The Role of Public Interior Spaces in the Socialization of Active Elderly Individuals

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Abstract

It is an indisputable fact that interaction and socialization between individuals are important for a healthy society. For this reason, it is essential to develop spaces that provide group and community interaction between all ages and all members of the society. This study is based on the assumption that the interactions of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over with individuals in public interior spaces are important in increasing their quality of life. In order to ensure this interaction, it is thought that the supportive role of public interiors should be investigated. The aim of the study is to evaluate the contribution of shopping center spaces to interaction and socialization from the eyes of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over and to determine the social interaction levels of these individuals in the shopping center. For this purpose, the study was built on social interaction, one of the spatial quality parameters. The research method consists of 2 steps: field observation on the selected shopping center and face-to-face survey. The findings obtained from the study conducted with a group of 200 people were evaluated by making descriptive analysis in the SPSS program. According to the research data, the majority of the participants are of the opinion that the areas and activities that will support social interaction are insufficient in the shopping centers where the study is conducted. In the study, it was determined that the majority of the participants used the shopping place especially for passive socialization and enduring socialization. The use of the space for fleeting sociability, however, took place in the background. It is thought that the reason for this is that the shopping center cannot offer sufficient physical conditions and activity opportunities in terms of space design.

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INTRODUCTION

When it comes to old age, the first thing that comes to mind is; They are dependent, weak, disabled, disturbed, mentally incompetent, in need of care, lonely and unhappy, and have weakened social relations, who are identified with negative qualities. Contrary to these beliefs and labels, most older people are not like that. It is ignored that most of the elderly people have experienced, active and healthy old age (Montross et al, 2006: 43-51).

Active aging is the name given to the aging processes of individuals who can provide the elements of being physically and mentally active, living in a safe environment, taking part in the social environment as well as being physically healthy. The concept of active aging, which was brought to the agenda by the World Health Organization at the end of the 1990s; It is defined as "the process of providing health, social participation and security opportunities at the best level in order to enrich their quality of life as people age" and includes the process of increasing the quality of life by offering these opportunities to all individuals.

The concept of active aging has a much more comprehensive meaning than concepts such as "positive and productive aging", "optimal aging" and "successful aging", which only point to the health indicators of the individual. The word "active" used in this term does not only indicate activeness in the sense of being able to participate in any labor force physically, but also expresses continuous participation in psychological, social, cultural, economic and civic duties (WHO, 2002: 12).

The period in which individuals may most need to feel belonging to the society and interact with other individuals is the old age period. The areas where active elderly individuals can be intertwined with the society and see themselves as a part of the society are public spaces.

One of the issues that elderly people attach great importance to is being intertwined with people. Increasing the spaces where the elderly and especially the lonely elderly living in the city can be side by side with other members of the society plays a role in increasing their quality of life. Enabling the elderly to socialize and interact by increasing their visit to public interiority spaces such as shopping centers, green spaces, libraries, mosques, hospitals, restaurants and cafes is important in increasing their physical and psychological well-being. When we look at the design concept, which is widely seen today, it is felt that the idea that the user mass is universal is moved away when designing public interiors such as shopping malls, restaurants and cafes. The concept of public interior design for children, youth and adults, which is believed to support the consumption concept more, is maintained. This understanding is one of the important problems faced by elderly individuals in adapting to society and public interior spaces. However, the issue of supporting the socialization and interaction of active elderly individuals with individuals in other age groups that make up the

society is increasing worldwide. Designing public interiors that will encourage the use of all age groups together can be considered as a big step to be taken both in breaking the prejudices about aging and in ensuring social interaction and making the active elderly feel belong to the society and public interiors.

In order to create a healthy social structure all over the world, many research and project studies (Kaplan, 1990; Kaplan, 1991; Kaplan, 1994) are carried out and their impact is gradually increasing. When the studies are examined, it has been determined that most of them are more interested in the feelings of age groups and individuals, but they ignore the role of space in supporting interaction and socialization.

As Bechtel (2000) mentioned, all social activities and human behaviors take place in a physical space. People spend their time in some kind of physical environment, and all interaction and socialization takes place within a physical space. People spend their time in some kind of physical environment, and all interaction and socialization takes place within a physical space. In this case, increasing the quality of life and well-being of the person can be achieved with positive environmental stimuli. For this reason, diversifying the places where interaction will take place and making room for elderly individuals will play a role in increasing their quality of life. Since interpersonal interaction and socialization are seen as inevitable for a healthy society, it is essential to understand and develop spaces that provide group and community interaction between all ages and all members of the society. Therefore, within the scope of this study, the effect of physical space characteristics of shopping malls, which are open to the public, on the interaction and socialization of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over will be investigated and evaluated.

PUBLIC SPACE AND PUBLIC INTERIOR SPACE

Cities are places that serve as meeting places for different segments of society, where people from all social and cultural classes, different ethnic groups and different characteristics come together, where individuals interact and socialize with each other. In particular, the structuring of the society, which is expressed as public spaces, and the spaces in which the relationship between individuals and society are supported by the physical environment have played an important role in the formation process of cities. The individual continues his socio-cultural life with the life and activities in these places, which are included in the physical environment fiction of the city he lives in (Erdönmez and Akı, 2005: 67).

