2.2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN PURCHASE DECISION-MAKING

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Abstract. *This study explores the role and impact of advertising communication on consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions in the context of modern, digitally driven society. Communication plays a central role in shaping consumer choices, especially as advertising becomes increasingly emotional, sensory, and interactive. With technological development, globalization, and rising consumption, advertising has evolved beyond informational content to deeply influence subconscious decision-making processes. The* ***goal*** *of this study is therefore to analyse the significance of advertising communication in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing their purchasing decisions. To achieve this goal, the following* ***objectives*** *were set:1) to discuss the theoretical aspects of consumer behaviour and its connection with the decision-making process to buy; 2) to evaluate the impact of advertising communication on consumer behaviour; 3) to review the significance of neuromarketing research in the context of advertising communication; 4) to analyse the practical connections of advertising communication elements with consumer behaviour.*

Marketing communication, particularly advertising, interacts with consumers on rational, emotional, and sensory levels, forming values, attitudes, and actions. The research emphasizes the complexity of consumer behaviour, influenced by psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors, and highlights how advertising appeals to consumer motivation and emotional triggers. The study identifies advertising communication as a major marketing tool that shapes consumer attitudes and behaviour. Emotional elements such as imagery, music, colours, and narratives are more memorable and effective than purely rational content. Neuromarketing, a growing interdisciplinary field combining neuroscience, psychology, and marketing, offers insights into subconscious consumer reactions. An empirical quantitative survey with 359 respondents showed that while many consumers claim advertising does not influence them, their behaviour suggests otherwise. A significant portion admitted to impulsive buying and being influenced by emotional advertising or influencer recommendations. Visual elements had the highest impact, while auditory cues were largely unnoticed, despite their potential subconscious effect. This dissonance reflects the hidden impact of advertising on consumer decision-making.

Keywords*: advertising, communication, consumer behaviour, decision-making process, impact, neuromarketing.*

Introduction

Communication is crucial for society in conveying and disseminating information, and in the age of digitalization, with an increasing number of diverse distribution channels, it undergoes various transformations. Technological advancement, consumption growth, globalization, and digitalization compel the expansion of communication possibilities to achieve faster, more efficient interaction, information transmission, and knowledge dissemination. In a consumer society, the evaluation of consumer behaviour and advertising communication's influence in the context of decision-making increasingly gains new insights. Consumers, being part of a multifaceted information flow, encounter hundreds of commercial messages daily, whose primary goal is to influence their thinking, feelings, and actions. Marketing communication tools, especially advertising, operate not only at a rational informative level but also at emotional and sensory levels, shaping their behavioural models. Moreover, advertising actively forms consumer values, attitudes, emotions, and decision-making processes by utilizing not only traditional marketing communication and consumer behaviour methods but also employing neuromarketing research. Consumer behaviour is a complex phenomenon encompassing psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors that determine how individuals search, evaluate, choose, purchase, and use products or services. Considering this, marketing communication encourages consumer interest and loyalty. One of the primary forms of marketing communication is advertising, characterized by its ability to simultaneously disseminate messages to a wide audience through various channels: television, internet, press, radio, outdoor advertisements, etc.

Advertising is considered a specific area of communication between the advertiser and the potential consumer, whose conditional communication is maintained using public information dissemination tools. The impact of advertising communication on consumers is often based on emotional and sensory principles. Studies show that people remember an emotional message more often than logical information, therefore, advertising creators are increasingly using not rational arguments, but emotional symbols that evoke sensations - seeing, hearing, feeling, even associations of smell or taste. Visual elements (colours, shapes, logos), textual components (slogan, narrative, figures of speech) and sound signals (music, voice, sound effects) collectively create a compelling, memorable and consumer decision-influencing form of communication. In recent years, more and more attention has been paid to neuromarketing - an interdisciplinary field of research, combining insights from neuroscience, psychology and marketing. Neuromarketing methods (e.g., eye-tracking technologies, EEG, fMRI) allow for a deeper analysis of consumer reactions to advertising not only at a conscious, but also at a subconscious level. Such studies help to reveal which aspects of advertising cause the greatest emotional response, increase engagement or even lead to spontaneous purchasing decisions.

Considering this, the object of this study is advertising communication and its connection with consumer behaviour and the decision-making process to buy. The research goal is to analyse the significance of advertising communication in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing their purchasing decisions. The following tasks were chosen to achieve the goal: 1) to discuss the theoretical aspects of consumer behaviour and its connection with the decision-making process to buy; 2) to evaluate the impact of advertising communication on consumer behaviour; 3) to review the significance of neuro-marketing research in the context of advertising communication; 4) to analyse the practical connections of advertising communication elements with consumer behaviour. The methods of scientific literature analysis, analytical method, systematic and survey methods were chosen to carry out the research. The method of scientific literature analysis was applied to conceptually justify the object of the research and its relevance. This method was applied to systematically review and summarize previous studies related to consumer behaviour, advertising communication and decision-making. The analytical method was applied to systematically analyse the theory, concepts and relationships between advertising communication and consumer behaviour, and the systematic method was applied to integrate the research results and theoretical views of different authors on the connections between advertising communication and consumer behaviour. The survey method was applied in conducting an empirical study to find out the opinion about the impact of advertising communication on consumer behaviour and the decision-making process to buy. A structured anonymous survey was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of closed and open questions. The research data was processed and analysed quantitatively to determine the connections between advertising elements and consumer decisions.

The effectiveness of advertising is often assessed by whether it can encourage the consumer to take specific actions – for example, to purchase a product, to be interested in a brand, or to recommend it to others. Therefore, it becomes necessary to thoroughly analyse how the content, form, channel and emotional impact of advertising affect consumer behaviour at different stages of decision-making. For effective advertising, it is necessary to understand not only the rational decision-making process, but also how emotions, sensations, visual symbols and even subconscious impulses work. This study aims to thoroughly discuss these phenomena, to single out the elements of advertising impact that most affect consumer behaviour.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN MARKETING

The Concept of Marketing

Marketing is a broad, multi-faceted term, the concept of which has changed and is changing in response to cultural and social changes in society. Different scientists describe marketing differently at different times, although similarities remain. It can be described as a process through which organizations create value for consumers, considering their needs, while ensuring mutual benefit. In society, marketing is understood as a certain manipulation strategy that encourages people to buy (Kotler and Lee, 2007) and includes the satisfaction of human and social needs in order to provide goods or services with economic value to the market and expand the organization's relationships with consumers (Kotler, 2012). Kotler and Keller (2021) describe marketing as a social process in which both parties get what they want and need by exchanging value with others. Recent studies indicate that in today's world, where the importance of artificial intelligence, technology and data analysis is increasing, the importance of marketing digitalization is growing. Today's marketing is focused on reaching the target audience and personalized offers, which are inseparable from digital platforms (Kapoor et al., 2021), therefore, the latest concept of marketing is associated with social responsibility and sustainability. Modern marketing not only seeks to satisfy consumer needs, but also addresses broader social and ecological challenges, creating long-term value for society (Kotler, 2023). Perhaps the broadest and best reflection of current market trends is the following definition of marketing: it is the science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to meet the

needs of the target market and generate profit. Marketing identifies unmet needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size and profit potential of the established market. For marketing to contribute to the sustainability of organizations, it must adapt to current conditions (Erden et al., 2025). Accordingly, marketing has changed over time from being considered only a field of product sales, then prioritizing customer satisfaction, emotional customer needs, and now being assigned to a stage where the focus is on technologies for humanity (AI, etc.). Consumers are addressed with more individualized and experiential efforts (Erden et al., 2025). Finally, Kotler (2023) already distinguishes the final version of marketing, which goes beyond the boundaries of the physical and digital worlds, providing an immersive experience where customers feel no difference between them. Accordingly, the concept and research of consumer behaviour are also changing.

Thus, marketing is an active business activity that provides exchanges between the manufacturer, seller and consumer. And the sale of goods and services is perhaps the most complex function in the conditions of a market economy (Čereška, 2004). Therefore, marketing, through advertising and other means of communication, must guide the buyer and speed up the buying process, and in order to be able to control and encourage that process, it is important to understand the desires, wishes, needs of consumers, in other words, consumer behaviour. One of the main goals of marketing is therefore to identify consumer needs and satisfy them. And to achieve this goal, it is important to determine why a particular product or service is purchased and the main reasons for consumption - because this is knowledge about consumer behaviour. Studies of consumer behaviour allow us to understand consumer actions, identify their needs, and predict their future behaviour.

The Concept of Consumer Behaviour

Consumer purchasing behaviour is one of the components of consumer behaviour theory, which explains consumers' purchasing habits, the reasons for their choices, and repeat purchases. Consumer behaviour is generally referred to as the decision-making process and physical actions that individuals take when evaluating, purchasing, using goods and services (Qazzafi, 2019; Rahayu & Melinda, 2017; Tassawa & Khumhome, 2023; Priyabrata & Dhananjoy, 2022; Lancaster, Reynolds, 2005; Richard et al., 2010; Khurana, Kaur, 2017). Consumer behaviour refers to the study of groups, individuals, and organizations, as well as the processes they use to select products, services, experiences, or innovations to meet their requirements and the impact on the consumer and society (Chen, Chen & Tung, 2018). Harun & Moury (2019), Mowen (1990) state that it is a process by which a consumer can choose, purchase, use, or dispose of products or services to satisfy their wants or needs. Thus, consumer behaviour is a complex phenomenon that includes the research of goods (services), their selection (Belch, Belch, 2001), and the reaction to the already purchased and consumed goods (Snieškienė, 2009; Richard et al., 2010), consumer reasoning even before the purchase of goods (services), at the time of purchase and during use (Bennett et al., 2002).

Table 1. Definitions of Consumer Behaviour

Delbert et al. (2003)	Consumer behaviour is the science of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use in selecting, acquiring/purchasing and disposing of a product, service, idea to meet their needs and wants.
Solomon (2004)	Consumer behaviour is an interdisciplinary field that includes psychology, social psychology, sociology, economics, and cultural anthropology.
Mowen (1990)	Consumer behaviour is the actions of people seeking to satisfy their wants and needs by buying and using goods and services.
Urbanskienė et al. (2000)	Consumer behaviour is an individual's actions related to the acquisition and use of a product, including behaviours from the emergence of a problem that may arise when acquiring a product to the reaction to an already acquired and consumed product.
Schiffman and Kanuk (1997)	Consumer behaviour is the behaviour that consumers demonstrate in searching for, using, evaluating, and rejecting products, services, and ideas.
Pranulis et al. (2012)	Consumer behaviour is an individual's actions related to the acquisition and consumption of a product, including his actions from the emergence of a problem that can be solved by the acquisition of the product to the reaction to the already acquired product.
Quester, Pettigrew and Hawkins (2011)	Consumer behaviour is a discipline that examines how and why consumers buy (or do not buy) goods and services.
Babin, Harris (2013)	Consumer behaviour can be understood as the actions, reactions, and consequences that occur as a consumer goes through the decision-making process, makes a decision, and then uses the product.
Peter and Olson (2007)	Consumer behaviour is the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour, and environmental events through which individuals conduct aspects of their life exchanges.
Solomon (2011)	Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, acquire, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and wants.
Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard (2002)	Consumer behaviour is the process by which individual individuals or groups select, purchase, consume and evaluate goods in order to satisfy their needs.
Engel, Blackwell and Minard (1990)	Consumer behaviour is a variety of actions related to the acquisition, consumption, and evaluation of goods, including the decision-making process.
Sandhusen (2000)	Consumer behaviour is the science of when, why, how, and where consumers buy or do not buy.

The concept of consumer behaviour is similarly described by various scientists (see Table 1). The definitions reveal two main themes of consumer behaviour: 1) the process of actions involving purchase, use, and (or) disposal; 2) it involves individual or group consumers related to goods, services, ideas, and experiences (Ling, 2015). Reviewing and evaluating the definitions provided, it can be observed that consumer behaviour is the behaviour of consumers in various situations. It is stated that consumer behaviour examines both the activities of individuals related to consumption and with inspection, the impact on other individuals, the impact from other individuals, complaints, and the return of goods. It investigates the reasons and efforts that encourage consumers to choose, purchase, consume, and liquidate an item or service to satisfy personal needs and desires. (Bakanauskas, 2006). In other words, in a broad sense, consumer behaviour is understood as a much broader phenomenon, including the search for information related to the decision to buy, consideration, the choice of a supplier of goods or services, and other actions performed before and during the purchase. This shows that consumer behaviour includes mental (psychological) decisions and physical actions arising from these decisions (Urbanskienė et al., 2000) and related to final consumption, including the acquisition, production, use, and, in some cases, disposal of products and services. Thus, consumer behaviour is focused on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources on consumption-related items (*Consumer behaviour*, 2020). The most important goal of consumer behaviour is to find out how consumers make those decisions, what they are based on, and what determines whether certain goods and services are purchased or not.

