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## The role of shopping in human life in 2021

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Society today is overly overwhelmed with advertisements for attractive products and ways to purchase them. The population is becoming richer and richer, which means they can spend more money on entertainment and their own pleasures.

**Purpose:** To present the role of shopping in human life in 2021 from the perspective of consumers.

**Material and method:** The study was carried out using the author's questionnaire. 260 questionnaires were collected and analyzed.

**Results:** Men (52.3%) and women (47.7%) participated in the study. More than half of them (53.8%) were employed and more than 30% were studying. One in three respondents earned cash income greater than the minimum national gross rate. Nearly 60% rated their material situation as good. The analysis showed knowledge of the term "consumerism" by 83.1% of people. The study showed that the respondents shopped several times a week (69.2%) and even daily (18.5%). In order to buy food products, they usually visited supermarkets (64.6%), and in buying products they were most often guided by quality (47.7%). They are most encouraged by sales (50.8%), as well as recommendations from friends (18.5%) and product ingredients (12.6%). The data shows that as many as 58.5% of respondents used shopping to

improve their mood. They were also induced to buy products by advertisements in the media (49.2%).

**Conclusions:** For consumers, apart from the price, the quality of the products is of primary importance. They buy mainly in large supermarkets and via the Internet. The advertisements in media, promotions and the desire to improve one's mood are the reasons of increasing phenomenon of consumerism.

**Key words:** shopping, consumerism, society, pandemic

### **Introduction and purpose**

Shopping is an activity that provides considerable satisfaction to people. As salaries rise and the material situation of Poles improves, the willingness to spend money on pleasures increases. On the other hand, the prices of products and services continue to rise, but this does not prevent the phenomenon of consumerism from growing. Consumerism is defined by the PWN Dictionary of Polish Language as an excessive attachment to the acquisition of material goods [1].

Stores surround consumers at every turn, starting from small neighbourhood stores, to larger discount stores, to large-format markets and shopping centres. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing significant growth in the e-commerce sector, i.e., commerce through online services. Consumers are increasingly making purchasing decisions without physically seeing the product. For this reason, they pay attention to other aspects of the product. Media advertisements also have an important influence [2].

The purpose of this study was to present the role of shopping in human life in 2021 from the perspective of consumers.

### **Material and methods**

The study was conducted in a group of 260 people. Men constituted 52.3%, while women 47.7%. A survey method based on the author's questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was made available via the Internet. The average age of the respondents was estimated at 32 years. More than half of the respondents (53.8%) were undertaking employment and one in three were studying. The percentage distribution regarding the gender of the respondents as well as their education and place of residence is illustrated below.

Gender	N	%
Female	124	47,7
Male	136	52,3

Table 1. Gender distribution of the respondents.

Education	N	%
Primary school	20	7,7
Lower secondary school	20	7,7
Vocational school	28	10,8
Secondary school	68	26,2
Post-secondary school	20	7,7
College education	104	40

Table 2. Distribution of education of the respondents.

Place of residence	N	%
Village	64	24,6
City	196	20,00

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents' place of residence.

## Results

The analysis showed that most respondents had cash receipts between 2000 and 2800 PLN. Every third respondent had income (including money from parents, scholarships, salary, pension, allowance, etc.) greater than the current gross national minimum wage (2800 PLN).

Cash receipts	N	%
Up to 200 PLN	12	4,6
From 200 PLN to 500 PLN	20	7,7
From 500 PLN to 1000 PLN	28	10,8
From 1000 PLN to 2000 PLN	44	16,9
From 2000 PLN to 2800 PLN	75	29,2
From 2800 PLN to 5000 PLN	43	16,5
From 5000 PLN to 7000 PLN	23	8,7
More than 7000 PLN	15	5,6

Table 4. Income distribution of the respondents.

Almost 60% of the respondents were positive about their material situation. The second largest group were respondents who indicated the "average" answer. Only 4.7% rated their current income poorly.

Evaluation of material situation	N	%
Very good	44	16,9
Good	108	41,5
Average	96	36,9
Bad	8	3,1
Very bad	4	1,6

Table 5. Assessment of the material situation of the respondents.

The study revealed knowledge of the term "consumerism" by 83.1% of the people.

Knowledge of the term consumerism	N	%
Knowledge	216	83,1
No knowledge	44	16,9

Table 6. Assessment of familiarity with the word consumerism by the respondents.

Respondents most often shopped several times a week (69.2%). and even daily (18.5%). The least number of people shopped once a month (1.5%).

Frequency of shopping	N	%
Every day	48	18,5
Several times a week	180	69,2
Once a week	28	10,8
Once a month	4	1,5

Table 7. Frequency of shopping by respondents.

In purpose of buying the food products, the respondents most often visited the markets (64.6%). The second place was taken by small neighbourhood stores, where 24.6% of people usually do their shopping.

