

YOU CAN LOOK BUT YOU CANNOT TOUCH: MALE BEHAVIORS OBSERVED IN LINGERIE STORES

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ABSTRACT

Cultural theorists (e.g., Jantzen, Ostergaard, & Sucena Vieira, 2006) suggest that lingerie has shifted from being solely worn for the pleasure of men to being a way for women to claim their feminine identities. Due to these new feminine motivations, the role men play when they are with female companions who are shopping for lingerie is unclear. We argue the ambiguity of gender roles, as related to shopping for an item that represents both sexual attraction and feminine empowerment, may lead men to an approach-avoidance conflict. Observations were made of heterosexual couples shopping in either female clothing stores or lingerie stores. Male behaviors were compared for the two conditions, and significant differences were documented. Compared to clothing stores, men in lingerie stores were less likely to handle sexually provocative items but displayed visual interest, suggesting they desired to approach the merchandise (approach motivation) but refrained from engaging in physical contact (avoidance motivation). We argue that men's behavior in lingerie stores represents classical approach-avoidance behavior.

Key words: *observation, approach-avoidance, sexuality, clothing, men*

INTRODUCTION

The culture of feminine undergarments has changed dramatically over the centuries, from the restrictive binding of women via the boning and lacing of corsets, to the modern comfort of bras and panties. Scholars such as Cox (2000) have argued that much of the history of female undergarments has been shaped by a patriarchal society that has moved towards embracing the functional aspects of hygiene and need for decorum, whilst still creating flattering silhouettes to attract and please men. Whereas some contemporary women may regard hygiene and modesty as the functional reasons for their current undergarment usage, the incentive to wear sexually provocative undergarments may not be as clear. Colorful and salacious lingerie exhibits a stark contrast to the functional attributes of feminine undergarments and instead reveals sexuality in the form of textures (e.g., lace, velvet, silk), and strategically exposed skin, which could be assumed to entice men. However, with modern women's freedom of individual expression, the case may be that women choose to wear these garments as a way to embrace their feminine identities (e.g., by making them feel feminine, increasing feminine behavior, improving self-esteem through heightened feminine appearance). With the potential motivation of wearing lingerie pivoting between sexual seduction and feminine identity, the question then becomes, is lingerie purchased with a man in mind or for the woman wearing it?

With the push of gender equality becoming more evident in contemporary Western society (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2010) and with de-differentiation becoming an increasing trend, women are feeling the effects of a vanishing feminine identity (Jantzen et al., 2006). That is, as women have gained power and status, particularly in the sphere of work, which emphasizes masculine traits of assertiveness and independence, they have simultaneously lost some of their feminine qualities (for review see Firat, 1994).

Jantzen et al. (2006) explored the recent influx of lingerie purchasing, which seems paradoxical given the current de-feminization associated with gender equality. Lingerie purchasing was deemed as distinct because it was categorized as a method for women to aid in their cultivation of femininity. This distinction leaves room to propose that the purchasing of intimate apparel may not always be in the service of men but instead (or additionally) might be a way for women to explore self-identity, sexuality, and their power to incite desire. Consequently, men may not play such an integral role in purchasing decisions but instead merely benefit from women embracing their femininity (as a bystander). This contention leads to the question: what would be the role of males when accompanying their female partners into sexually provocative stores like *Victoria's Secret* (i.e., an American intimate apparel shop) and *La Senza* (i.e., a Canadian intimate apparel shop)? We note that stores such as these sell a wide range of items, including cosmetics and pajamas, but are most known as outlets for lingerie.

