	10	2	2	11	12	22	5	3
Never	75	36	0	4	5	4	20	3	3

Shopping Habits: Do Men and Women Have Different Scheduling Needs?

Gender did not appear to play a very important role in isolating differences among shoppers in the consumer sample. The females in the sample had clear shopping time preferences before 5 p.m., with only 19.6% naming after 5 p.m. as their preferred time, in contrast to 35% of the male respondents. Females were more likely not to finish their errands in the given center than the males in the sample. The women were substantially more likely to care if shopping hours were posted.

There were no real differences in having stores close before finished nor not open when the shopper arrived. Both males and females reported similar conflicts with store hours; however, women were more likely to have to interrupt their activities to go shopping. **Exhibit 42: Shopping Habits: Scheduling Issues Related to Gender** presents this information.

Exhibit 42:

Shopping Habits: Scheduling Issues Related to Gender			
Gender			
Questions	Total	Male	Female
What time would you like to shop?			
Before 9:00	11%	14%	9%
9:00 to 11:00	29%	23%	32%
11:00 to 5:00	35%	28%	38%
After 5:00	25%	36%	20%
I sometimes do not finish my errands.			
Yes	48%	43%	51%
No	52%	57%	49%
I care if shopping hours are posted.			
Yes	63%	54%	68%
No	37%	46%	33%
I have to interrupt activities to shop.			
Once a week or more	12%	10%	13%
A few times a week	19%	15%	22%
Once a month or less	28%	28%	27%
Never	41%	47%	38%

Implications

■ General

Several common themes were found in the summaries compiled by the researchers:

1. **Know Your Customers:** A clear mismatch was found between retailers' and shoppers' perceptions. Retailers believed that there wasn't sufficient demand for them to change store hours. The shoppers, however, clearly indicated a need for earlier hours and possibly some later hours. These extended hours would represent minimal adjustments to the schedules currently maintained, but would instead serve to fine-tune the store and center schedules. Perhaps certain nights of the week and certain early mornings could be identified as popular choices among certain target consumers, so that openings and closings could be staggered, without adding considerable hours and expenditures to the normal schedule.
2. **Twenty-Four Hour Shopping:** While 24-hour shopping is thought to be needed by a substantial proportion of both retailers and shoppers, such schedules are generally needed for certain types of stores, such as pharmacies or supermarkets. Generally such a schedule should be undertaken only when sufficient demand can be documented so that costs are covered.
3. **Extending Shopping Times:** Shoppers want to shop earlier in their days, perhaps on the way to work, or after their children have gone to school. Actual shoppers are found in the community centers early in the day, before many stores traditionally open their doors. Shoppers also would be receptive to a few additional hours on certain evenings of the week, given that store security issues are addressed.
4. **One-Stop Shopping:** Shoppers want to accomplish their errands at the fewest locations possible. They prefer to go to one center, when they need something, or on the spur of the moment, but would like to find the items they need and also have enough time to complete their purchases.

These findings, while only representative of five centers in two states, can offer some guidance and prompt meaningful questions to retailers, center management, center owners and center developers. In much of the country, shopping centers are in competition with each other, with stand-alone stores, and increasingly with alternative forms of retailing. As time becomes more and more important to shoppers, it deserves concerted thought and action by local, and national store management, and by management developers and owners of centers.

■ Know Your Customers

Retail management at all levels needs to be aware that in this sample, retailers did not anticipate shoppers' responses as the shoppers actually perceive their problems. If the rule in retailing is to "know your customer," then this study raises many issues about time and about the greater question of how well we know our customers.

■ Twenty-Four Hour Shopping

While numerous stores across the country are experimenting with 24-hour shopping, we feel that such a move should be made with care. When considering the idea of 24-hour shopping there are several issues to be considered.

1. What do the shoppers say they want?
2. What is the actual practice of shoppers?
3. How is this likely to impact sales?
4. How will this impact profitability?

Retail management must carefully weigh costs and benefits in determining whether such a dramatic shift is really necessary.

What Do the Shoppers Say They Want?

Look at Exhibits 39–42. There is little to indicate that shoppers at the five centers want twenty-four hour shopping. The pattern that was discussed earlier clearly suggests that shoppers are looking for extended or changed hours. This was found in both the Phase One focus groups and the survey research. Retailers need to break loose from traditional daily shopping hours and consider other options. For example, are there slow days in the week that are not profitable, during which a store or center might be closed to provide additional hours to meet the extended demands of customers? In the five centers they seem to be asking for earlier and later hours.

What is the Actual Practice of Shoppers?

One of the things that has been learned is that it is important to look at their behavior as well as their ideal situation. For example, how will your being open twenty-four hours a day really impact your customers' routines?

How is This Likely to Impact Sales?

The reasons for staying open would normally be to increase sales and profits for the stores and the center. This prompts the question "By staying open can you expect one of the following?"

Will this prevent current customers from spending more of their sales dollars somewhere else, or in an alternative form of retailing?

Will this encourage your current customers to increase their purchases with you?

Will twenty-four hour shopping bring in new shoppers who were not previously shopping with you?

These are not questions for speculation. They should be given some careful exploration for a specific location. The research indicates that while changes in hours may help retain shoppers, current customers of the five centers are not looking for twenty-four hour shopping. If this is true for your store or center then you are left with the question of whether twenty-four hour shopping will bring in new sales from new customers at a profitable level?

How Will This Impact Profitability?

Management must consider the likely additional sales against the additional cost of operation. For some organizations the additional cost of operation may not be great, but for others it may be extensive requiring full staffing. There may be hidden costs such as extra security, and the problem of how to handle specialized departments within the store.

■ Extending Shopping Time

The findings suggest that retailers, chains, and shopping center management could shift their present number of hours to times of high, unmet demand, such as those which our shoppers have indicated. Early morning and late evening appear to be times when certain consumers prefer to shop and could be investigated as possible scheduling adjustments. In addition, the tradeoff might be to reduce hours on less popular days and increase or extend hours on more popular days. There is a question about the profitability of traditional hours.

Shoppers are Not Satisfied

Shoppers are not satisfied with the store hours which they confront and do take their business elsewhere. The suggestion here is that retailers and

center managers may want to look at the number of hours that they are currently open. Using this number, for example 84 hours (12 hours seven days a week), ask what are some of the other configurations that might help to retain current customers, increase sales to current customers, or bring in new customers. Suppose that the center is open 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM seven days a week. Ideas could be explored like the following:

Two Non-Traditional 84 Hour Shopping Weeks

	1	2
Monday	7AM-10PM	7AM-2PM, 5PM-11PM
Tuesday	7AM-10PM	7AM-2PM, 5PM-11PM
Wednesday	7AM-10PM	5PM-11PM
Thursday	Closed	7AM-2PM, 5PM-11PM
Friday	7AM-10PM	7AM-2PM, 5PM-11PM
Saturday	9AM-9PM	7AM-11PM
Sunday	9AM-9PM	11AM-9PM

Know Shoppers Lives

Center management is asked to break free from traditional ideas and get to know your shoppers and their lives. What kind of time schedule will most benefit them? If they ask for extended hours as they did at the five centers, that does not mean more hours but it may be worth investigating a tradeoff. If you do not focus on your shoppers as retail or center management, you will be teaching them to shop elsewhere and to shop with other methods. Every time you force them through closure to shop elsewhere or through a different method you risk their having a positive experience and not coming back. Further, as they come to know other methods, they reduce their cost in terms of time, energy and information of buying someplace else.

Send Your Shoppers to the Competition

Traditional retailers can no longer set their hours without considering the impact on alternative methods of shopping available to their customers. Shoppers with time conflicts are currently being trained to consider the many benefits of these alternative shopping methods. With home shopping networks, catalogs, and interactive sales via computer, the store will not close before they are finished, and the store is open early, before they

go to work. Once these shopping behaviors are learned and new habits are formed, their sales dollars may be lost to traditional retailers forever.

This may be as much the job of center management as it is for the retailers. Centers can afford the necessary studies, and can help local retail management to have clout with the national store management. Retailers acting alone may simply create a confusing image for the center and hurt the overall center.

■ One-Stop Shopping

Customers want to get all their shopping done in one day. Customers have an overwhelming desire to get all the shopping done in one day, a preferred order, minimum number of stores, and the minimum number of shopping centers.

As time increasingly becomes a more and more valuable commodity to those with money, then understanding their time needs for shopping is crucial to success and this is a role for center management.

■ Names and Signs

What's in a Name?

