Recommended Citation
Barthell, Valerie R. and Waitt, Jessica Ann (2010) "Shopping Behaviors of College Students," *Perspectives*: Vol. 2, Article 3.
Available at: https://scholars.unh.edu/perspectives/vol2/iss1/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Journals and Publications at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Perspectives by an authorized editor of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact Scholarly.Communication@unh.edu.

Perspectives

Volume 2 *Spring 2010* Article 3

5-1-2010

Shopping Behaviors of College Students

Valerie R. Barthell
University of New Hampshire, Durham
Jessica Ann Waitt
University of New Hampshire, Durham
Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/perspectives

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Shopping Behaviors of College Students

SOC 601

Valerie R. Barthell and Jessica Ann Waitt

May 10, 2010

This research examines the shopping behaviors of college student, encompassing their use of credit cards, where they shop, and how their income affects shopping. Respondents completed a self administered 36 question survey, in which they chose the most appropriate answer. Results show statistical evidence that income and age affect college students' shopping behaviors, use of credit cards, and amount of credit card debt. It was found that most respondents use credit cards but report little to no debt; however it was shown that the older the respondent the more debt they perceived they have. It was also found that students with lower monthly incomes shop for sale items and/or shop in discount stores to save money. These results suggest that income does have an effect on the shopping behaviors of college students.

Introduction and Conceptual Framework

Shopping is a cultural norm around the world. Historically, shopping can be seen in all cultures in different forms based on the economic system. In many countries shopping is a trade system in which goods can be exchanged for other goods or services of value; and in others, it is a capitalist system such as ours. In modern times in industrialized countries, goods are set at a monetary value and socioeconomic status can determine which goods can be readily purchased.

This study will set out to investigate the shopping habits of college students. We will investigate whether the amount of income, credit, and employment status of a college student affects their shopping habits in store and online. We seek to answer three research questions:

RQI: What affect does age have on credit card debt?

RQII: What are the effects of income or credit on shopping habits of college students in store and online?

RQIII: What are students' perceptions of credit card debt and spending?

Consumerism is prevalent in our society. We shop for many reasons, for things we need or want and items we buy for our "image." Goffman's theory of the presentation of self states that everyone uses impression management to shape other's view of them. In our society, we buy certain products to give others a particular perception of ourselves that we want them to have. Due to this impression management, people may buy things that are out of their income range, incurring debt. We will determine if income, credit, employment status, and perceptions of debt affect a student's shopping behavior positively or negatively.

Background Literature

Shopping has become commonplace(,); it is now an activity to pass time, with everyone from young children to adults wanting to go shopping. Across America, there are small retailers,

small businesses, large retailers, and even malls. Consumerism has grown to an all time high with the availability to shop anytime anywhere, and being able to pay with credit. This has changed the behavior of modern generations, who now have more options than previous generations.

I. Income and Sales

There are many societal factors influencing what products a person wants; everyone wants what is the current "in" trend. These societal pressures, as stated by Satterthwaite, cause people to have "a taste for more and better things" (2001:147). With coupons, sale shopping, discount stores(;) many people seek the best price for items in order to continuously shop and keep up with all the current trends. There are many incentives given to shoppers by retail giants, such as coupons and competitive markdowns on retail items. A 2003 study of 1,147 sale prone consumers in the Midwestern and Southeastern part of the United States suggests through surveys that sale prone consumers are generally concerned about the economic benefits of the sale (Garretson and Burton 2003:169). This study lends to whether the income of a college student influences their shopping habits.

With the high disparity of income in the United States, the access and ability to buy goods and services varies. Walters (2000) theorizes that throughout history there has been a fear of being unemployed and not having income to provide the necessities of life or economic stability. In today's economy, with the unemployment rate being 9.7%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it creates a fear to spend (2010). "Economic development creates jobs, and jobs provide the disposable income that further fuels the economy" (Giloth 1998: xi). This suggests that employment status and income will influence shopping behaviors, as the more income one has the more they may shop.

Further, society's shopping habits are influenced by the economic situation. The current economic situation is one of regression. People have lost money in the market and in other ways as well. This may led to saving strategies as well as cut backs in shopping and spending. An early 2009 (Rodriguez) survey of 4,329 online consumers from pricegrabber.com concluded that "consumers implemented a number of savings strategies to cut back on grocery shopping (13%), energy consumption (13%), gasoline (27%), and retail shopping (46%)" (6).