Indeed, men may feel conflicted about their role as shopping companions in lingerie stores. This conflict may partly stem from sex differences in general shopping behavior; for example, men typically take a more active role in specialty purchases (i.e., automotive,

insurance), and leave family shopping (i.e., clothing, food) to their female partners (Laroche, Saad, Cleveland, & Brown, 2000). This research would lead to the conclusion that lingerie shopping would be left to female partners. Thus, when it comes to shopping for clothing, men may not have a stake in the purchase, and consequently become disengaged from the process. However, lingerie may arouse men's interests due to the sexually provocative nature of the merchandise, and perhaps – purely speculatively -- the advertisement displays. That is, upon casual observation of in-store visual advertising, the majority of displays depict female models who are mostly naked, revealing the majority of their body, and with accentuated cleavage. In addition, some men may simultaneously begin to experience anxiety due to the public setting and the possibility of being labeled as perverted by witnesses for openly showing interest in such purchases.

To complicate matters further, men may want to express their preferences to their partners but resist for fear of intruding on their partner's choices, so instead wait to be asked their opinions. This possibility has some support from the literature. For example, Otnes and McGrath (2000) explored three stereotypical male consumer behaviors. The "Grab and Go" behavior was documented when an individual entered a store and purchased a few items, which marked the end of the shopping trip. "Whine and Wait" behaviors were displayed as negative moods while shopping with female companions and were typically age related. Younger men were seen to be unhappy (whining) and older men were presumed to be bored (waiting). "Fear of the Feminine" is described as men being concerned with exhibiting shopping qualities that are stereotypically those of women, such as feeling the fabric of a garment, taking too much time deciding on an item, or purchasing feminine products such as lingerie.

Otnes and McGrath (2000) found that spectators frequently misinterpreted the motivation for these behaviors. For instance, "Whine and Wait" behaviors are usually remedied when a woman involves her partner in the shopping process, such that men's display of boredom was not actually tied to the act of shopping per se, but merely to having an inactive role in the shopping experience. Notice that it is implied that men may take a backseat and wait for women to prompt them for their opinions when making particular purchases. This behavior may especially be true for men in stores selling only feminine merchandise and may become more pronounced with sexually provocative merchandise, due to not knowing how the behaviors might be interpreted by partners and unknown witnesses.

Additional potential conflict may arise due to financial issues. When faced with perceived financial risk, men are more likely to initiate conversations to voice financial concerns (Lim & Beatty, 2011). Whereas lingerie purchases may not pose a high financial risk, they are luxuries and men may still be concerned with spending habits or the necessity of the items. The sexual allure of a lingerie store might lead men to become conflicted by complex feelings between their financial concerns and their own sexual desires associated with the product, thus creating another level of ambiguity in their lingerie shopping experience.

It should be noted that men do not always display passivity in joint shopping experiences. Kruger and Byker (2009) looked at sex differences in consumer behavior and proposed evolved behavioral differences in foraging strategies. They argued that although women display social shopping behaviors comparable to female ancestral gathering, and view shopping recreational as well as a way to acquire information about new items, men instead enter into new areas (i.e., unfamiliar stores) concerned with safety and security, and were concerned with finding efficient navigation routes via Euclidean directions. Thus, one might argue that men's role is rather active, in that they try to ensure safety, especially in an unfamiliar store, and to provide navigational assistance.

Current Study

Due to the multiple levels of ambiguity outlined above, men might have mixed feelings when accompanying female companions on shopping trips for women's clothes or lingerie, particularly because the latter is directly tied to sexuality. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to investigate male consumer behavior within this context.

It was hypothesized that the ambiguity caused by the mix of financial, gender role, and sexual factors would produce an approach-avoidance conflict within male consumers. To test the hypothesis, consumer-related behavioral units were constructed, some of which were predicted to be indicative of this conflict, and some (for comparison) that were expected to not show this conflict. Male consumers were then observed in both lingerie stores (i.e., the lingerie condition) and in stores selling only female clothing (but no lingerie; i.e., the clothing condition). It was hypothesized that males in the lingerie condition would demonstrate greater evidence of approach-avoidance conflict. Behaviors that indicated approach included touching the merchandise, whereas items that indicated avoidance included restraining one's hands, for example.

