

Research Observation Report on a Public Mall

by Tedi tedu

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Research Observation Report on a Public Mall

RESEARCH OBSERVATION REPORT ON A PUBLIC MALL 2

Running head: RESEARCH OBSERVATION REPORT ON A PUBLIC MALL 2

Research Observation Report on a Public Mall

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Research Observation Report on a Public Mall

For my research, I picked a nearby shopping mall where I made regular observations.¹ From outside, I noticed a spacious parking lot that was mostly filled with saloon vehicles and an occasional truck delivering particular goods.^{2,3} Most vehicles were personal or family cars, and I rarely saw any public vehicle⁴ in the parking lot.⁵ The mall had an elegant but simple⁶ outline, with a spacious high-ceiling black-and-white tiled foyer. From the entrance, I could observe the numerous rows of shops that surrounded an open central area containing several pairs of wooden flat-arm benches facing each other. The spacious central area⁷ also had a well-crafted white towering indoor marble fountain, which, together with the sunlight, added a natural ambiance to the mall. The shops, which spanned three stories upwards, had large, spotless bay windows

and clear-glass French doors, which allowed one to effortlessly view the products from outside.⁸ I noticed several electronics and apparel shops, an exquisite car showroom, and a fleet of modest-sized supermarkets on the ground floor.

The first floor had several ice cream parlours,⁹ restaurants, and diners, together with a well-stocked serene bar in one corner. These food outlets served a wide array of delicacies and cuisines, both local and international such as teriyaki. On the second floor, I could observe a string of massage and nail parlours,¹⁰ barbershops, and boutique stores. The third floor, on the other hand, was almost entirely made up of executive offices with wooden doors and covered windows, two clinics including a dental one, and two banks.¹¹ The executive¹² offices had tags on their doors bearing the names of their occupants, and each of the banks had security personnel stationed outside their entrances.¹³ The mall had an almost euphoric feel to it, especially¹⁴ due to the slow jazz music subtly playing in the background. Occasionally, this would be interrupted by random¹⁵ announcements in an elegant voice over a hidden public address system. Nonetheless, several bold and flashy colourful¹⁶ signs animated the mall, as well as the bright neon lights glaring from some of the shops' entrances.¹⁷

Numerous people entered the mall each minute, and I could consistently observe movements within the spacious parking lot. Civilians from all walks of life thronged the mall, including Blacks, Asians, and Whites in almost equal measure. However, the ground and first floors were frequently occupied by young, vibrant individuals in their trendy footwear and ferociously imposing outfits, mostly walking in groups, freely chatting, and laughing away. They mostly hung around the gaming arcade and photo booth on the ground floor where they noisily played electronic games or engaged in loud¹⁸ friendly banter, as well as in the ice cream parlour¹⁹ on the second floor. The salespersons could

be seen²⁰ frequently engaged²¹ in conversations with their customers, who were either unmoved or convinced by their efforts. Occasionally, the salespersons stepped out of their shops to engage the people walking by, frequently adopting a persuasive demeanour²² to capture their interests. The ground floor also had a segregated children's play area where they ran around playfully, and mothers²³ and families habitually walked in with their toddlers and children, but mostly in the morning hours.

The food outlets on the first floor experienced a disproportionate increase in activity around midday, with families and groups mostly coming by to buy the wide variety of delicacies offered in the outlets. The customers were involved in routine friendly exchanges between the meals, with waiters and waitresses constantly²⁴ hovering around to serve them. Occasionally, the waitresses bundled in groups of two or three to engage in silent but animated chit-chat. Conversely, the bar on the first floor became livelier in the evenings, playing their music louder as more people walked in. More commonly, they were groups of young adults who seemed cozy with each other²⁵, or an occasional juvenile curious to observe what was going on in the bar. Also, older couples came by in a relaxed demeanour²⁶, slowly making their way to the bar. A live band also entered the bar, dragging their musical equipment alongside to entertain the crowd inside.

On the second floor, the barbers and parlour²⁷ workers commonly engaged in warm²⁸ friendly casual banter in between serving their customers. However, the third floor had a constant aura of tension and nonchalance, with people in formal outfits, slacks and²⁹ khakis seeming occupied with one thing or the other. The individuals there often walked briskly, routinely making long serious phone calls or stopping only briefly to greet each other before proceeding with their activities. Also, the majority of their interactions seemed formal and

indifferent. The two clinics commonly had few patients, and medical emergencies were rare. Conversely, the banks had a steady stream of customers, although they increased in number at specific times of the day, such as early in the morning. Activities on the third floor slowed to an almost complete end after five o'clock in the evening, leaving only the security personnel outside the banks.

