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Everyday Shopping: An Exploration of the Information Behaviors of Grocery Shoppers

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**Everyday Shopping: An Exploration of the Information Behaviors of
Grocery Shoppers**

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Everyday Shopping: An Exploration of the Information Behaviors of Grocery Shoppers

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The field of everyday information behavior addresses how individuals interact with information in their everyday life. Previous research in the field has largely ignored the banal and quotidian portion of everyday life that scholars of the critical and cultural theory of the everyday emphasize. This dissertation seeks to enhance the scholarly knowledge of everyday information behavior by demonstrating that critical and cultural theory offers concepts and theories that enable the field to more thoroughly explore the everyday. Through two empirical studies using qualitative methods inspired by institutional ethnography, this dissertation shows how everyday information scholars can investigate the mundane everyday activity of grocery shopping to gain a deeper understanding of the information behaviors involved. The first empirical study addresses the nurturer persona, a concept based on the role of the food provider. The second empirical study addresses the creative persona, a concept based on the creativity a recreational grocery shopper can enact in the grocery store. The data from the empirical studies is analyzed using three different perspectives (grocery shopping perspective, information behavior perspective, and critical and cultural theory perspective) drawn

from distinct but related research literatures to highlight the complexity of grocery shoppers' information behavior. The findings from the grocery shopping perspective show a strong presence of the nurturer and creative personas that impact a grocery shoppers' experience in the grocery store. The findings from the information behavior perspective show the process of grocery shopping as information-rich and consisting of many different information behaviors. They also show how aspects of the nurturer and creative personas influence the information behaviors of grocery shopping. Finally, the findings from the critical and cultural theory perspective show that grocery shopping engages in an intensive and active way in 'everyday' information behavior. This finding is demonstrated through concepts developed by combining critical and cultural theory with concepts and concerns from everyday information behavior research.

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Chapter 1: Introduction

The field of everyday information behavior (EIB) addresses how individuals interact with information in their everyday life. Much of the work in this field draws from information behavior (IB) research and began as the study of information use by scientists and engineers. EIB has struggled to embrace the everyday world, specifically ignoring the banal and quotidian world of the everyday. In this dissertation, I use methods common to EIB and IB scholars to investigate the information behaviors of individuals within the grocery store. While the grocery store is my chosen domain, it is merely one of many possible locations where EIB scholars can and should investigate everyday information behavior.

Grocery shopping is an everyday task that has received little to no research attention by information scholars, even though grocery shopping highlights many of the major concepts of information behavior. Grocery shopping is a form of decision making in an information-rich environment in which individuals are presented with thousands of purchase options. Through two empirical studies, I show the complexity of the information environment of the grocery store by exploring two distinct personas a grocery shopper may enact within the store. The term ‘personas’ refers to a novel framework I am using to explore different aspects of a grocery shoppers identity and motivations in the store. The concept will be described more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

Each persona uses, ignores, or seeks out information and is influenced by the context of the grocery store both as a social environment and as a landscape of information sources. While I created the concept of personas and their descriptions, I sought out concepts from several research literatures to ground the personas and model the empirical studies based on similar work. I used the grocery shopping literature

because, unlike EIB, it was designed to explore grocery shopping at its most mundane, using qualitative methods. This dissertation uses three different conceptual perspectives to demonstrate the complex information environment of the grocery store, explore the impact of external forces on the information behavior of grocery shopping, and gain insights into how grocery shoppers really navigate the grocery store. In this chapter, I present my goal and motivations for this dissertation, provide the background on EIB that I am building on, and lay out the dissertations structure.

DISSERTATION GOAL & MOTIVATION

The goal of this dissertation is to enhance the scholarly knowledge of EIB by demonstrating that critical and cultural theory offers concepts and theories that enable EIB to more thoroughly explore the everyday. Critical and cultural theory has been the conceptual home for the analysis of everyday phenomena for decades, and the work developed there can aid EIB in its analysis of the everyday world (Lefebvre, 2008; Schütz & Luckman, 1973). I have chosen the grocery store as a domain to perform my exploration into the everyday because it has a rich and diverse research literature that focuses on the everyday aspects of grocery shopping as well as on the more traditionally information-rich aspects, such as decision making and information seeking (Lioutas, 2014). The goal of this dissertation is motivated by the lack of everyday-focused EIB in the existing research literature. As will be discussed, EIB has slowly expanded to study information behaviors outside of the work or school context. I argue that through integrating concepts from critical and cultural theory that focus on the everyday into EIB, we can study more effectively how information is used in the quotidian parts of life. The knowledge gained from this new research focus will likely have implications for improving information access and reception in the everyday world and in more traditional

information institutions. By studying how individuals use information in their everyday life, an everyday-focused EIB can gain deeper insights into how all people interact with information in the grocery store, the doctor's office, or the library because of the similarities in the ways in which individuals typically approach all three domains.

BACKGROUND ON EVERYDAY INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

Everyday Information Behavior is an academic subdiscipline that includes scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds brought together by a focus on information behavior that exists in the domain of the everyday (Case, 2012; Fisher, Erdelez, & McKechnie, 2005). EIB primarily developed out of the academic tradition of Information Behavior research. Some researchers from IB and other academic backgrounds desired to explore information behaviors outside of traditional information domains (e.g., libraries, universities, formal databases, and the workplace) (Case, 2012). Since its beginning, however, EIB research has struggled to define itself as being more than simply IB concepts and literature as applied to the everyday world. In relying upon the framework of traditional IB, the EIB scholarship falls short of its full potential because traditional IB concepts do not appropriately address the realities and nuances of the everyday. However, we may look elsewhere for a theoretically based body of scholarship that can handle the everyday in a more nuanced manner than the IB literature does. Similarly finding their fields' traditional concepts and methods lacking, scholars in other fields, including sociology and history, have created a body of literature that addresses and highlights the everyday world. Infusing critical and cultural theories that better handle the everyday into current EIB approaches can therefore enrich research within EIB. In the remainder of this section, I present the history of EIB from its origins to current scholarship.

FROM INFORMATION BEHAVIOR TO EVERYDAY INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

The field of EIB originated within the broader research area of IB (also known as ‘Information Seeking Behavior’ and ‘Human Information Behavior’).¹ In order to better elucidate the assumptions prevalent within the EIB literature, I discuss the IB literature and its academic origins and bring to light the roots of several EIB concepts and theories, introducing along the way the research of several EIB scholars. Examining the history of EIB and IB is necessary in order to uncover the assumptions that underlie the discourse of the EIB field as well as the limitations of placing a well-established research literature into a new domain. A subdiscipline transitioning away from its founding ideas is not new; many disciplines have had to confront and amend their traditional ideas when faced with new research topics and a changing social world. Often the individuals who propose these types of revisions come from a different discipline or a different social circumstance than the dominant ideology of the discipline at issue. By entering a discipline with a different academic or social perspective, an outsider can see what may be hidden in plain sight from scholars who have been solely socialized into their field’s culture (Latour, 1981).²

For example, sociologist Dorothy Smith (1987) felt like an outsider when she entered her field. Fascinated by the social world around her and by the varying perspectives that brought seemingly similar people to different understandings of the world around them, Smith was drawn to sociology. However, she understood that her field of study was almost exclusively developed by men—a group that she was not a member of and that she found problems with how their research treated women and minorities. No matter what their personal backgrounds might be, scholars joining the

¹ “Information Behavior” became the preferred moniker of the field in 1999 (Case, 2012).

² Latour (1981) provides a thoughtful discussion of six different models of research studying scientists, including a thorough discussion of the benefits and disadvantages of the outsider perspective.

field studied the accepted research and literature—much of which was created from a privileged male perspective—well-suited to address a limited set of traditional social issues. “The literature is exemplary in the sense that sociologists look to what has already been done and is already identifiable as a legitimate piece of sociological work to exhibit what is recognizable as sociology” (p. 61). This socialization makes change slow going. When Smith became a sociologist, she found that her perspective and that of other women and minority groups were not well served by the field of sociology. She eventually was able to offer an alternative by scrutinizing the field’s origins and thereby uncovering the assumptions that were limiting its growth. Smith’s work led to the field’s further expansion into women’s studies. Her experience provides an example of what might be done when a discipline changes its focus. Just as sociology began to more fully address the social world of women and minorities, so can EIB aim to more fully explore the quotidian world of the everyday. Before discussing the current field of EIB, therefore, I present a brief history of the field with an eye to identifying underlying assumptions that still influence contemporary research.

The origins of everyday information behavior

The scholarship and concepts of EIB and IB trace their roots back to a research study in 1902 that examined information use in a library collection (Case, 2012). Studies addressing users as well as their information sources or systems, became increasingly prevalent in the 1920s. Slowly, the field expanded to include multiple channels of information; by the end of the Second World War, information dissemination had become a major focus of research and government funding. Most of the post-war research focused on the information needs and uses of scientists and engineers, professions that were becoming increasingly important to U.S. defense and economic growth. The

information interactions in these studies typically involved domain experts carrying out serious work tasks and using formal information systems.

Research during this time, even the studies of users, largely focused on information artifacts or on “venues of information seeking: books, journals, newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, schools, universities, libraries, professional conferences and the like” (Case, 2012, p. 6) instead of on the behavior of users. These studies, referred to as *task-oriented studies*, were the standard in the field of IB until researchers began shifting their attention to other types of users in other contexts and settings. This later research emphasis, *nontask-oriented studies*, is now the primary focus of contemporary IB and EIB work. It is important to note, however, that while the types of participants and contexts of information behavior have changed within these studies, the contemporary literature nevertheless relies heavily on the concepts and research interests of the older task-oriented studies, such as traditional information sources, information artifacts, and information systems.

Not only does more recent work in IB still use the concepts of the serious, task-oriented studies of the past, the field also contains several studies focused on traditional domain experts. Ellis (1993) provides an example of such work in his study on the information-seeking patterns of academic researchers. His study uses qualitative methods and grounded theory to create models of information-seeking patterns of academics in the fields of social science, physics, chemistry, and English literature. Ellis’s Model of Information-Seeking Behavior is one of the most heavily cited models in the IB literature. It was selected as one of only nine models to appear in the standard overview of IB, Case’s (2012) *Looking for Information*. Moreover, it was integral to Wilson’s (1999) major work on modeling information behaviors.

Another major contribution to the traditional theoretical backbone of IB—also identified by Case (2012)—is Byström and Järvelin’s (1995) Information-Seeking Model. Their study explores the relationships between task complexity and the types, channels, and sources of information used by public administration employees. Drawing from previous theoretical work on task-based information seeking in a workplace environment, Byström and Järvelin empirically test their model using both qualitative and quantitative methods (questionnaires and diaries).

Both the Information-Seeking Model and the work that it is developed from it was specifically designed to explore task complexity in a structured environment using traditional, information-rich sources. The information sources identified by Byström and Järvelin’s (1995) include the people concerned, experts, literature, official documents, personal collections, registers, and commercial databases. Significantly, these sources are not limited to official documents or printed sources; they also include expert, interpersonal communication. The study only addressed tasks that were “either given to, or identified by, the worker” with “a recognizable beginning and end, the former containing recognizable stimuli and guidelines concerning goals and/or measures to be taken” (Byström & Järvelin, 1995, p. 193). Even with a narrowly drawn operationalization to identify tasks, 18 of the 94 task descriptions that were notable enough to be recorded were excluded because “the role of information was too marginal” (p. 198). These limitations led to a study that is well regarded for rigorously testing several important concepts from the IB literature and finding empirical justification for the Information-Seeking Model.

In a highly structured and controlled environment, such as a traditional workplace, tasks and sources of information can easily be identified and observed, and the concepts that comprise the Information-Seeking Model can therefore be confirmed

most readily in such an environment. When researchers branch out from structured information environments, however, they find it more challenging to analyze or even identify many of the traditional concepts of IB. Therefore, in order for IB to successfully expand into new domains, such as the everyday, scholars must grapple with the assumptions that underlie the concepts, theories, and models in the literature and the research environments that produced them.

Everyday information behavior in transition

As the field of IB has grown and changed, scholars have slowly left the workplace and library to examine other information-rich areas of everyday life. One domain that has become a major focus of EIB is healthcare (for example, Ankem, 2007; Johnson & Meischke, 1993; Matthews, Sellergren, Manfredi, & Williams, 2002; McCaughan & McKenna, 2007; McKenzie, 2003; Pettigrew 1999; Veinot, 2009). While this scholarship includes topics as varied as the information networks of HIV/AIDS patients and the information behavior of elderly individuals at a community foot care clinic, the majority of these studies focus on topics far removed from most people's typical everyday experiences.

One telling example of high-quality scholarship in this area is McKenzie's (2003) work creating a model of varied information practices of women who are pregnant with twins. Pregnancy is an information-rich life event, which McKenzie argues creates a unique information context where "pregnant women can ask, and are often expected to ask, questions about pregnancy, childbirth, and infancy" (p. 31). However, although pregnancy is a fairly common life event (albeit a temporary one for most women), few women have their pregnancies complicated by a multiple birth. Therefore, while pregnancy itself may be common enough to be considered a focus of research in the

everyday, research on multiple-birth pregnancy and other uncommon health events do not easily fit into the quotidian, everyday domain. McKenzie does clarify that having twins is unusual and easy to identify. Within this study, McKenzie's research highlights some of the gaps that still remain between the theory within IB literature and the work that the field of EIB aims to accomplish.

McKenzie's (2003) article added to the EIB literature with the development of a model of information behavior that focuses on "the wide variety of information practices such as environmental scanning, chance encounters, lay referrals and connecting by proxy" (p. 37) and by highlighting the "the fluidity of the practices" (p. 27). Previous work describes information behavior more systematically, as separate steps in a process (e.g. Ellis (1993); Kuhlthau (1991)). Even with the progress of this work in using new conceptualizations of information, the author notes that the traditional IB concepts and models still stifle her work, stating:

While such models are useful for describing the kinds of systematic information searches that go on in academic or workplace environments, they tend to reflect analysis of one single focussed [sic] current need and therefore do not attempt a holistic consideration of the variety of information behaviours individuals describe in their everyday lives... (McKenzie, 2003, p. 20)

Here McKenzie is clearly struggling to incorporate an emerging EIB perspective into the body of IB literature.

Yet despite this acknowledgement of the problems present in the traditional IB literature, her 2003 study still contains several assumptions intrinsic within the IB literature. For example, the focus of the study is on an 'information-rich life event' and the sources of information identified by the author are traditional ones in the IB literature, similar to those examined by Byström & Järvelin (1995). McKenzie's (2003) article is therefore emblematic of how influential scholars are challenging several of the ideas and

concepts of the traditional IB literature and are developing EIB into a distinct research area, while still identifying with—and often working around—the literature of their chosen academic field.

SECTION & CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

The structure of this dissertation is based around three different theoretical perspectives derived from three research literatures. Each perspective presents a different set of analyses and findings about the grocery shopping of the research participants. Together, the three perspectives demonstrate the information richness of the grocery shopping information environment and provide a more comprehensive telling of the everyday realities of grocery shopping. This structure is necessary to properly address the domain of grocery shopping, explore the information behaviors of grocery shoppers, and present the benefits of integrating EIB with critical and cultural theory.

The dissertation has five sections: A: Introduction and Background, B: Grocery Shopping Perspective, C: Information Behavior Perspective, D: Critical and Cultural Theory Perspective, and E: Conclusion. The three perspective sections each contain two chapters that present the theoretical perspective and empirical findings for each analysis. The rest of this introduction briefly describes those sections.

Section B: Grocery Shopping Perspective

The grocery shopping perspective is drawn from the grocery shopping literature and uses concepts to investigate two (of possibly many) grocery shopping personas: the nurturer persona and the creative persona. Chapter 2 presents my methodological approach, use of personas to investigate different aspects that affect a grocery shopper's information behavior, and two empirical studies. Chapter 3 presents the findings from the two empirical studies. In addition to the nurturer persona and the creative persona, the

presence of other personas was also identified in the findings of the empirical studies. Together, these chapters show two different aspects of a grocery shopper and how they can be applied to achieve a more fruitful and nuanced understanding of grocery shopping more generally.

Section C: Information Behavior Perspective

The information behavior perspective is based on the EIB and IB literature. Chapter 4 interprets the data from both empirical studies as a means to identify information behaviors in the grocery store that draw upon and define important IB and EIB concepts. Chapter 4 focuses on how the behavioral aspects of information behavior and some related concepts (such as uncertainty and information overload) impact grocery shoppers' information behaviors. Chapter 5 focuses on how internal attitudes and motivations change information behaviors in the grocery store. This chapter builds on the analysis presented in Chapter 4 by addressing how the aspects of grocery shopping found in Chapter 3 influence a grocery shopper's information behaviors. Together, these chapters demonstrate that grocery shopping is an information-rich activity worthy of investigation by EIB scholars, and illustrate how EIB can use other research literatures to more thoroughly explore an everyday information environment.

Section D: Critical and Cultural Theory Perspective

The critical and cultural theory perspective is derived from critical and cultural theory literature that addresses the everyday. Chapter 6 describes missed opportunities in the current EIB literature and how they can be addressed using theories and concepts from critical and cultural theory. This chapter both acts as a literature review for the critical and cultural theory literature that is central to this dissertation and describes how it can be integrated into current EIB scholarship. Chapter 7 presents four concepts that

emerged from the data and were developed by applying critical and cultural theory to the concerns of EIB. The analysis highlights the unique ‘everyday’ aspects of grocery shopping information behaviors. Additionally, the new concepts are useful in creating another perspective to gain a deeper understanding of the research participants’ grocery shopping, and in showing how these two fields focused on the everyday can be combined. Together, both chapters will show how EIB can be enhanced using critical and cultural theory.

Section E: Conclusion

The conclusion will bring the three perspectives together to show how each can be used to analyze the grocery shopping of one shopper. The conclusion will show that while each of the three perspectives can be successfully used to investigate the information behaviors of grocery shoppers, all three create the most complete picture of how individuals use information in their everyday lives. The conclusion will also return to the research design and discuss its benefits and limitations.

SECTION B: GROCERY SHOPPING PERSPECTIVE

Chapter 2: Research Design & Grocery Shopping Literature

To explore the everyday activity of grocery shopping, I have developed a research design based on the grocery shopping research literature. I have adopted this approach because the grocery shopping literature was designed to address the intricacies of this everyday activity. EIB is more suited to studying information behavior in similar contexts to the scientists and engineers IB scholars addressed (Case, 2012). For example, research on the information behaviors of individuals involved in important life challenges, such as having twins (McKenzie, 2003), or activities that rely on documents and other traditional information sources, such as the hobby of gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2011). In this chapter, I present my methodological approach, research design, and the grocery shopping literature I used to develop my two personas and empirical studies.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

To thoroughly and accurately explore the everyday world of grocery shopping my methodological approach is strongly inspired by Smith's (1987; 2006) methodology, institutional ethnography.³ It was designed to explore the social relationships that construct the context around a given phenomenon through the descriptive analysis of the localized lived experience of research participants. Instead of seeking out a large representative sample, I analyze the lived experience of a small, purposively selected group of grocery shoppers to identify themes that help explain the social relations that create the socially and culturally specific context of middle-class grocery shopping in the United States.⁴ While the individual lived experience of the participants may not be

³ Later in Chapter 6, I will further describe the benefits of methods inspired by institutional ethnography for EIB research.

⁴ Middle-class shoppers are the focus because they have financial access to grocery store, but are not so wealthy that the financial implications of grocery shopping are insignificant.

generalizable to a wider population, the social relations are; they can be interpreted as applying to other individuals in similar grocery shopping contexts. By exploring the influences that create the context a grocery shopper exists within, my analysis illuminates the social relationships that create it. Qualitative methods focused on accurately describing the lived experience of individuals are the best approach to explore the nuances of the everyday world, and that is what drives my methodological approach.

PERSONAS

For this project, I am using the concept of *personas* to peel apart different layers of an individual's identity that are at play in the everyday world. My use of the term is novel and meant to serve as a framework for analyzing aspects of a person's identity that exist in the world. The personas are artificial constructs and are not limited to the two that I directly explore in the dissertation. Personas overlap, work together, and fight against each other all within a single individual. They are aspects of an individual's identity, and an individual may not be consciously aware of the personas or their impact on his or her information behavior. The use of personas reveals the complexity of a grocery shopper's information behavior by highlighting the various forces at play. For example, grocery shoppers may consider the price, nutritional content, packaging, familiarity, and potential use when selecting a single grocery item. All of these factors may be complicated by personas that value different attributes. By addressing the personas and not the shopper as a singular entity, I am breaking down a complex phenomenon, examining it, and then putting it back together to gain greater insights into the information behaviors of grocery shoppers.

Each persona focuses on an approach a grocery shopper might take when making decisions and evaluating information. Grocery shoppers are rarely of a singular mind;

they may select an item based on any number of features: price, an organic label, or a nostalgic feeling. All of the personas an individual may enact as the grocery shopper suggest the complexity involved in what most people regard as a mundane everyday activity. The use of personas enables a researcher to explore these variable approaches individually to gain a more complete picture of how each one functions. When these personas are assembled, a researcher can address how they interact and shape one another. In my dissertation, I explore two personas, the nurturer and creative personas, individually and together to thoroughly investigate the variety of influences and contexts that impact a grocery shopper's information behavior. Other personas are also likely at play while grocery shopping, but two are sufficient to give a proof of concept—employing two different conceptual literatures and comparisons drawn between them. Also if I am able to identify additional personas while exploring just two, the rationale for further research using the persona concept is strengthened.

The concept of personas is derived from my aim to show the complexity of an activity that initially seems straightforward or simple. I developed the concept after exploring the grocery shopping research literature where several different concepts and theories have all been used to explain different aspects of an individual's grocery shopping. The use of personas is meant to create a framework in which any activity a person can participate in can be analyzed based on the different identities, influences, and motivations that are at play while the individual is engaged in the activity.

NURTURER PERSONA STUDY

In recent years, a seemingly simple solution has been advocated to help decrease the prevalence of many nutrition-related health problems from heart disease to diabetes. That solution is the home-cooked meal. The home-cooked meal has been romanticized as

a remedy to health problems and family strife from the classic sitcom ideals of the 1950s housewife to the advocacy of celebrated food writer Michael Pollan. He once wrote, “far from oppressing them, the work of cooking approached in the proper spirit offer[s] a kind of fulfillment and deserve[s] an intelligent woman’s attention” (as cited in Marcotte, 2014, para. 1). Unfortunately, like many simple solutions, the home-cooked meal may have detrimental consequences to the “intelligent women” and families that strive, and sometimes fail, to enact them. Home cooking and homemade food has once again become a staple of what good parenting, and most often good mothering (DeVault, 1991; Warren, 2013) looks like in stable and healthy families (Bowen, Elliot, & Brenton, 2014). It is also a time-consuming activity that requires resources many individuals do not have; and when successfully incorporated into a family routine, it may still be met with hostility from picky eaters. Recently, researchers who interviewed 150 women from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds found that:

The idea that home cooking is inherently ideal reflects an elite foodie standpoint. Romantic depictions of cooking assume that everyone has a home that family members are home eating at the same time, and that kitchens and dining spaces are equipped and safe. This is not necessarily the case for the families we met. (Bowen, et al., 2014, p. 23)

No matter the background or current economic conditions of the families, the researchers report that the burden of responsibility for producing healthy, home-cooked meals was deeply felt by many of the mothers they interviewed.

Whether meals are made from scratch or heated up in a microwave, feeding any type of family requires bringing food into the home; and for most families that requires grocery shopping (DeVault, 1991). Whether their family consists of children, pets, roommates, or future dinner guests, most grocery shoppers are influenced by their role as the provider of food or the nurturer of their family. Even individuals who are solely

responsible for feeding themselves are influenced by the cultural norms of food and nutrition trends. Understanding the nurturer persona an individual enacts in the act of grocery shopping is integral to understanding the context of an individual's information behaviors related to grocery shopping. To explore the nurturer persona, this section defines the persona, articulates research questions, describes the current research literature surrounding the cultural expectations of nurturing and food choice within the grocery store, presents the research methods, and describes the sample of the empirical study that explored the unique information contexts of the nurturer persona.

Persona description

The nurturer persona is the embodiment of the cultural norms that inform an individual's experiences within the information environment of the grocery store as the food provider. The persona influences an individual's understanding and preferences for sources of information, as well as purchase decisions and general grocery shopping habits. An individual may feel that it is his or her responsibility to become an ideal 'good shopper' and that, through research and correct decision-making, he or she can create a healthy family through appropriate grocery shopping. A family is defined as the people or animals that the grocery shopper provides food for, including the shopper herself. Common examples of cultural norms include shopping at the right stores, buying the highest quality items, purchasing fresh ingredients, avoiding harmful foods, and following healthy food trends.

Research questions

The nurturer persona study combines literature on food choice, nurturing, and feeding families to explore the nurturer persona of an individual within the information environment of the grocery store. Grocery shoppers bring the food that families prepare

and eat into their homes. As such, grocery shoppers may feel that the task of grocery shopping takes on a larger meaning into the role of food provider. How individuals enact the role of food provider is also how they enact the nurturer persona in the context of grocery shopping. This study addresses the following research questions:

N1. What cultural norms influence grocery shoppers in their role as food providers?

N2. How do grocery shoppers understand their self-identity as food providers?

N3. How do grocery shoppers understand their moral obligation as food providers?

The nurturer persona is deeply ingrained in contemporary culture and in social norms surrounding motherhood, nutrition, and food choice. These concepts are discussed in a diverse group of research literatures that are discussed below.

Literature review

The 1960s was a time of great cultural change, including the food culture. Many of the food trends of today have their roots in the countercultural ‘hippie’ ethics developed during this time. Concurrently, scientists and health care professionals were beginning to understand the relationship between a person’s diet and her health (Belasco, 1989; Coveney, 2000; Levenstein 2003). The dual forces of a belief in a natural lifestyle and a distrust of preservatives, pesticides, and chemicals within food have created cultural norms that shape the ways in which grocery shoppers understand the food they bring into their homes (Kjærnes, Harvey, & Wards, 2007; Lewis, 1979). Norms are, as the term suggests, the rules of social interaction that seem normal to most people (Dandaneau, 2007). Most of the research literature that address these cultural norms focuses on how they impact the primary grocery shoppers in the United States: women

(Warren, 2013) and especially mothers (Bava, Jaeger, & Park, 2008; Bowen et al., 2014; Cairns, Johnston, & Mackendrick, 2013; Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; Cockburn-Wootten, Pritchard, Morgan, & Jones, 2008; Coveney, 2000; DeVault, 1991; Gram, 2014; Moisisio, Arnould, & Price, 2004; Shepherd & Raats, 1996; Slater, Sevenhuysen, Edginton, & O’Neil, 2011, Stratton & Bromly, 1999; Thompson, 1996; Warde & Martens, 2000). One recent study has shifted the focus to also address how some men nurture through cooking (Szabo, 2014).

Throughout the literature on motherhood and feeding families, several important concepts emerge that are essential to exploring the nurturer persona. The concept of the ‘good shopper’ may be heavily influenced by the concept of the good mother/parent. A ‘good mother’ is defined by her society’s time and culture, but it is universally understood to be a person who nurtures and practices self-sacrifice (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006). One study that investigated the ideal of the ‘organic child’ defined good mothers “as those who preserve their children’s purity and protect the environment through conscientious food purchases” (Cairns et al., 2013, p. 101). The concept of the good mother is also deeply tied to a parent’s responsibility to provide healthy food to the child (Slater et al. 2011; Stratton & Bromley, 1999)—in part through grocery shopping (Cockburn-Wootten et al., 2008). This responsibility often requires more time and resources than families have available (Bowen et al., 2014).

Due to a variety of reasons, such as a lack of time, convenience foods have become a staple of contemporary life for most people in the Western world (Warde, 1999). Convenience foods are traditionally thought of to provide some form of time or labor saving. Within the research literature, there is a divide between how Americans and how individuals in other countries view the role of convenience food in their lives (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006). Americans have been found to feel guilt when using

convenience foods and products to feed their families (Thompson 1996; Moisiso et al., 2004). By contrast, participants in the United Kingdom view convenience food as empowering (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006), and in New Zealand researchers found that the use of convenience foods is consistent with the ideals of the study's participants (Bava et al. 2008). This difference in attitude is possibly caused by a cultural difference between the United States and other countries.

Multiple U.K. studies (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Raats, Shepherd, & Sparks, 1995; Shepherd & Raats, 1996) have found the concepts of self-identify and moral obligation, as extensions of the theory of planned behavior, help to explain food choices. The theory of planned behavior “predict[s] and explain[s] human behavior in specific contexts” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181) and “links attitudes, subjective norms (akin to perceived social pressure), behavioral intentions, and behavior in a fixed causal sequence” with a measure of perceived control (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992, p. 388). The theory is used by psychologists use it as a framework to help explain human behavior.

Self-identity refers to how an individual understands or conceives of his or her identity, such as being a ‘green’ consumer (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). A person’s self-identity has been found to influence planned behavior, independent of the person’s attitudes, beliefs, and values. *Moral obligation* refers to the responsibility a person feels about how his or her decision making affects others (Raats et al., 1995). The role of food provider is likely accompanied by moral obligations, and they may originate when the role of provider begins or changes.

Both self-identity and moral obligation are important to understanding the nurturer persona inasmuch as a grocery shopper may both self-identify as a food provider and feel an obligation to buy the highest quality food for his or her family. A study that explores the cultural norms that influence grocery shoppers in their roles as nurturers will

provide valuable insights into understanding the information behaviors and context of grocery shopping as well as contribute to the food choice literature more generally. The study described below explores the nurturer persona as enacted within the information environment of the grocery store.

Methods

In order to explore the nurturer persona that an individual enacts while grocery shopping, this study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews of grocery shoppers. The interviews focused on the cultural norms that shoppers internalize in striving to be good shoppers/parents/people and explore how the shopper's self-identity as the provider of food and moral obligation to family influences the shopper's behaviors both inside and outside of the grocery store. Behaviors may include purchasing, researching, and comparing food items both in preparation for grocery shopping and during the shopping trip.

The study followed carefully selected existing research into consumer behavior by using interpretative mechanisms to develop an understanding of the life stories of a small number of participants—with a focus on cultural norms and assumptions identified through iterative reading and coding of individual transcripts and the corpus of data as a whole (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; Thompson, 1996). The study sought out three categories of middle-class, primary grocery shoppers: individuals who have either been married, had their first child, or had someone move out of their home in the last 12 months. These categories were selected with the goal of identifying individuals whose grocery shopping has recently changed due to the addition or subtraction of family members. The addition of members of a family, such as children, may bring about changes to an individual's grocery shopping practices (Cairns et al., 2013). My selection

of focusing on the addition or subtraction of family members is only one of many possible entry points into exploring the nurturer persona. My choice was driven by the literature on mothering and feeding families (Bava et al., 2008; Bowen et al., 2014; Cairns et al., 2013; Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; DeVault, 1991; Gram, 2014; Moisio et al., 2004; Slater et al., 2011; Thompson, 1996). It also may help the subjects to reflect on their grocery shopping behavior because of these changes. The present study adds to the research literature by exploring the cultural norms, self-identity, and moral obligations that can accompany a new life change. The focus on both the addition and subtraction of family members is used to create comparison groups to investigate how and if cultural norms, self-identity, and moral obligation change in other situations.

The sample includes 18 participants—six in each category. Participants were recruited through flyers, public postings, and interactions with the researcher at carefully selected recruitment sites. Recruitment sites included real estate offices specializing in new homebuyers and downsizers, public parks, and baby stores. Interested individuals contacted the researcher and were asked four screening questions to determine their eligibility to participate in the study. The participants all met the eligibility requirements of being over 18, self-identifying as middle class, being a primary grocery shopper for their home, and falling into one of the three participant categories. A few individuals contacted the researcher to participate who did not qualify based on the screening questions or availability. The recruitment process continued until six individuals were found for each category of participants. The interviews lasted between 18 and 47 minutes with an average of 34 minutes per interview. (See Appendix A for the interview protocol.) Among all 18 interviews, a total of 619 minutes of audio were recorded and transcribed into 247 pages of text. At the start of the interview, the participants provided informed consent and received a \$20 gift card to HEB, a large, regional grocery and

department store chain, as compensation for participating. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Austin approved the research protocol for this study.

Sample description

The 18 participants in this study all live in a large city in the Southwest with several regional and national grocery chains as well as many specialty stores. The sample includes 10 women and eight men. Each of the participants belongs to one of the three participant types (Newly Married, New Baby, and Left Home).

The number of men in this study is quite unusual for research on grocery shopping. Most studies that address grocery shopping or food provisioning either focus explicitly on women (Bava et al., 2008; Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; Slater et al., 2011; Thompson, 1996) or their samples contained at least twice as many female as male participants (Cairns et al., 2013; Gram, 2014). While the recruitment for the present study did not focus on gender parity, the resulting sample does provide a novel perspective to the grocery shopping literature.

The Newly Married group contains four women and two men. In this group, five of the participants' families consisted of themselves and their spouses only. Ramona's family consisted of her daughter, plus two stepsons who lived with her and her husband a few days a week.⁵ The New Baby group contains four men and two women. Five of the participants' families consisted of themselves, their spouses, and the new baby. Angelica's family consisted of her husband, new baby, and stepdaughter. Tim included his pets, a dog, cat, and fish, in his description of his family. The Left Home group contains four women and two men. Each participant in this group has a unique circumstance for their family changes at the time of the interviews. Marcella's family

⁵ All of the participants' names and identifying information have been removed from quotations presented in this study and pseudonyms have been assigned using a random name generator that only reflects gender.

consisted of her son and mother. Her husband had recently moved to another country for work. Emanuel's family consists of his son since his recent divorce from his ex-wife. Rudy was living alone when I interviewed him. He was finishing up school and his partner and daughter had moved back home ahead of him. May lived with her partner, dog, and cat. May's sister-in-law and baby had recently left May's home. Gladys' boyfriend moved out of their home for work, and she was living alone. Faye's family included her older brother; her younger brother had also been living with her but moved out a few months before the interview. Grace had previous experience working in a grocery store.

CREATIVE PERSONA STUDY

In 2005, Whole Foods was planning major changes to its then-small specialty grocery stores. Starting with the new flagship store in Austin, TX, Whole Foods created what one journalist called "the grocery equivalent of Disney World for food junkies" (Horovitz, 2005, para. 2). The new initiative was based on a simple premise, according to founder John Mackey:

Americans love to eat. And Americans love to shop. But we don't like to shop for food. It's a chore, like doing laundry... Whole Foods thinks shopping should be fun. With this store, we're pioneering a new lifestyle that synthesizes health and pleasure. We don't see a contradiction. (para. 4)

By transforming a chore into a pleasure, Whole Foods challenged the assumptions of what grocery stores are and what grocery shopping can be.

Many people still view their weekly shopping trips as another dull, but necessary, errand. Yet as stores are changing, so too are some customers' feelings and approaches to grocery shopping evolving. Some shoppers enter a grocery store and embark on an enjoyable, creative adventure, where thousands of ingredients offer the opportunity to

create millions of different dishes. As grocery stores become sites of fun and leisure, they also become spaces that can engender creativity (Brightbill, 1961). In her book on shopping and contemporary American culture, sociologist Sharon Zukin (2004) remarks, “we often feel that shopping is our most available means of creative expression” (p. 7). Stores such as Whole Foods—a store focused on the fun of grocery shopping—encourage individuals to enact the creative persona within the information environment of the grocery store. To explore this persona, this section will define the creative persona; present research questions; describe the current research literature surrounding creative consumption, leisure, and the grocery store; explain the methods; and describe the sample of the empirical study that explored the creative persona.

Persona description

The creative persona is the embodiment of the creative choices and activities that an individual experiences within the information environment of the grocery store. The persona impacts the selection and use of information sources an individual interacts with as well influencing purchase decisions and general grocery shopping habits. An individual may feel that the environment and programs a grocery store offers encourage creativity, exploration, and forms of play. Common examples of store offerings that may encourage creativity include cooking demonstrations, samples of uncommon foods, informational signs, in-store displays, and aisle and shelf organization.

Research questions

This study combines literature on shopping, creative consumption, and leisure with the methods and concepts of information behavior research to explore the creative persona of an individual within the information environment of the grocery store. To explore the research questions participants are categorized based on whether or not they

consider grocery shopping a leisure activity. Shoppers that view grocery shopping as a leisure activity are referred to as recreational grocery shoppers, a concept from the literature discussed below. The study addresses the following research questions:

C1. How do recreational grocery shoppers enact the creative persona within a grocery store?

C2. How do recreational grocery shoppers understand their own creativity within the grocery store?

C3. What store attributes are important to recreational grocery shoppers?

These research questions all focus on different aspects of the creative persona and come from different but closely related literatures, as discussed below.

Literature review

Studies of consumption began as a reaction to the growth of the retail industry, including the spread of the supermarket (Miller, Jackson, Thrift, Holbrook, & Rowlands, 1998). De Certeau (1984) is one scholar who challenged the conventional view of consumption. His work explored active and creative forms of consumption that individuals participate in throughout their everyday life. By focusing on the everyday, De Certeau's work on consumption fits well with explorations of grocery shopping, an everyday activity (Miller et al. 1998; Stebbins, 2009). In one example of creative consumption, in the chapter, "Walking in the City," De Certeau explains that walking through a city is an everyday activity that is constrained by the architecture of the city, but can choose their own path. Similarly, grocery shoppers are constrained by the architecture and aisle configuration of the grocery store, which is carefully designed to encourage one path through each of the store's departments (Davis, 2001). Shoppers can

challenge the authority of the grocery store by creating their own path within the store's constraints.

As described above, leisure can be the space in which creative activities occur. Leisure is defined as “uncoerced activity undertaken during free time” (Stebbins, 2009, p. 10). Stebbins breaks leisure down into three types: serious, casual, and project-based. Serious leisure is characterized by “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity” (p. 14). Casual leisure is characterized by pleasurable activities that are often short lived and intrinsically rewarding. The third form, project-based, is similar to serious leisure except that it occurs as a one-off or occasional activity. Grocery shopping can exist as either a serious or casual leisure pursuit. Hartel (2011), in her research on the serious leisure pursuit of gourmet cooking hobbyists, found that shopping for ingredients and visiting specialty markets can be an important and information-rich portion of her participants' hobby.

Shopping as leisure or recreational shopping has traditionally been studied in shopping malls and other non-grocery settings (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980; Jansen-Verbeke, 1987; Prus & Dawson, 1991; Yim, Too, Sauer, & Seo, 2013). Other studies have found that recreational shoppers represent a significant portion of the shopping public, are more likely to impulse shop, use shopping for information seeking, and choose shopping locations based on the shopping experience more than convenience (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). A key weakness in this research is that recreational shopping was only observed in non-grocery settings, ignoring the most common everyday form of shopping.

Stebbins (2009), building on the work of Prus and Dawson (1991), articulated the different experiences of a shopper who treats “shopping as obligation” versus “shopping as leisure.” Grocery shopping is typically viewed as a form of “shopping as obligation”

and tends to be considered a “laborious activity” that can lead to “undesired ambiguity and frustration... a sense of *the incompetence of self*” (Prus & Dawson, 1991, p. 160, emphasis in original). Adversely, consumers that enact “shopping as leisure” transform grocery shopping into “a means of acknowledging, entertaining, or expressing one's self” (p. 160). Stebbins (2009) goes on to problematize the typology of shopping as either obligation or leisure to describe the few instances where shopping may be both obligatory and enjoyable: “pleasant obligations are sometimes part of leisure, as when a volunteer is obliged to serve a certain time of the day or a football player is obliged to play in a game” (p. 95). Stebbins views “shopping as obligatory leisure” as a rare event, but one that can occur. While grocery shopping is an activity that most individuals must participate in, it may also be something enjoyable that they look forward to. One U.K. study, which specifically addressed leisure shopping in the grocery store, found that for the women in the study “grocery shopping [was] a way to obtain some form of leisure space” (Cockburn-Wootten et al., 2008, p. 430). Grocery shopping can act as an enjoyable time away from the demands of ones family, or as a way to spend time with friends while running an important errand.

Shopping as obligatory leisure may be a rare event, but grocery shopping has the opportunity to become a more common leisure activity, especially for food enthusiasts. Individuals that greatly enjoy grocery shopping may also sometimes feel that the activity has become an obligation. Studies that address grocery stores as leisure spaces can provide meaningful insights to the leisure literature as well as create recommendations for marketing and store design. Creative forms of consumption may be increased through a shopper's belief that he or she is engaged in a leisure activity instead of a laborious one. The current study explores the grocery store as a leisure space and the creative persona as enacted within the information environment of the grocery store.

Methods

To explore the creative persona that an individual enacts within a grocery store this study consists of both semi-structured interviews and shopping observations using the think-aloud technique. The study follows a similar research design into consumer behavior by using interpretative research (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; Thompson, 1996) and the think-aloud technique (O'Brien et al. 2014) to explore the creative process of grocery shopping. The think-aloud technique consist of participants vocalizing what they are thinking and doing with the researcher providing occasional prompts when the participant stops speaking.

Participants were recruited through flyers placed in specialty food stores and cafes. Multiple sites were used for recruitment to obtain a diverse sample of participants. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling with a focus on individuals who love food, cooking, or grocery shopping. All participants were screened with four qualification questions to ensure that they met the requirements of being over 18, self-identifying as middle class, being a primary grocery shopper for their home, and describing themselves as enjoying food, cooking, or grocery shopping. A few individuals contacted the researcher to participate, but did not qualify based on the screening questions or availability and thus were not included in the study. The recruitment process continued until 18 individuals qualified. In total, 18 individuals participated in the interview portion of the study (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). The interviews lasted between 26 and 49 minutes with an average of 37 minutes per interview and a total of 669 minutes among all 18 interviews. At the start of the interview, the participants provided informed consent and received a \$10 gift card to Meijer, a large regional grocery and department store chain, as compensation for participating. After the interview concluded, the participants were asked if they wished to continue their

participation and be observed grocery shopping. All 18 participants were interested in continuing their participation and were instructed in the think-aloud technique for the observation.

The shopping observations occurred with 17 of the 18 participants. One participant, Glen, was contacted three times after the initial interview and did not respond to complete the observation. His interview was nevertheless included in the analysis. At the start of the observation, participants were once again told about the think-aloud technique and given another \$10 gift card to Meijer as compensation for participating. Six of the observation occurred at more than one store, farmers market, or farm stand. Three participants were observed shopping with their partners and one was observed shopping with her two young children. The observations lasted between 30 and 76 minutes with an average of 52 minutes per observation and a total of 885 minutes among all 17 observations. Altogether, the data collection of this study totaled 1,554 total minutes of recorded audio, which was transcribed into 587 pages of text. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Austin approved the research protocol for this study.

Sample description

The 18 participants in this study all live in a rural and suburban area of the Midwest near a large research university. The community includes several grocery stores and a few specialty markets including ethnic food markets, health food stores, gourmet food markets, bakeries, butcher shops, and coffee and tea stores. The sample includes four men and 14 women. Several of the participants lived with and shopped for others, including 11 participants who shopped for their partner, three who shopped for their children, three who shopped for their pets, and two who shopped for their parents or in-

laws. Seven participants lived alone or only primarily shopped for themselves. One participant, Jenna, had recently discovered she was pregnant with her first child. One participant, Glen, had previous experience working in a grocery store. A few of the participants learned of the study through friends or family. During the observation stage of the study, I learned that two of the participants, Tonya and Arturo, were in a relationship, and two more were father and daughter, Joseph and Robin. Neither of these pairs live together nor primarily shop for or with the other participant, and although Robin shared a few shopping behaviors with Joseph, both pairs exhibited several shopping differences. The relationships between these participants pose minimal negative effects for the study as a whole.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The methods of the two empirical studies have four notable similarities and differences. First, both studies use qualitative methods inspired by Smith's institutional ethnography to focus on the lived experience of the research participants. The interviews are semi-structured and flexible, allowing the participants to shape the content of the interview while ensuring that a range of topics was addressed. Though, the goal of the interviews is to collect data that can be compared, my goal was also to allow the participants to describe their experience using their own terms. Second, the samples in both studies were purposive, based on the goals to find participants with particular life experiences or a love for food as well as participants with differences that could be used to create comparison groups. This study used a triangulation of sources (research participants) to gain a fuller picture of the realities of grocery shopping from a variety of grocery shoppers (Choemprayong & Wildemuth, 2009).

The studies also have differences between them that are important to my overall research goals. First, each study was designed to explore a specific grocery-shopping persona with a recruitment process designed to find participants who would likely have some relationship to each persona. The recruitment locations provided for two different samples between the two studies and a diverse group of participants within each study. Second, the nurturer persona study solely used interviews for data collection, while the creative persona study also involved observations. The basis for this decision was that the nurturer persona largely focuses on the influences that affect grocery shoppers, while the creative persona involved exhibiting creativity in the store. It was my belief that the nurturer persona would be easier for a participant to describe, while the creative persona would be easier to understand through observation, as the store itself is such an important part of enacting the creative persona.

Together, the studies complement each other with similarities focused on the lived experience of research participants and differences that highlight the different aspects of the two distinctive grocery shopping personas. The data collection and analysis followed the same procedures for both empirical studies and the process is described below.

DATA COLLECTION

All of the interviews occurred at a place of the participant's choosing. The majority of participants in both studies met the researcher at her office at a major research university. A few participants were interviewed at a quiet place in their workplace or school or in a coffee shop. Three of the nurturer persona study participants were interviewed over the phone. The shopping observations for the creative persona study occurred at the grocery store or stores of the participant's choosing.

The data collection for the nurturer persona study occurred from June through August of 2015. The data collection for the creative persona study occurred from September through early November of 2015, concluding before the traditional U.S. holiday season. To the best of my knowledge, no major grocery-shopping-related news stories or events occurred during the data collection process that might impact the data.

All interviews began with the researcher briefly describing the purpose of the research study and going over an informed consent form with the participants. The participants were told that they could interrupt the interviewer at any time to ask questions or ask for clarification. Participants were also told that they did not have to answer any question that they did not want to, and that 'no' was a perfectly acceptable answer to any question. All interviews concluded with a participant debriefing in which participants were encouraged to ask questions, return to previous topics, or describe any additional aspects of their grocery shopping that was not previously discussed.

After the interview for the creative persona study, participants were asked if they wished to continue their participation by taking part in the shopping observation. The procedures for the think-aloud technique were explained to the participants. The observations for the creative persona began with a brief reminder about the think-aloud technique. Throughout the observation the participants were prompted with questions about what they were doing or looking at if they were not verbalizing their thoughts and actions.

All of the interviews and observations were audio recorded and notes were taken by the researcher. After the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were sent to a professional transcription service approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Austin. All of the transcripts were corrected and amended by the researcher with the audio files and notes. Both studies produced 2,173 minutes of

recorded audio with 619 minutes of interview data from the nurturer persona study and 1,554 minutes of interview and observation data from the creative persona study. The audio was transcribed into 834 pages of text.

DATA ANALYSIS

My approach to data analysis is based on triangulation and iteration. Triangulation uses multiple perspectives to come to a finding or meaning (Choemprayong & Wildemuth, 2009). Each persona provides a unique perspective to explore everyday information behavior in and around the grocery store. Within each persona, triangulation was also used through comparative participant groups. While the true breadth of the grocery store experience may not be accounted for in this research, triangulation allowed for each persona and theme to be analyzed from multiple perspectives creating a full, if not complete understanding of the variety of grocery shopping experiences.

Iteration is an integral concept to work with qualitative research. Once data collection was completed, I began the iterative process of coding my data and creating my codebook. I used preset codes based on the research literature and developed emergent codes. The interviews were created based on the research literature and the questions acted as a starting base for preset codes. However, semi-structured interviewing allowed for variations in question order and context, which led to more emergent coding. Emergent codes began with the participant's own language and were refined through iterative reading of the data and codes. If a code was changed the previous excerpts of text were reviewed for consistency. All of the codes were created, defined, and augmented through multiple readings of the data. After the full codebook was created codes were separated into categories or higher-level concepts under which multiple codes are grouped based on shared properties (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Coding was mutually

exclusive but the same excerpt of text could be coded with multiple codes. Coding was content focused with codes varying from single words to several sentences of text. For example, if a participant described how she found a new recipe, I coded the recipe-finding incident as one code and the sources described within the incident as a separate code.

The codebook consisted of brief descriptions of codes along with the full list of text excerpts marked with the code. In addition to creating the codebook, I also used memos to identify themes, clarify codes, and build broader concepts. Analysis was performed using Atlas.ti, a well-known qualitative research software.

All of the data analysis was driven by the concepts of everyday information behavior and relevant grocery shopping literature to compare my findings to already existing concepts and, as appropriate, develop new ones using the critical and cultural theory of the everyday.

Chapter 3: Empirical Findings Concerning Grocery Shopping: Two Studies

The personas explored in this chapter isolate particular aspects of a grocery shopper's information behavior and grocery shopping experience. As described in Chapter 2, both empirical studies were designed to focus on one persona, but other personas were also observed in the data. This chapter presents the personas that a grocery shopper enacts in the act of grocery shopping. The analysis of the personas will provide insights into the context that grocery shoppers exist within. The next section will more directly address the everyday information behaviors of grocery shoppers. The findings show the complexity of the various influences and factors that impact grocery shoppers, described in their own words. This chapter will present findings for the nurturer and creative personas as discussed by the participants.

