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# Retail Log III: Data Analysis

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**Results**

Shopping during this term has been an interesting experience. I typically do not think about why I purchase what I purchase and instead think about what I like when I am making purchases. The channel I utilized the most was brick-and-mortar because I enjoy going to a physical store and experiencing it. Location was greatly important to me because of convenience and not wanting to travel far. I chose locations that were within ten miles of where I live and had parking. Merchandising is a motivator for me to make a purchase because it directly applies to my job and I respect other people's work that goes into the displays. Merchandising and window displays allow me to visualize the products in a way that I would use them. I only purchased from an app once and from an online website once during this term. I enjoy shopping in-store more than online. I do not purchase online unless I know exactly what I want, or I care more about the purpose of the item than the quality.

There were not many similarities between the retailers aside from them all being popular commercial businesses that can be found country wide. They were all in convenient locations to where I live. However, I did have similar reasons and patterns for purchasing from the multiple retailers. I mainly looked for brands, styles, and value. I was incredibly price conscious when shopping for myself unless I was shopping for a gift for someone else. Two big reasons to motivate me to shop were for outfits, accessories, and cosmetics for weddings this summer and a need for more workout apparel. I wanted new outfits for the weddings. I was getting tired of constantly doing laundry and felt that having more workout outfits would make my life a little easier.

Almost every clothing piece I bought I enjoyed. I was not shopping for anything too out there that pushed fashion boundaries. Thus was little risk in what I was looking for. One reason

being that I do not have anywhere to wear clothing that is new or out there right now because of the pandemic closing multiple businesses. I also am looking to save money right now because I am furloughed. Therefore, there is not an excess of money to be buying unnecessary things. One exception to a piece I did not love as much as other pieces was a shirt I bought online from a website. I was not able to try it on prior to purchasing. I still liked it and would wear it, but it will not be a go to piece.

There was a few times when shopping at the outlet mall that I wanted to purchase more than I did. However, my finances are limited right now, and I need to be responsible with what purchases I do make. I cannot justify purchases that will get little use right now. An example being fashionable clothes to wear out to the bars with friends. Bars are closed right now, and we are supposed to be practicing social distancing, therefore I have no reasoning to purchase clothes that will get no use.

## Discussion

The patterns in the data suggest that when shopping I am price aware, style focused, and when shopping in-store I am impulsive. I was attracted to a well merchandised store that made me aware of the product and how I could use the product. However, if it was too expensive or not on sale, I would not purchase. I was aware of styles that I like and are comfortable wearing. I did not make purchases that were out of my comfort zone aside from one outfit that was heavily discounted, therefore there was little risk if I did not like it.

This brings me to believe that the consumer behavior utility theory was greatly important to me when shopping and impacted decision making. The utility theory is an economic theory that focuses on "how do we allocate our limited resources to get what we need" (Jablon-Roberts, 2020, slide 6). It explains that people make choices regarding purchasing based on how much

use and satisfaction that item will bring to the consumer. It can also be broken down into two

categories known as acquisition utility and transaction utility. Acquisition utility "represents the

economic gain or loss from a purchase transaction" or to break it down further, it is equal to the

utility from the item subtracted from the price paid for it (Lichtenstein, et. al., 1990). Transaction

utility, however, "represents the pleasure (or displeasure) associated with the financial terms of

the deal *per se* and is equal to the internal reference price minus the purchase price"

(Lichtenstein, et. al., 1990). Therefore, if the item costs more than what I think the item should

cost, it has lower transactional utility to me. This happened multiple times when shopping in-

store. However, when there was a good sale and the item cost less than what I thought it would, I

was more inclined to purchase it.

When shopping I considered the price and if that was worth how much use I would get

out of something. Outfits that I cannot wear right now due to the pandemic, like going out

clothes, had little utility to me for my limited finances, therefore I did not purchase them. Items

that brought high utility, like the workout clothes, I felt a need to purchase more items. I knew I

would like more than one outfit, but when I purchased four outfits I felt satisfied. Thus, hinting

towards the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility. The Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility

suggests that there is "less additional utility the more we consume" (Jablon-Roberts, 2020, slide

7). This means that as one purchases more of something, like a latte, the less enjoyable and the

less utility it gives. The first and second can provide high utility, however, by the third or fourth

consumption the latte becomes less appealing. Therefore, once I purchased four outfits, a fifth

outfit was not worth the price I was paying for the utility it provided. I already had exercise

clothes at home, and the four new outfits allows me to go at least two weeks without needing to

wash any of my workout clothes. Thus, like Lichtenstein, et. al., suggests, the utility I was

experiencing diminished early because I am a value conscious person (1990). Two weeks felt

like a good time for me to do laundry rather than every week that I was doing with my current

supply of workout clothes. Adding on another outfit to purchase and exceed that two-week mark

did not provide much utility aside from waiting one more day to do laundry which was not worth

the price.