To recap, we predicted that men would display interest (e.g., signaling interest by pointing or gaze behavior) in both stores but restrain from physical contact with the lingerie more so than with the female clothing (H1). We predicted that in both conditions, men would engage in a form of 'dependent' travel thereby allowing female companions to lead them through the stores due to lack of confidence with their expected shopping roles, but that this behavior would be more apparent in the lingerie than the clothing condition (H2). Additionally, men would seek out independent travel or movement through pacing, as a way to preoccupy themselves away from the product, and also to allow their partners to independently shop, especially when in the lingerie condition (H3). If the differences in observed behavior between clothing and lingerie stores turned out to be significant, it would be evidence that men's shopping behaviors are dependent on the type of merchandise being purchased.

METHOD

Participants

Two sets of men ($N = 30$) were observed to compare shopping behaviors in female lingerie stores versus female clothing stores. The first sample of 15 was observed in a lingerie store situated inside an urban shopping mall in Atlantic Canada. The comparison sample of 15 males was observed entering a female clothing store, at the same shopping center. All male participants were accompanied by one female companion who was presumed to be their mate (e.g., similar in age, engaged in displays of affection, minimal personal space). Males who were out of view inside the store or who left or remained outside the store for longer than a minute and a half were excluded from observations. If a behavior was ambiguous (e.g., yawning versus engaging in verbal communication) it was not coded.

Procedure

A prototype catalogue of 18 behaviors was created from a preliminary round of observations of male lingerie store behaviors, and based on reading literature that applied approach-avoidance (e.g., with respect to door knocking behavior; Robinson, Wilkowski, & Meier, 2008; classical ethology of mother-infant bonding in monkeys; Rosenbaum & Harlow, 1963; coping with stress following trauma, Roth & Lawrence, 1986). Upon further inspection, the catalogue was condensed and specialized behaviors were examined, compared, and when possible, sub-categorized under a general behavior category. The final catalogue consisted of eight behavior categories (See Table 1). Three of these categories consisted of multiple sub-categories, such that Category 1 (interaction with merchandise) consisted of six sub-categories; Categories 3 (movement and travel with companion) and 5 (independent movement and travel) each consisted of three sub-categories.

As mentioned, all observations occurred at a shopping mall. There were two observation sessions for the lingerie store condition, and one for the clothing condition. With respect to the lingerie condition, the first observation took place from a table situated in the mall food court approximately 3 meters outside one of two adjacent main entrances of the lingerie store. This location was selected due to the large viewing area of the store interior. Upon entrance of a male (accompanied by a female companion), the stopwatch was started and a low-volume timer sounded after 45 seconds as an alert to stop observations. During this 45-second interval, behaviors were logged using a spreadsheet of the catalogued behaviors. If a new behavior completely stopped the action of a previous behavior and then the previous behavior reoccurred, multiple instances were documented (e.g., companion began verbal communication, so participant stopped pacing to communicate, and began pacing after communication ceased). These observations occurred in a two-hour period on a Saturday beginning at noon.

The second set of observations took place from a bench situated approximately 2.75 meters outside the center entrance of a different lingerie store, and this location was selected due to the seating area that allowed for inconspicuous observation of the full store interior.

