

Is bargain shopping a family trait?

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Prof. Robert Schindler says, "We're all, to some extent, price-sensitive, but most people aren't enthusiasts about getting a bargain the way others are."

If clipping coupons and bargain hunting gives you a thrill, there's a good chance that at least one of your parents had the same enthusiasm. A Rutgers University-Camden marketing expert says "deal proneness" is a trait passed down from parent to child.

"Some people have a taste for getting a bargain," says Robert Schindler, a professor of marketing at the Rutgers School of Business-Camden. "It provides excitement. They seek out bargains and look through the ads for the best deals."

Schindler says that even if parents don't explicitly teach their children how to shop for deals, children who observe their parents going out of their way to take advantage of sales and other bargains find themselves showing the same habits when they become adult consumers.

In his paper "Intergenerational Influence in Consumer Deal Proneness," published in *Psychology & Marketing*, Schindler says he also examined parenting style when surveying 83 parent-child pairs about their deal proneness. The age of the children ranged from 18 to 35 in the study, while the age of the parents ranged from 38 to 74.

Although past research on [parenting style](#) has found that the restrictive style of parenting has more influence on children than the permissive style, Schindler and his colleagues found that [parents](#) who are permissive of their children's actions and behavior are more likely to pass on their deal-prone habits to their [children](#).

"We think that's because past studies have focused on discipline-related behaviors, such as eating fruits and vegetables and not smoking. Deal proneness is not discipline related – it's more of an indulgence," Schindler says. "People who are deal prone spend time shopping for a bargain and really enjoy getting the discount. That's an indulgence."

Schindler says that besides seeking out a sale or discounts, deal-prone consumers take advantage of contests, sweepstakes, coupons, and "buy one/get one" offers.

"It's those premium deals that excite people," he says. "We're all, to some extent, price-sensitive, but most people aren't enthusiasts about getting a bargain the way others are. Some people even feel that they are responsible for getting a discount. They enjoy the bargain more when they feel responsible for it. It's like they've talked the salesman down to a better price."

The Rutgers-Camden scholar says deal proneness benefits retailers, who will work to attract those kinds of consumers to their stores. For the consumer, there are both positives and negatives.

"On one hand, the deal-prone consumer is more likely to buy something that he or she doesn't really need. On the other hand, getting bargains gives deal-prone people a genuine sense of pride. I interviewed a woman who showed me all of the items she purchased for [bargains](#). I asked her about one in particular, and she told me she got a deal on it 20 years ago. All this time later, she still feels good about it. That's worth something."

A Cherry Hill resident, Schindler was recognized as one of the top pricing researchers in the world in a 2011 article published in the *Journal of Business Research*, which surveyed the articles, authors, and institutions that have contributed most to the topic of pricing over the past 30 years.

He received the Bright Idea Award from the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University and the NJPRO Foundation, which recognized his paper "Perceived Helpfulness of Online Consumer Reviews: The Role of Message Content and Style" as one of the 10 best manuscripts published in 2012 in New Jersey.

More information: "Perceived Helpfulness of Online Consumer Reviews: The Role of Message Content and Style." *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 2012; Boston U. School of Management Research Paper No. 2010-26. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=1701043 or dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1701043

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