

# CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF SHOPPING CENTERS AND IN-HOME RETAIL FORMATS:

## *A Time Diary Approach*

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## **Overview**

Predictions abound of future consumers satisfying all of their consumption needs via in-home shopping. While technology creates potential new formats, mail order catalog shopping continues to represent the most significant and persistent form of in-home shopping. The current study begins by examining the benefits consumers associate with shopping center and catalog shopping. The study then explores shopper and situation factors surrounding an actual shopping event. A consumer time diary is used to assess the importance of time-related activity.

The findings suggest that shopping center and catalog shoppers pursue different shopping benefits. The differences between groups, however, are not explained by demographics or selected personality traits. The choice of retail outlet, and the shopping benefits associated with each, appear to be related more to shoppers' buying situations and daily time use.



## ■ **Research Problem**

Recent technological changes provide opportunities for new in-home retail formats. The promise of in-home shopping has motivated manufac-

turers and retailers to begin exploring these new formats. Predictions abound of future consumers satisfying all of their consumption needs via interactive and non-interactive television or computer-based formats (Eldridge 1993; Zinn 1993).

At the same time, shopping center traffic has declined (Pearson 1993). Possible reasons for the decline range from consumers having less shopping time available (Fram and Axelrod 1990), to consumers having time available but choosing non-shopping alternatives (Robinson 1989). The current trends in shopping center and in-home shopping activity seem to suggest predictions that new in-home retail formats are replacing shopping center shopping.

Historically, however, store-based retailing has been remarkably resilient (Keep and Hollander 1992). Earlier this century, mail order catalog firms such as Sears, Roebuck and Company opened retail stores in order to maintain growth (Emmet and Jeuck 1950). L.L. Bean, currently one of the nation's largest mail order firms, enjoys increasing sales at its single store location despite the availability of its products via multiple in-home formats. Similarly, some store retailers have turned to in-home formats as a way of maintaining customer contact and increasing sales, though they generally do so to augment their current operations.

While the evidence regarding the displacement of retail stores with new in-home formats is mixed, in-home shopping sales continue to increase. Thus, the more significant research questions are: "What shopping benefits do consumers attribute to shopping centers versus in-home retail formats?" and, "How do shopper and situation characteristics affect the pursuit of shopping benefits and the amount of time and money spent with each format?"

Preliminary research highlighted the costliness of identifying television network and computer-based shoppers (see NOTES). Since future demand for these and other new in-home retail formats is difficult to measure (partly because formats such as interactive television have yet to be introduced), their projected success is supported with evidence of the continued strength of existing in-home shopping, particularly mail order catalog shopping. Prior to recent technological changes, in-home shopping was comprised of mail order catalog shopping (referred to simply as catalog shopping from this point forward) and direct selling. While some electronic formats may suggest direct selling, most are using technology to enhance benefits already offered by mail order catalogs. Indeed, it is L.L. Bean and Land's End that one encounters when cruising the shopping cyberspace of computer-based systems such as Prodigy and CompuServe.

Thus, the current research poses the following questions: "What specific shopping benefits do consumers attribute to shopping centers

versus mail order catalogs?” and, “How do shopper and situation characteristics affect the pursuit of shopping benefits and the amount of time and money spent with each format?”

## ■ Research Objectives

The objectives of the current proposal are: 1) identify shopping benefits that are important to shopping center and catalog shoppers, and suggest how shoppers perceive each outlet type in benefit areas similar to both; 2) associate shopper and situation characteristics to the selection of a retail outlet type; 3) associate the pursuit of shopping benefits to shopper and situation characteristics, and the amount of time and money spent shopping.

## ■ Literature Review

Marketing researchers have long recognized a variety of shopping motivations (Tauber 1972) and marketing theory suggests that motivations affect retail outlet choice (Westbrook and Black 1985). Though the shopping center and catalog shopping research is extensive, generalizing shopping center versus catalog shopping behavior has proven difficult.

Some studies suggest that catalog shoppers are generally younger, better educated, and have higher incomes (Lumpkin and Hawes 1985). But Darian (1987) points to contradictions in the research and presents evidence of significant demographic similarities between in-home shoppers and store shoppers. (The reader will note that while some studies are specific to catalog shopping, others consider all forms of in-home shopping.) Psychographic profiles of catalog shoppers have proven to be even less reliable (Lumpkin and Hawes 1985). Darian (1987) suggests “a willingness to take risks” and a “liking for shopping” may help explain these contradictions. At the same time, however, the author also suggests that situations like an absence of “discretionary time” may affect in-home shopping behavior.

Considering the shopper’s situation is important because shopping convenience is consistently found to be a primary motivation for in-home shopping (Berkowitz, Walton, and Walker 1979). But attempts to associate in-home shopping with the need for shopping convenience have not been successful. Situation variables such as having a spouse working outside the home, family size, the presence of young children in the household, time consciousness, and the level of community involvement (an indicator of a more time-filled lifestyle), have not been found to be con-

sistently related to in-home or catalog shopping (Lumpkin and Hawes 1985).

Studies of outshopping, the practice of shopping at retail stores (frequently shopping centers) outside the local area, further illustrate the inconclusiveness of existing evidence. Outshopping is motivated by the desire for increased product selection and price competition (Papadopoulos 1980). The inconvenient nature of outshopping suggests outshoppers are different from consumers who use in-home shopping. Most studies, however, show outshoppers to be young, innovative, and to have above average incomes—characteristics similar to in-home shoppers. In addition, just as with in-home shopping, outshopping does not appear to be affected by family size or age of children (Lumpkin, Hawes, and Darden 1986). To further complicate the issue, research has alternatively found outshoppers to participate and not participate in in-home shopping (Reynolds 1974). In short, there is still little known about why or when consumers prefer shopping center or catalog shopping.

The design of the current study is based on the premise that consumers pursue shopping benefits when choosing a retail outlet (Darden and Dorsch 1990). Some shopping benefits may be unique to a retail outlet type, such as the immediate possession offered by a store, while other benefits may be available at many retail outlet types, such as the use of a credit card. Thus, it is the desire for a specific combination of shopping benefits that drives retail outlet selection.

In order to consider the pursuit of shopping benefits, the current study also includes several measures of shopper characteristics, and a time diary. Shopper characteristics are included to determine the extent to which demographics or personality affect outlet selection. Time diaries are used to more finely distinguish the amount of time spent in shopping and non-shopping activities during the course of the day. Particular emphasis is placed on time spent away from home, time spent at work away from home, time spent shopping away from home, and the number of trips or destinations the shopper engaged in during the day. Where previous research has classified consumers based on the frequency or recency of shopping at a specific retail outlet, the current study directly measures the amount of time spent engaged in various activities during a day the consumer also shopped.

Time diaries have proven to be a useful method of measuring a respondent's time commitment to a particular activity (Juster and Stafford 1991). For example, recent research indicates that the amount of time spent shopping is higher for women that are employed part-time than for those employed full-time or for full-time homemakers (Shelton 1992).

## ■ Methodology

Direct measures of perceived shopping benefits, or the lack thereof, are difficult to obtain because the consumer may focus on a narrow range of shopping benefits during any one shopping event. For example, a consumer may recognize the benefit of immediate product possession while shopping at a shopping center if the motivation for the shopping trip was to purchase an apparel item for an event that same day. But if questioned at the time, would that same consumer also recognize the ability to engage in "people watching" as a potential shopping benefit offered at shopping centers?

To avoid this measurement problem, the current research separates measuring the benefits associated with each retail format from actual shopping behavior. The study takes a three stage approach. First, in-depth interviews were conducted by an experienced interviewer. The interviews were taped and later debriefed by two independent researchers. Each researcher developed a list of potential shopping benefits for shopping centers and catalogs. Each researcher also listed possible personality traits or preferences that were indicated during the interviews. Differences between researchers were resolved through an iterative series of list exchanges. The result was an extensive list of perceived shopping benefits for shopping center and catalog shoppers, and a decision to include a limited number of personality traits and preferences in the study.

The second stage was a random telephone survey to obtain subjects recently engaged in a shopping event. In order to be eligible a subject needed to have made an apparel or gift purchase from a shopping center or catalog on the day called or one day prior. Once identified, subjects were then asked a series of questions regarding their purchases. A request for a time diary for the day of the purchase followed the purchase-related questions. The time diary was typed verbatim as reported by the subject. A standard set of demographic questions followed the time diary.

The third stage began with the sending of a mail survey after a completed telephone interview. Each subject was sent a six part mail survey. The survey included the list of potential shopping benefits previously identified for the retail outlet type shopped by the subject on the day of the telephone interview. The survey also included a section requesting the subject to distribute a percentage share of their apparel and gift spending during the past 12 months across different retail outlet types. The balance of the mail survey contained measures of personality traits and preferences.