2. E- Commerce

Today, there are many avenues for purchasing the goods that one wants or needs. With the evolution of the Internet, there are now even more ways to shop and get more for your money. "E- commerce is the selling of goods and services via an electronic media, using technology to facilitate rapid exchange of detailed information between buyers and sellers" (Lightner 2003:153). Online shopping is available for consumers "twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred sixty-five days a year" (Bellmann, Lohse, and Johnson 1999:32). Online stores function just as a retail store would; they display their items, have sales, and continually have the goods that are in demand. The convenience and availability of Internet shopping is a characteristic that is appealing to everyone. A 2008 Rotem- Mindali and Solomon study of 510 participants suggests that online purchases are not affected greatly by the demographics or socioeconomic status of the consumer (14).

While e-commerce is a seemingly large industry, research has shown that use of e-commerce is not what it was projected to be. A study conducted in 2003 by Girard, Korgaonkar and Silverblatt of 585 participants of various demographics has publicized that sales through e-commerce have not grown as expected (102). It is suggested, "uncertainty and perceived risk associated with revealing personal information as a part of online purchasing has contributed to

cautions against untried e-tailers" (Wolin, Korgaonkar, and Lund 2002 as cited in Girard et al 2003: 102).

Other researchers have seen a statistically small growth in online retail sales. Research by Dixon and Marston (2002) found that in both the U.K. and the United States e- commerce represented 1- 1.5% of all retail based on data from the Census Bureau (as cited in Rotem-Mindali and Salomon 2008: 14). While e- commerce represents only a small portion of all retail sales, it is still a growing industry with vast possibilities that will guide the future of shopping.

Many people have purchased various items online, ranging from food to electronics to larger items, such as home furnishings, and these purchases are not limited to a particular demographic or socioeconomic status. Online stores have a few different functions for consumers; as described by researchers "e-retail encompasses three main activities: specifically, a product search activity, an online purchase function, and the product delivery capability" (Keeney 1999; Kolesar and Galbraith 2000; Torkzadeh and Dhillon 2002 as cited in Rotem-Mindali and Salomon 2008: 246). These functions allow consumers to use online retail stores as a database of information for research on products, product pricing, and purchasing. According to a 2009 study of 4,329 participants "54% of online consumers searched for coupons and discounts online even if they planned to purchase offline" (Rodriguez 6). The research function of online stores has given consumers the ability to make sure they are getting the best possible deal for their money; which is important to many consumers who have limited income. According to a recent survey of 4,239 online consumers, 91% of these consumers said that researching products online made them feel more confident about their purchases (Rodriguez 2009: 1).

3. Credit Cards and Debt

Credit cards are an easy and helpful way to pay for products and services. Many people use credit cards because they are able to buy materials or objects at that moment, without necessarily having the money to do so. When credit cards users use their credit card unwisely, they tend to only pay the minimum each month, carry high balances and create a large amount of debt (Joireman, Kees and Sprott 2010:155). College students are a target for credit card companies, because college students enjoy the idea that they are able to purchase an object without necessarily obtaining the money for it at that time. “It was estimated in a 2000 study that 91% of college seniors have a credit card and 56% hold four or more credit cards” (Mae 2005; Consumer Federation of America 1999 as cited in Joireman 155). Also, in this study it was found that “the average college student will leave college with more than $2,800 in credit card debt and up to one fifth of college students debt will be of $10,000 or more” (Mae 2005; Consumer Federation of America 1999 as cited in Joireman et al. 155). This article looked at the reasoning behind the unwise credit card usage that leads college students into such a large amount of debt.

In a 2006 study, 448 students from five colleges in three states in the Midwestern, Northeastern and Southern United States were given a questionnaire consisting of 173 items in which students were asked to complete outside of class and return during the next session **(**Norvilitis, Merwin, Osberg, Roehling, Young, and Kamas 2006: 1400-1402). The study found that “financial knowledge is critical. It is one of the strongest predictors of debt and is also one of the most amenable to change” (Norvilitis et al. 1407). Lack of financial knowledge among young credit cards users creates a situation where they are unaware of the major consequences of their behavior.

Compulsive buying tendencies and the perceptions of future consequences may affect how college students use their credit cards. Compulsive buying tendencies were defined as” the

short term positive rewards one receives after chronic, repetitive purchases"(Joireman et al. 156). College students' attitudes toward debt may reflect their risky credit card habits. Another feature that college students are not considering is the future consequences of their shopping habits. It was stated that in regards to credit card use, "there is a reduced tendency to consider the impact of current behaviors on future outcomes" (Joireman et al.157). Since college students are young, there is still much to learn about money management.

Methods

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between college students' income or credit and perceptions of debt on their shopping habits.

1. Hypotheses

In past literature it has not been shown whether the amount of income or credit of a college student affects where the shop and if they specifically shop for sales, thus this study asks what affect income or credit will have on shopping behaviors.