An interesting side note to the New Jersey sample was that the interviewers reported that the majority of the consumers interviewed did not refer to the shopping centers by their designated names, but instead referred to them by the store which they considered to be the primary anchor. Thus, "Twin City Center" was called "Bradlees'" Shopping Center, as Bradlees' is the dominant discount-store anchor. "Fashion Plaza" was referred to as the "Builders' Square Shopping Center" by many respondents. This was particularly notable, since Builders' Square management informed our interviewers that they were planning to move to another shopping center in Fall 1994, although this decision was unknown to consumers when the interviews were conducted. Promotional ads which announce store specials and locations by giving the shopping center name only may only serve to confuse the consumer, when such unfamiliarity occurs.

Center management is at risk of losing by not paying attention to this. For example when the Builders' Square leaves it leaves Fashion Plaza without a recognizable name; this must devalue the retail space for lease. Perhaps center management should attempt to get stores to advertise "Bradlees' of Twin City Center" to establish center name.

Shopping Center Signage

In conducting their observations of the shopping centers from all possible access points, the interviewers noted that it was very difficult to determine store occupancy while driving past the centers. Some signage was poor, unattractive, and uninformative, with little more than the center's anchors listed on the marquee. Store hours and specialty shop identities were left to the consumer to determine.

■ **What Does This Say to Industry**

These results, while representative of selected shopping centers in New Jersey and Michigan, can offer some guidance to retailers regarding their selection and adjustment of shopping hours. While numerous stores across the country are experimenting with 24-hour shopping, we feel that such a move should be made with care. The question of 24-hour shopping must also consider profitability and operating expenses. Retail management must carefully weigh costs and benefits in determining whether such a dramatic shift is really necessary.

Our findings suggest that retailers, chains, and shopping center management could shift their present number of hours to times of high, unmet demand, such as those which our shoppers have indicated. Early morning and late evening appear to be times when certain consumers do prefer to shop and could be investigated as possible scheduling adjustments. In addition, the tradeoff might be to reduce hours on less popular days and increase or extend hours on more popular days.

An important finding, though, is the apparent lack of control that retailers have in being customer-sensitive. Many of the retailers that were surveyed were not able to adjust their hours to better meet customer demand. Both corporate headquarters and center management apparently have great control, perhaps without considering the possible profit generated by building flexibility into center schedules. Center management may actually be limiting their incomes if their returns are partially sales-based by not looking at this issue.

Such findings call into question the profitability of traditional hours. Consumers clearly are not satisfied with the store hours which they confront and do take their business elsewhere.

■ **Do It At the Center**

There are several reasons why the hours of operation should be looked at on the center level. This does not suggest that all stores should share

Shopping Center Signage

In conducting their observations of the shopping centers from all possible access points, the interviewers noted that it was very difficult to determine store occupancy while driving past the centers. Some signage was poor, unattractive, and uninformative, with little more than the center's anchors listed on the marquee. Store hours and specialty shop identities were left to the consumer to determine.

■ What Does This Say to Industry

These results, while representative of selected shopping centers in New Jersey and Michigan, can offer some guidance to retailers regarding their selection and adjustment of shopping hours. While numerous stores across the country are experimenting with 24-hour shopping, we feel that such a move should be made with care. The question of 24-hour shopping must also consider profitability and operating expenses. Retail management must carefully weigh costs and benefits in determining whether such a dramatic shift is really necessary.

Our findings suggest that retailers, chains, and shopping center management could shift their present number of hours to times of high, unmet demand, such as those which our shoppers have indicated. Early morning and late evening appear to be times when certain consumers do prefer to shop and could be investigated as possible scheduling adjustments. In addition, the tradeoff might be to reduce hours on less popular days and increase or extend hours on more popular days.

An important finding, though, is the apparent lack of control that retailers have in being customer-sensitive. Many of the retailers that were surveyed were not able to adjust their hours to better meet customer demand. Both corporate headquarters and center management apparently have great control, perhaps without considering the possible profit generated by building flexibility into center schedules. Center management may actually be limiting their incomes if their returns are partially sales-based by not looking at this issue.

Such findings call into question the profitability of traditional hours. Consumers clearly are not satisfied with the store hours which they confront and do take their business elsewhere.