To encourage participation, subjects were included in a gift certificate drawing. Seven gift certificates were awarded to randomly selected subjects at the conclusion of the study.

## ■ Data

The research data was collected by employees of a full-time research center located at a major university in the United States. The overall sample was derived from a city with a population of between 200,000 and 400,000, located in the south-central region of the United States.

Potential shopping center subjects were obtained by using randomly generated telephone numbers possessing the telephone prefixes for the county. Prior to asking about a recent purchase, the operator first asked if the person receiving the call was over the age of 18. No other demographic prescreen was used. Subjects were called on weekdays and weekends. A total of 151 telephone interviews were conducted with recent shopping center shoppers. Of these, 108 returned useable mail surveys, providing a response rate of 71.5 percent.

Catalog shoppers having just made a catalog purchase proved more difficult to identify. As a result, a telephone list of self-declared catalog shoppers was purchased. The list contained names of individuals claiming to have made a catalog purchase during the past year. After cleaning for non-current numbers, random calls were made from the purchased list. A total of 100 telephone interviews were conducted with shoppers that had made a recent catalog purchase. Of these, 92 returned useable mail surveys, providing a response rate of 92.0 percent.

## ■ Results

### *Shopping Benefits Attributed to Shopping Centers and Catalogs*

The first objective of the project was to identify perceived shopping benefits derived from shopping centers and catalogs. Interview subjects were asked to relate a "typical" shopping experience when shopping for an apparel or gift item. The subjects were then asked to describe the appeal of a particular retail format (i.e. shopping center or catalog). In addition, the interviewer asked questions regarding browsing after making a purchase, the social aspects of shopping, and the similarity of shopping to non-shopping activities. A total of 29 shopping center shoppers were interviewed. The researchers coding the interviews agreed on 61 potential shopping benefits associated with shopping center shopping.

A similar process was followed for catalog shoppers. For the purpose of the in-depth interview, a catalog shopper was identified as someone who felt they did a "significant" percentage of their apparel and gift

buying via catalogs. A total of 18 catalog shopper interviews were conducted. Interviewers asked questions identical to those posed to shopping center shoppers. Based on the interviews, 63 potential catalog shopping benefits were identified.

The list of perceived shopping benefits was included in mail surveys sent to shopping center and catalog shoppers. Using a 1 to 7 agree/disagree scale, subjects were asked to rate each shopping benefit at the retail outlet type described in their telephone interview. Table 1 lists the shopping benefits most strongly attributed to shopping centers by shopping center shoppers. The list highlights at least five benefit areas: product selection (items 4, 5, 7 and 8), immediate possession (item 3), the potential to socialize (items 2 and 6), price appeal (items 9 and 10), and ease of payment (item 1). Two shopping benefits, immediate possession and the potential to socialize, are unique to store retailers. Store retailers can also more readily offer a third benefit, price appeal, due to the ease with which store prices can be changed.

Table 2 shows a similar list derived from catalog shoppers. The top benefit areas for catalog shoppers appear to be: self-regulated shopping (items 1, 3, 4, 5 and 10), comfort (items 2 and 6), product selection

**TABLE 1. SHOPPING BENEFITS MOST STRONGLY ATTRIBUTED TO SHOPPING CENTERS BY SHOPPING CENTER SHOPPERS (scale = 1–7)**

Shopping Center Shopping Benefits	Mean Score
1. When shopping at a shopping center, I can easily use my credit card to make a purchase.	6.47
2. Shopping centers are good places to go for people watching.	6.14
3. Shopping at a shopping center allows me to take immediate possession of a product I have purchased.	6.10
4. Shopping at a shopping center allows me to view a wide variety of unrelated items in a short period of time.	5.95
5. I can purchase a wide variety of products by shopping at a shopping center.	5.95
6. Shopping centers are alive with the "hustle and bustle" of human activity.	5.85
7. Shopping at a shopping center allows me to view a wide assortment of related items in a short period of time.	5.75
8. Shopping centers are good places to see trends that are new for the coming season.	5.73
9. If you wait long enough, you can pay less than full price when buying from a store in a shopping center.	5.60
10. Stores at shopping centers regularly offer some products at a reduced price.	5.58

(items 7 and 9) and ease of payment (item 8). Seven of the ten benefits, those relating to self-regulated shopping and comfort, appear to allow catalog shoppers some flexibility to fit shopping into their lifestyle.