The Origin of Consumer Behaviour Science and its Connection to other Fields of Science

The historical roots of consumer behaviour lie in marketing itself; consumer behaviour is now one of the directions of marketing, allowing to help get to know the consumer and, at the same time, for the company to act purposefully to influence the consumer and change their behaviour (Urbanskienė et al., 2000). It is a young field of science that emerged at the intersection of economics and psychology and became an interdisciplinary subject, encompassing psychology, social psychology, sociology, economics, and cultural anthropology (Solomon, 2004; Bobadilla, Ortega, Gutierrez, and Alonso, 2020), and according to some – also demography, marketing (Urbanskienė et al., 2000), even jurisprudence, history, linguistics (linguistics and semiotics), ecology, pedagogy, political science, information technology (Husić-Mehmedović et al., 2012), and has formed as a separate discipline. Thus, the closest connection of consumer behaviour is with marketing, and when it comes to scientific instruments and procedures, its closest discipline is psychology. Psychology laid the foundations for the development of consumer behaviour as a separate discipline, creating conditions for a scientific approach to consumer behaviour through many of its emerging fields. Research on many categories, such as motivation, personality traits, perception, attitudes, and beliefs, is practically impossible without utilizing all the methods, approaches, and concepts of psychology (Husić-Mehmedović et al., 2012). Part of the influence that shapes consumer choices and trends are internal processes – our thoughts, feelings, and desires (Bakanauskas, 2006); perception, learning, memory, motives, personality, emotions, attitudes (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). After all, a consumer is a simple person engaged in activities related to the purchase of products or services. Therefore, it should not be surprising that consumer psychology examines the same questions as psychology in general: memory and cognition, affect and emotions, evaluation and decision-making, and many other topics discussed in psychological literature (Ajzen, 2018). Representatives of consumer psychology, like marketing, use concepts, theories, and conclusions from psychology, especially social psychology, to explain consumer behaviour (Bagozzi et al., 2000). It is generally agreed that consumer behaviour primarily and most importantly means the act of purchasing a particular product or service. However, this is far from the only behaviour that interests consumer psychologists. It also examines the search for information related to the purchase decision, the choice of a retail location or service provider, and other actions performed before and during the purchase (Ajzen, 2018).

The first consumer behaviour studies appeared only in the 1960s in the USA. Scientists from this country, James F. Engel, David T. Kollat, and Roger D. Blackwell, John A. Horward, and Harold F. Kassarijan, are considered the pioneers of consumer behaviour science (Bakanauskas, 2006). Before the appearance of these works and the development of the consumer behaviour direction, attention was paid not to consumption, but only to purchasing processes, sales, but not to the factors that can influence that result. Early consumer behaviour researchers relied on economic theory, according to which consumers behave rationally, i.e., objectively assess which products and services provide the greatest pleasure at the lowest price. However, later studies showed that consumer behaviour is a much more complex construct than its reduction to the level of rationality, and that consumers do not know the reason for their purchasing behaviour; in other words, there are hidden motives that drive them to behave in this way (Husić-Mehmedović et al., 2012). It was understood that not everything can be calculated based only on economic laws, that there are many other elements that determine the consumer's choice to purchase certain goods or services. Consumer behaviour is more than just buying things. Consumer behaviour includes research on how owning (or not owning) things affects consumers' lives, including the impact that material things have on the consumer's mindset about themselves and other people (Solomon et al., 2010). It began to be considered a comprehensive process, encompassing thoughts, emotions, and actions that people experience during consumption. It was noticed that the consumption process is changing. Consumers are not the only ones who think rationally when they are involved in the selection or purchase process. According to scientists, consumption is becoming increasingly emotional, and consumers are perceived as polysensory subjects who expect a more emotion- and sensation-based purchasing process (Douce and Janssens, 2013). Thus, in the 1950s, consumer behaviour studies found that consumer purchasing decisions are influenced not only by rational thinking, but also by subconscious psychological processes (Rozenkowska, 2023). In addition, a myriad of other factors can have an impact, including taste, preferences, brand loyalty, maintaining a balanced diet, health condition, specific food addictions, environmental factors, affordability, etc. (Asikhia, Ajala, Phillips, Olunuga, 2021). Accordingly, to understand the needs of individual consumers, demographic characteristics and behavioural variables, the influence of families, friends, reference groups, and society in general on consumers are examined (Zhao, Khan, and Khatib, 2021).

Consumer behaviour science has advanced significantly since its inception, but the increasingly successful application of communication and other technologies requires focusing on an even closer and more in-depth understanding of consumers within the shortest possible time frame. Undoubtedly, the most important factor in this section is the development of the internet, which has caused a revolution in the research process, information collection and use, product and service adaptation, distribution, development of relationships with partners, and so on. The so-called digital revolution provides consumers with a larger amount of accessible information, better choice, the ability to use extensive

and high-quality databases (about consumers), and increasingly diverse platforms and tools. Mobile telephony is also particularly important in this context. Along with its increasing use for commercial purposes, it also aspires to become an integrated communication, entertainment, gaming, and information system, in areas where television was previously the favourite (Husić-Mehmedović et al., 2012). Thus, consumer behaviour science must constantly seek new perspectives to be able to identify and comprehend emerging changes that determine the changing attitudes, behaviour, and lifestyle of consumers themselves, which is closely related to changes in consumer behaviour.

Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

In general, the main factors determining consumer behaviour are the prices of goods and services, consumer income, needs, and the information available about the properties of goods and services (which is significantly influenced by advertising and other marketing tools) (Universal Lithuanian Encyclopedia). Additional influence arises from environmental factors. Different authors identify various factors: social, economic, situational circumstances (Bakanauskas, 2006); personal, social, cultural, emotional (Roy, 2022); personal, social, cultural, and psychological (Khanthahutthee, 2017; Ibok and Etuk, 2018; Talkah, 2023); culture, subculture, demographic data, social status, reference groups, family, marketing activities (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). All these factors intertwine and interact dynamically to shape consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour is affected by the consumer's lifestyle, taste, social, economic, cultural, demographic environment, social status, and other factors, making everyone's behaviour unique. It also includes psychological procedures performed by consumers when they determine their desires, seek solutions to these needs, decide what to buy, evaluate information, plan, and execute these plans. Consumer purchasing behaviour is the culmination of consumer preferences, attitudes, goals, and decisions regarding consumer reactions in the market when purchasing a product. In the virtual space, five groups of factors influence consumer behaviour: consumer (hobbies, demographic traits, etc.), product (service) (packaging, price, etc.), website (design, navigation, etc.), characteristics of the retailer or intermediary (product quality, privacy and security controls, etc.), and environmental influence (culture, social influence, etc.) (Cheung et al., 2003; Richard et al., 2010; Al-Debei, Akroush, Ashouri, 2015; Hasan, 2016).

Different marketing communication tools in the virtual space are used to stimulate various consumer behaviours at different stages of their journey (Jenyo, Soyoye, 2015). Consumer behaviour in the virtual space is primarily determined by consumers' attitudes towards using technologies – computers, smartphones, or other devices, and the internet. Besides cultural factors (culture, subculture, social groups), social factors (influence groups, family, status), personal factors (age, lifestyle, personality), and psychological factors (motivation, perception, attitude) (Parsons, 2002), emphasis is placed on consumers' skills and the security, privacy, and reliability of websites (Dange, Kumar, 2012). However, some opinions suggest that consumers' attitudes towards online shopping and their behaviour are solely influenced by their past experiences and current situations, while external environment, demographic characteristics, personal traits, seller characteristics (services, products), and website quality are considered past factors that shape attitudes towards online shopping. This is supported by the role of *Google Ads*, which helps observe that search and display advertising can influence consumer behaviour now of decision-making and purchasing, affecting not the overall attitude towards online shopping but decisions related to specific goods or services, leading to conversions (Li and Zhang, 2002).

The main factors influencing consumer behaviour can be divided into two primary groups: *those that influence the consumer as a group member* and *those that influence the individual*. External factors are cultural and social, while internal or individual factors include personal and demographic characteristics, as well as psychological traits. Some scientists also distinguish economic factors (Jasiukonytė, Tamulienė, 2023). Understanding all these factors significantly reduces uncertainty when reviewing consumer consciousness processes ("black box").

Cultural factors are fundamental components of human behaviour, including consumption. It is believed that everything people know and understand as personal norms and beliefs is the result of cultural influences and is learned. People grow, learn, and adopt prevailing values from their environment and social groups, i.e., the culture they belong to (Kotler et al., 2019). Culture reflects the traditions, attitudes, beliefs, norms of behaviour, and values typical of a particular country or regional society, which are accepted within that community (Serban-Comanescu, 2019). Culture is defined as a shared set of values and beliefs that influence consumer behaviour. An individual's cultural environment can determine their choices and purchasing habits. For example, in cultures where heritage is highly valued, consumers tend to appreciate products considered authentic and of high quality. Conversely, in cultures that highly value modesty and conservatism, consumers more often choose products reflecting these values. These choices are not purely individual but are significantly influenced by the broader cultural context (Meena, 2023). Similarly, retailers must understand relevant cultural nuances to effectively meet the preferences of various demographic groups by adapting their products and marketing strategies considering cultural aspects (Meena, 2023). Cultural factors also include the influence of social classes on consumer behaviour. Social class is determined not only by income but also by various factors such as profession, education, wealth, etc. (Kotler, Lane, 2016). People belonging to the same social class generally share common

values that significantly influence their purchasing behaviour. Differences in financial status between social classes lead to different buying behaviours, with higher social classes often having different standards (Akdogan et al., 2021). Even if individuals believe they make autonomous decisions, their choices are still influenced by information or opinions provided by others. It is believed that middle and upper-class individuals often think their decisions directly impact their life outcomes, emphasizing traits of individualism and personal agency. People from lower social strata often feel dependent on their community and social structures (Akdogan et al., 2021). Consequently, consumers from lower social classes may pay more attention to price when choosing products, while higher social class consumers may prioritize product quality, features, and innovations (Al Shishani, 2020). Over time, cultural values become an integral part of personality. However, culture is a dynamic category: it changes over time and through various events. It dictates what is acceptable or not in a particular situation. It influences lifestyle and rhythm, core values, clothing, eating habits, family relationships, education, communication, and more. Marketing must be culturally sensitive and proactive, considering current cultural and societal influence trends (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012).

Social factors related to consumer behaviour mainly involve the influence of family, reference groups, roles, and status within society. Social factors have a similar impact as cultural factors. Consumers often adopt consumption patterns from their social groups to gain approval and avoid disapproval (Yeboah, 2023), feeling the influence of other members on their purchasing decisions (Kavitha et al., 2023). Consumers are more inclined to purchase products valued in their social environment or those that reflect their status and prestige.

Reference groups (family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, etc.) play a crucial role, with family influence being particularly prominent across nearly all societies worldwide. Family is undoubtedly the most important social unit shaping individuals and continuously influencing their behaviour in all situations, including consumption. Many aspects of family life are of interest to marketers, such as the relationship between spouses, stages of the family cycle, family structure, roles within the family, and family development dynamics, which are especially evident today (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012; Kotler et al., 2019). Two types of families influence individual purchasing behaviour: *the guiding family* (parents, siblings) and *the procreation family* (spouse and children). The guiding family shapes a person's values, beliefs, and aspirations, while the procreation family directly influences daily purchasing decisions (Kotler et al., 2019). For retailers and marketing professionals, it is important to assess the roles of family members in decision-making regarding the purchase of specific products (services) and to tailor advertising campaigns accordingly. Besides family, other reference groups also influence purchasing: opinions of friends, relatives, or simply demonstrating one's status. Consumers, observing the behaviour of their social group members, form their own, sometimes unconsciously. Additionally, individuals are influenced by groups they aspire to belong to, called *aspirational groups*, and groups whose values or behaviour they reject, called *dissociative groups* (Kotler, Lane, 2016). These groups typically have certain statuses or values that a person would like to or must embody in their life. Aspirations and desires are well represented by products promoted by influencers, often associated with the influencers' lifestyles showcased on social media, whereby it is assumed that purchasing a product brings one closer to their lifestyle. However, there are situations where a person must genuinely represent their role in society because it is expected by their social environment. For example, if a company executive drives a modest or inexpensive car, there is a high probability that business partners and clients will perceive them as less authoritative or successful compared to colleagues driving more expensive vehicles (Al Shishani, 2020). The same applies to clothing, footwear, and even watches. This is because the role a person occupies in society defines certain activities or behaviours expected of them based on their social environment. Each role is associated with a certain status that influences a person's purchasing decisions and behaviour. Such decisions show that people often choose products or services that not only meet their practical needs but also reflect their social status in society. Therefore, social factors influence consumer purchasing behaviour because, as social beings, people consciously or unconsciously adopt consumption patterns of their groups to gain approval or secure their status, prestige, and values, which in turn affects their purchasing choices.