■ Do It At the Center

There are several reasons why the hours of operation should be looked at on the center level. This does not suggest that all stores should share

the same hours but rather the hours should be thought about on the center level. First, in order to perform the kind of detailed market study that is needed to figure out what is the best combination of hours, it will probably require the participation of center merchants together. If stores act alone without benefit of study it could cause problems. One of the things that this study has shown is that retailers do not necessarily know their customers' time preferences. Second, stores acting independently lose all the potential benefit of center image, and may in fact hurt themselves and others. Three reasons for acting as a center are discussed below.

First, each center is potentially unique in the shoppers that it attracts or could attract by various times.

1. Each group of center shoppers is potentially unique. Which hours work for each center: early, late, days etc.?
Is your center on the way home from work or the way to work? Are people available in the day or night in your area?
2. Groupings of stores could change the way that hours should work in the center. What is the logic of hours in your center? Not grocery to variety, but variety to grocery.
3. Combinations of stores may impact which hours will work the best. Careful thought may need to be given to vacancies, and to the addition of services. Would it be worth the retailers' investment to pay for a bank to put in an ATM, or create a postal service station?

Centers will need to focus on what they are trying to achieve market-wise. It was noted above that different demographic groups had different time preferences. The question becomes "Is the center trying to retain its current market segment and increase sales, or expand to new customer segments - maintain sales levels through maintaining the same group of customers, or expansion of sales and markets?"

Closing at the Center

There are several possible definitions of closing. What does it mean in your center and at your stores?

Time of last sale - This is the time that store employees try and actually complete the last transaction of the day.

Time last person enters the store - Once in the store shoppers are encouraged to complete their shopping even if it takes considerable time.

Time employees expect to leave - It is clear that sometimes employees view this is the time to head for home or other employment.

There are undoubtedly other interpretations of closing times. It is an area that centers should pay attention to. Different meanings in the same center can cause confusion and hard feelings among customers.

■ Center Management

Center Management Should be Marketing Oriented

Center management should be a true marketing oriented management. This may be developed by the ownership of the center, or something developed independently by retailers, or a merchants association. In absence of expertise-based center management, stores could do this together. A merchants association could be a powerful force in putting in place a marketing oriented management. This management should pay attention to the role that hours of center operation could play to give the center a competitive advantage. The trick is not to be open all times but to be open at the times that provide the correct mix of profits and customer satisfaction.

Center Management Does Not Have to Do It All

One of the inherent difficulties is that some of the center stores may well have explored a number of market issues, like the hours of operation. Many of the anchors may have their own research services. They may have investigated what makes the most sense for a particular store location. The shoppers desire for one-stop shopping suggests that there is benefit to sharing information at the center level. Center management can make their money on knowing the stores well and the customers' reactions to them so that center management can work on center profitability.

Center Management Needs to be More Than Realtors

The leasing operation is a real estate operation. Drawing people to the center and increasing profitability is a marketing operation. Center management needs to be more than realtors.

■ Appendix: Background to the Problem: Retail Time Discrepancies

It has been said that in an ideal world, there would be a “normal” schedule that everyone would adhere to: everyone would awaken at similar times, be alert during their waking hours, and sleep when everyone was sleepy, conveniently at similar times. Presumably these hours would find waking hours coinciding with daylight, and sleeping hours matching darkness, so that households and organizations alike in a given society would have easily synchronized schedules. Research tells us, however, that such a utopian state does not occur. Many do not prefer the daylight-waking connection, however, instead finding their own best performance at other clock-hours throughout the day (Coleman 1986; Kaufman and Lane 1992).

One anticipated illustration of such a mismatch, or time discrepancy, is found in the hours of retail operation versus the hours when consumers wish to shop (Kaufman, Lane, and Lindquist 1991). As part of a larger society, consumers are often required to standardize their internal time clocks to external conventions established by the larger groups, manifesting a “public time.” (Lane and Kaufman 1989). The question remains whether consumers will continue to standardize to conventional retail shopping center hours, or whether they will abandon them in favor of self-scheduled shopping methods such as those available 24 hours a day through interactive methods or through catalog ordering. Consumers of the 1980’s and 1990’s indeed perceive themselves as “role-overloaded” and “time-compressed,” and seek to find products and services which alleviate their stress (Reilly 1982; Iyer 1989; Fram and Axelrod 1990; Fram 1991).