Although public spaces are mostly thought of as closed spaces, it is possible to define open spaces that can be defined spatially and have the necessary features as public spaces (Sağlam et al., 2019: 48). A public space can be an open or closed space. Streets, avenues, squares, green roads and parks are examples of the former, while buildings such as cinemas, theaters, universities, schools, hospitals, airports, atriums and

shopping centers where public services are provided are examples of the latter (Kaplan and Öztürk, 2004: 67). In order to avoid confusion of meaning, closed public spaces are also referred to as public interior spaces.

The concept of public space is perceived and used as structures belonging to the public. However, just like in government offices, the fact that a building was built by the government does not mean that it is always open to the public. As not every building constructed by the state can be defined as public, it would be an incomplete approach to evaluate the publicity of a space only on the basis that it is not private property. (Güney, 2007; Tanyeli, 2010; Yıldırım, 2015). Architect Neşe Gürallar states that "...for example, theater buildings may not be public property, they may belong to private individuals or theater groups, but they exist for the public, that is, they are public." This approach of her gives clarity to the situation (Gürallar, 2009).

As it can be understood from all these definitions and expressions, it turns out that the public space is a space that hosts public activity, supports, nourishes and directs social life. Within the scope of the study, the research was handled through shopping centers within public interior spaces. Although the level of publicity has been discussed and found low due to the management style, control and design of shopping centers according to certain themes, they appear as new types of public spaces in many studies with the economic and political transformation of social life. Especially in the last period, as these spaces have gained popularity and are used by the public constantly, they have become multifunctional public interiors rather than being shopping-oriented.

In order to evaluate the role of such public interiors in improving the quality of life of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over, it is necessary to mention the supportive role of space. This supporting role appears in the literature as the quality of space. For this reason, in the text flow, first of all, the quality of life and space in public interiors will be mentioned, then it will be explained how the socialization parameter, which is the main subject of the study, is reached.

LIFE AND SPACE QUALITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

The concept of quality of life is a complex structure that is directly affected by the environment in which individuals live, including their physical health, personal beliefs, psychological state and social relationships. Studies carried out on the quality of life in public spaces generally appear as urban quality of life. Urban quality of life is the interaction between individuals, the state of the built environment, the basic conditions in the field of health and the perceptions of individuals.

Quality of life in public space is a multi-faceted concept that covers the interaction of the individual with the society he lives in, the places where he spends his time, the social life and the evaluation of his satisfaction with leisure activities. Since studies on quality of life have always been carried out in large-scale and city-oriented open public

spaces, studies have been named as urban life quality in the literature. However, all of them examine the opinions, preferences and certain behavior patterns of individuals who make up the society in a public space.

Factors affecting the quality of life are in a multifaceted interaction. Evans (1994) prepared a theoretical model in order to better understand and analyze this multifaceted structure (Figure 1). In his model, the dimensions of quality of life are included as satisfaction, abilities and biosociophysical environmental factors that form a whole with the social environment. The relationship diagram of the factors affecting this versatile quality of life of Evans is given below.
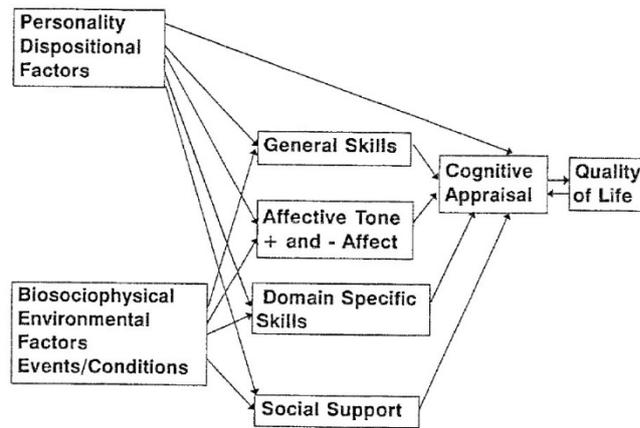

Figure 1. Model of factors affecting quality of life (Evans, 1994).

When this model of Evans is examined and evaluated, it has been observed that the quality of life is affected by the qualities of the space where the person is located. The social environment offered by the space and the opportunities provided by the activities play an important role in the quality of life of the person.

Vitruvius's work "De Architectura", which is still valid today, includes the first interpretations of the concept of quality made over space. Vitruvius determined the criteria of successful architecture with the concepts he determined as "Utilitas, Firmitas, Venustas" (usefulness, durability, beauty) and reduced the concept of quality to the dimension of space. In this way, spaces that are robust, functional and attractively beautiful are defined as quality spaces (Beardsley 1970). Later, many different researchers conducted studies on this subject in public open spaces by examining spatial quality in line with different parameters.

Lynch (1984) focused on the characteristics of a city in his work called 'Good City Form'. In order to measure the quality of the place, it has been determined that the place in question must meet criteria such as vitality, suitability, access to people, activities, resources, places, information and control.

According to Whyte (2000), for public spaces to be successful, they should be accessible, people should engage in various activities, the place should have a comfortable and good image, and it should be places

where more social interaction is provided (akt. Uzgören ve Erdönmez, 2017).

PPS (Project for Public Space), which carries out studies on the quality of space in public open spaces, has determined 4 basic qualities related to the quality of space in open public spaces. These are access and connections, comfort and image, use and activities, and sociability.

