Contextual Inquiry Notes

Session:

Observing Team Member: Samantha Horn
Date: 23 Sept 2025
Time: 3:00pm – 3:45 after post observation questions
Setting: Participant home/Office area
Participant Category: Parent/Professional

Demographics:

1. **Age:**
   a. 35-40
2. **Occupation:**
   a. Management and Parent
3. **Highest Level of Education:**
   a. Some college
4. **Gender (Self Identify):**
   a. Male
5. **Typical Shopping Setting (online/in-store):**
   a. Online and In-store
6. **Annual Shopping Frequency (1-2/year, quarterly, monthly, weekly, intermittent, need-based):**
   a. Intermittent
7. **Favorite Store:** For clothes Macys and Amazon for everything else and clothes too
8. **Patterns of Shopping (whole outfit, single pieces at a time, etc):** Shops as needed for occasions, holidays, and when specific items needed (ex. socks)
9. **Type of device used for shopping:** Phone

Notes:

Raw:

Participant is going on a vacation in a few weeks. They are currently looking for clothing for a warm climate, comfortable/leisure wear as well as nicer clothing for dinners.

Went directly to Macys app

Used the search bar to look for clothing items he wanted. The first item he searched for was button-up shirts. Process:

> Scrolled through the clothing options (no filters)
>
> Selected a few to look at in more detail, then either:
>
>> Went back to main search screen,
>>
>> Selected size and added to cart, or
>>
>> Would sigh and go back to main search screen when correct size was not available (Question 1)
>
> Selected three shirts total
>
>> Took about 14 minutes to find 3 he liked and was also available in his size

Used search bar again to search for shorts

> Same behaviors for shirts
>
> More shorts on sale or clearance
>
> Didn't use filter for size, style, or brand
>
> More variations to look through (material, length, and short style)
>
> Found a few he initially liked, but didn't know if the length would be too high
>
> Took longer to find shorts he liked in his size about 18 minutes to find 3 pairs of shorts he liked and were in his size

When checking out, didn't look for any additional discounts or promo codes (Question 4)

Didn't get everything he said he was looking for

End (Questions)

Specific Questions Asked (Include Context):
During:

1. While shopping for shirts: Are you able to find what you are looking for?
   a. Kinda, just something that doesn't look too old or has too many patterns. A lot of these are not really my style and seem like they are for older people. They aren't something I would wear on vacation.

After:

2. After they only used the Macys apps: Do you typically shop through the same stores?
   a. Yes, I usually stick with what I know to make it easier, not a big shopper so I like to just get it done. I don't really shop for particular brands, just style and size that fit their body type.
3. After last comment: Do you go in-stores to shop?
   a. Sometimes. When I shop in stores, I don't really try anything on. Just convenience shop...if I see something I like I find my size and hope for the best.
      i. What do you usually do if you don't like an item or it's the wrong size?
         1. Take it back when I have the chance or when I remember too
4. Once they checked out: Do you use discount codes when you shop?
   a. Sometimes, Macys will automatically apply promo codes if I am signed into my account. I don't carry them with me or forget them if they aren't on my phone. I would rather just be done than try and find them unless it is going to save me a decent amount of money.
      i. Would having discounts and promo codes impact how you shop?
         1. It depends, I probably won't go out of my way to go home and get them unless it saves a lot, but I'll try to remember to bring them if I know I'm going out shopping.
5. When done shopping: Are you satisfied with the items you found?
   a. Yeah, for the most part. I'll wear everything as long as it fits.
6. Did you find everything you needed to find for your trip using the Macys app?
   a. I think so...well probably should have found a few pairs of sandals.
7. Do you enjoy shopping?
   a. Yes and no, when I have time, I like to go out and look and shop around for stuff. But when I don't have a lot of time...just busy with work and kids, I try to get it done.
8. Are you confident the clothing you selected today will be able to be worn together?
   a. Oh I didn't really think about that when I checked out. Just was thinking about what I needed, I hope so or I'm going to be shopping again haha

Observation Summary:

Key Observations:
- Wanted to be done shopping kinda quick, doesn't really want to spend too much time finding and searching for items he likes
  - Not sure if this was because he was being observed or how he normally shops
- Didn't take the time to search other websites for items (time constraint and lack of awareness for other items available)
- Realized he didn't have everything he needed after he was done (having a shopping aid to help complete looks would have be beneficial)
- Even though he said he doesn't look for certain brands, most of the items selected were from the same or similar brand
- Didn't use filters for size, style, or brand (lead to an increase in search time and frustration)
- Shopping online for items "not in season" lead to more frustration and time finding items (having additional resources and options would help elevate this)
- Didn't really voice any concern or show any interest in matching items. It was an afterthought until asked about it (lead to an increase in workload with returns, shopping for additional items, and unnecessary spending)
- Sizing various depending on the brand(can lead to mental fatigue trying to remember the correct size to get for each brand)

Direct User Quotes:
- Additional Quotes under Specific Questions asked

Behavioral Patterns:
- Shops only when needed (event-driven)
- Sticks to known retailers (Macy's, Amazon)
- Doesn't use filters even though it increases efficiency
- Doesn't prioritize matching outfits
- Forgets what items are needed

Pain Points:
- Said they were shopping for button-ups, shorts, and leisure wear. However, he only purchased shorts and button ups.
  - Could be due to fatigue, pressure to finish shopping, or forgetfulness
- Finding both his size and style he liked

Inefficiencies:
- Finding clothing items for different season
  - Out of season shopping limits availability, sizes, and styles available
- Limited themselves to using single source for shopping
  - Could be saving time and money as well as have more options
- Sizing various for each brand

User Workarounds:
- Skipping filters
- Hoping items fit instead of reviewing sizing guide, reviews, trying on in store
- Returning items later rather than addressing sizing

Artifacts: