

Mini Research: Observations and Shopping Surveys
New or Unfamiliar Items
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Section 1: Observations

Although the participants were shopping for a wide variety of products, a few patterns emerged in the shopping observations. First, when adults shopped, and were considering their purchases, they all considered the purchase price (except one who was shopping for a very low-cost item, potato chips). Next, both shoppers that were looking at items in the technology department (laptop and iPod dock) asked for assistance. The others did not ask for assistance.

Quality and price were the two most common factors/considerations among the adult shoppers. Visual appeal was a factor for all but two of the shoppers: both were male, over the age of 50, one was looking at a bed and the other buying groceries.

Our young female shopper (looking for her first bra, probably age 10 or 11) was only interested in visual appeal. Her immaturity and emotional attachment to the intended product possibly made any other factors irrelevant. Our 52-year-old male shopper, Jeff, was interested in the store brand, most likely to save money when shopping for kids' cereal. Both shoppers who asked for assistance were female, but this could be attributed to the type of product they were shopping for. We don't have enough data, or a large enough sampling, to say that male shoppers might not ask for assistance when looking at laptops or iPod docks.

Section 2: Surveys

Patterns:

Upon examination of my online survey results, I noticed a few patterns between a few items in my survey and also between genders. Four out of the 13 participants are male and nine are female. Of those four males, three responded that they did not use coupons. All of the males shopped at a warehouse club or super grocery store (such as Meijer's). When surveyed, they responded that they were the main shopper in their household, and when buying a new or unfamiliar item, always or almost always shopped for the best price (yet don't use coupons regularly).

Eight of the nine female participants use coupons, while five of the eight obtain them from online sources. Of those eight who use coupons, all eight are the main grocery shopper in their family and say that they shop at least once a week. Interestingly, none of the participants shop at a local convenience store.

Means for the survey items:

The survey counts, percentages, and means for my survey items are shown in the table below:

Gender	Percentage	Count(13)
Male	30.80%	4
Female	69.20%	9
Age Group		
21-35	15.40%	2
36-50	23.10%	3
51-65	38.50%	5
66+	23.10%	3
Marital Status		
Single (never married)	23.10%	3
Married	61.50%	8
Divorced	15.40%	2
Widowed	0.00%	0
3. Are you the main shopper in your family?		
Yes (always)	69.20%	9
Sometimes	23.10%	3
No (never)	7.70%	1
4. Do you use coupons? If so, how do you obtain them?		
I don't use coupons	30.80%	4
I print coupons from online sources	38.50%	5
I get coupons when I'm at the store	46.20%	6
I cut them out of magazines/newspapers/flyers	61.50%	8
5. In which type of grocery store do you most frequently shop?		
Warehouse club	7.70%	1
Super grocery store (such as Meijer's)	23.10%	3
Local chain (such as Kroger's)	69.20%	9
Small convenience store	0.00%	0
6. How often do you typically grocery shop?		
More than once a week	23.10%	3

About once a week	46.20%	6
About two or three times a month	30.80%	4
Once a month	0.00%	0

Summary of the Means Section
Always = 4
Almost always = 3
Sometimes = 2
Never = 1

7. When you grocery shop, do you...

	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Never	Average (mean)
Usually shop with a written list	46.2% (6)	30.8% (4)	23.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.23
Have my shopping list in my head	0.0% (0)	16.7% (2)	58.3% (7)	25.0% (3)	1.77
Buy many impulse items	7.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	69.2% (9)	23.1% (3)	1.92

8. When you shop for a new or unfamiliar item at the grocery store, do you base your decision on...

	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Never	Average (mean)
Best price	7.7% (1)	46.2% (6)	38.5% (5)	7.7% (1)	2.54
Brand	0.0% (0)	30.8% (4)	61.5% (8)	7.7% (1)	2.23
Appearance of packaging	0.0% (0)	27.3% (3)	45.5% (5)	27.3% (3)	1.69
Expiration date/freshness	38.5% (5)	30.8% (4)	30.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.08
Whether you can use a coupon	0.0% (0)	23.1% (3)	61.5% (8)	15.4% (2)	2.08
Where it is made	7.7% (1)	7.7% (1)	46.2% (6)	38.5% (5)	1.85
The sample you just tried	0.0% (0)	7.7% (1)	61.5% (8)	30.8% (4)	1.77
Reputation of item	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	66.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	2.23
Recommendations from ads	0.0% (0)	9.1% (1)	63.6% (7)	27.3% (3)	1.54

Other (please specify)
Diet based on medical condition

0.31*

(*1 'always' response out of 13)

9. When shopping for a new or unfamiliar item at the grocery store, do you...

	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Never	Average (mean)
Ask for an opinion from other shoppers?	0.0% (0)	7.7% (1)	46.2% (6)	46.2% (6)	1.62
Ask for an opinion from a store employee?	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	38.5% (5)	46.2% (6)	1.69
Ask for an opinion from a spouse/relative?	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	69.2% (9)	15.4% (2)	2.00
Make the decision to buy without other's input?	7.7% (1)	46.2% (6)	46.2% (6)	0.0% (0)	2.62
Go by the reputation of the item?	0.0% (0)	23.1% (3)	76.9% (10)	0.0% (0)	2.23
10. When you buy a new or unfamiliar item at the grocery store, do you...					
	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Never	Average (mean)
Vow never to buy it again	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	76.9% (10)	23.1% (3)	1.77
Wonder what you were thinking	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	69.2% (9)	30.8% (4)	1.69
Think that you'll buy it again	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	84.6% (11)	0.0% (0)	2.15

Generalizations based on the means:

In general, the participants in my survey are over age 35, are married or divorced. They shop with a list (never go without) and sometimes or never make impulse decisions. They make best price, coupon use, brand, and reputation of the item a factor in their decision on new/unfamiliar items, check/evaluate the freshness or expiration date of a product at the grocery store, and rarely care where the item is made. When shopping for a new/unfamiliar item, these participants don't ask other shoppers or request input from store employees, but do ask their spouse/relative for an opinion. Generally, the participants in my survey feel that they typically make wise decisions, and only sometimes do they question their thinking or vow to never buy that item again.

Patterns in classmates findings:

Although the surveys were different, there are a few patterns in my classmates' findings. The participants in Brooks' survey also use shopping lists. Brooks' and Thompson's results also show that their shoppers consider price, brand names, and expiration dates in their decisions as do mine. Waters' participants consider price but, in general, do not prefer brand to price.

Differences/similarities between my findings and classmates' findings:

The mean on packaging was higher on Thompson's survey, meaning that her participants consider packaging more when considering a new/unfamiliar item than mine did. In contrast to my survey, Thompson's participants say that they have a shopping list in their head or shop without a shopping list. Waters' participants shop with a list in their head as well but also make spontaneous purchases or decisions upon arrival at the store. However, age may be a factor, as 83% of Waters' participants are under age 35. Also in contrast to my survey, Waters' and Brooks' participants rarely use coupons. Oetgens' survey also asked about doing research about a new/unfamiliar item before buying it, and five out of the six said that they always or sometimes did the research.