Gehl (2011) examined the relationship between the quality of physical space and urban space activities, and analyzed the spatial quality with three types of activities to be performed in the space. These are necessary activities, optional activities and social activities.

Mehta defined and classified the diversity of relationships between people in open public spaces in his study titled The Street A Quintessential Social Public Space in 2013.

Table 1. Approaches to the Concept of Space Quality (Additions have been made by using the table source created by Uzgören and Erdönmez (2017)).

Space Quality Components	Quality Parameters	Researchers
Social Interaction	Being suitable places for people to socially interact	Danisworo, 1989; Whyte, 1985, 2000, Gehl, 2002; Mehta, 2014
	Attracts people to engage in activities	Danisworo, 1989; Whyte, 1985, 2000; Mehta 2014
	The emergence of various activities	Rivlin, 1994; Whyte, 2000; CABE and DETR, 2001, Gehl, 2002; Mehta, 2014
Physical Quality	Ability to engage in activities individually or as a group	Rossi, 1982; Gehl, 2002; Mehta, 2014
	Having suitable and informal areas for recreation	Whyte, 1985; Project for Public Space, 2000
	be non-exclusive and democratic	Carr, 1992, Mehta 2014
	Being accessible to people of all social classes and age groups	Gehl, 2002; CABE and DETR, 2001; Mehta, 2014
	Easy access and movement system	Lynch, 1984; Danisworo, 1989; Car, 1992; Rivlin, 1994; Project for Public Space, 2000; Whyte, 2000; Gehl, 2002; CABE and DETR, 2001; Mehta, 2014
	Integration with transportation modes and land use	CABE and DETR, 2001
	Presence of signage and guidance elements	CABE and DETR, 2001
	Adoption of human scale in design	Asihara, 1981; Shirvani, 1985; Mehta, 2014
	Responding to physiological needs and being aesthetic	Rapoport, 1982; Lang, 1994; Whyte, 2000; Gehl, 2004; Pluta, 2003; Mehta, 2014
Psychological comfort and safety	Being safe and secure	Lang, 1994, Gehl, 2002; Mehta, 2014
	Allowing the user to feel comfortable and free in the area	Gehl, 2002

As mentioned earlier, all these exemplary works were carried out in the open public space (Table 1). Considering the studies, the point that is overlooked is that open public spaces have lost their attractiveness to a large extent, especially after the industrial revolution, while the public's interest and orientation to public interior spaces for various reasons is quite high. However, there are very few studies examining the quality of space in public interiors. So, what kind of interactions do active elderly individuals engage in in public interiors? Within the scope of this study, an empirical study was conducted on shopping malls, which are public interiority, to prevent active elderly individuals aged 65 and over from withdrawing into their shells by isolating themselves from the society. In the research, it has been tried to contribute to the literature in this field by focusing on the "suitability of the space for socializing", one of the space quality parameters.

THE RESEARCH AREA, PURPOSE AND METHOD

This study is based on the assumption that active elderly individuals aged 65 and over have an important role of their interactions with individuals in public interior spaces in increasing the quality of life. In order to ensure this interaction, it is thought that the supportive role of public interiors should be investigated. Especially in cold winter months and hot summer days, active elderly individuals aged 65 and over frequently prefer Shopping Centers to spend their time. The opportunities that the place provides for social interaction in shopping centers attract active elderly individuals to that place and determine how long they will spend in that place. For this reason, within the scope of the study, research will be carried out on "socialization and activities in the space", one of the spatial quality parameters whose effect is accepted in many studies by the literature. The social interaction levels of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over in shopping malls and the effect of the space on supporting this socialization will be investigated through Mehta's (2013) classification. The main purpose of the study is to examine the supportive role of the place with the activities carried out in the place in increasing the quality of life of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over and their interaction with other members of the society. For this reason, the study was built on the socialization parameter of space quality and other parameters were ignored.

Research Area

B shopping mall located in Çayyolu locality of Çankaya district of Ankara province was chosen for the field study (Figure 2). While choosing this shopping center, first of all, the districts and districts with the highest population of 65 years and older in Ankara were determined, then in order to narrow the area even more, the areas with the highest education and income levels were searched and this shopping center was reached (Tuik, 2020). Since the management of the Mall where the fieldwork is conducted does not allow the name of the

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Mall to be included in the study, the Mall where the area is conducted will be referred to as "B Shopping Center" in the following sections.


Figure 2. Satellite Image of B Shopping Mall (Url -2)

Research Method

While creating the method of the research, on-site observation in the space and face-to-face survey with the participants were preferred. In the on-site observation study, the focus was on the common use and resting areas preferred by all users (Table 2).