Table 1. Catalogue of Male Shopping Behaviors

Behavior	Description
1 Interaction with Merchandise	Interaction with store merchandise as outlined in the following 6 sub-categories.
a) Signaling	Directed attention to specific item(s) through arm, hand or finger movements, eye gaze, verbal response or a combination of these to self, companion, store employee or combination.
b) Touch Item	Used hands or fingers to explore item displayed on hanger or folded on flat surface.
c) Pick up Item	Used hands to lift item into air from displayed position for viewing for self, companion, store employee or a combination.
d) Pass Item	Used hands to pass item to companion or store employee.
e) Carry Item	Carried item(s) from one destination to new destination in store. (e.g., dressing room or check out).
f) Purchase Item	Exchanged form of payment at cashier for item and exited store with item.
2 Hand Restraint	Restrained hands in pockets, crossing arms in front of body or by clasping hands together behind or in front of body.
3 Movement and Travel with Companion	Movement and travel with a companion as outlined in the following 3 sub-categories.
a) Close Proximity	Traveled or stood no more than 30cm ahead or behind companion from one destination to another within store.
b) Follow Other	Traveled at least 30cm or more behind companion from one destination to another within store.
c) Lead Other	Traveled 30cm or more in front of person traveling from one destination to another within store.
4 Verbal Communication	Words or sounds emitted by mouth to companion
5 Independent Movement and Travel	Movement and travel independent from companion as outlined in the following 3 sub-categories.
a) Stand at Entrance	Stood independently at store entrance for 5 seconds or more.
b) Stand in Store	Stood independently in one area inside store for 5 seconds or more.
c) Pacing	Systemized walking independently by taking 3 or more steps in one direction, then back to point of origin.
6 Shifting	Shifted body weight from one leg to other leg more than once over 5-second interval.
7 Scanning	Moved head and eyes in side sweeping motion from one section of store to another section.
8 Gaze at Hand-Held Electronic Device	Head and eye gaze directed to hand-held electronic device (e.g., cell phone).

The previously developed observation protocol was used when cataloguing male participants. These observations again occurred in a two-hour period on a Saturday beginning at noon.

There was one observation session for the clothing store condition. Observations occurred from a bench situated approximately 2.5 meters outside the entrance of a female clothing store. This store was selected because of the wide-open entrance, which allowed for observations of the store interior with very few obstructions. Again, the previously developed observation protocol was used when cataloguing these male participants. These observations occurred on a Saturday during a two-hour time frame beginning around 3 o'clock on a late fall afternoon.

The three stores are very similar in size. One of the lingerie stores was a bit shallower and had a broader "face" such that the entire store is visible from the mall by means of either open doors or windows, whereas the other is more obstructed and deeper. The clothing store was highly similar in layout to the former lingerie store. One of the lingerie stores and the clothing store were located on the same floor of the same mall, which indicates that they were faced with the same amount of foot traffic.

To arrive at the catalogue on the previous page, one of this paper's authors observed shopping behavior in a variety of clothing stores at various locations. As mentioned, we attempted to create behavioral units which may be indicative of approach-avoidance conflict (e.g., hand restraint, pacing), and some that were expected to not show this conflict (e.g., scanning the store, verbal communication, gazing at hand-held electronic device). The authors then worked together to refine the list, and one author became the coder. This female coder engaged in a pilot study to become familiar with the catalogue and how to collect data unobtrusively, and modified the study as needed to optimize viewing location. For the data collection periods, she was accompanied by a male researcher. His presence was in response to the perceived need to further hide, from those under observation, the reason she was at the mall.

RESULTS

We performed Shapiro-Wilk analyses and found that many of our categories (i.e., all except Category 7, Scanning Store) violated normality at $p < .05$. Therefore, we relied on the Mann-Whitney U statistic for all analyses except Category 7. To ensure that we met the assumption regarding similar distributions across condition, we examined our homogeneity of variance. For each category we ranked our entire dataset collapsed across both the lingerie and clothing conditions. We then calculated the rank means for the respective conditions. Next, we calculated the absolute difference between the rank means across both conditions from those within each condition and created Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) models, with the absolute difference scores as dependent variables. These ANOVAs were not significant,

meaning we did not violate the Mann-Whitney U assumption of homogeneity of variance. Note that due to our sample size ($n=30$), we relied on exact p -values, and due to the directionality of our hypotheses, we report one-tailed significance values. We note that due to the use of ranking, a lower rank indicates the behavior occurred less frequently, and a higher rank indicates the behavior occurred more frequently.