Another theory that greatly affected my purchases was the Social Identity Theory. This

theory focuses on how one interacts within larger groups and society as a whole (Jablon-Roberts,

2020, slide 2). One's social identity is "viewed as the reconciliation of opposing needs for

assimilation and differentiation from others" (Yuli, et. al., 2017). The process works when

people sort themselves into groups, like a friend group, then start to compare and contrast their

group with another group. When differences are found, the group then emphasizes the

differences to differentiate themselves with other groups. This affected my shopping because

when shopping for fashion pieces like the dress and romper for the weddings. I wanted to find a

piece that would be appropriate for the social norm of a wedding, a style that would be accepted

by my friends who would be at the wedding and therefore conform to that group standard, but

also I wanted to find something that would make me stand out. I did not want it to stand out too

much, because I still want to fit in with the group, which applies to the social identity theory

because it suggests and assumes that "all identities operate by the same basic principles" (Brown

& Capozza, 2000).

It is important to me that my friends like my clothes because that gives me a sense of

pride that I picked out something that looks good. It is also important to me that I can stand out

and be my own person within my group of friends. Therefore, that also falls in line with

Simmel's Duality Concept which means that "people are motivated by two opposing impulses:

the desire to conform to a group and the need to maintain a distinct individuality" (Jablon-Roberts, 2020, slide 10). I was motivated by the impulse to fit my group's standards and conform and motivated to have my own identity within the group.

This theory and concept applied to me while I was shopping for workout apparel too. I wanted to find workout clothes that the other people in my Orange Theory Fitness classes were wearing to fit in the with the group of the class and the apparel had strong utility to be comfortable and perform well in the class. I want to do well in the class and be comfortable. That is what inspired me to grab more workout tank tops and running shorts, because that is what the other women wear. To make it more my style and stand out, I chose a brand I liked (Under Armour) and chose pieces in colors and patterns I liked. Many women in my classes wear black or dark colors, but I prefer brighter colors when working out. It is a fun way to express colors I like in a way that I do not normally get to. For example, I like neon colors but that would not be something I would feel comfortable in or appropriate wearing to work because of the attention it grabs. However, when working out, I don't mind the bright colors and attention.

## Conclusion

Overall, this research study was insightful and engaging. By applying the shopping behaviors to theories studied in class, I realized that my brain is busy at work making decisions for me while I determine making purchases whether I am aware of it or not. Motivations for me to purchase included a need for the product, how it will make my life easier, and convenience of location. The Utility Theory and Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility played a great role within purchasing decisions I made. Each item I bought needed to have a use, even the impulse purchases otherwise it was not worth making a purchase. Purchases were additionally affected by the Social Identity Theory and Simmel's Duality Concept. It was important to me to fit in with

who I think I am and what role I fall into within a group, but I wanted to find ways to stand out

within the group. Even if I'm shopping alone, I still try to think about my role, who I am in the

group, and how what I wear impacts that role.

**Revised Coding Guide**

1. Motivation to purchase
    a. Affordable
        i. Sale
        ii. Money
        iii. Price
        iv. Deal
        v. Discounted
    b. Comfortable
        i. Uncomfortable
    c. Gift
        i. Birthday
        ii. Graduation
    d. Workout
    e. Speed of Delivery
        i. Fast
    f. Quality
        i. High
        ii. Low
    g. Event
        i. Wedding
            1. Outdoor
        ii. Birthday
        iii. Graduation
    h. Need
    i. Merchandising
        i. Window Display
        ii. Email Marketing
    j. Impulse
        i. Not intending to purchase
        ii. Had to go in
        iii. Enticing
    k. Easy to Return
    l. Large Selection
        i. Choices
    m. Location
        i. Parking
    n. Sentimental Value
    o. Treat Myself
    p. Low Commitment
    q. Social Media
        i. Instagram
        ii. YouTube

2. Personal Opinion
    a. Love
        i. Pleased
        ii. Happy
    b. Cute
    c. Flattering
    d. Confidence/Confident
    e. Casual
    f. Fun
    g. Pretty
    h. Excited
    i. Boring
    j. Flop
    k. Surprised
    l. Comfort Zone
    m. Fashionable
    n. Brand
        i. Under Armour
            1. Currently more attracted to than other brands
        ii. Francesca's
            1. Favorite store
            2. Frequently shop here
        iii. Fossil
        iv. Old Navy
3. Style
    a. Fit
    b. Quality
    c. Confidence
    d. Awkward
    e. Casual
    f. Fashionable
    g. Basics
    h. Own Similar Styles
    i. Showed Off Curves
    j. Options
    k. Effortless
    l. Cute
    m. New
    n. Flattering
    o. Sophisticated
    p. Colors
    q. Dress Up
    r. Size

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