Personal or demographic factors are among the most powerful tools for understanding and predicting consumer behaviour in various situations, including consumption. Some factors, such as age, gender, education, and wealth, are often self-evident and can be studied based on reliable statistical demographic data. Determining the average age of a specific market segment reveals that segment's interest in certain products. For example, the interest of young consumers in clothing or music products and services can be predicted quite accurately. While this data alone is insufficient, combining it with gender, education, wealth, family status, group role, etc., allows for more precise analysis and prediction of consumption patterns within certain groups. Another group of personal characteristics relates to an individual's lifestyle and personality. Lifestyle can be described as a certain behavioural tendency chosen by individuals influenced by numerous cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012). Personality traits such as self-confidence, leadership, sociability, independence, defensiveness, adaptability, or even aggressiveness can help better understand how a consumer chooses a particular product or brand (Testa, Sarti, Frey, 2019). People

may live different lifestyles (healthy living, snobbery, dedication to nature, art, or career, etc.), even when in similar economic, age, gender, and other circumstances. Since these factors vary depending on the individual, each consumer's behaviour is unique (Kavitha et al., 2023).

One of the most significant factors influencing their purchasing behaviour is age, as interests, tastes, and needs change at different life stages. Lifestyle, values, environment, activities, and hobbies evolve with age, affecting purchasing decisions (Al Shishani, 2020). For example, younger consumers are often more willing to experiment with new products and services, tend to buy products that emphasize their social status and connection with others, while older individuals may focus more on reliability, quality, and practicality, valuing stability and long-term use (Maniatis, 2016). Income also strongly influences consumer behaviour. Higher incomes provide more opportunities to choose expensive goods, while those with lower incomes often focus more on price and practicality, opting for more affordable and everyday-use products (Vega-Zamora et al., 2018). In reality, personal and demographic factors encompass many aspects and their combinations related to consumer behaviour. They are among the most variable factors. Marketing must constantly evaluate them to identify clear target audiences for sales and to continuously adapt supply in response to consumer behaviour.

Psychological factors. Human psychology is complex and difficult to predict, exerting a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Psychological factors mainly include four key types: motivation, perception, attitude (beliefs, opinions), and learning (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012; Kavitha et al., 2023).

Motivation is the driving force of an individual. Based on universal human needs, it leads to the setting of desires and goals, which together form the basis of human activity. Without motivation and corresponding actions, humanity would not survive (Melika Husić-Mehmedović, Slavo Kukić, Muris Čičić, 2012). A motive is a strong need that prompts a person to take certain actions. People constantly have numerous needs, which can be divided into *biological* and *psychological*. Biological needs may include hunger, discomfort, while psychological needs include recognition, belonging to a social group, or the pursuit of respect (Winegard, Boutwell, 2017). A need becomes a strong motive when it reaches a certain level of intensity.

Perception is the process of capturing and interpreting objects and events in the environment, and this process varies depending on the type and complexity of the product (Al Shishani, 2020). Perception is how we see the world around us or how individuals respond to environmental stimuli. The effectiveness of marketing actions, communication with consumers, and overall marketing success depend heavily on how we perceive reality (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012). This stage involves consumers' familiarity with information, knowledge about a particular product or service, interpretation of that information, and ultimately perception. This entire process is based on personal consumer experience, so even when exposed to the same or similar stimuli, information interpretation and response can differ, based on individual values, desires, and expectations. It is also important to recognize that consumers tend to process information through their senses, focusing on stimuli that most affect their emotional state. Thus, perception determines how a consumer evaluates a product and what priorities they choose.

Learning is the process by which consumers change their behaviour based on new information or experience. It is a crucial factor in shaping consumer behaviour (Al Shishani, 2020). Learning describes changes in behaviour resulting from experience and ongoing interactions with the environment. It is said that most human behaviour is learned through elements such as incentives, stimuli, signals, responses, and reinforcement. In terms of purchasing behaviour, the learning process determines which products will be chosen in the future. On one hand, forming an attitude requires going through a learning process, which depends on many elements and the processing and acquisition of knowledge from environmental features (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012). On the other hand, through learning, individuals develop their attitudes (beliefs, opinions), which later strongly influence their purchasing behaviour.

Attitude (belief, opinion) expresses an individual's relationship with their environment, objects, phenomena, ideas, problems, etc. (Simanavičienė, Navikaitė-Varanavičienė, 2019). The attitude construct plays a central role in consumer behaviour theories and research. This construct, especially the attitude expectations and value model, offers an alternative to relying solely on revealed preferences (Ajzen, 2018). According to Zikienė and Brazinskaitė (2012), attitude is an individual interpretation that is difficult to change. It is divided into *positive* and *negative* regarding a particular object (Zikienė and Brazinskaitė, 2012; Simanavičienė, Navikaitė-Varanavičienė, 2019; Zikienė, 2010), depending on the feelings experienced by the consumer in response to certain products (services). For example, packaging a small product in a large, prominent package creates the impression that the product is more substantial and valuable, but it can also lead to negative experiences. It has been found that deceptive packaging sizes create negative consumer experiences, forming a negative attitude towards such packaging, which consumers may apply not only to that brand but also to similar food products with comparable packaging (Wilkins, Beckenuyte, Butt, 2016).

Due to increasing product offerings, consumers find it more difficult to choose, requiring more time to make decisions, and sometimes an excess of options leads to irrational choices. Therefore, it is important to understand what

factors shape consumer attitudes and influence their purchase intentions (Clement, Kristensen, Gronhaug, 2012). Attitudes consist of three components: cognitive, behavioural, and emotional. The *cognitive* component provides knowledge and beliefs formed through consumer experience about a particular object; the *behavioural* component describes the intention to act towards the object - consisting of various consumer actions based on beliefs or actions that demonstrate the consumer's intention to buy; while the *emotional* component reflects the positive and negative emotions and reactions experienced by the consumer towards certain product and packaging elements (Zikienė, Brazinskaitė, 2012; Kotler and Keller, 2007; Pikturnienė and Kurtinaitienė, 2010). Influencing one of these components can affect the consumer's attitude and encourage desired behaviour, and changing one component can alter the overall attitude towards the product (Bakanauskas, Jonušytė, 2020).

Thus, consumer behaviour is important as a marketing discipline that studies, investigates, how and why consumers choose certain goods and services, and what factors determine their choices. After conducting relevant consumer behaviour research, producers and retailers can better position their products, target the right audience, and plan advertising campaigns. The process of choosing goods or services itself is complex, and involves both objective and subjective consumer perceptions, influenced by various external factors.

CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Under the dominance of classical economic theory, the consumer was considered a rational decision-maker. It was believed that this rational consumer could choose from all possible alternatives the one that would provide the greatest benefit for the limited resources they have, as consumers tend to maximize their satisfaction with limited resources. This led to the assumption that the consumer is a smart, rational, thinking, and problem-solving individual who collects and evaluates external information to make an informed decision. Economic theory ignored the social-psychological factors influencing human behaviour, as well as the impact of advertising on consumer choice (Bakanauskas, 2006). Research in the USA revealed a completely different nature of decision-making (Hanna and Wozniak, 2001). Consumer behaviour studies have shown a significant increase in purchases after visiting a single store. After conducting a similar study, it turned out that 75–80% of small goods are purchased in one store. In addition, it was also found that 20–25% of durable goods and clothing are impulsive and hasty, or there is a purchase opportunity that eliminates reflection and pre-purchase planning. It was also indicated that up to 50% of purchases in supermarkets and 33% in various assortment stores are naturally impulsive (Hanna and Wozniak, 2001). This showed that the buyer's choice to buy is not always a rational and thoughtful result. The conducted studies forced a change in the approach to the factors determining consumer decisions, therefore, in 1970–1980, most consumer behaviour studies were directed towards the consumer decision-making process.

The main reason for creating a separate marketing discipline in an attempt to better understand consumers is the need to apply new discoveries in practice. First of all, the development of a market strategy requires a thorough understanding of consumers. When creating and designing any marketing strategy, it is necessary to delve into their preferences, expectations, beliefs, information gathering, and a multitude of other consumer information processes. Finally, the study of consumer behaviour can help consumers discover and understand some elements of their behaviour, which can lead to more efficient consumption and better satisfaction of needs in a more rational way and greater consumer control.

Every day, a person makes many decisions, including the decision to buy and what to buy. Therefore, a consumer decision is a process of certain actions, when a consumer chooses a product that can help solve a problem or satisfy an emerging need, in other words, a purchase is considered a problem-solving activity or an exchange process, during which both the buyer and the seller evaluate the compromises required to satisfy their needs and desires (Urbanskienė, 2000; Bakanauskas, 2006; Jiang et al., 2023). The purchase decision is influenced by various consumption-related behaviours, including psychological, physiological, and other essential activities that motivate consumers to act (Chowdhury, 2019). And the purchase is only the end of a long and complex process called the decision-making process to buy that took place in the buyer's mind. Its duration can take from a few seconds to several months. The decision to buy is a complex process because consumers behave irrationally in certain situations (Vlahna et al., 2021). It is believed that the decision-making process to buy consists of five stages: 1) problem recognition; 2) information search; 3) evaluation of alternatives; 4) purchase decision; 5) post-purchase behaviour (Akhter & Nur-Al-Ahad, 2021; Ali et al., 2022; Qazzafi, 2019; Santos and Goncalves, 2022).

A decision can mean a choice between two or more alternatives, but, despite the abundance of choices, the consumer usually considers a choice from two options, rejecting all others without further consideration. This is a process that requires different levels of involvement from decision-makers. Depending on the level of involvement, three main levels of consumer decision-making are distinguished: limited, extended, and habitual (routine) problem-solving (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012; Urbanskienė et al., 2000). The latter is quite common in the life of every consumer. The decision-maker, first, can rely on what they already know about the product without looking for any additional

information. Such decisions do not require special reflection, usually in this case, products are bought often and cheap (e.g., bread, shampoo, etc.) and those that are needed here and now (e.g., refilling the car's fuel tank). *Limited problem-solving* is a more complex level of decision-making compared to habitual behaviour. It can be expected in cases where consumers have established criteria for evaluating a product category and brand, but do not have a specific preference for a brand within the group. It is then that consumers need additional information to make a purchase decision, to recognize subtle differences between existing brands (e.g., buying shoes). *Extended problem-solving* is undoubtedly the most complex level of decision-making. The premise of the purchase decision is a wealth of information that needs to be collected in advance to create criteria or narrow down the choice to a small number to be considered. In other words, it is a process where an individual needs a lot of time to decide due to the complexity of the perceived consequences of the decision (Pickton, 2001). Making such decisions involves a high degree of risk, as they are associated with large financial commitments (e.g., buying a house), social risk (e.g., buying a gift), increased risk of personal dissatisfaction (e.g., interior design) (Bakanauskas, 2006). If the decision is irreversible and can have serious consequences, greater accuracy, reduced negative emotions, and easier justification will most likely be the most important. High-risk decision areas are important, new areas of application for our system, as the relevant decisions are characterized not only by the desire to make accurate decisions, but also by cognitive decision difficulties, emotionally charged compromises, and the need for justification.

CONSUMER MOTIVATION

Identifying the reasons for purchasing a product is an important step towards accurately meeting the needs and desires of consumers. A motive is a strong and constant internal **stimulus** that underlies behaviour. Stimuli arise from a person's environment and cause arousal. Physiological and emotional stimuli have been distinguished since ancient times. *Physiological stimuli* – stomach contractions, fluctuations in blood sugar levels, changes in body temperature, the release of sex hormones – can cause arousal. It can also be caused by *emotional stimuli*. And fantasy can stimulate secret needs, as well as the limitation of their freedom of choice causes arousal in individuals. In addition, arousal can be caused by various environmental factors – *smells, advertisements, packaging, billboards and price discounts*. Accordingly, the advertising of products is also oriented, which must perform two functions: to arouse the consumer's desire for a certain product category and to clearly direct the consumer to its purchase (Bakanauskas, 2006).