Darian (1987) examined the relationship between demographic characteristics of household and in-home shopping rates (mail or telephone ordering from the home). Her findings indicated that several demographic groups were likely to be in-home shoppers: housewives and part-time female workers with preschool children, single males less than 40 years old, households where the female head is aged 40–49 years, and households in the middle income groups. In Darian’s and other studies, home shopping has been related to the desire to save time, especially in the context of other activities and obligations which limit the consumer’s ability to shop during conventional hours.

The potential for home shopping may be influenced by the “match” between individual’s work times and the retail shopping times which prevail in their communities. In a previous study conducted by the authors, many respondents reported that their shopping times and methods were

selected out of necessity, rather than by preference for an ideal time to shop. That is, the obligation to a fixed schedule for work, child care, or school may somewhat pre-determine which hours are available for in-store shopping.

■ References

- Anderson, Patricia (1985), "Association of Shopping Center Anchors with Performance of a Nonanchor Specialty Chain's Stores," *Journal of Retailing*, Volume 61, Number 2 (Summer), 61–64.
- Baker, Julie, Dhruv Grewal, and Michael Levy (1992), "An Experimental Approach to Making Retail Store Environmental Decisions," *Journal of Retailing*, Volume 68, Number 4 (Winter), 445–460.
- Bates, Albert D. (1989), "The Extended Specialty Store: A Strategic Opportunity," *Journal of Retailing*, Volume 65, Number 3 (Fall), 379–388.
- Bellizzi, Joseph A. and Robert E. Hite (1986), "Convenience Consumption and Role Overload Convenience," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 14 (Winter), 1–9.
- Bluedorn, Allen C., Carol J. Kaufman, and Paul M. Lane (1992), "How Many Things Do You Like to Do at Once? An Introduction to Monochronic and Polychronic Time," *The Academy of Management Executive*, forthcoming.
- Coleman, Richard M. (1986), *Wide Awake at 3 a.m.: By Choice or by Chance?*, New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Crowe, Timothy D. (1992), "The Secure Store: A Clean, Well-lighted Place," *Security Management*, Mar 1992, Supplement p. 22A–24A. [3]
- Darian, Jean C. (1987), "In-Home Shopping: Are There Consumer Segments?" *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 63 (Summer), 163–186.
- Dwyer, Paula (1993), "Shop Till You Drop Hits Europe," *Business Week*, Nov. 29, 58–59.
- "Early Bird Special in NYC," 1991, *Chain Store Age Executive*, June, p. 31–32. [2,3,]
- Fram, Eugene (1991), "The Time Compressed Consumer," *Marketing Insights*, Summer, 34–39.
- Fram, Eugene H. And Joel Axelrod (1990), "The Distressed Shopper," *American Demographics*, October, 44–45.
- Iyer, Easwar S. (1989), "Unplanned Purchasing: Knowledge of Shopping Environment and Time Pressure," *Journal of Retailing*, Volume 65, Number 1 (Spring), 40–57.
- Jensen, Thomas D. (1989), "Working Versus Nonworking Wives' Psychographic Profiles: A Longitudinal Analysis," *Journal of Business Research*, Dec. 255–265.
- Kalish, Ira (1993), "Economic Recovery: What's Wrong with This Picture?" *Chain Store Age Executive*, August, 13A–14A.

Kaufman, Carol and Paul M. Lane (1992), "Biological Rhythms Between Spouses: Potential Contributions of Household Time Congruity in Marketing," *Proceedings of the Northeast Decision Sciences Institute Conference*.

Kaufman, Carol J., Paul M. Lane, and Jay D. Lindquist (1991), "Time Congruity in the Organization: A Proposed Quality of Life Framework," *Journal of Business and Psychology*, in Special Issue on Quality-of-Life Studies in Marketing and Management, Ed. M. Joseph Sirgy, Vol. 6 No. 1 (Fall), 79-106.

Kaufman, Carol Felker and Paul M. Lane (1993), "Role Overload and the Perception of Time Pressure," *Marketing and Education: Partners in Progress*, Proceedings of the Atlantic Marketing Association Conference," ed. Donald Thompson, 25-30.

Kaufman, Carol J., Paul M. Lane, and Jay D. Lindquist (1991), "Exploring More than Twenty-Four Hours a Day: A Preliminary Investigation of Polychronic Time Use," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18 (December), 392-401.