Table 2. Floor plans of B Shopping Mall, which is the subject of fieldwork

Ground floor plan

1st floor plan

2 st floor plan

3 st floor plan
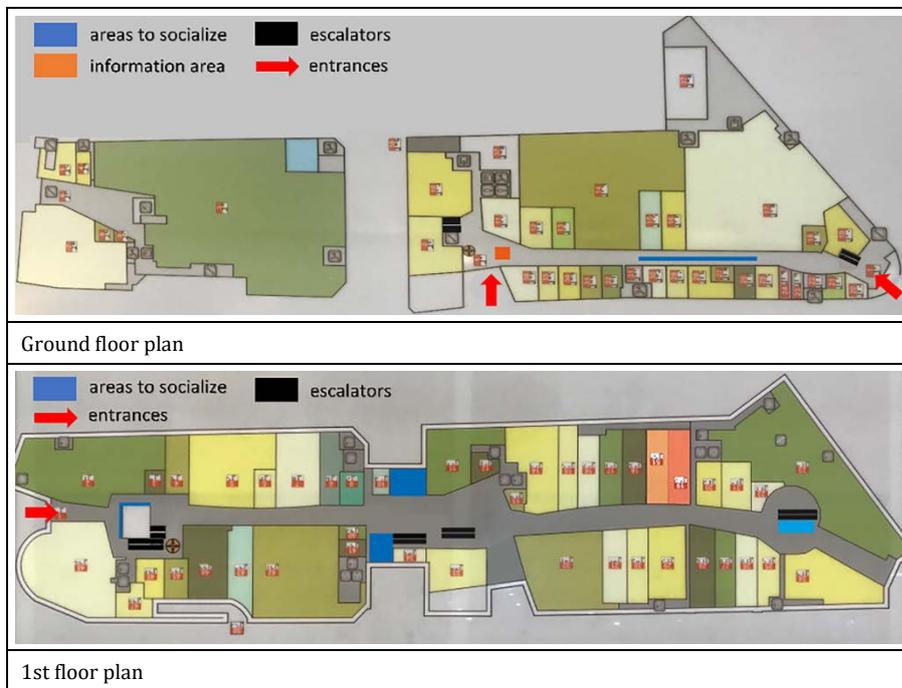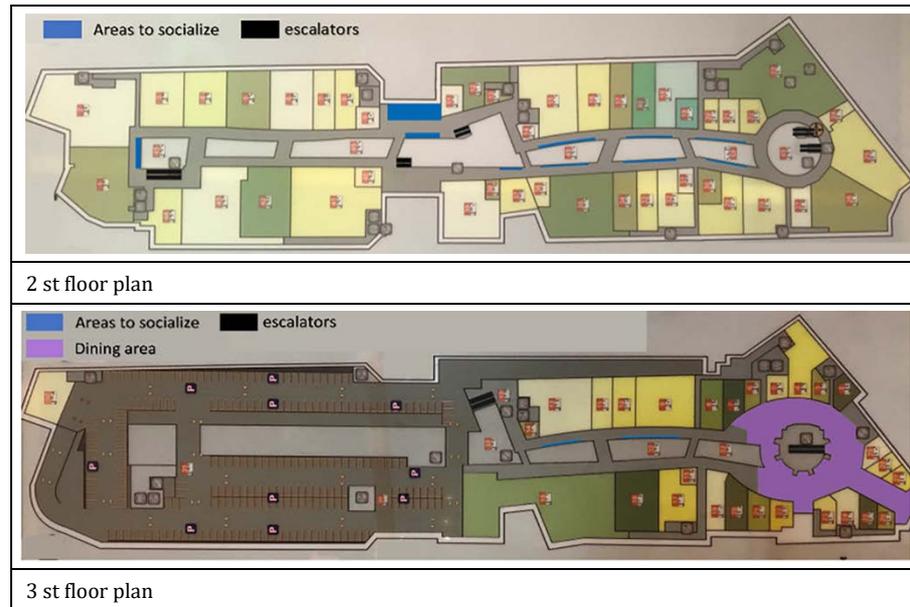
These spaces include areas defined by large spaces on the 1st floor of the building, which make it possible to organize various activities, which we can call the square of the building, and sitting/resting units formed in a more linear order on the walking axes. In addition, there are areas where small-scale cafes serve common meeting and gathering areas and offer beverage and snack facilities to the user and the areas where the users are crowded in the dining area of the Mall where there are tables and chairs for common use. Because in these areas, there are service units with furniture elements where individuals can sit and rest in large groups, watch the surroundings, read and drink something.

On the ground floor, the back-to-back seating units centered along the walking axis are positioned in such a way that they do not hinder circulation. The seating units here are in a comfortable form with fabric covered and backrest.

On the 1st floor, areas suitable for socializing are located on both sides of the section defined as the square of the building. There are berjer seating units in groups of two and three on one side, and a coffee table in the middle. On the opposite side of the area, there is an area with three or four armchairs and comfortable seating groups consisting of a coffee table between them, equipment suitable for group seating consisting of tables and chairs, and a mixed seating group consisting of a work bench and bar stools.

In addition, there are two each armchairs placed in the form of a strip surrounding the gallery space on the left side of the 1st floor and coffee tables between them. At the right end of this floor, there are seating areas of a cafe designed as an open space without sharp limiting elements.

When it comes to the 2nd floor, there are two each armchairs facing each other, placed in a linear way, around the gallery spaces along the floor, and a coffee table is positioned between them. In addition, in the circulation area on this floor, there are seating units open to access by a

cafe. These units consist of double-triple armchair groups facing each other, coffee tables and a sitting/resting unit that can serve multiple sitting in table and chair arrangement.

The shopping mall's dining area is located on the 3rd floor and there are seating units with freely positioned tables and chairs. Again on this floor, on the way to the dining area, two armchairs facing each other are placed in a linear way around the gallery spaces in the circulation areas, and a coffee table is positioned between them.

In all these areas, users and their behaviors were observed and photographs were taken.