Motivation is one of the main factors characterizing consumer behaviour. Everything that is done is conditioned by some motives or goals. Motivation is the cause of behaviour. A motive is a construct that represents an imperceptible internal force that stimulates and compels action and gives it a certain direction. A motive is the reason why an individual does something. The concepts of *need* and *motivation* are often used interchangeably. This is because when a consumer feels a gap between the desired state and their current actual state, the need is recognized and experienced as a driving state (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). *Need* is the first element in the motivational chain, and therefore a prerequisite for others. In other words, without it, there are no motives or motivation to achieve goals (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012). Needs and motives determine what consumers perceive as important, as well as their feelings and emotions. For example, a consumer who feels hungry is motivated to satisfy this need, will consider food and advertising about food as personally important, will experience negative emotions before eating, and positive emotions after eating (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). Thus, motivation is a state when a person's energy is mobilized and directed towards an external goal; a driving force that encourages an individual to act. The source of this force is a state of tension, because a certain need is not satisfied, and the way to reduce tension is to act and satisfy the need (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012). And *need* is the main force that motivates a person to act. Needs are usually physiological and acquired. *Physiological needs* are necessary for a person to survive, be healthy, and develop normally. These are the needs for food, drink, shelter, sex and others. *Acquired needs* are learned and conditioned by relationships with other individuals in the environment in which we grew up. These are the needs for prestige, power, status, etc.

Scientists are trying to understand the **motives** that influence human behaviour. Motives are the result of the interaction of psychological and physiological processes in a person, the totality of internal factors that encourage a person to act and direct and control that activity. They are important for consumer behaviour because they enable revealing the external results of these internal processes and to answer the question why the behaviour of people, individuals and groups in the markets takes the form it does (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012). A motive is an internal state arising from an imbalance in biological or psychological equilibrium. When this balance is disturbed, motives stimulate the individual to restore the previous balance. Based on this concept, specialists work to create states of tension for consumers in order to offer products that would help restore the resulting imbalance, yet the tension created must not be too great. This tactic is popular and used in almost 15 percent of TV commercials. For example, insurance commercials use this tension to stimulate interest in health, life, and home insurance, since insurance reduces the fear of suffering from an accident (Bakanauskas, 2006).

Motives can be divided into *rational* and *emotional*. *Rational* ones are caused through reason and logic. They emphasize objective, practical goals – economy, duration, quality and dependence. Rationality-oriented advertising tries to form a convincing and valuable attitude by providing relevant information without any hints or clever tricks. *Emotional* motives are based on subjective criteria, their origin is a person's feelings, impulsiveness or irrational actions (Bakanauskas, 2006). When we buy under the influence of emotional motives, purchases are more out of whim than out of practical need. According to Holbrook and Hirschamn (1982), emotional consumption is based on fantasy, feelings and the joy of acquisition. Most emotional motives are related to an individual's social and aesthetic needs and self-image, with status in society, motives of belonging, beauty, honour, uniqueness and pleasure (Bakanauskas, 2006; cf. Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, Čičič, 2012).

Conscious (open) and *unconscious* (hidden) motives can be distinguished. In most cases, the consumer's motives are conscious and the reasons for the behaviour are clear. If the consumer knows his motives, he does not need to be aroused. Various reasons can lead to unconscious motivation, especially if the needs are so unimportant that he does not even know them. In addition, needs can be suppressed. Since unconscious motives are secret and unknown to the consumer, the consumer must be shown by advertising (Bakanauskas, 2006). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) accordingly distinguish between manifest and latent motives. Manifest are known and freely recognized motives that correspond to the prevailing value system in society, they are more likely than motives that contradict such values. Motives unknown to the consumer or not recognized by him are called latent motives (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010).

In addition, motives can *positively* or *negatively* affect people's behaviour. Positive influence leads people to a goal. For example, supplements are used to get the body the required number of vitamins. Negative influence directs people away from unfavourable conditions. For example, a mouthwash is used to avoid bad breath. Although advertising is usually used to create a positive direction of influence, sometimes negative influence, such as fear or guilt, is used to get the desired result (Bakanauskas, 2006).

Motives undoubtedly play an important role as a variable determining consumer behaviour. However, the **goal** is also important in the motivational chain. It is a specific external stimulator that acts as a guide in a person's attempts to satisfy needs, in other words, it is the result of motivated behaviour (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). The consumer is motivated by the **need** to be satisfied and achieve goals. The desired result of motivation is the goal. And the individual's choice of goals depends on several factors that define the person or situation at the time the need arises. A person's physical, financial or emotional state determines the choice of goal. Cultural values and norms also determine the choice of goals (Bakanauskas, 2006). Thus, companies adapt to the individual goals of consumers, which are structured and adapted to the dominant cultural norms and values, as well as self-perception.

Consumer behaviour is influenced by **needs**, which affect people according to a certain hierarchy. In this case, many mention Abraham Maslow's theory, who hypothesized that human needs are the main motive for behaviour (1954) and that people's needs are arranged in a clear order. For higher needs to arise, lower ones must be completely satisfied. If the lower needs are not completely satisfied, they dominate human behaviour. In other words, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a macro-theory designed to explain most human behaviour in general terms. However, the main problem with Maslow's hierarchy is that it cannot be tested empirically – it is impossible to empirically obtain reliable indicators that would show how much one need must be satisfied before another is realized. It would probably be extremely difficult to do this, since each person is individual and the level of satisfaction of each need would also be of different levels. Despite this problem, Maslow's hierarchy of motives is often used in marketing. This is confirmed by two facts. On the one hand, mass consumption products often meet different levels of needs. On the other hand, advertising can emphasize different levels of motives or needs (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Scientists Hawkins and Mothersbaugh even compiled a certain classification of human needs and their product equivalents. According to them, the basic – physiological – human needs include food, water, sleep and, in part, sex – physiological motives. In marketing, they are satisfied by healthy food products, medicines, sports drinks, low-cholesterol food products and exercise equipment. The physiological needs are followed by safety needs – these are manifestations of physical safety and protection, stability, a familiar environment, etc. safety needs. This group includes smoke detectors, preventive medicines, insurance, pension investments, seat belts, burglar alarms and protective sunscreens, etc. Social needs occupy the middle of Maslow's pyramid. These are the needs of love and emotional connections, attachment and recognition. Products that help to realize them are personal care, food, entertainment, clothing, etc. Needs for respect and self-esteem – status, advantage, self-esteem and prestige – are related to a person's feelings of usefulness and achievement. Clothing, furniture, alcoholic beverages, hobbies, shops, cars, etc. are associated with them. And the last need is self-realization. It includes the desire to realize oneself, to become everything that a person can be. This part of the pyramid includes education, hobbies, sports, some vacations, gourmet food, museums (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). This confirms that it is not in vain that Maslow's theory is often considered the basis for market segmentation and product placement. However, it is important to remember that any consumption behaviour can satisfy more than one need. Also, the same consumption behaviour can satisfy different needs at different times.

In addition to Maslow's famous theory and classification of needs, in the scientific literature one can find other scientists' theories of human needs and their corresponding classifications. One of them is the classification system created by McGuire, in which various theories are divided into 16 categories. This system helps marketing specialists to identify motives that may be related to various consumption situations. McGuire first divided the motives into cognitive and affective, into those oriented towards maintaining the status quo or towards growth, according to the source and purpose of the motive and internal and new external relationships with the environment. Cognitive motives are oriented towards a person's need to adaptively orient themselves in the environment and seek a sense of meaning (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010).

To explain consumer behaviour, McClelland's theory of acquired needs is often used, which is based on the hypothesis that three types of acquired needs are important for human motivation:

- The need to achieve something, characteristic of people who want to be successful and take responsibility for solving problems.
- The need to belong is characteristic of people who are more oriented towards communication than success.
- The need to control or acquire and consolidate control over others can be expressed in two forms: positive, which results in persuasive and inspiring power, and negative, which leads to the desire to dominate and subjugate others.

Modern theories have appeared recently. One of them states that all motives can be divided into two groups: *social* and *non-social*. Social motives are characterized by an orientation towards other people. Their satisfaction, or rather, means that products or services have been approved by the group in some way. Such approval, for example, is characteristic of youth fashion and sports goods, adult clothing, the choice of drinks or restaurants, etc. Non-social motives, related to needs that are satisfied regardless of any external influence, in isolation. The needs to sleep, hear the news, etc. are a classic example of such needs.

The second approach to the classification of motives distinguishes three main groups of motives: functional, symbolic and hedonistic. The first, functional motives, are based on the search for products that could make a person or household functional. The motive to buy a larger car is the need for a larger trunk, the motive to buy a washing machine is related to the desire to save time, etc. In the context of symbolic motives, self-esteem, belonging, status, etc., there is always a need to achieve something. Finally, hedonistic motives are determined by the feeling of satisfaction now of satisfying the need. For example, the motives to play, learn or rest are marked by this feeling. However, from a marketing point of view, this fact is not the most relevant, but the fact that these types of motives influence the purchase and consumption of certain products and services (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Consumer behaviour reflects their actions, manifested in the search, purchase, use, evaluation and rejection of goods and services with which they hope to satisfy their needs. This means that consumers, when making a purchase decision, seek to make the best use of their resources, such as time, money and opportunities. When choosing to buy products, consumers are influenced by different motives, so each product or brand requires a different marketing and advertising strategy. Consumers do not buy products; they buy the satisfaction of motives or solutions to problems. So, they don't buy perfume, but romance, sexual appeal, sensual pleasure, sophistication, etc. Therefore, marketing specialists must discover the motives that their products and brands can satisfy and create marketing combinations based on these motives. However, marketing specialists rarely, or perhaps never, create a need, because motives are essentially determined by human genetics and experience. But they create demand – the desire to buy a particular product or service. It is caused by a need or motive, but demand is not a motive. For example, an advertisement for mouthwash may use the motive, suggesting that without mouthwash, people don't like you because your breath smells bad. This message links mouthwash to an existing need for affiliation, hoping to create brand demand. (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, 2010). Such information is important for creating marketing strategies, and consumer behaviour research provides important data for such strategies. Based on what consumers buy, why, when and how often they buy, as well as how often they use the purchased product or service, the marketing plans and advertising campaigns of a certain product can be directed.

ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Marketing Communication

One of the main reasons for analyzing consumer behaviour is to create an appropriate communication mix that reaches the target audience. In recent times, it is not enough just to create a quality product. Today's market peculiarities require not only setting an attractive price, organizing a suitable presentation method, and creating favourable service conditions, but also communicating with existing and potential consumers. Even the best product (brand) is worthless if consumers do not know about its existence, place of sale, price, features, etc. Therefore, marketing communication is

needed, which tells or shows consumers where, how, when, and why the product is used and for which consumers it is intended. Thus, *communication is part of marketing activities*, providing the consumer with information about a product or service. It is like the voice of the brand - one of the ways to establish a dialogue with consumers and maintain relationships with them (Bakanauskas, 2012). When communicating, the consumer is not only persuaded, informed, reminded, and influenced in their behaviour, but also brand loyalty is created (Madden, Perry, 2003).

Marketing communication is variously defined by different scientists. It is argued that it is a certain strategy (Zaušková et. al., 2015), that it must meet consumer expectations and needs to receive positive feedback from consumers (Hänninen and Karjaluoto, 2017; Zephaniah et. al., 2020), that it is carried out through various information tools or direct marketing tools, which encourage the purchase of specific products or services (Zephaniah et. al., 2020). *Marketing communication* is a process during which the target audience is reached, transmitting targeted information to it through selected communication channels at the right time. This process helps to create consumer awareness of the product or brand, inform about new products, and stimulate sales (Melovic et al., 2020). Prikhodko et al. (2019) claim that marketing communication can now be called the most effective marketing tool, including the practice of transmitting information necessary for the company to create a positive market image to actively generate demand for the offered products. Gomes and Knowles (2006) emphasize that it is not enough just to transmit information - you need to know what, how, to whom, and how many times to say. This is finding ways to influence the consumer's purchasing process and create needs (Clow, Baack, 2018). Pickton and Broderick (2011), Jasiukonytė and Tamulienė (2023) define *marketing communications* as the *totality* of all marketing communication elements, which helps the organization to communicate with its target audience in all possible ways. This is how the concept of *integrated marketing communications* arises. In modern society, it is necessary not only to attract customers through various marketing communication methods, but also to connect them with each other to achieve the best results. The focus is on the consumer and building relationships with them (Jasiukonytė and Tamulienė, 2023), without rejecting the factor of survival in today's difficult competition (Widjaja, 2022). In turn, integrated marketing communications are described as the organization's marketing communication, in which all elements are combined into a single and *coordinated* whole (information), which is conveyed to the target consumer. They include **advertising** and other marketing communication methods used by business and non-business organizations to change the behaviour of the target audience (consumers) (Bakanauskas, 2012; Melovic et al., 2020).