HIa: Credit card debt will increase with age.

HIb: Age will have no affect on the amount of credit card debt.

HIIa: The lower the income and credit of the student, the more they will shop for sales and/or shop in discount stores to save money.

HIIb: The income or credit of the student will not affect their shopping behavior.

There has been past research into perceptions of debt and financial knowledge impacting this, however, there has not been research on how college students' perceptions of debt will affect their shopping habits, thus this study will ask this.

HIIIa: If a student perceives credit card debt as negative they will use a credit card less and are more likely to pay more than the minimum every month.

HIIIb: The student's perception of credit card debt will not affect their use of credit.

2. Sampling and Protocol

A probability sampling procedure was used to draw a sample of classes on the Durham campus of the University of New Hampshire. A list of all general education classes was acquired and listed in an Excel spreadsheet. Using a systematic sampling method 20 classes were sampled, doing this systematically every 46^{th} class on the list was chosen. This method is most appropriate for our study because it gave us an unbiased sample that is representative of the University of New Hampshire at Durham students. After choosing 20 classes, e- mails were sent to the professors requesting permission to survey their students; after a pre- determined time period, follow up e- mails were sent to the professors who had yet to reply.

Using this sampling procedure brought upon issues of replacement due to the fact that when sampling study abroad, labs, practicums, internships, and recitations were not left out. In our initial sample, two classes needed to be replaced due to this problem and as the sampling progressed, others were replaced. As professors said "no," the classes were replaced with similar classes in order to acquire a representative sample.

The participants consisted of 233 males and females ages 18 to 24 years old. The sample was taken at the University of New Hampshire Durham campus, and consisted of undergraduate students in general education classes. The students were from all colleges encompassed in the university in a variety of majors.

Quantitative data was gathered through a self-administered paper and pencil survey instrument distributed in classrooms on the University of New Hampshire campus in Durham,

New Hampshire. Following informed consent, the survey instrument consisted of 36 questions of different types in four categories to be completed and returned when distributed.

3. Variables

There were many variables examined in this study. Those of interest are income, credit card use, credit card debt, and discount shopping. Income was defined as the amount of money the respondent receives monthly from various sources such as employment, loans, legal guardians, and other sources specified by the respondent. We ascertained this information from asking 11 questions on a self-administered survey. Questions included how much income they received monthly (a categorical question with $500 ranges), if they were employed and what type of employment, and if income was received from a legal guardian, student loans, employment, or another source (questions 21- 31 on survey in appendices).

Credit cards were defined as a system of payment, including store charge cards that the respondent owns. We gathered various information about the respondent's use of credit cards by asking several questions (questions 13 and 14 on survey in appendices), such as how many credit cards the respondent has and how often they use the credit cards. Following asking information about respondents' credit card use, a series of questions (questions 15- 17 on survey in appendices) were asked related to their amount of credit card debt and how they felt about it. Credit card debt was defined as the balance on credit card that has not been paid in full and is collecting interest due.

Discount shopping for the purpose of this study was defined as seeking out only sale items in department and/ or brand stores and/ or shopping more in discount stores to save money. Questions were asked about the types of stores that the respondents typically shop in, and whether they seek out sales specifically. They were also asked if knowledge of their income

affects whether they seek out sales only and/ or shop in discount stores only. Further questions were asked relating to e- commerce and whether respondents use these retailers to save money or compare prices in order to save money in store (questions 3- 12 on survey in appendices). These variables will be statistically examined and discussed further.

Results

This study was to investigate the relationship of income or credit on college students' shopping behaviors. A total of 233 surveys were collected, and descriptive statistics were run using SPSS.

There were a total of 233 respondents, encompassing 147 females and 86 males. There is an overrepresentation of females, as the population break down on the University of New Hampshire Durham campus is about 56% females and 44% males as of fall 2008 (University of New Hampshire). Respondents in this study were 63.1% female and 36.9% male.

All respondents were ages 18 to 24 years old, with the majority, 38.6%, being age 19. Further our study represents a younger population as 93.6% were ages 18 to 21 years old, and only 6.4% being over the age of 21. The ages of our respondents may affect their perceptions of credit card debt, as well as their income.

As Table 3 (below) shows, there is a difference in the amount of debt in relation to the respondent's age. The relationship between age and credit card debt is statistically significant with a *p* value of .004. It was found that 213 participants responded that they did not have debt or had little debt ($0- $500) at the time. Through this data it is shown those participants ages 18 to

24 have little debt, with only 15 respondents claiming $501 to $2500 in credit card debt(;), and 51 respondents claiming $0 to $500 in credit card debt.

