

IMPULSIVE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Research into consumer behaviour features as the foundation of all the planned and implemented marketing activities of a company. Consumer behaviour is determined by numerous factors, and is therefore characterised as highly complex and difficult to predict. A particular challenge for marketing science and practice is to research impulse consumer behaviour in shopping – a behaviour that occurs when consumers experience a sudden, powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. This article addresses some of the factors that cause consumers' impulsive or impulse-driven behaviour, and also to point out some possible directions of thinking and future research, based on the experience from Serbia.

KEYWORDS: consumer, consumers' impulsive buying behaviour, situational factors, personality

1. INTRODUCTION

The marketing concept of business behaviour focuses on consumers, their preferences, wishes, needs and expectations that need to be met and exceeded so that the company can achieve business success quantified by the levels of revenue, profit, market share and loyal customer basis. Marketing as a science, with all its derived disciplines, has been striving ever since its emergence to investigate the causes, factors, action mechanisms and consequences of consumer behaviour, and despite the fact that much has been discovered and achieved in this aspect, marketing theory and practice are still far from having explained all the aspects of consumer behaviour.

Consumer behaviour is the most complex issue of marketing theory and practice, due to its marked heterogeneity and a multitude of factors exerting a combined impact on it, in more or less diverse ways, depending on the occasion. One of the highly specific manifestations of consumer behaviour on the market is impulsive behaviour resulting in unplanned purchases. Marketing researchers have been trying to ascertain all the aspects of consumers' impulsive buying behaviour, for decades now, during which period the research focus was redirected from researching the types and categories of products inducing impulsive buying and defining the companies' marketing offer accordingly, to current research into the broad range of factors affecting and shaping consumers' impulsive buying behaviour and setting marketing strategies based on these findings.

Most marketing researchers offer their views of which factors affect consumers' impulsive buying behaviour to which

extent, but they all tend to agree that these factors can be viewed in terms of external environment factors and internal factors characteristic of each individual consumer such as personal character, internal conditions, demographic characteristics, etc.

This article aims to elucidate the phenomenon of impulsive behaviour by pointing to determining factors and by clarifying the essence of urge-driven behaviour, in order to enable companies to predict impulsive buyers' behaviour to a certain extent, and adjust and define their marketing strategies and activities accordingly.

The main aims of the article are:

- to identify factors affecting consumers' impulsive buying behaviour;
- to distinguish between impulse-driven and compulsive buying consumer behaviour
- to establish the existence and extent of the influence of gender as a specific demographic factor of impulse-driven behaviour.

The research question that the authors will try answer is: is there a difference between male and female consumers in relation to impulsive buying behaviour?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For a long time, the basic starting tenet of economic science was Homo Economicus, i.e. the economic consumer, whose behaviour is expressly cognitive and rational, and whose shopping habits are always guided by their interests and

consideration in order to achieve maximum benefits with minimum invested resources. Reality, however, has refuted such a narrow view of consumers, as they very often buy products and services not only to satisfy their physiological and other rational needs, but also to satisfy some personal psychological needs and desires that other consumers may find irrational. A purchase decision can be and very often is prompted by aesthetic and symbolic motives, or simply, desire for entertainment. Such deviation from standard and rational consumer behaviour is referred to as impulse buying. Generally, there are numerous examples of various products and services that can ascribe their sales levels to such shifts away from rational consumer behaviour. It is therefore not a rare occurrence; on the contrary, impulsive buying is a unique, but ubiquitous phenomenon, one that might even be classified as a routine form of consumer behaviour.

Dholakia (2000) argues that impulsive buying behaviour is a moment during the shopping trip occurring at the retail outlet, so that the greatest interest in the study of this phenomenon and the initial body of knowledge about it originate from retailing sources, where factors such as shelf arrangement, product packaging and point-of-sale promotion significantly increased the consumers' impulsive buying behaviour.

Researching the relationship between gender and material symbols in relation to impulsive buying, Dittmar, Beattie and Friese (1995) argue that the level of impulse intention characterises every individual consumer, different from one consumer to the other, but directly determine the real impulsive purchase. Although it is the consumers that manifest impulsive behaviour, it is triggered by products and services, i.e. the latter two are the main marketing stimulus of impulsive buying behaviour available to companies. Products such as clothing and accessories, music, and product categories that imply social and personal visibility and involvement, as well expressing one's personal image, tend to encourage consumer impulsive buyer behaviour.