In the second step of the study, a survey was conducted with active elderly individuals aged 65 and over, in a face-to-face conversation atmosphere, containing a total of 6 questions, excluding demographic information. While selecting the participants for the research, the criteria of being an active elderly individual aged 65 and over and having visited the B Shopping Center at least once before were taken into consideration. A survey was conducted with a total of 200 active elderly individuals, 100 males and 100 females, using random selection criteria.

The survey questions consist of 2 parts. The questions in the 1st part consist of a total of 3 questions, 2 of which are on a 5-point Likert scale and 1 of which is multiple choice, trying to understand the effect and support of the place on socialization from the user's view.

The questions in the 2nd part were created by using the classification that Vikas Mehta (2013) discussed in 3 groups as passive relationships, temporary relationships and permanent relationships in order to explain the social interaction levels of individuals in his book "The Street A Quintessential Social Public Space".

The social relationship classification and explanations created by Vikas Mehta to determine the levels of social interaction are given below.

Passive Sociability: People need to be in the same space with other people without direct verbal contact. Mehta (2013) calls this need passive sociability. Passive relationship emerges in the form of non-verbal various behaviors and activities. Being alone in the society, watching and listening to the surroundings and people, reading something, eating and drinking are examples of these behaviors. As Milgram (1977) stated, passive sociability is a shared human interaction between strangers and familiar strangers (as cited in Mehta, 2013).

Being alone in society is a social behavior. People seek out places to be alone in public places where others are present, even if they do not intend to directly interact with or participate in any active social behavior. Perhaps it is reassuring to be able to hear other people's voices speaking or to see the activities of individuals and to feel part of a larger community. Bystanders are one of the most common passive behaviors in public. Public interiors are also important places where active elderly individuals can mix with the society in order to see, be

seen, feel belonging and relax. All these behaviors and activities mean passive sociability and sometimes encourage temporary socialization (Mehta 2013).

Fleeting Sociability: Public spaces can lead to casual encounters, small conversations with acquaintances or brief, low-intensity contact as a result of these encounters. These encounters do not always have to be with acquaintances. While sitting and resting in an area, it can also occur in the form of instantaneous and witnessed images and events in the space with those sitting at the next table.

As Mehta (2013) mentioned in her study, chance encounters in public spaces create various opportunities for short-term, low-intensity contacts among visitors. These short, temporary contacts create casual and relatively simple easy interactions with other people. However, it is also suggested that these short-term, low-intensity contacts or weak ties are possible beginnings of deeper and enduring social interactions and participation between people (Mehta, 2013). Jacobs (1961) argues that, thanks to repeated short-term contacts, people begin to trust other users of public spaces who might otherwise be complete strangers (cited in Mehta, 2013).

A brief verbal exchange, such as waving to a familiar neighbor, a familiar face, pausing for a chat, a simple response with a nod or a smile, or asking for the time, are all temporary signs of sociability. Children, especially younger ones and pets lead to visual and verbal exchanges and even pleasant conversations between adults (Mehta, 2013).

Shows prepared for special occasions in public interiors, concerts, activities organized for the advertising and sale of any product, workshops that can be organized for a certain time interval, provide numerous opportunities for people to participate in such events, usually hoping to interact with others. This can happen not only with the activity to be organized, but also with the fiction and design of the space allowing such actions and activities. This situation occurs in the common resting, eating and drinking areas of public interior spaces.

Enduring Sociability: People may not come to public spaces solely to seek long-term relationships, but for many, the public space is a space to actively connect with friends or a group of communities, and Mehta (2013) termed this as enduring sociability. Enduring sociability includes close relationships and connections between people, which include meaningful interactions for both parties. The purpose of public interior design should be to create opportunities to support people's ability to interact with other individuals (family member, friend, acquaintance or stranger) at all levels, including meaningful associations.

Enduring sociability depends on more frequent and repeated contacts between individuals. In doing so, people spend their time and emotional energies finding or creating conditions that foster enduring sociability. One of these conditions is a suitable space to meet and communicate. Enduring sociability requires much more than space compared to passive and fleeting sociability. First of all, the space should

provide physical conditions and an environment suitable for meeting. Secondly, the rules of the space should allow both casual and serious interactions (Mehta, 2013).

Mehta (2013) mentions that enduring sociability can develop from fleeting or passive sociability and gain continuity over time. The realization of this situation for active elderly individuals is a big step for them to bond with the society, feel a sense of belonging, not marginalize themselves and spend more time in these places.

In the light of this information, the face-to-face survey study conducted with active individuals aged 65 and over in the 2nd step of the study method was constructed using the passive sociability, fleeting sociability and enduring sociability classification created by Mehta. Three questions were directed to the users for the shopping mall in question, and users were asked to rate each of the questions from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree). With these questions, it was tried to determine the social interaction levels of individuals over the age of 65 in the said space.

DATA ANALYSIS, CASE STUDY, DISCUSSION

In the first step of the study, areas that will allow active elderly individuals aged 65 and over to socialize in B Shopping Center were observed and photographs were taken.

