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Mini Research Report 2

Section 1: Observation

For this Mini Research Project, I began by observing my husband shopping for groceries. Most products were unfamiliar to him, as he does not do our grocery shopping. The only products that were familiar to him were sandwich thins and lunchmeats, two items he normally buys for himself as part of his weight loss program. For those two items there was no deliberation as his decision was based on brand recognition. Price was not a factor, though nutritional information was considered for the flavor/variety of the lunchmeat.

When it came to the other products on the shopping list, my husband considered the ease of use and the quantity to be the most important factors in his decision. He chose pre-cut watermelon despite the higher price because he did not want to have to slice it when we got home. He chose large quantity sizes of laundry detergent and dog food so that he would not have to buy more any time soon.

Finally, my husband did make two purchases that were not on the list. The first was a bag of Doritoes that were on an end-cap in the store. He believed they were on the end-cap because they were on sale, which is why he chose them. (For the record, they were not on sale, but he is not aware of that.) He also spent a long time comparing DVDs, another item that was not on the list. He chose which version he bought (standard DVD, special edition DVD, or Blu-Ray) based on the features. He ended up choosing the Blu-Ray version because it also had a digital copy he could download to his laptop or smart-phone.

When comparing the data shared by group members, it is clear that there are a variety of factors that people consider while shopping for new or unfamiliar products. These factors included price, quality, brand, nutritional information, reviews from others, ease of use, price per unit, and total quantity. The factor that was considered most often by the group's participants was price, with six out of seven participants using it as part of their decision making. Brands were considered fairly often, with four out of seven participants using it as a deciding factor.

There were a few differences between men and women in the group's observations. The only participants who used nutritional value, price per unit, quantity, and quality as part of their decision making processes. According to the group's observations, women were more concerned with peer reviews of a product and the price of the product.

Section 2: Survey

For my survey, I had four basic types of questions. The first two questions were used to generate an idea of the demographics of my participants. From those questions, it is clear that the majority of participants were female. Furthermore, the majority of participants were between the ages of 25 and 40. With the exception of the first two demographic questions, the means of the other items on the survey are listed below:

3 point scale: 3 Always, 2 Sometimes, 1 Never		
Question	**Item**	**Mean**
3	Do you make a list before you go grocery shopping?	2.222
4	Do you have a budget when you shop?	2.389
5	When I go shopping, I look at the prices of the items I am buying.	2.611
6	Do you use coupons when you grocery shop?	1.917

5 point scale: 5-Strongly agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly disagree		
Question	**Item**	**Mean**
7a	I buy the same brands every time I shop.	3.611
7b	I choose new products based on price.	3.722
7c	Sales and coupons make me more likely to buy a new product.	3.889
7d	Store brands are just as good as national brands.	3.667
7e	I check the labels of new products before I buy them.	3.889
7f	I choose new products based on value.	4.028
7g	I buy products in bulk/large quantities.	3.056

5 point scale: 5-Always, 4-Almost always, 3-Sometimes, 2-Almost never, 1-Never		
Question	**Item**	**Mean**
8a	Buy products that are not on your list.	3.472
8b	Buy products that are on the end cap of an aisle.	2.694
8c	Check product labels before buying.	3.722
8d	Choose a product based on price.	3.639

From the data and the means listed above, many generalizations can be made. For example, price seems to be an important factor in choosing products, whether new or otherwise, as seen in items 7b and 8d. One might also generalize that coupons are not that important to this group of shoppers, despite our bad economy. Also, one might also generalize that shoppers are watchful not to fall into the traps of the layout of a store, and only buy products off of end-caps sometimes.

There are two patterns or relationships that I noticed within my own data. First of all, 26 out of my 36 participants admitted that they only make a list sometimes. Yet, interestingly enough, all of those 26 admitted that they do end up buying products that are not on their list. Secondly, using coupons had a low mean (1.917) indicating the majority of participants only used them sometimes, with 5 participants admitting they never use them. However if you look at item 7c, there is a relatively higher mean (3.889) indicating that sales and coupons influence shoppers to try a new product. Does this indicate that sales play a higher role than coupons? It is clear that in the future, these factors should be separated and made into separate items/questions on the survey, a valuable lesson about creating surveys.

After reading my group's findings (summary of means), the following patterns were noticed:

- Survey participants tended to be the main grocery shopper in the household.
- Across all surveys, price was a very important factor in decision making.

- Items/questions related to price being a factor had higher means.
- Items/questions related to using coupons had lower means.
- Shoppers indicated that coupons might help them choose a new product.
- Items/questions related to the importance of brand names had higher means.
- Value being an important factor in choosing products also had high means on multiple surveys.

Finally, after reading my group's findings (summary of means), the only differences I noticed were between means on my survey and Debbie Young's survey.

- There were slight differences in responses to questions about the use of lists between the two surveys. In Young's participants, the mean was 2.8 (on a three point scale) indicating a large number of subjects used lists. However on my survey, I had a low mean (2.2 on a 5 point scale) on a similar question.
- Another difference in responses I noticed between Young's survey and mine was concerning buying items that are not on the list. Young's participants had a low mean (1.4 out of 4), while my participants had a high mean (3.4 out of 5), indicating my participants were much more likely to buy items that were not on their list.
- There were also differences in means on items/questions related to bulk sizes. Young's survey had low means (0.6 out of 4) while Jain's survey had higher (3.05 out of 5), indicating my participants were more likely to buy bulk sizes.