

Motives for consumption among Polish young consumers

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Abstract

The study contains the results of research carried out among a homogenous group of young consumers – high school students. The studies sought to determine the motives of consumption in the examined group of men and women when making purchasing decisions. Their implementation required the use of the Scale of Motives of Consumption by Poraj-Weder and Maison. The tool diagnoses five types of motives of consumption. These include: status/distinction, control, affiliation, reward, value. The studies described are a pilot research. The research group consists of high school students of both sexes at the age of 18 years, living in the city of Radom and other surrounding smaller towns and villages.

Paper type: research article

Keywords: motives of consumption, consumer behaviour, young consumers, purchasing decisions

Introduction

Young people are an especially important segment of consumers. They are distinguished by activity and, above all, conscious participation in the market processes. What should be highlighted is the diversity of this segment in terms of values, attitudes or beliefs, which is important from the perspective of consumer behaviour (Obuchowska, 2007). Hence, it is important to analyse the selected research group.

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Consumer behaviours represent all the activities related to purchasing and the use of the product or service (Engel, Blackwell, & Millard, 1978). One of the aspects related to the process of acquiring goods are motives of consumption. According to Stasiuk and Maison (2014), these are the reasons for all decisions and choices of consumers.

The aim of this study is to determine the motives of consumption in relation to one particular group – high school students (women and men aged 18 years).

In the study the Scale of Motives of Consumption (SMC) by Poraj-Weder and Maison was used. The study was conducted using the pencil-paper method and was followed by a statistical analysis using the Statistica software.

1. Young consumers as buyers

Consumer behaviours are understood as actions aimed at meeting the needs of an individual through the acquisition of goods or services closely linked with one's own system of preferences (Zalega, 2011). Their integral part is included in consumer decisions, namely, the selection of specific consumer behaviours and decision making process concerning all decisions taken by the consumer, both on the goods market and within the household (Woźny, 2012). It is also worth mentioning the consumer decision-making style, which refers to the psychological orientation characteristic of a consumer making choices (Sprotles & Kendall, 1986). It is clear that consumer decisions are specific to a particular group of consumers and, therefore, as presented by Table 1 which shows the characteristics from the perspective of young consumers.

The information presented in Table 1 indicates that in the case of the general decision-making by young consumers, there occurs minimization of time and effort. This may be due to the low prices of products purchased by these persons. In contrast, consumers making detailed decisions want to use as much of the available information as possible in order to avoid errors in decision-making. In this respect they carefully analyse the characteristics of the product, so that the time required for the decision is extended (Janoś-Kresło & Mróz, 2006; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2006).

In describing the segment of young consumers, one should take into account the following criteria: formal (legal), psychological (individual), socio-cultural (sociological) and economic. The basis of a formal criterion is the age of the majority, which forces greater self-reliance and, what goes with it, taking the first job and disposing one's own funds. As a result, a young person becomes independent in making purchasing decisions. The psychological criterion takes into account the internal development of the individual that lasts throughout the whole life. It is a dynamic process during which changes take place in the psyche and in behaviour. People are suscep-

tible to the influence of various kinds of external and internal factors that can change opinions, preferences, attitudes. From the perspective of the economic criterion among young consumers, you can see an “increase of the standard of living increasing the possibility of meeting the material needs better with a relatively small financial independence” (Woźny, 2012, p. 90). In contrast, the socio-cultural aspect shows young consumers as a separate social category due to the similarity of needs and responsibilities, for example, starting a career or achieving an appropriate social status (Grzyb-Hejduk, 2005).

Table 1 *Characteristics of consumer decisions of segment of young consumers*

| General decisions | Detailed decisions |
|---|--|
| Low-price products | High-price products |
| Products purchased frequently | Products purchased infrequently |
| Low consumer involvement in decision-making | High consumer involvement in decision-making |
| The product known to the consumer | The product unknown to the consumer |
| Little time for searching and purchasing | A lot of time for searching and purchasing |
| Not much information about the product | A lot of information about the product |

Source: based on Janoś-Kresło & Mróz (2006); Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg (2006), *passim*.