Results indicated Category 1 behaviors (Interaction with Merchandise) occurred significantly more frequently in the clothing condition than in the lingerie condition supporting Hypothesis 1 (see Table 2 for all descriptives and analyses), and showed a moderate effect size. Subcategories were examined within the categories also using the Mann-Whitney U . The majority of Category 1 sub-categories displayed significant differences. Further support was obtained by the data for Category 2 (Hand Restraint), as this behavior was demonstrated more frequently in the lingerie condition than the clothing condition, but showed a small effect.

Hypothesis 2, that men would engage in a form of 'dependent' travel more so in the lingerie condition than the clothing condition, was not supported. Category 3 (Movement and Travel with Companion) did not display a significant difference between the clothing condition and lingerie condition. For the sake of exploration, however, we examined the Category 3 sub-categories (Close Proximity, Follow Other, and Lead Other), and only Category 3a (Close Proximity) demonstrated a noticeable difference between stores. Category 4 (Verbal Communication), which was included to examine behavior that is outside of approach-avoidance conflict (as a comparison behaviour), was similar across conditions.

As for Hypothesis 3, that men in the lingerie condition would be more likely to engage in independent travel or pacing, was supported. Category 5 (Independent Movement and Travel) was demonstrated significantly more frequently in the lingerie condition than in the clothing condition, with a moderate effect size. Out of the Category 5 sub-categories (Stand at Entrance, Stand in Store, and Pacing), Category 5b (Stand in Store) occurred significantly more often in the lingerie condition than in the clothing condition.

As anticipated, there was no difference due to condition for Category 6 (Shifting). Category 7 (Scanning Store), which yielded normally distributed data, was also similar across the lingerie condition ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.19$) and the clothing condition ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.94$), one-way ANOVA $F(1) = 0.73$, $p = .401$, with a small effect, Cohen's $d = .025$. Likewise, Category 8 (Gaze at Hand-Held Electronic Device) behavior did not significantly vary between the conditions.

Table 2. Descriptives and results of Mann-Whitney U analyses by Condition for Categories of Behavior.

	Behavior	Mrank, Md Clothing Condition	Mrank, Md Lingerie Condition	U	p	r
1	Interaction with Merchandise	20.17, 3	10.83, 1	42.50	.001**	.54
	a) Signaling	17.87, 1	13.13, 0	77.00	.069	.29
	b) Touch Item	17.93, 1	13.07, 1	76.00	.065	.29
	c) Pick up Item	18.60, 0	12.40, 0	66.00	.011*	.45
	d) Pass Item	18.50, 0	12.50, 0	67.50	.008**	.49
	e) Carry Item	20.00, 1	11.00, 0	45.00	>.000**	.63
	f) Purchase Item	17.50, 0	13.50, 0	82.50	.05*	.39
2	Hand Restraint	12.77, 0	18.23, 1	71.50	.03*	.13
3	Movement and Travel with Companion	17.50, 4	13.50, 3	82.50	.11	.24
	a) Close Proximity	20.70, 2	10.30, 0	34.50	>.000**	.63
	b) Follow Other	15.33, 2	15.67, 2	110.00	.48	.02
	c) Lead Other	14.90, 0	16.10, 0	83.50	.33	.09
4	Verbal Communication	15.87, 2	15.13, 2	107.00	.43	.04
5	Independent Movement and Travel	11.17, 0	19.83, 3	47.50	.002**	.51
	a) Stand at Entrance	17.47, 0	13.53, 0	81.50	.06	.30
	b) Stand in Store	11.17, 0	19.83, 1	47.50	.002**	.53
	c) Pacing	14.80, 0	16.20, 0	102.00	.34	.09
6	Shifting	14.67, 1	16.33, 1	100.00	.33	.10
7	Scanning ^A	13.53, 3	17.47, 2	83.00	.11	.24
8	Gaze at Hand-Held Electronic Device	14.27, 0	16.73, 1	94.00	.23	.16

Note. * indicates significance at $p < .05$; ** indicates significant at $p < .01$. ^ANote that Category 7 data were normally distributed but presented here using rank data and the Mann Whitney U for the sake of thoroughness.