Table 3 **Credit Card Debt * Age Crosstabulation**

			Age							
				18	19	20	21	22	24	Total
Credit Card Debt	0- 500	Count	1	7	15	16	10	1	1	51
		% within Age	20.0%	16.7%	17.2%	31.4%	35.7%	9.1%	25.0%	22.4%
	501- 1000	Count	0	2	0	3	2	3	0	10
		% within Age	.0%	4.8%	.0%	5.9%	7.1%	27.3%	.0%	4.4%
	1001- 1500	Count	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
		% within Age	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.0%	3.6%	.0%	.0%	.9%
	1501- 2000	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
		% within Age	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	3.6%	9.1%	.0%	.9%
	2001- 2500	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		% within Age	20.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.4%
	I don't have debt	Count	3	33	72	31	14	6	3	162
		% within Age	60.0%	78.6%	82.8%	60.8%	50.0%	54.5%	75.0%	71.1%
Total		Count	5	42	87	51	28	11	4	228
		% within Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

——Students of different ages have varying perceptions of credit card debt. These views may impact how many credit cards (a student has) students have, as well as how much debt they

have and how often they use their credit cards. Shown in table 4 below, of 228 respondents 186 (about 81.5%) responded that they do not have debt when asked how they felt about their debt. Of the remaining respondents, 9.2% felt that have very little debt(;) and only 1.7% felt that they have too much debt. With gamma being significant at .000 and x^2= 31.214, this is a significant relationship showing that those who are younger have less debt.

Table 4 **Perceptions of Debt * Age Crosstabulation**

			Age							Total
				18	19	20	21	22	24	
Perceptions of Debt	I have very little debt	Count	0	0	6	7	6	1	1	21
		% within Age	.0%	.0%	6.9%	13.7%	21.4%	9.1%	25.0%	9.2%
	I have too much debt	Count	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	4
		% within Age	.0%	.0%	1.1%	2.0%	3.6%	9.1%	.0%	1.8%
	My debt is manageable	Count	0	2	3	6	3	3	0	17
		% within Age	.0%	4.8%	3.4%	11.8%	10.7%	27.3%	.0%	7.5%
	I do not have debt	Count	5	40	77	37	18	6	3	186
		% within Age	100.0%	95.2%	88.5%	72.5%	64.3%	54.5%	75.0%	81.6%
Total		Count	5	42	87	51	28	11	4	228
		% within Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The number of credit cards a student has may impact how they perceive credit card debt. In table 5 (below), it is shown how respondents feel about their credit card debt based on how many credit cards they have. The frequency table shown below (table 5) reports a gamma

significant at level of .000, a highly significant level. As shown in the table, 107 (46.9%) respondents do not have a credit card and reported that they do not have debt, showing that this group feels they have the lowest amount of debt. However, 62 respondents with 1 credit card also report no existing debt. There are 8 respondents reporting having four or more credit cards with various perceptions of their debt; showing that the more credit cards a student owns the less likely they are to report being debt free.

Table 5

Perceptions of Debt * Number of Cards Crosstabulation

			Number of Cards									
				-	0	1	2	3	4	5	8	Total
Perceptions of Debt	I have very little debt	Count	1	0	0	13	7	0	0	0	0	21
		% within Number of Cards	100.0%	.0%	.0%	15.3%	31.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	9.2%
	I have too much debt	Count	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
		% within Number of Cards	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.4%	.0%	.0%	20.0%	.0%	50.0%	1.8%
	My debt is manageable	Count	0	0	0	8	4	1	2	1	1	17
		% within Number of Cards	.0%	.0%	.0%	9.4%	18.2%	25.0%	40.0%	100.0%	50.0%	7.5%
	I do not have debt	Count	0	1	107	62	11	3	2	0	0	186
		% within Number of Cards	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	72.9%	50.0%	75.0%	40.0%	.0%	.0%	81.6%
Total		Count	1	1	107	85	22	4	5	1	2	228
		% within Number of Cards	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	123.563[a]	24	.000
Likelihood Ratio	93.021	24	.000
N of Valid Cases	228		

a. 29 cells (80.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Gamma	-.744	.065	-7.047	.000
N of Valid Cases		228			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Age may also be a determining factor in the amount of income a student receives. The relationship of age and income is shown below in table 6. Of 233 participants, 139 responded that they receive $0- $500 in monthly income from various sources. 58 respondents claim to receive monthly income of $501- $2000, with only 1 respondent claiming over $3000. Those of a younger age (21 and under), a total of 134, chose responses of a lower income ($0- $500). However, this has not been shown to have a statistical significance (*p*=.045).