NURTURER PERSONA FINDINGS

Life changes

All of the participants in this study were recruited based on the addition or subtraction of family members from their household in the last 12 months e.g. marriage, a new baby, or someone leaving home. Table 1 presents the participants listed by category. The categories were assigned to the participants before the interviews occurred and were verified during the interview.

Table 1: List of participants by participant type

Newly Married	Ramona, Paul, Santiago, Dora, Deborah, and Grace
New Baby	Felix, Kendra, Jerome, Tim, Angelica, and Jerry
Left Home	Marcella, Emanuel, Rudy, May, Gladys, and Faye

These life changes acted as a launching point for the interviews and were used to investigate how and whether household changes affect the nurturer persona and thus the

role of food provider. For example, the addition of a child into a family may change not only the items that are purchased at the grocery store, but also an individual's feelings about grocery shopping more generally.

The participants were all asked if their recent life change had an impact on their grocery shopping. Seven of the 18 participants described the life change as having a significant impact on their shopping. Three of the new parents in the study viewed either pregnancy or the birth of their new child as impacting their shopping and eating patterns. Tim explained in his interview that being a new father increased his focus on his health. As will be discussed further below, Kendra and Jerry described pregnancy as a time when both of their families became more aware of what food they were consuming. Two members of the recently married group described adapting their shopping to new tastes and even new food philosophies. Deborah started buying food she does not like for her new husband and adapted her cooking to try and make everyone happy.

Deborah: I think just trying to buy what he wants to and not just completely crush his palette. I feel like I have to buy things that I don't want to eat now. I would never eat steak, but I'm not going to make steak for him ... I guess I try to buy things and prepare meals that could be with two different proteins. Chicken pasta, it's easy to put shrimp in there and then when I put it on the two plates, give him all the chicken and me all the shrimp.

During her interview, Grace described how her recent marriage had impacted her views on food.

Grace: I feel like now that I'm married, I ... Not that I'm responsible for what he eats, but I've kind of taken on that role. Whatever I make is what he's going to eat, and so I'm more conscious about what he likes. I'm kind of picky, so being able to make something that we both like, but also I know that maybe he might be a little bit more concerned about health than me.

The other two participants who described their recent life change as significant came from the Left Home group. From the first question in her interview, Gladys explained how her boyfriend moving away changed her grocery shopping.

Interviewer: To begin with, how do you feel about grocery shopping?

Gladys: It depends on my mood or I guess, the purpose ... if I have a special reason then I look forward to it. It's just ... it can be kind of boring and habitual. So it sort of depends. Right now, I'm by myself so it kind of ... it's kind of more out of necessity and ... I'm not ... this might be answering more than what you're asking but, I'm not shopping for as many recipes as I used to. My boyfriend was living with me. I kind of buy more Lean Cuisines, more frozen foods and stuff. It's just me. So, it's not as [much] fun I would say as before. Yeah. Actually when I go by myself now, I tend to buy more things than I really need. I don't have a set list really. I kind of go in and see what's ... what I would want. But sometimes I would include things I don't really need.

May's shopping also changed when her sister-in-law and niece moved out, taking with them the pressure of shopping for a baby.

May: Yeah, I guess I, as far as bringing the right things home I guess aside of things for us it's really important, especially with the pets or when the baby was around. Just making sure that we had everything stocked up and that was a little bit more pressure than I feel now, for sure.

These comments also begin to show the variety of factors a grocery shopper considers when taking on the role of food provider.

Five of the participants described their recent life change as having little or no impact on their shopping. Most of this group came from the Left Home group. For all three participants in this group, the members of the family that left did not play a major role in their grocery shopping while they were members of the family; so their leaving was not impactful. The other two participants are in the Newly Married group. They described their grocery shopping as largely the same after their marriage—with just the inclusion of a few new items.

Four of the participants, two from the New Baby group and one from each of the other groups, described some change in their grocery shopping. Like Jerome, they all could recount some changes, such as buying more food or picking up a few specialty items, but nothing that the participants described as impactful.

Interviewer: Yeah. How has your recent life change with your adorable son, how has that changed your grocery shopping?

Jerome: Not as much as we had anticipated it would. Like I said, there were the ... There were the minor things about the fact that we don't buy certain really expensive ingredients and instead buy stuff to help my wife's milk supply, but we use cloth diapers. She exclusively breastfeeds him so we're not buying formula. We're not buying diapers or things like that.

Finally, two participants described significant changes in their grocery shopping that corresponded with their recent life change category, but that were also accounted for with other changes. Ramona viewed the changes of her grocery shopping as coming from her marriage, child, and stepchildren; Angelica's new daughter as well as her stepdaughter impacted Angelica's shopping.

Together, all of the participants in this study demonstrate that life changes to a family can, but do not necessarily translate into observable grocery shopping changes. The majority of the participants did describe impactful changes to their grocery shopping over their lifetime, but they did not necessarily correspond to the life changes that are the focus of this study.

Nurturer Research Question 1 – What cultural norms influence grocery shoppers in their role as food providers?

Grocery shopping, like all social behaviors, occurs within the context of cultural norms. They may influence many aspects of shopping—from how to act in a grocery store to the products a store carries. Cultural norms can be difficult to articulate, especially ones that are deeply ingrained in our culture. In order to uncover the cultural norms that impacted the participants, I coded the interview transcripts for ideas and concepts that were said and unsaid. I asked all of the participants if there is a right way to shop, trying to uncover the cultural norms around grocery shopping. Other cultural norms were identified through participants' awareness of norms and descriptions of unspoken claims. Unspoken claims were coded through repeated readings of the transcripts. An

example of an unspoken claim in this study is the belief that organic food is more nutritious. Many participants stated this claim in their interviews without presenting any evidence or knowledge about its accuracy. In fact, a recent study that examined scientific articles on nutrition found no significant difference in the nutrient content of conventionally and organically produced foodstuffs (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2014). The prevalence of this cultural norm has impacted the shopping behaviors of many of the participants in this study in spite of scientific proof.

To identify the cultural norms that influence grocery shoppers in their role as food provider, I present the themes that emerged from asking all participants about the right way to shop, identifying the norms that were discussed by more than one participant. I further present a table with the additional norms that were described by only one participant.

The right way to grocery shop

I asked all of the participants about the ‘right way’ to grocery shop to see what, if any cultural norms inform their social judgments around grocery shopping. The majority of participants—11 out of 18—answered that there is no right way to grocery shop and instead described grocery shopping as a highly individualized activity. Eight of these participants come from the Newly Married and Left Home groups; four from each, and three are from the New Baby group. All of their answers described in some fashion that grocery shopping is different for different people or different circumstances.

Dora: I would say for me there is. I don't think there's one right way that everyone needs to do it.

Jerry: No, I don't think so. I mean, I definitely have my way and I've noticed if I go with my wife, because that's the context I have of how other people shop. We have two different styles. That can be kind of difficult and we joke about it.

Gladys: Right way to grocery shop? I think there are... it depends on what you are looking for. If you want to save money, I definitely think there are better ways to do that. If you're trying to eat healthy, there's strategies for that too. I read about,

like, stay away from the middle of the grocery store, kind of shop around the perimeter for the healthy stuff. So, I don't think there is a right way. I kind of think ... I guess there is, but it depends on the purpose. Yeah ... Like what you're looking to do.

Some of the participants also described that they themselves do not have a usual way to grocery shop.

Grace: I'm not sure if there's a right way, but the wrong way maybe is grocery shopping while you're hungry. No, I don't have a specific way that I grocery shop.

Among these answers a few cultural norms of grocery shopping did emerge. Paul described two different types of grocery shopping, browsing and goal-oriented. Marcella mentioned the use of a grocery list. Felix said that the wrong way to grocery shop may be to block the aisle or to double back on your path when you forget something. Jerome mentioned “a most efficient way for each person.” Gladys described different strategies for saving money and eating healthy, while Grace specified not shopping while hungry. The other participants did not mention any cultural norms in their answers.

The next most popular answer was ‘yes, there is a right way,’ answered by four participants. Three of the participants that answered yes described some form of planning involved with the right way to grocery shop.

Angelica: List first, and go ahead and gather my coupons. Any other way you just go in blindly and buy way too much.

Rudy: Coupons, a list, going when you're not hungry, and preferably leaving the child at home or with a caregiver.

Deborah: Yes [...]I think buying off of a list and buying with a plan, because the times that I don't and I just buy what looks good, a lot of times it's food we end up not eating.

The other participant that answered yes drew his ‘right way’ from nutrition classes he had taken.

Emanuel: Is there a right way? I try to base it on the choices that I make in the supermarket, I try to base that on what I've learned in the past and I consider that the right way. I pretty much base it on several nutrition courses that I had and I think that if you don't base it on what you've learned, then you're going to have problems. You'll do it the wrong way.

These four answers also show several cultural norms of grocery shopping, mainly using a list, buying with a plan, using coupons, buying nutritious food, and not shopping while hungry or accompanied by a child.

The other two answers about the right way to grocery shop are “I don't know the right way,” answered by Kendra and Tim and ‘yes, but it depends’ answered by Ramona. Although they did not know the right way to shop, Kendra mentioned the cultural norm of avoiding the middle aisles of the grocery store and Tim mentioned using a list and not shopping while hungry. Ramona explained that the right way to shop is to support good eating, but that good eating means different things to different people.

In addition to asking the participants about the right way to grocery shop, many of the participants described norms that they are aware of related to grocery shopping or assumptions they relied on about shopping or food choice. Deborah stood out as the participant who was the most aware of cultural norms. She not only presented several norms in her interview, she described them as norms and could name where they originated. For example, she explained where her understanding of the right way to grocery shop with a list comes from.

Deborah: I think pop culture. You watch TV and those people, there's an idea of a grocery list.

None of the other participants were as explicit in their description or referrals to cultural norms in their interview. Still, several norms came up repeatedly across the corpus of data.

Feeding children the healthiest food

The most common cultural norm described by participants was the need for children to have good, healthy food. Marcella, who was describing her previous life change of having her son, provides the best example of this norm.

Marcella: Yeah, especially when I had a child. I need to buy things for him, like all the baby things. I also I think it changed my shopping habits a little because of the child. For example, when buying food. For example, when buying milk, for a smaller example I would think of him, so I would say, "Okay organic milk is better for him, but for adults I think not very much difference, but for child I think there's a big difference." I would choose like healthier food or more quality products because of the child.

Marcella references the norm through her explanation of her choice to give her son organic milk. In her view, children should have the best food, even better food than she herself consumes. Rudy also described in his interview the focus on nutrition that coincided with the birth of his child.

Rudy: Then when we had a kid it became even more important, so then I started looking more into nutrition and certain nutrients. So on and so forth. So yeah we started off, then went away and now I think were back on it again.

Throughout his interview, Rudy described actively seeking out information on nutrition, including using the MyPlate website to look up USDA recommendations.

Feeding children the best food came up when several participants described the responsibility they felt as the food provider. Tim used similar language to Marcella, when he described the responsibility he feels to bring healthy food into his home.

Tim: Especially with a baby. I'm just getting things that aren't ... Yeah, and making healthy choices. Especially with a kid. She's new, she's a new baby. Trying to develop good habits now while she's not able to call us out before she becomes aware of things. That when she's in full-swing, we're not having to reign in like bad habits or something like that.

The word 'especially' is used here and in Marcella's answer to denote that healthy food is important, and more important for children or families with children. This theme

reappears in later sections of this section in terms of moral obligations to children and self-identity around healthy eating.

Organic food

Marcella and Kendra describe the need to provide nutritious food to their children while using the terms ‘organic’ and ‘healthy’ almost interchangeably. In her interview, Kendra described how a shopping change during her pregnancy has remained after she gave birth to her son.

Kendra: I always knew organic was better before pregnancy but I would never invest in it in quite the commitment level that I have now. Like, maybe I would buy one product that was organic. Now it's like I would say 90% of what I buy, if there's a choice between organic and non-, it would be organic because for me it's not, so it's not just about me. It's also about my son.

The conflation of organic food and healthy food—or at least the idea that organic food is better than conventional foods—was another common cultural norm described by the participants. Tim explains how in his family buying organic food was always a part of the plan for the health of his eventual children.

Tim: Then once she got pregnant, we were really ... I think we even always said like, "If we had kids, we eat organic. In the meantime, we won't." We switched to all organics particularly ... We don't eat a greater deal of meat, but when we do now, it's really organic. That's costing more, but we definitely 100% made it. That was a good change.

When asked if her purchases reflected any political or ethical opinions, Marcella responded that she prefers organic products for the point of view they represent and added nutritional value.

Marcella: Maybe, for example when I'm buying eggs I prefer organic eggs, and I buy organic chicken wings. I do not buy those large ones, because I think that's a bit of, it's less healthy than the organic ones. They're a little bit expensive. I prefer the organic ones in terms of the nutrition and point of view.

While most participants described this norm like the participants above, Ramona highlights this norm through her confusion about the health benefits and financial costs of organic trends. Ramona is a current student grocery shopping for her husband, young daughter, and occasionally her two stepsons.

Ramona: Is it really helping me to buy organic chicken even though it's \$2 more per pound than regular chicken? It raises a lot of concerns because as a person that's not always financially stable I can't always afford to buy the organic version of everything that I eat or everything my kids eat. It's do I have to feed you guys and have an abundance of food in here to last you throughout the month? Or should I pick the more healthy conscious things where you'll probably have less food but it's possible that you'll be healthier in the long run.

Later in the interview this dilemma was stated again.

Ramona: I guess one of my biggest questions about grocery shopping is what difference does it make between organic and regular food as we call it? Other than the prices who has honestly done the work to say, "Hey, this is better for you because of this, this, this." This is better for you. Proven to be better for you because of this, this, this. We know a lot about organic foods don't have the hormones in it that normal foods have. Honestly you're going to tell me they have no hormones at all? Are you going to say they have less hormones than this one? Who gets to ... other than the USDA of course, who gets to deem that these foods are better for you? Or that more than likely food that we've been eating for generations are going to one day kill us faster than organic food? All of it is still processed. It's been processed by somebody somewhere. It didn't just jump on a package and say I'm going to go jump on a shelf so somebody can buy me.

Honestly I question how much better organic is for you than regular food. Even though I do buy into a lot of the organic schemes and catches or whatever is popular. But at the same time, I sometimes question about it because even I know for one time I was on this hook of organic soda, but it's made with cane sugar. Well isn't cane sugar what Coca Cola was first made out of and then you decided to switch to regular sugar. So what are we solving there? It doesn't seem like you solve anything. We're just stuck in this circle going back and forth, back and forth between what may be better and what is just here.

Ramona's confusion highlights several aspects of the cultural norms around organic food: whether it is better or more expensive, and what is the rationale for choosing it is often

poorly understood by most consumers. Santiago was the only other participant to mention this norm and how he does not subscribe to it.

Interviewer: You mentioned organics, you buy them rarely?

Santiago: It's rare. I think the cost benefit in terms of personal health for buying organic products is not what much of the media would make it out to be. I believe I will live just as long eating non-organic spinach than I will eating organic spinach. Over my lifetime, I'll end up saving \$1,000.00 by doing so.

Whether they described the benefits of buying organic in positive or negative terms, the cultural norm that organic food is better and more nutritious was a very common among many participants.

Healthy eating

In addition to discussions of the healthfulness of organic foods, the cultural norms around nutrition and healthy eating were prevalent throughout the interviews.⁶ Eight participants described healthy eating in terms of avoiding processed or packaged food. When asked about how he knew a food was nutritious, Felix replied, “It just says organic or it doesn't have a lot of processed ingredients, a short list of ingredients depending on what it is.” Similarly, Paul explained the importance of nutrition in his grocery shopping, saying,

Paul: Yeah, nutrition for sure. We try to stay away from packaged stuff, like a lot of pre-made foods because we both cook. We prefer to make it ourselves, get fresh vegetables and fresh meat, and make everything our self if we can.

Two participants described their views of healthy eating in opposition to other typical American diets that other family members enjoyed. In response to the question “do you think the products that you buy say something about your family?” Jerry answered,

⁶ Creative persona study participants, Lorraine and Jenna, also described the cultural norms around healthy eating. For further discussion of nurturer persona study participants describing aspects of the creative persona, see Appendix C.

Jerry: The more I think about it and the more we talk, the more I realize that there's a lot that you just kind of implicitly don't even realize are affecting your decisions. They just become part of your behavior. Whenever my wife and I go to her parent's house, they just buy a lot of junk food and they're diabetic and a lot of times it's issues because they shouldn't have all these sweets and junk food. They should be more concerned. It's just the way that they live. Sometimes when you see other examples like that it's kind of more stark and then you look back at what you buy and you're like, yeah, it says a ton about us. It says that we really care about health. We want to feel good. We want to be responsible with our money. I guess that's one thing. We'll buy good quality stuff at the store and pay more at the store, but my rationale is always like it's going to prevent us from going out to eat and spending twice as much.

Deborah also viewed her new husband's diet as unhealthy. She felt supported in her view by cultural norms about healthy eating.

Deborah: I don't feel like the food he was raised on is as healthy as the food I was raised on. In general, the typical American food palette that you think of, the stereotypes is like hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken nuggets, French fries, potatoes, chocolate chip cookies that are like you slice out of the package. To me that also does not fit with what you traditionally think of as healthy. Whereas Asian food, because my mom is Asian, is rice, and fish, and it just tends to be what our society right now is calling healthy. It's easy to justify getting the food I like more than the food he likes. He doesn't love the fact that he has to eat fish and rice. [...] Then on TV, a lot of the people who I watch on TV are eating salads and seafood and not cheeseburgers or anything. I think I also tend to be reinforced by that image.

In this study, the participants shared the cultural norms around healthy eating. That is not to say that the norms are stable. Over time what is considered healthy food changes, and sometimes it is unclear why or how. During her interview, Grace seemed to come to the realization that even she did not really know where the impetus came from for her shift away from the foods she grew up eating.

Grace: Yeah. I grew up with white bread. Bear white bread, yeah, exactly. That's another gradual change. Slowly, I don't know what influenced it, but now we get whole grain bread or seven grain, or anything that sounds grainy. Not gluten free, but if there's other benefits to it. I haven't bought white bread in ... I can't even remember the last time. As an adult I don't even know if I ever bought white bread. I think it was always wheat, because somewhere along the line it was like, "Wheat's good for you. White's processed flour."

While some grocery shoppers can quickly adapt to shifts in cultural norms around healthy eating, others struggle to understand why. As mentioned above, Ramona is a grocery shopper who is well aware of recent trends toward organic food and describes following them as difficult for her family. Once again, Ramona provides an articulation of the confusion that can occur around the changing of cultural norms of healthy eating.

Ramona: So I don't know. I just have a lot of questions about what is good. What's not good? Why are we saying this? In the end are we all going to die from this food that we call horrible? It seems like every year something comes out about ... first it was the trans-fat. Then it was the saturated fat. Then it was ... I'm like, "Well it all has one or the other." Are we going to eat the trans? Are we going to eat the saturated? Are we going to eat both? Are we not going to eat any? If so where does that leave the rest of us who are on the occasions where I don't have the money to shop the way I would like to I can't afford to eat that. So does that mean that everybody that's in a working middle class family may have some type of illness or disease or something that's festering that we can get rid of because we can't afford to buy it? It's just a lot of unanswered questions that I don't think could ever truly be answered.

Cultural norms around healthy eating can be confusing to grocery shoppers, like Ramona, because the norms can change quickly and most shoppers do not have an informed understand of the underlying rationale.

What you buy says who you are

The participants are aware of the cultural norms that tell them what they should and should not be buying. Some seem happy to learn more and embrace a lifestyle that may be healthier and is likely to be more expensive, while others do not see the point or feel as if they are excluded from participating. In the same way that shoppers try to shop 'right,' many are also aware that what they buy says something about who they are. For some, that is an enjoyable feeling, a validation that they are good, healthy people. When asked if the products that he buys say something about his family, Rudy said,

Rudy: Yes. I believe that we are ... that we care about what we're eating. I think that would be the biggest thing. I always like to put my food when it's on the conveyor belt and the person in front of me ... I always like to set mine up really

nice. So you know the guy who's bagging it doesn't mess it up. But I always like to look to the two people on the other side of me. And yeah I judge based on their food. I would say their food says a lot about them because I don't have soda in mine. I always try to have a whole bunch of colors in mine. Limited whole grains and if somebody sees that I would... they would think yes that family is eating healthy. That's what they were thinking.

Deborah, the most self-aware participant, also described in her interview this cultural norm.

Deborah: Yes, because I like looking at other people's products that they're buying at the grocery store and seeing what it says about them. Then when I buy my products I look at them on the conveyor belt and I imagine what it says about me. Sometimes I like what says about me and sometimes I don't.

Interviewer: What are those things?

Deborah: Sometimes it's as simple as I think it says I'm a single person or a married person. Maybe that's just because I just got married. Sometimes I'll go and all I pick up is, I don't know, if I just pick up Lean Cuisines and iced coffee and a box of tampons or something, I'll look at that on the conveyor belt and be like I bet it looks like I'm single. Another time I'll go through and there's a big gallon of milk, and there's a bunch of healthy produce, and there's all of my meat and fish that I picked up at Whole Foods and that will be wrapped up. I usually get a plastic bag from the produce area so that way the blood and whatnot from the protein doesn't get on everything else and I bag that up. I'm like, oh it looks like I'm a clean person who's got a household that I'm buying for, that I'm a healthy eater, and I probably like to cook. I feel like that's a good thing to say about me.

Deborah and Rudy both describe their clear awareness that grocery purchases say something about the grocery shopper and their role as the food provider for their family.

Diet changes

Cultural norms not only inform shoppers on products they are buying at the grocery store, they can also inform general thoughts on food choice, diet, and health. The final two norms that appeared in more than one person's interview speak to these general ideas about food and health. First, Angelica, a new mom, and Grace, a newly married woman, described in their interviews the cultural norm that once you have children you

and your family should become healthier. Angelica explained in her interview how she thinks differently about the food that she brings into her home today.

Angelica: Yes, because I have kids. Before I, when it was my, just me by myself I really wasn't that conscious of what I was putting in my body. Now I have, not only myself but others to think about as far as healthy eating goes.

Interviewer: That healthy eating, does that apply to the whole family or is it mostly focused on ensuring the kids have good habits?

Angelica: It's the whole family.

In her interview, Grace described a recent incident at the grocery store, as an example for how she does not currently feel a responsibility to herself while grocery shopping.

Grace: A good example is yesterday, I discovered ... I like Flaming Hot Cheetos, and I discovered that there's baked Flaming Hot Cheetos now, so I was like, "Hmm, I wonder if I should get those because I don't think I like baked Cheetos, but then, it's baked Flaming Hot Cheetos. Okay, let me just try it." I just got it and I was with my husband and I made a comment like, "I could just have this for dinner." We don't have kids right now, so it's like if we wanted, we could have Flaming Hot baked Cheetos for dinner, if we wanted. I don't really feel that responsibility yet that I have to have ... Like I said, more so that I have a husband, because I know that he wouldn't want to have Flaming Hot Cheetos for dinner, but I don't feel a responsibility for myself. I probably ... I mean, I should for health reasons, but I haven't gotten there yet.

Interviewer: You brought up not having children, do you think that that would change your mindset too?

Grace: Maybe, because I feel like maybe I would have to be a better example. Kind of set ... Have a whole dinner and even like times that we eat. Since we don't have kids, we can eat really late or really early. I think it will change if we have children. Right now I feel more of a responsibility, but if it was just me on a weekend and he was out of town, then I probably wouldn't even grocery shop. I probably would order pizza or something.

Both participants described unhealthy eating in terms of a time in their life when it was acceptable. Having a family is when you get healthy, but before then Flaming Hot Cheetos for dinner is fine. Two more participants described a similar cultural norm that

teenagers and young adults eat poorly. For Deborah, part of becoming an adult was giving up some food she still enjoys.

Deborah: When I was single I would buy a whole pumpkin pie and a can of whipped cream and just eat it for breakfast because they're not really filling so you can. Now I share a house with my husband and I think ... No one wants to see another person just eating an entire pie. That looks gross. I stopped doing that, and Totinos Pizza Rolls and whatnot. Stuff that's just obviously unhealthy and associated with being a college kid. I might still want it, but if I don't want him to have it and I don't like the idea of myself eating it, then I won't buy it.

Ramona, too, explained her eating habits when she was young saying, “When I first started [college], my eating habits were completely different but I was a teenager.” All of these participants, who in other parts of their interviews described healthy eating habits, suggest that being young is a reason for poor eating. This cultural norm, like most of the norms discussed in this section, is a piece of a larger cultural understanding of food and health, all of which impact food choice and grocery shopping. In addition to the norms described by more than one participant, 11 other norms were also identified and are presented with sample quotations in Table 2.

Table 2: Cultural norms mentioned once

A good family member	Faye: If there's a list, then I currently want to do my part of being a good family member and getting items that I can on that.
Become healthier with age	<p>Tim: Making better choices. I used to be really stoked about having multiple kinds of cereal. It was like luxury. Sugar, as an adult, having multiple kinds of sugared cereal was like a real luxury and I know I'm going to feel that way. Yes, better choices, more health conscious, and more cooking at home.</p> <p>Interviewer: What led to those changes?</p> <p>Tim: Just growing up.</p>
Become smarter with money when older	Ramona: Then on top of that age. I've gotten older so being more cost effective over cost efficient is probably a bigger factor than it was for me when I may have been 17 or 18.

Table 2 (continued)

Being a good wife	Deborah: Changing my self-concept. I think of myself as a wife and I want to be a responsible wife, TV and whatnot imparts that the responsible wives go and they pick out healthy stuff and do it with a list. That's part of it.
Being a responsible adult	Deborah: It's a different kind of enjoyment. It's not as fun, but I feel this sense of pride that I'm being responsible and this is matching my vision of someone should be buying groceries, is responsible with money, it's rewarding in that way
Buying in bulk saves money	Paul: I used to go to Costco and get the 50-pound bag of onions because I thought I was saving a lot of money. Then I had 25-pounds of onions going bad. Definitely learned about ... I thought just because I was buying a lot of it, and it was cheaper, that I was doing a good thing, but if I couldn't use it all, I wasn't saving any money.
Consumers are uninformed	Kendra: So many consumers are just uninformed, and I was, about what I was buying. Just marketing tactics. Like the eye-level product is what the General Mills has paid for that shelf space. If you just look a couple down, you're going to find an equally great product, it just doesn't have the budget.
Eating healthy is different from dieting	Ramona: We make these choices very often because I think both of us have come to the conclusion as far as our weight goes we don't want to diet anymore because it's seemingly not very effective. What's the alternative to dieting? Well now the new thing is if you eat healthier, it'll make a better impact on your life as far as your longevity and how long you live, you know?
Farmers markets have the best produce	Ramona: I feel like farmer's market is probably the best of all fruits and vegetables. It's the best of the best. It hasn't been sitting on a shelf for however long. You know? It's fresh.
Grocery shopping can align with values	Faye: With food, I think my behavior is more in alignment with my values. I can be like okay, I want to shop at farmers' markets, and I want to support local businesses. I want to buy organic, and I want to do this. That's not to say that I do it a hundred percent of the time, but I think I'm more aware of it with food shopping. That creates an overall more positive experience for me. I also just like eating a lot. I like grocery shopping because it helps serve that need.
Men do not care about their health	Ramona: My husband ... it's an emotional thing because I do worry about his health just because I feel like both of us are overweight but I feel like his is more pertinent because he actually shows signs of his weight starting to bother him. Of course as a man he ignores and I worry about him.

Table 2 (continued)

More information now	Grace: Yeah, I think so. I think with the more information out there and ... It can get overwhelming because one person says, "This is good for you." And there's another person that says, "This isn't good for you." It's kind of deciding, but I think when my grandparents and my mom grocery shopped, they didn't have all that information. You just got the standard spaghetti and spaghetti sauce, or whatever it is.
More interest in the environment	Emanuel: I think the decades have gone on. The world in general is more worried about ecological impact and stuff like this. I do look for, if I'm buying fish I look for something that's not farm raised. I gave that example, the coffee, I look for ecologic sustainable farm. It doesn't have much impact on the environment. I think that's the environment today, you really didn't see too much 30 years ago.
People do not know how to eat in a healthful way	Kendra: Yes, definitely. Especially with a new baby. I feel like I wasn't taught ... I don't think we as a society we really teach children how to eat in a healthful way. I don't think adults know how to do it and that's why our obesity epidemic is what it is.
People know how to eat well	Ramona: The doctor made the general notions, which I think they kind of just assume that everybody knows. Okay the general good eating habits as you would say. Not so much as pushing toward what you should be eating.
Research for baby	<p>Interviewer: When you had your baby did you do any research on how to shop differently, how to shop for a baby?</p> <p>Marcella: Oh yeah, of course I researched a lot of brands. The product's brands for baby. I compare them. I mean the clothing brands, the toy brands, and all those things for baby. I did a lot of research, and maybe a little bit too much if I look back today. Even today, for example, when I buy sunscreen for my child I would also do some research.</p>

Nurturer Research Question 1 – Discussion

The majority of participants did not believe that there is a ‘right way’ to grocery shop, although several cultural norms around grocery shopping did emerge. While there is no overarching cultural norm dictating how to grocery shop, grocery shopping is a complex process involving many cultural norms that address different aspects of the grocery shopping process. For instance, several participants described the cultural norms of using a shopping list and coupons. The use of a shopping list is a norm about grocery

shopping preparation, while using coupons relates to norms about saving money and getting a good deal. Overall, all of the norms presented in this section work together to shape grocery-shopping behavior.

Previous research has shown the importance of norms in influencing a person's behavior, identity, and values (Ajzen, 1991; Bava et al., 2008; Cairns et al., 2013; Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; Cockburn-Wooten et al., 2008; Gram, 2014; Kjærnes et al., 2007; Moisio et al., 2004; Slater et al., 2011; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Szabo, 2014; Thompson, 1996). This study extends this line of research by demonstrating the role cultural norms play in making information behaviors around grocery shopping more complicated, such as researching nutrition for your family, reading ingredient labels, and making grocery lists.

The specific norms identified in the present study speak to traditional ideals about family and parenthood as well as about current food choice trends. The cultural norm of feeding children the healthiest food encapsulates ideals about the purity and vulnerability of children and the need for parents to protect them from harmful chemicals (Cairns et al., 2013). While previous research on the cultural norms of feeding children primarily focused on mothers (Cairns et al., 2013; Gram, 2014), the present study shows both fathers and mothers being clearly aware of and influenced by this norm. In fact, both male and female participants in this study described participating in the gendered work found by Cairns et al. as falling primarily on women, including researching nutrition and grocery shopping. These findings support recent research examining men's attitudes toward cooking, which found that several male participants viewed their cooking in terms of nurturing and providing for their family (Szabo, 2014). Whether it was the mother who encouraged the focus on healthy food for their children was not addressed in this study.

The ideals of childhood drawn from the above cultural norm also speak to broader food trends related to healthy eating (Cairns et al., 2013; Gram, 2014). The organic, minimally processed food that is a must for children represents the wider norms

surrounding cultural understandings of health and food choice. While a focus on organic and homemade foods is not new (Belasco, 1989; Coveney, 2000; Levenstein 2003), there seems to be a new emphasis on healthy, homemade meals (Bowen et al., 2014; Marcotte, 2014). For several participants in this study, healthy eating means eating organic and avoiding pre-packaged, processed foods. Both attributes of healthy eating feed into a wider appreciation of homemade food. The organic products described by the participants were typically raw ingredients. Avoiding processed food typically means spending time cooking. In her interview, Dora even described her healthy eating in terms of time, saying, “It also says that I have time to do that because I know some people don't have time to watch what they eat as much as I do because it does take time and energy.” These cultural norms may also feed back into ideals about the family, as “homemade food remains as a vital symbol of the family” (Moisio et al., 2004, p. 79).

Two additional findings in this section suggest that cultural norms have an impact on self-identity. First, the cultural norms around diet change show a cultural understanding that eating habits vary at different life stages. Children need the healthiest food, among young adults unhealthy food becomes more prevalent, and later when a person starts a family, a focus on healthy food emerges. Second, the cultural norm that what you buy says who you are demonstrates a perceived relationship between a person’s purchases and his or her identity. The cultural norms around identity show that a synergistic relationship exists between cultural norms and self-identity that influences the grocery shopping of the participants in this study.

Nurturer Research Question 2 – How do grocery shoppers understand their self-identity as food providers?

For many participants, self-identity was integral to their understanding of their role as their family’s food provider. Self-identity is how individuals think of themselves (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). The participants in this study used many terms and ideas to describe their self-identity. This section discusses the six most common themes about

self-identity. Table 3 shows the prevalence of the self-identity codes by participant. The table indicates whether or not a particular aspect of self-identity was present in each interview. The table also notes the variation in self-identity codes by participant type. Three aspects of self-identity were mentioned by at least a third of the participants, while seven aspects were unique to a single participant.

To explore the self-identity of the participants in this study, I asked if their purchases at the grocery store say something about themselves and their families. These questions began a discussion with each participant about self-identity and its relationship to grocery store purchases. Three of the participants, Tim, Marcella, and Gladys, answered that their purchases do not say anything about them, but did discuss self-identity in other ways. Some participants also described their self-identity as a justification for some of their purchase decisions or as examples to highlight different parts of their views on food or family.

Table 3: Self-identity codes by participant

Self-Identity	Ramona	Paul	Santiago	Dora	Deborah	Grace	NM Total	Felix	Kendra	Jerome	Tim	Angelica	Jerry	NB Total	Marcella	Emanuel	Rudy	May	Glady's	Faye	LH Total	All Total
Healthy eater	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	0	1	0	1	1	4	13
Has kids/family	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	6
Enjoys food	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	6
Imperfect	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	5
Ethical	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5
Food provider	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
Same as family identity	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Purchases do not say anything	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Sustainable	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Vegan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Change with life change	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bargain hunter	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cooks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Middle-class	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Religious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Adult	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Frugal	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Informed consumer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Non-GMO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	2	4	3	3	7	3	22	2	4	5	2	3	5	21	2	3	4	5	3	4	21	64

Self-identity as food provider

Five of the participants described their self-identity in terms of their role as food providers.⁷ For three of the participants, getting married created a new role in their life and they felt this change.

Grace: I mean, the only other person would be my husband only because, like I was saying earlier, since I've kind of taken on that role ... Sometimes he'll ask me, "Okay, what are we going to have for dinner?" Kind of thing. It's not so much expected, but that I've kind of taken on this role of the food provider, the food maker, creator. Yeah, I feel responsible for others. He's not going to starve, he's a grown up, but I personally feel that's what I kind of volunteered to do.

Deborah sees her role in terms of a responsibility to provide healthy and affordable food.

Deborah: Now that I'm married I have this idea of being the financial steward of our kitchen and having this idea of I'm going to be responsible for making sure we both eat healthy and making sure that we both save money.

Dora defined her role as the food provider in terms of the trust her husband had toward her responsible shopping.

Interviewer: Do you think that the products that you buy at the grocery store say something about your family?

Dora: Yeah. First thing that comes to mind is my husband's family trusts me to make those decisions. He trusts me to spend money and choose things that he and I both like, and to be healthy.

Jerry, one of the new parents in the study, also looks at his grocery shopping as a responsibility to his family, and a small way to show appreciation to his wife.

Interviewer: Then, what responsibilities do you feel as the shopper?

Jerry: I think staying within a budget as much as possible. I think trying to buy things for ... Mainly I'm just shopping for my wife and I right now and getting stuff that she'll like and things that are special for her. That's kind of how we show

⁷ Several creative persona study participants also described the role of food provider as impacting their grocery shopping. For further discussion of creative persona study participants describing aspects of the nurturer persona, see Appendix C.

appreciation for one another is we'll buy little treats for one another. It's not necessarily a cupcake, but just a few things that are kind of exciting and new, so things like that. Then kind of just what I've said in the past like buying things that are healthy, having variety so we're not getting tired of the same old stuff, and buying enough food that'll last us the whole week and will not tempt us to go out because there's nothing good to eat at home.

All of these participants see grocery shopping as a way to contribute to their families. The role of food provider comes with many responsibilities including not spending too much, making sure that you buy the right food, and making sure that you get enough food.

Self-identity as healthy food provider

The majority of participants, 13 of 18, also discussed their self-identity in terms of providing healthy food for their family, or simply being a healthy eater. Emanuel, described himself in his interview as being “in the upper 1% of health conscious people” an attribute that extended to providing his son with healthy meals. Not all participants are as self-aware as Emanuel. Some in fact described their self-identity as healthy food providers in terms of what other people said about them.

Interviewer: When you're shopping do you think about what the products say about you at all?

Ramona: I think I do, subconsciously though. Because I can honestly say when I have guests that come over more than likely they're family members. They actually point out to me that things in my pantry or things in my refrigerator are not regular food. When they say that, they mean not food that they would buy or probably even eat if they weren't in my house. I think subconsciously I do it to satisfy myself but it's made known by them. [...] I might buy gluten free whole wheat pasta instead of just buying regular pasta. They'll go, “Why do you buy wheat pasta?” I'm just, “It's pasta. When I cook it you won't know the difference.” The point being, it's better for you. They're just, “Really?” they don't see the importance in it. Which to me, it makes a difference but to them it has no relevance whatsoever.

Sometimes aspects of our own identity are brought into focus through other people's eyes. For Ramona, her choices in buying healthy food were seen as a difference between her and her family. This difference is something that Ramona is very aware of and may

cause both positive and negative feelings between her and her guests. Jerome also shared that his grocery purchases have received comments in the past.

Jerome: I've had several cashiers when they are processing our order just say like, "Oh, you must be vegan." Because they realize okay, we didn't get any milk, dairy, or cheese, meat, all that kind of stuff. I think it probably speaks to our commitment to making good food and then establishing the habits now so that we can teach our son to make and appreciate and eat good and healthy food. It probably speaks volumes about that.

Jerome describes these comments in terms of what he views as the positive attributes of his family's "commitment to making good food." The other participants that described their self-identity in terms of their healthy habits also viewed it in similar positive terms.

Interviewer: Okay. What influences the products that you buy at the grocery store?

Jerry: Quality and price, I think, are the two main things. I'm really into healthy eating and not getting junk food, not getting processed foods. Getting organic when possible, but also price is a concern because we're on a budget.

For Jerry, healthy eating is important to him and his family, but something that must also be balanced with his budget. Purchasing healthy, less processed foods not only says that someone cares about their own health; it also says that they have the time and ability to create healthy foods. Dora brought up this concept in her interview.

Interviewer: Do you think that the products that you buy at the grocery store say something about who you are?

Dora: Yeah I think so. It says something like I want to be healthy and be conscious of what food I'm eating. It also says that I have time to do that because I know some people don't have time to watch what they eat as much as I do because it does take time and energy.

These four different responses, all concerning the participant's self-identity as healthy food providers, show the variety of other concepts that are tied to healthy eating. While

all of the participants were happy to share their choices with me, for some healthy eating was not without its problems, whether they were financial, temporal, or cultural.

Self-identity as family member

Self-identity for six of the participants was about more than their own opinions; it spoke to their membership in a family. Deborah described her grocery purchases as representing her as a wife in several places in her interview. Above she described her purchases as showing she is a clean, healthy eater with a family. She also described the pride she feels in her role as a wife.

Deborah: I guess because I like being married and I'm proud of that part of my identity, I don't like the image in front of me of a conveyor belt that is of a single person. When it's the Lean Cuisines and whatnot and food that just looks like it would be for someone who's not eating with their partner. I feel like I've regressed. Not that I've regressed, but that other people will see it and not recognize me for the wife. It sounds really ridiculous.

Deborah wants her grocery purchases to reflect an aspect of her identity that is very important to her. Jerome is cognizant of his identity as a father today and is thinking about what his purchases will say about his family's identity in the future.

Jerome: Yeah, I would say that it ... Now it very likely says that we have a baby, but in the future I would imagine 10 years down the line if we're still shopping this way it would reflect that we are pretty cohesive family.

Being a part of a family is something that many of the grocery shoppers in this study discussed in their interviews. Their self-identity was deeply tied to their family membership as well as the roles they played within their family. Being a husband, a wife, or a parent spoke both to their family membership and their self-identity. For many in this study, as their self-identity changed, so to did their role as a food provider. All of these aspects of being a food provider shaped the way the participants viewed themselves and shaped their interactions in the grocery store.

Other aspects of self-identity

Participants in this study described various attributes of their self-identity in terms of their grocery shopping. All of these attributes have some relationship to their role as food providers. Five participants described their self-identity in the grocery store as imperfect, ethical, and tied to their enjoyment of food.

While healthy eating was clearly an important part of grocery shopping for most of the participants in this study, five participants described their self-identity as the food provider as imperfect. Both Deborah and Gladys described their self-identity as imperfect and healthy. These participants described themselves as imperfect because they view an ideal version of grocery shopping that they do not consistently meet.

May: I try to buy pretty much local or my grocery store brand items and I mean, I'm not the healthiest person, but I try to at least get some good products as far as fresh vegetables, fruits, so I'm sure that says a lot about me too.

Everything May described here about her grocery shopping suggests it follows norms on healthy food, but she added the claim that she is not the “healthiest person” implying that some other behaviors, or versions of these behaviors, she does not view as meeting this ideal. When I asked Grace if her grocery purchases say something about her, she answered,

Grace: Maybe that I'm a boring cook? I don't think so just because even though we try and get healthy choices, you'll see something healthy or something organic, but then you'll also see the Flaming Hot Cheetos. I don't think it necessarily says too much about me. I've seen people where their whole basket is like granola and yogurt, but ours is kind of a little mix of everything.

Grace does not think someone could read meaning into her grocery purchases because her shopping is varied with healthy items and junk food like Cheetos. She also describes how she has seen people with more uniform purchases that can be read as healthy. For these participants, being an imperfect grocery shopper meant that they had diverse

purchases. This aspect of self-identity also reinforces the cultural norm of healthy eating described above.

Not all of the shoppers that described themselves as imperfect were referring to nutrition; Deborah described herself as imperfect when her grocery purchases suggest she is single instead of married. For Paul, he considered himself imperfect because not all of his purchases represented the ethical portion of his identity.

Paul: Well, I'd like to say that, at least somewhat, ethical and responsible shopping, but then also certain priorities are different. My wife still likes drinking her Diet Coke, so she's not too worried about the whatever they put in sodas.

Being ethical while grocery shopping, as described by Paul, was a part of four other participants' self-identity. I asked all of the participants if their grocery purchases reflected any political or ethical opinions they held. For Jerome, his shopping represented his social and political opinions.

Jerome: Yeah, we'll avoid purchasing things from companies that we disagree with politically or we feel are doing things. Like we won't purchase Nestle products. We won't purchase the pasta Barilla that ran the really offensive ad. We won't. We definitely in a lot of ways, spoke with our dollars, as they say.

Jerry also was concerned about the consequences of his grocery shopping.

Jerry: Yeah. I guess, ethically ... Well, politically, I would never really want to go shopping at Wal-Mart because I just don't agree with their philosophy. There's places like that I would avoid. I guess, ethically, I guess I've gotten more conscious. You know, not wanting to buy fish that's threatened of being over-harvested like tuna and swordfish. As much as I love the taste of it, it wouldn't be something that I would buy every week because I'm concerned about that. We've cut back on eating meat really significantly and I think it's for health reasons, for cost reasons, and also for environmental reasons. I know a lot about those sort of issues and the impacts that meat production has. We've really cut back and those are some areas.

Organic products as well, we buy organic bananas 100% of the time because they're available, they're not that much more expensive, and just knowing the workers don't have to use pesticides in those fields so their health is positively impacted and it's a very small thing you can do. Organic products, for that reason,

for the health of workers and the health of the environments in which they're grown, for sure.

Jerry purchased organic products not only for his family's health, but also because of the health and working conditions of the farmers who harvest them. This focus on the ethical implications of harvesting produce was also very important to Faye. When she was asked if her purchases reflected her political or ethical decisions, she told me about a West Coast bike trip she took with her brother.

Faye: So we started in Canada. I met him in Oregon, and we rode our bikes down the West Coast. Around Southern California, there were a lot of big farms, and it was kind of horrifying to see these massive, massive farms because it's kind of like you spend all day riding and eating and sleeping, you would see how the workers in the fields would work. They were conventional farms, so that had a big experience on me in terms of recognizing there are people that collect cauliflower and hand pick the strawberries and bringing a human face to what actually has to be done to get the stuff in the grocery store. It was after that that I made a very intentional focus to align my consumer dollars with things that I wanted to believe that I want to support and not support things that I don't want to support by buying them.

While most grocery shoppers do not see the conditions that led to the bountiful food in the grocery store, several participants remarked on the social, political, or environmental consequences of their grocery shopping purchases. The amount of participants concerned with these issues paled in comparison to those interested in health and nutrition.

Six of the participants described the enjoyment they feel in preparing, purchasing, or eating food. For Faye, her love of eating food translates to her enjoyment of grocery shopping. "I also just like eating a lot. I like grocery shopping because it helps serve that need. 'I'm like so, let's see what I can eat. Yum, yum, yum.'" At the start of his interview, I asked Jerry how he feels about grocery shopping and he responded,

Jerry: I generally like grocery shopping because I like to ... I like food, I like to cook, I like to kind of find variety and new stuff. I generally like it, except for when it's just hectic and you're just kind of squeezing in something on a day where you have too much going on already.

Jerry's personal enjoyment of food helps to inform how he grocery shops for his family. Inasmuch as he is the primary shopper, his family can enjoy the variety of food that he brings into his home. Felix also enjoys a variety of food. When he was asked about what his grocery purchases say about him Felix responded,

Felix: That I like good food, healthy food, a variety of foods, not just meat and potatoes or not just vegetables. I like to try to eat across the spectrum, different styles of foods, ethnic foods, fresh foods, cooked foods, depending on the season too.

An enjoyment of grocery shopping and food is the reason why many of participants in this study had taken on the role of food provider for their families. As discussed above, many participants viewed the role of food provider in terms of a responsibility, six of the participants described their self-identity in terms of being someone who enjoys food, while eight participants in this study, feel positive about grocery shopping.

Nurturer Research Question 2 – Discussion

All of the participants described their self-identity in terms of their role as the food provider in some way during their interviews. The role of the food provider was described directly and in terms of providing or eating healthy food as a member of a family. Notable aspects of self-identity that emerged from the data include being imperfect, ethical, and enjoying food. These findings suggest that, like cultural norms, participants are aware of and influenced by their self-identity in the grocery store.

The self-identity of the food provider as discussed by several participants is distinguished by a sense of responsibility. This responsibility likely feeds into the other self-identity aspects of healthy eating and being imperfect. The food provider is expected to bring home healthy food, and when they do not live up to that ideal they feel imperfect. This sense of being unable or unwilling to fulfill an idealized role has been found in a previous study on the consumption experiences of working mothers (Thompson, 1996).

Although the descriptions of self-identity refer to the role of the food provider and thus to the nurturer persona, two aspects point to the presence of other personas. The ethical self-identity refers to a political persona,⁸ with participants describing their self-identity in terms of using their consumer dollars to support companies and products that share their values. The participants that self-identified as enjoying food may be referring to aspects of the creative persona.⁹ The descriptions of enjoying food, cooking, and grocery shopping all suggest a relationship to attributes of individuals who enact the creative persona in the grocery store.

Altogether, the many aspects of self-identity described by the participants in the present study suggest the variety of roles and identities a grocery shopper may be experiencing while grocery shopping. Participants are not simply grocery shoppers in the grocery store—they are parents and spouses, they are imperfect and ethical—they are complex individuals trying to serve many different aspects of their identity. Previous research has found that self-identity can influence food consumption and other types of planned behavior, independently of attitudes (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Shepherd & Raats, 1996). In one study, identifying as a green consumer had a highly significant effect on the intention to consume organic vegetables, and the effect was not merely mediated through other attitudes or norms. Thus, the aspects of self-identity observed in the present study may independently influence grocery shopping and other behaviors related to grocery shopping. The description of the role of food provider and other similar aspects of self-identity presented in this section also suggest the consequences that these identities may lead to feelings of responsibility and moral obligation.

⁸ For further discussion of the political person, see Appendix D.

⁹ For further discussion of the prevalence of the creative persona described by nurturer persona study participants, see Appendix C.

Nurturer Research Question 3 – How do grocery shoppers understand their moral obligation as food providers?

Being the primary grocery shopper for a family can be an enjoyable experience, but it also can come with moral obligations or a deeply felt sense of responsibility. Moral obligations are responsibilities that an individual feels toward others (Raats et al., 1995). To explore the moral obligation participants may feel while grocery shopping, I asked the participants if they feel a responsibility to their families, to themselves, to others, and in their role as the shopper. Throughout their interviews all of the participants described some moral obligations they felt related to grocery shopping. Table 4 shows the prevalence of the moral obligation codes by participant. It indicates whether or not a particular type of moral obligation was present in each interview. The table also shows the variation in moral obligation codes by participant type. The New Baby group described the most obligations and the Newly Married group the least. Three moral obligations were described in some form by at least half of the participants, while only three were unique to a single participant.