The apparent difference in the means scores of the two shopping benefit lists is also of interest. Shopping benefits attributed to catalog shopping (Table 2) are generally rated higher than shopping benefits attributed to shopping center shopping (Table 1). The difference suggests that catalog shoppers are either more aware of, or place more importance on, the benefits they receive from catalog shopping.

In addition to associating shopping benefits to each outlet type, the current study also sought to compare shopping benefits that may be available from either a shopping center or a catalog. Comparing similar shopping benefits is important because the failure of one retail outlet to adequately provide a shopping benefit available through another retail outlet creates a competitive opportunity.

A list of 33 perceived shopping benefits available through both shopping centers and catalogs was developed. Again, subjects were asked to rate each shopping benefit using a 1 to 7 agree/disagree scale. Using retail image characteristics first identified by Lindquist (1974), the results were separated into five headings: service, merchandise, convenience, atmosphere, and institutional.

Again, the results (Table 3) suggest that catalog shoppers are either more aware of, or place more importance on, the benefits they receive

**TABLE 2. SHOPPING BENEFITS MOST STRONGLY ATTRIBUTED TO CATALOGS BY CATALOG SHOPPERS (scale = 1–7)**

Catalog Shopping Benefits	Mean Score
1. Catalog shopping allows me to shop at any time, day or night.	6.48
2. With catalog shopping I do not have to leave my home to make a purchase.	6.45
3. Catalog shopping allows me to shop at my own pace.	6.36
4. Catalog shopping allows me to take time to think about a purchase before actually buying.	6.26
5. When catalog shopping, I can easily stop shopping and resume other activities.	6.19
6. Catalog shopping allows me to shop in private.	6.17
7. Catalogs are a good source for unusual gifts.	6.15
8. When shopping with a catalog, I can easily use my credit card to make a purchase.	6.11
9. I can purchase a wide variety of products by catalog shopping.	6.04
10. Catalog shopping allows me to shop for the products I want, when I want.	6.02



from catalog shopping. In all service areas: contact with sales clerks or telephone operators, obtaining product information, and purchase satisfaction, catalog shoppers appear to value the shopping benefits they receive from catalog shopping more highly than do shopping center shoppers.

Catalog shoppers also rate catalog shopping more highly in terms of merchandise quality, and unique product selection. In only two instances, offering some products at a reduced price (Table 3 - under the heading MERCHANDISE) and buying from a retail outlet previously unknown to the shopper (Table 3 - under the heading INSTITUTIONAL), do shopping center shoppers rate the shopping benefit higher than catalog shoppers.

As might be expected, catalog shoppers also rate catalog shopping high on providing convenience-related benefits. The first measure under the heading CONVENIENCE (Table 3) suggests that catalog shoppers feel less rushed in their purchase decision. Catalog shoppers appear to believe, correctly or not, that products noticed in a catalog one week will be available in weeks to come. Shopping center customers appear not to have the same level of confidence. Catalog shoppers also rate catalog shopping high on gift-giving and shopping flexibility.

The remaining measures, shopping can be relaxing (Table 3 - under the heading ATMOSPHERE), and recommending a retail outlet to a friend (Table 3 - under the heading INSTITUTIONAL) are consistent with the overall tenor of greater awareness of or appreciation for shopping benefits available from catalog shopping.

### *Shopper Characteristics And The Selection Of A Retail Outlet Type*

Table 4 lists a variety of demographic characteristics plus six personality traits and preferences. The similarities between shopping center and catalog shoppers are immediately apparent. Unlike studies cited earlier, the current research found no difference between shopping center and catalog shoppers in terms of: age, gender, and household income. The groups were also similar in terms of: marital status, education, working outside the home, number of adults in the household, number of children in the household (measured in four different categories), and number of adults age 65 or older. A finding of no difference on key demographic characteristics weakens the argument for using demographics to segment retail outlet user groups.

