



As With Driving, Men Are Less Likely To Ask For Help When Shopping

For More Information: [Lori Wright](#)

603-862-0574

UNH Media Relations

Contact for Information: [Nelson Barber](#)

603-862-3571

UNH Department of Hospitality Management

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DURHAM, N.H. – The stereotype of a man’s reluctance to ask for driving directions appears to hold true in the retail store as well. A new study of consumer behavior from the University of New Hampshire shows that women are much more likely to seek out other people for guidance about purchases whereas men are more apt to go it alone.

The new research is published in Journal of Consumer Marketing in the article “Gender differences in information search: implications for retailing.” Nelson Barber, associate professor of hospitality management at UNH, found that women are more likely turn to interpersonal relationships such as friends and family for information about purchases. On the other hand, men prefer to gather information from impersonal and published materials.

However, the decision about whether to seek help with a purchase from a retail clerk or family and friends hinges on a man’s level of knowledge about the purchase. If in a purchasing pickle prompted by inadequate information, men will turn to others for advice.

“This research highlights the role of gender in decision-making research. The current study provides marketing professionals with new insights to developing better strategies. They need to be aware that in addition to objective product characteristics, customers purchasing decisions may be driven by less obvious factors, such as those investigated in this study – self-assessed knowledge, purchase confidence, and the purchase situation,” Barber said.

The study focused on consumer purchases of wine. Researchers evaluated the responses of 543 wine consumers when purchasing the product in various scenarios, such as for consumption at home and for a gift.

Overall, the men surveyed viewed themselves as much more knowledgeable about wine than the women. And while men were more likely, in general, to turn to impersonal sources for information, when it come to buying wine as a gift, they valued the input from retail clerks, friends and family just as much as women.

“This understanding will lead to a more critical look at marketing strategies aimed at establishing relationships, particularly with male customers and particularly given they are an untapped and potentially large market,” he said.

Research shows women account for 80 percent of the wine purchased in the United States.

The UNH Hospitality Management Program ranks fourth nationally among hospitality management programs in schools of business accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics has

been recognized as one of the best business schools in the nation by *The Princeton Review*, one of the Top 25 Most Entrepreneurial Colleges by *The Princeton Review* and *Forbes.com*, and one of the top 100 graduate business schools in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.