Table 4: Moral obligation codes by participant

Moral Obligation	Ramona	Paul	Santiago	Dora	Deborah	Grace	NM Total	Felix	Kendra	Jerome	Tim	Angelica	Jerry	NB Total	Marcella	Emanuel	Rudy	May	Gladys	Faye	LH Total	All Total
Healthy food	1			1			3		1					4							4	11
Child							1							5							4	10
Not to overspend				1			3			1				3							3	9
Change for children	1						1							3							2	6
Partner	1			1			4						1								1	6
More to family than self						1	1			1				2				1			2	5
Buy enough		1		1			2						1	2							1	5
Healthy and tasty				1			1	1					1	3						1	1	5
Model	1						1		1					3			1				1	5
Environment		1					1						1	2							1	4
Informed consumer			1				1							0	1		1				2	3
No							0	1					1	2							1	3
Spread the word							0		1	1				3							0	3
To self							0							0					1	1	2	2
Guilt	1						1							0		1					1	2
Make smart decisions in the store				1			1			1				1		1					0	2
Only one to do it							0		1					1		1					1	2
Pets							0				1			1				1			1	2
Help others							0						1	1							0	1
Homemade							0					1		1							0	1
Self same as family			1				1							0							0	1
Totals	6	2	3	5	3	3	21	2	7	7	9	4	9	38	3	5	5	6	5	4	29	88

Moral obligation of healthy food

When asked about the responsibility to bring the right food into their homes, most of the participants, 11 of 18, mentioned healthy food. For Deborah, her role as the food provider is based on her focus on healthy eating that her husband does not share, but sees value in.

Deborah: I feel like the cooking is my responsibility between me and my husband. We've split up managing the house and he's the one who cleans, I'm the one who cooks or at least has food somewhat available in the kitchen for us. Even if that's just takeout. That's been my mutually agreed upon official responsibility is to be the one to do the grocery shopping. We both agree that his inclination for food is not very healthy. The few times he's come to the grocery store with me he throws in Hot Fries and Chips Ahoy and not food that I would usually pick out for us, and that by his own admission is not healthy food. We're both happy with me taking that role of doing the grocery shopping.

For Rudy, buying the right food means more than making smart choices in the grocery store, it is also about researching nutrition.

Rudy: Above all it's going to be quality. But a very close second is going to be price. The right ingredients ... researching the ingredients because organic can mean numerous things. Those are the types of things that I think[...] I think I feel responsible for making sure that it's the right type of ingredients, the right type of food, the right balance of nutrition and nutrients.

Researching nutrition can go hand in hand with taking on the role of the food provider, but it can also occur in surprising ways. During his interview, Tim shared a story about how he got interested in learning more about nutrition when I asked him about the four-legged members of his family.

Interviewer: Since you mentioned pets [...] do you think a lot about what they're eating?

Tim: Yeah, that's actually how I got interested in nutrition at all or how I started the research because I juice, we juice vegetables and fruits a couple nights a week. We had all this pulp leftover and I was trying to figure ways to trick my dog into eating it and so I was mixing it with stuff and I contemplated making our own dog food. I started checking into making sure that her nutritional needs would be covered, like what her nutritional needs were, in order to make sure that I was

covering it with the dog food I was making. Didn't end up doing it, but then I realized that I didn't know what my nutritional needs were. That's when I went to the library. That, kind of, spurred everything.

Once he realized he was not aware of his own nutritional needs, Tim's search for information on nutrition led him to the library to learn more. Whatever the cause of the focus on nutrition, many shoppers felt that bringing healthy food into their homes was the most important aspect of their grocery shopping. Even when trying to save money on the food she brings into her home, Kendra is motivated to purchase only quality food items.

Kendra: Well, I try to make affordable choices, but also knowing that it's an investment and sometimes obviously the cheapest product isn't necessarily the best. But when I'm looking at options, if Whole Foods has their own organic brand, I'm going to choose theirs as opposed to the Horizon, whatever that one is, that's more expensive. So I try to cut corners, but not in quality of food.

Kendra and other participants in this study felt a strong obligation to purchase healthy and organic items for their families, even though these items are typically more expensive. For several participants, this obligation took on the feeling of pressure or even guilt to make healthy choices and stay within their budgets. Emanuel clearly described this feeling in his interview when he was asked about the responsibility he feels as the shopper.

Emanuel: I think I feel that when my choice is to buy organic or not, it has a lot to do with if I feel responsible for my health and my kid's. I will frequently choose the organic version because there's a little bit of guilt feeling the responsibility. It kind of kicks in[...]I think the feeling of responsibility and that kind of stuff probably kicks in when I'm thinking about, should I spend the extra money to buy the organic version of it? I don't know if that helps?

The moral obligation to buy healthy food at the grocery store was one of the most common themes that emerged from this study. It was not always an easy choice for the participants to make, because it was one involving many factors, including price that went into their purchase decisions.

Moral obligation to children

After providing healthy food for their families, the next most common moral obligation described by the participants is the moral obligation to provide for children. All but one of the participants that have children or have shopped for groceries for children staying in their home described their shopping in terms of the responsibility they feel toward children. Ramona, a recently married participant, shared the concern she feels toward her young daughter's evolving eating habits.

Ramona: She loves to eat healthy things. She loves fruits. Used to eat vegetables but I'm slowly seeing her go into that normal kid stage where it's a picky eater and then it turns into a picky eater to I'll only eat what I want to eat. So [she will] eat hamburgers or hot dog or something that I know is just ... and it's I guess because I try so hard to give her better options. Yogurt, cheese, fruit instead of the normal easy go snacks. It makes it frustrating when I have to go shopping for these things and then if I send her to someone to keep her for a couple hours or whatever those things are left in the bag and they feed her what they want to feed her. Which is normally whatever they're eating. I think I have a more of an emotional development for the children because they don't get to choose so much.

Ramona is clearly concerned about not only what her daughter eats, but also the choices her daughter makes now and will make in the future. Healthy eating is something Ramona and her husband have struggled with and it was clear throughout her interview that she worries about her daughter having the same problems in her own life.

There was a clear cultural norm portrayed by the participants that children need the best food. With that norm comes a moral obligation for parents and other caretakers to do what is necessary to provide for the children in their lives. For some this meant a change in diet or learning more about the foods they have eaten most of their lives. When Kendra was asked about the responsibility to bring the right food into her home she not only described her new baby, but also her concern about our cultures understanding of nutrition.

Kendra: Yes, definitely. Especially with a new baby. I feel like I wasn't taught ... I don't think we as a society really teach children how to eat in a healthful way. I don't think adults know how to do it and that's why our obesity epidemic is what it

is, but I really want to reverse that for my child and teach him you can have treats, but they are treats.

The moral obligation to children that was described by the participants shows the pressure that families feel to buy healthy food. Price and habits can interfere with this goal, but the pressure to provide what is right for your children was strong for most of the parents in this study.

Moral obligation not to overspend

Shopping for healthy food at the grocery can be a difficult venture in itself, but adding concerns about budgets and getting a good deal can complicate the situation. Concerns over the cost of grocery items were described in terms of a moral obligation not to overspend by half of the participants in this study. Most describe this obligation when I asked them about the responsibility they feel as the shopper.

For Deborah, her marriage brought a new emphasis to her shopping. She said, “I do think getting married made me try to be more strategic about it because it's not just my money, it's our money.” By sharing her financial life with her husband, Deborah felt that she needed to be more “strategic” in her shopping since it was no longer merely about her. May described her obligation not to overspend as balanced with the obligation to buy enough.

May: I guess, like I said, I want to make sure that we have everything that we might need and we might want. Then, I also, financially, I think that finding the right budget for grocery shopping is a big part of it. I don't want to spend too much money, but I want to get everything that we need.

Like May, Dora’s obligation not to overspend was described along side other obligations.

Dora: I feel responsible for spending an appropriate amount of money. Not just buying random stuff and making it really expensive. The responsibility to be healthy. I feel also the responsibility to make food that my husband likes. I don't want to just get what I want. If he really likes something I want to make sure since I'm shopping for him too. I want to do that sometimes.

In Dora's list of obligations, the concern over money comes first. The reality that everything in the grocery store has a financial cost was prevalent in the descriptions of several participants' moral obligations.

Moral obligation to change for children

For six of the participants in this study, the addition of children into their homes created a moral obligation to change their own lifestyle for their children. This moral obligation is similar to the moral obligation to children, but differs in that the change occurs in the adults on behalf of the children. Pregnancy was the time several participants began to reevaluate and change their food choices. This change did not only extend to the mothers. Jerry shared in his interview how his wife's pregnancy changed the way he thought about food.

Jerry: Yeah. I think we became even more hyper-aware of, when my wife was pregnant, of toxins that can be in certain foods, trying to buy organic when possible and avoiding certain things like farmed salmon. What I realized was like ... It's not like we would go and buy wild salmon because it was really expensive. We just cut out things that maybe we used to buy. For instance, I learned a lot more about fish because that's a really sensitive topic for pregnant women. Just trying to buy organic produce whenever.

The changes that Jerry made to his grocery shopping occurred at least in part due to an obligation to his child. For other participants, having a child led to a new focus on health and nutrition more broadly. When Jerome was asked if the way he thinks about food has changed he said,

Jerome: Yeah. I'm way more conscious about it in a few different ways. Where does my food come from? What is my food doing in my body? I was even in the last year, I've been more and more devoted to I guess the science of food and why do these things do what they do together. Thinking about my caloric intake and how that pertains to my various energy levels and how I'm feeling in life, that kind of thing, what's required of me, and what are the most efficient ways to get that.

Interviewer: Was there any particular reason that you think you became interested in that?

Jerome: I think maybe this guy (referring to his son). When we found out my wife was pregnant, I really started to probably change a lot about that. It's not just me.

For these six participants, becoming a parent meant thinking about themselves in a new way. Both Rudy and Emanuel, when asked if they feel a responsibility to themselves, described a moral obligation to make dietary changes for their children.

Rudy: I do. Before eating pizza, hamburgers whatever ... the child comes along and you're like I have to be around. I have to play with her. I have to exercise with her. I have to show her good nutrition. What we eat, she's gonna eat and setting her up now for the future dietary wise is important. So yes I do feel responsible for myself and the food I eat.

Emanuel: Yes. I feel like I owe it to myself to eat right because if your health declines, right now there's not going to be anyone else taking care of my kid. I have parents that are helpful and three different babysitters that I use. Basically if I don't eat well my health will decline. I need all the help I can get.

For a few of the participants, the changes they felt they had to make for their children were about their health and modeling healthy behavior.

Ramona: Overall being pregnant—that brought about many things that I should probably change. Don't do this. Teach her how to do this. Of course the best way that they influence to go about it is you do it yourself. Let her see that you're doing it and she will follow.

Ramona's eating habits changed when she got pregnant and continued in hopes of influencing her daughter through modeling healthy behavior.

Moral obligation to partner

Children were not the only members of the family that participants felt a moral obligation toward; six participants described a moral obligation to their partners. For Dora, she described her responsibility to bring the right food into her home in terms of health.

Interviewer: Do you feel a responsibility to bring the right food into your home?

Dora: Yes I do. For myself and for my husband because what I bring home is what we're going to put into our bodies and it can affect our health and our weight, so I do feel responsible to buy healthy food and limit junk food and sugars and things like that.

While Gladys was living with her boyfriend, she was concerned about impressing him with her cooking. She said in her interview, “like, we haven't been dating very long so I want to impress him, so it wouldn't be the healthiest of food. I would do a lot of Italian food, tomato sauce, cheese and lots of carbs.” Ramona’s concerns for her husband were split between buying him what he wanted and what she thought he should be eating.

Ramona: My husband ... it's an emotional thing because I do worry about his health just because I feel like both of us are overweight but I feel like his is more pertinent because he actually shows signs of his weight starting to bother him. Of course as a man he ignores [it] and I worry about him. When I go buy him things that he wants and I know probably aren't the best option it's a nagging feeling...

The “nagging feeling” that Ramona describes is her moral obligation; while different participants used different words to describe it, all of the participants described some form of it. In addition to the most common types of moral obligation described by the participants, I will discuss two more notable types: feeling more of an obligation to the family than to oneself, and not feeling a moral obligation.

More to family than self

Five participants described that they felt more of a responsibility or moral obligation to their families than to themselves. When I asked Marcella if she thinks about food differently now, she responded,

Marcella: Yeah, for one thing it's like after I got married because my husband and I come from different places. We eat, like after I got married I eat much more pepper. I bought much more pepper than I did before. My husband his hometown eats ducks. Me, I seldom eat duck before, but after that I think I began shopping for duck meat. After I have the child I shop more like for his needs. When I buy the food I would think how he would like to eat. That is a very big difference I think. Our needs are no longer the priority. What he wants to eat, what he likes, this is very important.

She clearly views her husband and child's needs as the priority when it comes to her grocery shopping. She even adapted some of her tastes to meet her husband's. For the other participants that described this moral obligation, they responded that they did not feel a responsibility to themselves in comparison to what they felt for their family.

Tim: Not as much. I'm more inclined to indulge and make bad choices for myself than I am for the other people in my family and the animals.

Tim is more worried about the health of his family, allowing himself to make "bad choices" that he would not make for others.

No moral obligation

Three participants responded that they did not feel a responsibility when they were asked about their grocery shopping. Jerry explained that while he thinks of it as important it does not rise to the level of moral obligation.

Jerry: I mean, I think it's really important. I try to bring in healthy food that's also going to be appealing. I know that if it's not appealing, my wife will sometimes end up going out and going to Target during the week and buying stuff because she feels like there's not really appealing foods. Sometimes it may not be as healthy. We kind of grew up in different cultures, I guess. I think it's just really important to eat healthy for health and well-being. I do try to ... I do feel like it's important, but I don't really know if I feel like it's ... I don't feel pressure or anything.

While Felix explained that he did not feel a responsibility, he did describe an importance he felt to buy things that are healthy and tasty.

Felix: Yeah, I don't know if responsibility, it just seems important if I want to feel healthy and happy, to eat right. I wouldn't say I feel it as a responsibility to myself, I just feel like I'll be happier. I like to be happy in life if I can, so I'll be happier if I have good food.

Finally, Faye, who lived with her brothers, did not feel responsible to them, because they were capable of getting their own groceries.

Faye: Not particularly because I know that they're also capable of getting it themselves. If I don't bring home soy dogs for my little brother because my bag was full or I just forgot, I know he's entirely capable of going and getting it for himself as well. I don't feel a whole lot of responsibility.

These participants were unusual in this study in not feeling a moral obligation toward others. While the term 'obligation' was too strong for these participants, Jerry did describe his role as the food provider as important and Felix described a responsibility that he felt. Moral obligation may not impact all grocery shoppers, but these findings suggest that moral obligations are quite prevalent among many grocery shoppers.

Nurturer Research Question 3 – Discussion

The most prevalent moral obligations that were identified in this study essentially break down into three types: a moral obligation to health (healthy food and change for children), a moral obligation to family (children, partner, and more to family than self), and a moral obligation to finances (not to overspend). Each of these types of moral obligations can be described as a pressure, or as Ramona refers to it, a nagging feeling that a person experiences while grocery shopping for others.

A moral obligation to health was described by the participants as the need to buy healthy food and to research nutrition more broadly. Emanuel even used the word guilt to describe the feeling he experiences when choosing between conventional and organic versions of food. Several parents in this study also described their children as creating in them a moral obligation to become healthier; to live longer and model healthy eating habits. Cairns et al. (2013) found that mothers concerned with protecting the 'organic child' focus on socializing their children into healthy eating habits. The present study extends previous research on moral obligation by identifying a variety of moral obligations at play in the process of grocery shopping (Raats et al., 1995).

Moral obligations to the family highlight several grocery shopping changes that can occur when individuals are added to a family. For many of the participants, their

marriage or the birth of a child created new moral obligations in their lives and they in turn impacted their grocery shopping. Participants described the need to provide healthy and tasty foods for their family members. Participants also discussed needing to buy enough food and to accommodate different tastes and preferences. The research literature is full of examples of women and mothers putting the needs of the family ahead of their own (Cairns et al., 2013; DeVault, 1991; Slater et al., 2011; Thompson, 1996) and one study also found men self-sacrificing through cooking (Szabo, 2014). The present study identified a description of a similar moral obligation from three female and two male participants, suggesting that research on self-sacrifice should look to address gender more broadly or focus more on family roles such as the food provider. Overall it was clear that the vast majority of participants feel a moral obligation to other members of their family while grocery shopping.

Finally, the moral obligation not to overspend highlights the pressure that cost and budget can have on grocery shopping. Even though all of the participants described themselves as middle class, staying within a given budget was the reality for most of them. For some of the participants, budget was not necessarily the concern, but rather the more general desire to get a good deal in the grocery store. Sometimes the concern over price came into direct conflict with the goals of buying healthy or organic food. This moral obligation also suggests the presence of an economic persona impacting decision-making in the grocery store.¹⁰

Previous research has found that moral obligation plays a significant role in a person's attitudes and intentions in regards to food choice (Raats et al., 1995; Shepherd & Raats, 1996). These studies find that moral obligation is activated "when a person is involved in buying and preparing foods for other people, and perhaps particularly for children" (Shepherd & Raats, 1996, p. 357). The participants in this study clearly felt like

¹⁰ For further discussion of the economic persona, see Appendix D.

an obligation to their families and that shaped their grocery shopping. A pressure to buy organic food not only impacts selection of one food item over another, it may impact the ability to purchase other foods and the store someone shops at. Moral obligation like cultural norms and self-identity are another factor that make purchase decisions and all other behaviors in and around the grocery store more complex.

NURTURER PERSONA CONCLUSION

The nurturer persona addresses how the role of food provider impacts grocery shopping and associated information behaviors. The present study investigated how and if cultural norms, self-identity, and moral obligation impact the role of food provider in the act of grocery shopping. Overall, the findings show that all three elements complicate grocery shopping by adding influences and pressures to food providers. This clearly points to the prevalence of the nurturer persona among all nurturer persona study participants.

The nurturer persona study began by looking for primary grocery shoppers who had recently gone through a life change. These changes were the starting point for the participants to discuss the nurturer persona, but they were not always the reason for grocery shopping changes. This suggests that everyday activities such as grocery shopping may be affected by both major and minor life changes. An implication of this finding is that research that addresses the everyday should explore not only major or unusual life events, as did previous everyday information behavior research on rare health events (McKenzie, 2003; Veinot, 2009). Of course, major life changes impact many aspects of an individual's everyday world, but to solely focus on those may limit researchers' ability to explore the variety and banality of the everyday.

The cultural norms, aspects of self-identity, and moral obligations were found here to influence grocery shoppers in various ways. While several of the themes identified in this section are similar across the cultural norms, self-identity, and moral

obligations, each theme can impact a shopper in a different way. For example, the importance of providing high-quality, nutritious food to children was present throughout the data. This cultural norm influences a grocery shopper's purchases as well as encourages the shopper to research nutrition and read product labels. The cultural norms also inform the self-identity of food providers. Independently, the self-identity of being a parent impacted how several participants' viewed their grocery shopping as contributing to their family. The role of food provider also included the pressure, and even guilt, of moral obligations to provide children with the best food, and also to eat healthily for their children's sake. It may not be surprising that having a child changes a person's behavior, but the variety of influences behind those changes are significant. Together all of the cultural norms, aspects of self-identity, and moral obligations create a complex and dynamic context that the food provider navigates while grocery shopping.

Grocery shoppers are inundated with influences that impact their grocery shopping. The findings of this study show that the cultural norms that influence grocery shoppers can be experienced on multiple levels, with each level complicating behaviors in the grocery store. Buying nutritious food seems simple, but as the participants described, knowing what is nutritious can require research, such as Rudy using MyPlate and Tim going to the library. Not only do they contend with cultural norms, self-identity, and moral obligation, but they also consider the creative, economic, and political aspects of their grocery shopping. Not all shoppers do this, but many participants in this study demonstrate the variety of issues at play when, say doing something simple as selecting a loaf of bread.

Participants described attributes of grocery shopping that relate to other personas including an economic, political, and creative persona.¹¹ The nurturer persona identified

¹¹ For further discussion of the other persona identified in the nurturer persona study see Appendices C and D.

in this study, was also found to interact with other personas, such as when participants described the conflict they felt when buying organic foods that they believed to be more nutritious and more expensive. The evidence presented in this section also points to future research that should address the additional personas found in this study as well as research into other possible personas.

Providing food for a family is a form of nurturing that is deeply tied to our cultural understandings of nutrition, family, and food choice. Living up to the ideals of being a good shopper requires individuals not only to grocery shop, but to conform to the changing cultural norms around healthy eating and grocery shopping. If a shopper has a family, there are norms surrounding his or her role within that family as well as the moral obligations to the family. A grocery shopper does not simply enter a grocery store and buy food. Grocery shopping exists within an information context that includes but is not limited to all of the cultural norms, aspects of self-identity, and moral obligations discussed within this focused study on the nurturer persona. The everyday behavior of grocery shopping exists in a highly complex cultural context where no decisions are simple, and every choice has meaning.

CREATIVE PERSONA FINDINGS

The creative persona study addresses the creative and leisurely aspects of grocery shopping. During the interviews, all of the participants were asked if they view grocery shopping as a leisure activity. Based on their answers, I categorized the participants into three different types of grocery shopper to explore the research questions. Table 5 presents the distribution of participants. The recreational and not-recreational shopper codes were preset based on the research literature, while the can-be-recreational shopper code was emergent. The codes were applied to the question, “Do you consider grocery shopping a leisure activity?”

Table 5: List of participants by shopper type

Recreational Shoppers	Wilma, Lorraine, Katie, Glen, Henrietta, Gina, and Alberta
Not-Recreational Shoppers	Tonya, Jenna, Mabel, Joseph, Arturo, Michelle, Julius, Patsy, and Leah
Can-Be-Recreational Shoppers	Robin and Carole

Nine of the participants did not view grocery shopping as a leisure activity, seven did view it as such, and two did not consider grocery shopping in a grocery store as a leisure activity but did view some grocery shopping as leisurely, such as at farmers markets or specialty stores.¹² These comparison groups help to organize my analysis of what makes recreational shoppers different from other shoppers. Table 6 highlights several differences between the three groups in regards to their views on creativity in the grocery store and their own cooking. All but one of the participants viewed cooking as a creative activity, and the majority of the not-recreational and can-be-recreational grocery shoppers did not view the grocery store as a creative space. Participants in this study were recruited based on their love of food with some enjoying grocery shopping, cooking, or simply eating. Patsy, the participant who did not view cooking as creative, described herself as loving food and especially eating.

Table 6: Views on the grocery store and cooking by shopper type

Shopper Type	Recreational (7)	Not-Recreational (9)	Can-Be-Recreational (2)
The grocery store is creative.	5	3	0
The grocery store is not creative.	2	5	2
The grocery store can be creative.	0	1	0
A specialty store is creative.	1	2	2
Cooking is creative.	7	8	2
Cooking is not creative.	0	1	0

¹² Nurturer persona study participant, Faye also described the recreational aspects of grocery shopping. For further discussion of nurturer persona study participants describing aspects of the creative persona, see Appendix C.

When asked more generally about their feelings toward grocery shopping, six of the seven recreational grocery shoppers described grocery shopping as enjoyable.¹³ The seventh, Gina, remarked,

Gina: I like it if I'm in the mood for it, like if it's the activity of the day almost, but if it's more like squeezing it in between other activities, it can be stressful... but I do like it, especially because when you grocery shop, like at Walmart or Meijer, they have other products, too, so you can get those there and combine those shopping trips.

Four of the not-recreational shoppers described their feelings toward grocery shopping as a chore, two others described it as enjoyable, two more described it as enjoyable some of the time, and one described it as simply a weekly activity. The can-be-recreational shoppers were split with Robin describing grocery shopping as a chore and Carole describing it as enjoyable.

The three types of shoppers also viewed cooking differently. All recreational shoppers answered 'yes' to questions describing their cooking as fun, creative, and a leisure activity. The not-recreational shoppers disagreed on their views of cooking. When asked if cooking is a fun activity, seven answered 'yes' and two answered 'no'. Only two answered that they felt that cooking was a leisure activity, and two more responded that it could be some of the time. When asked more generally about their feelings toward cooking, three not-recreational shoppers portrayed it as a chore and one characterized it as stressful. The can-be-recreational shoppers all answered that cooking is fun, creative, and a leisure activity, with Robin also describing it as a chore. These results imply a link between a shopper's views on cooking and their opinions on grocery shopping.

¹³ Eight of the nurturer persona study participants also described positive feelings toward grocery shopping. For further discussion of nurturer persona study participants describing aspects of the creative persona, see Appendix C.

Creative Research Question 1 – How do recreational grocery shoppers enact the creative persona within a grocery store?

When comparing the three types of grocery shoppers identified in this study, three themes emerged that can help in understanding how the recreational grocery shopper enacts the creative persona during the act of shopping. The first two come from variations in answers to two interview questions about discovering new things and the relationship between their grocery shopping and cooking. The third theme comes from participants describing an overwhelmed feeling. This feeling of being overwhelmed came up more frequently in the interviews and observations with the not-recreational grocery shoppers. The distinction between the groups highlight what may create feelings of leisure and then creativity in the minds of the recreational grocery shoppers and not the other types of shoppers.

Discovering new things

Every participant was asked if he or she try and discover new things while grocery shopping. The majority of participants, 14 of 18, answered that they do try to discover new things.¹⁴ Three of the four participants who answered ‘no’ came from the not-recreational shopper group. Overwhelmingly, the recreational shoppers described their love for discovering new things in the grocery store.

Several of their quotations highlight the joy and enthusiasm the participants have for grocery shopping and being creative in the grocery store. One of the strongest reactions to this question came from Lorraine, a recreational shopper who manages one of the local farmers markets but still does the majority of her shopping at the grocery store.

Lorraine: Definitely. I get really excited about new things that I find at the grocery store, and we'll talk about it on social media, or tell friends at work, or

¹⁴ Although, I did not ask the nurturer persona study participants if they try to discover new things in the grocery store, Deborah, Paul, Marcella, and Jerry all described discovering new things while they grocery shop. For further discussion of nurturer persona study participants describing aspects of the creative persona, see Appendix C.

family at home. I get really excited when I find something new, or find it in a place I hadn't seen something before. Every once in a while I'll find a new product and I'll only go to the same place to get it, and then I'll happen to see it somewhere else. I'm like, "Oh, this is amazing." It's really lame.

Other recreational shoppers shared Lorraine's enthusiasm in their answers.

Glen: Especially on the Saturday morning runs, yeah. That'll be like the one where I go into [a local specialty store] and I'll just ... I guess you've been in there so you know they have the cheese in there, and I'll just be like, "I never even heard that name before. Let's try it, or let's buy it." I'll just go and buy something, there especially.

In another portion of the interview, when asked if he considers the grocery store a creative space, Glen returned to his love of discovering new things to describe his creative process.

Glen: I think there's a lot of stuff in a grocery store you just never know is there until you go looking for it. You can get a lot ... A lot of this comes from meeting people too. I live with a roommate now, and he'll just show up with something. It'll be just some weird kind of honey or some weird seasoning, and I'll just "where'd you get this?" and he was like "went to Schnucks," I was like "what? They have this in there?" You can go through these grocery stores and find some weird thing and then say "oh, maybe I'll do something with that." Even if I don't do anything with it immediately, I'll remember it's there and have it in the back of my head, so that when I do think of something that I'd like to do with it, then it's there for me.

Participants also described in their interviews going to the grocery store sometimes just to discover new things. When asked about her experience at different grocery stores, Katie explained,

Katie: I guess my experience when I go into Target or Costco or a Kroger or a Tom Thumb is more business. Like I am going in there to get what I need. Whereas when I go into a Trader Joe's I am more of exploring and looking for something new and exciting and just like testing. Same with Central Market and Whole Foods.

Alberta, when asked about parts of the grocery store she enjoys, also described spending time in the grocery store exploring,

Alberta: Yeah, enjoy, I will say fresh produce is a necessity and for dessert and crackers, something like that, and chocolates. I like sweet things. Yeah, I enjoy shopping around them. Sometimes I do not buy a lot of them, just looking at if there's new flavors or new products, just for fun.

The only recreational grocery shopper who responded that she did not try and discover new things in the grocery store during her interview, was observed browsing and purchasing new tea flavors:

Gina: We'll get some tea. And I'll look at what they have. I love to look at the coffee, I just love coffee. Usually I don't buy any, because I have a pound at home[...]

Gina moves on from coffee and look through several varieties of tea.

Gina: So, this is the kind I really like. But I still have a bunch of that at home, so I'm not going to get any more. And I like chamomile for upset stomach or even for a sore throat, because it just calms it down. I do like chai, chai latte, but usually it's ... I don't like ... most of the tastes are too artificial.

Interviewer: So, do you have favorite brands?

Gina: No, I just ... I usually would get the Meijer brand if they have the one I want. If they don't, then I would get a different brand, if they have another flavor. I really like vanilla. For example, if they had vanilla caramel, then I would probably try that. But for today, I'm going to try orange spice.

Interviewer: So, you usually try to get a new tea every time?

Gina: Yeah, I like to try new teas. I usually have one that's kind of like a berry, more fruit flavor, and then something different like chai or some other herb. Traditional... I'll try the chai. I'll give it a try. It also marked down.

Three of the participants who answered 'no' when asked about trying to discover new things are not-recreational shoppers. Two of the participants' answers demonstrate that to them grocery shopping is highly routinized and the same items are purchased weekly.

Tonya: It's usually buying the same stuff every week.

Patsy: Not really, no actually, pretty rarely. I would say like where my current shopping list is pretty different from maybe what I would have purchased when I first lived with my parents. It took me like seven years to make some pretty minor changes to things I was purchasing. Sort of, but not really, no.

The third not-recreational shopper answered that she would on occasion discover new things through impulse buys, but most of her grocery discoveries occur at the farmers market and not the grocery store.

Mabel: Not really. When I discover new things, it's usually at the farmers market. Sometimes if I see some interesting commercial, when I pass by it in the aisle, sometimes I'll, like, "Oh, that's what that thing is on that commercial." Sometimes I do impulse buy, especially if I'm hungry. That's such a bad habit to be in. Yeah, sometimes I do, but not as often as I think, maybe, the big companies would like to think. It works on me, so...

Discovering new things in the grocery store is an enjoyable part of grocery shopping that can inspire shoppers to try new items and even share their discoveries with friends. This finding demonstrates how leisure and creativity go hand in hand in the grocery store; when shoppers are enjoying exploring the grocery store they are primed to find inspiration in expected and unexpected places.

Relationship between grocery shopping and cooking

Another distinction between the recreational grocery shoppers and the other types of shoppers is the relationship between their grocery shopping and their cooking. The vast majority of participants love cooking or at least view it as a creative activity. Throughout all of the interviews, three types of relationships were recorded between a participant's grocery shopping and cooking. Eight participants described the relationship as going two ways: grocery shopping provides the ingredients for cooking, but also can inspire cooking. The other eight participants described the relationship as unidirectional, grocery shopping merely provides the ingredients for their cooking. Among the not-recreational grocery shoppers five described the relationship between their cooking and grocery shopping as unidirectional. Two described it as bidirectional, and the answers of

the two others did not fit into either category. Patsy, the only participant to view cooking as not a creative activity, said that the relationship is “pretty disjointed,” and Jenna did not describe the relationship beyond that both are important, saying,

Jenna: Whatever I find in the grocery store, I think there's a certain energy that I put into it, even just buying it because I'm imagining how that's going to be created in my kitchen. And then as I'm cooking it, again, I'm being mindful as to what sort of ingredients and products I'm putting together for my family.

The recreational shoppers' answers mirrored that of the not-recreational shoppers—with five describing the relationship as bidirectional and two describing it as unidirectional. The can-be-recreational shoppers again split in their answers with Robin describing the relationship as unidirectional and Carole bidirectional. Table 7 provides examples of descriptions of both the bidirectional and the unidirectional relationship between grocery shopping and cooking.

Table 7: Bidirectional and unidirectional grocery shopping and cooking relationship

<p>Bidirectional Relationship</p>	<p>Wilma: I guess those two things affect each other. Sometimes when I want to cook but I need a certain type of ingredient so I go to the grocery stores. Sometimes when I just explore like at the grocery store I see certain products that I want to try out. If I want to like cook then yeah I buy it first and then start cooking.</p> <p>Gina: Yeah. Like I said, usually I stock up on things pretty well, and sometimes I see something at the store. For whatever reason, I look at the product and I think, "Yeah, that might be good," or, "I haven't had it in a long time," or, "Yeah, let's just try it." Yeah, as I'm in the store, other things pop into my mind of how I could prepare that, or if I have something at home that's already cooked that is in the refrigerator, that I could combine, I just need one or two things and I can combine those and make a new meal...</p> <p>Glen: Most days I feel like it's my desire to cook, affects my shopping, but my shopping probably affects my desire to cook as well.</p>
<p>Unidirectional Relationship</p>	<p>Arturo: One certainly leads to the other.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's unidirectional?</p> <p>Arturo: Yeah. I guess. A lot of times I'll think about what I want to cook. Then it's like, "Well, I can't do half of those things before I go to the grocery store." There's a lot of imagination and then using the store as a tool and then going home and cooking what I got there.</p> <p>Tonya: If I don't have ... Again, the recipes, like following a recipe, if I don't have a certain thing, then it might mess up the whole thing. I might feel like I need to not even try the recipe or something like that.</p> <p>Robin: Yes. Because typically if I'm going to the grocery store, I am collecting the ingredients for maybe one or two specific meals I have for the immediate week ahead...</p>

The examples show that for the participants who describe the relationship as unidirectional, the grocery store is merely a tool to be used for the real creative event, cooking. The grocery store is not a place to explore and gain inspiration. Whereas the participants who describe the relationship as bidirectional look at the grocery store as an extension of their cooking and a place to find inspiration.

Overwhelmed

The last distinction that helps to understand how the creative persona is enacted in the grocery store is the concept of being overwhelmed. The term itself or descriptions of dealing with a plethora of options in the grocery store came up during the interviews or observations with eight of the nine not-recreational shoppers, one can-be-recreational shopper, and one recreational shopper. The number of options available in the grocery store or the sheer size of some stores overwhelmed many participants. For some, this feeling is a major reason why they do not view grocery shopping as a leisure activity.

Throughout Arturo's interview he described his love of all things food and even his awe at the wonderful bounty present in the grocery store. Arturo works with a local food-focused non-profit that runs a local farmers market. In response to a question about his feelings toward grocery shopping he said,

Arturo: I like it. I like going grocery shopping. I've taught classes on food systems and things before and we spend time talking about food processing, all that kind of stuff. I tell my students if I'm in a college, academic-type setting when I'm teaching, "Just go in a grocery store and take it in for a minute. It's an amazing place. Grocery stores are incredible. The entire world has conspired to put all this food in front of you in a neat and orderly fashion and everything's ready for you to eat." It's amazing. Grocery stores are super cool. I don't always take the time to marvel every time I'm there, but I like spending time. The food industry amazes me.

Near the end of the interview, I asked him if he considered grocery shopping a leisure activity. I was almost convinced based on his enthusiasm and answers from the earlier questions that he would view grocery shopping as leisure, but instead he said,

Arturo: No. As fascinating as I find grocery stores, I still find shopping as a whole a little tiring. Grocery shopping is the most interesting shopping I think you can do, but shopping in general still is a little overwhelming with the overhead lights and the endless possibilities and trying to weigh all these different factors. It's a little tiring.

Even with his love and fascination with food, the “endless possibilities” of the grocery store diminish his enjoyment of the activity and the space.

Two other participants also described the sheer amount of information in the grocery store as debilitating and strongly affecting their experience. When he was asked about trying to discover new things, Julius explained,

Julius: Yeah, I do look at products. I scan the shelves, I guess you would say. I'm disabled in that if I go into an aisle where there are a lot of pills and supplements, I immediately go blind, too much information. So it's hard for me to look through that material...

Carole, one of the can-be-recreational shoppers, splits the majority of her grocery shopping between Meijer and a small local food cooperative. When asked about her feelings toward grocery stores, she described her discomfort with the amount of information present at Meijer,

Carole: It depends on the store. I mean I think for the most part it's a welcoming environment. It's like Meijer for instance, it's so large, sometimes those box stores just make me feel overwhelmed by all the information, and things going on, so that's when I'm like "Okay, I'll just stick to my list. Get in get out, and go home and cook or hang out." I think the Co-op has a different feel too, because it's smaller, and it's just like fewer people, and for the most part it's just like a little bit different, a more intimate feel than the big box store.

Other participants shared Carole's discomfort with larger grocery stores. Mabel's observation got off to an unusual start when the store she planned to begin her trip with, Aldi, had a cash register issue and was only able to accept cash payments. This forced Mabel to skip shopping at Aldi and instead do most of her shopping at a larger, more traditional grocery store. While reviewing the last few items on her shopping list, she said,

Mabel: The last thing I have on my list is coffee filters, tortillas, and then I'll probably get a couple of lunch items. I'll see what they have. This is the feeling I don't like. When I'm not really sure where I'm ... I allow myself more impulse buying at Aldi because it's just smaller. Here it's almost overwhelming.

Interviewer: The actual size of the store has an impact? You feel more comfortable in Aldi?

Mabel: Yeah, because it's smaller. Even though here I come here all the time...

The size of the store and the amount of choices were also concerns for the one recreational grocery shopper who described feeling overwhelmed. When asked about her feelings toward the grocery store, Alberta answered,

Alberta: I think it's a bit big, too big for me. Sometimes it's not very easy to find what I need. I always have to look up and find the names on the aisle, the tag. I once thought that the supermarkets should have developed their app to be like when I make a shopping list and they can optimize a route for me. My husband says it's against their benefit, so they won't do that. If they do that, you wouldn't have time to linger around and buy more things. Sometimes they have too many choices, it's a big headache for me. I always don't know what to choose. There are a lot of very similar things.

For all of these shoppers, feeling overwhelmed negatively impacted their experience of grocery shopping and even their feelings toward larger stores. Mostly not-recreational shoppers described feeling overwhelmed. Arturo serves as an example of how someone who truly loves food cannot see grocery shopping as a leisurely activity because he feels overwhelmed, and that feeling limits his enjoyment of the store and his ability to enact the creative persona.

Creative Research Question 1 – Discussion

The recreational shoppers in this study enact the creative persona within the grocery store by being open to inspiration. This inspiration can come through their discoveries of new things and their view that the grocery store can motivate their cooking. Shoppers who feel overwhelmed in the grocery store have a harder time enjoying the space and being open to inspiration and creativity within the store.

Trying to discover new things at the grocery is a way for many shoppers to inspire their culinary creativity. This behavior is also a form of information seeking. Previous

research has found the information seeking behavior both in and out of a retail setting is a trait of recreational shoppers in non-grocery contexts (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). Based on the responses in this study, information seeking is also an important attribute of recreational shoppers and the creative persona.

Also, the shoppers that describe their relationship as bidirectional are actively using the grocery store as a source of inspiration for the cooking. As described above, this view follows the recreational shoppers' goals of finding inspiration to construct creative dishes and cooking experiences. This feature is similar to what Hartel (2011) found in her study of gourmet cooking hobbyists and their practice of staying informed and inspired. Hartel found that the hobbyists "stay informed and inspired through regular contact with the culinary literature and media" (p. 228). The present study found that the grocery store is a space, beyond culinary literature and media, where recreational shoppers can stay informed about new products and food trends while also gaining inspiration from novel and familiar ingredients.

Sometimes this inspiration comes not only from the discovery of a new item, but from encountering an exceptional example of a staple. For example, during her observation, Henrietta was browsing the produce section and an item caught her attention. She is one of the recreational shoppers who described the relationship between her cooking and grocery shopping as bidirectional.

Henrietta: The radishes, like this-

The participant picks up a bunch of raw radishes in the produce section.

Interviewer: So, why do they jump out?

Henrietta: They jump out, one, because they're just unusually big, and they just look really fresh. It's nice and tactically, like they're a little wet, and so it looks like they've just been refreshed or just put up.

In this encounter, Henrietta was inspired to purchase radishes, a product that did not appear new to her, because of their appearance and tactile feel. This type of inspiration can only occur in a grocery store or similar food market. It demonstrates that for several recreational shoppers in this study, staying informed and inspired occurred away from traditional sources of information, such as those recorded by Hartel (2011), and occurred regularly in the grocery store.

Finally, the feeling of being overwhelmed described by the participants in this study is very similar to the negative aspect of shopping described by Prus and Dawson (1991) as “facing undesired ambiguity.” This form of ambiguity is described as “ambiguity that is seen as discomfoting, disconcerting, or perplexing” and it “tends to define shopping as more laborious” (p. 154). This research supports the current study’s finding that for most shoppers, feeling overwhelmed negatively impacts their grocery shopping experience, even making an ardent food lover like Arturo find the process tiring.

The participants in this study that found grocery shopping to be a leisure activity described more by the characteristics found to enact the creative persona and less by the characteristics found to limit it. When a person feels comfortable in a space, when they are having fun, they are more likely to feel creative in that space. Brightbill (1961) explains that leisure time “is the chance to be as uninhibited and unencumbered as we can be” (p. 178) and those attributes are key to feeling creative and expressing creativity. Grocery shopping may not be universally seen as leisure, but those who do see it that way, those individuals may be able to more easily enact the creative persona.

Creative Research Question 2 – How do recreational grocery shoppers understand their own creativity within the grocery store?

It may be difficult for individuals to clearly articulate how they understand their own creativity. Creativity is an abstract concept that individuals may not think about much, especially creativity in the grocery store. To answer this research question, I asked

the participants about creativity in different ways and then looked at each participant's transcript holistically to identify overarching themes. For the majority of participants, creativity was identified as an overarching theme, but for six participants particular aspects of grocery shopping were identified.

The questions that elicited the most discussion of creativity were about the creative space of the grocery store and cooking. All but one of the participants viewed cooking as a creative activity and eight considered the grocery store as a creative space. Throughout the interviews and observation the participants discussed creativity in several different ways. Creativity was an important part of grocery shopping for all of the recreational shoppers and for several of the other shoppers as well. Among the shoppers who discussed their creativity within the store, four themes emerged: discovering new things, learning in the grocery store, visual presentation, and the importance of cooking. For the six other shoppers, the themes of efficiency and price emerged as more important than creativity. This suggests that for some shoppers, different personas are at the forefront in their shopping experience. In this section, I present how all of the recreational shoppers as well as three of the not-recreational shoppers and one can-be-recreational shopper understand their own creativity. I conclude this section with a brief discussion of the other aspects of grocery shopping that the six remaining shoppers mentioned during the study.

Discovering new things

Discovering new things was discussed as an important part of creativity within the grocery store for most of the recreational grocery shoppers. All of the shoppers try to discover new things and some even go to the store just to browse new items. For example, when asked about her feelings about the grocery store, Lorraine described her enjoyment in terms of seeing what is new.

Lorraine: I like grocery shopping and it's funny because a lot of people I feel like feel like it's a chore. They just want to get in and get out. Sure, if there's like crowds and lines I kind of feel the same way, but I like to go to the grocery store and read labels and see what's new, and, I don't know, I like it.

For Wilma, the grocery store is a fun place to hang out and explore.

Wilma: Yeah. I sometimes go there even though I don't need anything and I just spend time and I feel happy, like fun so it can be definitely a leisure activity.

Interviewer: It sounds like you had very positive grocery experience when you were a kid so you always sort of saw it as a fun place?

Wilma: Yeah. I never thought about it as like no fun. There are so many things you can do there. A lot of like guys, they think it's just like a store where you buy things that you need. I happen to go almost every day, even [back home] or here. I like to look at like products. I like what they have, like written or visually. Yeah. I really enjoy it.

Lorraine and Wilma's comments, as well as the findings presented in the last section, show how integral discovering new things is to the creative persona and a grocery shoppers understanding of their own creativity.

Visual presentation

Participants also described the visual presentation of items in the grocery store as an important part of their enjoyment of the space and as inspirational to their cooking and food choices.¹⁵ When asked if she considers the grocery store a creative space, Lorraine answered,

Lorraine: I think of [the local food cooperative]. It's a gorgeous store. It's just fun to look around in it. The displays are gorgeous. They spend a lot of time on that. Then there's other stores where it's just the food. There's no like signage or marketing or anything like that, you know. I don't know if that explains it.

¹⁵ Nurturer persona study participant Felix also described how the visual presentation of food in the grocery store made it a more comfortable space. For further discussion of nurturer persona study participants describing aspects of the creative persona, see Appendix C.

Lorraine enjoys not only the beautiful displays in the grocery store, but also the signs and information presented that adds to the displays of food. Henrietta frequents a small urban farm stand near her home and describes it in her interview as her “favorite spot in the world.” When asked about creativity in the grocery store she described the farm stand,

Henrietta: [The farm stand] is very creative. That's just an amazing ... He's an art director who runs it, retired. That's a very creative space because it's ongoing organic. I mean organic in a not food way, but organically evolving. He's adding ... Last year he added a beehive and it's only not to cultivate honey, but it's just a place to repopulate the bee population. Then, this year he put ethnic plants together and ... The Thai and Indian plants have their little space. It's absolutely gorgeous, it's like, "Oh, my god. You got to try it."

The beauty of foods was also integral to Lorraine’s views on her creativity and cooking. When asked if she views cooking as creative activity, she explained,

Lorraine: Definitely. I think some chefs have turned it into total art form. Maybe it's because I follow so many different chefs and foodies on social media. I've even seen wedding bouquets of produce that look like flowers and are gorgeous. I even had a friend that used produce in her wedding bouquets.

The visual presentation of products in the grocery store, and the store’s décor all help to make some stores stand out as uniquely creative spaces. It is hardly surprising that food lovers enjoy beautiful presentations of food and gain creative inspiration from them.

Learning in the grocery store

In addition to the visual presentation of items in the grocery store, participants also described the fun of learning about new foods and cooking preparations at the grocery store. During her interview, Wilma described her preference for shopping at smaller grocery stores because they are great places to learn.

Wilma: This summer when I started to go to like farmers market and I got more interested in like vegetarian cooking or healthier, like vegetable food. I stopped to look at [a local natural food market] sometimes so that I can ask questions. I guess I can get like that information off the Internet but still it's better to ask in person always. Sometimes they tell me like how I can cook with those. There's like a co-op store at [the shopping center] that I sometimes go and I ask a bunch of

questions about like figs, because I never know what that was, like I didn't know how to cook with it so I talked to the person and she told me how I can cook it for like purees or like jams. I'm making jams, so yeah, I got so much information.

Glen shared this example during his interview about stopping into a specialty food store to ask a question and his experience with “the most pleasant, knowledgeable food man [he’s] ever met in [his] life.”

Glen: Yeah, so every once in a while I'll have a really funky question for them. The last time I went in there, I asked him about squid. They have octopus, it's either octopus or squid. One they have on their seafood mailing list, the other they don't. I'll go in there and ask "oh, what can you get in terms of this?" I also ask them what they have in terms of bones, like beef bones to make broth with and stuff. I want to say it's the owner, I see two people there primarily. One guy, older guy who I think is the owner, is kind of short, bald, and he is one of the most pleasant, knowledgeable food man I've ever met in my life. The younger guy who works there is also really pleasant and knowledgeable and I'll go in and ask them stuff. When I asked him about the octopus stuff, he was just like, "I can get you octopus in 50 different ways." I was just like "whoa dude, I was just curious," I wasn't even planning on doing anything with octopuses.

Also too, a lot of times they have cheese samples out and I'll hear about a certain kind of cheese. I'll recognize the name when I'm looking through their counter, and then I'll be like, "oh, let me try that." The other day ... It sort of may be intuitive, but I recognized it, I was like, "I'm gonna get some manchego," and I went up and they had two different ages of manchego, and I was asking them what's the difference. Of course the older one's sharper and stinkier. They're really good for ... I can't even remember what the question was I just started thinking about [the specialty food store].

Having knowledgeable and helpful employees was also important to Katie and came up several times during her interview when she was describing her favorite grocery store back home.

Katie: Central Market I think is a really creative space. For example the cheese is it's really interactive, you can try them and there are so many different types. Even the people that work there are very knowledgeable and all foodies themselves and want to suggest to you new recipes and ways to try new things. Yeah I think the people that work there also really help make it a creative environment.

Katie: Whenever employees are more interactive and more helpful it makes you a lot more excited about doing something. I am a people person and I love bouncing off ideas on other people. When they are so interactive and really want to help you find the ingredients you want and are willing to walk to the other side of the store. One day I was in one section and I said do you know where the hummus is? They started recommending different ones, like “This one is really good for putting it on a sandwich but if you are looking for more of a dipping one I would try this. If you like this seasoning than I would really recommend this one or come to our fresh section and we actually have a store brand one that we make this one in house. Come try it”. That definitely helps make my experience a lot more creative and a lot better in general.

Katie: When people come visit us we will take them to our grocery store, like Central Market because it is such an interactive fun experience. Yeah I would say it is a leisure activity most of the time.

Katie’s favorite grocery store clearly is an inspiring food source in her life and makes grocery shopping into an event that you can share with guests, not a chore. Learning about food from other food lovers was clearly an enjoyable aspect of grocery shopping for several participants.

Cooking

Cooking is also an important foray into creativity in the grocery store.¹⁶ The store can inspire and be the impetus behind new recipes and ideas. When Gina was asked about creativity in the grocery store she described how the store influences her cooking.

Gina: To some extent, because, like I said, when I'm there and I see different products, the meals I want to make sometimes I can just visualize them, so, therefore, yes...