It is also worth mentioning the model of consumer decision-making EKB (from the authors' names Engel – Kollat – Blackwell) which assumes that the decision to choose the product concerned is a transition effect of the consumer through five stages:

- 1) recognition of the problem – creates the need of the consumer,
- 2) search for information on the available options,
- 3) evaluation of alternatives – the use of specific evaluation criteria reduces the number of alternative products,
- 4) purchase decision – taken after the earlier detailed selection,
- 5) postdecision evaluation consists in evaluating the product during use (Stasiuk & Maison, 2014).

In addition, young consumers in the area of consumer decision-making play specific roles in their families. In the case of some products, young people express the attitude of active initiators, seekers of information, or simply buyers (Kaur & Singh, 2006).

Undoubtedly, one should stress the importance of development processes during which the preparation of young consumers to consciously participate in purchasing decisions takes place (Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, 2011). In adoles-

cence, young people model their moral autonomy and differentiate their worldview. Thanks to entering the broader social life, they are involved in new situations and take up their first activities. General changes in the physiology are aimed at achieving the capability of transmitting life while changes in the psyche are aimed at achieving a mature personality (Obuchowska, 2007).

2. Motives of consumption as a factor affecting the buying behaviour of consumers

The phenomenon of motivation is usually analysed in conjunction with a particular group of needs, and its strength is dependent on the intensity of expectations of a person (Nowak, 1993). Generally, motivation is “a term referring to regulating the behaviour satisfying the needs and striving for a particular purpose. The motivation process consists of a lot of motives, i.e. body conditions that affect its readiness to start or continue systems of reactions and activities” (Jachnis & Terelak, 1998, p. 133).

For the motivational process to take place, two priorities must exist:

- an objective pursued by an individual – it must be useful, i.e. it should reduce motivational tension,
- an individual must be aware that the objective is achievable under certain conditions with a probability greater than zero.

Along with that usability and the likelihood of change, quantitative characteristics of motivation, that is, direction and intensity change. The direction of motivation is an indication of the purpose of actions taken by the entity, and the intensity of motivation is characterized by three parameters: strength, size and intensity (Reykowski, 1975).

Researchers continuously work on creating a universal model of motivation in terms of consumer behaviour, which will explain the basis of all the consumer decisions and choices (Stasiuk & Maison, 2014). The literature presents the classic model of consumer motivations known as VALS 2, or a modified version of the concept of segmentation based on values and lifestyles VALS from 1978 (Weinstein, 1994) and the second model – Censydiam – of a more contemporary overtone which will be described in the further part of the report (Stasiuk & Maison, 2014).

The inspiration to create the Censydiam model was drawn from psychological concepts of Freud and Adler. On the basis of the Freud's theory, a vertical line, placed at the ends of the two opposing needs – fun and control – was created. However, thanks to the Adler's theory, a horizontal line presenting the need to belong at one end, and the need for a status at the other was created (Callebaut, Jans-

sens, Op de Beeck, Lorré, & Hendrickx, 1999). Apart from the above basic needs, the Censydiam model also has four indirect needs: vitality, standing out, sharing, calming down (Stasiuk & Maison, 2014). All the needs of the Censydiam model are characterized in Table 2.

Table 2 *Characteristics of needs in the Censydiam model*

| Name of need | Characteristics of needs |
|--------------|--|
| Fun | It includes states, such as, joy, surprise, spontaneity, unpredictability |
| Control | A sense of security and predictability are fundamental |
| Status | It is highly individualistic and highlights the identity of an individual |
| Affiliation | It has a collectivist basis, and, therefore, is based on group identity |
| Vitality | Closely linked with the enjoyment of life, the desire for action |
| Calming down | Related to withdrawal, the feeling of calm, relaxation, comfort |
| Distinction | It grew out of the need to be someone different, the feeling of being special, extraordinary |
| Sharing | It is about mutual experience, mutually experiencing emotions |

Source: based on Stasiuk & Maison (2014), pp. 289–291.

More importantly, in the model there are needs that are opposed to each other is: fun – control, sharing – distinction, affiliation – status, calming down – vitality, and therefore both cannot be satisfied with a single product. In contrast, one product (brand) can satisfy several needs, but a given need cannot be satisfied with different products (brands) (Stasiuk & Maison, 2014).

3. Research methodology

The aim of the study was to determine the motives of consumption among the high school students. The efforts were made to indicate whether there is a correlation between the consumption motives and gender of young consumers. It was assumed that women prefer the consumption motives such as affiliation, reward and men: quality, control, status/distinction.