One of frequently cited authors dealing with consumer impulsive behaviour, Rook (1987) defines it as unexpected purchases unplanned before entering a retail outlet, resulting from rapid purchase decision, preceded by sudden and strong urge to possess a noticed product or service. Impulsive purchase is an unplanned purchase decision made at the point of sale, which is, in most cases, a consumer's emotional, or cognitive, or combined response to a sudden stimulus.

Tendai and Crispen (2009) devote the most attention to researching the element of point of sale on consumers' impulsive buying behaviour, underlining that it is, basically, a purchase decision made at the retail outlet, so that it is necessary for marketing theory and practice to constantly investigate which retail outlet elements may produce impulsive buying behaviour and satisfy the consumers' need innovatively. Product display, packaging design, relaxing interior and atmosphere at the retail outlet make a positive

impact on consumers' impulsive buying behaviour. Tendai and Crispen (2009) specify that the retail outlet ambience and atmosphere have two positive impacts on impulsive buying (p. 103):

- promotion effect, as a combination of information and economic effect produced by stimuli such as price reductions, coupons, gifts, etc.
- involvement effect, where the atmosphere causes a high level of customer involvement, positive agitation and pleasure by means of appearance and interior decoration, music, sales promotions, sales staff attitude, etc.

Solomon (2002) defines consumers' impulsive buying behaviour as behaviour that "occurs when a consumer a sudden irresistible urge to buy" (p.301). Most frequently, impulse purchases occur in situation when the consumer deems impulsive buying behaviour totally appropriate, such as buying a present for someone else. Salomon further categorises consumers according to the degree of manifestation of impulsive buying behaviour (p.303):

- planning consumers, who always decide in advance what, how much and which brands they will buy;
- partially planning consumers, who either choose only the category, or only the amount of product to buy; and
- impulsive buyers, without any prior shopping plan

Hanna & Wozniak (2001) opine that consumers' impulsive buying behaviour is a common occurrence on the market, and consider it to be within the consumer's non-programmed problem resolution pattern during the purchase decision making process. Impulsive behaviour and purchases imply very little time used for decision-making, limited presence or total absence of cognitive effort in decision making, where emotional appeals make a decision-making impact on the consumers.

Mowen (1993) defines impulsive purchases as "hedonically complex impulses to buy that may stimulate emotional conflict." (p. 381). Impulsive purchases tend to appear in situations when the consumer's consideration and the significance of consequences of these purchases diminish. Impulsive purchases occur when consumers have no prior perception of any problem or consequences of these purchases, or prior intention to buy. Mowen claims that between 39 and 67% of purchases are completely unplanned and impulse-driven. Impulsive buys happen automatically and without control, but always entail strong affective conditions in consumers.

Maričić (2011) regards what he terms affects as specific acts of manifesting consumer buying behaviour. An affect or emotion refers to consumers' feelings, whereas cognition or consideration refers to consumers' planned behaviour, and both these extremes are, in fact, consumers' psychological responses to stimuli and events in the environment. Affects are almost always responsive behaviour, which means that they reflect the consumers' immediate and automatic response to

stimuli they are exposed to. Maričić (2011) lists the following types of consumers' affective responses, their effect on behaviour, and characteristics of response to it (p.133):

- Types of consumer's affective responses:
 - emotions;
 - specific and subjective feelings;
 - moods;
 - assessments
- Effect of affects on consumer behaviour:
 - positive mood accelerates the consumer education process and shortens the decision-making time when
 - choosing products or services;
 - invigorated mood favours products with positive connotations;
 - emotions activate consumers' motivation to buy
- Characteristics of affect-driven response:
 - affect is always an immediate and automatic response to an external stimulus, which cannot be planned;
 - affect-driven responses are either beyond or under negligible control of the consumer;
 - intensive affective conditions also include consumers' physiological responses;
 - most affect-driven responses are learnt.