Although much of Alberta’s cooking consists of staple dishes she makes regularly, she described in her interview her habit of buying new items and learning to cook with them.

Alberta: When I find new products in grocery stores, I try to cook with them. There are some routine dishes that I make for my family, so the majority of grocery shopping is quite similar for a dish[...] I sometimes find new vegetables

¹⁶ Nurturer persona study participant May also described how cooking led to her enjoying grocery shopping, an activity she previously disliked. For further discussion of nurturer persona study participants describing aspects of the creative persona, see Appendix C.

that I haven't tasted before or some vegetables that I tasted at a restaurant, but I never made it myself or see other friends made it. I will try to buy some and try to find the recipe that resembles the ones I ate at the restaurant.

During our observation, Alberta and her partner examined several items they were unfamiliar with and even purchased jicama, a vegetable she had never heard of but wanted to try. When asked if she considered cooking a creative activity she responded, “Yes, exactly. I seldom follow the recipes. I usually try something new or something my husband and I especially enjoy, which are those I call, ‘original recipes.’” The creative activity of cooking can drive creativity in the grocery and be the catalyst that sparks the creative persona.

Other shoppers understanding of their creativity

Five other participants, four not-recreational shoppers and one can-be-recreational shopper, also described their understanding of their own creativity in the grocery store. Leah described exploring the grocery store and discovering new things with her young children during her interview. She even created an activity for her children to pick out a fruit or vegetable they had never seen before and go home and research it. Jenna found inspiration from discovering new things in the grocery store and on food television shows. When she was asked if cooking is creative she said,

Jenna: I love discovering different ingredients and different ways of putting certain foods together that I would have never thought of before. I think watching the Food Network channel has kind of enticed that on a more visual level. And the fact that my husband also is very innovative in his cooking kind of lets us express ourselves creatively through food.

For Joseph, his creativity in the grocery store was strongly tied to his cooking, something he described as “honorable work.” When he was asked if the grocery store is a creative space he answered, “Yes because sometimes just walking through it and taking a look at things, I will be thinking about, how could I put that together with something else? If you

mean by a stimulating space.” He viewed shopping in a very similar way to the recreational shoppers described above.

Both Carole and Arturo discussed their understanding of creativity by comparing the local food cooperative to more conventional grocery stores. Carole described the creativity she derives from two different parts of the local food cooperative, of which she is a member.

Carole: I think the Co-op, in there little community space, where they have like a kitchen set out, and there's chairs. I think of that space as more creative, because it's like bringing people together. You can have a space to bounce ideas, and recipes off one another. I think that that creates something more energizing. For the most part like Meijer, I don't really see as creative, or making me feel creative[...]

Interviewer: You mentioned specifically the community space in the Co-op, but in general when you're shopping at the co-op does it feel creative, or not as much?

Carole: I guess maybe the bulk section for some reason, because it's sort of this creative display, and artful almost to see it all together with all the different textures and colors. I think it could be more inspiring like that aisle itself for like recipes. That would probably be where I would get more inspiration to do certain recipes.

Arturo shared Carole’s thoughts on the creativity of the co-op, and also described his views on how traditional stores are almost anti-creativity.

Arturo: I think of the co-op as a creative space. There's so much more ability to get raw goods, bulk goods, foods you've never seen before. It's a little more inspiring that way. Also, they have their kitchen that's part of the co-op so people are invited to come learn there. I don't think I've ever gone to one of their cooking classes but my organization actually has held some cooking classes there. I wasn't teaching them. I think a place like that is. I feel like if you want to be inspired and feel creative in a more conventional grocery store, you have to go into it with that mindset. Otherwise, I don't think they're that inspiring in that way.

They're providing a ton of ingredients and foods and things like that and I think that's amazing, but I don't think ... I have this view of agribusiness and our food system is like that. I don't think they're trying to get you to be too, too thoughtful about your food and too creative about it. It's more just inundating people with as much food as possible.

The creative aspects of the local food cooperative described by Carole and Arturo encouraged them and other shoppers to be creative and think about food and grocery shopping in a different way.

Other themes

All of the recreational shoppers described creativity in the grocery store in one or many different forms, but for most of the not-recreational shoppers other characteristics were more important to them than creativity in the grocery store. Efficiency was described as a goal for shopping and cooking by three of the shoppers: Mabel, Tonya, and Julius. When asked about her feelings toward cooking, Mabel presented an interesting comparison between herself and her boyfriend—someone she describes as a more creative cook.

Mabel: My boyfriend, he's way more creative in this than me. I like to have a recipe. I use the website allrecipes.com a lot. I'm pretty active on that website. I love how you can search by ingredients so whatever I've got laying around the house, I can use them up in a recipe. The way he cooks is so different. He'll go to the store and look around and see what is interesting and spends time looking at stuff and then comes home. He's putting together a recipe while he's at the store and then he comes home. It might even change by the time he's done cooking it. I'm not like that at all. I like to have a recipe, go to the store with my list, get in and out, go home, follow the recipe to a T, and have dinner ready in as quickly and most efficient way possible.

Efficiency was a term Mabel used several times during her interview and observation. After crossing off some items on her grocery list, she exclaimed, “We are rocking this efficiency today!” Tonya also shared a love for efficiency, describing her shopping preference for avoiding deli counters saying, “I don't want to interact with someone to get my stuff. I just want to efficiently go and get it all off the shelf or whatever.” Getting in and out quickly was a goal many shoppers shared. Julius concisely stated his shopping philosophy when asked if he felt grocery shopping is a leisure activity with, “No, no. Snag it, tag it, and bag it.”

Getting a good price or holding to a specific budget was another aspect of grocery shopping that emerged as a strong focus for three of the not-recreational shoppers, Mabel, Michelle, and Patsy, and one can-be-recreational shopper, Robin. Robin even described grocery shopping in terms of a game saying,

Robin: I'm working with a very limited amount of cash, but, at the same time, that turns it into a bit of a mathematics game to make things less boring, so calculating it will cost X with X on its own. It will cost Y with tax. How many of these can I get before I run out of cash?

Even where a tight budget does not impose constraints on shopping, Mabel still seeks out the best deal. In her interview she explained, "I make more money now than I used to. Just out of principle, if I can get the same thing, same brand, same ingredients, same everything somewhere else for cheaper, then I'm going to go to the other place." Michelle also seemed very budget and price conscious. When asked about places that she looks for information about grocery shopping or food she replied, "Probably just Pinterest. I'm always looking at the how to get your budget down to \$50 a month or how to feed a family of four, I'm always reading those things." For these shoppers being efficient with their time and money were more important than being creative or inspired in the grocery store.

Creative Research Question 2 – Discussion

To truly explore how the participants understood their creativity in the grocery store, I analyzed each of their transcripts looking for overarching themes. Most of the participants in this study described their grocery shopping in terms of creativity in some way. For the participants who did not discuss creativity, other aspects of their grocery shopping were identified as important to their understanding of their grocery shopping.

From the eleven shoppers who described their own creativity in the grocery store, four themes emerged as important grocery shopping attributes: discovering new things in the store, the visual presentation of the store, their own cooking, and knowledgeable store

employees. Two of these findings, the importance of discovering new things and knowledgeable store employees, align with Bellenger and Korgaonkar's (1980) findings that recreational shoppers are active information seekers. Shoppers can gain inspiration from products in the store and from talking to store employees. The visual presentation of the store and the products within it also act as a place of inspiration for a few of the shoppers. Previous research has found a link between leisure shopping in department stores and shopping malls and attractive settings (Jansen-Verbeke, 1987). The final theme is clear: for many shoppers cooking is a creative activity and part of that activity occurs in the grocery store. The store can be a source of inspiration for a shopper's cooking. All of the themes together demonstrate that there are several ways a shopper can understand their creativity in the grocery store and that the store can be an important part of encouraging and engaging the creative process.

The findings from the six other shoppers suggest the prevalence of other personas in the participants grocery shopping. The themes of efficiency and price point to the economic persona and its focus on price and value.¹⁷ The themes identified in this section show participants focused on getting the best deal and not wasting time in the grocery store. Ensuring that they receive the best value for their time and money.

Creative Research Question 3 – What store attributes are important to recreational grocery shoppers?

To answer the final research question, what store attributes are important to recreational grocery shoppers; I analyzed the transcripts from the interviews and observation and recorded all instances where participants described an attribute of a store. Each attribute was recorded only once per participant so as to more easily draw conclusions across participants and avoid over-representing attributes that a participant may have discussed in multiple sections of the interview. I asked all of the participants

¹⁷ For further discussion of the economic person, see Appendix D.

about their feelings toward different grocery stores as well as how they felt about grocery stores in general. Store attributes include features such as the product selection and décor, but do not include the location of the store. Many of the participants viewed stores differently, with some liking different attributes of large stores and small ones, but overall preferring small stores. Some of the attributes refer to large box stores and some refer to smaller specialty stores and food cooperatives. I did a separate coding for store attributes for farmers markets and farm stands.

I recorded a total of 64 store attributes: 48 positive attributes, 15 negative attributes, and eight related to farmers markets or farm stands. One attribute, namely customer types, was referred to in both positive and negative terms. For example, Tonya described the customer types of two stores she frequents, “County Market seems more like the customer base is definitely students. Schnucks is where it's like families that actually go shopping.” For Tonya, the customer types that frequent the stores change her experience of shopping there, with her feeling more comfortable in Schnucks, even though her own lifestyle fits somewhere in the middle.

Table 8 shows all of the attributes mentioned by each participant, sorted from most mentioned to least. Three store attributes were stated by at least seven participants, while 32 attributes were described by only a single participant. This shows the wide variety of attributes, both positive and negative that grocery shoppers interact with and think about while shopping.

Table 8: Store attributes by participant

Store Attributes	Tonya	Jenna	Mabel	Joseph	Arturo	Michelle	Julius	Patsy	Leah	NR Total	Wilma	Lorraine	Katie	Glen	Henrietta	Gina	Alberta	R Total	Robin	Carole	CBR Total	All Total
+ Product selection										6								7			0	13
+ Low price										3								6			0	9
+ Samples										4								2			1	7
+ Educational programs										2								1			2	5
+ Ethnic foods										3								2			0	5
+ Beautiful presentation										1								2			1	4
+ Bulk items										2								1			1	4
+ Knowledgeable employees										1								3			0	4
+/-Customer types										2								1			1	4
- Poor presentation										3								0			0	3
- Self-checkout										2								1			0	3
+ Carries specific brand										1								2			0	3
+ Coupon app										3								0			0	3
+ Employees are fairly paid										1								1			1	3
+ FM-social*										2								1			0	3
+ Friendly employees										2								1			0	3
+ High end										1								2			0	3
+ Sales										2								0			1	3
+ Small size										1								1			1	3
- Décor										1								0			1	2
- Different values										2								0			0	2

Table 8 (continued)

Store Attributes	Tonya	Jenna	Mabel	Joseph	Arturo	Michelle	Julius	Patsy	Leah	NR Total	Wilma	Lorraine	Katie	Glen	Henrieta	Gina	Alberta	R Total	Robin	Carole	CBR Total	All Total
- Large size			■							1								0		■	1	2
- Lighting	■	■								2								0			0	2
- Too few employees								■		2								0			0	2
+ Community engagement		■	■							2								0			0	2
+ Consistency										0							■	1		■	1	2
+ Cooking demos						■		■		2								0			0	2
+ Donations					■			■		2								0			0	2
+ FM-direct to farmer*		■								1								0		■	1	2
+ FM-fresh food*										0	■							1	■		1	2
+ FM-selection*										0	■							1	■		1	2
+ Practical presentation			■		■					2								0			0	2
- Good presentation					■					1								0			0	1
- High end					■					1								0			0	1
- Large bulk items		■								1								0			0	1
- No information										0		■						1			0	1
- Not part of the community				■						1								0			0	1
- Sales gimmicks							■			1								0			0	1
- Sales on junk food		■								1								0			0	1
- Unhappy employees								■		1								0			0	1
+ 24 hours		■								1								0			0	1
+ Clearance									■	1								0			0	1
+ Community space										0								0		■	1	1
+ Décor								■		1								0			0	1

Table 8 (continued)

Store Attributes	Tonya	Jenna	Mabel	Joseph	Arturo	Michelle	Julius	Patsy	Leah	NR Total	Wilma	Lorraine	Katie	Glen	Henrietta	Gina	Alberta	R Total	Robin	Carole	CBR Total	All Total
+ Easy exchange										0	1							1			0	1
+ Efficiency			1							1								0			0	1
+ Familiarity										0				1				1			0	1
+ FM-local products*										0								0	1		1	1
+ FM-part of the community*		1								1								0			0	1
+ Fresh foods										0							1	1			0	1
+ Farm stand-local products										0					1			1			0	1
+ Farm stand-organic space										0					1			1			0	1
+ Health information tag								1		1								0			0	1
+ Local products				1						1								0			0	1
+ Organic		1								1								0			0	1
+ Part of the community					1					1								0			0	1
+ Personal connection							1			1								0			0	1
+ Recipes					1					1								0			0	1
+ Self-checkout					1					1								0			0	1
+ Shares values-healthy		1								1								0			0	1
+ Store flyer		1								1								0			0	1
+ Trust			1							1								0			0	1
+ Well organized						1				1								0			0	1
+ Wine tasting			1							1								0			0	1
Totals	4	19	12	5	13	8	5	12	5	83	8	7	8	4	6	6	4	43	7	10	17	143

* FM stands for Farmers Market

Other store attributes

Eight attributes were mentioned by more than one recreational shopper, with all of the shoppers describing the selection of products as a positive store attribute. Glen discussed throughout his interview his favorite local specialty store and its offerings.

Glen: It's always fun to go in there because they just have so much weird stuff you don't really see anywhere. It's just a really good experience. Especially for trying something new that isn't the cheapest thing in the world and could turn out to be really bad and a huge waste of money.

When describing more conventional stores many participants, including Lorraine, simply preferred the store that had the higher quality staples she used everyday.

Lorraine: Some I feel like offer a higher quality of produce, or the meat selection is better, or I feel like the deli appears fresher, or something like that. Basically, because some offer products that I want and others don't.

Low price was a positive store attribute mentioned by six of the recreational shoppers. Even if price was not the most important attribute, it was a consideration and participants would go to cheaper stores for a few items. Alberta explains that she shops differently for fresh produce and household items, shopping at one store for price and one for quality.

Alberta: Yes, they all have their characteristics. Wal-Mart is always the cheapest, but not so fresh for vegetables and foods. I think Meijer is quite suitable for me, both in the price and the quality.

Interviewer: Are there some things that you buy at Wal-Mart because they're cheaper?

Alberta: Yeah.

Interviewer: Then, there are other things you buy at Meijer because you're willing to pay more because it's a better quality?

Alberta: Yes, especially for fresh fruits and vegetables. For other things, like detergent or tissues or other non-food things, yeah.

This sentiment was also shared by Lorraine.

Lorraine: Sure. I think some stores are expensive, but then you're paying for the quality, and then I think some stores are cheap and it's cheap because the quality isn't that great. Each offer something that I like to take advantage of, so I'll go to the discount stores. I've even purchased canned goods and boxed food items from Big Lots before, because I'm in there and I'm like, "Oh, hey, they have the same gluten-free all-purpose flour mix here as they have at the grocery store and it's three bucks cheaper. I'm going to buy three bags of it here and it costs the same as buying a couple bags at the grocery store.

Recreational shoppers valued the presence of knowledgeable store employees. Wilma, Katie, and Glen have all previously been quoted discussing how knowledgeable employees made their grocery shopping experience creative and fun.

The not-recreational shoppers also viewed store selection and low price as important to their store selection and grocery shopping with six participants mentioning selection and three low price. Not-recreational shoppers varied in their mentions of store attributes, with four discussing their enjoyment of samples, three the options of ethnic food, three their dislike of poor presentation, and three their enjoyment of using a store's coupon app. Table 9 presents example quotations for each of these attributes.

Table 9: Store attributes

+ Samples	Julius: I enjoy the free food samples at Sam's on Fridays. If I happen to be at the store. But I won't plan a trip just to go to them. On the other hand, if I'm there anyway and they have free samples, I'll look and see if it's something I might like.
+ Ethnic Foods	Joseph: I will say, one thing that I find interesting with all the grocery stores, their idea of, maybe 12-15 years ago their idea of foreign foods might be Kikkoman soy sauce or something like that. Now you find a whole array of stuff, which is kind of nice.
- Poor Presentation	Arturo: It felt dingy. It felt a little gross. It felt a little sad, I guess. It felt like things weren't being maintained; they weren't being taken care of there but not in a deliberate way.
+ Coupon App	Michelle: And then the coupons, we shop at Meijer mostly, and they have this really cool phone app that allows you to just scroll through what you need, so you can type in like shampoo, and then all the coupons for shampoo will show up, and so that kind of tailors our ... Instead of getting the shampoo I always get, I might get the shampoo that's buy one get one free instead.

Creative Research Question 3 – Discussion

The present study found 64 unique store attributes described by participants. Overall, the store attributes that all of the participants seemed to enjoy matched up with the other findings of this study. Although most of the participants were interested in a store's product selection and price, the recreational shoppers seemed more interested in knowledgeable employees. Information resources in the store are found to stand out as important to recreational shoppers who want to engage in information seeking as part of their recreational shopping (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). Presentation also came up for several shoppers, with good presentation as a plus and bad presentation a minus. Other studies have argued for retailers to use “a mix of artistry, showmanship, and creative merchandising” (p. 92) or attractive settings (Jansen-Verbeke, 1987) to draw recreational shoppers to department stores and shopping malls, but the current findings

suggest that these tools can and should be used by grocery stores trying to attract recreational shoppers.

The sheer amount of store attributes identified in the present study highlight the complexity of the grocery store. Grocery stores are no longer simply places where shoppers buy their groceries, they are becoming community spaces where shoppers go to learn and be inspired.

CREATIVE PERSONA CONCLUSION

The creative persona, as defined in this study, does exist in the grocery store. Several participants described enacting the creative persona while engaging in the leisurely activity of grocery shopping. Not all grocery shopping for these participants was leisurely, but when it was they were more likely to experience creativity in the grocery store. In this study, I showed how the obligation of grocery shopping could be leisurely for some grocery shoppers and that leisure could lead to creativity. Glen provides the clearest example of the relationship between leisure and creativity when he describes how his Saturday morning shopping trips are the most fun shopping trips and the most inspiring. Consumption in the grocery store for Glen, and for all of the recreational shoppers, was an active and creative endeavor—one that was not without constraints or limitations, but which allowed the individual shoppers to express themselves through their consumption.

The findings not only present the existence of a creative persona in grocery shoppers, it also suggests the presence of other personas, including most clearly the economic persona.¹⁸ Even among participants who described themselves as food lovers, the importance of price and value was prevalent.

¹⁸ For further discussion of the economic person, see Appendix D.

This study demonstrates how the grocery store can inspire shoppers by providing an enjoyable grocery shopping experience. The findings of this study can help both consumers and retailers understand grocery shopping in a new way. For many of the participants, thinking of the grocery store as a creative space or a place for leisure was a new concept, even though many described it as such. By highlighting the store attributes that recreational shoppers enjoy as well as providing more information about grocery items, stores can help shoppers enact the creative persona.

The present study has also shown how grocery shopping is an information-rich and complex activity. The shoppers consistently discovered new information, sought out knowledgeable store employees, and had their experience limited by the anxiety of too much information. Although the word 'information' itself came up rarely in the participants interviews, the shoppers were constantly describing learning, exploring, looking, asking, searching, and finding information in many forms, including physical food items. Just as Hartel (2011) found intense information work being done by gourmet cooking hobbyists, I found similar work occurring away from traditional documents and information sources, and instead in the grocery store. The participants demonstrated time and time again that the grocery store is as information-rich as any library or database. Perhaps because the shelves are filled with food and not books, information studies scholars have overlooked the grocery store and other everyday spaces, even though far more people visit the grocery store than the library. The present study shows that the grocery store is an everyday space that can be fruitful for research on information and information behavior.

SECTION C: INFORMATION BEHAVIOR PERSPECTIVE

Chapter 4: Information Behavior of Grocery Shopping

One aim of this dissertation is to highlight the rich research environment of the grocery store to scholars of EIB. It is an ideal place for EIB research in as much as it is a public space that most people frequent regularly and that contains immense amounts of information in and around it. The grocery store is a place where “people are trying to solve problems in their lives, not ‘seek information,’” making it an ideal place to explore information behavior in the everyday (Bates, 2009, p. 2386). Although research into shopping for major purchases is not a new topic in the IB field, no empirical study has addressed the information behaviors of routine purchases made in the grocery store (Case, 2012). Yet, historically, information behaviors permeate the grocery store (Wimberly & McClean, 2012). The present work supports this observation and adds to it by demonstrating the prevalence of IB concepts in the descriptions of grocery shopping by real grocery shoppers. These concepts allow scholars to explain a great deal of how individuals navigate a particular information environment, but the other perspectives uncover additional aspects of the everyday activity, grocery shopping. This chapter will show how the behavioral aspects of information behavior play out in the process of grocery shopping.

As described in the nurturer and creative persona studies, grocery shopping is a multifaceted activity that occurs in the complex and unpredictable environment of the grocery store. Klein (2009), a leader in the field of decision-making research, has argued that many of the traditional beliefs around decision making fail when they occur in complex and unpredictable environments. Klein describes these environments as,

A world of shadows where we don't know all the causes or how they work, we can't pin down all the knowledge we need in order to be successful, and we aren't sure we understand the goals.

Complex domains aren't as structured or stable as well-ordered ones. These situations may change rapidly and unexpectedly. We have to keep track of more factors, and they link to each other in lots of different ways. We may also have the feeling that we don't know some of the important linkages. We aren't entirely sure what causes events to happen. We can't make good predictions about what will happen next. And we rely a lot on stories and examples instead of rules. (p. 10)

Klein uses examples of famous aircraft emergency landings to illustrate complex and unpredictable environments. The remarks of the participants show that the grocery store is also an example of a similar, although safer environment. Grocery stores are consistently changing, with new products coming in, old products being relocated, and prices changing. Many of the participants described a variety of motivations and goals within their grocery shopping that conflict and lead to frustration. Participants described the sheer volume of products and product attributes as overwhelming. They described confusion over what foods are healthy and what products are most affordable. The grocery store as described by the participants is a complex and unpredictable environment in which information is changing and decision making rarely follows well-informed rules.

Shoppers are influenced by the context of their grocery shopping as well as their goals and feelings toward the store. In this chapter, I will return to the empirical data we described in the earlier chapters and present some new data in order to highlight the prevalence of traditional information behavior concepts in the grocery store. This chapter consists of eight sections focused on information behavior concepts identified in the data from both empirical persona studies. Each section begins with a brief description of the concept followed by several illustrative examples selected from my empirical data.¹⁹ The

¹⁹ Several of the quotations contain descriptions of multiple IB concepts and are not only representative of the section they appear in.

IB concepts that are discussed include seeking, uncertainty, decision making, information overload, sharing, passive information behaviors, sources, and related concepts of information use.²⁰ I selected these concepts because they are foundational concepts in EIB and IB that many other models and theories have been built upon.²¹ I draw this conclusion based on my experience with the IB and EIB research literature, especially Case's (2012) book, *Looking for Information*.

SEEKING

The most commonly discussed topic in IB is information seeking (Case, 2012). Information seeking is defined as “a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge” (p. 5). Some important attributes of information seeking are that it is both active and purposeful. (Passive and accidental information encountering are also a part of IB literature and will be discussed below.) Wilson (1999), one of the leading scholars in the IB field, created a nested model of information behavior that describes information-seeking behavior as a subset of information behavior, highlighting the relationship between these two closely tied areas.

At least one study has addressed information seeking in the grocery store in an historic context. Wimberly and McClean (2012) traced the history of the grocery store with a focus on IB concepts and found that “throughout the twentieth century, multiple information-seeking processes occurred in the information-rich environment of supermarkets. Shoppers sought answers to questions, gathered and stored information

²⁰ My presentation of analysis and my focus on breaking down larger information behaviors into smaller activities is similar to Palmer, Teffeu, and Pirmann's (2009) work on scholarly primitives. While I do not directly address this work in my analysis, future work may want to investigate if everyday primitives can be addressed in a similar manner as scholarly primitives.

²¹ Other theories and concepts may have also been used to explore the information behaviors of grocery shoppers, but I limited my analysis to these eight because additional analysis would have moved the focus toward grocery shopping and away from the goal of this dissertation to enhance the EIB field.

from diverse sources, and acquired information thrust upon them” (p. 189). Most of the research on the information seeking of grocery shoppers and consumers more broadly comes from the marketing literature. The role of the grocery shopper has not been the focus of IB scholars in an empirical context until this work.

In both the nurturer persona and creative persona studies, participants described a variety of information seeking behaviors related to their grocery shopping both in and out of the store. A few topics that multiple participants looked into include nutrition, product information, recipes, sales, and store selection. In addition to these topics of information seeking, one form of seeking was very prevalent among creative persona study participants, namely talking to store employees.

Nutrition was an important aspect of grocery shopping for many of the participants. As was described in Chapter 3, the importance of eating well was a common theme throughout the nurturer persona study participant’s interviews. One participant, Tim, shared his information seeking about nutrition and its unique origins in research on his dog’s nutritional needs. After realizing that he was also unaware of his own nutritional needs, he embarked on a well-studied type of information seeking and went to the library to learn about nutrition. He explained in his interview,

Tim: I realized I didn't know what a vitamin was and I didn't know anything about ... I knew how to read labels, but I didn't know what any of it actually meant. I knew what was good and what was bad, but I didn't know what any of it did. I got curious so I went to the library. [...]The nutrition section is ridiculous. It's huge and it's all fad diets. It's actually difficult to find a book on legitimate nutrition. You'd probably do better in anatomy or something like that, but the nutrition section is just as bad as the check out aisle at a grocery store.

Although Tim was unhappy with the information he found at the library, his description shows his active and purposeful information seeking. The only other participant to also

mention going to the library, Joseph, a creative persona study participant, read cooking magazines at his local library. Rudy shared in his interview, that researching nutrition has become a regular activity.

Rudy: I try to research things that I eat and the best to get, so.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that? The research that you do. Is that a regular activity?

Rudy: It is. It has become as a ... I'll say about a year ago. It has become a more regular thing. I would say that I research ... MSG or specific ingredients I can't even explain. I'm sorry if I can't spell it or say it correctly, I try to look it up basically you know. If I can pronounce it and I know what it is then I probably ... not a big deal but I tend to try to make sure that the list number one isn't too long and number two, that I can find out what those ingredients are and what they do exactly.

Rudy also said in his interviews that he looks for information about the food he buys in scientific journals, *Bon Appetite*, and nutrition websites such as MyPlate.

Participants also described seeking information about other attributes of the products they buy in the grocery store. Mabel described in her interview that the more she learns about the food industry, the more she is unsure about the labels on products in the store.

Mabel: Also organic, especially after reading *Omnivore's Dilemma*, I realize that organic also doesn't really mean that the animal's treated fairly. I don't really care too much about animal welfare, but I also don't want to eat a chicken that's been sitting in its own poop because that's gross. I know that a chicken that's been sitting in its own poop eating organic feed could be labeled organic. I usually don't just take organic or all natural at face value. I usually try to do a little bit of research about the company so that's why it's a lot easier if I know the farm or have been to the farm where it's made.

Researching products in the grocery store was also described by several of the parents in the nurturer persona study. Marcella shared her recurring information seeking around products for her young child.

Interviewer: When you had your baby did you do any research on how to shop differently, how to shop for a baby?

Marcella: Oh yeah, of course I researched a lot of brands. The products and brands for baby. I compare them. I mean the clothing brands, the toy brands, and all those things for baby. I did a lot of research, and maybe a little bit too much if I look back today. Even today, for example, when I buy sunscreen for my child I would also do some research.

Marcella described several different instances of information seeking in her interview. She described how she uses her cell phone to look up products in the store.

Marcella: When I'm not sure about certain products I will immediately check my cell phone in the grocery store to look for whether it is. For example, a few weeks ago I wanted to buy some cheese, but there is a lot of varieties of cheese, and I'm not familiar with that. Which cheese goes well what kind of dishes, or what kind of food. When I was there I just look up on my phone and say, "Okay this is cheddar." Then look for cheddar. What is that good for, and I think that helps.

Carole also described looking up recipes in the store.

Carole: Occasionally I look up recipes right in the store, just thinking of what I want to make, or what ingredients I need. If I feel inspired by a certain thing I see that I want to make then I'll look up how to make it.

Several participants, from both studies, described looking up recipes as a common and regularly occurring information-seeking habit. Dora said, "I don't usually do the same recipes. I always look for new ones every week."

In the store, information seeking also includes looking at sale prices or the clearance section. Ten participants in the creative persona study described checking for

sales as a shopping habit or routine. Robin's description of her shopping habit was similar to many of the other participants.

Robin: For one, I tend to check out the clearance deals. Well, maybe clearance is the wrong word, but the orange sticker deals in Schnucks in the meat case. Sometimes I can find a cut of meat I can chop up for stir fry and jerky later for relatively cheap. I try to bring a list, but I'll leave four lines or so on there saying, "You can toss in this many items that aren't on the list." Definitely I bring coupons, use them when applicable, and I try to stock up on things I use a lot of, just to make sure that if I get sick and can't go shopping for a week, I'm not going to run out instantly. I, also, tend to look in the clearance carts or racks, if there are any, for stuff I'm actually going to eat.

Robin was just one of many participants who described looking for price information in the store. Additional examples of searching for price information are discussed below in the decision making section on price comparison.

While several participants looked for information in the grocery store, only one actively searched for the grocery store itself. Katie explained in her interview that after moving she researched the local grocery stores to find out which one carried one of her favorite brands.

Katie: The reason I like Meijer is because they sell Siggi's, now that I think about it, that's why I started coming to Meijer 's because I looked online at all the grocery stores around here to see which one would sell Siggi's and this is one of the only stores who had it last year. That's why I started coming here. [...] I called stores and they had it.

Katie's description, like the other examples presented in this section, show the variety of forms of information seeking that the grocery shoppers in both studies described. The various topics also highlight the range of issues related to grocery shopping that shoppers may be interested in.

Finally, talking to store employees was a prevalent form of information seeking in the creative persona study. Several participants described learning from knowledgeable employees in the grocery store. Among the creative persona study participants, 12 either described talking to employees or were observed doing so. The interactions ranged from asking for the location of an item to discussions about recipes. In their interviews, both Wilma and Joseph described how information seeking was a reason they shopped at certain stores. When I asked Wilma if she felt differently about different stores she explained,

Wilma: Yeah. I go to other stores for different reasons normally. Farmer's market is if I need some like fresh fruits or if I want to try a new kind of vegetables or things that I didn't know so that I can like get some information from the vendor so I go for that.

I asked Joseph if he had a favorite department in the store and he responded,

Joseph: I have to admit I like going to the deli counter. I may not buy a lot there, but I always like to look at their cheeses, because that's where you find the good cheese.

Interviewer: Do you usually talk to people that are working there or-

Joseph: Oh yeah. Well known to the deli staff.

Interviewer: What do you just ask them what it is?

Joseph: I just ask them if they could tell me a little bit about it, and usually they can. Particularly with something I'm unfamiliar with. It took me a little while to adjust to something like goat cheese, because I could see where that's an acquired taste. As they say, some of those cheeses, they have the gift of movement in them.

Knowledgeable employees can help shoppers explore new ingredients and turn the grocery store into an interactive learning environment. This makes seeking information easier and more enjoyable for shoppers.

The grocery shoppers in both empirical studies were frequent information seekers, both in and out of the grocery store. The variety of topics investigated and forms of information seeking used indicate how much information there is to explore around grocery shopping. This finding shows that not only large purchases send shoppers searching for information to make decisions.

UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty is a key IB concept related to information seeking. “Information seeking research draws attention to the uncertainty in the experiences of the searcher.” (Anderson 2009, p. 5285). It is defined as “the condition of not having certain knowledge or of not knowing beyond a doubt” (Case, 2012, p. 391). Historically, information seeking was described in the scholarly literature as being motivated by reducing uncertainty. More recent research has altered this perspective somewhat, suggesting that while information seeking is often motivated by reducing uncertainty “in some situations, information seeking can actually increase uncertainty” as new information can challenge and even overwhelm a seeker (Anderson, 2009, p. 5288; Kuhlthau, 2009).

The grocery store is a place with an immense variety of information that shoppers must sort through in order to make a purchase decision. Several participants in both studies described their uncertainty in the grocery store. Like uncertainty in other information domains, uncertainty in the grocery store centered around different problems for different shoppers. Some participants described uncertainty in selecting a specific product when faced with a plethora of brands and varieties. Michelle, a recent primary grocery shopper, explained in her interview why she prefers to shop at off hours in the grocery store, giving a recent example of her problems making decisions.

Michelle: I remember the last time we went, we were trying to buy mustard, and I looked at mustard for probably 20 minutes, deciding [between] honey mustard, Dijon mustard, regular mustard, the off brand mustard, which costs 90 cents less.

Michelle's uncertainty about buying the best option has clearly affected her grocery shopping to the point that she chooses her shopping trips around being able to spend 20 minutes shopping for mustard. I was able to observe Wilma deal with uncertainty during her shopping observation, when she spent several minutes selecting toilet paper to buy.

Wilma: I need to buy some toilet paper. For me toilet paper is the hardest thing to choose.

Interviewer: Why?

Wilma: I don't know what to choose it's like all the same. The price is quite expensive actually of toilet paper. [...]

Interviewer: You don't have a normal brand?

Wilma: No. That's the thing too, I try to memorize what I liked but I just forget all the time. Every time I buy it's like this looks good and I buy it. I have some.

Interviewer: What are you looking at?

Wilma: I don't like the soft brands I want something that's ultra strong or something. Thinking either I should buy, whether I should buy just a double size or a triple size or something like that.

Interviewer: Depending on how much you have is going to determine how much you should buy?

Wilma: Mm-hmm. The thing is I just realized recently these are not ... price is not that different. This is just twice the size of this one but the price is not that different so I may just buy smaller one, see if I like it or not... I'm just going to buy it next time more. I feel like even though I think more time, spend more time to think, I think it's always the same. Unless they have a really good sale price....I don't think there is today.

Interviewer: What is that?

Wilma: That one is I guess buy one get one free. These are... I think these are all out.

Interviewer: The sale item isn't here anymore?

Wilma: I don't think so. It says six double rolls but it's all twelve rolls so I think they're all out.

This incident shows the several levels of complexity of a grocery purchase that are impacted by uncertainty. Wilma is dealing with choosing among brands, varieties, prices and sizes as well as the presence of a sale tag that adds additional information to what Wilma described as the “hardest” choice she makes in the store. Wilma is unsure how to evaluate the different attributes of the toilet paper and clearly does not enjoy the selection process.

Selecting a product can also become more complicated when the shopper is uncertain about how to interpret the various types of information that accompany each grocery item. Katie, a nutrition-conscious participant, shared her uncertainty around selecting the healthiest version of her grocery items.

Katie: The other day I just Googled what are the healthiest granolas to see if, even though I stood there and compared them for 15 minutes I am wondering if, I think I was in Target when I did that so again the selection is limited to like the main brands I think that most people want but I would be happy to spend a little more and buy it from a specialty grocery store but I just wanted to find out which brand would be the best to choose. I searched online for that a lot but again it was really hard to compare how many cups and the serving size.

Katie is uncertain about the healthiest granola in part based on her uncertainty of how to interpret the nutritional information that is reported via various serving sizes. Grace described her confusion over labels, as well, in her interview when I asked her about shopping for organic products.

Grace: Typically it will be produce, but not everything. Again, we do consider price. I just started buying organic romaine lettuce, and I can tell ... To me, in the grocery store it just looks fresher, it tastes fresher. That's one thing now that we look at organic. Stuff ... I don't know if it's technically organic, because I don't know all the labels, but like natural peanut butter, that kind of stuff we'll try and get.

Grace is not certain what the labels mean and how to identify organic items, even though she described in her interview a preference for buying them. Several participants also discussed confusion over the meaning and benefits of organic grocery items in the nurturer persona study, with the clearest articulation coming from Ramona.

Ramona: I guess one of my biggest questions about grocery shopping is what difference does it make between organic and regular food as we call it? Other than the prices who has honestly done the work to say, "Hey, this is better for you because of this, this, this." This is better for you. Proven to be better for you because of this, this, this. We know a lot about organic foods don't have the hormones in it that normal foods have. Honestly you're going to tell me they have no hormones at all? Are you going to say they have less hormones than this one? Who gets to ... other than the USDA of course, who gets to deem that these foods are better for you? Or that more than likely food that we've been eating for generations are going to one day kill us faster than organic food? All of it is still processed. It's been processed by somebody somewhere. It didn't just jump on a package and say I'm going to go jump on a shelf so somebody can buy me.

Honestly I question how much better organic is for you than regular food. Even though I do buy into a lot of the organic schemes and catches or whatever is popular. But at the same time, I sometimes question about it because even I know for one time I was on this hook of organic soda but it's made with cane sugar. Well isn't cane sugar what Coca Cola was first made out of and then you decided to switch to regular sugar. So what are we solving there? It doesn't seem like you solve anything. We're just stuck in this circle going back and forth, back and forth between what may be better and what is just here.

Ramona's uncertainty stems from a lack of evidence supporting the claim that organic food is healthier. She is not alone in her uncertainty, but her financial constraints make it more difficult for her to justify the added expense of organic items.

A lack of information about organic items created uncertainty when it came to their value and price. As was discussed in the nurturer persona study, organic items are typically more expensive than their conventionally produced versions. Several participants, including Faye, were conflicted by wanting to purchase organic but not to overspend. When asked if there were any items she always buys the organic version, she replied,

Faye: There are ... I don't know that I want to say it's largely based on price but maybe just carrots always organic. [...] They're pretty close to ... I don't know, maybe I'm just delusional and I'm like. In my mind, they're organic and non[organic] are very comparable in price. I'm like, eh. Mentally I can justify those. Then whatever is seasonal and on sale, I guess carrots and onions and not always garlic. Carrots and onions primarily.

Faye's use of the term "delusional" demonstrates not only her uncertainty about her belief that the organic carrots she buys is only slightly more expensive, it also highlights how uncertainty can be used by shoppers to justify their choices. It would be very difficult and time consuming to truly be informed about all of the attributes that make one grocery item preferable to another. Not knowing the exact price difference of organic and conventional carrots allow Faye to more easily decide on her purchase.

Grocery shoppers experience considerable uncertainty. For some, it makes selecting a product a long and arduous task, while others do not seem to be impacted by it as much. At least one participant used uncertainty as a factor to help justify her choice of more expensive organic items. Like most grocery shoppers, none of the participants were experts on all of the different attributes of the grocery store items they regularly purchase, leading to the presence of uncertainty in their information seeking and decision making.

DECISION MAKING

Both of the previous IB concepts are intertwined, in the research literature and real world with decision making, a unique IB concept that has its own research literature in addition to a strong presence in the field of information studies. Decision making is defined as “evaluating and choosing among alternative actions to take in response to a perceived problem” (Case, 2012, p. 383). Information seeking is often a part of decision making as more information is sought to make an informed selection of one alternative over another. Information seeking or more information does not always aid in decision making. Klein (2009) argues that decisions come in two forms: puzzles and mysteries. Puzzles are solved with more information, a missing piece; while mysteries require additional analysis of the information that is already known. Decision making in the grocery store, as described by participants, is generally more of a mystery than a puzzle. Many of the examples already presented in this chapter show shoppers engaged in decision making or doing preliminary research for a future decision. In some ways, grocery shopping is more clearly linked with decision making than any other IB concept in that all purchases are decisions. In this section, I present examples of decision making in and out of the grocery store and discuss two prevalent forms of decision making that emerged from the data: price and nutrition comparison.

A literature review article by Lioutas (2014) describes several studies on food or the grocery store have addressed decision making and their findings inform the present work. The complexity of decision making was highlighted by Steptoe, Pollard, and Wardle (1995) in their article on food choice. They found nine factors (health, mood, convenience, sensory appeal, natural content, price, weight control, familiarity and ethical concern) that influence food selection. Park, Iyer, and Smith (1989) found strong evidence that some unplanned buying decision are triggered by in-store information.

Hoyer (1984) found that most of the decision-making processes for detergent occur outside of the grocery store—a finding that likely applies to similar products. These studies point to key aspects of decision making that emerged during participants’ interviews and observations.

During the observation portion of the creative persona study, I was able to record the decision-making process of several shoppers as they evaluated and selected among some of the nine attributes that Steptoe et al. (1995) identified. One illustrative example occurred during Lorraine’s observation as she decided which types of meat to purchase for two weeks’ worth of meals. The excerpt begins with Lorraine looking through the meat cooler.

Lorraine: I've never seen this sale thing before. Mix and match, when you buy three or more selected items with an orange dot per package. Doesn't seem too bad. I'd go for that. So, I needed some chicken breasts. I wrote “big”. What does that mean? That's for tonight. And for next week. So we'll go for tonight and for next week which will be the packages and ... Actually I might get one more because next week it's coconut chicken tenders and if it's already cut then that saves time. And I'll just have an extra chicken to put in the freezer. So that's that chicken. My husband is off this weekend, so he'll take the whole ... I think I put it on Saturday. Friday. He'll take the whole chicken and cut it up and put it on the grill. He does the grilling. All right, beef.

Interviewer: What are you looking for?

Lorraine: So, we're going to have beef fajitas tomorrow night. We'll put a ton of veggies in it, so I'm just trying to figure out what beef I want to get that I can cut into strips that would cook quick with the veggies. This would be my preferred, but I usually get it from [Dan], the meat man. Or I get it from the Mexican grocery store and they have this machine that will tenderize it and they put it through and it's so thin. You can almost see through it. It's awesome. So when it cooks, it gets crispy on the edges. Oh, that's good stuff. I don't know what kind to get. I think I'm going to go with this.

Interviewer: So, your decision is being driven by how you are going to use it.

Lorraine: Yep. This had just slightly more marbling in it, a little more fatty. That's probably not the best way to cook it, but I figured it would caramelize a little better on the edges. I need some ground beef and ground pork. This orange dot again. Three or more pay five dollars each. Although I kind of want the sirloin, but it doesn't have a dot. But it's under five dollars anyway.

Interviewer: Why do you prefer that?

Lorraine: I don't know, the word "sirloin"?

Interviewer: Sounds better?

Lorraine: And then for ground beef, I don't want it too extra lean, because I don't want it to be dry. But that's the only one with the orange dots. But I did need pork. So, there's my pork, just plain. I need one more. I'll do chicken instead of the pork for my other package.

Interviewer: So, what made you decide to get the ground chicken?

Lorraine: Because there was another ground pork up there, but I was trying to stay around the five dollar per package mark, and that one was \$6.20 for some reason. A little bit more bulk. Just over a pound. I usually shoot for about a pound packages since that's what we're used to cooking. Most of my recipes, like for the spaghetti squash bake, which I'll make Wednesday, I'll use the chicken for it and a little bit of ground beef together. I need one more package of ground beef.

Lorraine is evaluating at least four of the nine Steptoe et al. (1995) attributes considering the price with and without the sale, the sensory appeal with the marbling, the convenience with pre-cut chicken, and the familiarity of the sirloin. Her decision making is also driven by the way she will use the different meats in her cooking and the different locations she buys meat from. All of the attributes of the meat complicate and help Lorraine decide what to buy. Discovering the orange dot sale also triggered Lorraine into buying some versions of meat that were not on her list, aligning with Park et al.'s (1989) findings on unplanned purchases.

Although I did not observe participants in the nurturer study during their grocery shopping, several shared their decision-making rationale. Faye explains how she approaches grocery shopping in terms of price and nutrition.

Interviewer: Is there a way you try to shop?

Faye: Yes, most of the time, not all the time. Most of the time I try to ... My mom taught me this game, to get the most nutrition for the least amount of money. Beans and rice would be a pretty good example of will this be satisfying? How many meals will this serve, and how expensive is it? Another layer of that is am I okay, does this help support my values and ethics and where I want to spend my consumer power?

Faye's decision making considers price, health, and ethical concerns. Marcella also shared her grocery shopping decision making.

Marcella: First of all, it's the need. Yeah, the items that I must buy for my daily life. I think this is the greatest factor. The second may be price, but I think this less influential than the first one. Yeah, when I have the similar items available, then I may compare the functions, the brands, and their prices, and maybe even just their package, which is more appealing.

Marcella described the function of her grocery purchases as well as price, familiarity, and sensory appeal as guiding her grocery shopping.

A few participants also described how they decide on their groceries before entering the store. Later in this chapter, I will also discuss the planning process of several participants. Jerry shared that he uses store flyers and meal planning as guiding his in-store decision making.

Interviewer: You mentioned a budget. Do you do anything, like is there any sort of process that you go through to make sure you're staying within the budget or do you have any process for grocery shopping?

Jerry: Like I said, sometimes, I will look at a flyer but it's only at Central Market because the prices are just a little bit more, can be a little bit higher there. Other

than that, I don't really do any preparation, except, I guess, mentally, I'll kind of think of like one or two meals that we'll make for the week that will kind of last us for at least five nights, like Sunday through ... I guess six nights, Sunday through Thursday, five nights. Planning that out in my head, and then ... As far a budget, just kind of scrutinizing things I'm buying and just trying to not indulge in things that are expensive or not buy too much stuff and just kind of hope that it falls within our budget. It's usually in the general vicinity of it.

Jerry, like most of the participants, did not only make grocery-shopping decisions in one location or based on one factor.

While some participants were more driven by price or health, all described some variations in how they decide what to buy. Even Robin and Santiago, the most price conscious shoppers in each study, chose health, taste, and quality over price sometime. Decision making in and out of the grocery can be difficult as shoppers try to make the best decision and weigh all of the attributes that are important to them.

Price comparison

Price is a key attribute used in making purchase decisions in the grocery store. During the observations of the creative persona study, I observed many participants compare prices throughout the grocery store. The following examples show the many ways price is considered and highlight a common decision-making form in the grocery store. Shoppers compare prices for financial reasons as well as out of habit—and for social returns when their price saving is shared with others (Urbany, Dickson, & Kalapurakal, 1996). The habit of comparison shopping was described by several participants in the creative persona study.

Mabel was focused in her grocery shopping on getting a good deal, more on principle than need. She explained in her interview, “I make more money now than I used to. Just out of principle, if I can get the same thing, same brand, same ingredients, same everything somewhere else for cheaper, then I'm going to go to the other place.” I

observed Mabel comparing prices between the three grocery stores where she usually shops. She compared prices for butter, toilet paper, milk, canned tomatoes, shredded cheese, almond milk, dishwasher soap, coffee filters, tortillas, and peanut butter. When she was choosing butter, she vocalized her price comparison.

Interviewer: You know the price that you usually pay?

Mabel: Yeah, it's like \$2.20 at Aldi. It's \$2.90 here, so it's like 50 cents more. Yeah, but I'll just get one. At Aldi I would have stocked up. I might need to make a pie, you never know. Okay butter and tomato paste. I'm not getting almond milk.

Interviewer: Why not?

Mabel: Aldi has really good prices on soy milk and almond milk. It's also something like \$2.20 for ... They have organic soy milk for \$2.20. It's like the same quality as what you would get here or even at a really nice store like the co-op or whatever.

She also explained in her interview how she keeps track of the prices from several products at different stores.

Mabel: I don't keep a price book. I know some people do that, but I pay a lot of attention to prices. When the price of butter goes up and I'm used to paying \$2.25 for it at a certain place and it goes up there, I will pay attention to how much it is at other locations. I always keep a mental book for it. I do know some people write them down.

Mabel was not the only participant who was highly price conscious. Julius also shared his price comparison knowledge during his interview.

Julius: I'm always checking the prices. I tend to buy ... If the price is lower somewhere, I might buy there next time, but I won't always know that on this trip. One example, all last year, milk was \$1.49 a gallon at Aldi, they were having a price war with Ruler foods. And eggs were 49 cents a dozen. And that's been more than a year. With the egg shortage, they've had to change that a little bit, but it always interests me that just over at Meijer, you can see people paying two and a half dollars a dozen for eggs when they could just drive over there, it takes five

minutes, but that's not their habit I guess. My routine has a lot to do with the price.

During Robin's observation she compared prices on fruit cups, some of which were on sale, while also comparing the value of using a coupon she brought to the store.

Robin: Take a look at the relative costs of store brand, \$2.30 versus, they seem to be running a sale on that particular Dole brand. And, I have a couple of coupons. So, I need to find a package of fruit bowls, each of these, that's packed in no sugar added.

Interviewer: And where did those come from?

Robin: Those came from mailers that I occasionally find in my mailbox. They are available. Marketing in this case would work on me, because even though these are slightly more expensive than the store brand with the coupon ... Oh, wait.

Interviewer: With the coupon they're cheaper.

Robin: With the coupon they are much cheaper.

In this excerpt Robin is evaluating the different prices on the price tags with the coupon and calculating the best deal.

All of these price comparisons are a form of decision making that are based largely on the price attribute. Focusing on price may make decision making easier, but the above examples show how much knowledge and time price comparison can require. The shoppers have to evaluate the prices at different stores with different sales and coupons—all complicating what seems like a straightforward method to make purchase decisions.