The subjective scope of this report covers the market of young consumers, more specifically young people of 18 years of age. The study was conducted in the High School no. 5 named after Romuald Traugutt in Radom in February of 2015. The selection of classes was made based on the age of students.

To describe the motives of consumption of high school students, the paper-pencil study was carried out with the use of the research tool consisting of two main

parts and responder's particulars. The first part of the questionnaire *Purchasing behaviours* includes three questions. The first concerns the frequency of purchasing specific products, e.g. clothes, footwear, cosmetics, books and so on. The second question in turn refers to the frequency of purchases in specific places, such as, shops with articles of everyday use or discount shops. In contrast, the third question concerns the recipients of the products purchased by high school students.

The second part is the Scale of Motives of Consumption (SMC), by Poraj-Weder and Maison (Poraj-Weder, 2012), which diagnoses the motives of consumption. It is made up of 24 items which are divided into five factors illustrating the different types of consumer motivation, i.e. status/distinction, control, affiliation, reward, value. The preferences of a given motive of consumption are determined on the basis of the average calculated for the factors. The interpretation takes into account only their high results (Poraj-Weder, 2012).

The last part of the tool – responder's particulars – includes questions on basic information, such as, gender, year of birth, place of residence as well as detailed information including the amount of money (in PLN) allocated for expenses.

The study involved 115 high school students. Finally, due to errors and omissions in the responses, 106 observations were accepted for further analysis. The data have been placed in the Excel sheet and then the statistical analysis of data using the Statistica software was performed. In the first place, the author used descriptive statistics (making use of basic measures of association). Next, in order to verify the relationship between the consumption motives and gender, the averages of a given scale were calculated. In the next step high scores for each of the factors (dimensions) were detected in accordance with the sten scores (where: low = (1–2,99); high = (3–4). If the respondent obtained a high score in a given dimension, it means that he or she prefers a given motive of consumption.

4. Purchasing behaviours of high school students – research results

Characteristics of high school students as buyers concerned the frequency of purchase of products, such as, clothing, shoes, magazines and others, frequency of visits in different retail outlets and end users of goods purchased by the surveyed high school students.

The data presented in Table 3 show that high school students usually buy clothing, cosmetics and footwear. It may stem from the fact that young people attach great importance to appearance. In addition, high school students are not interested in buying CDs, which can affect easy access to music and movies on the Internet.

Table 3 *Frequency of purchasing specific products by the surveyed high school students (n = 106)*

| Type of product | Frequency of purchases of specific products | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------|----|--------------|----|------------------|----|-------------|----|-------|----|
| | Several times a week | | Once a week | | Once a month | | Every six months | | Once a year | | Never | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Clothes | 1 | 1 | 21 | 20 | 64 | 60 | 19 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Footwear | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 25 | 74 | 70 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Electronic equipment | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 22 | 21 | 63 | 59 | 12 | 11 |
| Sports equipment | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 26 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 35 | 33 | 15 | 14 |
| Magazines | 5 | 5 | 16 | 15 | 27 | 25 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 38 | 36 |
| Books | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 13 | 22 | 21 | 33 | 31 | 32 | 30 |
| CDs | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 18 | 17 | 21 | 20 | 53 | 50 |
| Cosmetics | 5 | 5 | 12 | 11 | 57 | 54 | 16 | 15 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 10 |

N – number of answers.

A further part of the analysis refers to the frequency with which respondents make purchases in the shops mentioned: shops with articles of everyday use, shops with specialized products, discount shops, supermarkets (Table 4).

Table 4 *The frequency of purchases in certain shops by the surveyed high school students (n = 106)*

| Type of shop | Frequency of purchases in certain shops | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|------------------|----|-------------|---|-------|---|
| | Several times a week | | Once a week | | Once a month | | Every six months | | Once a year | | Never | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| With articles of everyday use | 70 | 66 | 25 | 24 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| With specialized products | 0 | 0 | 18 | 17 | 69 | 65 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Discount shops | 41 | 39 | 46 | 43 | 13 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Supermarkets | 15 | 14 | 35 | 33 | 37 | 35 | 12 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 |

N – number of answers.

According to the study, most of the high school students make purchases in shops with articles of everyday use several times a week, which may indicate satis-

fyng their own needs, but also concern for their family. In addition, more respondents prefer to make purchases at discount shops than in supermarkets, the reason of which may be the larger number of discount shops.