Maričić (2011) argues that consumers' affective and cognitive systems are mutually dependent and related, and continuously influence each other, which often results in unplanned and impulsive purchases. These purchases are characterised by sudden spontaneous urge to buy, which can be completely contrary to the consumer's earlier behaviour, followed by a state of psychological imbalance and loss of control over the consumer's own behaviour, occurrence of psychological conflict caused by the analysis of satisfaction and consequences, decrease in the consumer's cognition, and finally, manifestation of impulse-driven behaviour. There are five types of impulsive purchases (Maričić, 2011, p. 143):

- pure impulsiveness;
- suggestion effect
- planned impulsiveness:
- recall effect; and
- planned purchase of a category, but not also a brand of product and service.

Making an impulsive purchase requires certain mood, i.e. excitement, and the consumer's positive attitude. The most common impulsive purchases are those caused by hedonic urges and comprise the so-called hedonic consumption; these purchases, however, also cause emotional conflict, so that impulsive purchases are often also termed 'emotional purchases' (Maričić, 2011, p. 144). Although impulsive purchases include a situation where the consumer cannot resist the marketing stimulus, this does not mean that impulsive purchases do not also include cognitive consumer behaviour. On the contrary; often a cognitive analysis of, for instance, excellent offer in a retail outlet is the trigger of impulsive purchase.

2.1. The specific features of impulse-driven in comparison to compulsive consumer behaviour

In marketing research, impulse-driven and compulsive consumer behaviour are regarded as two adjacent and common phenomena in consumers' lives. As specific behaviour forms deviating from normal and usual consumer behaviour, impulse-driven and compulsive behaviour draw significant attention of both scholars and practitioners. Marketing researchers, psychologists and sociologists agree that both these types of behaviour are affected by three decisive determinants – consumers' inner states and moods, personal characteristics, and environment factors.

The degree of purchase probability which is unintended, immediate and unconsidered by individual consumers represents the tendency of impulsive buying. Impulse-driven consumers have very flexible shopping lists; compared to other consumers, they are much more open to sudden and unexpected shopping ideas, and much more prone to spontaneous responses to marketing stimuli from the environment.

Shahjehan, Quereshi, Zeb & Saifullah (2012.) regard compulsive behaviour as an abnormal form of individual consumer behaviour, characterised by chronic purchases where the consumer feels unable to stop or adjust it. Although this deviant behaviour form can also cause a certain form of short term pleasure, viewed in the long run, compulsive behaviour tends to usurp the consumer's normal life and cause highly negative consequences. The authors quote the American Psychiatric Association's definition, stating that compulsive behaviour is "repetitive and apparently purposeless activity that an individual performs according to strict rules in a stereotypical manner" (2012, p. 2188).

A manifestation of compulsive behaviour in marketing implies purchases that a consumer cannot control, which are excessive, persistent, and become a part of everyday life. Although compulsive purchases appear to be a consequence of the product and service that are the object of devotion, which is a characteristic of impulse purchases, the primary urge and drive of compulsive purchases is disturbed feeling of delight in and because of shopping.

Ridgway, Kukar-Kinney & Monroe (2006.) point out that the basic distinction of compulsive purchases in relation to impulse-driven ones is the consumer's inability to control and influence the urge to buy, and markedly negative consequences of this type of purchases, which is not present in impulsive buying (p. 131).

Compulsive behaviour definitely leads to highly unpleasant consequences for the consumers, i.e. their private and social lives, career, and financial standing. Compulsive behaviour is a behavioural disorder with a growing incidence in society, causing disturbing consequence for it. Dittmar (2005, p. 468) presents compulsive behaviour in three dimensions – irresistible desire to buy something, total lack

of control over behaviour, and incessant excessive shopping despite all the negative consequences for the consumers and their families.

Workman & Paper (2010, p. 89) state that as many as 18 million Americans suffer from this behavioural disorder, i.e. compulsive buying disorder. The authors cite various theories attempting to clarify the mechanisms of consumers' compulsive buying behaviour, entering an in-depth analysis of its factors, and conclude that females are inclined to compulsive behaviour than males, that individuals of weak self-confidence, prone to fantasises, obsessions and depressions often buy compulsively. The authors also refute the critique of marketing, labelling it as the main culprit for compulsive buying.

Compulsive behaviour is a negative extreme of impulse-driven behaviour and can be regarded as an individual consumer's illness. The main problem of research into compulsive disorder is that it is based on surveying consumers who admit and are aware of their own behavioural disorder, which is seldom the case; most compulsive consumers negate the inability to control their shopping urge, accepting only the fact that they are impulse buyers who enjoy shopping without any dangers or consequences. However, unlike impulse-driven, compulsive behaviour is laden with addiction, materialism, negation, depression, low self-esteem and self-confidence, seeking justification and understanding, and loss of control. Compulsive consumers are basically neurotic and require the help of their families, social environment and companies.