Nutrition comparison

In addition to price comparisons, I observed four creative persona study participants compare nutrition in the grocery store. Studies from several fields have explored how individuals use nutritional information when selecting food items in the

grocery store and other places. A critical review of the nutrition-labeling literature performed by marketing scholars has found that the importance that someone places on nutrition “seems to explain a lot in terms of who is motivated to process [nutritional] information” (Hieke & Taylor, 2012, p. 143). A systematic review of nutrition labeling performed by public health scholars found “most [consumers] appear able to retrieve simple information and make simple calculations and comparisons between products using numerical information, but their ability to interpret the nutrition label accurately reduces as the complexity of the task increases,” suggesting that comparing across items with different serving sizes is more difficult (Cowburn & Stockley, 2005, p. 26). All of the participants who were observed engaging in nutrition comparison discussed being a healthy eater or shopping for a health concern.

Early in Katie’s shopping observation, she wanted to compare brands of pretzels for their sodium content. She and her roommate bought different brands, and she wanted to compare them in the store to decide which one to buy on this trip. She found the pretzels she usually buys early in the shopping trip and found her roommate’s preferred brand near the end.

Katie: You see those pretzel crisps she, [another shopper], has are the pretzels my roommate eats. Which makes sense because that's where we originally found them was next to the hummus. It's still buy one get one free which is what it was last time. I'll probably get these just because I know she'll like them. Yeah, the serving size is, oh okay the serving size on these two things is the same, so wow that's a miracle. These have some fat in them, they have less sodium, same amount of protein, they have twice the sugar, so they're pretty much the same. One has more calories, so we got these last time and they were pretty good, so I'm going to get them again.

Katie compares multiple nutritional attributes of the pretzels before making her purchase decision. She was also pleased to see the products had the same serving size, making it

easier to compare. As described above in the decision making section, Katie finds it difficult to compare the nutritional information of similar products when they do not have the same serving size. Because the serving sizes were the same, Katie was able to make a straightforward comparison.

During his shopping observation, Julius compared the sodium content of several brands and types of bacon. He informed me that he tries to buy low-sodium foods because his wife has a sodium-related health concern.

Interviewer: What are you looking at?

Julius: Low-sodium bacon. I don't care how much sodium's in there, but [my wife] sure does, so ...

Interviewer: Is that on the list, or ...

Julius: It's not on the list, but it should have been. 10 percent fat, 9 percent fat, but that's not what I'm going for. I'm looking for sodium. That one is 10 percent sodium, 17 percent sodium, hmm ... There is an uncured bacon at Aldi that's not too bad, and they had ... sometimes they'll label it low sodium, sometimes they won't. 25 percent more bacon! Yeah, than what? Natural choice, no preservatives, 100 percent natural. That's not natural? Okay. I just think that's funny. I'm old enough to remember what organic used to mean, organic matter. Okay, let's see. 8 percent. I didn't know they were putting sodium as a percentage, well. Jalapeno, eh, I might could have some of that[..]. Hmm. 17 percent. This will set me back on time, but I guess I don't care. I mean what do old people really have besides time, right? See, this one is actually 16 percent sodium, but it's not cured like a lot of the other stuff there.

Interviewer: You don't have a normal bacon you buy?

Julius: Well, the problem is that stuff comes and goes so much ... 10 percent, that's the best one so far. This is going back, and it looks nice, and it's supposed to be original, whatever that means. Original bacon. Must be really old. It came over on the ark with Noah.

Julius went back and forth reading each type of bacon's nutrition panel. Although he shops for low-sodium products often, he was surprised by how the sodium content was presented and was unsure which of the several brands and varieties of bacon had the lowest sodium content. He also tried making the process quicker by selecting the "all natural" brand. A similar tactic was observed when Lorraine was seeking a healthy pre-made tomato sauce.

Lorraine: All right, now we need spaghetti sauce so I don't have to make my own this week. But I don't like a bunch of junk in it, especially sugar, so, now starts the process of reading all of the labels. Because I can never remember the kind that I got the time before. Usually when I get it, I'll get a couple. I'll keep it in the pantry and I don't really pay attention to the label. Which I should. ... Nope. "Sweetened, tasty tomato." Nope. Come on Human Zone, you're not the winner either. All right. I doubt any of those would have it (participant points to another shelf of tomato sauces).

Interviewer: Why?

Lorraine: Because they're big brands.

Interviewer: So you think something smaller or natural?

Lorraine: But sugar is natural, I just don't necessarily want to have it in there if I can help it. We get it from so many other places and there's already going to be sugar in the fruits and vegetables they put here anyway. I think we have a winner. Do I want garlic? I think we're going to stick with tomato and basil. I'll buy one more because I found one and it'll save me time. My sister has a great recipe for tomato sauce, but it takes a long time. It's like a weekend activity I think.

Lorraine checked the organic and all natural brands first, assuming that the major brands would not have the low sugar content she desired.

All of these shoppers used, with some difficulty, the nutritional information on the grocery items they were buying. Their decision-making process was affected by the information presented and by the amount of options. They tried to use other information

on the products, like an ‘all natural’ label to more efficiently whittle down the number of alternatives and make their decision making easier, but were largely unsuccessful in that pursuit.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Information overload impacts decision making as well as how individuals feel about an information environment. Information overload is defined as “a state in which too much information leads to a generalized state of anxiety and/or confusion, or an inability to make a decision regarding a specific problem” (Case, 2012, p. 385-386). Overload can occur when the number of alternatives and attributes of the alternatives add up to more than 10. The participants did not use the term ‘information overload’, but instead they described being overwhelmed, a term also found in the research literature. “The feeling of overload is usually associated with a loss of control over the situation, and sometimes with feelings of being overwhelmed.” (Bawden & Robinson, 2008, p. 183).

In the creative persona section, several not-recreational shoppers indicated they were feeling overwhelmed. For example, Arturo illustrates how information overload negatively impacts a food lovers’ experience in the grocery store. Three of the nurturer persona study participants also described feeling overwhelmed by having too much information or too many choices. During Jerome’s interview, his thoughts on decision making in the grocery store came up, and he shared how information overload impacted him.

Interviewer: Okay. You had talked about decision making. Do you think that decision making in the grocery store is an easy thing to do?

Jerome: No.

Interviewer: No?

Jerome: No.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that?

Jerome: There's so much information and it's an overload of everything that's there. If you go in for, say you're just going in for beans. If all you've written down, if you're making a bean soup and it doesn't specify what kind of beans, you get in there and there's all the beans, you say what do I get? If you decide on okay, I want chickpeas and black beans. There's like seven different types of both. Which ones do you want? Then you've got to whittle that down. I think that's true across the store. If you just write potato chips, okay which of the 90 kinds of potato chips do you really want?

Interviewer: You mentioned that there's a lot of information, so when you're talking about information, are you talking about just the sheer volume of products?

Jerome: Products and then like sales flyers and HEB for instance has not only their sales flyers but like all the deals that you don't know about until you get in store on the little yellow tags. I would say if I'm shopping, I only look at maybe a quarter of those yellow tags because I just don't have the time or wherewithal to process picking up every single one of those and saying what are you for and reading all that.

Interviewer: Do you think that the grocery store provides you with new information that changes your shopping or do you think you're ...

Jerome: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, it does.

Jerome: Yeah, especially with those sales flyers and stuff. There's plenty of times I'll go in saying "oh we don't need any fruit today, we're good on fruit" and then grapes are a buck a pound. Yeah, we're getting grapes or corn's eight for a dollar. Cool, we're making succotash.

Jerome succinctly explains all of the factors that make grocery shopping an overwhelming experience for him, although not to the point where new information is not

used or considered valuable. Dora also described the amount of choices in the grocery store as overwhelming when asked about her feelings toward grocery shopping.

Dora: It feels kind of like a chore. I try to only do it once a week because I don't love doing it. I just kind of see it as a thing that I have to do in order to eat healthy and not just eat out all the time. It also can feel a little bit overwhelming. Making a list and stuff isn't particularly overwhelming, but once I'm in the store it's overwhelming. There's so many choices. You want to buy tomatoes and there's 15 choices for tomatoes. Sometimes I feel like the layout of grocery stores isn't really conducive to grocery shopping so it can be a little overwhelming.

Grace added a different layer to being overwhelmed with information overload in the grocery store when she described her concerns about nutrition and the amount of choices.

Grace: Yeah, I think so. I think with the more information out there and ... It can get overwhelming because one person says, "This is good for you." And there's another person that says, "This isn't good for you." It's kind of [hard] deciding, but I think when my grandparents and my mom grocery shopped, they didn't have all that information. You just got the standard spaghetti and spaghetti sauce, or whatever it is. There wasn't whole wheat spaghetti and vegetable spaghetti, and stuff like that. The options were more limited, it seemed, back then.

The number of products present in the grocery store is just one aspect of what causes information overload for shoppers. As Grace explains, the variety of choices is only complicated by the information that accompanies them. That information includes a variety of forms from product labels to healthy food trends.

Information overload was clearly experienced by participants in both empirical studies. It not only makes decision making more difficult for shoppers, but can also increase feelings of anxiety to the degree that grocery shopping becomes a stressful chore. Information overload makes the grocery shopping experience less enjoyable and makes it more difficult for consumers to evaluate important information about the food they bring into their homes.

SHARING

As IB research has expanded to address more than just information seeking, other information behaviors have become a research focus. Information sharing is another information behavior related to, but not solely focused on information seeking. Information sharing occurs when an individual forwards information to another person (Kari, 2010). Research on information sharing has mostly focused on how information is shared in work environments between two individuals (Case, 2012). How groups work with information is described in the research literature as *information collaboration*.

In both the nurturer and creative persona studies, participants described information sharing. Jenna described how information sharing on social media is an integral part of her food love.

Jenna: And through social media, I've also posted a lot of different discoveries of information and restaurants and recipes and articles of companies not doing too ethically. So, my digital footprint has also enticed [an international food producer] to reach out to me and I'm actually on their board of advisors.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Jenna: Not too much, confidentiality. But, I would post something every single day, and I think I started this two or three years ago for about two years, just because the love of food, as a foodie. And they reached out to me through one of the social media sites and met up with me and interviewed me, and I think six other millennial females and got us on board.

Jenna was the only participant whose information sharing was recognized by a major food producer, but other participants described their love of sharing information on social media as well. Lorraine explained how her food-based discoveries drive most of her information sharing.

Lorraine: Definitely. I get really excited about new things that I find at the grocery store, and we'll talk about it on social media, or tell friends at work, or family at home. I get really excited when I find something new, or find it in a

place I hadn't seen something before. Every once in a while I'll find a new product and I'll only go to the same place to get it, and then I'll happen to see it somewhere else. I'm like, "Oh, this is amazing." It's really lame.

In addition to sharing food-related information on social media, a few participants also described how they share healthy eating habits with family, friends, and around their workplace. Kendra even described how she tried to share the lessons she learned about food and nutrition with the students she previously taught.

Interviewer: Do you feel a responsibility to others?

Kendra: Yeah. I'm new in the position. I was a middle-school teacher and part of what I would do in the classroom is just make subtle references to, "Oh, so and so has a really healthy snack today." Or I would even incorporate a couple documentaries. Like, I showed *Food, Inc.* to my students and incorporated that with some academic taking notes, and analyzing, and having debates.

Kendra viewed her information sharing as a responsibility. She described how she did not grow up well informed about healthy eating and feels that our society does not do enough to teach children about nutrition. Other participants described information sharing either in terms of the social benefits they gained or the responsibility they felt in passing on their knowledge.

Although information sharing is usually studied between two individuals, several of the participants used social media or their work place to share food related information to several people at once. These participants viewed information sharing as a pleasurable and important activity. The three examples mentioned above all come from participants who described healthy eating as important to them and as important social issues, suggesting that more interest in a topic leads to more information sharing.

PASSIVE

The IB field came out of information seeking behavior research, and most of the field focused on active, purposive information behaviors, but other forms of information behaviors also occur in the information-rich world we live in (Case, 2012). Erdelez (1999) has argued against the catch-all term ‘information-seeking behavior’ for all types of information acquisition saying, “the label is a misnomer because passive and opportunistic information acquisition such as some types of browsing, environmental scanning or information encountering more resembles ‘gathering’ than ‘hunting’ - the active pursuit suggested in the term seeking” (p. 25). In this section, I present examples of three types of passive information behaviors described and displayed by participants in my two empirical studies: monitoring, browsing, and encountering.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a passive information behavior described by Savolainen (1995) “as a lifelong activity focused on the care of everyday matters” in which individuals keep up with a topic but do not actively seek information about it (p. 272). Williamson (1998) found in her study of information behaviors of older adults that her participants’ information behaviors were more focused on “‘being informed’” than on ‘seeking information’” (p. 35). She explained,

While respondents purposefully sought information in response to perceived needs, they also monitored their world, at least to some extent, and acquired information which they were not always aware that they needed. The majority of respondents indicated a strong desire to “be informed’ about a wide range of information topics for everyday life (p. 35).

Williamson (1998) also found that personal networks including friends, family, and social groups such as clubs or churches as well as mass media were sources for incidental information acquisition.

Five nurturer persona study participants described the monitoring of food information without purposive seeking. Jerome's description of his passive information behaviors was one of the clearest examples.

Interviewer: Are there places you look for information about food?

Jerome: Oh, I don't think so. When you say information do you mean nutritional information? Do you mean kind of just like anything?

Interviewer: Anything.

Jerome: I wouldn't say I seek it out but I'm not opposed if somebody sends me a thing about, oh hey, check out this new trend in whatever. I learn that broccoli is the new super food or whatever, but I don't actively seek that out.

Marcella, another passive monitor of food information, shared how she incidentally acquired food information from a friend.

Interviewer: Once you learned about these issues in the media, did that make you want to learn more about other food products?

Marcella: Not unless I come across something with a significant question or doubt about other products, or maybe I listen to a friend talk about it. For example, last week a friend talked about beef. They say, "We are shopping and need to notice that some of the labels say it's natural, or what kind of ingredients, or what kind of antibiotics has been used." She said, "You need to read closely because there are some labels on that. There are some information on the labels." I said that, "I didn't notice that before." With her telling me the information maybe next time when I shop for beef I would take closer look at the labels of the beef, but not until somebody brings it up.

The information Marcella's friend provided to her was useful information that Marcella might use on future shopping trips, but it did not create in her a need to seek out more information. Marcella seems content simply to gain this information as she comes across it.

When I asked Tim if his purchases reflect any political or ethical opinions he holds, he answered,

Tim: No, but I wouldn't be above it. If I found out a particular company had particularly environmentally destructive or anti-civil rights or something like that, I would probably definitely take that into account and buy a different product. I'm not currently, but I would totally 100% do that.

Interviewer: It's not something you're looking into?

Tim: No, I don't like ... I probably should, but I don't. I don't.

Tim describes how, if he knew that a company was involved in practices that he did not agree with, he would not purchase that company's items; but that desire was not strong enough to send him looking up information about the products that he buys regularly.

All of these examples show how many grocery shoppers feel about information related to their grocery shopping; they are interested in the nutrition, labels, and ethics, but not enough to put in the time and effort it would take to learn more. The interest shoppers have in the groceries they buy does not usually rise to the level of active information seeking. This may be because it is not as important as other information seeking tasks or because food information is so plentiful that they believe they will eventually encounter it. Either way, the prevalence of the participants monitoring without seeking supports Williamson's (1998) finding that everyday information is commonly acquired incidentally.

Browsing

Browsing is "the central (and oldest) concept" of unplanned or passive information behaviors (Case, 2012, p. 100). It "is an examination of unknown items of potential interest by scanning or moving through an information space in order to judge the utility of the items, to learn about something of interest in the item, or to satisfy

curiosity about something” (Chang, 2009, p. 73). It is also a recreational activity such as when someone goes window-shopping. The term has been used to describe a variety of information behaviors from aimless scanning to more focused searching. In this discussion, ‘browsing’ will refer to the passive act of scanning without a clear goal (Case 2012).

In addition to the IB literature, marketing scholars have studied browsing in the grocery store and other retail venues. Their research has found that a significant number of people browse without an upcoming purchase in mind (Bloch & Richins, 1983); browsing in retail settings, including grocery stores, serves a functional and recreational purpose (Xia, 2010); and unplanned buying can be triggered by in-store information (Park et al., 1989). All of these findings were also observed in the data of both of my empirical studies.

Participants in both studies described browsing in the grocery store and its multiple purposes. Paul, a nurturer persona study participant, described how browsing was a way to learn about food. When I asked him if there are any places he looks for information about food, he said, “Not particularly. I would say probably just more the general browsing would be the way to learn about that stuff.” Gina, A creative persona study participant, told me that sometimes she browses the coffee and tea section of the grocery store even when she is not buying anything. She said, “sometimes I just look, I don't buy anything. I just look at what I could buy and what I might buy in the future, like in a couple of weeks when it gets really cold or whatever, to know what stores have which kind of tea, which flavor, stuff like that.” The browsing that Paul and Gina describe is functional in that it provides them with additional information for their grocery shopping.

Several participants described looking for new items or things on sale. During his observation, I asked Joseph about his browsing while he and his wife walked up and down the aisles. He explained why he browses the aisles with products he was not planning to purchase.

Joseph: Yeah. This is just in case we came across something like a real deal that we didn't know about. The other thing we like to do is check the end caps. A lot of times that's where they'll put stuff that you might not see in the paper.

When I asked Glen if he has any shopping habits, he described the sections he typically browses.

Glen: I always look at wine and beer, every time I go. Yeah, every time. Then, let's see, what else? I usually will walk by the meat section, see if anything is on sale, or if they have anything interesting in seafood or something like that.

Joseph and Glen's browsing may lead to unplanned buying. Even though they know they may buy something, it is not until they browse in the store that they discover what is on sale or what new products they want to purchase.

Glen and Joseph were two of 14 creative persona study participants who tried to discover new things in the grocery store. In the creative persona section, I discussed how discovering new things was a key part of how recreational shoppers enacted the creative persona and an important part of how shoppers understood their creativity in the grocery store. Browsing is how many of the participants discovered new things in the grocery store and several participants described browsing as an enjoyable and recreational activity. One of the nurturer persona study participants, Felix, also described his love of browsing through the grocery store.

Felix: I enjoy grocery shopping. I find it fun as long as the grocery store is not too crowded. You probably messed up getting me coming for this interview because I love grocery shopping, I could talk about it forever. I like looking at all the

different stuff on the shelves, walking around the supermarket, as long as there's not too many people there. I feel like they do a good job in grocery stores of presenting food in a way that makes it look appealing, like when you look at a whole bunch of products on the shelf together, it looks comforting because you see a whole bunch of them there, and just the idea of being full of food is a happy, comforting feeling. I guess that's basically how I feel about grocery shopping.

For Felix, browsing in the grocery store is enjoyable on a sensory level; he not only can discover new things, it's also just nice to look at beautifully displayed food.

Browsing may be the most prevalent information behavior during the grocery-shopping trip. It was observed or described by three of the nurturer persona study participants and 14 creative persona study participants. It allows shoppers to take in a lot of information and gives them an opportunity to explore the grocery store and discover new things.

Encountering

Encountering is another passive type of information behavior. It is more passive than browsing and is defined as “the accidental or serendipitous exposure to information that turns out to be relevant to a preexisting information need, or which sparks curiosity about an emerging topic of interest” (Case, 2012, p. 383). Unlike browsing, where a participant may be scanning the store looking for a sale, encountering occurs while a person's attention is on something else entirely. Erdelez's (2004; 2009) functional model of information encountering assumes an individual is involved in an information behavior with a foreground problem, and when the individual encounters a new piece of information, a switch in attention occurs and a background problem becomes the person's focus. In both of my empirical studies, participants described times when they encountered information related to their grocery shopping.

Information encountering in the grocery store can take on many forms. Grace, a nurturer persona study participant, shared how she encountered and may have been influenced by a promotion at her grocery store.

Interviewer: Would you ever say you're influenced by the store itself? Or do you usually have a recipe in mind and then just go and get the ingredients?

Grace: I typically have a recipe in mind. There's a few times where I'll have a sample of something, and sometimes it's either because I feel bad, like, "Oh. Well, I guess I have to buy this." That's not often, but if I actually liked it. You know? I wouldn't say I'm too influenced. Right now, I think I was just at the grocery store and they're having Taco-topia, or whatever, it's like the theme is different tacos and stuff. I'll have tacos when I have tacos, I wasn't like, "You know what? Let's have tacos today." Although we did, so maybe it was subconsciously. Maybe it subconsciously influenced me because we did end up having tacos, but it was just because it was easy.

Grace was not seeking out information about the taco promotion before entering the grocery store, but once she encountered the information it likely helped her decide on what to make for dinner that night. Like Grace, other participants encountered new information about products while searching for their groceries. During her shopping observation, Patsy was shopping for usual grocery items when she encountered a new version of a familiar product that was nearly sold out.

Patsy: I'm going to get actually some black beans because I do eat those a lot. [...]

Interviewer: Since you purchase them a lot, do you have a usual?

Patsy: I do. I was actually just wondering this reduced sodium. What other poison do they put in there to balance out the sodium? I usually actually get the seasoned recipe then I saw this reduced sodium. It appears to be very popular and I was just wondering how much ... This is like 10% of your daily amount of sodium, which is still a lot. This is twenty.

The empty shelf encouraged Patsy to look at the seemingly more popular low sodium version. Along with discovering the new version of black beans, this encounter also led her to learn about the sodium levels of the beans she typically buys. Jenna also discovered a new product in the store while shopping for a staple.

Jenna: I'm looking for the organic baby carrots. Carrot chips? I like it for a snack. They're wet, because they're pre-cut. I've never seen these before, the broccoli and the carrots. In a steamer bag? I'd rather buy it fresh and raw.

Interviewer: Yeah. You came here looking for baby carrots, but now you're just looking at other things, too.

Jenna: This just caught my attention, because I needed to get broccoli, too. Again, this is a snack for myself. \$2.99, not bad. Go ahead and just try it out.

Interviewer: Yeah. Would you say you usually shop for new stuff?

Jenna: No, but I'm open.

Grace, Patsy, and Jenna all encountered new information and products in the grocery store while being involved in their normal shopping routine.

Because of the vast amounts of information seeking and searching that occurs in the grocery store, information encountering is likely to occur. Most grocery shoppers go to the grocery store to purchase items for a variety of needs and they may run into new products or new information about products along the way.

SOURCES

Information sources have been central to the field of information behavior since its inception. Much of the early research addressed the artifacts or venues of information seeking including published materials, such as books and journals, as well as mass media and information institutions, such as libraries and museums (Case, 2012). As research moved away from focusing on information sources to studying users, the concept of

information sources did not change much. One prominent aspect of sources that has been consistent throughout the literature is the distinction between different types. The earliest distinction was between formal (books and journals) and informal (friends and popular culture) types—with more recent research creating six different types (human sources, printed media, broadcast media, networked sources, organizational sources, and other sources) (Savolainen, 2008b).

Between the two empirical studies, I identified 70 different sources of information described by participants in their interviews or observations based on their description and their described use. The list of sources varies based on how the participant described the source. The broadest source is “I’ve heard”/Media and was used when a participant described a claim with a non-descript source. For example, during Tonya’s observation while she was selecting dried beans she said, “I want a variety because I've heard, and I don't know how true this is, that there's different amino acids and proteins in different kinds.” Table 10 presents the total number of sources identified in both studies. The sources are sorted with the most prevalent codes between the combined studies presented at the top.

Table 10: All sources identified in the nurturer and creative persona studies

Sources	Nurturer Total	Creative Total	Total
Experience**	35	63	98
Friend/Family**	32	49	81
Grocery attributes	7	31	38
Labels	12	26	38
In-store signs	7	16	23
Store Flyer	9	11	20
"I've heard"/Media	11	8	19
Food TV	0	17	17
Price tags	4	13	17
Magazine	7	6	13

Table 10 (continued)

Sources	Nurturer Totals	Creative Totals	Total
Expiration date	0	10	10
Search Engine*	3	7	10
Book	3	6	9
Cookbooks/Recipes	0	9	9
Cooking Class	6	3	9
Formalized education	4	5	9
Memory	3	6	9
Coupon	0	8	8
Documentary	4	4	8
Recipe Website*	0	8	8
Facebook*	1	6	7
Store Websites*	0	6	6
Blogs*	2	3	5
Newspaper	0	5	5
Pinterest*	1	4	5
Restaurants	1	4	5
Store App*	1	4	5
Store Employee**	0	5	5
Work	1	4	5
Advertising	4	0	4
Celebrity Chefs/Media Personality	2	2	4
Farmer**	0	4	4
Food Trends/Movement	3	1	4
Family Recipes	0	3	3
Health Website*	3	0	3
News Story	3	0	3
Nutrition Class	3	0	3
Research Article	1	2	3
Store Layout	3	0	3
Health Problem	0	2	2
Instagram*	0	2	2
Medial Professional**	2	0	2
Nutrition Books	2	0	2
Nutritional Assessment	2	0	2
Online Course for Fun*	2	0	2
Online Periodical*	0	2	2
Twitter*	1	1	2

Table 10 (continued)

Sources	Nurturer Totals	Creative Totals	Total
CSA	0	1	1
Culture	1	0	1
Dog Food Review Website*	1	0	1
Email Subscription*	1	0	1
Extension Material	0	1	1
Food Website*	0	1	1
Governmental Reports	0	1	1
Health Newsletter	0	1	1
Library	0	1	1
Money Saving Newsletter*	0	1	1
News Program	0	1	1
Nutritionist**	0	1	1
Online Forums*	1	0	1
Podcasts*	1	0	1
Pop Culture	1	0	1
Radio Program	0	1	1
Regional Cooking	0	1	1
Season	0	1	1
Smartphone in store*	1	0	1
Store Activities	1	0	1
Store demos	0	1	1
Store Email*	0	1	1
YouTube*	0	1	1
Totals	193	381	3

Note: * Marks online sources, **Marks human sources

The sources described by the participants offer several insights into understanding the information behavior of grocery shoppers and what sources are used in everyday activities. The wide range of sources is apparent throughout the data and especially among the most prevalent sources. The top ten most-used sources include personal experience, human sources, printed text on grocery items, the physical attributes of the items themselves, and mass media in both printed and audio-visual form. The sources

show that grocery shoppers also rely on close human sources, domain-specific sources, but on surprisingly few online sources.

Human sources have been defined by Savolainen (2008a; 2008b; Savolainen & Kari, 2004) a leader in EIB research, to include information “received directly from individuals via face-to-face contacts, telephone calls, or letters” and personal experience (Savolainen & Kari, 2004, p. 422). The top two most prevalent sources meet this definition. Four other sources described by participants are also categorized as human sources (store employee, farmer, medical professional, nutritionist). Previous research has found that, for everyday life problems, the majority of participants rely on human sources (Chen & Herson, 1982; Derwin, Ellyson, Hawkes, Guagno, & White, 1984; Savolainen, 2008a; 2008b; Savolainen & Kari, 2004). Human sources are preferred because they are familiar and easily accessible (Savolainen & Kari, 2004) and the human source has the advantage of being able to provide filtered, experience-based information (Savolainen, 2008b).

Traditionally defined formal sources are present in the list (books, formalized education, library), but they are far less prevalent than informal sources (friends, food TV, grocery attributes). Many of the most prevalent sources are directly related to the grocery store and grocery shopping (labels, in-store signs, store flyers). These sources do not meet traditional definitions of formal sources, but they do provide shoppers with information directly related to their grocery shopping. Many of the sources described by the participants are domain-specific and provide information for a very specific information need. Information in the grocery store is constantly changing as items go on sale, become sold out, and pass their expiration dates. Reading a book about grocery shopping can provide a shopper with strategies and tips to navigate the grocery store, but it cannot inform a shopper of sale prices or whether or not an item is organic.

In comparison to human sources and domain-specific sources, participants in my empirical studies described online sources less often. The most prevalent online source was search engines, and together my 36 participants mentioned search engines only 10 times. Among the 70 sources identified in the data, 21 were primarily online. Some of the other sources, such as new stories, may have been encountered online, but the participants did not describe them as being online. Previous EIB research found that online sources were becoming more common and participants preferred using them for problem-specific concerns second most to human sources (Savolainen 2008a; 2008b). A more recent EIB study found that among 8,353 college students, 95 percent used search engines as a source for everyday life decision-making information (Head & Eisenberg, 2011). The present work does not support the previous works findings. Among all 21 online sources, there were only 66 total references to an online source taking into consideration both of my empirical studies. The majority of participants, 27 of 36, referenced two or fewer online sources in their interviews and observations. By comparison, only eight participants mentioned two or fewer human sources and just 17 participants, when excluding experience from the human sources. Eight participants did not mention a single online source, while only nine mentioned three to six online sources. Table 11 shows the number of online sources each participant mentioned. The lack of online sources described by participants suggests that the popularity of online sources in everyday life may be domain-specific.

Table 11: The number of online sources mentioned by participants.

Zero online sources (8)	Julius, Paul, Felix, Santiago, Dora, Jerome, Angelica, Jerry, Faye
One online source (8)	Joseph, Katie, Julius, Patsy, Ramona,
Two online sources (11)	Tonya, Kendra, Glen, Henrietta, Gina, Alberta, Leah, Marcella, Deborah, Tim, Grace,
3-6 online sources (9)	Jenna, Robin, Mabel, Wilma, Michelle, Lorraine, Carole, Emanuel, Kendra

Altogether, the nurturer and creative persona studies show the diversity of information sources that can be useful to grocery shoppers. Human sources are quite popular along with domain-specific sources, while online sources play a less important role. These findings suggest that the information environment of the grocery store is highly specialized to the needs of grocery shoppers and that previous findings on EIB sources do not accurately represent this everyday activity.

RELATED CONCEPTS

The final two information behaviors in this chapter, planning and learning, are not well-defined concepts in the IB literature. I will explain how each concept is related to a defined information behavior concept and how these concepts are interesting extensions of the primary IB concepts. Both concepts are a form of information use, a poorly defined IB concept. Kari (2010) published a thorough investigation of the many uses and definitions of ‘information use’ in the research literature. He found that “on the basis of the literature, the use of information would seem to be a really multiform phenomenon: almost any kind of human interaction with information will do as information use” (Kari, 2010, para. 5 ...As information practice). The variety of behaviors information use covers make it ideal to discuss everyday information seeking with the variety of information behaviors individuals participate in for their everyday activities. In both the nurturer and creative persona studies, I identified participants using information in

complex and interesting ways that do not align with traditional IB concepts other than information use. The two most prevalent that I will discuss below stand out as interesting and potentially important concepts for the IB literature to explore further.

Planning

Grocery shopping is a form of planned behavior in which an individual intends to do something (Ajzen, 1991). Most people go to the grocery store with some idea of the items they want to buy; the specificity of that idea may vary from as vague as something for dinner to as specific as honeycrisp apples. One grocery shopping study found that more than half of the 173 women surveyed “described themselves as carefully planning their grocery trips to get the most value for their money” (Smith & Carsky, 1996, p. 80). Outside of grocery shopping, Julien and Michels (2004) found in their intra-individual study on information behavior in daily life that planning was one of the primary stated purposes of information seeking.

Planning is not only a motivation behind an information behavior; it is also an information behavior in its own right. Planning a grocery-shopping trip can require inventorying, meal planning, recipe retrieval, list writing, and coupon selection. Planning drives information seeking and propels grocery shopping for many individuals. Glen said it best when he described his love of organized planning when asked about his feelings about cooking.

Glen: It's incredibly fun. It's one of the best activities just because there's lots of fun ... I like to organize things, so there's lots of fun organized planning before hand. You get to plan what you're going to cook, how you're going to cook it, what you need to cook it. You get to go to the grocery store and get to buy cool looking stuff, and then you get to spend some time making that cool thing that you're planning out. Then you get to eat it and hopefully, if you don't mess I up, it tastes pretty good. Definitely one of my favorite activities.

Not all participants loved the planning process as Glen did, but most took part in some aspect of it. In this section, I discuss the three main planning activities described by participants in both studies: list writing, meal planning, and couponing.

List writing

List writing is a common practice among grocery shoppers. Lists can be used as a memory aid and to help shoppers avoid impulse purchases (Block & Morwitz, 1999). List writing has also been found to provide comfort to shoppers by ensuring they do not have to make additional trips to the store and by making the shopping process easier (Thomas & Garland, 2004). These reasons may partly account for why all of the creative persona study participants and 11 nurturer persona study participants described at least occasionally using a shopping list. Dora, even described all of these reasons as informing her use of a shopping list.

Dora: I think one, it cuts down on my time at the grocery store because I know exactly what I'm going for. It helps me save money too, because like I mentioned when I have a list and I'm sticking to the list I don't make impulse buys. It just makes it easier on me too because I know exactly what I'm going for and I know I need to go to this section of the grocery store and buy these things.

The participants described several different approaches they take when writing their shopping list. Mabel explained in her interview how she organizes her list.

Mabel: I just want to get in, get out. I have my list; I even have it sorted by sections. If I have to go to multiple [stores], I have that sorted by which one I'm going to. I know exactly what I need to get and I leave. That's it. I even write down the quantity; if I need two jugs of milk, I will write down "two" next to it so then I don't have to think about it while I'm there.

Mabel's list helps her to not only navigate the store layout, but also to navigate her shopping across stores, which she also described as integral to her price comparisons.

Lorraine also sorted her list by sections and even came to the store with two different lists. At the start of her shopping observation, she showed me her two lists and explained how she uses them.

Lorraine: Someone will start melting down in an aisle and I'll have the screaming kid in the grocery store, so I try to put it in sections. So, if I don't get to a section, maybe somebody can come back later.

Interviewer: So, the list is really in two parts?

Lorraine: Yeah. One is the what we're going to eat for the dinners and then what we need to buy at the grocery store. There are a few things on here for lunch, but my kids eat lunch at school. [...]

Interviewer: Okay. And why did you bring both parts?

Lorraine: Oh, just so I can remember what I'm cooking in case I forgot something or I'm like why did I need this? Oh yeah, it's because I'm making ... I don't know. Something on this day or that day.

Lorraine's list not only ensures that she buys the food she has planned on, but also what the purpose for them is. Later in the observation, Lorraine came across a meat sale and used her meal-planning list to take advantage of the sale and purchase appropriate types of meat for her recipes.

Joseph prepared his list to ensure he buys what he needs while also making allowances for impulse purchases.

Joseph: The only other strategy we use is we understand that sometimes there are impulse buys. We do four lines on the list. That's the only impulse items we will buy, we allow ourselves four. It has to be a real good reason, like, if prime rib suddenly dropped down to a buck a pound, we'd have to think about that.

Interviewer: That's very systematic for impulse buys.

Joseph: Yes. We believe in clearly defined, rigidly outlined spontaneity.

Joseph was unusual in his planned impulse purchases, but I observed other participants purchased items not on their list and some even added the items to the list as they were shopping.

While the last few examples stood out for the eclectic ways in which the participants created or used their lists, May provided a thorough account of her list writing. Her example is similar to how most of the participants—and most shoppers more generally—likely approach their list writing.

May: I like to go through sort of a weekly planning, so I would say I plan out meals probably like I'll do it on Monday for the rest of the week. I do usually a big grocery shopping [trip] once every two weeks and then in between if I'm missing a couple items I'll run to the store, but probably once every two weeks. I'm do the big, sort of, get everything. Yeah, a lot of stuff on my list comes from planning menus or kind of like we have the staples, the basics that we always have so I know, that are just sort of given items, if we're running out of those. That and then, yeah, I have to have my list. I can't go to the grocery store without a list. I like to know exactly what I need ahead of time. That way I don't forget anything.

Interviewer: How much time, would you say, outside of the grocery store do you spend planning and preparing the list, things like that?

May: Probably, in total, about an hour and a half a week, maybe. I do, like I said, I do like menu planning and I'll come up with some ideas for that week. Try to change things up. That'll take me like an hour every Sunday or Monday and then I'll do like twenty minutes or so coming up with a list. I'll go through my kitchen and see what I need and go through my household products. I'll ask whoever, at this point it's like I have my partner living with me or if we need anything for the pets or whatever it is that week.

In the hour and a half she spends preparing her list, May is making decisions on her family's meals, seeking information on what her partner needs, and identifying what staples the family needs. Her list serves as a memory aid, and the writing process helps her make decisions before she enters the store.

These examples indicate that list writing can take on different forms and the process can take as much time as a shopping trip. List writing can serve different purposes depending on the goals and habits of the shopper. It allows some shoppers the ability to make decisions outside of the distracting information-rich environment of the grocery store.

Meal planning

In addition to list writing, a few participants, including Lorraine and May, also planned their meals ahead of time. For these participants, meal planning and grocery shopping are intertwined and inform each other. When I asked Dora about her list writing process she explained.

Dora: My first step is deciding what I'm going to make for the week. I find recipes. Choose what I want and then from that I make a list of what I need to make those things. I'd say the whole process takes maybe 45 minutes, an hour.

Dora's meal planning not only consists of deciding on what she is going to make, she also looks up recipes to cook.

Meal planning and list writing can make a shopping trip easier and assist with other family concerns. For Jerome, meal planning is a part of scheduling his family's busy week with a new baby.

Jerome: [My wife and I] do it together. We have several recipe books and we'll bust those out probably on a Friday night, Saturday and just pick four to five favorite recipes each. Get about 10 to 12 meals, depending, and figure out which of those are going to be easiest, look at our schedule for the week and say okay, who's doing what, what night? What are meals that I can cook? What are meals that she can cook? I can't do a lot of chopping so it's like, okay, if something requires a lot of chopping we both need to be home so that one of us can watch the baby and one of us can do that.

Interviewer: How long would you say that is?

Jerome: Maybe 45 minutes. It used to take a lot longer. It used to take us the better part of two, three hours to really go through it. A lot of that was we didn't know the recipe books very well. We were still learning a lot of it. Now we kind of have our favorites, we really know what we're looking for. We know what's easy. We know what's fast, so we can dive in pretty quick.

Jerome's description again highlights how the planning part of grocery shopping can be time consuming and require the evaluation of many different pieces of information. Jerome and his wife take into consideration the amount of time and effort a recipe requires as well as the tasks each person can perform.

Other study participants also described how they used meal planning to help ensure that their families are eating healthy and not spending too much money. Joseph described how he and his wife use meal planning to eat healthier.

Joseph: I try to plan out a week's worth of meals. That's the big challenge because now it's just my wife and I, we're trying to really do portion control at the same time while we're eating healthy, so Sunday is the day when I will do a lot of cooking and will either refrigerate or freeze so we can just pull things out.

Rudy explained how his family meal plans to fit into their grocery budget.

Rudy: We'll throw out ideas, we'll see what sticks then we'll move on to discussing the prices of said items whether or not we can squeeze in the quality ... say pork loin or quality chicken or even omitting meat altogether is really I'd say total two or three days. Before actually shopping.

Meal planning was less common than list writing among the participants, but several participants described it as a regular habit and an integral part of their grocery planning. Meal planning was used to make grocery shopping easier as well as to assist with other family issues including scheduling, nutrition, and budgeting. Meal planning can include decision making as well as seeking out new or familiar recipes.

Coupons

Another grocery shopping planning activity that several participants mentioned was collecting and using coupons. “Coupons is a commonly used marketing tool used to encourage advance planning” (Block & Morwitz, 1999, p. 370). Using coupons requires shoppers to bring the coupon to the store and follow the guidelines on the coupon before it expires. Julius, a notable price comparer, remarked on the organizational effort required for coupons.

Julius: I do use some coupons. But using coupons requires a high level of organization and having them in the store with you and so on, so you have to keep them in a safe place, you have to organize them, you have to remember when they run out. It's really a lot of work.

Although Julius was very price conscious, he did not think the effort to coupon was worth the financial benefit.

Ramona was also very familiar with coupons. As a former retail employee, she witnessed firsthand how shoppers used coupons to shop for pennies on the dollar. She eventually began coupons too and described the effort and benefits.

Ramona: I used to be an extreme coupon shopper and the reason I stopped was because of the extreme. It's like having a job because you're watching all these ads trying to see which one is going to go down, which one is going to go up. Which ones are compatible with the coupon that you have and which coupons are going to expire before this ad goes up? It's so much that's put into that. It's literally like having a job and making sure that this store doesn't have these limitations and they can accept all these coupons or whatever. It's definitely not an easy thing so I can admit that [...]

At one time they were even doing it where you buy this and this and we'll give you a \$10 gas card. There's no limit on the gas cards that you can get. You just follow the rules of the ad. Make sure everything is right and literally between store coupons, manufacturing coupons and whatever sales they had on you were still walking out the store with \$60 to \$70 worth of stuff and you may have paid 20, 30 cents for it and then on top of that they're giving you \$10 on gas cards. Wow, you're paying me to take this stuff out of your store basically and you're giving me a gas card. Life couldn't get any better. Somebody's paying me to take

the things off their shelf and I'm not stealing. I'm not doing anything illegal. I'm shopping. I'm putting food in the house. I have a stockpile that clearly shows that my family ... we don't have to go to the store for toothpaste for probably another two years.

Ramona eventually stopped couponing when the effort was no longer worth the reward. Her description highlights not only the benefits someone can gain from understanding how to coupon, but all of the information required to do it to this extreme.

Ramona was the only extreme couponer I interviewed, but several participants in both studies described coupons as a regular part of their grocery shopping. Some participants clipped coupons from weekly ads or flyers, but many used store applications on their smartphones or store websites for their couponing. Angelica explained in her interview how the coupon app she used works.

Angelica: I haven't been using physical coupons, I've been downloading apps that like, for instance HEB has a new app and you just go in and click the coupon that you think you might need. You don't really have to pay too much attention while you're doing your grocery shopping. If you grab something it automatically registers to your, to the app. It takes the coupon off.

The other participants that used couponing apps also described them as very easy to use, but one participant did not like the fact that the app tracked her purchases and sent messages to her phone. Couponing apps may make some of the work of couponing easier, but it may also produce other annoyances or problems for shoppers.

Couponing may be the most difficult planning activity. At its most extreme it can require the processing and evaluating of information, scheduling, and information seeking into coupon policies and value. Couponing also adds additional information sources to consider when making purchase decisions.

When added together, list writing, meal planning, and couponing extend the grocery shopping experience outside of the grocery store. The grocery-shopping process

can become simpler when shoppers perform some of the information work of grocery shopping at home. Shoppers are able to consider the many factors that go into their food purchases at their own pace without the distraction of additional products and in-store information. Planning for a grocery-shopping trip is similar to other information behaviors; it requires individuals to seek, process, evaluate, organize, and make decisions about information.

Learning

Information behavior and learning are interconnected aspects of human behavior that have been separated into different disciplines for research and education (Limberg & Alexandersson, 2009). While learning may not be the focus of IB research, it is difficult to think of it as anything other than an information behavior. “As a human activity, learning and information seeking are inseparable and mutually shape each other” (p. 3252). Learning is defined as “a social activity in which the learner uses sensory input and constructs meaning out of it” (p. 3253). Kari (2010) found that several IB scholars applied the concept of information use to describe the learning-related concepts of information processing and knowledge construction. For this section, I present examples of how nurturer and creative persona study participants described learning to grocery shop.

During their interviews, I asked all of the nurturer persona study participants how they learned to grocery shop. All 18 participants described learning from their personal experience, through modeling other grocery shoppers (mostly their parents), or a combination of the two. The breakdown of how the participants answered is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: How participants learned to grocery shop

Experience	Marcella, Kendra, Angelica, and Tim
Modeling	Ramona, Felix, Emanuel, Jerome, Jerry, May, and Gladys
Both	Paul, Santiago, Dora, Deborah, Rudy, Grace, and Faye

Overall, the participants’ answers were quite similar with most using the same language to describe how they learned to grocery shop. Due to the similarities, I will present one illustrative quotation for each answer type.

Jerome’s description of learning to grocery shop provides an example of how grocery shoppers learn by modeling their behavior after their parents.

Jerome: I probably say with my dad. He did pretty much all the cooking in the house so I would grocery shop with him. Yeah.

Interviewer: Were you an active participant?

Jerome: Yeah, he would send me to oh, go get this, go get this. Especially when I was really young that was a good exercise because it would help me learn words, help me learn where things were located, be self sufficient, so I think it was a good exercise.

Interviewer: Did you have much impact even maybe when you were an older child on what was purchased?

Jerome: Oh yeah, absolutely. We would kind of consult about menu and what we wanted for the week, two weeks and my brother and I both had a pretty sizable amount of input.

In addition to modeling his father’s behaviors, Jerome was an active participant in the grocery shopping process, which enabled him to watch his father’s decision making and other grocery shopping behaviors. Marcella did not grow up grocery shopping with her parents and shared how she learned to grocery shop on her own and with her friends.

Marcella: I think I didn't learn much when I was little because usually my mom, in my family my mom did the shopping. When I went to university I had to live independently it was at that time. It's pretty late. Okay, yeah I learned to shop by myself. At that time I think I was mainly influenced by my peers because we went shopping together, and so went to the same shop and we have similar needs. I have to say many times, okay so their decisions may influence mine. Later as I do more shopping on my own I made more decisions on my own. Like my preferences of the things, my preferences of the brands. Yeah, and the prices that I can afford.

Grace used her memories of how her family grocery shopped as well as trial error, like the other participants who learned through both modeling and trial and error.

Grace: I think that goes back to my mom, seeing my family grocery shop. Then, of course it's like trial by error, because when I moved out on my own after college, I moved to another city and then it's like your responsibility to grocery shop. It was out of necessity, remembering what the staples ... What I needed to get.

While the specifics of each participant's learning experience differed, the fundamental aspects of their learning were largely the same. One participant, Emanuel, had a difficult time with the question initially saying,

Emanuel: I don't think anybody taught me. Growing up, I would go to the store with my mom and dad. I don't think anyone really taught me. If you go to the store, if you have money, you buy food. I don't think you need that much education to learn how to shop. I think I was influenced ... the more I think about this I probably did learn from a few people.

He went on to discuss how his father impacted his shopping. Emanuel's answer is interesting because it shows him thinking through the question. Starting with confusion at the thought that someone would learn to grocery shop. His response and the responses of a few others made me realize that most of the participants had never really thought about how they learned to grocery shop; it was just something that they did.

A few of the creative persona study participants recently began grocery shopping and their perspective highlights the complexity of the task. Michelle had only recently moved out of student housing, and she shared her early experiences grocery shopping.

Michelle: So, I've been with my partner for about two years, but we just moved in with each other in July, so it's only been a couple months. At first, we just went in and it really was kind of an impulse of oh, I like Oreos, and I eat Oreos with sandwiches and I eat sandwiches with chips, so that's what I would buy. And a week later we would be out of food. And we weren't really thinking long term. It was more like I'm going to make a salad, so I'll buy this giant bag of lettuce, I'll buy one tomato and I'll buy some corn. And we forgot the dressing, we forgot ... It was very random, there was no plan. We never took a list either. We thought we would just walk up and down every single aisle. Once we realized we were losing so much money ... Spoiled food is one of my biggest pet peeves. And so once we started seeing that wasn't working, we make lists, we use coupons, and we go in with a plan. So, what are we going to eat every night this week, and what ingredients do we need to make that meal. And that's what we go and buy instead. So if we have a coupon we buy it, or if we need it we buy it. If we don't really need it, we skip it.

Gina also struggled with grocery shopping when she first lived on her own.

Gina: It was almost like developing a whole new set of skills, because there are stores all over, but, like I said, you don't want to spend a lot of money. Then you had to think about buying different products at different stores, and how long will it last, and how much bread you really eat until it goes bad, stuff like that. When I first started buying, because I, also, didn't have a car at the time, I would buy vegetables and fruit worth of maybe two weeks, but that didn't work out so well, because sometimes it would go bad, or after a certain time you just want something else, so I stopped that. Now I go maybe once or twice a week, and just buy smaller amounts, so they're really fresh.

The perspective of a new grocery shopper from Michelle and Gina shows how difficult a new everyday task can seem before it becomes routine. The trial and error they describe helps to identify the skills and information behaviors at work while grocery shopping. Learning to grocery shop means learning what food you need, how long it will last, what other items go with it, and how to get everything within a budget. All of these lessons

require using information to increase understanding and make better decisions in the future.

Grocery shopping, like most everyday activities, is a skill not taught in school that adults are assumed to know. It is hardly surprising that all of the creative persona study participants described learning to grocery shop through either experience or from watching others. The process of learning an everyday activity might be less clear because it is unstructured and iterative. A shopper's level of uncertainty decreases and new understandings are developed through the experience of grocery shopping and watching others in the grocery store. With every new successful information search or accidental information encounter a shopper continues to learn.

CONCLUSION

All eight sections presented in this chapter provide ample evidence that grocery shopping is an everyday activity filled with information behaviors. The grocery store is an information-rich environment in which information is sought, shared, browsed, and encountered; where shoppers try to overcome uncertainty and information overload to make purchase decisions. While few of the IB concepts discussed in this chapter were directly described by the participants, all of them described using information in complex and interesting ways. Some were overwhelmed by it; others were in awe of it. The examples presented here provide strong evidence that the grocery store is a rich research space for EIB scholars to explore.

This chapter also demonstrates how the IB literature can be used to analyze a grocery shopper's information behaviors. This analysis provides a detailed explanation of the information behaviors involved in the grocery shopping process. This analysis does not address the context of grocery shopping that the two previous chapters focused on or

present an analysis that highlights the nuances of this everyday activity. The next three chapters will build on this analysis to present a more thorough explanation of why these information behaviors occurred and what about them is unique to the everyday.