One of the security personnel particularly piqued my interest. Always dressed in a plain black uniform and a black pair of leather boots, the guard constantly³⁰ exuded composure and confidence, especially when addressing individuals who asked for directions. He was also excessively alert and quickly responded to calls or directives from his superior. He also inquired about my presence, which indicated that he noticed how long I had spent in the mall. Furthermore, he rarely engaged in conversation, only giving brief answers and direct replies whenever he was asked^{31 32} a question. He seemingly worked a twelve-hour shift since I noticed that he was not present after five o'clock in the evening and before five o'clock in the subsequent morning. Additionally, he remained stationed outside the bank throughout his shift, only going for a brief break at noon.

The observation experience taught me several things about myself as a researcher. I prefer having total control over the research project, such that the quality of my research is not affected by my reliance on other individuals. I wanted to be involved in each step of the research, not only to increase my control but also to understand how I could improve the research project.^{33 34} I also noticed that whenever I was interrupted in my research, I tended to ignore the distraction unless it was helpful to my research. Nonetheless, I realized that I can³⁵ be resourceful and ingenious if my resources are limited since I recorded my observations even when I did not have my notebook. Also, I learned that I

am naturally curious since I was eager to understand why some people in the mall behaved the way they did, such as the security guard who deliberately avoided conversations with other people. As such, I would best describe myself as an enthusiastic researcher with a narrow focus and a preference for total control over the direction of the research project.³⁶

I also realized that I employ a perfectionist mindset when doing my research, such that my³⁷ biggest worry as a researcher is the thought of not completing the research process perfectly.³⁸ However, this mindset was occasionally a source of frustration since it created additional internal pressure to meet extra high standards. For instance, I spent a lot of time refining my observation skills through online tutorials and reading books to ensure that I was exceptional in my observation. Consequently, I realized that I was heavily invested in the research since I cared about every single outcome. Although I tried not to, I took most of my failures during the research³⁹ personally, which motivated me to do better but also⁴⁰ added to the internal pressure to achieve perfectionism. This⁴¹ made me realize that the outcome-focused mindset could be my biggest drawback as a researcher. Therefore, I need to learn to be more process-focused by enhancing my mindfulness during research.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Handwritten Field Observation Notes

1.	<i>For my research, I picked a nearby shopping mall where I made regular observations.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
2.	<i>was mostly filled</i>	Passive voice misuse	Clarity
3.	<i>was mostly filled</i>	Passive voice misuse	Clarity
4.	<i>From outside, I noticed a spacious parking lot that was mostly filled with saloon vehicles and an occasional truck delivering particular goods.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
5.	vehicle → conveyance	Word choice	Engagement
6.	simple → straightforward	Word choice	Engagement
7.	area → room	Word choice	Engagement
8.	to view the products from outside effortlessly	Inappropriate colloquialisms	Delivery
9.	parlours → parlors	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
10.	parlours → parlors	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
11.	<i>The third floor, on the other hand, was almost entirely made up of executive offices with wooden doors and covered windows, two clinics including a dental one, and two banks.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
12.	executive → administrative	Word choice	Engagement
13.	<i>The executive offices had tags on their doors bearing the names of their occupants, and each of the banks had security personnel stationed outside their entrances.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
14.	especially → mainly, primarily, mostly	Word choice	Engagement
15.	<i>Occasionally, this would be interrupted</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity

by random announcements in an elegant voice over a hidden public address system.

16.	colourful → colorful	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
17.	<i>Nonetheless, several bold and flashy colourful signs animated the mall, as well as the bright neon lights glaring from some of the shops' entrances.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
18.	loud,	Comma misuse within clauses	Correctness
19.	parlour → parlor	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
20.	be seen	Passive voice misuse	Clarity
21.	engaged → been involved, involved	Word choice	Engagement
22.	demeanour → demeanor	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
23.	, and mothers → . Mothers	Hard-to-read text	Clarity
24.	eonstantly → always	Word choice	Engagement
25.	other,	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Correctness
26.	demeanour → demeanor	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
27.	parlour → parlor	Mixed dialects of English	Correctness
28.	warm,	Comma misuse within clauses	Correctness
29.	, and	Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	Correctness
30.	eonstantly → always	Word choice	Engagement
31.	he was	Wordy sentences	Clarity

32.	<i>was asked</i>	Passive voice misuse	Clarity
33.	research → study	Word choice	Engagement
34.	<i>I wanted to be involved in each step of the research, not only to increase my control but also to understand how I could improve the research project.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
35.	can → could	Faulty tense sequence	Correctness
36.	<i>As such, I would best describe myself as an enthusiastic researcher with a narrow focus and a preference for total control over the direction of the research project.</i>	Unclear sentences	Clarity
37.	, such that my → . My	Hard-to-read text	Clarity
38.	perfectly → correctly	Word choice	Engagement
39.	research → study	Word choice	Engagement
40.	but also → and	Wordy sentences	Clarity
41.	<i>This</i>	Intricate text	Clarity