Both impulse-driven and compulsive consumer behaviour are based on the loss of control of urge to buy, but differ in the degree and intensity of this loss of control. Impulse-driven behaviour is characterised by a much lower degree and does not entail serious negative consequences, whereas in the case of compulsive, it is all much more compelling and serious.

2.2. Factors influencing impulse-driven consumer behaviour

Impulse-driven consumer behaviour is not rare on the market, so that marketing theory and practice have invested significant efforts in clarifying it as much as possible, in order to reach certain knowledge that companies could use in practice. Over the past decades, many marketing researchers have attempted to identify factors encouraging impulsive buying behaviour.

Karbasivar & Yarahmadi (2011.) investigate the effect of external marketing stimuli on impulsive buying behaviour. The authors state that impulsive purchases are situations where the consumer does not evaluate or even identify all the shopping alternatives, nor does he evaluate the consequences of his/her decision. Consumers are only focussed on instant gratification of their strong need, not thinking of the real problem, which is to be resolved in a higher-quality

manner. Impulsive purchases are always instant, affective and hedonic. The authors state numerous forms of impulsive purchases – rationally unplanned, emotionally impulsive, objectively impulsive and many others, but devote special attention to factors influencing impulse purchases and consumer behaviour (p. 175):

- External impulsive purchase factors are under full control of companies, which try to use them to incite the impulse buying mechanism, i.e. strong urge to buy something that consumers cannot resist:
 - store apparent characteristics;
 - in-store displays;
 - the in-store shopping environment – music, scents, colours, sales staff etc.;
 - price discounts and point-of-sale promotions
- Internal impulsive purchase factors are related solely to the consumer, and the company can influence them to a minor extent, but cannot control them:
 - the consumer's personality traits;
 - the consumer's emotional and affective state;
 - demographic factors;
 - situation factors – time, purpose of the purchase and disposable income.

Coley & Burgess (2003, p. 283) claim that simultaneous effect of external and internal stimuli results in positive shopping emotions and guides consumers' moods, followed by strong urge and desire to buy that the consumer cannot resist, resulting in the emergence of impulse-driven behaviour and, eventually purchase. The authors have also identified significant differences in the impulse-driven behaviour of males and females, depending on product categories.

Virvilaite, Saladiene & Bagdonaite (2009.) argue that impulsive buying behaviour occurs as a consequence of action of diverse marketing stimuli in the retail outlet, focussed on low prices and appealing promotions, resulting in unplanned purchase. In their opinion, factors influencing consumers' impulsive buying behaviour:

- characteristics of a consumer;
- peculiarities of purchase environment;
- characteristics of the product or services; and
- situation factors

Pleasant and stimulating atmosphere in the sales outlet, appealing prices, friendly sales staff, product displays, products and services with a strong effect of expressing the consumer's personality etc. have a powerful effect on the strong manifestation of the consumers' impulsive buying behaviour. Factors with a stronger experiential, entertaining and hedonic effect also have a comparatively stronger effect on the consumers' impulsive buying behaviour.

Chen (2008) deems that impulsive purchase add hedonic value to the act of shopping itself, and consequently, products and services with a high level of hedonic dimension provoke higher level of emotion and the consumer affective response, eventually resulting in impulsive purchase. The

same author lists a range of factors influencing the impulsive buying behaviour (p. 155):

- the product's characteristics;
- the consumer's mood or emotional state;
- the shopping task;
- availability of time and money; etc.

The combination of these factors influences the consumers' impulsive buying inclination spontaneously, immediately and kinetically, and, at the same time, determines the consumers' involvement, which is dependent on the interest and significance of purchase for the consumer. The author deems that the most frequent objects of impulsive purchases are "consumer goods which appear to have potential for self-presentation, self-expression, mood adjustment, diversion and entertainment" (p. 156).