Chapter 5: Information Behavior Influences of Grocery Shopping

The aim of this chapter is to explore a holistic view of information by combining the findings from the grocery shopping perspective, the traditional concepts of IB and EIB, and a focus on the lived experience of my research participants. In the previous chapter, I discussed how several important concepts from IB and EIB can help to explain the information behaviors of grocery shoppers. The analysis showed the variety of behaviors as well as how issues such as information overload and uncertainty impact grocery shoppers' decision making and their experience in the store. The previous analysis provides a foundation to describe information behaviors related to an everyday activity. Here, I more fully address the nuances of the influences and motivations that underlie these behaviors and concepts.

Throughout this work, participants have described differences in their information behaviors and feelings toward the information environment of the grocery store. The traditional concepts help to explain some of these differences, but by digging deeper into the lived experience of grocery shoppers, scholars can identify additional forces that impact information behaviors in the grocery store and other everyday information environments. By using the grocery shopping concepts presented in Chapter 2 and the findings of Chapter 3, this chapter will explore the differences in information behaviors described by the participants based on the context of their grocery shopping. Chapter 4 largely addressed how individuals interact with information in the grocery store. The analysis presented in this chapter will bring additional clarity to an understanding of why grocery shoppers interact with information in the ways that they do and what creates the differences among participants from the two empirical studies.

In this chapter, I seek a deeper understanding of the motivations and influences of information behavior. This analysis shows that the observed information behavior is impacted by the context of grocery shopping that each participant exists within. Therefore, through analyzing the specific lived experience of individuals, their information behaviors can be more fully understood. This chapter begins with a theoretical analysis and then presents several illustrative examples of how combining the grocery shopping literature with concepts from IB can elucidate information behaviors. Each example discusses the internal factors, such as attitude and creativity, that influence a grocery shopper's information behaviors. This analysis relies on the findings from Chapter 3, which explored the context surrounding grocery shopping.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

My analytic approach in this chapter is heavily influenced by the work of Carol Kuhlthau (1991; 2009). She expanded the IB field by creating the Information Search Process (ISP) model, an approach to information seeking focused on the user and his or her emotional state as well as cognitive processes. The ISP was developed through several studies that investigated information seeking in the library; most of the participants were students working on term papers. Kuhlthau (1991) argued, "while purely cognitive conceptions of information need are adequate for some research purposes, consideration of the affective dimension of users problems is necessary for a model to address a wider, holistic view of information use" (p. 362).

Kuhlthau's ISP model combined IB research with the theory and concepts of psychologist George Kelly, specifically his personal construct theory (Kuhlthau, 1991; 2009). Kelly's work addressed how individuals create their understanding of the world with new information in phases that are affective and cognitive in nature. Kuhlthau built

her model to assess more than the cognitive aspects of information seeking, and she needed to bring in concepts from another discipline to do so. There should be more work in IB or EIB that crosses information behavior analysis with concepts from other disciplines to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and influences behind information behaviors. Other fields offer insights into domains, behaviors, motivations, and contexts that impact information behaviors in the everyday world. I am inspired both by Kuhlthau's ability to mesh information behavior research with affect and by her success in integrating concepts from another discipline. As an EIB scholar I am primarily interested in how the grocery shopping literature and other similar work that addresses the everyday can be used to enhance EIB scholarship. Below I will use this analysis to highlight several examples where combining the grocery shopping literature with concepts of IB and EIB lead to a deeper understanding of the influences and motivations behind information behaviors.

CULTURAL NORMS

Cultural norms are the unwritten rules of society made up of shared beliefs that inform behavior while being largely unquestioned (Dandaneau, 2007). They help individuals know how to act in social situations and are largely stable but can evolve over time. Cultural norms change because as they are defined by their time and as society changes so to do cultural norms (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006). An example of this evolution was articulated by Grace, a nurturer persona study participant, when she explained how she grew up eating white bread, but since living on her own she only buys whole grain, "because somewhere along the line it was like, 'Wheat's good for you. White's processed flour.'" The cultural norm of bread as a staple food item remained stable, but the view of the best type of bread changed. In Chapter 3, several cultural

norms surrounding grocery shopping and the grocery store were presented. In this section, I will describe how cultural norms influenced grocery shopper's information behaviors or feelings toward the information environment of the grocery store. The other cultural norms described in Chapter 3, such as the norm to write a grocery list, also influence the information environment that grocery shoppers exist within.

Feeding children the healthiest food

Ensuring that their children were eating high-quality healthy food was described by most of the parents in the nurturer persona study. Several participants also described how this cultural norm motivated them to learn more about the items they buy at the grocery store. Rudy described how having his daughter led him to start learning more about nutrition. Rudy's information seeking steered him to use sources such as MyPlate from the USDA and to regularly research ingredients. Marcella also described how she researched products and brands before purchasing items for her son. The cultural norm that you need to feed children the healthiest food strongly encourages parents, such as Rudy and Marcella, to learn more about nutrition and the products they purchase in the grocery store. This norm motivates individuals to know about the best options for their children requiring information seeking into nutrition and health related food trends.

Organic food

Several participants described both the positive and negative cultural norms related to organic food, which is widely believed to be more nutritious and healthy, but also understood to be more expensive. The cultural norms around organic foods demonstrate how information is used. Both Kendra and Tim described how pregnancy led their families to purchase and consume far more organic food than ever before. They both described how the information they had about organic products being healthier for

them did not resonate sufficiently to change their behavior until they learned about their future children. Tim's quotation presents how his family used information about the costs and benefits of organic food:

Tim: Then once she got pregnant, we were really ... I think we even always said like, "If we had kids, we eat organic. In the meantime, we won't." We switched to all organics particularly ... We don't eat a greater deal of meat, but when we do now, it's really organic. That's costing more, but we definitely 100% made it. That was a good change.

The rationale for Kendra and Tim concerning when to increase the amount of organics they purchase demonstrates how information use is impacted by outside motivations such as impending parenthood. Information takes on new meaning and import before or during a life change, and that change affects information behavior.

Healthy eating

The cultural norms around healthy eating vary over time as new nutritional studies and diet fads come and go. The participants described the current norms of eating fewer packaged and processed foods as relying more on organic products. As the cultural norms evolve and change, grocery shoppers may be unsure why the changes are occurring, even as they are changing their habits. Ramona articulated this phenomenon when she described her questions about healthy eating and the confusion over good and bad fats:

Ramona: So I don't know. I just have a lot of questions about what is good. What's not good? Why are we saying this? In the end are we all going to die from this food that we call horrible? It seems like every year something comes out about ... first it was the trans-fat. Then it was the saturated fat. Then it was ... I'm like, "Well it all has one or the other." Are we going to eat the trans? Are we going to eat the saturated? Are we going to eat both? Are we not going to eat any? If so where does that leave the rest of us...

While Ramona is referring to a specific nutritional debate, her uncertainty is hardly limited to this issue. Grace and Kendra also described instances where they were confused by a cultural norm around healthy eating or just felt uninformed. A lack of understanding in the rationale behind changing cultural norms leads to uncertainty, especially when grocery shoppers are unable to participate in the norm for financial or health reasons.

Cultural norms are powerful exogenous forces that inform an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and values. Many grocery shoppers are strongly influenced by norms to buy organic and healthy food without really knowing the reasons undergirding their decision making. Some accept the norms and follow them without hesitation, while others struggle to find the value in spending more money for products that appear the same. Tapping into the norms that influence a domain such as grocery shopping can allow scholars to understand an individual's information behaviors more deeply and how the cultural context informs information behaviors. This section described how information seeking, information use, and uncertainty are all influenced by cultural norms. These norms are more than a source of information, they can motivate and discourage, leading some participants, including Ramona, to be overwhelmed with questions that seem to have too many answers.

SELF-IDENTITY

How an individual conceives of herself and her lifestyle plays a major role in how she interacts with her world (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). In the way that cultural norms tell individuals how to behave, self-identity provides a similar, internal guiding path. For example, being a 'green consumer' independently influences food choice separately from attitudes and norms (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). Self-identity can influence a variety of

information behaviors as well, leading some individuals to be constant researchers or browsers. The nurturer persona study participants described several unique aspects of their self-identity and several of these aspects strongly influenced their decision making in the grocery store, as explained below.

Self-identity as ethical

The five participants who self-identified as ethical described how the information that they gained about unethical practices they disagreed with led to a change in their behavior. Faye explained how on a West Coast bike trip she witnessed the human toll of conventional farming, changing her outlook on farming practices and grocery shopping. The information she encountered on that trip affected her decision making in the grocery store, making her more focused on supporting products that align better with her values. For all of the participants who self-identified as ethical, the implications of their shopping became another factor in deciding on the products they buy and the stores in which they shop.

Altogether, self-identity affects decision making by adding another attribute to be taken into consideration in the already complex purchase decision-making process. Items are judged not only on their usefulness or perceived benefit, they are judged on whether they align with a shopper's self-identity. Outside of the grocery store, self-identity plays a similar role with a variety of life decisions. Individuals can use their self-identity to ask themselves if their choices are in alignment with the person they are or are striving to be.

MORAL OBLIGATION

Moral obligation is the responsibility an individual feels about how her choices and actions impact others (Raats et al., 1995). There were several moral obligations articulated by participants in both of my empirical studies, and many of them have

implications for an individual's information behavior. In this section, I present several examples that highlight the relationship between moral obligation and information behavior, but there are additional ones in the data that will not be described here. In general, moral obligation adds a pressure to grocery shoppers' information behaviors to ensure that they are helping rather than hurting others.

Moral obligation of healthy food

The responsibility to bring healthy food into a home was described by the majority of the nurturer persona study participants. This moral obligation impacts an individual's overall feeling about grocery shopping and the role of food provider. While several participants described how this moral obligation led them to seek out information about food and nutrition, Tim's story emphasizes how this obligation affects the entire information seeking process. Tim began his research on nutrition through learning more about his dog's nutrition. He explained that it was his concern for his dog's nutritional needs that led him to discover a gap in his knowledge about his own needs. This gap led Tim to the library, where he looked through several information sources. Like many participants, Tim's moral obligation to feed healthy food to his dog began as one information search that spawned others. Moral obligation was identified as an important motivating catalyst for many participants, including Tim, to seek out information about how their grocery shopping and food choice impacted their family.

Moral obligation to change for children

Children can be the motivating factor for various life changes, including eating and shopping healthier. The moral obligation to change for children was described by six nurturer persona study participants. Jerome described how the birth of his son created considerable uncertainty in his mind about his health and nutrition. He described not only

a new-found interest in nutrition, but also an uncertainty about the science of food. Even though Jerome was a healthy eater, he was unsure about his understanding of healthy eating and how food was directly impacting his health. He also explained how, when he learned of his wife's pregnancy, it created this obligation that he needed to learn more and be healthier to be around for his son.

Participants described moral obligations as a pressure that impacted several aspects of their grocery shopping. It complicated what previously were simple decisions into important issues that impacted the entire family. Moral obligation reminds a person that her choices affect others, leading some to research things that previously were not worth the effort to research. The pressure of moral obligation can also expose previous gaps in knowledge when the outcomes of personal choices begin affecting others.

CREATIVITY

Creativity in the grocery store is associated with leisure and enjoying the process of grocery shopping (Brightbill, 1961; Stebbins, 2009). Previous research has found that recreational shoppers are distinguished from other shoppers by their penchant for information seeking (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). The creative persona study found a similar relationship between enacting the creative persona while grocery shopping, and enjoying seeking, using, and browsing information in the grocery store. The food-loving participants in the creative persona study described several grocery shopping aspects that positively impacted their creativity in the grocery store. These attributes impacted not only the participant's level of inspiration and enjoyment in the store, but also encouraged the seeking, sharing, and use of information. Several of the store attributes and other aspects of grocery shopping that participants described as contributing to their positive experience are strongly tied to information behavior. Discovering new things and

learning in the grocery store were both identified as important factors in how a grocery shopper enacts and understands his or her creativity in the grocery store.

Discovering new things

Several participants described discovering new things as an enjoyable aspect of their grocery shopping. At its essence, discovering new things is a direct result of passive information seeking in the grocery store. A number of participants described how they enjoyed browsing certain sections or the entire store to uncover new items and find inspiration for their cooking. Alberta and Gina shared how they enjoyed just perusing their favorite sections in the grocery store to see what is available, even when they are not shopping for items in that section. Lorraine and Wilma described that browsing in the grocery store was a pleasurable activity in its own right, aside from the enjoyment they receive from grocery shopping.

Discovering new things turns passive information seeking into an enjoyable activity in which the unexpected can turn the chore of grocery shopping into a leisure activity. While it seems counterintuitive to make the organization of a grocery store unexpected, it is precisely the surprise of encountering something new that can make information seeking more enjoyable and creative. Having a positive impression of grocery shopping or viewing the grocery store as a creative space motivates shoppers to leisurely browse a store's products and find inspiration.

Learning in the grocery store

For Wilma, Glen, and Katie, their favorite specialty grocery stores acted as an enjoyable source of information as well a marketplace to buy ingredients. All three participants described throughout their interviews how they enjoyed not only shopping and discovering new things in the grocery store, but also enjoyed learning from the

store's employees, displays, and interactive atmosphere. Katie's description of Central Market, a high-end grocery store, highlights the attributes that motivate her to learn in the grocery store and use it as a source of information.

Katie: Central Market I think is a really creative space. For example, the cheese is it's really interactive, you can try them and there are so many different types. Even the people that work there are very knowledgeable and all foodies themselves and want to suggest to you new recipes and ways to try new things. Yeah I think the people that work there also really help make it a creative environment.

The cheese samples along with the in-store displays and knowledgeable staff were described as inspiring exploration and making the discovery of new things easier and more inviting. High-end grocery stores such as Central Market carry a wide selection of products; the employees invite inquiries and freely provide recommendations. Through samples and in-store displays, these stores do not wait for someone to ask a question, they make the information available and assume a shopper will find a use for it. Altogether, these creative spaces encourage a wide variety of information behaviors and help grocery shoppers become more active information seekers and users.

Creativity in the grocery store is entwined with information. Discovering new products and learning about food were described by many of the participants as integral to their feeling creative in the grocery store. The participants that enjoyed passive and active information seeking in the grocery store also described enjoying their time grocery shopping. Some grocery stores are trying to enrich the information environment of their store by developing interactive spaces where information is plentiful and accessing it is fun. The findings of this study suggest that the more enjoyable information available to shoppers is, the better for the shoppers experience and the store's popularity.

OVERWHELMED

The creative persona study also addressed aspects of grocery shopping that prevented shoppers from enacting the creative persona. For several participants, being overloaded with information and options made the act of grocery shopping overwhelming and laborious, preventing them from enjoying the creative aspects others fondly described. Arturo, one of the most die-hard food lovers in either study, did not enjoy the process of grocery shopping. He explained,

Arturo: As fascinating as I find grocery stores, I still find shopping as a whole a little tiring. Grocery shopping is the most interesting shopping I think you can do, but shopping in general still is a little overwhelming with the overhead lights and the endless possibilities and trying to weigh all these different factors. It's a little tiring.

Arturo was one of many participants who did not fully enact the creative persona because he was overwhelmed by the “endless possibilities” in the grocery store.

Participants described planning ahead with lists and meal plans to help cope with feeling overwhelmed. Mabel, another participant who described being overwhelmed in the grocery store, explained how her list helps her navigate the grocery store.

Mabel: I just want to get in, get out. I have my list; I even have it sorted by sections. If I have to go to multiple [stores], I have that sorted by which one I'm going to. I know exactly what I need to get and I leave. That's it. I even write down the quantity; if I need two jugs of milk, I will write down "two" next to it so then I don't have to think about it while I'm there.

Through planning her grocery-shopping trip, Mabel is able to cope with the feeling of being overwhelmed that she experiences in large grocery stores.

The size of the store, the number of products, and the information-rich environment of the store overloaded participants with too much information and too many options. Information overload can occur when there are too many available options

with too many attributes to evaluate. Information overload creates anxiety in grocery shoppers that makes decision making, information seeking, and other information behaviors less enjoyable and more difficult. The information use of planning can be used to counteract the anxiety created from information overload and help grocery shoppers create successful if not pleasant shopping trip.

The descriptions of the participants that described grocery shopping as overwhelming demonstrate how an individual's love of food can be limited by the anxieties experienced when confronted with information overload. Being overwhelmed limits an individual's ability to make the most out of the information environment of the grocery store by discouraging passive and active forms of information behavior. The internal impact of feeling overwhelmed limits a grocery shopper's ability to interact with the information environment of the grocery store, negatively affecting many if not all of their information interactions in the grocery store.

CONCLUSION

Following Kuhlthau's (1991; 2009) work on affect by meshing IB research with concepts from other disciplines, this chapter demonstrates how several aspects that create the context around grocery shopping impact the information behaviors of grocery shoppers. The aim of this chapter was to explore a wider, holistic view of information by combining the findings from the grocery shopping perspective with the traditional concepts of IB and EIB. Through exploring the lived experience of grocery shoppers, I found that cultural norms, self-identity, moral obligation, creativity, and feeling overwhelmed all influence different aspects of information behavior. These aspects of grocery shopping highlight the variety of influences that are at play in the everyday activity of grocery shopping. They also suggest that information behavior in specific

domains may best be understood by focusing on the lived experience of individuals in those domains.

The analysis presented in this chapter demonstrates how the context surrounding an information environment can help explain the information behaviors that occur within it. Whether the forces are externally imposed, such as cultural norms, or internally imposed, such as creativity, they nevertheless influence an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and values. The examples presented in this chapter are specific to grocery shopping, but additionally show how a deeper understanding of the everyday life of individuals can increase our understanding of the context, motivations, and influences of their information behaviors more generally. The analysis shows how EIB scholars can use concepts from other disciplines to help explain the motivation and influences of information behaviors, enriching their research and scholarship

This section on the information behavior perspective has shown that grocery shopping is an information behavior activity. The following section will continue building on this work by using concepts and theories from the critical and cultural theory of the everyday to investigate the aspects that make grocery shopping an *everyday* information behavior activity.

**SECTION D: CRITICAL AND CULTURAL THEORY
PERSPECTIVE**

Chapter 6: Critical and Cultural Theory of Everyday Information Behavior

In the previous two sections I have analyzed my data using the grocery shopping and the information behavior literatures. My final analysis uses critical and cultural theory to expand the previous analysis by focusing on their ability to analyze the unique aspects of the everyday. In Chapter 7, I will present four new concepts I have created to this end, but in this chapter I describe four missed opportunities I see in EIB and the way theories and concepts from critical and cultural theory can be used to address these shortcomings.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN EVERYDAY INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

The strong ties between the traditional IB literature and the emerging field of EIB have created problems for and limitations to EIB research. EIB scholars are simultaneously breaking new ground in exploring the everyday world that historically has been viewed as too frivolous for research, while also wrestling with fitting the everyday into the concepts and theoretical frameworks of well-established IB scholarship. In order to enrich EIB scholarship, I advocate augmenting the scholarly focus in EIB of the traditional IB scholarship with literature from critical and cultural theory that focuses on the everyday.

Critical and cultural theory is the birthplace of research into the everyday, with scholars arguing for the importance of everyday life in scholarship since the 1930s (Lefebvre, 2008). One influential scholar, Henri Lefebvre, a Marxist and an intellectual forefather of critical theory, tried to bring together Marxism, philosophy, and tangible revolutionary change. He saw that, within the everyday life, individuals could learn to transform their lives and the broader world through the application of critical thought.

Lefebvre's work is not unlike that of contemporary EIB scholars; he sought a new domain in which to apply his work and to forge a new integration between emerging new philosophical traditions and Marxism. Lefebvre and several later scholars of critical and cultural theory provide many answers to the problems of contemporary EIB scholarship.

I am limiting my use of the work of critical and cultural theory scholars below to specific pieces of their work that I believe are the most useful for the EIB scholarship. Identifying them as scholars of critical and cultural theory is designed to create a conceptual coherence based on the small subset of work I am describing below. The work of these scholars is far more dynamic and diverse than the limited examples I am presenting here and in future work I hope to use more of their scholarship.

Table 13 previews the specific arguments I make in the following sections about missed opportunities present in traditional EIB scholarship.

Table 13: Overview of missed opportunities in everyday information behavior

Traditional Concepts	Missed Opportunities in EIB	Useful Approaches from Critical and Cultural Theory
Savolainen (1995) on the differences of information behaviors between teachers and industrial workers	EIB values only traditional types of expertise	Smith (1987) on everyday experts
Hartel (2010a) on the personal culinary libraries of gourmet cooking hobbyists	EIB values only serious, academic information	Hartman (2007; 2008) and Steedman (1987) on using narrative, lived experience, and other non-traditional forms of information
Ankem (2007), Johnson & Meischke (1993), Matthews et al. (2002), McCaughan and McKenna (2007), McKenzie (2003), and Veinot (2009) on information-rich health focused studies and Cortada (2011), Hartel (2003; 2010a; 2010b; 2011), Lee and Trace (2009), and Otto, Metz, and Ensmenger, (2011) on information-rich leisure studies	EIB values only information-rich behavior	Lefebvre (2008) and Schütz and Luckman (1973) on the unique attributes of the everyday and how those attributes help to identify non-traditional, information-rich behaviors, with examples from De Certeau (1984)
Kalms (2008) as an example of traditional research methods	EIB values only traditional research methods	Smith (1987; 2006) on institutional ethnography

Everyday information behavior values only traditional types of expertise

In its earliest days, research in IB was focused on understanding the behaviors of expert scholars in the fields of science and engineering who were using information systems known for containing sources with informational expertise. This legacy has led to a long tradition in both IB and EIB of privileging expertise in documents and people (Case, 2012). When leaving the controlled environments of the laboratory or the workplace and entering the everyday world, however, what counts as an information

source needs to change in order to handle new sets of problems and needs. The library does not always have the best answer to an everyday life question, and a non-professional user may not be able to easily access the library or an information system. Nevertheless, much of the literature in EIB continues to align itself with those kinds of traditional informational institutions and traditional expert information (Ankem, 2007; Hartel, 2003; Savolainen, 1995).

IB scholarship's preference for expertise—particularly a specific type of information-rich, academic expertise—creates research projects and scholarship that does not foreground and sometimes demeans the information needs, uses, and abilities of individuals who do not work within such contexts. A clear example of this preference is found in Savolainen's (1995) empirical study of everyday life information seeking in the context of "way of life," particularly when he compares the information behaviors of two (as he would argue) distinct groups of individuals: teachers and industrial workers. The study reports on the information behavior of teachers and industrial workers through interviews focused on their information use outside the workplace. The findings of the study were mostly expected by Savolainen, who uses claims in the results and discussion sections to show a clear distinction between the two participant groups' information behaviors with a preference toward those of the teachers.

Savolainen's (1995) argument demonstrates a clear preference for high-culture channels of information by including both fiction and non-fiction books into what Savolainen views as the information-rich pursuit of book reading, and by contrasting "serious" with "entertainment" television programs and newspaper sections. For example, he explains that while teachers "were more eager to seek factual information from various media, and they took a more critical stand toward the supply of *light entertainment* from radio, television, newspapers, and magazines" (p. 274, emphasis

added) due to the norms of their field, for industrial workers “the interest in informational pursuits is better explained on the basis of occasional interest in current affairs, not the substantial requirements of daily work per se,” (p. 274). Savolainen (1995) additionally argues in several places that teachers are also more serious in their information use of various media, stating that “even though watching television also belongs to teachers’ leisure time, it never dominates it so that there would be no time for book reading and other literary pursuits,” (p. 279) and “as expected, the workers were more interested in magazines associated with entertainment whereas teachers preferred ‘serious’ magazines reporting on cultural and professional affairs” (p. 275). While teachers watch “informational” (in Savolainen’s judgment) documentaries on television, industrial workers watch sports and other forms of “entertainment” (Savolainen’s phrase).

While Savolainen (1995) found that both groups used similar forms of personal communication for information seeking, he found that teachers have greater access to experts within their contact networks: “among their friends there were, for example, lawyers and physicians who could be contacted in problematic cases. It seemed as if teachers had more determination to contact *experts or decision makers* who were not easily available” (p. 282, emphasis added). The interpretation of what qualifies as an “expert” (and even the significance of “experts”) for these participants is based primarily on Savolainen’s opinion and previous experience with in the field of EIB.

Finally, Savolainen (1995) openly demonstrates a preference for traditional information institutions for everyday life information when he states that,

In general, workers seemed to be more dependent on information sources which were rather easily available... This practice is, of course, problematic because the information sources and channels most easily available and accessible might not necessarily be most expedient in problem solving. The best sources, for example, articles focusing on the problem at hand may be “hiding” somewhere in libraries. (p. 288)

This passage illuminates Savolainen's (1995) assumption that the best sources of information frequently, if not always, reside in a library. The library is a traditional information institution: it may be the best place to carry out certain information-rich tasks that are particularly suited to its design and institutional goals (e.g., researching a dissertation) but not necessarily for other information-rich tasks that fall more outside of that scope (e.g., researching a fantasy football draft).

At issue here is not the accuracy of Savolainen's (1995) results but rather the assumptions underlying his means of analysis and description. His article concludes with the evaluation that while there are individual differences and preferences due to the higher levels of cultural and social capital held by middle-class people, these individuals have "better chances than [working-class] workers of succeeding in seeking practical information in problem situations" (p. 290) by accessing decision makers or other expert sources. However, he regarded only certain types of content as informational and useful. By limiting the definition of information to sources that are information-rich or expert in some traditional way, he both fails to record many of the information behaviors important to the industrial workers in his sample and reinforces a hierarchy of information that originates in the laboratories and libraries studied by traditional IB literature. This information hierarchy, where the expert is prized above all else, diminishes individuals who and information behaviors that lack exposure to expert sources due to limited accessibility or for which an expert source does not exist. The everyday world is filled with information behaviors that may not use expert sources, but this does not mean they are not worth researching. Due to the complicated and varied nature of information behaviors in everyday life, many situations require expediency, social connection, cultural norms, or other characteristics to fill an information need.

Everyday information behavior should value everyday experts

Considering Savolainen's (1995) remarks above, it is not surprising that he found teachers (and the middle class that they represent) to be more comfortable with a traditional and narrowly drawn conceptualization of information than the working-class industrial workers in his study. Due to their lack of access or desire to access traditional expert information sources, the industrial workers in his study are presented as lacking "competence" and as being ill-prepared to find and use appropriate information in problem situations. The industrial workers are viewed as lacking the ability to successfully work within the information environment around them. Similarly, the hierarchy of information that has been subtly presented in the broader EIB literature creates distinctions that alienate groups who chiefly use and seek non-expert information. Instead of following in the footsteps of researchers such as Savolainen, EIB could use critical thought and theory from other scholarly fields in order to reject this hierarchy and replace it with a new understanding of expertise.²²

Coming out of both critical and feminist traditions, Smith (1987) provides one such explication of the everyday expert that could work with and shape the hierarchical expertise present in much of the EIB literature. The concept of the everyday expert that Smith presents in her work is an outgrowth of the ideas that ground her feminist thought. She explains that an essential component of the women's movement and the political action of consciousness-raising is "the repudiation of the professional, the expert, the already authoritative tones of the discipline; the science, the formal tradition, and the return to the seriously engaged and very difficult enterprise of discovering how to begin

²² The term 'expert' may not be the most appropriate word to use here, as an everyday expertise refers more to a competence or experience, but the term's importance in the scholarly community makes it the appropriate term for my purposes. For a similar redefining of the term 'expert' see Bakardjieva's (2005) use of 'warm expert'.

from ourselves” (p. 58). As outsiders, women were viewed as less capable than men due to their perceived lack of ability to fit within the norms of the public sphere. Men were regarded as the experts of the public sphere in all of the places that mattered, while women’s expertise was largely restricted to the private sphere of the home.

Freed from the assumed hierarchies of expertise by rejecting the basic premises of those hierarchies, Smith explains that the meaning of expertise accordingly changes from identifying the few experts to recognizing the expertise in every person: “Within our everyday worlds, we are expert practitioners... Our everyday worlds are in part our own accomplishments, and our special and expert knowledge is continually demonstrated in their ordinary familiarity and unsurprising ongoing presence” (Smith, 1987, p. 110). Thus, individuals of all social and cultural backgrounds—even individuals who may fail at traditional forms of information seeking—are experts of their own everyday lives; consequently, everyday expertise needs to be taken into consideration in future research in EIB. Information behaviors are not limited to contexts with traditional expert sources, especially in exploring everyday life. Scholars cannot simply swap out one group of expert sources for another when researching a new domain. Instead, the field should also use Smith’s concept of the everyday expert to focus on the multiple forms of expertise present in the everyday.

Everyday information behavior values only serious, academic information

The information identified and studied by most of the scholars of EIB looks remarkably similar. Not only are the scholars well versed in the traditional IB literature with its origins in the study of libraries and research labs, but scholars have also been socialized into their positions through the regular use of academic tools, such as libraries, databases, and scholarly communication. The offices of most scholars are filled with the

types of information they use for their work, and when they leave those offices to study the everyday life of their participants, it is no wonder that they are drawn to information that is familiar to them. Even when scholars challenge convention and take on topics of study that historically have been regarded as frivolous, they continue to identify with the libraries and books, which demonstrate to them that information is present.

One scholar, Jenna Hartel (2003; 2010a; 2010b; 2011), has challenged the accepted domains in EIB by proposing and then presenting work that studies serious leisure. Much of her work centers on gourmet cooking hobbyists and their information behaviors. Hobbyists are notable because their information pursuits are non-professional (Hartel, 2003) and do not generate traditional forms of capital (Aspray, Royer, & Ocepek, 2013), but they nevertheless do participate in a “serious” type of leisure as defined by Stebbins (1982). It is the serious and information-rich nature of gourmet cooking hobbyists that Hartel highlights in her work.

In one study, focusing on the management of documents of serious leisure hobbyists, Hartel (2010a) visited the homes of gourmet cooking hobbyists and requested tours of spaces used in the pursuit of their hobby, saying, “I’d like you to take me through your home, showing me the locations and resources used in the hobby. In particular, please show me the culinary *information* resources here in the house” (p. 853, emphasis added). After this prompting, it is not surprising that Hartel encountered information-rich spaces, with accounts that are only slightly dissimilar from that of someone entering a traditional academics workspace:

...a visitor encounters a long wall of ceiling-to-floor shelves holding hundreds of cookbooks, grouped by topic. Culinary magazines arrive in the mail monthly and are displayed on a coffee table, while past issues covering four decades are kept in the garage. An updated kitchen contains a cabinet-sized card file of several thousand hand-written recipes, and various culinary handbooks are within reach of the stove. In a spare-bedroom-turned office Dorene spends up to two hours a

day at her computer, surfing food-themed web sites, sorting folders and files of digital recipes, and staying current with hobby-related mailing lists and correspondence. (p. 848)

The information that Dorene, a participant in the study, presents to Hartel comprises traditional information sources, and the amount of time dedicated to maintaining and updating the information is similar to what many academics and professionals strive for in their professions.

Beyond these descriptions, Hartel's (2010a) central finding is a description of the "personal culinary library" within each home. These descriptions include accounts of the libraries' "contents, scope, prevalence, and management, with special attention to unique information artifacts and structures created by hobbyists" (Hartel, 2010a, p. 848). In attempting to leave the traditional domains of the IB literature, Hartel enters a home and finds a library (in each of her 20 site visits). Specifically, she finds a library that can be analyzed and understood to have the tools IB and EIB scholars know very well because the personal culinary libraries look almost exactly like the libraries that have already been studied for decades.

Ultimately, therefore, this study does not actually move beyond the library or the documents that are familiar to Hartel and her participants. It may be the case that, as individuals with personal culinary libraries, the participants understand their information in only this way. However, it is very difficult to believe that there are not also less easily observable forms of information beyond these libraries. These alternate forms of information are less easily observed in part because they do not look like the serious, academic forms of information that IB and EIB scholars are trained to recognize. It is not difficult to imagine that these hobbyists also use information sources such as memories of their grandmother's cooking, discussions with friends and other hobbyists, or stories

associated with the recipes that fill their cookbooks and shelves. Unfortunately, these types of information appear nowhere in Hartel's (2010a) study.

Everyday information behavior should value non-traditional forms of information

While serious, academic forms of information can be readily identified in the everyday world by IB and EIB scholars, there are many other types and forms of information that are not only native to the everyday, but characterize its unique aspects. Non-traditional information sources cannot be identified from a list of information objects (Kalms, 2008) or by taking photographs of a person's living spaces (Hartel, 2010a) because they are far more complex and specific to an individual's lived experience and personal reference schemas (Schütz & Luckman, 1973).²³

Information that cannot be seen or experienced by the researcher has not been well researched in the EIB or IB literature, but several notable scholars in critical and cultural theory (Geertz, 1973; Haraway, 2004; Hartman, 2007; 2008; Rhodes-Pitts, 2011; Steedman, 1987; Williams, 1975) have offered an alternative way of identifying such information through an exploration of epistemology and the unique relationship between an individual and the information he or she encounters. The scholars who I discuss in this section share with me the goals of my work in this dissertation in that each came to an academic field with the traditional tools of the trade and found that he or she was not able to accomplish his or her desired research goals relying upon these tools. These scholars stand out because they were able to approach research in new ways compared to their contemporaries. Instead of giving up or changing their focus, these scholars fought for changes in their field and were successful in both attaining their goals and improving their disciplines.

²³ A personal reference schema is a cognitive framework for understanding the world based on personal experience and other known information.

In particular, two scholars of cultural theory, Steedman (1987) and Hartman (2008), share several important characteristics: both were trained as historians and both felt a pull to explore the research areas that reflected their own personal lives. Steedman devoted much of her career to class analysis, cultural criticism, and critical feminism through the study of the English working class, while Hartman spent her career researching memory and identity formation through the history of slavery and contemporary black experience. Each was frustrated by the desire to tell accurate histories in the face of inaccurate and incomplete sources. When the traditional sources that they were taught to use failed them, each of these scholars explored the meaning of evidence and alternative ways of telling history.

Steedman's (1987) most notable work, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, begins with her research problem, stating that "the structures of class analysis and schools of cultural criticism... cannot deal with everything there is to say about my mother's life" (p. 6). Her mother is a central figure in this work precisely because her everyday experience as a working-class woman in post-war England did not match the accounts of working-class women that Steedman found in the scholarly literature. Steedman was interested not primarily in what happened, but instead and in her eyes more importantly in, "how people use the past to tell the stories of their life" (p. 8) and through those stories make sense of their life. Throughout the work, Steedman uses her memories of past events as evidence to explore the social pressures and norms placed on her and her family as working-class people. She argues that it is through narrative that social meaning can be identified, providing several examples including how children use fairytales as cognitive tools to understand their world and their place within that world.

While personal narrative and memory are not types of evidence traditionally found in historical scholarship, Steedman (1987) reminds the reader that traditional

sources are not always the accurate accounts they claim to be. In explaining that while she and her sister are illegitimate, “we have proper birth certificates, because my mother must have told a simple lie to the registrar, a discovery about the verisimilitude of documents that worries me a lot as a historian,” (p. 40). Such inaccuracies in traditional sources of evidence are just one of the many reasons why there should not be an assumed hierarchy of information sources.

Hartman’s (2008) work not only provides another reason to avoid relying on “authoritative” sources, but also considers alternative ways of knowing and recounting history. In her research on the Atlantic Slave Trade, Hartman encounters historical documents filled with brief snippets of lives discarded, often written by the men who discarded them. In an archive, Hartman encountered a passing reference to a young girl named Venus who, along with another young girl, was killed on board the slave ship *Recovery*. The captain of the ship was acquitted of these crimes and the only evidence introduced in the trial was testimony by the ship’s crew. The absence of Venus’s voice troubled Hartman. She knew that to create a story for Venus “would have trespassed the boundaries of the archive,” (p. 9) but not to write about Venus and the other girl would have “consigned them to oblivion” (p. 10). The archives that Hartman worked with are filled with traditional forms of evidence and information, but they are also filled with “the fictions of history—the rumors, scandals, lies, invented evidence, fabricated confessions, volatile facts, impossible metaphors, chance events, and fantasies that constitute the archive and determine what can be said about the past” (p. 10).

The tools of her field required Hartman (2007) to enter the archive, and there she explains, “my graduate training hadn’t prepared me to tell the stories of those who had left no record of their lives and whose biography consisted of the terrible things said about them or done to them,” (p. 16). Instead of relying solely on inaccurate and

incomplete sources, she decided to write about the Atlantic Slave Trade by going to Ghana, a country that “possessed more dungeons, prisons, and slave pens than any other in West Africa,” (p. 7). In Ghana, she sought out the archives and historical monuments of the Atlantic Slave Trade and found additional inaccurate and incomplete sources. She decided, instead of regarding her time in Ghana as a fruitless research trip, to write about her experience as a young African American in Ghana struggling to find a specific history that was not there and discovering a new story and new ways to tell history.

Information scholars—particularly EIB researchers—can take from Steedman (1987) and Hartman (2007; 2008) the reassurance that scholars can move beyond the accepted disciplinary tools and still find success and inspiration. Instead of overly relying on traditional information sources and ways of knowing, they can look to narrative, lived experience, and other non-traditional forms of information as valuable resources and means for understanding everyday life.

Everyday information behavior values only information-rich behavior

As the EIB literature has expanded and addressed new areas of everyday life, it has held on to the familiar concept from the IB literature of ‘information-rich behavior.’ Information-rich behavior can be defined as any information behavior that uses, transmits, or seeks large amounts and/or varieties of visible information, which typically includes printed and online sources, personal communication, and use of a traditional information institution or expert source.

Several of the clearest examples of research in EIB that focus exclusively on information-rich behaviors come from studies on health information (Ankem, 2007; Johnson & Meischke, 1993; Matthews et al., 2002; McCaughan & McKenna, 2007; McKenzie, 2003; Veinot, 2009). All of these studies consider the information behavior of

individuals in the midst of major medical life events, such as cancer diagnoses, multiple birth pregnancies, and HIV/AIDS treatment. During these difficult times, patients may suddenly find themselves making decisions about their treatments and dealing with the personal hardships that go along with their diagnoses. Many patients struggle to find and assess pertinent information coming from their doctors, friends, and their own information searches. Several of these health information studies (Ankem, 2007; Johnson & Meischke, 1993) assume that purposive information seeking is the default behavior of individuals experiencing a major medical life event, or at least that the social pressure involved with a medical condition demands that individuals become active information seekers (McKenzie, 2003). These assumptions create a very fertile ground for EIB research, but also demonstrate the uncommon nature of this life experience.

Even research that is focused not on a doctor's office but instead on the home, one of the more typical venues of the everyday, tends to seek out exclusively information-rich pursuits: the hobbies of genealogy (Cortada, 2011), gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2010a; 2010b; 2011), rubber duck collecting (Lee & Trace, 2009), and fantasy sports (Otto et al., 2011). This focus on information-rich pursuits is not surprising considering the way in which Hartel (2003) exhorted EIB scholars to enter the leisure domain: "The most fruitful starting point [for leisure research] is serious, not casual leisure, because it is information-rich" (p. 236). Specifically, Hartel argues that individuals who participate in serious leisure are ideal to study because, "participants in serious leisure must make significant personal effort based on specially acquired knowledge, training, or skill. Hence, information and the proactive seeking and use of it are central to serious leisure" (p. 230). Hartel (2003) also notes that serious leisure hobbyists are also frequenters of the public library—making them a traditionally more acceptable subject of study.

All of the above examples underscore my argument that EIB research looks for the information that it easily recognizes—and the more information, the better. Unfortunately, these studies also demonstrate that even with an emphasis placed on identifying a variety of information sources in information-rich environments, there is little variation in the sources presented. The information-rich behaviors and information-rich environments typically found in the EIB literature strongly resemble the information wealth of the traditional information institutions and workplaces that have defined the IB literature. In fact, scholars in EIB have addressed only a small portion of the everyday world with much of their work.

Ultimately, although the field of EIB has made great strides by entering new domains and areas of research, it continues to hold on to concepts that clearly align with the traditional IB literature. This legacy, in turn, drastically limits the research domains in which EIB scholars can feel comfortable in their explorations. The traditional IB understanding of information, and especially information-richness, makes much of everyday life appear to be information poor and not worthy of study.

Everyday information behavior should value the variety of ‘everyday’ information behavior

In order to explore the great variety of information behaviors native to the everyday world, EIB scholars should broaden their conceptualization of information-richness to include behaviors that appear at first glance to use few, if any, traditional forms of information, but which in fact are in their own way information-rich. For instance, future work should move beyond the serious leisure to explore what has been defined as casual leisure, i.e., “play, relaxation, and entertainment” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 19). By understanding and using the transformative power of the everyday (Lefebvre, 2008; Schütz & Luckman, 1973), EIB scholars can expand their research to new domains

and new forms of information. These new conceptualizations of information are not just information-rich and within the reach of study, they are also notable for the emphasis they place on the relationship between the various types of information and the individual interacting with that information.

The theoretical concept of the everyday was established by Lefebvre (2008) and Alfred Schütz (Schütz & Luckman, 1973). Schütz was a phenomenologist and social scientist who believed that “the world of the everyday life is consequently man’s fundamental and paramount reality” (p. 3) and should be the focus of scientific inquiry. A scholar fascinated by social scientific methods, Schütz argued that,

The sciences that would interpret and explain human action and thought must begin with a description of the foundational structures of what is prescientific, the reality which seems self-evident to men remaining within the natural attitude. This reality is the everyday life-world. It is the province of reality in which man continuously participates in ways, which are at once inevitable and patterned. (p. 3)

For Schütz, the everyday was important because it influences every thought and action of an individual. The everyday is quotidian and often unnoticed, which is precisely why it is the centerpiece for understanding individuals and the larger social structures around them.

The other major scholar to define and encourage scholarship in the everyday, Lefebvre (2008), saw the banality of the everyday as an opportunity for revolution. Like Schütz, Lefebvre believed that “the science of mankind must become a study of everyday life,” because the everyday is where “genuine reality” can be found and “genuine change” can take place (p. 137). Both scholars saw the potential in the everyday for research; although neither was primarily interested in information’s role in the everyday,

their call to begin work in the everyday is just as appropriate in studies of information behavior as it is in any other social science.

Like Schütz and Lefebvre, scholars of information behavior must look to and not past the banal, quotidian descriptions of the everyday in order to understand how individuals really interact with information on a fundamental level. To conduct this research, the scholar must go beyond simply identifying sources of information and look to the relationship individuals have with information. For example, De Certeau's (1984) influential chapter "Walking in the City" takes the everyday behavior of walking through a city and examines it through a critical lens in order to discover the complexities of a common activity.

De Certeau (1984) explains that walking through a city is viewed by most scholars as a passive experience in which an individual follows paths constructed by various social and governmental institutions. While the city is created with space where an individual can and cannot walk—the various paths someone might take across the city—this infrastructure allows for pedestrians to shape their own experience of the city. Walking in a city is not completely limiting, but it is also not totally free for personal freedom and movement. In fact, the various paths available to a pedestrian contain great amounts of information—everything from the signs, billboards, and people populating the city to the reasons an individual might choose one path over another. Regarding walking in a city as De Certeau argues it should be considered, provides just one example of how an individual's interaction with the everyday can be information-rich. Often, the information-richness of a behavior can best be understood when taking into account the relationship between the individual and the information.

In both IB and EIB, sources are often viewed as things read, heard, or seen by an individual and are taken at face value: if an individual reads an article about a specific

medical procedure, then he or she is regarded as having received that information. In contrast, scholars of the everyday look at how individuals interact with information on a personalized level. For instance, Schütz explains that,

Meaning is not a quality of certain lived experience emerging distinctively in the stream of consciousness—that is to say, of the objectivities constituted within it. It is rather the result of my explication of past lived experiences which are grasped reflectively from an actual now and from an actually valid reference schema. (Schütz & Luckman, 1973, p. 15-16)

While meaning-making may be only one type of interaction between an individual and information, this quotation highlights the relationship between the new information that an individual interacts with and all of the information and experiences that already creates the individual's reference schema.

In thinking more about the relationship between individuals and information, De Certeau (1984) provides an illustrative example in his chapter “Reading as Poaching.” Reading is described as a typical everyday activity, which at first glance appears to be a passive form of consumption in which an individual receives the information present within a book. De Certeau (1984), however, sees reading as a form of production in which the book provides information to the reader, who in turn places his or her own interpretation on that information to create new information. Readers are like poachers in that, as De Certeau explains, “readers are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write,” (p. 174). This view of reading not only explicates an information behavior where information is both received and created, but also identifies the agency of the reader that is typically not recognized in much of IB and EIB scholarship. At the end of “Reading as Poaching,” De

Certeau makes an important point: “it is always good to remind ourselves that we mustn’t take people for fools” (p. 176).²⁴

Everyday information behavior values only traditional research methods

One of the most exciting opportunities in EIB research can also be one of its biggest pitfalls. Researching a new area allows scholars considerable freedom to ask big questions and to try and find big answers. Unfortunately, this freedom also means that while several of the research goals are ambitious, the initial studies may lack the ability to utilize methods that are up to the challenge of exploring new domains.

One example of a failure to properly match research methods with research goals in EIB is Kalms’ (2008) research on household information practices. Kalms’ study begins with admirable aims:

While much is known about the modern household as a consumer of media and adopter of technologies, little is known about how the household, as a collectivity, processes and manages the information it receives each day; that is, about how the household operates as an information system. (Introduction, para. 3)

In order to understand the underexplored household information system, Kalms (2008) designed his study to focus on the unique experience of the participating households and also to require the individual participants “to employ his or her own view of what constituted information,” (The Nature of Information, para. 2). The study consisted of two data collection methods, a questionnaire and an interview. The goal of both data

²⁴ In addition to De Certeau, several other scholars of critical and cultural theory provide good examples of finding information-rich behaviors in nontraditional places. These include Geertz’s (1973) famous examination of Balinese cock fighting; also see Becker (2008) on artistic movements, Goffman (1959) on presentation of self, Haraway (2004) the American Museum of Natural History, Harris (1987) on food culture, Molotch (2003) on the design of everyday items, and Zelizer (2011) on different cultural views of monetary worth.

collection methods was to allow the members of the household to explain their own specific household information systems.

Kalms' (2008) study begins with clear research goals and is openly focused on understanding the participants' lived experience and personal views on information. These goals, unfortunately, were largely not met due to the choice of the traditional methods of data collection common in the EIB literature. First, the questionnaire provided to the participants prior to their interviews contained a list of 190 types of information and 70 types of information-related devices and services. The lists were created by the author based on an "an audit of the information found in [his] own household," (Kalms, 2008, Note, para. 1). After the participants went through and marked off which of the various information types, devices, or services they use in their own home, they were then interviewed by the researcher. Each interview began with the prompt, "Tell me what happens to information in your household," (Methods, para. 2).

By giving the interview subjects ready-defined lists of what constitutes information and information devices, Kalms (2008) undermines his own avowed goals of allowing his participants to define information for themselves. The participants were first told what information looked like in their home, as embodied in the various items presented in the questionnaire, and were then prompted *not* to describe their life in their household, but rather to specifically describe their interaction with a predefined list of information categories. Whatever the participants might have viewed as household information before the study began, their views were clearly influenced—if not completely changed—by being presented with a list of information types from an information scholar.

Moreover, by not allowing the participants to explain what they believe information to be in their homes, or actually observing the participants' information use,

Kalms' (2008) study was unable to meet its own goals of exploring the unique experience of household information systems in real homes. The participants' opinions and ideas were therefore never able to truly come out through this study: instead of being able to convey their own experiences with information in their home, they were primed to identify information types before they were even able to speak.

Everyday information behavior should practice methods that highlight the individual's lived experience

As new ideas and research areas enter into a research field, the traditional methods need to be revised, and new methods need to be created that are more appropriate to facilitate the new area of research. EIB scholars can look to Smith (1987) and her reinvention of traditional methodologies in sociology as inspiration to create their own new methods. Like Smith, scholars in EIB need methods that allow for a thorough and exact recording of the lived experience of participants in order to accurately portray the nuances of everyday life. Smith's *institutional ethnography* could become a guiding force for the incorporation of new methods into EIB. Below, I present Smith's (1987; 2006) institutional ethnography method as described for use by sociologists and then describe how it can be adapted in the EIB field.

The aim of institutional ethnography is "to explicate the actual social processes and practices organizing people's everyday experience from a standpoint in the everyday world" (Smith, 1987, p. 151). This means that institutional ethnography "does not transform people into objects, but preserves their presence as subjects" (p. 151). Institutional ethnography is a methodology for the people that "begins where people are and proceeds from there to discoveries that are for them" (Smith, 2006, p. 3). This method is grounded in the real, lived experience of the participants and "does not transpose knowing into the objective forms in which the situated subject and her actual

experience and location are discarded” (Smith, 1987, p. 153). The specific methods used within institutional ethnography can be diverse, as long as there is “a commitment to an investigation and explication of how ‘it’ actually is, of how ‘it’ actually works, of actual practices and relations” (p. 160). Even though most of the work is descriptive and all work is based on local settings, institutional ethnography is nevertheless generalizable.