Table 6

Income * Age Crosstabulation

Count

		Age						
		18	19	20	21	22	24	Total
Income	0- 500	0	30	61	28	15	2	3	139
	501- 1000	1	4	14	11	7	2	0	39
	1001- 1500	0	0	3	4	3	5	0	15
	1501- 2000	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	4
	over 3000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

	Don't Know	1	8	10	6	2	1	0	28
Total		2	42	89	50	28	11	4	226

Table 7 (appendix) demonstrates a relationship between income and the number of times a respondent goes shopping a month. This data shows that those respondents who shop 0 to 1 time per month (65 respondents) reported having a lower monthly income, with 40 reporting that they receive between $0 and $500 a month of income; with the other 25 respondents, who report shopping only 0 to 1 time a month, claiming no more than $2000 a month of income. Those who report shopping the most (10 to 15 times a month) claim various amounts of monthly income, with the lowest report being 5 participants claiming $0 to $500 monthly income and the highest of $1001 to $1500 monthly income (2 respondents). A chi- square test was performed, finding a statistical significance) and found this data to be statistically significant x^2=157.085 (p=.000, df=80), supporting the study's hypothesis that income affects students' shopping habits.

Table 8 (below) is a crosstabulation of credit card payments (DV) and perceptions of debt (IV). With a total of 228 respondents, 5.7% report their debt as being manageable, yet they only report paying the minimum or more than the minimum. Of the respondents, 38.5% report that they pay the minimum payment, yet they do not have debt. A chi- square test was run, finding a statistical significance x^2= 120.105 (p= .000, and df=15). This statistical information leads to rejecting the study's hypothesis, but failing to reject the null hypothesis that students' perceptions of credit card debt will not influence how they use credit cards.

Table 8 **Credit Card Payment * Perceptions of Debt Crosstabulation**

			Perceptions of Debt				
			I have very little debt	I have too much debt	My debt is manageable	I do not have debt	Total
Credit Card Payment		Count	0	0	0	2	2
		% within Perceptions of Debt	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.1%	.9%
	-	Count	0	1	0	2	3
		% within Perceptions of Debt	.0%	25.0%	.0%	1.1%	1.3%
	I pay the minimum	Count	3	1	4	5	13
		% within Perceptions of Debt	14.3%	25.0%	23.5%	2.7%	5.7%
	I pay more than the minimum, but not the full amount	Count	9	2	9	7	27
		% within Perceptions of Debt	42.9%	50.0%	52.9%	3.8%	11.8%
	I pay the full amount	Count	9	0	4	58	71
		% within Perceptions of Debt	42.9%	.0%	23.5%	31.2%	31.1%
	I do not have a credit card, or do not use a credit card	Count	0	0	0	112	112
		% within Perceptions of Debt	.0%	.0%	.0%	60.2%	49.1%
Total		Count	21	4	17	186	228
		% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8 **Credit Card Payment * Perceptions of Debt Crosstabulation**

			Perceptions of Debt				
			I have very little debt	I have too much debt	My debt is manageable	I do not have debt	Total
Credit Card Payment		Count	0	0	0	2	2
		% within Perceptions of Debt	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.1%	.9%
	-	Count	0	1	0	2	3
		% within Perceptions of Debt	.0%	25.0%	.0%	1.1%	1.3%
	I pay the minimum	Count	3	1	4	5	13
		% within Perceptions of Debt	14.3%	25.0%	23.5%	2.7%	5.7%
	I pay more than the minimum, but not the full amount	Count	9	2	9	7	27
		% within Perceptions of Debt	42.9%	50.0%	52.9%	3.8%	11.8%
	I pay the full amount	Count	9	0	4	58	71
		% within Perceptions of Debt	42.9%	.0%	23.5%	31.2%	31.1%
	I do not have a credit card, or do not use a credit card	Count	0	0	0	112	112
		% within Perceptions of Debt	.0%	.0%	.0%	60.2%	49.1%
Total		Count	21	4	17	186	228
		Perceptions of Debt					

Table 9 (below) shows a descriptive statistics crosstabulation of income and participants who shop for discounts (whether that be sale items or shopping in discount stores). It was found to be significant at a gamma of .063 and an $x^2 = 34.830$. With 221 observations, 101 (45.7%) responded that they shop for sale items and their income does affect where they shop to save money. Of these 101 responses, 78 (77.2%) reported an income of less than $1000 a month, suggesting that those with a lower income do seek out sales and/ or shop in discount store to save money. This data supports the study's hypothesis.