Yang, Huang, & Feng (2011) study the factors affecting the impulsive purchases of cosmetic products, terming them as consumers' "weakness of will" (p. 275). The authors claim that impulse-driven behaviour, i.e. the intensity of its manifestation is individually determined by the inclination to it, affected by the company's marketing stimuli and the situation itself. The factors of economic, personal, temporal and cultural nature affecting impulsive purchases are (p. 276)

- external stimuli – display of products in the retail outlet, promotion, atmosphere, purchasing frequency of the product category, etc.;
- internal perceptions – lifestyle, the customer's personality traits, emotions, disposable money and time;
- buying behaviour – price, payment terms and conditions, and time of purchase;
- demographic characteristics – age, gender, income;
- profession, education level, marital status, social position etc.

Yang, Huang, & Feng (2011) conclude that there is a significant correlation between gender structure and impulsive buying intention, but this correlation did not turn out to be significant enough in terms of real impulsive buying behaviour.

Maričić (2011, p. 144) highlights that unplanned and impulsive purchases stand in "close correlation with the consumers' income and overall economic situation". The rise in the number of impulsive purchases is directly related with the increase in the consumers' discretionary income and vice versa.

Gasiorowska (2011) focuses the major part of her research into consumers' impulsive buying behaviour on the analysis of differences between genders on encouraging and manifesting impulsive behaviour. The author points out that females regard impulsive purchases as a game of chance that offers them a high level of stimulation and the feeling of sensational, while impulsive purchases made by males are in most cases the result of action of companies' marketing

stimuli and unwanted situation of information overload that they wish to avoid by accelerating the purchase decision. Furthermore, the author states that females spend much more time shopping, which arises the feeling of pleasure and delight in them. Male consumers, on the other hand, make purchase decision much faster, and are less prone to unplanned purchases. However, male consumers devote more attention to companies marketing stimuli, placing themselves under higher probability of impulsive purchase. Females' impulsive purchases are determined by emotions and materialism, whereas the same is of instrumental character in males' case, that is, gratifying the sudden urge as soon as possible.

Generally speaking, the correlation between gender and consumer behaviour is one of the most discussed topics in marketing theory and practice. A notably detailed overview of significant analyses of correlation between gender and consumer behaviour was given by Professor Kay M. Palan from Iowa State University (2001), who was the first one to point out the importance of differentiating between the notions of biological sex and gender identity – "the fundamental, existential sense of one's maleness or femaleness" (p.1). Palan notes that there are numerous studies confirming some hypotheses on differences in behaviour, but also that most of them have no major scientific relevance, for instance a 1980 study claiming that the biological sex is a better predictor of consumer behaviour in terms of their categorisation of products and services as males' and females' than gender identity. He lists a couple of significant studies that proved scientifically that sexual identity in males much better accounts for purchase intention than biological sex, that female gender identity results in higher involvement level in purchasing votive candles at Christmas time, that promotional appeals about financial services are much better responded to by females with male personality traits, and that males remember benefits of the presents they got, whereas females remember more who the gift came from.

Tifferet & Herstein (2012) study gender difference and their influence on brand commitment, impulsive buying, and hedonic consumption. These authors prove in their research that females as consumers are more inclined to hedonic consumption and impulsive purchases. The authors find a partial explanation in females' personality structure and the fact that they are more prone to depression, and regard these impulsive purchases as a means of improving their own mental state (p. 178).

Kovač Žnideršić & Marić (2013) look into the gender differences and their correlation with consumer behaviour in terms of the application of ethical standards, and highlight all the complexity of this aspect, as female consumers are more prone to using double standards when assessing their behaviour.

Despite the immense body of research into impulsive buying behaviour, the need to study it has not diminished; on the contrary, any change in the marketing environment results in new consumer behaviour patterns, and thus new forms of expressing impulse-driven behaviour and impulsive purchases.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research project completed in order to support or reject the defined hypothesis was conducted on a random sample of 312 respondents in the cities of Novi Sad and Subotica. The sample was stratified by gender, and it is important to point out that 65% of the respondents were females, and 35% were males. Empirical data was gathered by means of an anonymous questionnaire comprising questions and statements about consumer intentions and behaviour related to the analysis of the respondents' impulsive buying behaviours. The respondents were asked to express the degree or agreement or disagreement on a 5-degree Likert scale. The main limitation was the sample size, and the fact that the research was based on the consumers' sincerity in answers, without verifying their actual behaviour and actual purposes.