"Keying in On Convenience: Retailers Can Actually Double the Size of Their Trading Areas," (1986), *Chain Store Age Executive*, February, p. 11-15. [1,2,3,]

Lane, Paul M. and Carol Felker Kaufman (1994), "Retail Processing Time: Anthropology in the Shopping Center," *Proceedings of the American Marketing Association Winter Educators' Conference*, 281-287.

Lane, Paul M. and Carol J. Kaufman (1989), "Standardization of Time," in Marketing: Positioning for the 1990's, *Proceedings of the 1989 Southern Marketing Association Conference*, 1-5.

Lane, Paul, Carol J. Kaufman, and Jay Lindquist (1989), "More Than 24 Hours a Day," in Marketing Theory and Practice, *Proceedings of the American Marketing Association 1989 Winter Educators' Conference*, edited by Terry Childers et al, 123-130.

Lumpkin, James (1986), "The Future is Bright and Gray," in *Baylor Business Review*, Summer, Vol. 4, No. 2, 14-18.

Lumpkin, James R. (1986), "Shopping Patterns of the Rural Consumer: Exploring the Relationship Between Shopping Orientations and Outshopping," *Journal of Business Research*, Feb., 63-81.

May, Eleanor G. (1989), "A Retail Odyssey," *Journal of Retailing*, Volume 65, Number 3 (Fall), 356-367.

Park, C. Whan, Iyer, Easwar S., Smith, Daniel C. (1989) "The Effects of Situational Factors on In-Store Grocery Shopping Behavior: The Role of Store Environment and Time Available for Shopping," *Journal of Consumer Research* (Mar), 422-433.

Richardson, Laura (1993), "Consumers in the 1990's: No Time or Money to Burn," *Chain Store Age Executive*, August, 15A-17A.

Reilly, Michael D. (1982), "Working Wives and Convenience Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8 (March), 407-418.

Robinson, John P.(1991), "Your Money or Your Time," *American Demographics*, (November), 22-26.

Robinson, John P. (1990), "The Time Squeeze" *American Demographics* (Feb), 30-33.

"Shoppers Rediscover Small Centers," (1986), *Chain Store Age Executive*, July, p.69-72. [1,2,4,5,6]

"Sock Shops Brings Its Kind of Service to USA," 1988, *Chain Store Age Executive*, May P.125-6. [1,2]

Tantiwong, Duangtip (1985), "Understanding Food Preferences Among the Elderly Using Hybrid Conjoint Measurement Models," *Journal of Retailing*, Winter, 35-64.

Zinn, Laura (1993), "Retailing Will Never Be The Same," *Business Week*, 26 (July), 54-60. [1,2,3,4,5,6]3

Acknowledgments

This study has been a wonderful learning and growing experience. We wish to acknowledge the important financial assistance from the International Council of Shopping Centers Educational Foundation and their substantial contributions as friends and colleagues. They have helped us with references, insight, contacts, and support.

Managing a study of this sort and the finances is always a major project for faculty. The assistance, cooperation, and constant help of Larry Gaines has allowed the researchers to focus on the topic and not on the administration of the grant at Rutgers. Similarly Debbie Stanfield at Western Michigan University has helped make things happen so that pretest could be given, and helped keep the project going at some rough moments. The preparation of this final document was made possible by our graphics specialist, editor and creative supporter, Gary Goscenski of Perspectives Consulting Group.

There is much to do in putting together a study of this magnitude, and we would like to thank our many research assistants: Eric Yorkston, in New Jersey, for his tireless efforts and constant sense of perspective; Carl Taylor and Linda Maholland for their work as assistants and their interest in independent studies; Jennifer Kaufman who helped shape the important initial phases of the study and has always come to our rescue when projects have become larger than life; Cindy Masselink, the lead coder and retail surveyor in Michigan, for her constant questioning and improvement of the work; Jennifer Trewern, for her assistance in coding; and Art Henry for his data collection.

We wish also to express our gratitude to the shopping center management, and the retailers who took their precious time to help us learn. To them, we and our students are indebted. The shoppers deserve a big vote of gratitude, for without the hundreds that stopped and took the time to talk with the interviewers we would have nothing.

Finally, we wish to thank our students from whom we continually learn. They have helped us to open our eyes and see problems from new directions. They have challenged our thinking. They have attempted new and interesting ways of getting information. Their efforts and their thoughts have taught us many new things about shopping time.