Based on in-depth interviews and previous outlet research, three personality traits and preferences were included. Self-confidence, value consciousness and fashion involvement have all been previously used to

TABLE 3. DIFFERENCES IN SHOPPING BENEFITS RATINGS AS REPORTED BY SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS (scale = 1-7 agree/disagree)

Shopping Benefits Measures	Shopping Center Shoppers		T-Value
	Shopping Center Shoppers	Catalog Shoppers	
<b>Service</b>			
Sales clerks in stores in shopping centers (Telephone operators at catalog companies) make customers feel valued. (N = 200)	3.7 (1.42)	5.3 (1.09)	9.28**
Sales clerks at stores in shopping centers (Telephone operators at catalog companies) treat customers with respect. (N = 197)	4.2 (1.31)	5.6 (1.14)	7.95**
Sales clerks in stores in shopping centers (Telephone operators at catalog companies) project a positive attitude. (N = 199)	4.3 (1.24)	5.6 (1.22)	7.50**
Sales clerks (Telephone operators) at stores in shopping centers (catalog companies) provide information that is helpful in determining the appropriate product for me. (N = 200)	3.9 (1.42)	4.7 (1.34)	4.04**
Stores at shopping centers (Catalogs) provide detailed information regarding the materials and processes used in manufacturing a product. (N = 200)	3.2 (1.59)	4.2 (1.36)	4.48**
When shopping at a store in a shopping center (with a catalog), I can get my questions answered quickly. (N = 199)	3.5 (1.47)	4.8 (1.38)	6.28**
Stores at shopping centers (Catalog companies) stand behind their products with a satisfaction guarantee. (N = 200)	5.1 (1.20)	5.6 (1.21)	2.79**
Stores at shopping centers (Catalog companies) do what they say they will do. (N = 197)	4.7 (1.18)	5.2 (1.21)	2.75**
Stores at shopping centers (Catalog companies) accept a product return under almost any circumstance. (N = 200)	4.3 (1.75)	5.4 (1.26)	5.15**
<b>Merchandise</b>			
Products purchased at a store in a shopping center (from catalogs) generally provide the performance expected. (N = 196)	5.0 (0.97)	5.6 (1.06)	3.68**

Stores at shopping centers (Catalog companies) provide above average quality for the price paid. (N = 198)	4.1 (1.40)	4.8 (1.14)	3.65**
Stores in shopping centers (Catalogs) are a good source for unusual gifts. (N = 195)	4.5 (1.58)	6.2 (1.07)	8.77**
Products offered from stores at shopping centers (in catalogs) are unique. (N = 197)	3.8 (1.40)	5.2 (1.27)	7.24**
Stores in shopping centers (Catalogs) are a good source for unusual apparel. (N = 199)	4.5 (1.60)	5.4 (1.24)	4.13**
Each time I shop at a shopping center (catalog shop), I am pleasantly surprised by some of the products I see. (N = 200)	4.7 (1.26)	5.3 (1.02)	3.82**
Stores at shopping centers (Catalog companies) regularly offer some products at a reduced price. (N = 200)	5.6 (1.27)	5.0 (1.50)	-2.93**
<b>Convenience</b>			
With shopping at a shopping center (With catalog shopping), I can decide on a product one week and actually make my purchase weeks later. (N = 199)	4.2 (1.73)	5.9 (1.12)	8.57**
Shopping at a shopping center (Catalog shopping) makes the process of sending a gift to someone else simple. (N = 199)	4.5 (1.68)	5.4 (1.33)	4.20**
Shopping at a shopping center (Catalog shopping) fits well with my day-to-day schedule. (N = 199)	4.4 (1.82)	5.9 (1.10)	6.88*
<b>Atmosphere</b>			
Shopping at a shopping center (Catalog shopping) can be relaxing. (N = 199)	4.0 (1.92)	5.5 (1.25)	6.53**
<b>Institutional</b>			
I would not hesitate to buy from a store at a shopping center (a catalog I received in the mail) even if I had never previously heard of that store (Catalog company). (N = 199)	4.7 (1.72)	3.5 (1.75)	-4.58**
I recommend stores at shopping centers (catalog companies) to friends. (N = 200)	4.6 (1.63)	5.3 (1.33)	3.03**