The defined null and alternative hypotheses are:

H0: Gender as a demographic determinant does not affect consumer behaviour and impulsive purchases

H0: Gender as a demographic determinant affects consumer behaviour and impulsive purchases

The set hypothesis was tested by means of non-parametric chi squared (χ^2) statistical test, i.e. characteristic function test for conditional independence, according to the following formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^m (f_i - f_i^{(t)})^2 / f_i^{(t)}$$

with the number of degrees of freedom r and probability of 95%, i.e. error risk $\alpha = 0.05$ that the characteristic independence hypothesis is rejected if $\chi^2 > \chi^2$.

4. ANALYSIS, LIMITATIONS AND FINDINGS

Due to the limitations in the size of the article, not all tables will be shown, but the essential results, i.e. respondents' replies to main statements are given in the tables below.

Table 1.

	I often buy totally spontaneously and depending on how I feel					TOTAL
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
MALES	20	38	31	80	35	204
FEMALES	6	24	44	30	4	108
TOTAL	26	62	75	110	39	312

Chi squared $\chi^2 = 34.00205112$; p value = 0.00000074; the hypothesis is rejected.

As p value 0.00000074 is lower than α error (0.05%), hypothesis H0 is rejected, so that we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between genders in terms of manifesting impulsive buying behaviour, i.e. spontaneous purchases guided by current emotions. As 57% females and only 31% males confirmed that emotions and spontaneity, as indicators of impulsive buying, determine

their behaviour, it was concluded that females are much more prone to impulsive buying, i.e. spontaneous and emotional. It is interesting to note that an identical percentage of males and females gave negative answers (28%), and that females are much more determined in this statement, as only 15% of them were neutral, whereas this percentage was much higher in males, amounting to 41%.

Table 2.

	I often buy something and reconsider it afterwards					TOTAL
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
MALES	15	36	36	85	32	204
FEMALES	20	36	26	24	2	108
TOTAL	35	72	62	109	34	312

Chi squared $\chi^2 = 46.26531971$; p value = 0.00000019; the hypothesis is rejected.

As p value 0.0000001 is lower than α error (0.05%), hypothesis H0 is rejected, so that we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between genders in terms of manifesting impulsive buying behaviour, i.e. that the purchase is often made without having completed cognitive process. As 57% females and only 24% males confirmed that they often buy without prior consideration, which in-

dicates impulsive buying behaviour, it is concluded that females are much more impulse-driven when shopping, i.e. they purchase with decreased or eliminated cognitive processes. Males are very decided in the statement that they first consider and only then buy (52%), whereas this share in females is only 25%. 24% males and only 18% females gave a neutral response.

Table 3.

	I often regret buying something					TOTAL
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
MALES	12	26	15	100	51	204
FEMALES	20	38	32	14	4	108
TOTAL	32	64	47	114	55	312

Chi squared $\chi^2 = 64.71753123$; p value = 0.00000001; the hypothesis is rejected.

As p value 0.0000001 is lower than α error (0.05%), hypothesis H0 is rejected, so that we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between genders in terms of manifesting impulsive buying behaviour, i.e. the feeling of regret often appears after the purchase. As many as 74% females and only 17% males reported post-purchase consumer regret, which points to impulsive buying behaviour,

and the fact that females are significantly more impulse-driven when shopping. Only 19% females claim that they seldom regret the purchases they made, whereas the same is claimed by 54% males. Females are highly determined in this statement, as only 7% have no opinion, whereas the percentage of neutral males is more than four times higher (29%).

Table 4.

	I often buy because it makes me happy.					TOTAL
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
MALES	18	34	33	85	34	204
FEMALES	20	41	25	17	5	108
TOTAL	38	75	58	102	39	312

Chi squared $\chi^2 = 50.91643212$; p value = 0.00000001; the hypothesis is rejected.

As p value 0.0000001 is lower than α error (0.05%), hypothesis H0 is rejected, so that we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between genders in terms of manifesting impulsive buying behaviour, i.e. that often the motive for purchase is the feeling of happiness and gratification, identified in the literature as one of the basic drives of impulsive buying. As many as 59% females and only 20% males confirmed that their purchases are often motivated by the feeling of satisfaction and happiness, which points to im-

pulsive buying behaviour, and the fact that females are significantly more impulse-driven when shopping. A negative reply was given by 25%, and more than half the surveyed males, i.e. 57% stated the same. Females are much more determined in this statement, as only 15% of them were neutral, whereas this percentage was much higher in males, amounting to 41%. Females are highly determined in this statement as well, as only 16% have no opinion, i.e. opted for neutral, whereas the percentage of neutral males is 23%.