The subjects were asked the question for whom they typically buy products such as clothing, footwear, electronic equipment and other (Table 5).

Table 5 *Users of products purchased by the surveyed high school students (n = 106)*

| Type of product | Users of purchased products | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----|---------------|----|--------------|----|
| | Young consumer | | Family member | | Other person | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Clothes | 105 | 99 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 |
| Footwear | 105 | 99 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Electronic equipment | 77 | 73 | 38 | 36 | 11 | 10 |
| Sports equipment | 90 | 85 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 |
| Magazines | 57 | 54 | 41 | 39 | 15 | 14 |
| Books | 72 | 68 | 29 | 27 | 25 | 24 |
| CDs | 56 | 53 | 10 | 9 | 39 | 37 |
| Cosmetics | 92 | 87 | 40 | 38 | 21 | 20 |

N – number of answers.

As it turned out, most high school students buy products for themselves. In addition, as many as one third of respondents buying electronic equipment, magazines and cosmetics buy them also for family members. However, there are few people who make purchases for other people. Undoubtedly, it can be a manifestation of self-centeredness and attention to individual needs. On the other hand, it may be due to a specific developmental period in which the research group is classified.

5. Motives of consumption – research results

Overview of results obtained in the Scale of Motives of Consumption (SMC) requires a two-step procedure: analysis of the motives of consumption for all respondents and separately for women and men. To determine the dimensions of SMC, one should at first calculate averages for the items constituting a given dimension, and then verify the averages in accordance with the sten scores (where low = (1–2,99); high = (3–4)). What was calculated next was the ratio of high and low results as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 *Distribution of results of dimensions of the Scale of Motives of Consumption*

| Dimensions of Scale of Motives of Consumption | Low result | | High result | |
|---|------------|----|-------------|----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Quality | 50 | 47 | 56 | 53 |
| Control | 51 | 48 | 55 | 52 |
| Reward | 62 | 58 | 44 | 42 |
| Affiliation | 58 | 55 | 48 | 45 |
| Status/Distinction | 78 | 74 | 28 | 26 |

N – number of answers.

The analysis shows that high scores in the dimension of quality were achieved by up to 53% (56 people), which constitutes the largest group. These people meet their consumer needs by selecting the best quality products. Similar results are achieved in dimension control – 52% (55 people), which means that the majority of respondents in their purchasing decisions clearly avoids risks. Not much fewer, that is, 45% of respondents (48 people) achieved high scores in the dimension of affiliation which relates to people who when making purchasing decisions take into account the needs of other people. In turn, in dimension award a high score was achieved by 42% (44 people), which testifies to the fact that people in this group often buy a given product to reward themselves for successes. The smallest number of responders achieved high scores in dimension status/distinction, that is, 26% (28 people), describing the people of extremely individualistic motivation.

Such a large group of respondents – 52% (55 people) – showing caution in consumer choices and appreciating what has already been verified (dimension control) is surprising. Moreover, it may also seem that young people in their consumer decisions are guided only by their own good, which is denied by a large group of respondents 45% (48 people) with the consumer motivation resulting from affiliation. Perhaps what is the most surprising is such a small number of people 26% (28 people) who, through purchasing choices, want to emphasize their uniqueness and individuality (dimension status/distinction).

On the other hand, in the case of analysis of differentiation of dimensions SMC by gender it turned out that the correlation is statistically significant only in dimension quality. Moreover, it is men who most often prefer this motive.

Table 7 Differentiation of dimensions of the Scale of Motives of Consumption by gender

| Dimensions of Scale of Motives of Consumption | Chi-square | p |
|---|------------|---------|
| Quality | 3.877435 | 0.04894 |
| Control | 3.116953 | 0.07748 |
| Reward | 1.563894 | 0.21110 |
| Affiliation | 0.1826500 | 0.66911 |
| Status/Distinction | 2.420269 | 0.11977 |

The analysis on the basis of the averages building the scale, checking the dependence on gender (Figure 1), was also conducted.