Location of food shopping	N	%
Marketplace	16	6,2
Small neighbourhood stores	64	24,6
Markets	168	64,6
Internet stores	12	4,6

Table 8. Place of shopping for food products by respondents.

Consumers were mainly guided by quality (47.7%) when buying products. Product price (29.2%) and proven brand (18.5%) were also of great importance.

Important product features	N	%
Price	76	29,2
Quality	124	47,7
Proven brand	48	18,5
Trends	12	4,6

Table 9. The main product feature that the respondents are motivated to buy.

Respondents were most encouraged to buy by sales (50.8%), as well as recommendations from friends (18.5%) and product ingredients (12.6%). Media advertising (11.2%) and promotional newspapers (6.9%) were less important.

Encouragement to buy the product	N	%
Promotion	132	50,8
Promotional newspaper	18	6,9
Advertisement in the media	29	11,2
Friends' recommendations	48	18,5
Product ingredients	33	12,6

Table 10. Feature that encourages respondents to buy.

The vast majority (86.2%) of respondents shopped online.

Internet shopping	N	%
Yes	224	86,2
No	36	13,8

Table 11. Making online shopping.

The opinions of the respondents regarding improving their mood by shopping were also divided. As many as 58.5% of them used shopping for this purpose.

Shopping in order to improve mood	N	%
Yes	152	58,5
No	108	41,5

Table 12. Making purchases to improve mood.

Nearly half of the people were prompted to make a purchase by advertisements in media such as Internet, television, radio (49.2%).

Advertisements in media	N	%
Induce to buy	128	49,2
Not induce to buy	132	50,8

Table 13. Impact of advertisements in media on respondents.

## Discussion

The results of the study conducted showed an increase in the phenomenon of consumerism in the society. A review of databases was conducted in order to find articles relating to the evaluation of the importance of shopping in the lives of Polish people.

In the study by J. Zawadka, the respondents positively assessed their material situation, as much as 17.4% described it as very good, while 55.0% as good [3]. In the analysis, the results were very similar - 16.9% and 41.5% respectively.

The results of the survey conducted by Moja Gazetka portal were also significant. As many as 42.9% of respondents admitted to do shopping "almost every day". In the second place was the answer "once a week", which was declared by 41.5% of people [4]. The results of the analysis showed a different distribution of responses, as most respondents shopped

several times a week (69.2%). Daily shopping concerned 18.5%, while a smaller group were those who shop once a week (10.8%).

According to G. Samuk's survey, respondents by pandemic have reduced the frequency of stationary shopping. The use of discount stores is declared by 69%, while the use of large-format stores by 76% of people [2]. On the other hand, in the questionnaire, 64.6% of the respondents opted for shopping in supermarkets, which is a similar result.

Consumers are guided by different criteria in choosing the best products. According to the Open Research survey „Shoppers Perspective 2021”, as many as 22% of Polish people paid attention to the quality of things, while they still mainly were suggested by the price (34%) [5]. However, for the respondents in the discussed study, the most important thing was the quality, which was chosen by nearly half of them (47.7%). The second place was taken by the price, driven by 29.2% of people.

One of the important factors encouraging people to buy are sales. According to statistics conducted by PayPal, 53% of respondents admitted to buying products at discounted prices that they were not interested in [6]. In the analysis, also more than half (50.8%) of consumers said that promotions encouraged them to buy.

PayPal also asked a question about improving mood through shopping. As many as 40% said that shopping was a reward for them, such as a bad day [6]. The result obtained in the analysis was higher, as much as 58.5% of people used purchasing new products for this purpose.

Currently, shopping is moving to the Internet area, which is confirmed by research reports. According to a survey by the Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej in July 2021, 63% of respondents (86% of Internet users) were shopping online [7]. Expert Sender report also showed high percentage of online shopping (79.60%) [8]. On the other hand, according to the latest survey by GEMIUS and the Chamber of Electronic Economy, 73% of Internet users used this option [9]. The analysis in turn showed that 86.2% of the respondents purchased items this way.

Advertisements in the media have a great influence on purchases, but 65% of people in the CBOS survey denied being encouraged to buy under their influence [10]. On the other hand, according to the Mindshare Huddle For Good survey, as many as 62% of respondents believed that people buy unnecessary things under the influence of advertising [11]. In turn, the results of the survey showed that the opinions were divided almost evenly, with 49.2% of people confirming the impact of the ads.

## Conclusions

The data suggest that shopping is an important part of consumers' lives today. Currently, the financial situation of Poles is at a better level than in the past, so they can afford more frequent purchases. The quality of products is increasingly important, but sales are proving to be very encouraging. The majority of the population makes their purchases over the Internet, which is also influenced by the current epidemiological situation. In addition, they are tempted to do so by advertisements in the media and the desire to improve their mood. All these components contribute to the rise of consumerism in society.

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