



THE ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT OF SHOPPING CENTERS: CASE STUDY LEMAR

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Abstract

Economic, socio-cultural and demographic changes in Famagusta have altered consumers' shopping expectations; they expect good architectural quality as well as various functions and activities besides shopping. The concept of shopping has moved away from being purely a necessity towards being part of the urban lifestyle. Accordingly, recently developed shopping centres try to satisfy these new demands in a variety of ways. The new Lemar shopping centre in Famagusta, Northern Cyprus, is an example of such a centre. This study aimed to measure user satisfaction and identifies the impact of the Lemar shopping centre on the immediate local context by surveying 104 randomly selected consumers, local residents and shopkeepers. Statistical analysis of the resulting data was used to determine Lemar's physical qualities, functions and activities as well as its general impact on its close urban context and the wider city. Survey data is supplemented with on-site observations. This study reveals that the majority of respondents perceive the shopping centre as a positive contribution to the area, as an attractive building with a contemporary style and pleasant indoor spaces. On the other hand, it has increased the traffic on the high street, the area has become more crowded and air pollution has increased. This study suggests that consumers' and citizens' viewpoints should be considered in planning decisions in order to contribute to the success of shopping centres.

Keywords: Famagusta, Shopping Centre, Public Satisfaction, Public Space.

INTRODUCTION

There is a perceivable increase in shopping centre developments worldwide. This is especially visible in Turkey and other developing countries where large-scale shopping malls – which have become attractive places to shop, visit and spend time – have been newly constructed. Since 2000, the shopping mall has become 'one of the most recent additions to the lexicon of built forms' (Jewell N. 2001). In more recent years, the shopping mall has undergone further essential changes in form, increasing the leisure activity components. In particular, malls in Turkey have transformed into Disneyworld-like entertainment parks rather than shopping places. As shopping centres have moved towards social gathering spaces they have a great impact on the lifestyle of citizens (Aktas G. G. 2012). Hence, the contemporary shopping centre not only derives value from consumption, but contributes to active urban living. Several scholars have contributed to the discussion on the role of shopping centres in society and the environment (Erkip F. 2005; Amendola G. 2006; Jewell, N. 2001). Erkip et al. (2014) noted that globalisation has had a strong impact on the retail sector and particularly focused on the role of shopping centres in urban spaces in Turkey. Wakefield and Baker (1998) turn their attention to the influence of tenant variety, mall environment and shopping involvement on consumers' excitement and wishes to stay at a mall. Various scholars have observed that apart from the functional offerings, visual and aesthetical appearance or the choice of location may have an impact on the existing environment

and the users of the space. Finn and Louviere (1996) looked at the contribution of an anchor store to a shopping centre's image and consumer choice. Ng (2003) analysed how the physical environment affects the shopping experience and satisfies the psychological desires of the shopper. Oppewal and Timmermans (1999) evaluate the influences of shopping centre design and management on consumer evaluations of the public space presence. Evans et al. (1996) assessed the impacts of social influence and role anticipations on shopping centre patronage intentions. Kusumowidagdo et al. (2015) examine visitors' perceptions of shopping centre public spaces as creating a sense of place. Oppewal et al. (2006) considered how retailer and town centre corporate social responsibility influence consumers' evaluations of town shopping centres. Abdul-Ghani et al. (2011) discussed usability as a hidden quality in determining shopping centre success. Clearly, the shopping centre has gained much attention from scholars from variety of disciplines and viewpoints. The Urban Land Institute defines a shopping centre as a 'group of commercial structures with integrated architecture, that is built in a planned location, developed, owned and managed as an operational unit' (Kusumowidagdo et al., 2015:266, Kowinski W. S. 2002). But what makes shopping and shopping centres so attractive around the world? Shopping is one of the oldest human activities, dating back to the Ancient Greek Agora and Roman Forum. Shopping is a vital and ordinary activity of human beings (Ng C. F. 2003; Hewer P. & Campbell C. 1997). It is often a social performance with little exception, achieved together with friends or

relatives (Evans K. R. et al. 1996). Therefore, shopping is about with social gathering and may be seen as the most significant part of city life. The shopping centre is also a part of the built environment, influencing the image of the city. Shopping places can also be classified according to their sizes, functional characteristics and activities offered (Mui Y. K. et al., 2003, Ahmad, Z. et. al., 1996). Abdul-Ghani et al. (2011: 496) categorize trade into large and small scale retailers. Small-scale retailers include hawkers, peddlers and market stall holders, whereas 'superstore, discount store, hypermarket, department store, supermarket and shopping centres' belong to the large-scale group.