Smith (1987) presents a new framework for positioning the method by explaining, “investigating the everyday world as problematic involves an inquiry into relations that are themselves generalized through exploration of the character of those relations from the standpoint of everyday experience” (p. 159). An individual case is the “point of entry, the locus of an experiencing subject or subjects, into a larger social and economic process” (p. 157). The individual cases are used to draw out broader general statements about society or about the particular population that is being studied; these cases are the ideal units of analysis precisely because of their specificity and awareness of their lived experience. The context surrounding the cases are created by the social relationships that impact all members of the population within that context.

For EIB, institutional ethnography provides a framework for thinking about the best methods for exploring both the everyday and understanding the actual lived information behavior of individuals. By grounding work in the everyday life of individuals, EIB scholars can learn how information actually impacts and interacts with people’s lives. This focus can also ensure that participants in research are valued and encouraged to share their own thoughts and opinions, not merely to repeat back the views of the researcher. This research framework amplifies the solutions mentioned above to the problems currently affecting EIB by ensuring that participants are valued for their everyday expertise and that their behaviors are carefully examined to find the many forms of information in their everyday life.

EIB methods that aim to explore the unique and multifaceted nature of the everyday should follow institutional ethnography in that,

though this inquiry calls for specialized skills, it must be considered as a work of cooperation between sociologists and those who want to understand the social matrices of their experience. For each of us is an expert practitioner of our everyday world, knowledgeable in the most intimate ways of how it is put together and of its routine daily accomplishment. It is the individual's working knowledge of her everyday world that provides the beginning of the inquiry. (Smith, 1987, p. 154)

Methods designed to follow institutional ethnography are the most appropriate for EIB research because they will be developed with a specific focus on the everyday world in addition to supporting the other solutions to EIB problems as presented above.

TOWARD A MORE 'EVERYDAY' EVERYDAY INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

I conclude this chapter by presenting three examples in order to elucidate how the new EIB I have advocated here will work. These three examples come from scholars in different fields and use different methodologies. These examples all deal with lived experience in the everyday world, and they all demonstrate the great amount of information that is present in the everyday but is traditionally hidden from IB scholars. The first example comes from a folklorist describing an interpretive conflict surrounding her interpretation of her grandmother's story (Borland, 1997). Steedman (1987) provides the second example of how the creation of government assistance programs dramatically shaped her understanding of her own worth. The third example demonstrates how Smith's (1987) institutional ethnography has been used to unpack the social relations of a mother's role in the schooling of her children. These examples suggest how critical and cultural theory can be integrated into EIB and can open up new avenues of research.

Borland (1997), a folklorist interested in feminism and stories of women's experience in the early 20th century, embarked on interpreting a story from her grandmother for an academic audience. She recorded her grandmother, Beatrice, recounting the story about a day Beatrice spent with her father at the racetrack in the 1930s. The story centers around Beatrice correctly picking and betting on a winning horse and her father's disagreement with Beatrice's selection. Borland interprets Beatrice's story "as a presentation of self as a competent judge of horses," and also functioning "to assert a sense of female autonomy and equality within a sphere dominated by men" (p. 325). Borland sent this interpretation to Beatrice who responded with a fourteen page letter explaining that she is not a feminist and does not agree with her granddaughter's interpretation.

The conflict of interpretations between Borland (1997) and her grandmother allowed her to reflect on how her methods and analysis alienated her grandmother. Borland explains,

The performance of a personal narrative is a fundamental means by which people comprehend their own lives and present a 'self' to their audience. Our scholarly representations of those performances, if not sensitively presented, may constitute an attack on our collaborators' carefully constructed sense of self. (p. 328)

Beatrice found Borland's interpretation not to align with her own lived experience. Specifically, Borland abstracts from Beatrice's story and describes Beatrice's father as "a symbol of repressive male authority" (p. 329), while the actual man was many things to Beatrice, including supportive and loving. Through the interpretation of her story, Beatrice's lived experience and her father were attacked in order to draw broader meaning. The interpretations differ because of the contextual information that is tied to the story for Beatrice and is removed in Borland's interpretation.

This example highlights the hidden information present in lived experience as well as the problems with abstracting out from participants' localized actualities. While Borland's (1997) interpretation of her grandmother's story may be useful for scholarship, it misses out on the nuanced relationship between Beatrice and her father and her everyday world. The next example also highlights the importance of seemingly small everyday changes to someone's life.

Steedman's (1987) research addresses gender and class dynamics in England, as well as the differences she sees in the lived experience of herself and her mother. Both grew up as working-class women, but they did not share the same worldview. One reason for the change in worldviews between generations that Steedman points out is the impact that state intervention had on her and her sister in post-war England. Steedman argues that, as some of the first beneficiaries of welfare programs designed to ensure that children had access to nutritious food, she developed a novel viewpoint in her own family. The extra food provided to her and her family gave her the message, "I do have a right to the earth" (p. 122). This message did not need to exist in advertising campaigns or through lectures at Steedman's school; instead, the message came from her experience of receiving assistance that was not available to previous working-class generations, including her mother's. Steedman goes on to explain that even in her later life, when her family no longer needed government assistance, she could not disconnect from her personal experience to analytically examine the government assistance programs.

Using traditional methods and concepts of information would make understanding Steedman's story difficult. Looking at the facts of the government assistance programs of post-war England provides an understanding of the impact of the program in an abstract way, but only the stories of the individuals who actually lived and benefitted from the program can uncover the program's broader and lived significance. A large part of

Steedman's understanding of self is derived from the everyday experience of picking up food from government assistance programs. Embracing this type of everyday experience in information behavior research will require new research aims as well as methods to execute those aims.

The final example presents how Smith (1987) employed institutional ethnography in a sociological context. Institutional ethnography is a research method that begins "with the standpoint of actual women and [explores] through them the relations organizing the everyday world as the matrix of their experience" (p. 181). The specific research study that Smith creates to demonstrate the benefits of institutional ethnography addresses work that parents perform in relation to their child's formalized schooling. This study's methods have three stages.

The first stage of Smith's (1987) study involves semi-structured interviews of 12 women from two neighboring primary schools—one working-class and one middle-class school—selected for the socio-economic makeup of their populations. The interviews focus on the women's work in relation to their child's school and a description of a school day. The second stage consists of the researchers analyzing these interviews in order to identify the underlying social relations present in the women's descriptions. The interviews are not coded, nor are themes identified. Instead, the language and descriptions from the interviews are examined for concepts such as common terminology and "the ways in which they were articulated to the social organization of the school" (p. 183).²⁵ Smith explains that the researchers "wanted to be able to preserve our sense of the lived actualities of women's lives as being embedded in a more extensive complex of

²⁵ For example, the concept of "school day" or the rhythms of preparing students for school, their return, and their homework time are all understood to take on a specific order and are expected to occur in every home with school-aged children. This term is used and its meaning is implicitly understood by the parents, teachers, school administrators, and researchers.

relations that which we could actually investigate” (p. 184). For this specific study, the concept that emerged and became the focus of the study was the parent’s role in their child’s homework. The final stage involved interviewing teachers and school administrators to explore the social relation identified in stage two.

After the three stages were completed, the entire corpus of data was examined to address larger social relations while holding onto the specific, localized experience of the women from stage one. Smith (1987) emphasizes that “the movement of research is from a woman’s account of her everyday experience to exploring *from that perspective* the generalizing and generalized relations in which each individual’s everyday world is embedded” (p. 185, emphasis in original). The generalized relations that emerged from this study include the shared assumptions surrounding the parent’s role in their child’s schooling, especially the child’s homework. Smith (1987) explains that the parents, teachers, and school administrators all share an assumption that homework is the responsibility of both the child and the parents. This assumption in turn creates a strong norm that parents, usually mothers, must spend additional time assisting with and checking their child’s homework. This expectation is seen in both schools, with higher expectations on the parents at the middle-class school.

Smith (1987) uses institutional ethnography to ground her research in the actual, lived experience of the women she interviews, while still addressing the larger generalized relations that analytically move beyond description into theory development. Smith’s study and the two previous examples demonstrate the feasibility, as well as the opportunity, provided by an EIB with a strong focus on the everyday. All three examples demonstrate that the everyday world contains information in places that are beyond the scope of traditional information behavior research, but which can be the focus of a new form of EIB.

While all of the examples and most of the critical and cultural theory discussed above was designed to address the social world of women or marginalized groups, the perspective on approaching the everyday that I advocate can address the everyday life of all members of society. The scholars who developed the critical and cultural theories of the everyday did so out of necessity to explore and explain aspects of life that traditional concepts and methods had ignored. That history is important for contextualizing the work of these researchers, but it does not limit the usefulness of their theories and methods for EIB. The methods that I describe will allow EIB researchers to address the lived experience of all persons in the everyday world because these concepts help to expand what scholars value and count as information, thereby allowing both teachers and industrial workers to be experts in their own everyday life.

Going forward, research in EIB—including my own—will be able to explore the everyday world as many of the above critical and cultural scholars have, but with a special focus on information behavior. This integration of critical and cultural theories of the everyday into the still-developing field of EIB research creates many opportunities to examine new information behaviors, as well as providing EIB scholars with a more nuanced understanding of information behavior than can be achieved by solely relying on traditional IB perspectives. By bringing out the everyday in EIB, my research aims to gain greater insight into information behavior that goes largely unnoticed and then to use that insight to improve the analysis of information behavior, processes, and systems.

Chapter 7: Critical and Cultural Theory of Grocery Shopping

Chapter 6 presents my approach to augmenting EIB with the critical and cultural theory of the everyday. As previously described, the everyday world is primary to understanding society because before we learn anything in school we are steeped in our experience of the everyday world (Lefebvre, 2008; Schütz & Luckman, 1973). As such, an everyday focused EIB necessarily carries great importance for the broader information behavior research community. If one can approach the everyday as primary, then the importance of understanding information behavior in the everyday world becomes clear. Before ever entering a library or writing a research paper, individuals create an understanding of how the world works. This understanding may of course be altered and changed, but it is the foundation that knowledge is built on. The critical and cultural theory of the everyday literature argues that to understand someone, you should focus on the lived experience of his or her everyday life. Throughout this chapter, I will articulate how that conceptualization can be usefully applied to EIB through examples from my two empirical studies. Throughout my empirical work, four concepts from critical and cultural theory emerged that aided my analysis of my participants' grocery shopping information behaviors: everyday expertise, non-traditional sources, personal stories, and a typology of relationships between individuals and information. In the following sections, I will describe in turn each of these concepts and their theoretical basis, followed by examples from the nurturer and creative persona studies.

EVERYDAY EXPERTISE

As described in Chapter 6, the concept of the everyday expert comes out of the women's movement and is a rejection of traditional ideas of expertise that value professional experts, mostly a closed group of powerful men (Smith, 1987). Traditional

expertise involves hierarchies where the few are considered knowledgeable and important, while the rest must gain access to experts' knowledge and abilities. Smith's concept of the everyday expert rejects this hierarchy and replaces it with a level field where all individuals are experts of their own life, and their expertise is valuable to them regardless of titles or formalized training. Through each individual's lived experiences she or he becomes an everyday expert of her or his life.

All of the participants in my study are experts of their life and their needs. Some participants described themselves as grocery shopping novices who are still learning, but others had well-established systems that have refined through years of practice. Both groups represent everyday experts in that all of the participants understand their grocery shopping experience. This conceptualization feeds my overall research design and the importance I place on my participants' remarks throughout the studies. The concept of the everyday expert is also useful when addressing how participants navigate the grocery store. Each person is an everyday expert, and through my research I uncovered how some participants use his or her everyday expertise.

Everyday expertise is not universal; there is no one everyday expert of grocery shopping; instead each participant has his or her own expertise that he or she relies on in the grocery store. Everyday expertise is a set of skills that a person relies on to make decisions, evaluate information, and drive other information behaviors. Individuals develop everyday expertise through lived experience influenced by their values and background. Conceptually, expertise functions like muscle memory in that it facilitates quick decisions and is the deciding factor when choosing among equal alternatives. As an example, a person's everyday expertise could be handiness. Someone who spends time tinkering with things and fixing them can be said to be handy. That handiness is useful to fix a broken light switch, but those skills affect how someone approaches problems and

situations. A handy person may be more likely to be self-reliant and try to do things themselves in other aspects of their life. Several participants described their everyday expertise and how it impacts grocery shopping. I identified two forms of everyday expertise that were described by multiple participants: bargain hunter and nutrition seeker.

Bargain hunter

The bargain hunter expertise relies on an understanding of price and appreciating getting a good deal. Grocery shoppers with this expertise do not always buy the cheapest version of every product, but they seek out deals to maximize quality for minimal cost. Both Mabel and Julius described and were observed using their bargain hunter expertise in the creative persona study.

Mabel's shopping goals were efficiency in the grocery store and getting a good deal. She explained in her interview, "Just out of principle, if I can get the same thing, same brand, same ingredients, same everything somewhere else for cheaper, then I'm going to go to the other place." During her observation, she repeatedly compared prices on a variety of items, including high-quality items such as fair trade coffee sold at the local food cooperative. While she was shopping, Mabel could easily recite the recent prices of items she regularly purchases. On two different occasions, her attitude toward the price of a product changed when she realized they were not on sale, but the low price was merely highlighted by the store's Everyday Low Price tag. First, while buying toilet paper,

Mabel: Yeah, I know, and also the size of the roll. I guess this one is fine. This Angel Soft's only six dollars for this giant thing of it. Oh wait, this is the every day price. They tricked me.

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Mabel: That means it's not on sale. It's just the normal price.

Interviewer: Would it be better if it was on sale?

Mabel: Yes.

Interviewer: It's still a good price.

Mabel: Yeah, but I think it will be good. I'm going to look for something that's on sale. Do they even have anything on sale? It's just the same. Oh, this one's on sale, the Scott.

Second, while encountering an aisle end-cap of tortillas,

Mabel: All right. Tortillas. We're all about corn tortillas, so that's what we get, after I compare prices, of course. I think we usually... I'm not sure why. Yeah... This looks like a good price.

Interviewer: That's a brand you usually buy?

Mabel: Yeah. Banderita. All right, I think I got everything on my list... All right. Time to check out. All right. Ooh, these are like two dollars? Oh wait, see, this is the Everyday Low Price. No.

Interviewer: So really being on sale matters to you.

Mabel: It's got to be cheaper than normal, otherwise I can get it any time. Why would I get it today?

Interviewer: That makes sense.

Mabel: Unless I need it today.

For Mabel the low price of the items was not nearly as important as taking advantage of a sale. Her bargain hunter expertise is about maximizing her purchases by purchasing items when they are at their lowest cost, not just an affordable price. Mabel's everyday expertise is not only her knowledge of prices, but her decision to give up a good deal to find a best deal. It is her approach to money saving and efficiency in the grocery store.

Julius also relied on his bargain hunter expertise for his grocery shopping and other purchasing decisions. He shared the importance of getting a good deal throughout his interview. When I asked him about his routines and strategies when shopping, he explained how he always pays attention to price.

Julius: I'm always checking the prices. I tend to buy ... If the price is lower somewhere, I might buy there next time, but I won't always know that on this trip. One example, all last year, milk was \$1.49 a gallon at Aldi, they were having a price war with Ruler foods. And eggs were 49 cents a dozen. And that's been more than a year. With the egg shortage, they've had to change that a little bit, but it always interests me that just over at Meijer, you can see people paying two and a half dollars a dozen for eggs when they could just drive over there, it takes five minutes, but that's not their habit I guess. My routine has a lot to do with the price.

Later in the interview he added,

Julius: Anyway, I'm always asking about things, looking into things. And I can tell you, for example, that although it's a wonderful place to visit, [a local orchard] is not an inexpensive place to buy anything because it's agra-tourism. Although I know that family, and love them and know the young lady that handles the bees there and so on, they would charge maybe five or ten times as much for their honey, at least a couple times as much for their apples as if you went to a big commercial orchard or a big bee keeper. So, yeah, I'm always looking at prices and trying to think ahead. With gasoline, I have Amoco. It will give me 10 cents off per gallon if I buy there regular enough and Shell with their card, I have two different cards, one gives me three cents off and the other gives me five cents off, so I can get eight cents off. I'm a cheap skate, I don't know. But I won't drive to the next town to do that. If I'm over there anyway fine, but the nearest Shell station is on [street name]. However, on Friday mornings, I drive my wife to work and then I do some shopping in that area, pretty light shopping, but it includes getting gas.

Julius' comments show a clear understanding of cost and knowledge of prices and the forces that affect them. He is not only aware of the best prices; he considers the effort necessary to access a good price and decides on the best deal for his time and money. His

everyday expertise guides his decision making by considering the costs and benefits of different alternatives in and out of the grocery store. Like Mabel, Julius used his bargain hunter expertise, but also looked for other attributes in his grocery shopping, especially comparing products to find low sodium foods for his wife.

Both Mable and Julius approach their grocery shopping with a focus on getting a good deal. They keep track of prices and sales and strive not only to not spend a lot of money, but to maximize their time and money. Both participants relied on pricing as a guide for much of their grocery shopping and their descriptions of their everyday expertise strongly suggests that it applies to other aspects of their life.

Nutrition seeker

The nutrition seeker expertise is based on an understanding of the nutrition and other health attributes of foods and grocery items. This expertise also extends beyond the grocery store with healthy eaters approaching other aspects of their life with a focus on health and well-being. Two participants, Emanuel and Kendra, described this expertise and how it impacts their grocery shopping and general approaches to food.

Emanuel described the importance of nutrition and a deep understanding of the chemistry of food throughout his interview. When I asked him if there was a right way to grocery shop, he started his answer describing his nutrition expertise.

Emanuel: I took a lot of nutrition classes in college. I think, yes there is [a right way to shop]. I'm probably in the upper 1% of health conscious people out there. I have a master of science in biology with a minor in biochemistry. I understand [at] the molecular level what some of the problems are... Is there a right way? I try to base it on the choices that I make in the supermarket, I try to base that on what I've learned in the past and I consider that the right way. I pretty much base it on several nutrition courses that I had and I think that if you don't base it on what you've learned, then you're going to have problems. You'll do it the wrong way.

Even before he studied nutrition, Emanuel gained a lot of nutrition expertise from his father.

Emanuel: I think I was influenced ... the more I think about this I probably did learn from a few people. My dad is a PhD in biochemistry and he's always worried about ... I'm very thankful that I grew up with him because I think he influenced me quite a bit. Because of him, I don't buy processed foods and I really do look at labels. Even today I have to ask him about certain food additives and if it's safe for [my kid]. Is it a potential carcinogen?

Nutrition expertise, like the everyday expertise of many, is a lifelong pursuit for Emanuel. He described taking online courses on nutrition for fun, watching nutrition-focused cooking shows, and participating in a workplace nutrition assessment program. His father clearly influenced him from an early age to think about the scientific side of food and nutrition and that formed his approach throughout his life.

Kendra came to her nutrition expertise later in life than Emanuel, after she discovered that she suffered from some food sensitivities. Kendra also described in her interview how her pregnancy and the recent birth of her child changed her family's food choices with an increased emphasis on eating and shopping for organics. She described how she started developing her expertise, saying, "I wasn't very focused on my health until I had some complications and realized that food, what I'm putting in my body more than three times a day, is the biggest drug that you take." Her food sensitivities forced her to read labels, which led to her interest in learning more about nutrition. When I asked her about things that have influenced her grocery shopping, she mentioned a variety of nutrition focused information sources.

Kendra: I watched Food, Inc. [...] Websites! Like blogs, Wellness Mama is a blog that I really value her research. Then Bonnie Girl, I Read Labels is a blog and the Food Babe are all sources that I put a lot of stock in. I think that they're pretty reputable. [...] I'm even trying to follow people on Twitter who I think are reputable sources. Where else do I look? Just anywhere online. I'll type in 'organic

baby food' and kind of read reviews on what brands are the best and how to make your own, is what I'm really trying to do. Instead of buying the packaged food, what's in it and how can I make that in the simplest way possible.

Kendra went on to say how her interest in nutrition was influencing other aspects of her life. She described wanting to be an advocate for healthy eating and presenting content on nutrition in the classroom where she taught. She even described how she is considering making nutrition a bigger focus in her life.

Kendra: I'm really interested in nutrition, I would like to pursue maybe a degree in it, but I hate to say it, but academic institutions don't teach the kind of nutrition that I believe is integrative and functional. You're going to have to look for alternative or Eastern holistic. I feel like US nutrition is too scientific and away from holistic.

Nutrition is clearly important to Kendra. She described in her interview how it impacts her grocery shopping and her purchase decisions.

Kendra: Well, I try to make affordable choices, but also knowing that it's an investment and sometimes obviously the cheapest product isn't necessarily the best. But when I'm looking at options, if Whole Foods has their own organic brand, I'm going to choose theirs as opposed to the Horizon, whatever that one is, that's more expensive. So I try to cut corners, but not in quality of food.

Kendra's primary focus in the grocery store is food quality. She also explained that she was trying to be healthier by eating less packaged and processed foods. She wants to ensure that everything her and her family eats is organic and nutritious.

Kendra's expertise was developed through a variety of sources and her interest. She seeks out nutritional food, but also sources of nutritional and wellness information to make her family's life healthier. Kendra was not only concerned for her own family, but believed in sharing her information with others who she too fears are uninformed in the way she used to be.

Although the source of Emanuel and Kendra's everyday expertise are different, they both look to nutrition as a guiding force in their grocery shopping. They also share a continued fascination with nutrition demonstrated through their descriptions of continuously seeking out sources to learn more.

Both types of everyday expertise were described by the participants as taking a primary role in their decision making in the grocery store and as motivating them to an almost constant habit of information seeking. The bargain hunters were continually investigating sales and the nutrition seekers were keeping up with the latest nutrition information through blogs and online courses. The concept of everyday expertise is tied to their information behaviors and has a strong influence over it. Overall this concept is not only useful in helping to understand the information behaviors of these specific individuals, it also shows what an everyday expert looks like. As described in Chapter 6, expertise is problematic in EIB in that it assumes that for everyday problems individuals seek out traditional experts. The participants I described in this section are experts of their everyday life and they use their expertise to orient their information behaviors. They largely did not develop their expertise through formalized channels, instead deriving their expertise from their experiences in their everyday world with a few more traditional sources to further their understanding. Everyday expertise is a useful concept to both understand information behavior and to challenge the IB and EIB traditional conceptualization of expertise.

NON-TRADITIONAL SOURCES

Sources of information are well studied by IB and EIB scholars. As was discussed in Chapter 4, participants in both studies described using a wide range of sources for their grocery shopping. In addition to the sources that the IB and EIB literature is familiar

with, I also identified three other types of sources using the critical and cultural theory of the everyday. Drawing on the work of Steedman (1987) and Hartman (2008), I explore how grocery shoppers use non-traditional sources of information. In this section, I will describe each new type of source and present a variety of examples to both help define the information source and show examples of its presence in the data. Integrating critical and cultural theory allows EIB scholars to accurately study the information sources individuals rely upon for their everyday life.

Everyday expert

Smith's (1987) concept of the everyday expert is useful in describing sources of information an individual may use in the process of an everyday activity. An everyday expert is not a traditional expert of an everyday activity, but rather someone who is viewed as having some expertise based on her or his experience. For example, Martha Stewart is an expert of the everyday world of home design, while I am the everyday expert of setting up new electronics for my family. Martha has a formalized education and titles to distinguish her as an expert, while I have learned through experience a basic understanding of many consumer electronics. The everyday expert is more than just a friend or family member; they take on a specific a role within their friend and family group as a specialist who can be called on for help.

Participants in both studies described several everyday experts and how their expertise influenced their grocery shopping. Arturo described this concept best when he explained the sources he uses to learn more about food, saying, "every person that I've lived with or been in a relationship with or whatever, since I was eighteen, probably has had some influence over what I cook and how I cook it."

Several participants described their parents as everyday experts who showed them how to grocery shop or cook and are available to answer questions. Felix described how his mother was an important source behind his love of cooking. He explained, “I’ve always just been interested in cooking. My mom was big into cooking, so I would cook with her a lot. It’s always just fun to buy new ingredients at the store to cook with.” Katie explained in her observation how if she needs help in the grocery store, her mom and Google are her go-to sources, saying, “I’ll call her in the middle of the store or I’ll Google things sometimes.” Dora learned how to grocery shop from her mom.

Dora: My mom was always really good at grocery shopping. She only went once a week, I think. I don’t remember her ever having to make extra trips to the grocery store with us growing up. She always made a plan beforehand what we were going to eat.

Carole and Gladys explained how the different styles of the parents were a dynamic source in finding their own way to cook and grocery shop respectively.

Carole: Yeah, oh gosh. Well I ... My parents cook. My dad was an avid cook, and would make a lot of recipes from scratch, just using like local ingredients. Some that he would hunt, or fish, so a lot of meat. Where it came from. My mom liked to cook too, but not as intense really. She was more like practical about it I guess. I just learned a lot from my family, and their love of food. I grew up enjoying learning more about it, and continue to kind of play around with it

Gladys: I don't know if this is how I learned because I don't do it exactly how ... I used to go grocery shopping with my parents separately and they both have very different habits. Whenever we went together with both of them, my mom and I would like, put things in the cart we thought looked good, like snacks and stuff, that my dad would then take out. So there was definitely... two different ways of grocery shopping. My dad is definitely more of a frugal shopper. He buys what we needs. He uses the coupons and he can ... His brain is like a calculator and he can spot mistakes on the screen and whenever that happens he would go directly to customer service and get a refund. So, he would teach me some tricks, I guess. But I don't really wholly subscribe to that, I would say. I'm more of a ... I don't know. Reasonable? There's more leeway with me. Like, I'll definitely buy what I want in addition to what I need. So, I did learn from them but I wouldn't say that I exactly mimic their habits.

While parents made up the majority of everyday expert sources described by the participants, a few also learned from their friends. Felix described his friend's passion for barbecuing as a source of information that influenced his own cooking.

Felix: I have a friend that's big into barbecuing and he showed me how to make ribs. Then I got more into buying different kinds of meat to grill and I got more into grilling. Then I started buying a lot of different meats and then I started learning how to grill vegetables and stuff like that too.

The way Felix describes his friend highlights what an everyday expert is, a person in your life that has some expertise likely drawn out of personal passion or experience. When a friend starts a new hobby or develops a new skill it is not surprising that he shares it with his social circle. This example demonstrates the cascading flow of information that passes from one individual to the next that would be unclear without a focus on everyday experts as sources of information.

Everyday experts serve a different role as information sources than other friends and family. They are known for having a particular knowledge that makes them stand out. While they are not experts in the traditional sense, they do serve a specific purpose in everyday information seeking as an interpersonal source with a known expertise. These features of the everyday were highlighted in my interviews. The story of the participants' lived experience brought to light notable features of the information environment, demonstrating the unique power of everyday focused qualitative work to provide thick description.

Lived experience

Sources are typically codified as things like books or people, but experiences are how most people learn about an everyday activity. As discussed in Chapter 5, experience

was an important factor in how most of the nurturer persona study participants learned to grocery shop. This concept of lived experience comes from Steedman (1987) and Hartman (2008) and their focus on their own lived experience as a source of describing and analyzing history. Their experiences became a form of evidence that could be used to frame and identify parts of history and social relations that their fields' traditional methods of historical research could not.

Experience is not entirely a new type of information sources in the IB and EIB literature. Previous large-scale survey studies have found experience to be the most commonly used information source. Chen and Hernon (1982) in their information behavior study surveyed 2400 respondents in six New England states. They found that 74% of respondents cited experience as a source of information, the most of any source; it was also rated as the most helpful. Similarly, Dervin et al. (1984) found that among the 733 respondents (out of a representative sample of 1040 Californians) who answered items about the most important question they dealt with in the last month, 89% reported using "their own thinking/experience." Respondents with higher income and more education were more likely than others to cite using "their own thinking/experience" along with authorities/professionals, co-workers, business persons, and people in government. Dervin et al. (1984) explained, "the most prominent of findings supporting this conclusion showed more educated, higher income respondents placing more reliance on "expert" sources than less educated, lower income respondents" (p. VII-12). The experience of the respondents with higher income and more education was categorized along with more traditional versions of expert sources. Neither study developed any arguments nor implications concerning the meaning of this finding or defined how experience works as an information source. In general, the research literature has not

focused on experience as a unique information source instead ignoring it or combining it with human sources (Savolainen, 2008a; 2008b, Savolainen & Kari, 2004).

Although most of the IB literature simply identifies experience as a source and then largely ignores it, Chatman (1991) takes a different approach. In her study on the information behaviors of a lower-class population, she describes her participant's reliance on experience, writing, "the conclusion is that they live in an impoverished information world" (p. 440). Chatman argues that by using mostly knowledge obtained through personal experience, the janitors she studied exist within a small, information-poor world that limits their abilities to access important information. This finding stands in contrast with Dervin et al.'s (1984) finding that respondent with more education and higher income use experience at higher rates.

Everyone relies on experience, including those engaged in menial labor or white-collar professions. This suggests that while janitors may exist in information poverty, using experience as a source of information is not the reason. Rather the quality of experiences may impact the information world. The previous literature seems to suggest the experience of well-educated, financially secure individuals is a benefit, while the experience of poor people is a hindrance. None of these studies focus on how the experiences function or explore their specific use. Yet, experience is an often called upon resource, a finding the present work shares.

By focusing on the lived experience as defined by critical and cultural theory, I identified 98 mentions of lived experience as a source of information. The experiences were largely related to grocery shopping with some occurring in the process of grocery shopping and others occurring in different parts of life, but still influencing a participant's grocery shopping.

Many of the shoppers described the lived experience of grocery shopping as a source of information, where they learned something that changed their future grocery shopping. Paul described how when he started grocery shopping he thought buying in bulk meant saving money, but his lived experience was quite different.

Paul: I used to go to Costco and get the 50-pound bag of onions because I thought I was saving a lot money. Then I had 25-pounds of onions going bad. Definitely learned about ... I thought just because I was buying a lot of it, and it was cheaper, that I was doing a good thing, but if I couldn't use it all, I wasn't saving any money. It was still costing me the same or more. That's definitely when I first got out of the house I did a lot of that and learned from that about ... Like now, trying to narrow the focus and not spend money on stuff like that unless I know I can actually use it in a week or two.

It was through the experience of bulk shopping that Paul was able to understand its benefits and pitfalls. Lorraine also shared how having children changed not only what she purchased at the grocery store, but her process and list writing.

Lorraine: Someone will start melting down in an aisle and I'll have the screaming kid in the grocery store, so I try to put [my list] in sections. So, if I don't get to a section, maybe somebody can come back later.

It was through the lived experience of grocery shopping with young children that Lorraine created her grocery list system. Based on her description, it is not difficult to imagine how before she started sorting her list by section Lorraine struggled to make sure she purchased all of the groceries she needed while shopping with her children.

Participants also described how experiences outside of grocery shopping changed their habits and perspective on the items they buy. Faye described how a West Coast Bike trip with her brother changed the way she feels about food production.

Faye: Yeah. My little brother and I did a West Coast bike trip. So we started in Canada. I met him in Oregon, and we rode our bikes down the West Coast. Around Southern California, there were a lot of big farms, and it was kind of

horrifying to see these massive, massive farms because it's kind of like you spend all day riding and eating and sleeping, you would see how the workers in the fields would work. They were conventional farms, so that had a big experience on me in terms of recognizing there are people that collect cauliflower and hand pick the strawberries and bringing a human face to what actually has to be done to get the stuff in the grocery store. It was after that that I made a very intentional focus to align my consumer dollars with things that I wanted to believe that I want to support and not support things that I don't want to support by buying them.

Faye's bike trip demonstrates how experiences that do not at first seem related to grocery shopping can be potent influences. Jenna shared a similar story during her observation while picking out apples.

Jenna: I'm thinking of the Honeycrisp apples. I like sweet apples. I love the fact that it's organic. I'm going to try them out, because I'm usually a Gala apple girl. I don't mind taking a risk, but I also have to look at how old it may or may not be, how many worms have been in it, right? We have our little friends called the insects. They help our food grow, so I don't mind them too much, as long as the apple's not too bruised. When I was an apprentice organic farmer, when I would pick fruits or vegetables, a lot of my nail prints would get on the fruits or vegetables, so I'm always reminded, human beings pick.

Jenna points out small indents on apple.

Interviewer: Yeah, someone touched that apple.

Jenna: Yeah, so you see a couple of nail marks here.

Jenna's time working as an apprentice organic farmer provided her with an uncommon perspective on how farmers literally leave their mark on food.

The four lived experiences discussed here are only a small sample of the variety of experiences that the participants described as impacting their grocery shopping. As described in Chapter 5, several participants also described experience as the source that taught them how to grocery shop. Lived experience is an important source of information that was described by participants as being integral to their grocery shopping, but it is

commonly overlooked in traditional IB research. In fact, traditional work tends to gloss over what some have found to be the most central component of information acquisition, experience. Critical and cultural theory highlights the need to refocus attention away from the ‘ideal shopper’ or the expert toward real complex individuals.

Memory

The final non-traditional source I identified in the research data is memory. Like lived experience, memory was described as a source of information by Steedman (1987) and Hartman (2008). Both historians argue that although memory is an imperfect source, it is also one that most people use when thinking about their lives and experiences. Memories are based on lived experience, but they are different in that, through remembering and reflecting, memories take on meaning. Another scholar of lived experience, Van Manen (1990) described this difference when he writes, “lived experiences gather hermeneutic significance as we (reflectively) gather them by giving memory to them. Through meditations, conversations, day dreams, inspirations and other interpretive acts we assign meaning to the phenomenon of lived life” (p. 37). Memories can play an important role in developing our personal histories and creating meaning. Through this process they become unique sources of information, different from lived experience because of the adding meaning they contain.

There is at least one reference to memory as an information source in the IB literature in Krikelas’ (1983) model of information-seeking behavior. The model identifies both external and internal sources of information sources, with memory and direct observation listed as the internal sources. While this early model was widely cited, I was unable to find other information behavior scholars who have used its memory element as an information source in their research.

I identified nine descriptions of memory as an information source in the data. There may have been more memories described by participants, but I limited my coding to experiences that participants specifically described as a memory or as being remembered. I will discuss here only the most illustrative examples of how memories act as a source of information.

Several participants described their memories of grocery shopping with their parents. Faye explained that she learned to grocery shop from her mother and described her memories of being in the grocery store as a child.

Faye: I would go with my mom as a kid to the grocery. [...] As a kid Mom would take us to the grocery store because we were around and she had to get groceries. I would kind of shadow her on that front, and I remember her taking great joy in grinding the coffee beans in the coffee grinder at the store and relishing that smell. Then, she would also take us ... There's so much about my mom and my upbringing, take us to the grocery store on Saturday afternoons and all the sample people were out. They'd be like, "Here you go, kids. This is lunch." We'd wander around the store, and pick things up to "sample" but fill up on as a kid. I guess I learned to grocery shop through a combination of just observing her behaviors and grocery shopping and then my own kind of trial and error.

The smell of the coffee grinder and the interaction with the “sample people” create a positive memory for Faye of grocery shopping and spending time with her mother. She also described in her interview how she now enjoys spending time in the grocery store; it is easy to see how these positive memories contribute to her current feelings. Faye’s memory influences how she thinks about the grocery store and what that time meant to her. Lorraine also described how positive memories of grocery shopping with her father helped create her love of food.

Lorraine: I remember going grocery shopping with him. Although my mother was probably the primary grocery shopper in the family, my father was the cook. My mother was not, which is, I think, kind of nontraditional. I feel like the lady in the family seems to always do a lot of the cooking. My dad loved it so my mom

thought, "Okay, I take care of the kids all day and you can do the cooking." Although my mom would do a lot of the grocery shopping for snacks and meals and things during the day, my dad would almost go to the grocery store every day to pick up items for something, or a recipe, he was going to make that night. Usually he would take me with him. We would go by the meat counter and look at the meat, and we would talk to the person behind the seafood counter, and we would sample the cheeses at the deli, and walk around. We joked that that's why I spend so long at the grocery store. It's his fault. It's like a positive childhood memory.

Like Faye, the positive memories of the grocery store helped Lorraine develop into a food and grocery store lover.

Not all of the participants had positive childhood memories of grocery shopping; Michelle shared her memories of her childhood dislike.

Michelle: As a child I hated grocery shopping and my mom always did the grocery shopping. And I distinctly remember ... We also shopped at Meijer when I was younger. One of two things would happen, we would go and I would be not [be] in the mood to go, so she said I could sit in the car. And she'd say it will just take a minute, it will just take one minute. And then it would be like 45 minutes and she would come back with like three carts and she'd be like sorry, there were just so many great deals. I remember that was not enjoyable. Or, I would go in with her and she would send me on missions. So she'd be like you're going to go find the pasta that is shaped like bow ties and I need three boxes, okay? Go! And I just remember if I went in and she made it into this game, then it was really fun. Or if we just went in and we just walked ... And I do get this from her. She walks every single aisle just in case there's a good deal, or there's something she forgot she needed, I know I get that from her. It's this weird insecurity. Like what if we need something down that aisle and we skip it? So I think when I was little, it was not fun, most of the time unless she made it a game.

In addition to memories about grocery shopping, Arturo shared how his memories of his mother cooking helped form his love of it.

Arturo: I always have positive associations with it because my mom spent a lot of time cooking. She was the stay-at-home, well, not complete stay-at-home mom, but she was home for a lot and she always did the cooking. She was great at it so I have a good association with it. Now that's become a big part of my life.

Arturo's love for cooking is based on the positive memories he has of watching his mother cook and enjoying her food.

All of the memories presented in this section are sources of information that impact how the participants describe and think about their relationship to grocery shopping and cooking, and how they feel about the activities. Whether positive or negative, these memories stand out for the participants as shaping how they understand and feel about the grocery store or food more generally. It is not hard to see how growing up in an environment where grocery shopping is an enjoyable or boring activity leads someone to approach their own grocery shopping in a similar way. The memories are different from experience because over time they come to stand for more than just the experience they become embedded with meaning.

The three non-traditional sources I presented in this section are all based on concepts from critical and cultural theory and can help EIB scholars more accurately address how individuals use information. As described above, all of these sources have some relationship to more traditional concepts in EIB, and can be easily studied alongside more traditional sources. By grounding our focus in EIB on the actual lived experience of our research participants we gain a fuller understanding of their information behaviors and the sources that they find useful.

PERSONAL STORIES

In Chapter 5, I elucidated how concepts from the grocery shopping literature can help EIB scholars to understand the context surrounding an individual's information behavior. Steedman's (1987) work on narrative as a historical source can also provide another lens to view the context surrounding information behavior. Steedman contended that individuals create the stories of their lives through narrative, and an individual

narrative can be read to uncover larger social meaning. Based on her analysis, I identified several participants who used personal stories to define themselves to others and contextualize their grocery shopping through culturally specific social meaning. While the stories are largely outward facing, they also help an individual to situate himself or herself similarly to self-identity.²⁶

Personal stories can be as simple as a word that defines a lifestyle, or a more detailed story of a lived experience that captures a part of someone's essence. Both forms have the same function; they label individuals in a way that they can easily share a part of themselves and define their behaviors in terms of a broader social trend. For example, someone can call themselves a cinephile, or equivalently, share a story of how they drove three hours to see the 70 mm Hateful Eight Roadshow instead. Personal stories can be used to define a person, guide behavior, or justify a choice or action; and they can come from outside sources. All of these attributes of personal stories I encountered in the data with participants from both studies. I have selected one illustrative example (from among many) for each attribute to explore the variety of ways life stories impact the participants' grocery shopping and their interaction with information.

Foodie

A few participants described themselves as *foodies*, a slang term referring to a love and enthusiasm for food. Foodies are known to share their love of food through various channels, including posting images of beautiful or interesting dishes on social media. Jenna described herself as a foodie.

Jenna: Yes. So, my husband and I were big fans of the food network. *Chopped* is a cool show we like watching, *Taco Trip* is another. We love Rachel Ray for example, we love watching ... I think we're foodies to be quite honest. And it

²⁶ Personal stories are also similar to Goffman's (1959) concept of a "front."

gives us ideas, like oh my gosh, I never would have thought of that. It just entices how we like to cook. We love to cook together. To me that's a social activity that we embraced as we started dating. Food is a value of ours anyway, individually, and also collectively.

By using the term 'foodie' and describing how it applies to her life, Jenna is describing to the interviewer how she relates to food and food culture. She also explained how her foodie identity on social media led to her being contacted by a major food production company. She currently sits on a consumer board providing feedback to the company.

Describing herself as a foodie allows Jenna to quickly inform others about her perspective on food and her understanding of food culture. The term has cultural resonance to people interested in food and is prevalent in the social media world that Jenna has used to share her views on food related issues. The personal story of being a foodie helps Jenna and other participants to quickly identify themselves with a culturally specific identity.

Adult

Personal stories not only help identify individuals to others, they can also help guide a person's behaviors. Deborah described herself as an adult and described how popular culture influenced her understanding of the behaviors consistent with being an adult. She described her own feelings and personal narrative around being an adult throughout her interview. First, in an answer about what influences her ideas about the right way to shop, she explained,

Deborah: The idea of being a responsible adult. I actually didn't think of it before coming here, even though I think about it all the time when I sign up for a grocery study. I wasn't like, "oh yeah, I'm a good person to do that because I have an idea in my mind."

When I asked her about how she learned to grocery shop, Deborah described how shopping relates to her thoughts on what adulthood means.

Deborah: I don't know, because I'm inclined to say by going with my mom to the grocery store but she cooked more than I did. She always knew what she had to buy for what she wanted to cook. I guess that works into my ideal of how I think adult grocery shopping should be.

Finally, she described how her shopping has changed throughout her life, saying,

Deborah: Right after college really, really trying to save money. You're just so wide eyed and optimistic you're willing to eat spaghetti just two weeks in a row and nothing else. I was just so desperate to be a super responsible adult, I remember eating super, super cheap and not good food in the beginning just because I wanted to save money.

Deborah was so concerned about embodying the cultural ideals around being an adult that she suffered through two weeks of eating just spaghetti. Deborah's description shows both the importance of adulthood to her and the depth of the adult narrative in her understanding of self.

Being an adult motivated and discouraged Deborah from certain behaviors. In addition to the above quotations, she described being proud of spending responsibly and being worried that she had regressed with her grocery shopping. Deborah's personal story of being an adult was a major influence on not only her self-identity, but also her presentation of self. She wanted to ensure that she exhibited the behaviors she associated with adult life. The narrative of the adult was so crystallized for Deborah from popular culture that it created a blueprint for her behaviors both inside and outside the grocery store. Deborah's information, behaviors, and concerns become clearer to understand through the knowledge of how she is driven by her personal story of being an adult.

Poor

Personal stories can also be used to justify choices and explain behaviors. Mabel used a personal to story to contextualize and explain where her bargain hunting focus came from.

Mabel: I think it all stemmed from me being poor. Also, speaking of me being poor, I think that's why I stick so closely to the list, because I read in a book somewhere that if you want to save money at the grocery store, you write a list of exactly what you need, and you stick to that list, and you do not deviate from that list, because they put all kinds of extra stuff here to make you want to buy it.

Although during the time of our interview Mabel was making more money, her early days of grocery shopping were constrained by her budget. She looked up money-saving strategies and focused on getting a good deal out of necessity. Now that her situation has changed, the information she gained is not as critical to her lifestyle but she still relies on it frequently.

Mabel uses her previous circumstance to explain her shopping style. Although the specifics are not clear, being poor and its relationship to saving money are familiar concepts to others. By describing herself in this way, Mabel had a shorthand way to explain the rationale behind her grocery shopping method, justifying it as an adaptation drawn out of her personal narrative, rather than some independent ideal.

Healthy

Personal stories are a way for an individual to explain herself to others. Sometimes they are created entirely by the individual and other times it is through remarks from others that the personal stories are recognized. For example, when I asked Ramona if she thinks about what her purchases say about her, she replied,

Ramona: I think I do, subconsciously though. Because I can honestly say when I have guests that come over more than likely they're family members. They

actually point out to me that things in my pantry or things in my refrigerator are not regular food. When they say that, they mean not food that they would buy or probably even eat if they weren't in my house. I think subconsciously I do it to satisfy myself but it's made known by them. [...]I might buy gluten-free whole wheat pasta instead of just buying regular pasta. They'll go, "Why do you buy wheat pasta?" I'm just, "It's pasta. When I cook it you won't know the difference." The point being, it's better for you. They're just, "Really?" they don't see the importance in it. Which to me, it makes a difference but to them it has no relevance whatsoever.

Her family is drawing attention to the fact that Ramona is different because she buys healthier versions of food. She says that she shops for healthy items for her own satisfaction, and that her family's comments highlight her choices. It could be that the comments make Ramona feel more satisfied with her choice, or her satisfaction is a defense against the comments. Whether Ramona internalizes the comments as positive or negative, they feed into Ramona's personal narrative.

Ramona's description above shows how personal narratives can develop through personal experience and the comments of others. Often individuals are unaware of how they are perceived by others until someone tells them. Personal stories situate individuals into the larger social world. Stories can be developed in tandem between the individual and other members of their social circles, such as family, friends, or coworkers.

By describing themselves with personal stories, the participants I highlight above have situated themselves in their social world. All of the stories mean nothing on their own; it is only within the social world of these individuals that the stories serve their purpose. Personal stories can drive information behavior. A foodie shares her food-related thoughts on social media, an adult uses a grocery list, a poor person finds a good deal, and a healthy person buys gluten-free pasta. These stories help scholars to understand why individuals are approaching their information behaviors the way they do. Scholars of EIB can identify these stories to contextualize and gain a deeper

understanding of the social realities that influence the information behaviors of individuals. The stories also speak to the broader social world that the individual exists within and how that individual thinks of herself inside it. Narratives define the individual to the outside world and create enacted identities.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND INFORMATION

Individuals do not uniformly absorb information. De Certeau (1984), in his work on active consumption, used the metaphor of reading as poaching to argue that instead of mindlessly consuming the words on a page, readers are active participants in a dialogue with the text. A focus on the relationship between an individual and a piece of information can help EIB scholars to understand why some information behaviors are more successful than others. In this section, I will present a typology of six different relationships I identified in my data that affected how a participant interacted with a source of information. These typologies show that information is not simply absorbed—it is mediated by a person's context and personal schema—highlighting the importance of understanding the person in order to understand the realities of their information behavior.

Emotional

Sources of information can resonate with an individual on an emotional level. This type of information interaction may make an individual more likely to use and select a piece of information. For example, Marcella described how a TV commercial created a strong emotional reaction in her that will likely led her to purchase a product.

Marcella: I think just this morning I watched a TV commercial about Johnson's, the baby's shampoo. Because the baby they shot in the TV commercial is really really sweet. Her smiles, and I think that's very impressive. I think I may look at

the Johnson's products in future. Though not right now, because that TV commercial made me, left an impression on me about this brand.

The impression that Marcella describes comes from her emotional response to seeing the smiling baby in the commercial. The attributes of the product are not what attracts Marcella to the product, it is the emotion of the baby and the emotion that it elicits in Marcella. The emotional resonance of the ad made it stand out to Marcella more than other advertisements.

Ineffective

Sources of information do not always lead to changes in behavior or attitude. Sometimes, information is received ineffectively. For example, when Ramona learned disturbing information about a fast food chain that she and her family frequent it became memorable, but it did not change her views on fast food.

Ramona: Seemingly over the past two years there have been many discrepancies about fast food restaurants and what you're actually eating. For instance, yesterday someone posted something about KFC and their chicken. They ordered a chicken tender and it actually looked like a fried rodent and it was in the shape of a little rat with a tail but it was fried. The person said they bit into it and it was hard and rubbery. It didn't taste like chicken. Which it just brings to mind what are we really eating? Of course I'm going to go to the store and feed you guys. I don't want to feed you that. I know that's not going to stop my family from eating fast food. It's not going to stop me from eating fast food because it's convenient. At the same time it just raises awareness I guess. In my head a red flag about where does stuff come from?

Although the information clearly left an impression on Ramona, it was not effective in changing her actions or overall opinions toward fast food. The benefits of fast food outweighed the impact of the disturbing information for Ramona, and she was aware that the information was not impactful enough to cause a change. While learning that a rat was served at a fast food restaurant would make many people question their patronage,

Ramona's description shows how upsetting information can be ineffective in changing behavior when it is not upsetting enough to overcome the perceived benefit of ignorance.

Interactive

The presentation of information can make information seeking and use more or less likely. When information is presented in an interactive way, where individuals are encouraged to learn and experience something new, an information environment can motivate information behaviors. Katie provides an example of an interactive information environment in her description of the cheese department at Central Market, a high-end grocery store.

Katie: Central Market I think it is a really creative space. For example the cheese is really interactive, you can try them and there are so many different types. Even the people that work there are very knowledgeable and all foodies themselves and want to suggest to you new recipes and ways to try new things. Yeah I think the people that work there also really help make it a creative environment.

The ability to try different cheeses and explore new items created the interactive environment that Katie described positively. Later in her interview, Katie explained that Central Market is an enjoyable space where she shops and also brings friends to experience the creative and interactive grocery store. Katie described her love for discovering new things in Central Market, and the interactive environment clearly encouraged and inspired her in that pursuit.

Personal

The relationship an individual has with a source of information can have a great deal of influence over how it is received. When friends and family share information, it can take on a personal layer that makes it more important than if it came from another

source. Emanuel described concerns about processed food and food additives that were passed down to him from his father.