Table 9

discount * Income Crosstabulation

			Income						
			0- 500	501- 1000	1001- 1500	1501- 2000	over 3000	Don't Know	Total
discount	.00	Count	7	2	1	2	0	0	12
		% within Income	5.2%	5.3%	6.7%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	5.4%
	1.00	Count	32	5	8	0	0	9	54
		% within Income	23.7%	13.2%	53.3%	.0%	.0%	32.1%	24.4%
	2.00	Count	56	22	6	2	1	14	101
		% within Income	41.5%	57.9%	40.0%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	45.7%
	3.00	Count	40	9	0	0	0	5	54
		% within Income	29.6%	23.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	17.9%	24.4%
Total		Count	135	38	15	4	1	28	221
		% within Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10 (below) shows the association between income and shopping for discounted items online. A total of 226 responses demonstrate that 72.6% do shop online for discounted items; of this group, 57.9% report an income of $500 or less per month and 19.5% report an income of $501- $1000 a month. Further, 60 of the 226 (26.5%) responses report that they do not shop for sale items online or even use online retailers. These descriptive statistics do not show a

statistical significance (p=.124, x^2= 12.955) in this association, neither refuting nor supporting the study's hypothesis that those students with lower income will shop online to save money.

Table 10

Discounted Items Online * Income Crosstabulation

			Income						
			0- 500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	over 3000	Don't Know	Total
Discounted Items Online		Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		% within Income	.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.4%
	-	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		% within Income	.0%	2.6%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.4%
	Yes	Count	95	32	12	3	1	21	164
		% within Income	68.3%	82.1%	80.0%	75.0%	100.0%	75.0%	72.6%
	No	Count	15	3	2	0	0	1	21
		% within Income	10.8%	7.7%	13.3%	.0%	.0%	3.6%	9.3%
	I don't use online retailers	Count	28	3	1	1	0	6	39
		% within Income	20.1%	7.7%	6.7%	25.0%	.0%	21.4%	17.3%
Total		Count	139	39	15	4	1	28	226
		% within Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the shopping behaviors of college students, encompassing their income, credit card use and credit card debt, and their actions to save money. First, we tested the affects of age on credit card use and perceptions of debt, to determine if there

was a statistical difference in the use of credit cards and perception of credit card debt based on age. It was found through a descriptive statistics crosstabulation that there is a statistical relationship between these variables with a gamma approximate significance p=.004; with most respondents claiming little to no debt (table 3). While there was minimal difference in the debt among those ages 18 to 24, there is basis to support the hypothesis that age does have an effect on the amount of debt the student has.

Second, we tested the affects of age on perceptions of credit card debt. It was found that 9.2% of respondents ages 18 to 24 feel that have very little debt; and 1.7% of respondents ages 18 to 24 feel that they have too much debt (p=.000). Further, the majority (65.8%) of respondents 21 and under responding that they do not have debt. This shows a statistical relationship between the variables, showing that as age increases, the respondents perceive that they have less debt; this refutes the study's hypothesis that as age increases, so will debt.

Finally, we tested the affects of income on whether the student shops for sale items and/ or shops in discount stores. It was found that 45.7% of respondents said that they shop for sale items and their income does affect where they shop to save money. Of these respondents, 77.2% reported an income of less than $1000 a month, suggesting that those with a lower income do seek out sales and/ or shop in discount store to save money, which supports the study's hypothesis.

1. Future Research

This study has found significant relationships between income, age, and shopping behaviors of college students. Several aspects should be kept in mind about this study; we had a limited age range (18 to 24) with most respondents being under 21; also, there was an underrepresentation of men in the study. Despite these aspects, it was found that as students age their shopping habits

change in many ways, such as their use of credit cards and how they shop to save money. This study was limited in its access to a diverse population, and if broadened could have larger implications. Also more qualitative research should be conducted to ascertain the level of knowledge that college students have on terms of credit card agreements and use. Further, other aspects of shopping should be examined, such as previous financial knowledge, whether the student has had education on financial matters, and if they are aware of the terms and consequences of credit card use and debt. With future research we may be able to give students education in credit cards to better the economy.

References

Bellman, Steven, Gerald L. Lohse, and Eric J. Johnson. 1999."Predictors of Online Buying Behaviors."Communications of the ACM 42(12): 32-38. Retrieved 20 February 2010. (http://elearning.dmst.aueb.gr/mis/Cases/Plaisio/Case/Training_Files/Online_buying_%20behaviour.pdf).

Garretson, Judith A. and Scot Burton.2003."Highly Coupon and Sale Prone Consumers: Benefits Beyond Price Savings."Journal of Advertising Research 43(2):162-172. Retrieved 23 February 2010. (http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=10740439&site=ehost-live).

