

Gender differences in shopping assignment



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Gender Differences in Shopping Gender differences in humans can be observed everywhere; one of the most noticeable differences is an activity that many people participate in – shopping. I personally enjoy shopping even though I don't have a lot of time to do so. When I shop, I like to go with my friends because sometimes their opinion on what I'm shopping for matters to me. I find it interesting to see that men and women have completely different shopping habits even though when it comes down to shopping for the same items.

There are many companies that observe the shopping behaviour of consumers and analyze the information to give retailers a better idea of changes they can make to draw more customers in, to make them stay longer and see more products as well as influence their buying decisions and get them to return time after time. I believe that finding out the shopping differences between men and women can contribute to the overall success of a business. Let's talk about some of the habits of male shoppers that I have found in my friends.

First of all, a lot of my guy friends usually know exactly what they're looking for when we go shopping together. Whether if they're buying a game, shoes, clothes, or even food, they already know where they're going. It seems to me that they plan everything out before they actually commit themselves into going to the mall to make the purchase. Moreover, I believe that men look on shopping as a mission. The brain gives them an assignment; they locate the target, secure the target, make the payment and exit the location as quickly as possible.

Also most of my guy friends shop alone or with other guys, they dislike shopping with women because they think we take too long, which I won't discuss why till later on. Men seldom compare prices. Men don't care if the item is on sale, and rarely compares quality. Another interesting theory that I have come up with is the "hunter and gatherer" theory. Way back in the Stone Age days, when men's main tasks were to go out to hunt for food to bring back to feed the family, they had one simple objective in mind.

This reflects to modern day shopping habits where men know exactly what they're looking for. I also notice that when there are comfortable couches in retail stores, 99% of the time the person that occupies the seat is a male. This shows that men have less patience and likes to spend less time when it comes to shopping; they're more there to buy and not shop. Also what I have noticed is that men tend to not like to go shopping alone with their kids either. I've seen very impatient fathers at the mall when shopping with the family numerous times.

This brings me back to my theory because back when men were hunters, they did not take the children with them either because it was dangerous and there was a very high chance for the children to be hurt. On the other hand, the women were classified as gatherers. The women gathered vegetables, fruits, plants, and numerous other things. When the women went to gather, they would go in groups and it would become more of a social event as well. Often the women would also bring the children along.

Today, women tend to go shopping in a group because it is more of a social event, a time to bond with your friends and chit chat and catch up. For

example, when I shop with my friends, we would take our time walking slowly, go check out most of the stores and look at almost everything inside the store. I enjoy taking several outfits into the dressing room to try on. All outfits may be the same style, cut and size but they are different colors and I love to try every one on and have my friends critique them. I also tend to compare my choices in greater detail regarding price, quality, feel and whether my friends like it on me.

Many times I would spend all day looking at several items and still not buy anything. From having worked retail in a mall, I have observed that most of the stores in the mall are more catered towards women's needs. There are a lot more stores that sell jewellery, makeup, and women-only products, compared to stores that sell products or services just for men. On top of that, stores that mostly sell personal hygienic products are more directed towards women as well. Retailers such as "Crabtree and Evelyn", "The Body Shop", and "Bath and Bodyworks" are just a few to name.

Even though lotions, soaps and body washes are made for both men and women, the ones who buy them are predominately women. Moreover, many stores that sell unisex merchandise carry more inventories styled for women as opposed to men. For example, there's a retail store called "La Senza" which sells women's under garments and night wear only, and nothing for men. There are almost no other stores that sell merchandise strictly for men. By having more stores and more choices offered to women, it contributes to the fact that women take a longer period amount of time when shopping as opposed to men.

When I go shopping, I usually take much longer than my guy friends because I have to look for a much wider variety of products. On top of the many different jeans, shirts, and dresses that I look at, there are also other accessories that cannot be forgone. Earrings, necklaces, and makeup are just a few things required to complement my outfit or wardrobe. When a guy shops for clothes, most of the time they look for pants, shirts, and shoes, and that generally sums it up. Another difference in shopping behaviour between the two sexes is that women tend to shop more impulsively and emotionally.

Sometimes I feel that shopping is linked to a woman's menstrual cycle. I believe shopping sprees could be a way for premenstrual women to deal with the negative emotions created by their hormonal changes. Also when I feel upset or depressed, often going shopping would make me happier and cheer me up. I believe for most women, shopping is a kind of therapy that they treat themselves to when they're feeling down or emotionally unstable. The feeling of splurging and buying something nice for yourself often temporarily takes the mind off of any stress or state of unhappiness.

This is why often when women shop, they don't realize how much money they have spent until they walk out of the mall and get their credit card bill to see that it has been maxed out. Men on the other hand, seldom buy on impulse because they already have a plan before they enter the shopping mall and are not easily distracted. Overall, I've mentioned quite a few differences in how women shop compared to men. One of the main difference is that men treats shopping as an objective to buy or acquire

something, where women treats shopping as more of a social event and get together with friends and children.

In regards to that theory, it also explains why women take a much longer time to shop than men. It is because men have fewer choices to begin with and women have a wide variety of merchandise to choose from. Another point I want to reiterate is how the modern day shopping habits relate back to the main roles of men and women, where men are categorized as the hunter and women as the gatherer. By noting and studying gender differences in shopping, it is useful to help retail stores at how to merchandise and market their products appropriately to maximize profit.