Emanuel: I think I was influenced ... the more I think about this I probably did learn from a few people. My dad is a Ph.D. in biochemistry and he's always worried about ... I'm very thankful that I grew up with him because I think he influenced me quite a bit. Because of him, I don't buy processed foods and I really do look at labels. Even today I have to ask him about certain food additives and if it's safe for Bob. Is it a potential carcinogen? Even to this very day, I'm 52, he's in his 80's, I still ask him things. I think I do avoid certain foods in the supermarket based on probably, a lot of it is just his attitude toward food kind of rubbed off on me I think a little bit. [...] I think if anyone influenced me more than anyone else as to how to shop, it would probably be my dad.

Emanuel explains how his father was an important influence on his grocery shopping. While he could have learned about the possible dangers of processed food from a variety of sources, the influence of his father likely made the information seem more important because of their personal connection. His father likely cares about Emanuel's well being and provided the information to help his son. Emanuel's description of his father's influence demonstrates the importance of interpersonal sources and how a personal relationship can impact the reception of information.

Recreational

The atmosphere surrounding information can also impact how it is received. As described in Chapters 2 and 3, leisure can lead to creativity when individuals feel comfortable and at ease, increasing the likelihood of exploration (Brightbill, 1961). A recreational atmosphere in an information environment can make individuals more likely to seek and use information. Faye described how the recreational activities at Whole Foods helped change her feelings toward the store and grocery shopping.

Faye: I also think that I started spending more recreation time at grocery stores for other reasons. I remember this is an awesome thing if it's not you tell me, but I feel like since being here, Whole Foods has yoga on the roof or movie nights, and

so does Central Market. We still have the nice places to eat and be on the patio and watch people go by. I feel like I spend time there not grocery shopping, and that was probably an entry into it's okay to hang out here, which then probably translated to it's okay to spend more time shopping here.

Faye explained how recreational activities led her to view the grocery store as a recreational space, where she can enjoy herself without a specific shopping goal. Spending more time in the store gives Faye the opportunity to discover new things. A recreational information environment can make individuals more comfortable with the environment and the information in it, aiding information seeking and encountering.

Subconscious

Finally, sometimes the impact of an information interaction occurs so subtly that it is not noticed. An individual may receive information and only upon later reflection can she recognize it. Grace described a subconscious information interaction that occurred while she was shopping during a storewide promotion.

Grace: You know? I wouldn't say I'm too influenced. Right now, I think I was just at the grocery store and they're having Taco-topia, or whatever, it's like the theme is different tacos and stuff. I'll have tacos when I have tacos, I wasn't like, "You know what? Let's have tacos today." Although we did, so maybe it was subconsciously. Maybe it subconsciously influenced me because we did end up having tacos, but it was just because it was easy.

Grace explains that she was aware of the promotion, but was not consciously interested in taking advantage of it. The information was received and she acted on it, while being unaware of the connection between the promotion and her purchases. This type of relationship may be the most difficult to identify because if information is truly received subconsciously, research participants may be unaware and thus unable to describe it.

The above typology shows six different ways in which the relationship between individuals and information can affect information behaviors. Individuals do not simply

receive information in the same way. Information seeking, use, and other behaviors are highly contextualized and can be impacted by a wide variety of factors. EIB scholars should focus on the relationship between individuals and information because the reception of information is still a part of the information behavior.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the four sections above, I defined concepts derived from critical and cultural theory of the everyday that have utility in thoroughly exploring everyday information behavior. Each concept was also developed to remedy the missed opportunities in EIB I articulated in Chapter 6. The concepts of everyday expertise, non-traditional sources, personal stories, and the typology of relationships between individuals and information all show that EIB can use critical and cultural theory literature to expand further into the everyday world. This expansion will allow scholars to understand the everyday and how individuals approach information more broadly. If the everyday is primary to understanding the larger world, then everyday information behavior may be primary to other forms of information behavior.

SECTION E: CONCLUSION

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Throughout this work, I have shown how the everyday world is a fruitful venue for research in EIB. To study an everyday activity previously ignored by EIB scholars, I used three different perspectives to demonstrate that EIB can and should use critical and cultural theory to advance its concepts, making them more appropriate for exploring the everyday world.

I began this dissertation with the grocery shopping literature, a literature designed to explore the everyday activity of grocery shopping, to investigate how EIB can be applied to a mundane everyday activity. With that literature, I developed two empirical studies that addressed the banal and quotidian aspects of grocery shopping. I did not assume that the grocery store was an information-rich environment; instead I provided an analysis of the grocery shopping data in Section C to demonstrate how traditional concepts of IB and EIB can be found throughout the grocery shopping process. I also showed how the grocery shopping literature can be used to uncover what motivates and influences grocery shopping information behaviors. Finally, I applied the critical and cultural theory of the everyday to emerging themes and concepts from the grocery shopping data to develop concepts that highlight the unique aspects of ‘everyday’ information behavior. These new concepts and analysis also demonstrate the ability to combine two literatures focused on the everyday to expand EIB scholarship.

Through the integration of concepts and theories from critical and cultural theory, this work is a step toward my goal of bringing out the everyday in everyday information behavior. Additionally, I have accomplished my goal of demonstrating how critical and cultural theory can enhance the scholarly knowledge of EIB to more thoroughly explore the everyday. To conclude this work, I present one final example of how the three

perspectives I presented in this work can be used together to create a more complete picture of the grocery shopping information behaviors of a single shopper.

THREE PERSPECTIVES OF ONE SHOPPER

I began this project with the grocery shopping research literature, stepping away from EIB scholarship, to see how another discipline investigates an everyday activity. I then applied the concepts of information behavior to the empirical data and demonstrated that information and information behaviors are present throughout the grocery shopping process. Finally, I developed new concepts, combining ideas from critical and cultural theory with EIB, focused on the primacy of the everyday, and argued for integrating them into EIB. To close this work, I want to return to my analysis and demonstrate how one shopper's grocery shopping can be interpreted in three different ways using the three different perspectives from Sections B, C, and D. None of the analysis presented in this section is new, instead by revisiting it I hope to bring added clarity to the structure of my analysis and this dissertation and show how each perspective addresses a different but important aspect of grocery shopping.

Ramona is an ideal shopper for this concluding analysis because, during her interview, she provided many insights into her grocery shopping behaviors, motivations, and constraints. She candidly shared her confusions and frustrations over grocery shopping as well as her love for her family and the responsibilities she feels as her family's food provider. I have already described her grocery shopping from the grocery shopping perspective, information behavior perspective, and critical and cultural theory perspective, with each analysis providing another layer of understanding about how she navigates the information environment of the grocery store.

Before I remind the reader of how I used each perspective to analyze Ramona's grocery shopping, I briefly summarize the aspects of her biography that have been presented throughout this work. She is the primary grocery shopper in the home that she shares with her husband and young daughter. Occasionally, her two stepsons also stay with the family. She is a student on a budget that fluctuates, with a smaller budget while she is taking classes during the school year and a larger budget while working more in the summer. She and her husband have struggled with healthy eating, but so far her daughter is adopting the healthy eating habits Ramona started modeling for her. Ramona's family has described her purchasing gluten free pasta and other healthy foods as unusual, and she worries that when her family watches her daughter, the daughter adopts their less healthy eating habits. Ramona is similar to many of the other participants in that she is concerned with the costs, health benefits, and taste of the items she purchases in the grocery store.

Grocery shopping perspective

Ramona was a participant in the nurturer persona study, and her interview focused on her role as the food provider for her family. This role led to her feeling a moral obligation that she described as a "nagging feeling" to buy grocery items that her family likes but that are also healthy.²⁷ A moral obligation comes from the responsibility a person feels about how her decision making affects other people; moral obligation has been found to influence food choice (Raats et al., 1995). Ramona described several moral obligations that impact her, including an obligation to buy healthy food, an obligation to her child, an obligation to change her own life for her child's sake, and an obligation to her partner.

²⁷ Analysis also showed Ramona's grocery shopping was impacted by several cultural norms and self-identity (see Chapter 3).

Using the grocery shopping perspective, I found that moral obligations impacted Ramona's grocery shopping and food choice by leading her to buy healthier foods than she purchased before she was married and had her daughter. For example, she described how her pregnancy and the birth of her daughter led her to make healthier eating choices, both for her own health and to model healthy eating for her daughter. She also described how she was concerned about her husband's eating habits and balancing his tastes with ensuring that he is eating healthy food. Ramona and her husband both struggled to eat in a healthy way in their earlier life, and the negative health effects of a poor diet led her to start selecting healthier options in the grocery store. She explained how she and her husband were no longer dieting, as the diets never seemed to work, but instead they were eating healthy food and adopting a more broadly health conscious approach to their food selection. These many moral obligations can be seen as leading to changes in her grocery shopping.

Information behavior perspective

Ramona's grocery shopping can also be understood by focusing on her decision-making process and how uncertainty impacted it.²⁸ Uncertainty is defined in the IB and EIB literature as a condition of not knowing beyond a doubt. It can impact decision making and lead to information seeking (Case, 2012). Ramona described being uncertain about the benefits of organic items in the grocery store, wondering if the health benefits were worth the financial cost. She wanted to follow healthy food trends, such as buying organic products but was unsure if her limited budget placed those items financially out of reach.

²⁸ Analysis also showed Ramona as an active grocery shopper planner who previously was involved in the information-rich activity of extreme couponing (see Chapter 4).

Ramona's uncertainty did not stem from a lack of information about the costs and benefits of organic items but rather from a difficulty weighing them. When looking at what influenced Ramona's decision making, it is clear that it was made more difficult because of the cultural norms surrounding organic food and healthy eating. Specifically, Ramona perceived the norms around healthy eating to be constantly changing.

Ramona: So I don't know. I just have a lot of questions about what is good. What's not good? Why are we saying this? In the end are we all going to die from this food that we call horrible? It seems like every year something comes out about ... first it was the trans-fat. Then it was the saturated fat. Then it was ... I'm like, "Well it all has one or the other." Are we going to eat the trans? Are we going to eat the saturated? Are we going to eat both? Are we not going to eat any? If so where does that leave the rest of us...

The very nature of a constantly changing norm creates uncertainty as to why the changes occur and what will be considered healthy next. Ramona is trying to make good decisions for the health of her family, but she is unsure if the newest information is what she should follow or merely a passing fad. The changing norms not only make it difficult to follow the newest trend, it also degrades the quality of the information for Ramona, who believes that in a short time the recommendations will change again.

Ramona's uncertainty directly affects her decision making in the grocery store as well as her overall feelings toward grocery shopping and food choice. Understanding both Ramona's uncertainty and its causes provide useful insights into her decision making process. Through lessening or eliminating Ramona's uncertainty, her decision making in the grocery store would be easier and she would feel more confident in her decision to buy healthy food.

Critical and cultural theory perspective

Finally, focusing on Ramona's personal story of being healthy shows how her grocery shopping fits into her understanding of her everyday world. Drawing on Steedman's (1987) concept of narrative, Ramona's personal story of being healthy identifies her to others and impacts how Ramona sees herself. She was focused on buying healthy foods for her household, and her extended family noticed and commented on what they perceived as unusual purchases. She explained that when they see gluten free pasta and other healthy versions of common food items in her kitchen, they remark on it. These remarks demonstrate that Ramona's extended family does not understand why she buys it, and they do not purchase similar items.

The narrative that results from these comments defines Ramona as a healthy outsider, who makes unusual choices compared to her family. The comments define her as different from her family in the realm of grocery shopping. The narrative and comments tell Ramona not only that she is shopping for healthy products, but also that her choices are unusual. Her personal story comes from how her family perceives her as well as what she thinks about herself and her grocery shopping. This personal story is an aspect of the context that Ramona lives within in the grocery store and among her family members. She describes her healthy shopping positively, even though it stands out as one aspect of her life that makes her different from other members of her family. Being healthy drives not only her grocery shopping, but it also fuels her perspective on understanding herself in her place in her social circle and larger world. Her grocery shopping is dynamically impacted by her personal story; it makes her proud to be shopping for healthy items, but it also highlights a distinction between herself and her family.

Each perspective presents a different piece of Ramona's grocery shopping and her related information behaviors. Her grocery shopping can be understood in terms of her moral obligations, uncertainty, and personal story of being a health focused grocery shopper. Each piece of this story fits into a specific research literature, and together they form a more complete picture of a grocery shopper. In fact, the personal story can be seen as relating to Ramona's moral obligations for feeding her family well and uncertainty about the best way to accomplish her health goals. By drawing out concepts grounded in the everyday, the critical and cultural theory perspective can shed new light on the other findings and illuminate aspects of grocery shopping that traditional concepts of EIB may miss, such as how Ramona's lived experience with her family impacts her decision making in the grocery store.

Overall, the three perspectives present three different pieces that help researchers understand how a grocery shopper engages in the process of grocery shopping. With each perspective building on the other to provide additional context and nuanced understandings of not only the information behaviors of the grocery shoppers, but the motivations and influences that impact them. The critical and cultural theory perspective provides the most granular level of analysis by focusing on the lived experience of specific participants and how their unique experiences represent larger social trends. Each perspective needs the others to create the most complete picture of the information behaviors of grocery shoppers.

RESEARCH DESIGN REVISITED

My methodological approach for the present empirical research reported in this dissertation was grounded in critical and cultural theory, specifically Smith's (1987; 2006) institutional ethnography. While my methods differ slightly from Smith's

empirical work, my methods follow the major tenets of institutional ethnography by focusing on the lived experience of the participants to illuminate the social relations around a phenomenon. Through my analysis, I was able to use the specific lived experience of my participants to identify broader social process at play in and around the grocery store. By focusing on the lived experience of my participants I was also able to show how methods influenced by the critical and cultural of the everyday can be fruitful for EIB scholars. By using methods as well as concepts and theories for analysis, this work is theoretically consistent and makes a strong argument for focusing on everyday in all aspects of EIB. My research design was successful in collecting useful data and producing strong findings.

Personas

I developed my research design around the framework of personas. My use of personas is novel, and it proved to be fruitful. I was able to design studies that were focused on particular attributes of grocery shopping grounded in a specific line of research literature. The personas enabled me to create comparisons between different attributes of grocery shoppers and apply both EIB and critical and cultural theory to those attributes. In addition to each persona, I was also interested in how personas interact. I was very pleased to see references to several other personas in the data for each study and even identify participant's descriptions of conflicts between different personas (See Appendix C for a discussion of how the nurturer and creative personas overlapped, Appendix D for the other personas described by the participants, and Appendix E for the conflicts between personas). While my empirical work only directly addressed the nurturer and creative persona, the presence of other personas in the data strongly suggests that further exploration of additional personas in the grocery-shopping context would be

productive. Although this was the first use of personas to explore an everyday activity, the successful use of personas in this work suggests that a similar framework could be applied to other activities in the everyday world.

Limitations

This work has three main limitations: the small sample size, the lack of standardization across the semi-structured interviews, and the inability to compare the findings from the critical and cultural theory perspective to other work. First, following similar work using interpretative analysis (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006; Thompson, 1996), each study sampled only 18 participants. The small sample size limits the analysis to the specific lived experience of only the 36 participants. This means that the list of findings is not exhaustive and that with a larger sample the themes identified may be more diverse. Through the use of comparison groups, I have triangulated my data to provide an exploration of the different lived experience of several types of grocery shoppers. Maximizing the diversity of the small samples to gain access to a variety of grocery shoppers and grocery shopping experiences.

Second, the analysis is limited by the use of semi-structured interviews, in that all questions were not asked in the same way to all participants. To overcome this limitation I coded iteratively across the interviews and observations, looking for themes independent of the questions asked. The strength of the semi-structured interviews allowed changing the interview slightly based on real-time interactions with the participants. This enabled me to focus on their experience and description of grocery shopping. The variance in answers allowed for a more thorough exploration of the variety of the grocery shopping experience.

Third, unlike the analysis presented in section B and C, the new concepts presented in section D cannot be verified through the research literature. While some of the findings align with related concepts in EIB or critical and cultural theory, the novelty of the concepts limits their ability to be substantiated with previous findings. These concepts should be further explored in future work in and away from the grocery store to further explore their usefulness. While the findings related to the broader social relationships of grocery shopping can be seen as generalizable, the analysis is offered as textually supported accounts of the true lived experience of the participants in this study.

Significance and Implications

The goal of this dissertation is to enhance the scholarly knowledge of EIB by demonstrating that critical and cultural theory offers concepts and theories that enable EIB to more thoroughly explore the everyday. Throughout this dissertation I have articulated the problems I see in EIB when a field of study uses the term ‘everyday’ but does not embrace the terms rich theoretical legacy. I believe that previous research in EIB has devalued everyday information and the individuals who use it, preferring traditionally information-rich, academic sources and individuals who use traditional information institutions such as libraries for their informational pursuits. This creates two main problems for the field. First, it limits the domains and types of information behaviors that scholars investigate. The everyday domain may hold important answers about how to make a vast variety of information sources and systems more user-friendly and accessible. Second, it prizes a group of sources, behaviors, and people above others and in so doing reifies an information hierarchy that values the information rich over the information poor. By marginalizing some forms of sources, behaviors and people, the EIB field will have greater difficulty exploring new domains and a wider variety of

information users, in the same way sociology struggled to study women and minorities (Smith, 1987). Without a change in our field's understanding of what forms of information are valuable the field will continue struggling to understand the everyday world that most individuals experience.

There are three main implications I hope the field of EIB takes from this dissertation. First, the quotidian parts of the everyday world are not information poor; they simply do not fit into the traditional ideas of information richness. This dissertation demonstrated the variety and prevalence of information behaviors, influences, and sources at play in the process of grocery shopping. Second, research methods inspired by Smith's (1987) institutional ethnography, especially the focus on an individual's lived experience, are an ideal way to explore new dynamic and nuanced domains such as the everyday world. The empirical studies in this dissertation were successful because I allowed the participants to describe their lived experience in their own words. The findings come from the exploration of how the localized lived experience of the 36 participants relate to the large social world. This analysis allows for a thorough exploration of how individuals use and think about information in all its forms. Third, the theories and concepts of critical and cultural theory can guide EIB research and be combined with it to create new concepts that help explain the unique aspects of information behaviors in the everyday world. Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation showed that critical and cultural theory of the everyday can be applied to problems that may occur when EIB focuses on the quotidian parts of the everyday.

Appendix A: Nurturer Persona Interview Protocol

1. How do you feel about grocery shopping?
2. Is there a right way to grocery shop?
 - a. What is the right way?
 - b. What influences your understanding of the right way?
 - c. Do you try to shop in the right way?
3. How did you learn how to grocery shop?
4. What influences the products you buy in the grocery store? (Nutrition, budget, political/ethical reasons)
5. Are there magazines or articles that you read, or shows that you watch on TV that have shaped the way that you provide food for your family?
6. Are there places that look for information about the food that you buy for your family?
7. Do you grocery shop for your family?
8. Do you feel a responsibility to bring the right food into your home?
 - a. Do you feel a responsibility to yourself?
 - b. Do you feel a responsibility to your family?
 - c. Do you feel a responsibility to others?
9. What responsibilities do you feel you have as the shopper?
10. Do you think the products you buy at the grocery store say something about who you are?
 - a. Do your grocery purchases reflect you or your opinions on political or ethical issues?
 - b. What do you think they say?
11. Do you think the products you buy at the grocery store say something about your family?
12. Are there items that you buy...
 - a. To save time?
 - b. To address a health concern?
 - c. To save money?
13. How has your grocery shopping changed over your lifetime? Was there a time in your life when you shopped differently?
 - a. What caused those changes?
 - b. When you decided to make a change, how did you decide what to do?
14. How has your recent (life milestone) affected your grocery shopping?
15. Do you think about the food you bring into your house differently?
16. Is there anything else you want me to know about your grocery shopping that we have not yet covered?

Appendix B: Creative Persona Interview Protocol

1. How do you feel about food?
2. How do you feel about grocery shopping?
3. What stores do you like to grocery shop at?
 - a. Do you shop at any specialty stores or farmer's markets?
4. Who do you shop for?
5. Do you shop with other people?
6. Do you have a preferred time to go grocery shopping?
7. Do you have a routine?
8. Do you have any shopping habits?
9. Do you have any strategies or techniques when you go grocery shopping?
 - a. Do you use a shopping list?
 - b. Do you try to discover new things?
10. When things move around in the store, how does that make you feel?
11. Are there any programs or departments in a grocery store that you particularly enjoy?
12. Do you feel differently about different stores?
13. Was there a time in your life when grocery shopping became more enjoyable?
14. Are there magazines or articles that you read, or shows that you watch on TV that have shaped the way that you grocery shop?
15. Are there places that look for information about the food or grocery shopping?
16. How do you feel about cooking?
 - a. Do you view it as a creative activity?
 - b. Do you think of cooking as a fun activity?
17. What is the relationship for you between your grocery shopping and your cooking?
18. How do you feel about the grocery store?
 - a. Do you consider the grocery store a creative space?
 - b. What is creative about the grocery store? What could make the grocery store more creative?
19. Do you consider cooking a leisure activity?
20. Do you consider grocery shopping a leisure activity?
 - a. What about at a farmer's market or specialty store
21. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about grocery shopping or your cooking that we have not yet discussed?

Appendix C: Overlapping Personas – Nurturer & Creative

The personas explored in this work isolate individual aspects of a grocery shopper's information behavior and grocery shopping experience. Both empirical studies were designed to focus on one persona, but other personas were observed in the data. In this appendix, I present the description of the creative personas by the nurturer persona study participants and the description of the nurturer persona by creative persona study participants. Some of the following quotations were used in the previous chapters, but many are new for this appendix.

CREATIVE PERSONA IDENTIFIED IN NURTURER PERSONA STUDY

The nurturer persona study focused on the role of food providers through interviews with participants that had recently gone through the addition or subtraction of members of their family. Several nurturer persona study participants described the presence of the creative persona in their grocery shopping. As detailed in the nurturer persona study section, six participants self-identified as enjoying food and eight described positive feelings toward grocery shopping. One participant, Faye, specifically described the recreational aspects of the grocery store and how it has made grocery shopping more enjoyable for her.

Faye: I also think that I started spending more recreation time at grocery stores for other reasons. I remember this is an awesome thing if it's not you tell me, but I feel like since being here, Whole Foods has yoga on the roof or movie nights, and so does Central Market. They have the nice places to eat and be on the patio and watch people go by. I feel like I spend time there not grocery shopping, and that was probably an entry into it's okay to hang out here, which then probably translated to it's okay to spend more time shopping here.

Participants in the nurturer persona study also described enjoying the visual presentation of grocery stores, discovering new things in the grocery store, and cooking; all attributes that recreational shoppers discussed as relating to their creative persona.

The creative persona is tied to a grocery shopper's feelings toward the grocery store. If someone sees the store as overwhelming and unpleasant it becomes more difficult to be creative in it. The visual presentation of a store influences how a person feels in the space.

Felix: I enjoy grocery shopping. I find it fun as long as the grocery store is not too crowded. You probably messed up getting me coming for this interview because I love grocery shopping, I could talk about it forever. I like looking at all the different stuff on the shelves, walking around the supermarket, as long as there's not too many people there. I feel like they do a good job in grocery stores of presenting food in a way that makes it look appealing, like when you look at a whole bunch of products on the shelf together, it looks comforting because you see a whole bunch of them there, and just the idea of being full of food is a happy, comforting feeling. I guess that's basically how I feel about grocery shopping.

Like Faye, Felix enjoyed his time in the grocery store. It was a comfortable and appealing space.

Although I did not ask the nurturer persona study participants if they like to discover new things, several described being inspired in the grocery store and enjoying encountering new products. Deborah explained that she tries to be an organized shopper with a plan, but that most of her shopping trips are more impulsive.

Interviewer: Would you say that you usually shop this way with the plan and the list?

Deborah: No. I should but we run out of groceries or we'll need something and then I go to get maybe a handful of things. I'll be hungry and I'll leave with a bunch of things. Or I'll end up at Central Market and be inspired by different things that I see.

Deborah was inspired by the variety of products at Central Market, a high-end grocery store. Paul also described discovering new things at Central Market and his love for the stores diverse selection.

Paul: Well, we love going to Central Market. We were just at Central Market the other day. We love going there because there were 15 different kinds of salt. We went to the ... What's that called? The bulk goods section. It has 15 different kinds of sea salt. Going in the produce section there is great because there's just so much interesting, different stuff to look at and ... which can be distracting, but ... Yeah, we like going there for the diversity, seeing a bunch of different things.

Marcella described her enjoyment of grocery shopping as coming directly from her love of discovering new things.

Marcella: It's like I find something useful for my family, for me. Especially when I find something that I didn't notice before. Something notable, or when I find there are some discounts on the items, on the goods that I usually buy.

Jerry's love for spending a lot of time exploring the grocery store has even become a joke in his family.

Jerry: I generally like grocery shopping because I like to ... I like food, I like to cook, I like to kind of find variety and new stuff. I generally like it, except for when it's just hectic and you're just kind of squeezing in something on a day where you have too much going on already[...]Generally, I like it. My wife kind of jokes. I take a long time because I kind of like to explore and just get new stuff. I cook so I'll do a majority of the shopping so that I'm prepared for cooking.

Jerry, like several nurturer persona study participants takes on the role of food provider as both the grocery shopper and cook in his household.

As described in the creative persona study section, the description of cooking as a creative and enjoyable activity was an attribute of many recreational shoppers. Enjoying cooking and grocery shopping often go hand in hand. In fact, May went from hating

grocery shopping to enjoying it because she started cooking after taking on the food provider role for her family.

May: I think I've become a lot more methodical about it. I think that I have become a lot more patient and that's had a lot to do with taking the time to shop and really enjoying it, going through it. I just think that I am now a lot more open minded about the products that I buy or I'm willing to buy more products than I used to be because I do a lot more cooking now. In general I've gone from basically hating getting dragged to the grocery store to now I think I kind of look forward to it every couple of weeks.

Interviewer: You mentioned cooking. Do you think that one led to the other or how do you think that process began?

May: I do. I think that probably my cooking led to enjoying grocery shopping more and getting familiar with the products that are available. I, before when I was, you know, I used to live with roommates and stuff I didn't really do this sort of cooking and I would just go out to eat or living on campus or whatever and so I, when I would go to the grocery store it would be to get sort of snacks. Once I started my own family and now that we have a full kitchen and everything and I have the time to cook I think that is when I started actually going to the grocery store and figuring out, okay this is, these are the products that I have. It's opened a lot more doors for me.

May demonstrates not only the presence of both the nurturer and creative persona in her interview; she also demonstrates how they interact. As discussed in the nurturer persona study section, taking on the role of the food provider can also mean taking on new responsibilities. Most of the participants described these responsibilities as adding pressure or even guilt, but for some, like May, they can also make mundane tasks more meaningful and even enjoyable.

NURTURER PERSONA IDENTIFIED IN CREATIVE PERSONA STUDY

The creative persona study explored food loving, grocery shoppers' views on leisure and creativity in the grocery store. The participants in the study were all self-described food lovers and were categorized in the study as recreational, not-recreational,

and can-be-recreational shoppers based on their views of whether or not grocery shopping is a leisure activity. The participants were interviewed and all but one was observed grocery shopping. In the interview and observation data, the participants made several references to the nurturer persona and how it influenced or impacted their grocery shopping.

Unlike the nurturer persona study, the role of the food provider was not a focus of the creative persona study and the research study was not designed to explore it. The presence of a nurturer persona was not discussed in the creative persona study findings because the references to it were not directly related to the study's research questions. A few participants did describe their role as the food provider and the importance of feeding their families healthy food.

Several creative persona study participants described the role of food provider when they described how grocery shopping became more enjoyable when they started taking care of themselves after leaving their parents' home. Grace and Leah both described the freedom of being in control of their cooking and grocery shopping. Robin said, "It was definitely a lot more fun when I was cooking on my own or just providing for myself." Joseph described how grocery shopping became more enjoyable when his daughter was growing up, and he and his wife took on the responsibility of getting her to eat.

Joseph: I think it became more enjoyable about the time my daughter was born. Not so much when she was born, but as she grew up, because, like a lot of kids, she was a very finicky eater, so we really had to work at it to get her something to eat, or to get her to eat something.

Later in his interview, Joseph also described his love of cooking in terms of providing for his family.

Joseph: It's a skill I've developed, and, with some instruction and some inspiration and a lot of mistakes. My first attempt at bouillabaisse, even the dog didn't want to touch it, that's how bad it was. This might sound really strange, but the Chinese have an expression about feeding the family as honorable work. That's the way I look at it.

It was clear throughout his interview and observation that providing food for his family was very important to Joseph.

Lorraine and Jenna also described their families as influencing their grocery shopping when they described their views on healthy eating, a cultural norm that was discussed at length in the nurturer persona study section. Lorraine described her grocery shopping as buying “a lot of fresh food and not a lot of processed and prepared foods.” As a follow-up, I asked her why she shops like that.

Lorraine: I just know that it's better for us, and healthier, and more nutritious, and I would like my kids to see us eating that so they think that's normal. Whether they eat it or not is a whole 'nother story. I think it's pretty the fresh produce, and coming home and putting it away and, "It's gonna start us off well this week.”

Lorraine not only references her understanding of healthy foods in this quotation, she also explains that she is modeling healthy eating for her children, another theme from the nurturer persona study. Jenna also described her views on healthy eating when I asked her about how she grocery shops.

Jenna: What I love about, again, the local Meijer, the fruits and vegetables are in your face as soon as you come in which, to me, shows that they value that most than other grocery stores I've gone to historically, and I've been shopping for myself for almost 20 years, so ... I like that a lot. That forces me on a subconscious level to eat healthy. And it reminds me okay, let me not buy the Oreo cookies, let me get apples. Which are just as sweet and even better. Apple a day keeps the doctor away I think is very true and I think the research has shown that. Funny enough. I also like the fact that I go straight to the organic section and the food products that are organically grown are not that much more in price than the regular products. I appreciate that. For me, that means that my family and I,

we might be stretching our budget a little bit, but at least we still have access to healthy food. Especially now that I'm pregnant.

Throughout her interview and observation, Jenna described how her family was focusing on healthy eating, and her recent pregnancy added an additional importance to her grocery shopping and healthy eating choices. Although the nurturer persona was not described by most of the creative persona study participants, its strong presence with a few demonstrates that grocery shoppers, beyond the carefully selected nurturer persona study participants, experience the nurturer persona.

Appendix D: Other Personas – Economic & Political

Both of the empirical studies were designed to focus on one persona a grocery shopper can enact. While the interview protocols were designed to gain insights about the nurturer and creative personas, several participants also described other influences on their shopping that suggest other personas are at play. In this appendix, I will present several of the references made to an economic and political persona.

ECONOMIC PERSONA

The presence of the economic persona was discussed throughout the interviews and observations of participants in both studies. The economic persona relates to how cost, value, and budget impact a grocery shoppers decision making and grocery shopping habits. Research has consistently found that 80% of shoppers use coupons (Lempert, 2002). Money-saving strategies require shoppers to navigate a complex information landscape in which making the right decision provides enjoyment (Putrevu & Ratchford, 1997), satisfaction (Webber, Sobal, & Dollahite, 2010), and even a form of “gaming” (Prus & Dawson, 1991). Even for shoppers who do not view money-saving strategies as enjoyable, economic incentives and price have been found to play a major role in food selection (Glanz, Basil, Maibach, Goldberg, & Snyder, 1998), consumer information search behavior (Putrevu & Ratchford, 1997), and the purchase of organic foods (Hill & Lynchehaun, 2002; Yiridoe, Bonti-Ankomah, & Martin, 2005). Unsurprisingly, participants in the nurturer and creative persona studies described the economic implications of grocery purchases, although they were described in different ways.

The economic aspects of grocery shopping were present in all three major elements of the nurturer persona (cultural norms, self-identity, and moral obligation). I

asked all of the nurturer persona study participants what influences the products they buy at the grocery store and 10 of the participants listed price or cost.

Several of the cultural norms described by the nurturer persona study participants have an economic aspect to them. The use of coupons was a common cultural norm that several participants viewed as integral to the “right way” to grocery shop. The cultural norms around healthy eating, especially the belief that organic food is more nutritious, was described by several participants as having a financial toll. Most explicitly, Ramona described the financial implications of following the healthy eating norms.

Ramona: Is it really helping me to buy organic chicken even though it's \$2 more per pound than regular chicken? It raises a lot of concerns because as a person that's not always financially stable I can't always afford to buy the organic version of everything that I eat or everything my kids eat. Its do I have to feed you guys and have an abundance of food in here to last you throughout the month? Or should I pick the more healthy conscious things where you'll probably have less food but it's possible that you'll be healthier in the long run.

Gladys also discussed how the cost of organic products is the reason why she doesn't purchase them.

Gladys: I think it's obviously very important but I think for me right now, price kind of wins out. Organic is much more expensive so I would say for now, unfortunately in my budget I'm not as ... I am conscious about it but I don't apply it in my purchases.

Interviewer: Have you in the past?

Gladys: I mean I've bought organic before but I've never had so much money that I could only buy organic. So, I have bought it before but not regularly.

Santiago was the only participant to discuss the cost of organic foods not as a hurdle to be overcome but simply something to avoid. He explained in his interview, “I believe I will live just as long eating non-organic spinach than I will eating organic spinach. Over my

lifetime, I'll end up saving \$1,000.00 by doing so.” The cultural norms around grocery shopping are shaped by the costs of the products in the grocery store as much as the products themselves.

The economic persona also was present in some of the participants’ descriptions of their self-identity. Ramona, Santiago, and Angelica all described themselves as frugal or bargain hunters. Other aspects of self-identity were also discussed in economic terms. Deborah and Dora both described their role as their family’s food provider with a description of the financial side. Deborah described herself as the primary grocery shopper and the “financial steward.” Dora discussed her role as primary grocery shopper, as being notable for the trust that her husband places in her to make reasonable grocery purchases.

Finally, the clearest example of the presence of an economic persona comes from the moral obligations that the participants described in terms of their role as the food provider. Several participants described the role of price in their decision making at the grocery store. Kendra described how two of her responsibilities, to save money and to buy healthy food, interact in her grocery shopping.

Kendra: Well, I try to make affordable choices, but also knowing that it's an investment and sometimes obviously the cheapest product isn't necessarily the best. But when I'm looking at options, if Whole Foods has their own organic brand, I'm going to choose theirs as opposed to the Horizon, whatever that one is, that's more expensive. So I try to cut corners, but not in quality of food.

Emmanuel also described the guilt and uncertainty that he feels when deciding whether or not to spend more on pricey organic items.

Emanuel: I think I feel that when my choice is to buy organic or not, it has a lot to do with if I feel responsible for my health and my kid's. I will frequently choose the organic version because there's a little bit of guilt feeling the responsibility. It kind of kicks in[...]I think the feeling of responsibility and that kind of stuff

probably kicks in when I'm thinking about, should I spend the extra money to buy the organic version of it.

The choice to buy organic products was almost universally lauded by the nurturer persona study participants, but many also struggled to justify the additional cost.

One of the common moral obligations discussed in the nurturer persona study findings focused squarely on the economic persona; the moral obligation not to overspend. Grocery purchases were necessities for all of the participants, but knowing what is too much to spend or what an appropriate should be budget added a layer of complexity to the grocery shopping experience. Many of the participants described wanting to get a good deal, but had to balance that goal with other pursuits.

For the creative persona study participants the clearest example of an economic persona come from the seven creative persona study participants who described efficiency and saving money as a major goal in their grocery shopping. These participants described getting in and out of the grocery store quickly while saving the most money. Robin even described how sticking to a budget while grocery shopping turns into a fun math game. During her shopping observation, I observed the math game first hand.

Robin: This is where some of the math fun comes in. Take a look at the relative costs of store brand, \$2.30 versus, they seem to be running a sale on that particular Dole brand. And, I have a couple of coupons. So, I need to find a package of fruit bowls, each of these, that's packed in no sugar added.

Robin went on to compare the prices of the fruit cups and the coupon she brought into the store.

Low price was also the second most common store attribute described by the creative persona study participants. Many described how they shop at several grocery stores due to price and quality, buying specific cheaper items at discount stores while

buying other items for more money at conventional or specialty grocery stores. Lorraine provides a great example of how several participants thought about price and their grocery shopping options.

Lorraine: I think some stores are expensive, but then you're paying for the quality, and then I think some stores are cheap and it's cheap because the quality isn't that great. Each offer something that I like to take advantage of, so I'll go to the discount stores. I've even purchased canned goods and boxed food items from Big Lots before, because I'm in there and I'm like, "Oh, hey, they have the same gluten-free all-purpose flour mix here as they have at the grocery store and it's three bucks cheaper. I'm going to buy three bags of it here and it costs the same as buying a couple bags at the grocery store.

Lorraine's discussion of the relationship between price and quality is a clear example of how complex of the economic persona can be. Always buying the cheapest product is a simple goal, but most of the participants had a much more nuanced view of price. Some items just are not worth spending more for at a higher quality store, while other items would only be purchased at a farmer's market or specialty store. Each product was evaluated individually to decide what was most important: price, quality, convenience, health, location, etc. For some of the participants, price was the most important part of their grocery purchase decisions, and for the rest it was a factor.

POLITICAL PERSONA

The other persona that was described by participants was the political persona. This persona relates to the political, ethical, and social implications of grocery shopping. In recent years scholars and activists have begun to see the grocery stores as a site for political action and a space of complex decision making (Economist, 2006; Johnston & Mackendrick, 2014; Micheletti, 2003; Nestle, 2006; Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005; Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). The implications of purchase decisions were investigated in both research studies, but the descriptions of the political persona differed between the

two groups of participants. Overall, several of the creative persona study participants described a knowledge and awareness of the political implications of their shopping, while political implications only came up in the interviews of a few nurturer persona study participants.

Many of the creative persona study participants were very well informed about the social, ecological, and political issues around food and the food system. They were purposively recruited based on their love of food and several worked with or had been involved with educational classes related to food, nutrition, or gardening. This awareness of food issues may explain why several participants shared their political thoughts and motivations about their grocery shopping, all suggesting the presence of a political persona.

At the end of every interview, I asked the participants if they had anything else to add to our discussion. Jenna brought up her views on grocery stores' role in wider social issues.

Jenna: I mean, there's a health and wealth gap that I think should also be a focus in regards to grocery stores. I find it kind of interesting that there are four different types of grocery stores that I need to go to in order to get what I want. And they're all different locations, and they all have different infrastructure, and they all have different customers and they all have different prices, and they all have different foods that the other doesn't have. I find that interesting.

I'm a food justice advocate as well, and there was a point in my life where for one summer I was an organic apprentice farmer and it was produce, vegetables and fruits that we grew. And I think that brought to my attention the whole seed to plate concept and how grocery stores are a big part of that discussion. Farms as well, of course. Without farms, you don't have grocery stores. So I think farms should be part of the discussion as well and whether there's a farmers market near grocery stores. To me they're the absolute foundation of grocery stores.

Jenna described herself as a food justice advocate, someone who is concerned with a variety of food issues and the food system. She was not alone in seeing the grocery store and grocery shopping as a part of wider issues. Lorraine, a manager at a farmers market, also described a political motivation behind her shopping that she shares with others.

Interviewer: Do you have any shopping habits?

Lorraine: Well, beyond kind of trying to have a shopping list to stick to, going around the outside, I always look at the meat prices, even if I'm not in the market to buy meat that day, and that's mostly for running the market I feel like sometimes people are like, "Meat at the market costs a whole lot of money." I feel like, "Well, I was just at Meijer and I noticed that a pound of ground beef cost this much. It's not organic but if you're shopping with this [farmer] at the [farmers] market you know that it's organic and where it came from, and there's really only a dollar difference. Would you pay a dollar difference for something you know is humanely raised and processed sustainably? I don't try to like guilt the person, but I don't know. That is a habit. I always look at the meat.

Even one of the most price conscious creative persona study participants, Robin, expressed her desire to shop at the local food cooperative for ecological reasons.

Robin: [The food cooperative] is definitely a store I'd like to frequent a lot more. I like the fact they've got local meat and dairy, local eggs. They've got the best selection of allergen free stuff that I could hope for.

Interviewer: For you, with the local items and things, is it about the safety of the food? Is it about the quality of the food? What makes you want to purchase things that are local?

Robin: It's partly quality, partly the ecological aspect of it. Food has to travel to us with a distance, and with some of those farms, I could walk right up and lean over the fence to check out the cow that in a couple of months if going to turn into my steak.

Carole also described shopping at the food cooperative in terms of wider political issues.

Interviewer: The things that you mentioned that you would buy at the Co-op are available at Meijer's, so why do you prefer to buy them at the Co-op?

Carole: Well because I know that it's a cooperatively owned store that benefits their employees, and supports more of a living wage. I want to support more of the economy as much as I can, but it's not always convenient, or feasible all the time.

Patsy and Gina also said that they preferred shopping at stores where the employees are fairly compensated. They both specifically mentioned avoiding Walmart, a company that they viewed as having a bad reputation. Additionally, Robin and Mabel both said that they purchased fair trade products. All of the participants mentioned in this section considered the impacts of their grocery purchases in a broader political way suggesting that political motivations and thus a political persona play a part in their grocery shopping.

A few nurturer persona study participants described political or ethical motivations behind their grocery shopping purchases that suggest the presence of a political persona. Paul, Jerome, Jerry, and Faye described the political dimensions of grocery shopping in the nurturer persona study findings. Paul viewed his grocery shopping as imperfect by participating in some ethically motivated shopping. Jerome and Jerry discussed how they were politically motivated to avoid companies and products that demonstrated different political or ethical values. Faye shared her political persona in her interview in two ways. First, she identified the cultural norm that grocery shopping can align with your values. She described how more than other forms of shopping, she feels that grocery shopping allows her more access to support products and companies that share her values.

Faye: It's something that I tend to appreciate supporting with my consumer dollars. Whereas lots of things, not a lot, but some things that I buy I'm like oh, I want the outcome of this, but I don't like the process in which this is made. I don't like the ethics of the company or the social labor laws or I don't like all the slave

labor that went into actually creating this, but I'm still going to buy the thing because I want it.

Second, she also identified as an ethical shopper. Describing how she made an intentional choice to purchase products that align with her values after seeing first hand the realities of large-scale conventional farming during a West Coast bike trip. Although the majority of participants did not describe political motivations related to their grocery shopping, its existence and the existence of a political persona was clearly observed in the nurturer persona study.

Appendix E: Persona Conflicts

In addition to the personas identified throughout Chapter 4, several participants also described conflicts that they experienced while grocery shopping. Some fit with the personas described in other appendices, while others point to other possible personas. Most of the conflicts surrounded health and price, but convenience, quality, ethics, and culture also were discussed.

The most common conflict described in the data was between the benefits of healthy food and the cost. Many of the participants in both studies described conflicts between the shopping goals of buying healthy and affordable items. When I asked Tim about what influences his grocery shopping, he responded,

Tim: Price and then the ingredients list or nutritional label or whatever.

Interviewer: What kind of things are you looking for?

Tim: Cheap. An ingredients list where I can pronounce everything. Not hidden or unexpected large amount of calories or large amount of certain things that you wouldn't expect. Crazy amounts of sugar in something that doesn't seem like it would be sweet or something like that.

Interviewer: Do those influences of price and food you can pronounce, do those come in conflict ever?

Tim: Yeah, yeah, often.

Interviewer: How do you resolve that?

Tim: Cases by case, it would just be depending on if I felt that item was particularly good for you or had some particular value that might justify the price.

Michelle had recently begun grocery shopping on her own and was actively researching ways to save money in the grocery store. I asked if she had picked up any tips in her research.

Michelle: Yes and no. I think it goes back to my opening statement about if you want to eat healthy and if you want to eat on a dime, figuring out where that balance. Most of the stuff I read on Pinterest is people eating the least expensive things ever, and most of the time it's not healthy. It's like make this casserole that will last you three days. And I think that's realistic, but I'm like, there's nothing in that casserole that has nutritional value that will sustain for three days in my mind. So, I haven't really found any that are too terribly good, not yet.

Grace explained that she buys organic produce, but only if it is not “outrageously priced.” Deborah described both a conflict between price and health and a conflict between price and convenience in her interview.

Deborah: I would love to just strictly be buying all of our food at Whole Foods. I would also love to, I mean I guess this isn't those two goals [health and price] but I would love to buy stuff that's already made and not have to cook. In order to save money you usually have to put in the labor yourself. Even the cut up fruit is more expensive if you're not at least peeling the pineapple yourself. For our finances I'm the one that goes over our finances at the beginning of every month and watches how did our grocery bill move, how did our going out to eat bill move from month to month. I also have our finances color-coded so I'm motivated to get the green font each month. I want to maximize our, whatever makes a difference our profit each month.

Deborah's economic goals are clearly very important to her and create a conflict around eating healthy food and spending enough time preparing it.

Ramona and Mabel also described convenience as coming in conflict with health. Ramona shared in her interview how even after learning distressing information about the quality of fast food; it was too convenient for her family to give up.

Ramona: For instance, yesterday someone posted something about KFC and their chicken. They ordered a chicken tender and it actually looked like a fried rodent

and it was in the shape of a little rat with a tail but it was fried. The person said they bit into it and it was hard and rubbery. It didn't taste like chicken. Which it just brings to mind what are we really eating? Of course I'm going to go to the store and feed you guys. I don't want to feed you that. I know that's not going to stop my family from eating fast food. It's not going to stop me from eating fast food because it's convenient. At the same time it just raises awareness I guess. In my head a red flag about where does stuff come from?

Like Ramona, Mabel also was conflicted about the healthfulness of some of her convenience foods.

Mabel: Now that I make more money I actually eat a lot more meat. Me and my boyfriend, we talk about this a lot, where we have more money now, we eat a lot more meat, and we definitely feel less healthy than when we were eating vegetables three meals a day, five days a week. We're making an effort to revert back to that, but it's hard when you're so used to convenience and meat just tastes good.

Even when individuals know that something they eat is less helpful, the pull of quick and easy eating can make it difficult to make healthy decisions.

Returning to conflicts over price, the cost of higher quality food was a concern described by a few participants. Alberta mentioned her conflict over spending more money for fresher, higher quality food.

Alberta: Oh, one more thing I really do not like, I think it's the pricing habit in the US grocery stores, is that when you buy really a big bunch of food, the price goes down sharply. When you buy two little potatoes, maybe it's the same price for a very big bag. I feel that's really not enjoyable for me, because we're a small family, but I do not want to pay extra for just small portions [...] Yeah, and I also would prefer fresh food all the time. If I buy a lot of stuff and store them at home, I do not like that.

Alberta grew up outside of the U.S. where her family would shop at small markets near her home everyday. While many of the participants described buying bulk as a plus, for Alberta it means that she has to pay more for food that has to last longer than she would

like. Rudy also struggled with balancing the family budget with his standards for high quality food.

Rudy: The idea that something is more expensive thus it must be better quality, Is obviously a misnomer but I do see a significant difference. I guess a good example if I may use one would be an organic grass fed beef which is expensive but and its a pound and it's like ninety percent lean or whatever and I would ... and I know that's expensive but I would buy that over say a Walmart ground beef chuck or something because number one I like that they're eating their normal diet, number two I like that it's not a lot but I think it is quality.

While the belief that more expensive means higher quality was described by Rudy as incorrect, items produced sustainably or organically typically cost more than the conventionally produced alternative.

Cost was also a concern with a few participants who tried to buy ethically raised and sustainable grocery items. Faye described her goals of shopping for affordable grocery items that matched her political and social values as well as the conflict that exists between them.

Faye: I guess I feel responsibility to myself to make good financial decisions and then to also buy things that are in alignment with my values and what I want to support.

Interviewer: Can you talk about little bit? Do those two things oftentimes work well together or do they come in conflict?

Faye: No, they come in conflict. The mantra that I keep trying to come back to is what am I ultimately supporting? Is that something that I would feel good about giving money to or is that something that I would ultimately be like, "Oh, I'm giving and supporting the devil," or some entity that I don't want to support in any way, shape, of form? No, usually they're in direct conflict with each other. It tends to, not one hundred percent alignment between behavior and values of, no, if grapes are on sale, I'm getting grapes on sale, and they will not be organic. I will still enjoy them a lot.

Shopping ethically not only applies to the products you buy, it can also impact the stores you shop at. Gina was politically motivated to shop at stores that paid their employees well and aligned with her values. Unfortunately, shopping at her preferred stores does not easily fit into the realities of her life.

Gina: I feel bad, and I think about it every time I go in the store, but nonetheless I buy there, due to different matters. Like I spend a lot of time in [a small town] and there's just County Market and Walmart there. I'm not going to drive to [the larger town] to get a gallon of milk or whatever. I still think about it, but I shop there anyway, but I feel bad about doing it, because I don't agree with this whole thing.

Trying to shop ethically can be expensive and inconvenient leading shoppers to make compromises.

Overall, the presence of these conflicts demonstrates the variety of influences and factors that can impact a grocery shopper. Throughout this work, I have presented evidence that grocery shoppers are complex beings that are balancing different pressures and influences. These conflicts demonstrate not only the presences of the other personas motioned above, they also point to the additional factors of quality, ethics, and convenience and that complicate the decision making process of grocery shopping further. These conflicts show how different grocery shoppers think about and reconcile conflicts that can arise between different personas and different influences in the grocery store. For some participants, other personas were more important to them. This strongly suggests the presence of many personas within grocery shoppers. It also demonstrates a need for future research to explore more personas to better understand the many factors and influences that make the everyday activity of grocery shopping an immensely complex decision making process.

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