Marketing communication is the transmission of a sender's message to a recipient through selected media channels. Distribution channels, mass, selective, or exclusive, create an image of the product's availability to everyone or only to a selected market group. In addition to traditional message transmission channels, social media has become extremely popular. It is a very interactive platform that allows individuals and communities to share their content and present advertising (Felix et al., 2016; Moslehpour et al., 2018), and social networking sites (*Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter*) are a great way to create and develop your brand image (Marešova et al., 2020). Social networks have a huge influence at every stage of the consumer decision-making process to form a general opinion and attitude. In addition, social networks have opened the opportunity to communicate with their consumers here and now (Prabowo, et al., 2019; Wibowo et al., 2020). Considering the establishment of new media channels in the market, modern research empirically studies specific goals of social media marketing: promoting sales, increasing brand awareness, improving the product image, generating traffic on online platforms, reducing marketing costs, and activating user interactivity on platforms, encouraging consumers to publish or share content (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Bianchi and Andrews, 2015; Schultz and Peltier, 2013).

Social media can help consumers evaluate and recognize various products, brands, and services, and provide companies with various opportunities to use technology to attract an audience more efficiently and effectively. Social media has become a very effective platform for communicating with consumers. Through social media, brands can send more personal and direct messages to consumers and receive feedback in real-time (Syaputra, Azhar, 2025). By using social media platforms, consumers can get user experiences, product reviews, and expert opinions from other consumers, thus forming their perception and knowledge of the product. Consumer interaction and exchange of opinions on social media can influence consumer purchasing decisions. Commenting and sharing can shape consumers' social identity, i.e., connect and identify with a specific social group (Mu, 2022). When consumers see that the people in their social circle positively evaluate a product, they are more likely to buy it. Advertising, recommendations, and carefully planned marketing activities on social networks can stimulate consumer needs and desires, arouse their interest in specific products or brands, and thus encourage purchasing behaviour (Mu, 2023). Anwar and Iskandar (2020) revealed that consumer interaction with brands through social media can strengthen their relationship, which in turn increases the level of engagement. One of the factors that can encourage engagement is the success of delivering relevant advertising messages, arousing emotions, and personally satisfying consumer needs and desires. It has also been found that personalized advertising can strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to brands (Hidayat, 2020; Lestari, 2018). The importance of social media in creating consumer engagement is shown by a study that found that platforms such as Instagram, Facebook

and Twitter allow brands to use consumer data to create more personal and relevant advertisements. This increases consumer engagement because they believe that the advertisements presented are more in line with their interests and needs (Schouten et al., 2020). This study confirms that social media acts not only as a communication channel, but also as a platform supporting the personalization process in marketing. Accordingly, social media platforms show relevant products and services to users, considering their needs and interests, collecting consumer data, and providing personalized recommendations, thus influencing their purchase intentions. And when personalized advertising meets the needs and preferences of consumers, they feel more valued, which increases emotional attachment to the brand (Syaputra, Azhar, 2025; Keller, 2020). Adjusting advertising messages based on consumer behaviour data, such as previous search history or preferences, makes the advertising more attractive and increases consumer interaction, such as comments, likes, and content sharing (Smith and Johnson, 2021; Kim, 2022; Zhao and Wang, 2019). Personalized advertising increases the sense of relevance, which in turn encourages greater engagement compared to general advertising. Thus, social network marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase intentions, and consumer behaviour and attitudes on social media influence their purchase decisions. Social network marketing can stimulate consumer interest and desire to buy by increasing brand awareness (Mu, 2023). However, despite the potential of personalized advertising, challenges remain, especially related to the management of consumer personal data. The use of data to create personalized advertisements often raises concerns about privacy and data security. Some consumers feel uncomfortable with the data collection used to provide overly personalized advertisements, which in turn can damage their trust in brands and reduce engagement (Keller, 2020). Therefore, companies must be very careful when implementing personalized advertising, ensuring transparency in data use and giving consumers the opportunity to control the type of data collected and used in advertising (Syaputra, Azhar, 2025).

The obvious change in marketing communication reveals how constantly changing this area is and how it is necessary to re-evaluate, it would seem, already known factors, circumstances, which are related to consumer behaviour. The emerging new marketing communication channels force not only the nature of communication or its strategies to change, but also to re-recognize the consumer and their changing behaviour, which determines the changes in social communication.

The Concept of Advertising

One of the situational factors that can encourage the intention to purchase a new product is advertising (Basuroy et al., 2006). In fact, advertising, both traditional and online, is one of the most powerful tools to help overcome consumers' challenges in the intention to buy new products (Burmester et al., 2015; Gruner et al., 2019). Under active market conditions, where the production of goods and the provision of services increase much faster than the purchasing power of the population, advertising becomes one of the most important factors in attracting as many customers as possible, shaping their needs, and thus ensuring their loyalty. At the same time, **advertising** becomes one of the most effective means of competition against competing companies that offer similar services and pursue similar goals. It is related to shaping public opinion. Advertising can be defined as a short, emotionally coloured message aimed at potential buyers to encourage them to perform various actions related to the acquisition of goods or services. It is called a form of visual art, a form of social activity, a way of informing groups of real people (Jokubauskas, 2003). It is also referred to as a part of information or specific information (**Čereška**, 2004). Different aspects are emphasized depending on which scientific field provides the definition of the concept. It is evident that when examining the concept of advertising, it is noticeable that it intertwines aspects of marketing, communication, economics, sociology, psychology, and aesthetics, including human psychology, sociology, and social psychology (see Table 2).

Table 2. Definitions of Advertising

Kotler (1990)	Advertising is non-personal communication carried out through paid information channels, with a clearly specified source of funding.
Kotler and Keller (2007)	Advertising is the dissemination of paid, non-personal information about ideas, goods, or services to a selected audience.
Rosengren and Dahlen (2015)	Advertising is a non-personal, paid communication tool designed to shape and persuade consumers to purchase certain services or goods and is presented to consumers in certain ways.
Jonikas, 2013	Advertising is a certain form of communication aimed not only at conveying information but also at influencing the consumer, encouraging them to purchase a product or service, and eliciting the desired emotional reaction.
Rupšlaukis et al. (2019)	Advertising is information about products, their features, and forms of realization, as well as about organizations that produce or sell these goods and services.

Solomon et al. (2011)	Advertising is non-personal communication from a designated sender aimed at *informing*, *persuading*, and/or *reminding*.
Durmaz (2011)	Advertising is a persuasive message intended to inform the target audience about its products, services, or ideas.
Picktonas and Broderick (2011)	Advertising is the art of preparing the right message and presenting it correctly to the target audience.
Terkan (2014)	Advertising is a form of communicative activity. It is informational and persuasive in nature, capable of influencing consumers to buy goods or use services through new media channels.
Winston (2010)	Advertising is a non-personal communication tool about goods, services, ideas, organizations, people, and places, delivered through advertising carriers.
Vorobėjus (2004)	Advertising is a targeted use of information channels involving activities that enable informing residents about an organization, its offered goods, services, or ideas, through verbal or visual means, and encouraging purchase or consumption.
Čereška (2004)	Advertising is impersonal, paid, persuasive information disseminated through various means by a known advertiser about goods, services, or ideas to sell them.
Arenso et al. (2008)	Advertising is a non-personal transmission of information from identifiable advertisers, usually paid, often with the aim of persuading about products, services, or ideas through various media.
Smetonienė (2009)	Advertising is a communication tool aimed not only at transmitting desired information but also at influencing consumers, eliciting a probable emotional response.
Wellsas et al. (2006)	Advertising is paid communication from a specific identifiable client via mass media aimed at persuading or influencing the audience.
Percy (2008)	Advertising shapes consumer opinion or attitude towards a product or brand. The advertised product is often given an emotional tone that influences consumer behaviour in a way beneficial to the company.
Diržytė et al. (2012)	Advertising is any form of paid, impersonal message disseminated through mass communication channels, primarily aimed at informing people or influencing their choice of ideas, goods, or services.
Išoraitė (2013)	Advertising can disseminate information about a product or service, create and maintain a favourable image, shape the need for a product or service, promote loyalty to the product or service, and directly stimulate purchase (discounts, coupons, gifts).
Littlejohn and Foss (2011)	Advertising is a form of marketing communication used to encourage, persuade, or manipulate the audience (viewers, readers, or listeners, sometimes a specific group) to take or continue certain actions.

In marketing literature, the concept of advertising is explained differently, emphasizing certain features of advertising – its purpose, form of influence on consumers, characteristics, etc. The definitions of advertising presented are quite similar, highlighting that advertising is a form of communication, often mentioning compensation for advertising, clear advertisers of the promotional message. According to most authors, one of the main features of advertising is that it is impersonal. However, over time, new definitions should emerge that represent the currently widespread personalized advertising, which is clearly reflected in changes in marketing communication. Therefore, besides being often described as a tool for persuasion, suggestion, and information (Bakanauskas, 2012), its concept should also be expanded to include personalized advertising, a trend that has become increasingly prominent and a vital part of advertising in recent years. It is also important to remember that any form of advertising aims to sway or influence the consumer to decide or perform a certain action (Čereška, 2004). Therefore, the advertised product is often given an emotional tone that influences consumer behaviour in a way beneficial to the trader.

Advertising can be *rational* and *emotional*. In the first case, advertising informs, influences consciousness, argues, and seeks to persuade. *Rational advertising* uses texts, drawings, photos, and other information. Its style is often strict, constructive, convincing, prompting the buyer to decide quickly and purchase. *Emotional advertising* hints, advises, appeals to feelings, and subconscious motives. Its impact is associated with ideas, images, and specific environmental situations. Therefore, the main tools of such advertising are visuals and partly sounds. Its tone is playful, soft, and enticing. Various symbols are used to evoke feelings in buyers, creating emotional arousal.

Rational attractiveness refers to essential information about the advertised products. Such information is always relevant, for example, what materials or ingredients are used to create the products, or the benefits consumers could

gain from purchasing and using the products (Li and Cui, 2021). Rational attractiveness usually includes product specifications, features, and any information primarily aimed at creating an effective impression from the consumer's perspective (Dolan et al., 2019; Trivedi et al., 2019). The information presented about the advertised product is highly valuable for the advertising itself and is highly appreciated by consumers who want to assess their needs if they decide to purchase it (Zimand Sheiner et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that advertisements with high rational appeal are very likely to positively influence consumer reactions towards the product, especially in the context of live broadcasts (Ma et al., 2023). Rational attractiveness is effective in increasing consumers' purchase attitudes and intentions and influences purchase intent (Chan, 2025).

Emotional attractiveness is an appealing factor in advertising that connects the product emotionally with consumers to persuade them to buy the products (Wan Nawawi et al., 2022). It stimulates consumer emotions that subjectively align with their beliefs about the brand (Gahlot Sarkar et al., 2019). Advertisers often incorporate emotional appeal into their ads, trying to stimulate and evoke emotional reactions by presenting convincing messages about their products or brands. This persuasive act is usually implemented using verbal or non-verbal cues to maintain sufficient emotional responses (Gahlot Sarkar et al., 2019). It has been proven that emotional appeal as a stimulus has an indirect effect on consumers' purchase intentions. Various music, emotions, and stories in advertisements are effective in improving purchase intentions (Chan, 2025).

Thus, the purpose of advertising is both to inform consumers and to motivate them emotionally. In fact, these two factors usually go hand in hand, because when advertising products, it is important to both provide information about the product and evoke certain emotions, emotional impact, and a connection with the advertised product so that purchasing it also involves experiencing a certain feeling. Emotions and feelings are most often evoked using human senses, through which they are activated. Since people understand the world and their environment through senses, they can better evaluate and perceive the value and feeling of the advertised product, which will be awakened and recognized through their senses.