In the case of Northern Cyprus, large-scale retail has only become relevant in the last couple of years. With its small population (286,257), there was previously no necessity nor were there any attempts to build larger supermarkets or malls (DPO, 2011). Nonetheless, there is now a similar tendency in Northern Cyprus towards mall development along with the rest of the world. There are currently several new shopping malls and larger supermarkets under construction in the larger cities of the island. In Famagusta, there is currently one large shopping mall under development as well as a mixed-use building with residential, shopping and recreational areas. This research is based on this recent trend and focuses on the impacts of the newly established Lemar shopping centre in Famagusta. It is located in a popular area of the city centre, which has been undergoing renewal over the last few years. The Lemar shopping centre, the first of its kind in Famagusta, is part of this renewal, along with a large number of new shops, cafes and restaurants which have been established along the high street. It offers more functions than a conventional supermarket and has a distinctive architectural style. This research is mainly concerned with the following questions: What is the contribution of the new shopping centre on its surroundings from a functional, spatial or social perspective? Is the visual quality of a shopping mall an important contribution to the urban quality?

ASSESSMENT OF THE LEMAR SHOPPING CENTRE IN FAMAGUSTA, NORTHERN CYPRUS

This study deals with the newly designed Lemar shopping centre in the Northern Cypriot city of Famagusta (or Gazimağusa in Turkish). Famagusta is a small coastal city located on the eastern shore of Northern Cyprus, with a small harbour and a historic walled city, with medieval as well as Ottoman traces in its built environment. The city also has a newly developed area along the high street, İsmet İnönü Bulvarı (known as Salamis Road). The new Lemar shopping centre is located in the central part of the İsmet İnönü Bulvarı. Frequented by families, this area has become a new focal point of the city over the last few years, especially through the establishment of a youth centre; MAGEM (Mağusa Gençlik Merkezi) with a small city park and several sports facilities. In addition, the location is popular with students due to its proximity to the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). The Lemar shopping centre has three storeys, with a supermarket, its major function, on the ground floor. It also has some fast-food restaurants with access to an open area in front of the centre. Shops are located on the second floor with the third level serving as an enter-



Figure 1. New Lemar Shopping Centre, Famagusta.

tainment area with a Cineplex as well as bowling and play amenities (Fig.1).

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was obtained from a field survey and on-site observations conducted at various times of day and on various days of the week during the spring of 2015. The survey was conducted during March/April 2015 sample size of 104 respondents, approached at different periods of the day and week. The questionnaire was divided into six main categories: 1) socio-demographic issues; 2) frequency and aim of shopping centre usage; 3) physical aspects of the building; 4) functions and activities; 5) general impact of the shopping centre on its surrounding area; 6) general statements about user feelings towards the new Lemar shopping centre. In the first part, respondents' socio-demographic characteristics were established, such as gender, age, occupation, education, nationality and area of residence. The second part of the survey was related to the frequency and aim of shopping centre usage. The third and fourth parts contained 42 questions related to the shopping centre's physical, functional and contextual aspects, each with a rating scale from 1 to 5. Finally, the respondents were asked about their personal opinions and general statements on the new building.

The questionnaires were evaluated using Microsoft Excel, cross-tabulation, frequencies and an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA was used to evaluate the significant correlations between user profiles and the above-mentioned categories.

Sample Size

The study was limited to residents and employed people living/working within walking distance of the shopping centre (i.e. a distance of 800m or approximately 10 minutes' walking time). This limitation ensured that respondents were directly involved in the changes to their everyday environment and neighbourhood. Four districts were identified within an 800m radius of the centre: Baykal, Karakol, Sakarya and Dumlupınar districts. In addition, the respondents had to have lived/worked in the specified area before the construction of the shopping mall, in order to offer an evaluation of the direct impact on the neighbourhood and lifestyle. According to the 2001 census, Famagusta city (excluding the outskirts) has a popula-

tion of 40,202 inhabitants (DPO, 2011). Of this total, 2,574 live in Baykal district, 2,940 in Dumlupinar, 7,647 in Sakarya and 7,046 in Karakol (DPO, 2011) totalling 20,207 inhabitants. However, since less than half of these districts' areas are within the prescribed 10 minutes walking distance, this total was halved for the purpose of this study. Accordingly, the population is considered to be 10,100.