Figure 3. Living/resting units located on the ground floor of B shopping mall

In Figure 3, the living/resting unit located on the ground floor is shown. It is thought that passive sociability is supported by the preference of back-to-back seating, which can only be found on this floor in the building. In terms of its organizational form, it does not allow the opposite.
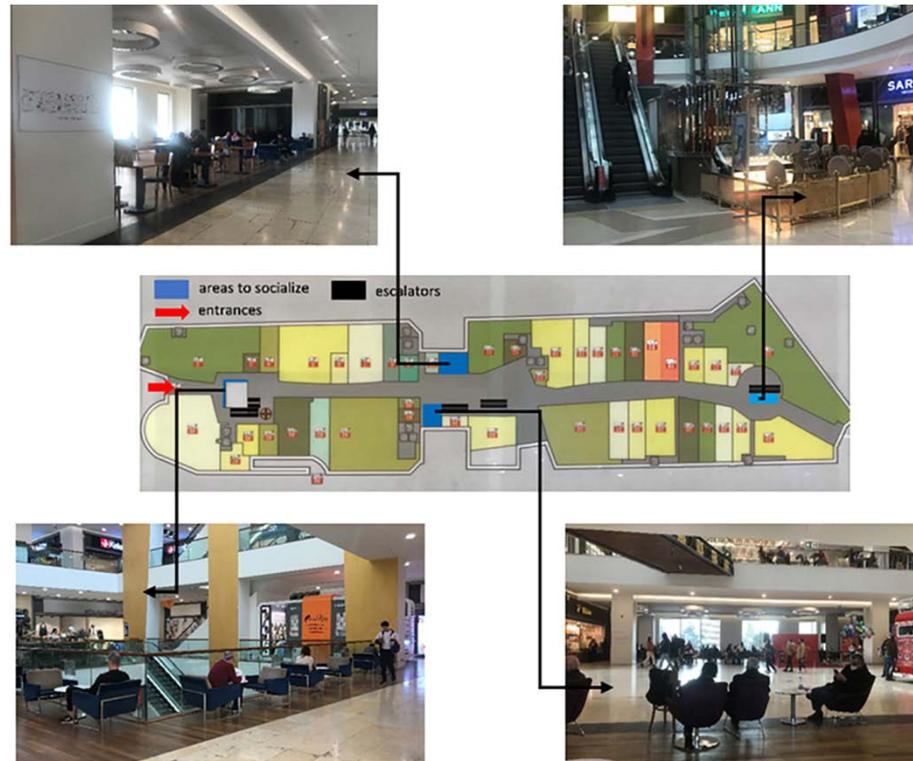
Figure 4. Living/resting units located on the 1st floor of B shopping mall

Figure 4 shows the areas where the shopping mall can be used for gathering, sitting/resting, eating and drinking, and performing any performances and concerts. In the observations, it has been determined that especially individuals over the age of 65 use this area, which is located in the square of the place, for reading newspapers, resting and watching the passers-by. In fact, as can be seen in the image, it has been determined that active elderly individuals sit by turning their seating units so that they see the circulation and circulation area and watch people just like sitting on a bench in the public open space and watching the people passing by. In this area, there are toys and a sightseeing bus for families with children/baby to spend time. It has been observed that elderly individuals often attempt to initiate conversations with these families and their children. The said area is the area on the 1st floor of the venue, which we can define as the largest common area or even the square of the venue, and where the most seating units are located for individuals to rest. When an activity is desired to be carried out in the mall, this is the place that will offer the best space for the activity, considering the current space conditions such as the size of the area, level of visual access, and location. On one side, there are berjer seating units in groups of two or three and a coffee table in the middle. On the opposite side of the area, there is an area with three or four armchairs and comfortable seating groups consisting of a coffee table between them, equipment suitable for group seating consisting of tables and chairs, and a mixed seating group consisting of a work bench and bar stools.

Figure 5. Living/resting units located on the 2 st floor of B shopping mall

Although the sitting/resting units located in the relatively narrow circulation areas on the other floors are not as dense as the rest area on the 1st floor, it has been observed that active elderly individuals spend time in passive sociability in these areas (Figure 5).

On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors, the sitting units grouped with two opposing berjers located around the gallery spaces are of a quality that can be used by the active elderly people to spend time away from the density of people and to spend time alone (Figure 5). The living/resting units located here are not very defined in terms of location and are insufficient in number compared to the size of the area where they are located. It supports passive socialization.

On the dining floor, there are units that are more suitable for eating activities than resting or socializing (Figure 6).
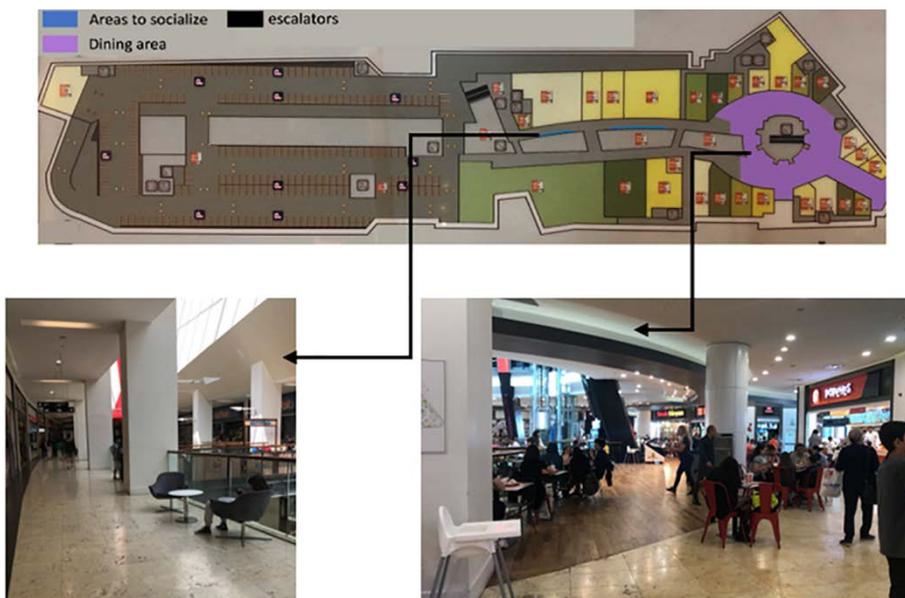