Advertising and Sensation

Motivation is an important element in evaluating consumer behaviour and the choice to buy a particular product or service. However, besides motivation, there are other human mental processes that influence the purchase. But these processes are more related to the influence of advertising on the consumer, as the knowledge of human mental processes creates the conditions for creating psychologically and commercially more effective advertising (**Čereška**, 2004). And this, in turn, stimulates certain consumer mental processes and awakens motives to purchase the advertised product or service. One of the main such processes is *sensations* and *emotions*.

A ***sensation*** is a primary cognitive process. It is one of the most important elements of cognitive influence on the consumer. They allow a person to recognize only the individual properties of an object, which directly affect the sensory organs. A person distinguishes sounds, colours, taste, smells, etc., in other words, visual, auditory, olfactory, taste, tactile, movement, organic, vibrational, balance, and other sensations are distinguished (Jokubauskas, 2003). It is important to remember that sensations are closely related to other mental processes – perception, emotions, memory. This is especially relevant when preparing advertisements, because if the advertised product can evoke positive or previously experienced pleasant emotions and could affect it through sensory sensations, in this case, all the information received would be easier to absorb and identify, thus arranging that information into appropriate categories. Lindstrom (2008) identified all this as an emotional sales proposition, when products are perceived as different primarily due to emotional attachment. The use of sensory marketing in various business sectors only confirms its relevance, when all five human senses can be used in marketing strategies and tactics (Kumar, 2014).

Since 2010, and perhaps today, sensory marketing has received the greatest interest from both a scientific and non-scientific point of view as one of the most effective strategies (Krishna and Schwarz, 2014). This tactic involves human senses to establish deeper emotional connections between brands, products, and consumers, ensuring that the interaction between the product/brand and the consumer is an increasingly unique and memorable experience (Krishna, 2011; Hulten, 2011). Thus, the sensory system is so important in advertising that a separate area of marketing is even distinguished - sensory marketing, which focuses on the consumer's senses (Krishna and Schwarz, 2014). Sensory marketing involves human senses to establish deeper emotional connections between brands, products, and consumers, ensuring that the interaction between the product/brand and the consumer is an increasingly unique and memorable experience (Krishna, 2011; Hulten, 2011). The beginnings of this type of marketing are recorded from ancient times, when people used various smells or eye-catching signs in the markets. Studies only began in the 1950s - after noticing that images are extremely significant in advertising, the power of colours and design elements were investigated (Vahid, Esmaeli, 2012). Over time, sound inserts and musical tracks began to be used in both stores and advertisements. In the 1960s, the sense of smell was considered the newest in the sensory system.

In other words, it has been noticed since ancient times that human behaviour can be manipulated by using sensory marketing. The consumer's decision can be influenced not by one sensory factor, but by the activity of the brain, which is responsible for human decision-making, and is affected by certain methods (Ramanathan, 2017). Through human senses, information is transmitted to the brain, and this affects the reflexes of the consumer's physical body and mind, causing a certain sensory experience (Hulten, 2017). In other words, the perception of sensations occurs when the processed information causes psychological phenomena (Yim, 2018) because not only the positioned product affects the consumer's consciousness, but also the psychological sensations arising from the subconscious, which have a strong influence on the decision to buy (Petit, 2019). Therefore, sensory marketing, according to Bočkova et al. (2021), is defined as a system of stimuli that determines a person's tendency to consume.

Despite the fact that, sensations cannot be transmitted through advertising dissemination tools, nevertheless, in plots and photos we most often see people who feel the pleasure of those changes. Analogously, consumers feel it by identifying with the characters in the advertisement. And if the advertisement makes the buyer look at the product, listen about its usability and other properties, taste it, touch it, then sensibilization takes place, the senses sharpen (**Čereška**, 2004).

Vision. Vision is a sensation that determines the first impression (Singh et al., 2020). A person receives the largest amount of information through vision (80-90 percent) (Jokubauskas, 2003; Berčik, 2016). Sight is considered the most powerful human sense, helping to notice changes, differences in the environment, or positioned products both in physical stores and in various types of advertisements. Visual information is best suited for transmission to a person, because people use the least energy to perceive the image. Advertising tools must attract attention unconsciously. At least one of the elements of advertising tools must be intended for that trick - a bright colour, an unusual shape or size of the first letter, the composition of the text, etc. (Jokubauskas, 2003). Sight is the most developed human sense (Ifeanyichukwu, 2018; Kumar, 2014; Hecht, 2009) and is very important because people store the images they see in their subconscious (Liu, 2019; Longley, 2019), which determine their sensory experience and are reproduced when certain associations arise. Therefore, the products seen in advertisements are unconsciously chosen when they come to the point of sale, although these consumers often deny that they watch advertisements and that they influence them.

Retailers have well analysed the importance and significance of the sense of sight, and successfully manipulate it by positioning products on shelves, choosing the lighting of shop windows, etc., and advertising specialists pay a lot of attention to the aspects of colours, fonts, shapes, compositions and other visual tools in advertisements. A person first sees images in advertisements, then reads the headlines, and only if the first two elements work and attract attention, then there is further interest in the product or service. With the emergence of many advertising transmission channels in the online space, the importance of visuals in them has only become more important. Visual images (stimuli) presented in the online environment should be considered the strongest and most effective, capable of influencing the consumer's perception and experience; as such it is necessary to use distinctive elements in the digital environment, such as logo, pictures, and videos related to the product so that the consumer processes the information provided under the influence of positive emotions, which strengthens the ability to better imagine the use of the product and eventually lead to a positive experience (Kaushik and Gokhale, 2021). The choice of colours is especially important, as it has been noticed that the colours used in the online environment affect the consumer's mood, and this also determines behaviour (Soars, 2009). The correct position of the product in a visual advertisement has an impact on the consumer's intention to buy (Elder and Krishna, 2012). And properly visually conveyed advertising offers affect the consumer's subconscious by encoding a positive impression and encourage the purchase of the product, while unattractive adverts lead to a negative attitude, when consumers unconsciously start criticizing the advertised product (Henderson et al., 2003).

Hearing. The sense of hearing is important for receiving and understanding auditory information. Various sounds attract attention; music evokes certain emotions - this is how advertisers try to captivate the consumer and listen to the advertising content of the product or service. Hearing, like sight, is a sense, the sounds and melody of which travel to the human subconscious and are reproduced when certain associations with a similar sound or melody arise. Hearing and the sounds and melodies heard through it provide information to a person, and are closely related to experiences (Wiklik, 2019), evoke sensations and emotions (Cuesta, 2018), memories (Jillson, 2014) and accordingly affect consumer behaviour (Mukherjee, 2007; Shifriss, 2019). Therefore, popular melodies that people have heard, are familiar, and most often evoke certain associations with certain feelings or life events are usually used. The musical background chosen in advertisements depends on the idea of the advertising message and the advertised product and the desired consumer reaction - a calm, slow melody can allow the consumer to relax and make decisions, a fast, resonant melody can evoke emotions, feelings, encourage the memorability of the product, etc. Although the sense of hearing is important in order to use in advertisements, it has been found that the sound marketing strategy affects only 11 percent of the consumer population (Berčik, 2016). Yet other studies reveal that consumers unconsciously react and make decisions under the influence of the musical background, melody or sound, so in surveys they most often indicate that the sound environment in advertisements does not affect them. However, other studies reveal that, in one way or another, musical sounds can have an impact on consumer

behaviour, which is stimulated by activating their emotions and moods (Cameron & Caza, 2004; Hulten et al., 2008).

Smell. Smells emotionally affect people by more than 75 percent, compared to other human senses (Kumar, 2014; Selwyn and Meakings, 2015). Although it is believed that smell evokes stronger memories and associations compared to the feelings evoked by hearing and sight, the process itself is similar - the smell reminds of certain events with which it is associated, in other words, the information related to it is also stored in the human subconscious and remembered when a certain stimulus appears. The human sense of smell directly affects the limbic system, which is responsible for emotions and memory, therefore, a smell, due to its intensity or aroma, can cause corresponding sensations. An appropriately chosen smell and aroma can activate positive consumer emotions, which can affect behaviour. People cannot block smells like other senses, so advertising and marketing specialists have long understood the benefits of this sense. Special individual perfumes are used for certain brands of cars, the smell of baked goods is emitted in shopping centres, in certain specialized stores, etc. Since the information received through smells remains in people's memory for a long time, the memories received with them can be reproduced even after a long time and cause corresponding associations.

Advertising and Affect

Emotions, feelings, and moods are attributed by some scientists to the general term *affect*. Based on the latest scientific discussions, the term affect is used to describe the internal state of feelings. As Russell and Carroll (1999) state: affect means real subjective *feelings* and *moods*. The theory of affect as information emphasizes the importance of emotions and affective states in making decisions (Schwarz 2012). It defines affect as a broad term that includes affective states such as emotions, moods, and physical experiences (Zanger, Meisner and Rauschnabel 2022). Thus, affect is an essential source of information for evaluation, and emotional expressions encourage the processes of drawing conclusions (Kapoor, 2025). Most consumer affect studies are associated with moods (Barone, Miniard and Romeo, 2000; Cohen and Andrade, 2004), although there is increasing interest in the study of specific emotions (e.g., Lerner, Small and Loewenstein, 2004; Raghunathan, Pham and Corfman, 2006). Moods are generally considered low-intensity and diffuse affective states that generally lack source identification. Moods have been shown to be easy to manipulate by exposure to emotionally charged stimuli such as music, videos, and images, or by recalling an emotionally engaging experience (Cohen and Andrade, 2004; Cohen, 2088). And emotions are much more differentiated and therefore provide more information related to attitude and behaviour (Cohen, 2006).

Emotions perform signalling, regulatory, and stimulating functions. Feelings are human experiences. They describe the consumer's attitude towards the needs, the satisfaction of which causes positive or negative emotions. They are closely related to each other and condition each other. By choosing an emotional appeal, the advertisement can evoke certain feelings in the consumer, and the feelings evoked form the attitude that has formed or create a new one towards a certain object (Bakanauskas, Jonušytė, 2020). Scientists have noticed since ancient times (Gilson, Berkman, 1987; Ambekar, 2009; Dens, Pelsmacker, 2010; Tedeschi et al., 2017; Manideep et al. 2020; Zheng, 2020) that advertisements that appeal to feelings are more effective, attract consumers' attention and remain in memory. Emotion-evoking and exciting images are used in advertisements, facilitating the transmission of certain information, and even the memorization of the advertisements themselves (Ruseckaitė and Bulotaitė, 2017). According to Sadeghi et al. (2015), emotions are the main element that influences human planning and decision-making.

In the scientific literature, emotions are most often grouped based on Robert Plutchik's wheel of emotions (Warpechowski, Orzeszek and Nielek, 2019). However, different scientists distinguish a different number of basic emotions. Some distinguish eight primary emotions: *fear, anticipation, anger, sadness, disgust, surprise, joy, and trust*, from which positive emotions (joy, trust, anticipation, and surprise) create a positive effect, and negative emotions (fear, anger, sadness, and disgust) - a negative effect (Bakanauskas, Jonušytė, 2020). Izard (1992) identified ten innate emotions that a person feels from birth: *joy, wonder, sadness, contempt, shame, fear, disgust, interest, guilt, anger, and excitement*. It is said that they are innate and evoke unique feelings that most strongly motivate a person to take action. Ellsworth and Scherer (2003) identified six basic emotions, which they also call social emotions, as they arise in certain social situations: *happiness, fear, sadness, anger, surprise (shock), and disgust*. However, it is noticeable that some emotions are repeated in all the classifications presented.

In marketing, ***emotion*** can be defined as a reaction to the environment, a state of impulse that precedes action (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, Čičič, 2012). Our behaviour is largely influenced by emotions - love, fear, anger, envy, loneliness, and pity. Emotions describe an individual's response to a specific stimulus in the environment, while mood causes a temporary state of feeling or way of thinking. Sellers often try to create a good mood for buyers, e.g., perfume stores are perfumed to create the appropriate mood (Bakanauskas, 2006). In current science, the functions of emotions, considered as a cause, consequence, intermediary, and moderator (Bagozzi et al., 1999), influence the evaluation and behaviour of all participants in the marketing ecosystem. Emotional convergence (Zablah et al., 2017) and technologies such as artificial intelligence seek to resonate with human emotions (Belk, 2022) and further increase the need for emotional understanding in the market.