Giloth, Robert P. 1998. *Jobs & Economic Development: Strategies and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Girard, Tulay, Pradeep Korgaonkar and Ronnie Silverblatt. 2003. "Relationship of Type of Product, Shopping Orientations, and Demographics with Preference for Shopping on the Internet." Journal of Buisness and Psychology 18(1):101-120.

Joireman, Jeff, Jeremy Kees and David Sprott.2010. "Concern with Immediate Consequences Magnifies the Impact of Compulsive Buying Tendencies on College Students' Credit Card Debt." *The Journal of Consumer Affairs* 44(1): 155-178.

Lightner, Nancy J.2003."What users want in E-Commerce Design: Effects of Age, Education and Income."Ergonomics 46(3):153-168.

Norvilitis, Jill M., Timothy M. Osberg, Paul Young, Michelle M. Merwin, Patricia V. Roehling, and Michele M. Kamas. 2006. *"Personality Factors, Money, Attitudes, Financial Knowledge, and Credit Card Debit in College Students."* Journal of Applied Social Psychology 36(6):1395- 1413.

Rotem-Mindali, Orit and Ilan Salomon.2008."Modeling Consumers' Purchase and Delivery Choices in the Face of the Information Age."Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design 36: 245-261.

Rodriguez, Sara. 2009. *Economic Climate Shifts Consumers Online*. Report on Consumer Behavior, pp 1-10. Retrieved 20 February 2010 (https://mr.pricegrabber.com/Economic_Climate_Shifts_Consumers_Online_March_2009_CBR.pdf).

Satterthwaite, Ann.2001. *Going Shopping: Consumer Choices and Community Consequences*. New haven, CT: Yale University Press.

University of New Hampshire. 2010. *2008 UNH Fast Facts.* Retrieved 6 May 2010. (http://www.unh.edu/unhedutop/aboutunh.html)

U.S. the Bureau of Labor Statistics. United States Department of Labor. 2010. *Employment Situatuation, 2010.* Retrieved 6 May 2010. (http://www.bls.gov/cps/)

Walters, William. 2000. *Unemployment and Government: Genealogies of the Social*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Appendices

1. Informed Consent

A research project on **Shopping Behavior** is being conducted by Valerie Barthell and Jessica Ann Waitt, students in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Hampshire. Your class was randomly selected from all general education undergraduate classes at UNH; your participation is important. Your participation will take approximately **ten minutes**. You are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may also omit leave blank any items on the questionnaire you prefer not to answer.

If you should experience any of feelings of discomfort, please be aware that you may contact the Health Services Center at the University of New Hampshire for assistance at http://www.unh.edu/health-services/

Please do not write your name on this survey. All responses will be treated confidentially, and information about individual responses will not be released.

If you agree to participate in this research project as described, please complete the attached questionnaire. If you do not want to participate, please return a blank survey to the box at the front of the room.

Once you are done please drop your questionnaire in the box located at the front of the room. Thank you.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact us at: Valerie Barthell at vrx4@unh.edu or Jessica Ann Waitt at jar76@unh.edu . You may also contact our professor, Dr. Catherine Moran, at clmoran@unh.edu.

2. Survey

Please CIRCLE the letter of the answer that corresponds best to you unless otherwise instructed.

Shopping

1. What do you typically shop for? **(Please rank the items 1-8 with 1 being the item(s) you most often shop for)**
   _____ a. Clothes
   _____ b. Shoes
   _____ c. Electronics (Computers, Computer accessories, Video Game Consoles etc.)
   _____ d. Accessories (Jewelry, Purses, Scarves, Hair Accessories, etc.)
   _____ e. Books
   _____ f. Music
   _____ g. Entertainment (DVDs, Video Games, etc.)
   _____ h. Other (please specify) _____

2. On average how many times per month do you go shopping, not including grocery shopping? (please enter the number)
   I go shopping _____ times a month.

3. When you go shopping what type of store do you usually shop in? **(Circle all that apply)**
   a. Department Stores (Macy's, JCPenney, Sears, etc.)
   b. Discount Stores (Tjmaxx, Marshalls, Ross Dress for Less, etc.)
   c. Brand Stores (Hollister, Abercrombie and Fitch, Charlotte Russe, etc.)
   d. Online Retailers
   e. Other (please specify) _____

4. When shopping do you seek out sale items to save money?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. When shopping in Department Stores (Macy's, JCPenney, etc.) and Brand Stores (Hollister, Charlotte Russe, etc.) do you seek out sale items only?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don't shop in these types of stores

6. Does your income affect whether you decide to shop at department / brand store retail prices or at bargain stores/ sale prices?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. On average how many times per month do you shop online? **(Please enter the digits)**
   I shop _____ time a month online.