\*\*significant at .01 level

**TABLE 4. DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS**

<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Shopping Center Shoppers</b>	<b>Catalog Shoppers</b>	<b>Chi-Square</b>
<b>Age (N = 198)</b>			
18–34	23 (21.7%)	24 (26.1%)	3.63
35–54	51 (48.1)	32 (34.8)	
55 and older	32 (30.2)	36 (39.1)	
Average age (s.d.)	46.5 (15.23)	49.6 (16.07)	1.41 (t-value)
<b>Gender (N = 200)</b>			
Male	22 (20.4%)	17 (18.5%)	.011
Female	86 (79.6)	75 (81.5)	
<b>Marital Status (N = 200)</b>			
Single	24 (22.2%)	18 (19.6%)	2.95
Married	64 (59.3)	61 (66.3)	
Widowed	6 (5.6)	7 (7.6)	
Divorced	14 (13.0)	6 (6.6)	
<b>Household Income (N = 181)</b>			
\$24,999 or less	26 (26.8%)	12 (14.3%)	6.79
\$25,000–\$34,999	13 (13.4)	20 (23.8)	
\$35,000–\$49,999	19 (19.6)	21 (25.0)	
\$50,000–\$69,999	26 (26.8)	20 (23.8)	
\$75,000 and over	13 (13.4)	11 (13.1)	
<b>Education (N = 200)</b>			
High School equivalent or less	25 (23.2%)	18 (19.6%)	2.45
Some college	34 (31.5)	34 (37.4)	
Attended four year college	18 (16.7)	12 (13.0)	
Completed four year degree	8 (7.4)	11 (12.0)	
Completed masters degree or higher	23 (21.3)	17 (18.5)	

**TABLE 4. DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS, (cont.)**

Demographic Characteristics	Shopping Center Shoppers	Catalog Shoppers	Chi-Square
<b>Work Outside Home (N = 199)</b>			
Full-time	56 (52.3%)	44 (47.8%)	5.53
Part-time	19 (17.8)	20 (21.7)	
Retired	15 (14.0)	21 (22.8)	
Not employed outside home	17 (15.9)	7 (7.6)	
Average # of hours work per week (N = 139) (s.d.)	40.8 (15.73)	37.4 (16.07)	- 1.26 (t-value)
<b># Over 18 Years of Age Living in Household (HH) (N = 198)</b>			
One	30 (28.3%)	22 (23.9%)	1.53
Two	59 (55.7)	59 (64.1)	
Three or more	17 (16.0)	11 (12.0)	
<b># Children Under 18 in HH (N = 199)</b>			
No	67 (62.6%)	64 (69.6%)	1.06
Yes	40 (37.4)	28 (30.4)	
<b>Children Under 6 in HH (N = 68)</b>			
No	17 (42.5%)	11 (39.3%)	0.07
Yes	23 (57.5)	17 (60.7)	
<b>Children Age 6–12 in HH (N = 68)</b>			
No	17 (42.5%)	14 (50.0%)	0.37
Yes	23 (57.5)	14 (50.0)	
<b>Children Age 13–18 in HH (N = 68)</b>			
No	29 (72.5%)	20 (71.4%)	0.01
Yes	11 (27.5)	8 (28.6)	
<b>Age 65 and Older in HH (N = 148)</b>			
No	65 (83.3%)	55 (78.6%)	0.11
Yes	13 (16.7)	15 (21.4)	

**TABLE 4. DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS, (cont.)**

Demographic Characteristics	Shopping Center Shoppers	Catalog Shoppers	Chi-Square
Personality Traits and Preferences	Mean (std. dev.)	Mean (std. dev.)	T-Value
Self-monitoring (N = 195)	7.1 (3.52)	7.2 (4.52)	0.24
Locus of control (N = 189)	9.6 (3.77)	8.8 (4.00)	-1.61
Self-confidence (N = 199)	21.0 (4.28)	21.2 (4.46)	0.25
Value consciousness (N = 199)	41.9 (7.34)	41.3 (7.27)	-0.56
Fashion involvement (N = 200)	9.6 (2.90)	9.6 (2.69)	0.08
Polychronic attitude (N = 199)	14.4 (5.35)	15.6 (5.34)	1.54

distinguish consumer groups (Reynolds 1974; Lichtenstein et al. 1990; Tigert et al. 1976), though not always applied to retail outlet selection situations. The current study showed no difference between shopping center shoppers and catalog shoppers along these three dimensions.

A relatively new measure, polychronic attitude index (Kaufman et al. 1991), was included because of its focus on time use. A high polychronic attitude index indicates the respondent believes they can comfortably accomplish multiple tasks simultaneously. Catalog shoppers were expected to rate significantly higher than shopping center shopper on this measure. While catalog shoppers did rate higher, the difference was not statistically significant.

Self-monitoring and locus of control were included based on the in-depth interviews. Self-monitoring is a personality trait that refers to an individual's propensity to adjust their behavior according to what is deemed socially appropriate for the situation. The current research used a previously tested 18-item measure of self-monitoring (Snyder and Gangstad 1986). Since shopping center shopping provides a variety of social cues, shopping center shoppers were expected to rate high on self-monitoring. Again, no difference was observed between the two groups.

Finally, Rotter's (1966) locus of control was used to identify differences among shoppers based on their desire to control their own situation. Given the relative flexibility offered by catalog shopping, catalog shoppers were expected to rate high on this personality trait. Results show

no significant difference between shopping center shoppers and catalog shoppers in terms of locus of control. In total, these results suggest that outlet selection goes beyond simple demographic variables and the personality traits measured.

### *Situation Characteristics And The Selection Of A Retail Outlet Type*

Before considering additional situation factors, the two shopper groups were assessed to determine if there was a difference in overall outlet selection when purchasing apparel and gifts. As part of the mail survey, subjects were asked to distribute the approximate share of their apparel and gift purchases during the past 12 months across four retail outlet types: stores located in shopping centers, mail order catalogs, television shopping networks, and stores not located in shopping centers.

Table 5 shows that shopping center shoppers participating in the study apportioned more of their apparel and gift spending to stores at shopping centers and stores located away from shopping centers, and less to mail order catalogs, than did catalog shoppers. Shopping center shoppers made 57.3 percent of their purchases at shopping centers, compared to less than 46.8 percent for catalog shoppers. Alternatively, catalog shoppers made 30.6 percent of their purchases through catalogs, while shopping center shoppers used catalogs for 10.9 percent of their apparel and

**TABLE 5. COMPARISON OF RETAIL OUTLET CHOICE FOR APPAREL AND GIFTS BETWEEN SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS**

<b>% of Spending on Apparel and Gift Items During the Past 12 Months According to Retail Outlet Type</b>	<b>Shopping Center Shoppers</b>	<b>Catalog Shoppers</b>	<b>T-Value (N = 193)</b>
Stores located in shopping centers	57.3% (25.75)	46.8% (23.99)	- 2.83**
Mail order catalogs	10.9 (15.53)	30.6 (21.10)	7.11**
Television home shopping	0.4 (1.79)	1.3 (5.00)	1.72
Stores not in shopping centers	28.0 (23.84)	17.4 (18.07)	- 3.36**
Other	3.4 (6.55)	3.8 (10.75)	0.29

\*\*significant at .01 level

gift purchases. These results are important because they verify outlet selection differences between the two groups.

If shopping center and catalog shoppers are similar in many ways yet different in their retail outlet selection, what can account for the difference? While the complete answer to this question is not known, information obtained during telephone interviews suggest significant differences in shopper situations and the types of shopping benefits sought. While the data reflects only a single shopping event, the results are consistent with shopping benefits identified earlier.

During their most recent shopping event, shopping center shoppers purchased significantly more items (5.8 versus 2.7) and spent significantly more money (\$181.86 versus \$66.87) than did catalog shoppers (Table 6). Shopping center shoppers were also more likely than catalog shoppers to need to "make the purchase today" and to "have the product in your hands today." Asking catalog shoppers whether or not they needed the product in their hands today may appear somewhat pointless since, obviously, they cannot obtain the product immediately. But the significant differences in terms of making the purchase and acquiring the

**TABLE 6. COMPARISON OF MOST RECENT SHOPPING EVENT BETWEEN SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS**

Variable	Shopping Center Shoppers	Catalog Shoppers	T-Value
<b>Amount Spent &amp; Number of Purchase</b>			
Number of items purchased when most recently shopped (N = 198)	5.8 (6.65)	2.7 (2.22)	-4.51**
Total amount spent when most recently shopped (N = 198)	\$181.86 (510.45)	\$66.87 (65.19)	-2.31*
<b>Immediacy of Purchase</b>			
"had to make the purchase today" (scale = 1-7; 1 = had to make purchase today; N = 200)	2.3 (1.80)	3.3 (2.23)	3.48**
"had to have the product in your hands today" (scale = 1-7; 1 = had to have in hands today; N = 200)	3.7 (2.41)	5.3 (2.23)	4.60**
<b>Reason for Shopping Event (N = 193)</b>			
Specifically shopping for item purchased or another product.	93 (92.1%)	64 (69.6%)	16.08** (chi-square)
Just browsing.	8 (7.9)	28 (30.4%)	

\*\*significant at .01 level; \*significant at .05 level



product suggests the two shopping groups faced different shopping situations.

