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Average woman spends \$150,000 on lifetime of shopping

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HOW much Australian women love to shop, and how much money they spend in a lifetime of their favourite pastime, has been revealed.

The answers are: a year and about \$150,000.

New research estimates the average female spends 12 months of her time on Earth in shopping centres hunting bargains and buying everything from potato chips to the latest must-have patent heels.

That isn't enough to frighten off males, women will also hand over three times the average wage on clothes, shoes, handbags and cosmetics in a lifetime.

The report, *Shopping: A Consuming Passion*, by consultancy Directional Insights studied the shopping habits of thousands of Australians over the past four years.

More than 20,000 people were questioned, making it one of the biggest national studies of shopping trends.

It found that for men shopping was generally a chore. For women, it was a pleasure.

Women spend an average of 15 minutes more than men in a shopping centre and make up the majority of shopaholics - one of seven shopping "tribes" identified by the study.

One in 10 likes to indulge in some retail therapy every day.

Other findings reveal Generation Y shoppers are the most passionate -- a third of those born in the late 1970s and through the '80s say they love shopping.

And the younger the shopper, the bigger the shopping centre they like.

Consumer researcher and author of the report Helen Bakewell said the study reflected the country's addiction to consumerism.

"We were born to shop," she said.

The report shows us that shopping is a valid human experience, with people connecting emotionally with their local shopping centre.

Just like men talk about sport and that fabulous try and that fabulous tackle, women also love to talk about the thrill of shopping and what they have bought."

The comprehensive report revealed shoppers were not only venturing to their local more frequently, but were spending more time browsing in-store.

Shopping tribes range from shopaholics to price sensitive bargain hunters and seekers of quality -- buyers of high-end designer clothing.

The shopping spending estimates did not include major purchases such as cars and boats. Other costs not incurred at shopping centres were also excluded from the study.

Confessed shopaholic Liz Franklyn, 20, a student of Malvern, admitted she shopped every weekend despite it draining out her bank account.

Shopping makes me feel good, especially if I'm in a bad mood. A new dress can totally cheer me up," she said.

But I sometimes feel guilty when my bank account is zero and I can't eat for two weeks."

She said she would rather buy something than go home empty handed.

Recent British research found 74 per cent of women thought about shopping every 60 seconds.

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