8. Do you use online retailers to compare prices both online and in store?
   a. Yes

b. No
c. I don't use online retailers

9. When shopping online do you search for discounted items?
a. Yes
b. No
c. I don't use online retailers

10. Do you save money specifically for shopping purposes (not including grocery shopping)?
a. Yes
b. No

11. On average how much do you spend on shopping per month (not including grocery shopping)?
I spend $_____ a month.

12. When shopping does knowledge of your income affect how much you will spend on an item?
a. Yes
b. No

Credit Cards

13. When you go shopping (not including grocery shopping) how often do you pay with a credit card?
a. Never
b. Sometime
c. Often
d. Every time
e. I do not have a credit card

14. How many credit cards do you have (enter number of cards including store charge cards)?
I have _____ credit cards.

15. Do you pay the minimum payment or full payment to your credit card?
a. I pay the minimum
b. I pay more than the minimum, but not the full amount
c. I pay the full amount
d. I do not have a credit card or do not use a credit card

16. How do you feel about the credit card debt that you have?
a. I have very little debt
b. I have too much debt
c. My debt is manageable
d. I do not have debt

17. How much credit card debt do you have?
a. $0- $500
b. $501- $1000
c. $1001- $1500
d. $1501- $2000
e. $2001- $2500
f. $2501- $3000
g. Over $3000

h. I do not have debt

18. Do you spend more or less now than you did before the current economic depression (not including grocery shopping)?
a. I spend more
b. I spend less
c. I spend about the same

19. Do you shop more or less than you did before the current economic depression (not including grocery shopping)?
a. I shop more
b. I shop less
c. I shop about the same amount

20. Do you shop more at discount stores (such as Tjmaxx and Marshalls) than you did before the current economic depression?
a. Yes
b. No

Income

21. Are you currently employed?
a. Yes
b. No

22. What type of employment do you have?
a. Full- time
b. Part- time
c. I am not employed

23. On average how many hours per week do you work for wage? **(Please enter number of hours, enter 0 if you are not employed)**
I work _____ hours per week.

24. Do you receive income from a source other than yourself or your savings, such as cash advances, loans, or money from another person (such as parent or legal guardian)?
a. Yes
b. No

25. Do you receive monthly income from student loans?
a. Yes
b. No

26. Do you receive monthly income from a full- time job?
a. Yes
b. No

27. Do you receive monthly income from a part- time job?
a. Yes
b. No

28. Do you receive money monthly from a parent or legal guardian?
a. Yes

b. No

29. Do you ever receive cash advances from credit cards?
    a. Yes
    b. No

30. Do you receive money monthly from a source other than student loans, a full- time job, a part- time job, a parent or legal guardian, or cash advances (from credit cards)?
    a. Yes (please specify) _____
    b. No
31. What is your average monthly income?
    a. $0- $500
    b. $501- $1000
    c. $1001- $1500
    d. $1501- $2000
    e. $2001- $2500
    f. $2501- $3000
    g. Over $3000
    f. Don't know.

Demographic Information

32. What is your sex?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Other

33. What is your age? **(Please enter the digits)**
    I am _____ years old.

34. What is your year in school?
    a. Freshman
    b. Sophomore
    c. Junior
    d. Senior
    e. Other (please specify) _____

35. What is your student status?
    a. Full- time
    b Part- time
    c. Other (please specify) _____

36. What college are you enrolled in at UNH?
    a. College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (CEPS)
    b. College of Health and Human Services (CHHS)
    c. College of Liberal Arts (COLA)
    d. College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA)
    e. Thompson School of Applied Science
    f. Whittemore School of Business and Economics

3. Table 7

Table 7 **Shopping per Month * Income Crosstabulation**

Count

		Income						
		0- 500	501- 1000	1001- 1500	1501- 2000	over 3000	Don't Know	Total
Shopping per Month	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	6
	0.5	3	1	1	0	0	2	7
	1	35	9	1	1	0	6	52
	1.5	3	0	1	0	0	0	4
	10	5	2	1	0	0	1	9
	14	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	15	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	2	39	7	3	1	0	7	57
	2.5	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	3	27	6	1	1	0	5	40
	3.5	2	1	0	0	0	1	4
	4	11	6	3	0	0	1	21
	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	5	9	4	0	1	0	0	14
	6	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total		139	39	15	4	1	28	226

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	157.085[a]	80	.000
Likelihood Ratio	73.060	80	.696
N of Valid Cases	226		