In order to determine the correct sample size, Daniel and Terrell's (1995) formula, below, for applications with finite populations was considered the appropriate calculation tool for this study (Cengiz, 2012:181, Atici, E. 2012).

$$n \geq \frac{Z^2 \times N \times p \times q}{N \times D^2 + Z^2 \times p \times q}$$

n = Sample size, *Z* = Confidence coefficient (*z* = 1.96 for 95% confidence level), *N* = Population size, *p* = Proportion of the sample in the population, *q* = 1-*p* = 0.5, *D* = Sampling error (% 10)

$$n \geq \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 10.100 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}{10.100 \times (0.10)^2 + (1.96)^2 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}$$

n ≥ 95

This formula yielded a sample size of 95; the actual number surveyed was 104. The interviews were conducted on Ismet İnönü Bulvarı and partially in the neighbouring districts. The respondents were randomly selected, rejecting any potential participants who did not live or work within the research area.

FINDINGS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1 shows an almost equal number of female and male respondents. This is not surprising as the shopping centre is located in a leisure and entertainment area used by both genders. About 65% of the respondents were Turkish Cypriots, followed 23% Turkish citizens and 12% from other countries. The dominant group, at 52%, lived in the Sakarya district followed by the Karakol district with 37%.

More than 60% of the respondents had lived in the area for more than 5 years, with 50% having even more than 10 years. This is important because the longer people live in the area, the more they are likely to be affected by the changes in their environment and the better they may be in evaluating these changes. The largest group of respondents (75%) was

	Weekly	Monthly	Never	Total
Sex				
Male	18	27	5	50
Female	15	33	6	54
Age				
13-18	6	5	0	11
19-24	10	15	1	26
25-34	9	15	3	27
35-50	4	16	5	25
51-64	3	5	2	10
65+	1	4	0	5
Occupation				
Employed/Self-employ	12	29	7	48
Univ. student	11	18	2	31
School student	7	6	0	13
Retired/unemployed	3	6	2	11
Housewife	0	1	0	1
Education				
Lower school	4	4	0	8
High School	12	25	3	35
University	21	33	7	61

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

between the ages of 19 and 50. The majority of the respondents were employed or self-employed (46%), followed by university students and school children. Interestingly, the shopping centre is least used by house wives (1%). This could be explained by the shopping centre's proximity to business and leisure areas where most people are working or studying, rather than to residential areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE SHOPPING CENTRE

Respondents were asked 42 questions regarding the physical aspects, functions or activities offered by the shopping centre. These are important factors for measuring user approval. The questions used a rating scale from 1 to 5, with 1 for 'strongly disagree' and 5 representing 'strongly agree'. The questions were designed to gather information on the following aspects in particular:

Physical aspects of the building: architectural quality, interior space quality, outdoor spaces

Functions and activities

General impact on the context/environment: pollution, traffic, general impact on the neighbourhood

Statements about user feelings

ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY

Considering the architectural quality of the building (Table 2), the majority of respondents indicated that the shopping centre is attractive (68.3%), has a contemporary style (62.5%) and that the finishing material is appropriate (75%). Additionally, 68.3% of respondents agreed that the new shopping centre is an architectural landmark for the region. Even more, the majority considered the building to be a landmark for the whole city (60.6%)

INTERIOR SPACE QUALITY

Table 3 shows that the majority of users (61%) are satisfied with the indoor design of the shopping centre. 81.8% agreed that the indoor spaces are clean and tidy, 76.9% found the indoor design organisation to be successful in terms of ease of shopping and 75% felt it offered ease of circulation.

OUTDOOR SPACE QUALITY

Architectural Quality	Yes	No
Shopping center is an attractive building	68.3	31.7
The building has a dynamic, contemporary architecture	62.5	37.5
The building's finishing material (large glass surface, steel) is appropriate to its style and form	75	25
The building is an architectural landmark for the region	68.3	31.7
The building is an architectural landmark for whole Famagusta	60.6	39.4

Table 2. Evaluation of the Architectural Quality.

Interior Space Quality	Yes	No
The interior design of the shopping center is satisfying the users	61	39
The indoor spaces are clean and tidy	81.8	18.2
The interior design eases the shopping activity	76.9	23.1
Easy circulation	75	25

Table 3. .Evaluation of the Interior Space Quality.

Outdoor Space Quality	Yes	No
The car parking in front of the shopping center is a good location	51	49
The location of the car parking in front of the center disturbs the appearance of the building	72.1	27.9
The location of the car parking in front of the center disturbs the usage of the outdoor space in front of the building	80.8	19.2
The shopping center is easily accessible for everyone	76.9	23.1
The access from the main street to the shopping center is well integrated to the existing traffic	42.4	57.6
The physical quality of the outdoor spaces of the shopping center is attractive	60.6	39.4
There is a need for street furnishing in the outdoor space	90.4	9.6
The lighting in the outdoor space is adequate	70.2	29.8
The outdoor spaces have enough greenery	12.5	87.5

Table 4. Evaluation of Outdoor Space Quality.

The design and quality of outdoor spaces are significant aspects of contemporary shopping centres. Accordingly, the respondents were asked a set of questions to evaluate whether outdoor design quality was a significant issue for the consumers in Famagusta (Table 4). Even though there is a large underground car park, 51% of respondents were pleased with, and preferred using, parking spaces directly in front of the shopping centre (Fig.1). Conversely, most of the respondents felt that this car park has a negative impact on the appearance of the building (72.1%) and compromises the usage of exterior spaces (80.8%) such as the outdoor area of the fast-food restaurants. The majority of users confirmed that the building is easily accessible for everyone (76.9%). Indeed, the entrance has no steps and is easily accessible for elderly or handicapped users.

As the shopping centre is located on the main road, respondents were asked to evaluate the access from the main street to the building. The majority of users claimed that the connection to the main street is not successful (57.6%). This corresponds with observations and statements of users on the site.

Although the majority of respondents (60.6%) found the outdoor spaces attractive, 90.4% felt a need for street furniture, 70.2% found the lighting inadequate and 87.5% claimed that there is not enough greenery. This indicates that the attractiveness of the outdoor spaces are not dependent on the location of the car park, green areas etc. Moreover, the users appreciate the simple existence of outdoor space in front of the centre.

FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Table 5 shows that respondents agreed that the functions of the building are proper (76%), adequate in diversity (51.9%) and satisfy the users' needs (67.3%). Similarly, the activities on offer are perceived as adequate (58.6%) and appropriate (75.9%). Moreover, a high percentage of the respondents indicated that the building serves as a landmark for the area (72.1%) and for Famagusta (59.6%) as a result of its functions. These findings overlap with similar developments in other European cities, where shopping opportunities are serve as magnets in a similar way as cultural attractions (Amendola, 2006:90). In that sense, it is not only the building's attractiveness that creates a landmark effect, but the shopping activity gives the building its landmark character.

IMPACTS ON THE CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT

According to the respondents, the shopping centre has a negative impact on the environment in terms of pollution and traffic issues (Tables 6 & 7). Responses indi-

Functions and activities	Yes	No
The functions of the building are proper	76.0	24.0
The existing functional diversity is adequate	51.9	48.1
The functions of the building satisfy the users' needs	67.3	32.7
Existing activities (shopping, leisure...) are adequate	58.6	41.4
Existing activities (shopping, leisure...) are appropriate	75.9	24.1
Lemar shopping center is a landmark for the area, because of its functions	72.1	27.9
Lemar shopping center is a landmark for Famagusta, because of its functions	59.6	40.4

Table 5. Evaluation of functions and activities.

Pollution	Yes	No
The shopping center increased noise pollution	62.5	37.5
The shopping center increased air pollution	64.4	35.6
The shopping center increased waste pollution	72.1	27.9

Table 6. Evaluation of Pollution.

Traffic	Yes	No
The new complex has increased the traffic	96.1	3.9
Parking problems in the area increased	84.6	15.4
The usage of cars for shopping is reduced	51.9	48.1

Table 7. Evaluation of Traffic.

cated that there is an increase in noise level (62.5%), air pollution (64.4%) and waste pollution (72.1%) as well as increased traffic (96.1%) and parking problems (84.6%) as a result of the new building. However, it appears that the shopping centre's central location, in walking distance to residential areas, has not affected vehicle use; only 51.9% of respondents reported a reduction in car use. This indicates, that the central location of the shopping centre and its position in walking distance to residential areas and offices is not affecting the frequency of usage of cars.

GENERAL IMPACTS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The majority of respondents perceive the new shopping centre as a positive contribution to the neighbourhood (Table 8). The area has become more urbanised (64.4%), shopping activities have increased (79.8%), use of other facilities has increased (74%) and the amount of other facilities has increased (68.3%). Additionally, respondents feel that the construction of the new centre has enlivened the area (90.4%) and that there has been an improvement in the physical quality of the vicinity (74%) as well as cleanliness (56.7%). On the other hand, a high percentage of respondents claim that rents/land values

General Impact on the Neighborhood	Yes	No
The building urbanized the context	64.4	35.6
The shopping center increased shopping activities in the neighborhood	79.8	20.2
The shopping center increased the use of other facilities in the neighborhood	74	26.0
The shopping center increased the amount of leisure facilities nearby surrounding	68.3	31.7
The shopping center increased the rents/ land values in the nearby surrounding	75	25.0
The shopping center has enlivened the area	90.4	9.6
The shopping center increased the physical quality of the nearby surrounding	74	26.0
The environment in the nearby surrounding is more tidy and clean	56.7	43.3
The area is more crowded than before	94.3	5.7
The area is less safe than before	60.6	39.4
The amount of greenery and trees in the nearby surrounding increased	15.4	84.6

Table 8. Evaluation of the general impact of the shopping center on the neighborhood.