Emotions, whether random or integral, arise from a variety of cognitive, physiological, and subjective experiences that are associated with the assessment of importance and resources, ultimately leading to regulatory or evaluative behaviour (Aeron and Rahman, 2025). Therefore, most products offer emotions as a benefit received: cars provide the opportunity to travel and prestige, drinks - to quench thirst and enjoy. Emotions are often used in the advertising of food, cosmetics, fashionable clothes, underwear, and non-alcoholic beverages (Bakanauskas, 2006). The emphasis is not on collecting information before the purchase, but on feelings or emotions: joy, fear, love, hope, 'magic'. More precisely, instead of looking for information to make the best decision, the logic is to follow the matrix: 'first', 'you deserve it', etc. For example, clothes are brought from famous brands not because they look better, but because of an implied better feeling due to the brand's status (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012).

So, everything that surrounds a person causes certain emotions. It is emotions that lead to the many emotional differences between potential consumers. Any advertising announcement is not only information, but also a certain number of emotions personally experienced by a person during the viewing time (Jokubauskas, 2003). The study of consumers' emotions or their emotional reaction to a product, service, idea or their advertisement constitutes the largest part of advertising research. It is believed that in order to achieve the meaningful psychological effect of advertising, it is necessary for it to evoke positive emotions in consumers. But there is also the opposite - a striking commercial effect of advertising is achieved, although it awakens unpleasant, annoying emotions, fear or anger (**Čereška**, 2004; Bakanauskas, Jonušytė, 2020).

Emotions used in advertisements are transmitted through appropriate *emotional appeals*. As Gilson and Berkman (1987) stated, emotional advertising appeals are creative advertising solutions that aim to stimulate consumers' motivation to buy and shape their attitude towards the advertised product or service. Kanuk et al. (2007) note that emotional advertising appeals are used to influence consumers emotionally, and thus more effectively attract consumers' attention, form an opinion about the product or service. An emotional appeal usually shows some event or life situation, thus creating a psychological attraction to the advertised product (Rizwan et al., 2013). For example, according to Pandos et al. (2013), emotional appeals are most often used in advertisements for personal care products (perfumes, fashion industry, wine, status products), because it is in these product categories that it is difficult for the consumer to rationally justify the advantages of the product. Emotional appeals are used to consciously activate human emotions, trying to appeal to the human subconscious, to values, beliefs, attitudes. For example, if the culture of a healthy lifestyle is prevalent in society, emotional appeals will appeal to the fear of living unhealthily, therefore, various ecological products, vegan products, sports clubs, etc. will be advertised, which should help to live healthily. Thus, emotional advertising appeals are used to provoke an emotional response, a faster consumer reaction, as a result of which they would give a response - take action (Čereška, 2004). Emotional appeals try to give the product special emotional associations that are not directly related to opinions about the benefits of the product. Most consumption decisions are made to experience positive emotions or to evoke them in others (Cavanaugh, Fredrickson, 2010). In contrast to the appeals discussed, rational appeals are also distinguished, based on the premise that consumers base their decision on logic or practical benefits (Pandos et al., 2013). Often, rational appeals show the rationality of the choice, highlighting the advantage of the product over competitors – the consumer is helped to understand what to buy and what not to buy (Rizwan et al., 2013). According to Pandos et al. (2013), the focus of rational appeals is the consumer's problem, and the benefits and properties of the product are presented to solve the problem and get the desired result. Rational appeals appeal to the audience's interests by showing that the product will bring benefits with its quality, economy, convenience, and function, i.e. objectively and logically testifies that the product can provide the desired benefits. The message provides information, for example, about the practicality, quality, performance, or economy of the item (Bakanauskas, 2012). According to Keshari and Jain (2014), rational appeals most often provide various facts and information about the product and its use, and they are also used when it is desired to change consumers' attitudes towards the brand. Which type of appeals to use when creating an advertisement for a particular product or service depends on the message sent by the advertising message to the consumer: whether it is desired to emphasize the benefits of the advertised product (service), the important properties of the product, to inform about the appearance of a new product, or whether it is desired to appeal to the emotional pleasure provided by the product (service), focusing more on the feelings that the consumer will experience after purchasing the product or service, the associations with the corresponding emotional experience. The intensity of the arousal of emotional experience increases people's direct and long-term memory of this experience, therefore, *emotional memory* is very important, which works according to the principle 'pleasant-unpleasant', 'liked-disliked' (Cohen et al., 2006). The impact of emotional memory on making a decision is much stronger than other types of memory, so many people consider the purchase as a way to experience pleasure, to feel better (Jokubauskas, 2003).

Social media now has a huge impact on the process of making consumer purchasing decisions. The term *emotional contagion* is also distinguished in the scientific literature. It includes the imitation of the *influencer's* emotional expressions and emotional reactions, as well as the social evaluation of the influencer's emotions as a reference point for the viewers'

emotional experience and interpersonal behaviour (Clément and Dukes, 2017). For example, the influencer's passion and excitement, demonstrated in his social media content, can cause the contagion of the emotions shown, which can further encourage engagement (Lee and Theokary 2021). A happy face of the influencer can evoke pleasant feelings in the viewer, which can lead to a favourable attitude towards the brand, greater engagement, and stronger purchase intentions (Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). This shows that consumers are very susceptible to the emotions of their favourite people and, on the principle of a mirror, accept the emotions conveyed by influencers, as if they are infected by them. The positive excitement of influencers influences the viewers' reactions to social media posts (Lee and Theokary, 2021) and positive intentions, which are transmitted through emotional contagion (Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). In addition, emotional contagion also has real principles of benefit for merchants - studies have shown that emotional contagion promotes positive results, e.g., increased customer engagement and purchase intentions (Shuqair et al., 2024). Thus, emotional contagion is significant in determining consumer behaviour. In the scientific literature, it is also possible to find the term *approval* related to emotional contagion. It is associated with the use of celebrities as an advertising attraction object to encourage and motivate consumer purchasing behaviour (Wan Nawawi et al., 2022). This is closely related to emotional contagion, because in both cases, consumers seek to identify with the people advertising the product (service), unconditionally believe the information they spread, and, most likely, think that by purchasing the product or service, they will get closer to them in terms of their status, image, and circumstances of life. Therefore, the use of approval is intended to direct the attention of consumers, especially celebrity followers, to products and motivate them to buy them, thus increasing sales (Ao et al., 2023; Chopra et al., 2021). Currently, peer approval is becoming increasingly popular, as social media is becoming the main advertising channel and is mostly dominated by young people (Roshdi et al., 2025). Therefore, the advertising strategy is also created accordingly, focusing on the individuals of this generation. Research by Młodkowska (2019) and Sheng et al. (2022) confirmed that video bloggers can influence consumer perception by providing video reviews of products that motivate consumers to purchase the advertised products.

Mood as a premise for decision-making can be defined as a feeling or mental state at a particular moment. Unlike emotions, which are always a reaction to the environment, mood is a state that already exists at the time an impulse is received from the environment. In addition, moods are states that tend to be long-lasting. Mood is an important variable in consumer behaviour. Mood determines when consumers intend to buy and where, in which store, in their city or outside of it, etc. All this can be considered a reason why sellers try to influence the mood of consumers. For example, they try to influence mood by decorating the exterior or interior of the building: colour combinations, shelf layout, etc. The overall atmosphere of the store is also important: the type of music, lighting, the behaviour of the sellers, etc. (Husič-Mehmedovič, Kukič, **Čičič**, 2012).

Thus, a person is not only a social but also an emotional personality, who, although imagining that they make decisions rationally, is nevertheless influenced by emotions, feelings, and mood in many cases. Therefore, advertisers are looking for their connections with the advertised product so that they can influence the consumer's attitude towards it accordingly. As can be seen, many factors work in a complex way, since emotions, feelings, and mood are rapidly changing, volatile factors, it is quite difficult to predict them, so several stimuli at the same time still achieve their goal. It must influence the consumer in such a way that they do not even feel a particular effect, and the act of choosing and buying is performed under the influence of positive emotions, so that they enjoy the result.

Elements of Advertising Communication Impact: Text, Image, Sound

Advertising influences the consumer, whether they like it or not. Good advertising knocks on the deepest corners of a person's soul, and sooner or later 'forces' them to purchase the advertised product (Jokubauskas, 2003). Advertising aims for the consumer to act in the way the advertiser desires. Advertising affects our thoughts and feelings, whether we want it or not (**Čereška**, 2004). Like any other act of speech, advertising primarily conveys information. As with any other communication act, it can be verbal or non-verbal: advertising transmits information through text, images, and sound. However, the goal of advertising, as previously mentioned, is not only to convey information, but also to influence the listener and elicit the desired emotional reaction (Smetonienė, 2009). When considering advertising as a communication process, it is impossible to distinguish when the image plays a greater role and when the text does. Word and image are two main sign systems, whose history dates to ancient times. The advantage of images is that they can show an object, while words can create abstractions (Smetonienė, 2009). An image allows for savings because it does not need to be retold or described in detail, and it can create additional meanings, present reflections, thoughts, the latest information, and save time. It is worth noting that the influence and role of sound are the hardest to evaluate. Although it is certainly undeniable, justifying its use in advertising with scientific research is perhaps the most difficult.

Advertising text. The most important message of the advertisement is the advertising text. Text is the main element of influence. Short and expressive language is easier to remember, and the brand name is reinforced in memory. Words

most often express feelings, thus capturing the feelings of the readers. Words also convey associations, attitudes, and ideas to the reader. For example, lipstick names like 'Eastern Peach', 'Calm Fire', 'Warm Coral' distinguish them from a multitude of similar products and give them appeal (Čereška, 2004; Pilelienė, 2015). The following ***verbal elements*** are distinguished: headline, subheadline, main text, slogan, explanations (Pilelienė, 2015; Župerka, 2008). ***Headlines*** play a significant role in the effectiveness of advertising texts. Their purpose is to attract the reader's attention so that they become interested in the advertising and read the entire text. It should be short (a statement of five to seven words) and psychologically effective. The headline is intended to convey the main idea of the advertisement. The headline should answer the consumer's question, "What's in it for me?" (Čereška, 2004; Pilelienė, 2015). The headline should lead to the subheadline, if necessary. Subheadlines, like headlines, should engage the consumer and encourage them to read the main advertising text. The ***main text*** presents the story of the product or service, showing the consumer how the product works, what feelings it evokes when used, and describing its benefits that the consumer will receive. It is important to encourage the consumer to act at the end: visit the website, buy products at a discount, etc. To make it easier for the reader, short sentences and paragraphs should be used. The benefits the consumer will gain from purchasing the product or service should be emphasized more than its features. Presenting a ***slogan*** in an advertisement increases the likelihood that the consumer will remember and distinguish the advertised brand from others. ***Explanations*** are short parts of the text around the visual element of the advertisement (Pilelienė et al., 2015). Ladd (2010) refers to a slogan as a composite element that includes the company's name, logo, and contact information.

Looking at the structure of the text itself, it is noteworthy that not only the structure is important but also what is presented in the content, the linguistic constructions and lexicon used, and how these tools are employed to attract attention. It is not enough just to write a text and think that it will interest the consumer. The text must act as an enticing message that not only encourages interest but also compels active action. Therefore, it is important to note that everything *new* in advertising texts influences the consumer, which is why many advertising texts start with statements like: *new, new prices, new formula, new collection*, etc. This creates admiration, entices with novelty, quality, and the fact that being among the first to buy and try new things is not only interesting but also a certain privilege and prestige.