Table 6 also includes an analysis of the reasons given for the recent shopping event. Approximately 92 percent of shopping center shoppers report their reason for shopping was to acquire the item purchased or another product. Fewer than 70 percent (69.6) of catalog shoppers gave the same reason. Alternatively, 30.4 percent of catalog shoppers report they were “just browsing,” compared to 7.9 percent of shopping center shoppers. The number of products purchased and the directed shopping activity suggests that shopping center shoppers were solving a more immediate shopping problem. On the other hand, it appears that many catalog shoppers were not necessarily in a hurry to make a purchase.

Additional situation characteristics are taken from the time diary and presented in Table 7. When compared to catalog shoppers, shopping center shoppers appear to have spent more time away from home on the day they made their purchase (43.3% versus 49.4%) but the difference is not statistically significant. The amount of time spent at work away from home also did not differ significantly between the two groups. Once work time is subtracted from time away from home, however, differences between the two shopping groups become more clear.

Shopping center shoppers report spending 31.6 percent of their time engaged in non-work activities away from home, while catalog shoppers report spend only 18.9 percent of their time in non-work activities away from home. As may be expected, shopping center shoppers also spent significantly more time away from home shopping. One final time

**TABLE 7. COMPARISON OF TIME USE BETWEEN SHOPPING CENTER AND CATALOG SHOPPERS DURING DAY OF MOST RECENT SHOPPING EVENT**

<b>Time Use Variable</b> <small>Note: All variables measured as a percent of total time reported, except for number of destinations.</small>	<b>Shopping Center Shoppers</b>	<b>Catalog Shoppers</b>	<b>T-Value (N = 162)</b>
Total time away from home.	49.4% (23.28)	43.3% (27.78)	- 1.52
Total time spent at work away from home.	17.8% (26.19)	24.4% (30.14)	1.48
Total time spent away from home minus time spent at work.	31.6% (20.22)	18.9% (20.66)	- 3.93**
Total time spent shopping away from home.	17.5% (12.57)	5.2% (10.98)	- 6.58**
Total number of destinations traveled to during the day.	5.1 (2.88)	3.3 (2.12)	- 4.66**

\*\*significant at .01 level

related measure was the number of destinations the shopper mentioned when relating the day's activities. Here again, shopping center shoppers had significantly more destinations to reach during the day than did catalog shoppers.

## ■ Conclusion

The final objective of the project was to examine shopping benefits, and shopper and situation characteristics, and the amount of time and money spent at a particular retail outlet. Shopping center and catalog shoppers show clear differences in their perception of the retail outlets' ability to deliver the benefits sought. These differences are apparent from both the shoppers' evaluation of the available shopping benefits and actual benefits acquired during their most recent shopping event.

The evidence suggests that both shopper and situation characteristics are important to understanding differences in the time and money spent at shopping centers and with catalogs. The absence of differences in shopper characteristics alone indicates that shopping center and catalog shoppers are, in fact, quite similar. The data also suggests, however, significant situation differences. The shopping center shoppers found themselves in a shopping situation that had some degree of immediacy, required multiple purchases, and required a moderate retail expenditure. The catalog shoppers were less interested in making an immediate purchase, made fewer purchases, and spent a more modest amount. In addition, shopping center shoppers were more likely to be away from home, once work time was accounted for, and traveled to more destinations throughout the day. In short, shopping center shoppers tended to be "out and about" with a somewhat immediate shopping situation at hand.

Situation differences alone do not tell the whole story. The fact that catalog shoppers choose catalog shopping for a significant portion of their apparel and gift purchases suggests that they tend to face different shopping situations. These differences cannot be explained by demographics or some personality traits. The evidence does suggest, however, that measuring and monitoring changing consumer situations will provide important clues to future retail outlet selection.

## ■ Notes

Initially the current study sought to explore the issues of shopping benefits, and shopper and situation characteristics with shopping center, cat-

alog, television network, and computer-based shoppers. Preliminary research found usage rates for television network and computer-based shopping to be extremely low. The need of a recent shopping experience for the purpose of obtaining a time diary meant a very low "hit rate" for research operators. As a result, the research budget was being expended without obtaining a satisfactory sample. With the cooperation of the granting agency, the decision was made to concentrate on the most significant in-home retail format, mail order catalog. Some in-depth interviews of television home shoppers were conducted and a preliminary shopping benefits list was generated. This shopping benefits list is available from the lead author.

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