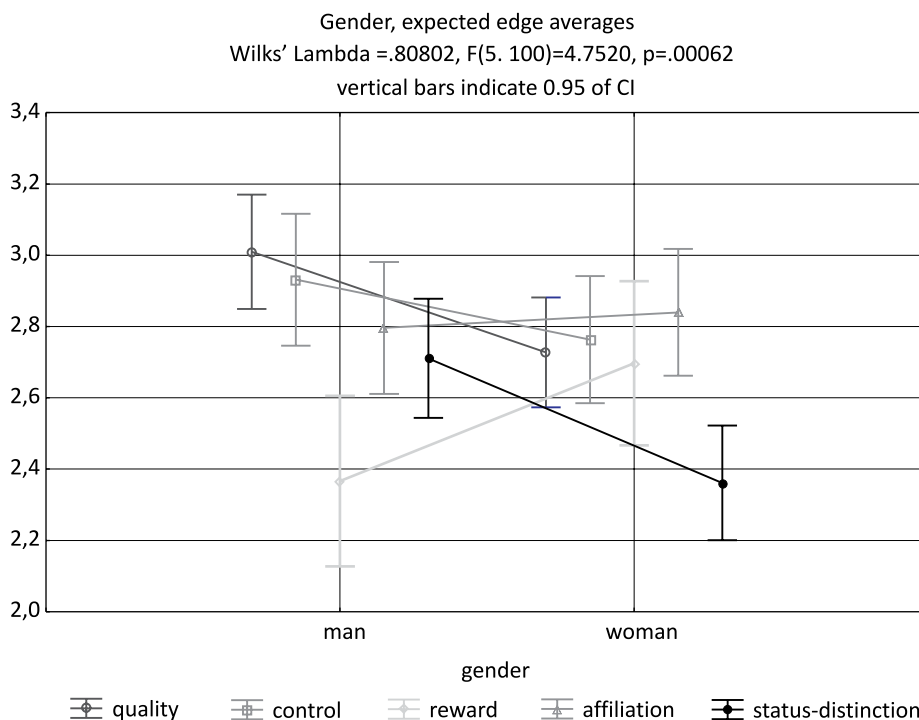


Figure 1. Dependence of motives of consumption on the gender of the surveyed high school students.

The diversity of motives of consumption occurs in the case of both genders ($p = 0.00062$). Men appreciate quality, control and status-distinction, while they attach the smallest importance to rewards. In women, in turn, none of the motivators

clearly dominates, and by far the least important is status-distinction. Importantly, the smallest variation in assessments emerged in the case of affiliation. Both for women and men it is just as important, but not dominant.

Overall, the results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between only one consumption motive – quality and the gender of young consumers. On the other hand, there is no reason to accept the hypothesis that indicates the preference for specific motives by women. Among women none of the motives is dominant, especially the two of a collectivist nature i.e. affiliation, reward. In turn, the second detailed hypothesis was confirmed, which means that men prefer consumption motives, such as, quality, control, status/distinction that are associated with individualistic needs.

Conclusions

Studies have shown differences in the motives of consumption of high school students of both sexes. Women in their consumer choices are not guided, as assumed, by motives of affiliation and reward. This means that when making purchasing decisions they are not willing to regard the needs of the people close to them as more important than their own (dimension of affiliation) and do not make purchases aimed at improving their mood (dimension of reward). In addition, none of the motives clearly dominates in this group of women surveyed.

However, the men surveyed are dominated by individualistic motives of consumption, such as, quality, control and status/distinction, which confirms the assumptions of research. In their buying behaviours men choose good quality (dimension of quality). Moreover, they exhibit conservatism when reaching for the tested products (dimension of control). At the same time, consumption is for them an instrument for emphasizing individuality and distinctiveness (dimension of status/distinction).

Consumer behaviour study showed that high school students usually buy clothing, cosmetics and shoes, but they are not interested in buying CDs. In addition, most of them makes purchases in shops with articles of everyday use several times a week and more often choose discount shops than supermarkets. Interestingly, almost all of the respondents buy products destined for themselves, and few people make purchases intended for someone else.

It should be emphasized that the final results could have been influenced by a number of limitations, including the size of the selected sample, the selection of homogeneous group in terms of age or the tool used. The Scale of Motives of Consumption is still subjected to continual changes and improvements on the part of its authors.

The results of the tests described in this study may help those involved in creating the product and its marketing strategy to fit the needs (motives) of consumers.

What may be a valuable tip for further research is the verification of the scale in relation to the purchase of a specific product, but also the examination of motives of consumption in other consumer groups.

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