

Objectives:

1. This exercise is designed to illustrate that many different types of data collection are necessary to obtain a true picture of the shopping habits.
2. The findings from this exercise demonstrate how you can later formulate a questionnaire.
3. You will gain the experience of conducting observational research.

OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT BRIEF:

Location: Any grocery store

- **WHEN:** Any time of day. Weekends are often better as more people are shopping. Start from the parking lot and discretely follow a person for his/her entire shopping trip—do not follow so closely as to make the person nervous. IF YOU THINK the person is aware that you are following them and it is making them nervous approach them explain what you were doing (take this handout with you), apologize, and start over.
- **HOW:** You will select one consumer/family (it must be a stranger). Take a cart around the store to appear to shop or do your shopping at the same time. Take paper and pencil (or phone) with you. Create an observation form with the following items (the completed form must be turned in with your assignment via Blackboard).
 - Gender, approximate age
 - Type of car
 - How dressed
 - Appearance
 - Time of day
 - Was the store crowded?
 - Did the person have a list?
 - Did the person seem to be checking items off the list?
 - Did the person appear to follow the list and not deviate (buy any extra items)?
 - Did the person appear to buy an impulse item, if yes what was it?
 - What size of items did the person buy single serving, family packs, et cetera?
 - Did the person comparison shop items or did the person go straight to the item?
 - What type of items were purchases convenience, pet food, non-grocery, seasonal, meats, produce?
 - Did they pay with cash, credit, or check?
 - Did they have assistance carrying out the purchases?

- Did the person have any difficulties shopping?
- Did the person buy any items that were very low on the shelves or high on the shelves? Did they have to ask for help?
- Did he/she appear to be familiar with the store?
- Did he/she use coupons?
- Did he/she visit every aisle in the store, how did the person move through the store (i.e. outer-rim first, inner aisles second)?
- Was the person with someone else? Did that person impact the shopping trip?

Written Report:

Take all the information you gathered and summarize it in a brief written report format. Address what assumptions you can make about this person from your observations. For example you might state: Well-dressed female put one loaf of expensive fresh baked bread in her cart, in the meat section she selected steak, she selected a bouquet of flowers, and she did not use coupons. From the items selected, her appearance, and her not using coupons, I believe her to be well off.

Other issues you should address is if the person appears to live alone, do they have pets, how often do you think they shop, whether you believe they are health conscious, was this the store the usually shop at, does the person make impulse purchases, etc.

Survey:

Given your reported observations and assumptions, write a minimum of 10 survey questions that can be distributed to shoppers at any grocery store. Clearly show how your survey questions relate to your assumptions and/or observations.