Figure 6. Equipment for living/resting and dining on the 3rd floor of B shopping mall

In the second step of the study, as a result of the face-to-face survey conducted with active elderly individuals aged 65 and over, findings about the users' evaluations of the space and the level of interaction in the space were obtained.

Table 3. The survey section that includes the personal information of the participants and the evaluation questions about the shopping mall.

		Woman		Man		Total	
Your Age	Age	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	65-69	51	51	49	49	100	50
	70-74	30	30	25	25	55	27,5
	75-80	14	14	19	19	33	16,5
	80+	5	5	7	7	12	6
	Total	100	100	100	100	200	100
		Woman		**Man**		**Total**	
In this mall, activities are organized to encourage socializing with other people.		Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	1 (I strongly disagree)	29	29	27	27	56	28
	2	13	13	20	20	33	16,5
	3	16	16	18	18	34	17
	4	9	9	12	12	21	10,5
	5 (Totally agree)	33	33	23	23	56	28
		Woman		**Man**		**Total**	
There are enough and wide common areas for different activities that will encourage socialization in this shopping mall.		Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	1 (I strongly disagree)	37	37	24	24	61	30,5
	2	15	15	12	12	27	13,5
	3	15	15	27	27	42	21
	4	15	15	18	18	33	16,5
	5 (Totally agree)	18	18	19	19	37	18,5
		Woman		**Man**		**Total**	
Have you participated in any previous activity held at this venue? (concert, exhibition, small-scale show, etc.) please explain.		Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	Yes	43	44,8	26	27,7	69	36,3
	No	53	55,2	68	72,3	121	63,7

50% of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over participating in the research are female and 50% are male. 50% of the participants are 65-69 years old, 27.7% 70-74, 16.5% 75-80 and 6% over 80 years old. Participants were asked to evaluate the statement "There are activities that encourage socializing with other people in this mall" by giving a score from 1 (I do not agree at all) to 5 (I completely agree). 28% of the participants stated that they never agreed with this statement, 16.5% did not agree, 17% neither agreed nor disagreed, 10.5% agreed and again 28% completely agreed (Table 3). While 44.5% of the participants stated that they strongly disagree or disagree with this statement, the

percentage of those who agreed and completely agreed constituted a total of 38.5%. The users, who make up 17%, evaluated the place with 3 points corresponding to the statement of neither agree nor disagree, and it was revealed that they were indifferent and undecided against this judgment. This situation can be interpreted as the fact that there is no activity organized in the place to provide an environment for interpersonal interaction and socialization. If it were otherwise, the individual would not fall into this indecision and would evaluate the space with 4 or 5 points.

When the participants evaluated the statement, "There are sufficient and wide common spaces for different activities that will encourage socialization in this shopping mall.," 30.5% strongly disagree, 13.5% disagree, 21% neither agree nor disagree, 16.5% agreed, and 18.5% completely agreed answered as (Table 3). While the total rate of those who think that common areas are sufficient for different activities that will encourage socialization is 35%, the total rate of active elderly users who think that they are not enough is 65%. In line with the observations made by the researcher, it has been determined that there are not enough and wide common areas for different activities that will encourage the socialization of the users for the shopping center in question. The opinions of researchers and users are in the same direction.

The observations made in the field also support the results of the two questions above. The existing space size is not spatially wide enough to support different and various activities in the space. Existing areas that can be used for such activities are not well organized and designed. The venue is dense in terms of the number of active elderly users. However, a large area in the square of the place remained unorganized and undefined. In addition, there was no activity program organized as weekly or monthly programs in the venue.

"Have you participated in any previous activity at this venue? Please explain (concert, exhibition, small-scale demonstration, etc.)", statement while 36.3% of the participants answered yes, while 63.7% answered no (Table 3). Most of the participants who answered no stated that they did not come across such an activity or that they did not see an activity that interested them. Participants who answered yes mostly stated that they either came to an activity for their grandchildren or saw them passing by. Few of them talked about concerts, music concerts and dance performances that would correspond to a real participation. This can be interpreted as the fact that the activities that offer the user the opportunity to interact in the space are not performed at a sufficient level.

In the second stage of the questionnaire, questions were asked to the active elderly individuals aged 65 and over who participated in the research to determine their social interaction levels in the space. Findings related to the questions are given in Table 4.

Table 4. The survey section that includes evaluation questions about the social interaction levels of the participants.