DISCUSSION

The results of our study indicated both distinct differences and similarities in male shopping behavior due to context. When examining the mean rank frequencies of behaviors between the two conditions, the differences are explicit. As proposed, men interacted with merchandise (Category 1) much less frequently in lingerie stores than in clothing stores, suggesting a tendency to avoid lingerie merchandise. Men also restrained their hands (Category 2) more in lingerie stores than clothing stores. Together, these findings support our hypothesis that men would show interest in both clothing and lingerie stores (similar to an approach motivation), but engage less with sexually provocative merchandise (similar to an avoidance motivation).

This behavior may also signal boredom from lack of involvement in the shopping process. During observations, men interacted more freely with women's clothing through physical touch and did not exhibit any avoidance behavior while carrying merchandise throughout the store. Interestingly, men visually scanned both clothing and lingerie stores similarly, which demonstrated at least some interest in the merchandise. This finding suggests that some men were comfortable enough to look, but avoided physical interactions with sexually provocative merchandise.

Movement and travel with companion overall (Category 3) did not differ between the two stores. However, in the clothing store, men were significantly more often observed to be in close proximity to their partner than in the lingerie store. This finding fits well with the results of the independent travel behavior. As predicted, independent travel (Category 5) occurred more frequently in lingerie stores. These movements may have been motivated from the need to avoid contact with the provocative merchandise or possibly because the men did not have an active shopping role in these stores. While in clothing stores, men exhibited helping behaviors by carrying merchandise and interacting with their partners in purchasing decisions. The question becomes, what initiated men's helping behavior? Was it their mate asking for help or were men volunteering assistance? If women asked for help only in clothing stores, they might not have been eliciting help in lingerie stores, leaving men with no role in these stores. Although interest was shown by men in both stores, as indicated by their interaction with merchandise (e.g., looking or point at it), men generally did not physically interact with sexually provocative merchandise. Together, our observations suggest the following behavioral pattern emerges in lingerie stores. First, we observed that men visually approached the merchandise and then seemingly avoided physical contact. Men demonstrated their willingness to be a part of the shopping experience by following their partners into the store, also seen in the clothing condition. However, when men were not prompted to engage in helping or purchasing roles, men may have began traveling independently. The motivation for independent travel may have stemmed from anxiety induced by the sexually provocative merchandise, boredom from the lack of active engagement, or due to a need to provide privacy for his female companion to shop, among other potential yet unidentified reasons. Unlike the clothing store, we contend that men

clearly exhibited mixed feelings between the desires to approach the sexually provocative merchandise, and to avoid it as well.

The basis for approach avoidance behavior in men may stem from the evolutionary basis of foraging differences between men and women (Kruger & Byker, 2009). Shopping behaviors in men may mimic ancestral hunting actions, such that they use the minimal amount of energy to bring home the desired object. Women, on the other hand, may use shopping as a social and recreational activity, similar to the ancestral gathering of items throughout the day while in groups and passing the time with socialization. As well, as Kruger and Byker (2009) review that women collect more information about items before purchasing, whereas men are more likely to try to shop quickly and may seek the assistance of a store clerk. These sex differences in evolved behaviors may cause incongruence in resulting activity, such that while shopping for female-oriented items, men adjust to a female strategy (Dholakia, 1999), and while shopping for male-oriented items, women adjust to a male strategy (Kenneth, William, & Dennis, 1999). Moreover, these potential sex differences in shopping strategies might underpin why clothing stores oriented towards men and women appear to be laid out differently.

In addition to these evolved sex differences are socio-cultural expectations. Contemporary women are more often being targeted as consumers of sexual goods (Attwood, 2005) than previously, suggesting women are taking a more active role in developing their sexual identities. However, earlier socio-cultural expectations would deem women who identify with their sexuality as demoralized and mentally disturbed (Lunbeck, 1987). These opposing sexual attitudes in women may evoke anxiety in male companions due to unknown socio-cultural behaviors now expected from men. Ultimately, the arousal factor of lingerie may be enticing but the different foraging behaviors coupled with unclear socio-cultural expectations may lead to approach avoidance conflict during these shopping experiences.