Table 5.

	I carefully plan my shopping, and make and stick to my shopping list.					TOTAL
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
MALES	34	72	37	38	23	204
FEMALES	6	22	22	40	18	108
TOTAL	40	94	59	78	41	312

Chi squared $\chi^2 = 72.4433464$; p value = 0.00010820; the hypothesis is rejected.

As p value 0.0000001 is lower than α error (0.05%), hypothesis H0 is rejected, so that we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between genders in terms of manifesting impulsive buying behaviour, i.e. that the purchase is often previously planned and shopping list is made, which is an indicator of rationality in shopping, curbing and controlling impulsive buying behaviour. The results

are reversed, and show that men are more rational shoppers and consumers, because as many as 54% of surveyed males regard themselves as such. Only 30% females claim to be rational shoppers. As many as 52% accounts for women who go shopping without previous planning or making a list, compared to 26% males. The percentage of neutral is similar, amounting to 20% males and 18% females.

Table 6.

	My rationality in shopping would increase with an increase in income.					TOTAL
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
MALES	18	46	61	58	21	204
FEMALES	12	43	31	19	3	108
TOTAL	30	89	92	77	24	312

Chi squared $\chi^2 = 73.01352694$; p value = 0.00258826; the hypothesis is rejected.

As p value 0.0000001 is lower than α error (0.05%), hypothesis H0 is rejected, so that we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between genders in terms of manifesting impulsive buying behaviour. Very often, research into impulsive buying behaviour confirms its directly proportionate correlation with income levels. The actual purpose of this statement is to gain insight into consumers' intended impulsive buying behaviour (disguised as a question about the opposite, i.e. rational behaviour) conditioned by expected growth in income. 31% of females who regard themselves as impulsive buyers in the survey believe that a future increase in income would not increase rationality of their behaviour, while 39% of them believe that a rise in income would cause a fall in impulsive purchases, i.e. increase in rationality, and 30% of females express no opinion on this statement. The structure of responses shows that females are equally distributed across the three groups, and it cannot be inferred with certainty whether an increase in income also causes an increase in rationality and reduction in impulsive buying behaviour in female consumers. As for males, only 20% of them answered that increased income will cause a rise in their rationality, whereas as many as 51% answered negatively, and a significant segment of 29% gave a neutral response. This can be explained by males' thinking pattern, i.e. the fact that they already perceive themselves as rational, so that it will not change even with an increased income, i.e. does not confirm the claim stated in some studies that increased income results in increased impulsive buying behaviour.

5. CONCLUSION

Through its social, cultural, political, legal, economic and even technological dimension, the contemporary marketing environment changes traditional behaviour patterns of

both males and females. The trends in women's emancipation, their growing involvement in education, corporate management, politics and public life are extending globally from developed to developing markets. With legal regulation and departure from earlier rigid moral standards related to the individual's gender identity in society, we are witnessing a growing relativisation of differences in consumer behaviour stemming from differences in biological sex. However, despite the above mentioned trends and tendencies, consumers' impulsive buying behaviour still maintains significant differences regarding male and female consumers.

Companies will undoubtedly keep basing a noteworthy segment of their marketing plans and strategies on consumers' impulsive buying behaviour, where it is necessary to develop different approaches to male and female consumers. Companies must keep investing efforts and resources into studying the phenomenon of loss of control over the shopping urge in general, and especially monitor any change that can affect it, in terms of certain sociological and psychological processes in the consumer world, such as online gender swapping, change of gender identity, and related shopping behaviour patterns.

Finally, it is also important to highlight that consumer behaviour in all the stages of shopping can only be studied and explained through interdisciplinary approach, where the results of geographic and demographic analysis are used in the initial stages of research. This is followed by economic and sociological explanations regarding the research into external stimuli of consumer behaviour, and their interpersonal relations and communications. The final stage comprises psychological rationales, which are intrinsically internal in character, and is conducted with the aim of comprehending the intra-personal determinants, which powerfully shape consumer behaviour, in interaction with the effect of external factors.

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