		Woman		Man		Total	
This space allows me to come and spend time alone, have a drink, read a book or newspaper, sit and watch people (Passive sociability).		Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	1 (I strongly disagree)	25	25	26	26,3	51	25,5
	2	8	8	8	8,1	16	8
	3	14	14	11	11,1	25	12,6
	4	15	15	20	20,2	35	17,6
	5 (Totally agree)	38	38	34	34,3	72	36,2
		Woman		Man		Total	
This space allows me to meet and establish relationships for a short time, such as greeting people I do not know or only familiar with, participating in activities offered by the space (music concert, exhibition, etc.)(fleeting sociability)		Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	1 (I strongly disagree)	32	32	25	25,3	57	28,6
	2	12	12	8	8,1	20	10,1
	3	13	13	20	20,2	33	16,6
	4	15	15	28	28,3	43	21,6
	5 (Totally agree)	28	28	18	18,2	46	23,1
		Woman		Man		Total	
This space allows me to establish long-term relationships with my friends and acquaintances, such as meeting, sitting, chatting, eating in a planned manner (Enduring sociability).		Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent	Number of people	percent
	1 (I strongly disagree)	23	23	28	28,3	51	25,6
	2	4	4	6	6,1	10	5
	3	6	6	11	11,1	17	8,5
	4	22	22	24	24,2	46	23,1
	5 (Totally agree)	45	45	30	30,3	75	37,7

When the participants were asked to evaluate the statement "This place allows me to come and spend time alone, have a drink, read a book or newspaper, sit and watch people" for the B Shopping Center, 25.6% participants strongly disagree, 8% disagree, 12.6% of them neither agreed nor disagreed, 17.6% agreed and 36.2% completely agreed as answered (Table 4). It has been determined that the total percentage of active elderly users aged 65 and over who agree and fully agree with this judgment is 53.8%, and it has been determined that more than half of the study participants use the shopping mall for passive socialization. The answers to this question are consistent with the observations made.

When the participants were asked to evaluate the statement "This place allows me to establish short-term acquaintances and relationships, such as greeting people with whom I do not know or only familiar with, and participating in the activities offered by the space," 28.6% completely disagreed 10.1% disagreed 16.6% of them neither agreed nor disagreed, 21.6% agreed and 23.1% completely agreed answered as. When looking at the general distribution, the total percentage of those who say they strongly disagree, do not agree and neither agree nor disagree is 55.3%, while the total percentage of those

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who say they agree and completely agree is 44.7%. This result supports the findings obtained from the statement "Activities that will encourage socializing with other people are organized in this shopping mall" in the questionnaire. The answers to both questions prove that the space does not support fleeting sociability.

For Participants' B Shopping Center; When asked to evaluate the statement "This space allows me to establish long-term relationships with my friends and acquaintances, such as meeting, sitting, chatting, eating in a planned manner," stated that 25.6% strongly disagreed, %5 disagreed, 8.5% they neither agreed nor disagreed, 23.1% agreed and 37.7% completely agreed indicated as. While the total of those who strongly disagree and do not agree with this view is 30.6%, the total of those who agree and fully agree is 60.8%. It has been revealed that more than half of the active elderly individuals participating in the study use the shopping mall for enduring sociality. In addition, they constitute almost twice as many of those who do not support this judgment. The observation by the researcher that active elderly individuals aged 65 and over interact for a long time in groups of 2-3 people in the space also supports the finding obtained from this question.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence from research on the relationship between human behavior and the physical environment shows that the physical characteristics and spatial relationships of a space can have a significant impact on where and when social interaction occurs and, when it does, on the efficiency of social interaction (Steinfeld 1972: 4). While people are looking for spaces to socialize, the possibilities offered by the space significantly affect their choices. Especially for active elderly individuals aged 65 and over, the attractiveness of the place may be directly related to the opportunity for interaction and activity options that it will offer. It is very important for people in this age group to be able to live in harmony without breaking their ties with the society, in increasing their quality of life.

As can be seen as a result of the study, active elderly individuals aged 65 and over use shopping mall spaces especially for passive and enduring socialization. However, they find the physical space that will provide them with the variety of activities and socialization opportunities that the place offers them insufficient. In addition, it has been shown that the equipment and organizational forms in the physical area are chosen as repetitive elements, away from the consciousness of both supporting socialization types and thinking about the relaxation action of the user. It is important to design public interior spaces with physical places where the best possible interaction and socialization can take place, which will support increasing the quality of life of active elderly individuals aged 65 and over. For this reason, the common use areas to be designed considering the necessity of all types of socialization activities, especially in areas where this age group is high,

should be designed as large enough, transformable areas that can serve a large number of users and organizing activities of different sizes.

Carr et al., (1992) states that Spaces are proposed, constructed and evaluated with assumptions about what should be done in them. He says these assumptions are based on the goals of space designers, clients, and venue managers, and either ignore the needs of older adults or fail to address the ways public places serve those needs. However, even when considered only from a customer focus, it is essential to develop designs and programs considering the needs and requirements of all user types in order to keep the priority of being preferred among the increasing number of shopping malls. The applications to be made for the active elderly users aged 65 and over will not only nurture them in the direction of socialization, but also enable them to spend more time in the place and provide income for the property in terms of consumption. With the activities to be organized, workshops, shows, and the spatial features that allow these activities, both active elderly individuals aged 65 and over can use these spaces more effectively, and these individuals can be intertwined with the society and socialized. As Layne (2009) puts it, "Society is about groups of people interacting collectively to create stories that are mutually shared, mutually understood, and mutually passed on to future generations."

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