	A	B	C	D1	D2
Employment	0.00		0.04	0.03	
Age	0.00	0.04	0.00		
Education			0.04		0.04

Significant: $p < 0.05$

A: Usage of Shopping Center. B: Physical aspects of the building.

C: Functions and Activities, D1: Traffic, D2: Pollution

Table 9. Results of the statistical ANOVA analysis.

have increased (75%), the area has become more crowded (94.5%) and is less safe than before (60.6%). Only a small amount of respondents perceive that greenery has increased (15.4%).

RESULTS OF THE ANOVA

The ANOVA was applied between and within categories, revealing. As an outcome, there are significant correlations between socio-demographic data (employment, age and education) and shopping centre usage, physical aspects of the building, functions and activities, traffic and pollution (Table 9).

The ANOVA shows that there are considerable correlations between employment status and usage of the shopping centre, its function and activities as well as traffic. The results show that the retired, the unemployed and housewives use the centre least frequently. On the other hand, employees and university students are among the most frequent users, especially for leisure activities. Most employees use cars to access the centre, whereas most students prefer to walk. Furthermore, employed people are most likely to find the functions proper, adequate and satisfying users' needs. The same user group found the existing activities adequate and appropriate. Employed people and university students highlighted the shopping centre as a landmark for the district, and the city, because of its function as well architectural appearance. Furthermore, they were most likely to highlight the traffic problems caused by the shopping centre.

The statistical analysis also indicates a correlation between age and shopping centre usage, its physical aspects as well as its function and activities. The least frequent users are the age group over 50. Conversely, the most frequent users of the leisure functions are between 13 and 34 years old. The same age group accesses the shopping centre most frequently by walking or cycling. Users between 24 and 50 years of age found the building attractive and appealing and the age group between 19 and 24 sees the building as a landmark for the district because of its architectural quality. Users between 19 and 50 years of age are unsatisfied with the quality of the interior space, but the same age group is satisfied with the location of the parking spaces in front of the shopping centre. This result is not surprising as the majority of Turkish Cypriots, according to personal observations, generally prefer to minimise walking distances. The age group between 19 and 24 found the functions and activities of the shopping centre appropriate and adequate, but this age group did not consider the building to be a landmark for the region nor for the city.

Additionally, there is a significant correlation between education and functions and activities as well as traffic. Those with high school education or above are more satisfied with the appropriateness of the functions, but found the diversity of existing functions and activities inadequate. The same user group emphasised the building as a regional landmark, but pointed out that the shopping centre has increased the

traffic intensity and car parking problems in the area. Personal observations show that this is related to standard working and studying hours. During weekdays and on weekend mornings there is less crowdedness, but every afternoon between 16.30 p.m. and 18.30 p.m. the area is overcrowded and there are limited parking spaces. On Saturdays after 10.00 a.m., the district is very crowded until night time while on Sundays the mornings are quiet, with crowding from 14.00 p.m. until night time.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper discusses the impacts of the Lemar shopping centre in Famagusta in Northern Cyprus, the first of its kind from a functional as well as architectural perspective. The aim was to understand its contribution to the immediate urban context and how it is perceived. It was intended to get feedback in particular from people who knew the area before the new construction. Observations and interviews with local users show that the liveliness of the neighbourhood the Ismet İnönü Bulvarı has increased since the shopping centre was built. Furthermore, the area has become a magnet and the physical appearance of the environment, as well as the quality of the public urban space, has visibly improved. Indeed, the majority of users refer to the newly designed buildings as a regional and city landmark. Additionally, the majority of respondents perceived the shopping centre as a positive contribution to the area, as an attractive building with a contemporary style and pleasant indoor spaces. It may consequently be concluded that the contemporary shopping centre, if its design is meaningful and appealing to consumers and citizens, is not just a place for consumption, but may contribute to active urban life.

Since, the shopping centre, as a building typology, is relatively new to the urban context of Northern Cyprus, this study's findings could act as a guide for future shopping centre design proposals as well as local and government authority planning decisions.

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