We are certainly not the first to explore the evolutionary basis of consumer behavior (e.g., see Miller, 2010; Saad 2007; 2011). However, although the current study is admittedly quite small in scope, particularly with regards to the small sample size, the value lays in its ability to highlight one way to begin to systematically observe consumer behavior using predictions offered by ethological theory.

Limitations

The observations were made as inconspicuously as possible, however potential male participants may have noticed the observers, which may have inhibited their behavior. As well, behavior monitoring was sometimes impaired because participants often went out of line-of-sight due to displays that were otherwise obstructing clear views. However, behaviors may be modified due to the public nature of the setting and the chance of exposure to spectators, so these displays may actually serve to decrease men's avoidance related anxiety.

It must also be stated that motivations for human behaviors are not always clear. With respect to the current study, in many instances, participants engaged in verbal communication with their female partners, and then proceeded with independent movement and travel. This activity could be interpreted in multiple ways. For instance, the companion may have asked the male to engage in these behaviors, instead of these behaviors being prompted from anxiety or boredom.

Upon examining the final three male participants, it was noticed that once outside the lingerie store, intimate physical contact occurred, usually in the form of handholding. This observation suggests men experienced discomfort with physical contact while inside the lingerie store. When examining males in the women's clothing store, multiple participants showed several displays of intimate physical contact. This difference suggests there is an important difference in feelings of intimacy with companions, which may be worthy of future research.

Last, we acknowledge that we have used a small sample size, and that there are likely other behaviours that could be documented and observed. We have also only collected data in one city, and it would be interesting to see whether these behaviours are observable in other cities and countries.

Future Research

In women's clothing stores, men would touch, hold and carry items, demonstrate a helping behavior in shopping, but these behaviors were not demonstrated in lingerie stores. Are men less willing to engage in these behaviors due to anxiety or are women less likely to elicit help for these behaviors? It could be that because women view lingerie as a way to express the feminine side of their self-identity, they prefer to not include their partners in these decisions. Additionally, women may be exhibiting social consciousness due to the nature of the merchandise and because the interaction is in a public setting. Future research could explore the dynamics between couples shopping in lingerie stores, comparing behaviors and further exploring the motivations of both sexes.

Brosdahl and Carpenter (2011) found that male consumer behaviors varied between generations, suggesting that age plays a significant role in male behaviors in retail settings. Millennial generational men significantly exhibited a higher number of positive shopping experiences and initiated engagement in the shopping process more readily than men born in differing generations. In future research, age and the accompanying generational social expectations should be considered an important factor in examining differences in male shopping behaviors.

It would also be interesting to explore who pays for lingerie items and the motives behind this decision. If men practice a general avoidance strategy, one presumes that they will not pay for lingerie. This prediction is especially valid if the women view lingerie as part of their independent sexual identity. However, if men perceive lingerie as being purchased for them instead, they may be more eager to pay.

Conclusion

Our study yielded several interesting differences in men's behavior while shopping with female companions. Men demonstrated an approach-avoidance conflict in lingerie stores, but while in female clothing stores, men did not show the same conflict. It was apparent that some men were anxious when shopping in lingerie stores. Whether this anxiety occurred due to arousal caused by the merchandise, fears of judgment by spectators, or waiting to be instructed by a companion, is unclear. To complicate matters, men may have been reacting to their female companions, who may have desired to purchase these items independently. Although men may have wanted to be an active participant in lingerie purchases, many factors may have impeded acting on these desires, leaving men in a state of ambiguity of arousal and anxiety. Ultimately, these behaviors manifested as visually seeking the sexually provocative merchandise but not physically touching it, a classical approach-avoidance conflict situation.

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