One often debated and frequently not always recognized factor by consumers is the discounts and various lotteries offered. To prevent these from appearing too banal and obvious, certain lexical choices are used, such as *special price, holiday price, buy two get one free, gift with purchase*, etc., which unconsciously attract attention. Social psychologists refer to this as the '*bait method'.* Advertising texts that mention scientific experiments or proof that the product being promoted is very good can also be intriguing. Impressions are also created by numbers or mysterious product compositions – *impressive sounding names*: *e.g., 'contains nourishing ceramides'* (Smetonienė, 2009). If we analyse the lexicon of advertising texts more closely, we might notice that at first glance, seemingly solid and promising texts are merely collections of abstract phrases that say little. However, their connotative meaning is so pleasant to the eye and ear that consumers rarely perform linguistic analysis of texts; it is enough that these texts touch their emotional state and give the impression of a seemingly rational choice of products. Therefore, in advertising, certain so-called '*strong words'* can be distinguished, which the audience primarily notices*: secret, mystery, miracle, exclusive, special, success, etc.* Their semantic structure includes not only factual but also emotional information, creating an expressive impression. An important contribution to strengthening the impression is also the use of *euphemisms*. Therefore, advertisers offer not soap but fragrant freshness, not a trip but relaxation, not cosmetics but beauty. Things that could cause unpleasant sensations are softened – *sweating is called moisture, which causes discomfort, and toilet paper is called a gentle bath accessory*. There are also more words that seem significant at first glance but, upon closer examination, appear empty and meaningless — such words are called 'empty words' by advertising critics: *helps* (the most common), *possible*, *may be, refreshes, calms, cares, fights, creates a feeling*, etc. (Smetonienė, 2009). They not only impress the recipient but also allow advertisers to hedge against potential claims. For example, fights, but it's unclear if it will help; looks new but is not really new; will help you fall asleep, but you won't, it will only aid.

Thus, formulating a communication message is a *creative process*. Texts must be creative, interesting, useful to consumers to attract their attention, generate interest, and evoke desire and action (AIDA model). The main task of the message is to first ***attract attention***, then ***generate interest***, and finally ***stimulate the desire*** to buy—this is one of the most difficult tasks of a message. To communicate effectively, it is necessary to understand the consumer's mindset, behaviour, and how they make decisions. The message must convince the consumer that the product meets their needs and desires. And ultimately, ***to encourage action*** – this is the final task of a communication message, but it is also the most essential and important.

The impact of text on interactive internet platforms is also significant. Moreover, the internet features unique elements of advertising text construction, continuous generation of new texts, and storytelling. In the marketing context, storytelling is also widely used and studied as an effective tool for shaping consumer behaviour, brand building, and advertising. According to Milli (2023), storytelling can be used to encourage the audience to trust the organization

and to give clients the opportunity to learn about the company's values. Both verbal and visual narratives can create an emotional connection with consumers; strong brands tell compelling stories that evoke emotions and foster empathy because people tend to immerse themselves in stories (Milli, 2023).

Furthermore, online texts are important not only for what is visible to the consumer, but also for those that help distribute advertising via ***Google Ads*** or organically promote advertising banners. This influences consumer behaviour online. The clicking behaviour of consumers is also determined by how well the advertising matches the keyword or phrase entered in the search engine's search box. The better the advertising matches the keywords entered by consumers, the more likely they are to click on it, as they will evaluate it as the best match to their expectations for search results. The keyword or phrase used to encourage clicks can be incorporated into the headline, description, or website link (Jerath et al., 2014). The use of keywords not only in advertisement headlines but also in the visible link of the advertising is also seen as contributing to the impression that the advertisement better matches the entered keywords. Regarding the importance of the text itself in Google Ads search advertising, it should be noted that words like *'free'* / *'complimentary', 'cheaper', 'great'* / *'excellent', 'special', 'fantastic'*, etc., can motivate users to click on the ad. These words increase the attractiveness of the advertisement text and the likelihood of clicks. Another important aspect of the text is encouraging users to act, expressed through words like *'save'* / *'save now', 'buy'* / *'purchase', 'contact'* / *'get in touch', 'hurry'* / *'act now'*, etc. (Kim et al., 2014). An additional element that can motivate users to click on an advertisement is the brand name or website address mentioned in the advertisement (Jerath et al., 2014). Seeing either a recognizable brand or a link to a website increases consumer trust in the ad, especially if the brand and the website address in the advertising match.

Partly, another important element of the advertisement text is *humour*. It often works together with visual and video content and is closely related to it. Humour is considered one of the most convincing elements of advertising because consumers often prefer humorous messages over serious ones about the promoted products (Barry and Graca, 2018; Ren et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). Humour, as a unique and powerful form of emotional appeal, plays an important role in both advertising and influencer marketing. It is estimated that about a third (32%) of advertisements worldwide contain some form of humour (Jones, 2023). This, in turn, influences consumers' attitudes toward products and their intentions (Hornik et al., 2016; Walter et al., 2018). Brands that focus most on influencer-created humorous content in their social media strategies tend to be more successful, increasing the effectiveness of their messages (Ren et al., 2023). Recent studies have shown that humorous, story-based, collaborative content created by influencers and funny videos of product use enhance followers' emotional value and engagement (Barta et al., 2023; Ren et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024), and such content has a greater emotional impact (Barney and Jones, 2023; Kapoor, 2024).

Images. Until the mid-20th century, images in advertising were simple and less important than words. Today, the situation is different. We live in a world of striking and exciting images. Advertising presents us with visuals and makes them real. Advertising encourages extravagant expectations because it is more dramatic and vivid than reality (**Čereška**, 2004). In modern society, widespread visual communication means that consumers communicate non-verbally, often receiving information through images. Images contain encoded messages that influence consumers' consciousness and perceptions of certain products and benefits. Woodman-Burgh and Govan-Brace (2010) state that visual consumption defines the 21st century because consumers now consume images rather than products, and the primary visual presentation – appearance – determines their decision to purchase a desired product. Most consumers first notice an illustration or visual and only later read the title, then the rest of the advertising message. Therefore, it can be said that the visual message in advertising is the primary source that creates the value of the advertisement and the promoted product.

Thus, visual communication plays a crucial role in effectively conveying messages and emotions, creating an attractive experience for consumers, and establishing a connection. Visual communication includes many forms, such as graphic design, photography, animation, videos, fine arts, etc. (Milli, 2023). In the rapidly evolving digital communication context, trends in social media communication increasingly use innovative, less formal visual solutions: emoticons, animated images (Mladenovic, Koštiál, Ljepava, Častek, and Chawla, 2022). It is important to note that images cannot only convey emotions but also create stories. Using visual communication as a storytelling tool, narrative, evokes emotions and makes ideas easier to explain and leaves a stronger impression on the audience. Since storytelling emotionally and consciously involves recipients, they become more receptive to the narrative's claims (Yu, 2006). Visual stories, according to Nikulina et al. (2024), are processed differently than other storytelling methods because viewers tend to instantly reconstruct their meaning based on prior experience and imagination. Cakmak (2023) states that effective visual symbols and storytelling methods are used in visual campaigns to ensure that the target audience is not only informed but also motivated to act. He argues that people think narratively rather than argumentatively, so campaigns using visual stories are more effective. Visual elements have the power to evoke emotions and influence consumers' attitudes toward a brand, and experienced emotions can stimulate the reaction and behaviour of the target market. However, Zhao and Ji (2019) note that emotions can elicit different responses, so the message sender must understand what causes them and how to use them properly. Visual communication tools are widely used in advertising (Danaitis and Usovaitė, 2012),

and depending on their purpose, graphic design solutions, and the goal to attract consumers' attention, consciousness, and trigger certain behavioural aspects, they are associated with visual content.

During a study by Bakhshi et al. (2014) on the impact of visual elements on consumers, it was found that *photos showing a human face* attract more attention than those without. Pilarczyk and Kuniecki (2014) found that happy facial expressions promote trust in the brand, and when consumers see a sad face or emotion in a photo, they start feeling the same (emotional contagion). *Photos with richer colours or with filters* attract more attention than unedited ones (Bakhshi et al., 2014). The authors state that the connotative meaning of colours influences consumers' desire to share intriguing, impressive, and elegant images more than calm or relaxing ones. Ohman (2017) also contributed significantly by providing insights that *images depicting animals* are more liked because animals are associated with positive emotions. It is emphasized that cats, dogs, birds, and horses are the most used animals in advertising: dogs are mainly used to promote products or services for families, while horses are used to demonstrate strength and masculinity.

Regarding the influence of images on advertising communication, it is also necessary to mention the importance and influence of certain new marketing communication channels on consumer choice and behaviour. Ibrahim et al. (2015) introduced a concept of visually convincing website design, which reveals possible website design elements that motivate users to stay longer on the site. In their study, visual persuasion refers to any image or textual message that influences the initial impression of the user and thereby affects their motivation and behavioural intention. The study found that a website receives more positive feedback when it is visually attractive but could not confirm that visually convincing design influences perceived informativeness, convenience, and engagement with visual content. The authors describe this because of using templates in website creation, where websites have similar design features, and users do not feel a sense of uniqueness. Aljukhadar and Senecal (2017), analyzing e-commerce marketing strategies and consumer behaviour, found that videos improve perceived information quality, trust, and excitement among users who browse without a specific purchase goal. For users with specific goals, searching for products, both traditional text and video marketing had an equal impact on their satisfaction. These types of studies are of particular interest to neuromarketing, which analyses consumers' attention focus when browsing online stores, reading menus, arranging products on shelves, and positioning products in stores. Based on this, advertising communication strategies are developed, and visuals are created. The display of images in advertisements influences consumers' memory and attitude because visual information stimulates better recall and leads to greater engagement and decision-making to purchase the advertised product or service (Lin et al., 2012).

Regarding the influence and significance of images, it is important to separately mention the use of colours in advertising. This is one of the most important codes through which advertising conveys information and influences consumers emotionally and psychologically. Colour generally increases the informational value of the image, making it appear more natural and closer to reality (Čereška, 2004). Colour plays a vital role in developing marketing or advertising campaigns, as it's what consumers notice first - so choosing the right colour can effectively convey targeted information. Each colour has its own meanings, associations with objects, real-life situations, emotions, and even moods. Colours are a form of non-verbal communication associated with certain symbols and meanings encoded in the human subconscious, so it is important to know how certain colour associations are perceived by consumers when creating advertising. It should be noted that colour associations formed early in human history, where each colour had its assigned meaning, and simply looking at a certain coloured object would evoke corresponding symbols in the subconscious (Luscher and Scott, 2008).

Colour is an extremely unusual phenomenon. Physiologists study the effect of colour on human eyes and brains and investigate their anatomical connection. Psychologists are interested in the effect of colour on our psyche. (Čereška, 2004). It is observed that consumers tend to spend more money in a blue environment (Valdez and Mehrabian, 1994) or a green environment (Arnould, 2004). It is not recommended to use grey colour in advertising. In addition, colours can cause general associations together with other advertising elements. For example, colour is often associated with taste. It is believed that the colour orange stimulates appetite, and when looking at the colour yellow we can feel sourness, because an association with a lemon arises. In ice cream advertisements, the product is usually white, even slightly bluish, similar to real ice cream - to emphasize the idea that ice cream is cold and refreshing. The impression of the weight or lightness of the object being depicted also depends on the colour. For example, lighter boxes look lighter than dark colours. The motif of colour and smell is very important in perfume advertisements. Form is not related to colour, but colour gives emotionality to the form, can convey the desired mood. This shows that colours are significant in creating advertisements, as they convey a certain emotion to consumers and accordingly determine their involvement in the brand (Ohman, 2017), encourages the consumer to act (Domiszewska, 2023). It has also been established that the colour range of video content affects the popularity of the brand's content on social media and, at the same time, determines consumer engagement (Zailskaitė-Jakštė et al., 2017). Based on psychological theories, it is stated that colours attract attention, convey specific meanings, communicate information, awaken certain emotions and motivations. In marketing, colours determine consumers' attitudes, feelings and emotional reactions to product packaging, advertise-

ments, logos, etc. In this way, colours also affect the consumer's purchasing decision. In a virtual environment, certain colours used can affect the time spent on a website and the memorization of elements.

Consumer engagement and the decision to buy are also determined by the visual expression of the ***packaging***. When choosing food products at the point of sale, consumers usually evaluate them according to their visual appearance, which is determined by a large supply of similar goods, which complicates the consumer's search and selection process. Effective packaging guarantees that the product will be noticed by the consumer, it will encourage interest, purchase intention and evoke positive emotions and good impressions (Kotler, Keller, 2007; Becker et al., 2011). According to Vilnai-Yavetz and Koren (2013), the packaging and its constituent elements create relationships with consumers, conveying to them functional and aesthetic information about the packaged food, consumers often identify the packaging with the product itself. Becker et al. (2016), Simmonds and Spence (2017) note that packaging, of different elements, affects people's psychology and conveys a certain perception of the food products being purchased. The photos used on the packaging help to better imagine the taste, smell or even the feeling of eating the product (Becker et al., 2011; Holmes, Pawan, 2012). Photos and their colours, according to Clement (2013), Wilkins, Backenuyte and Butt (2016), help to understand tastes (sweetness, spiciness, saltiness, etc.) faster, to evaluate the ecological, naturalness and healthiness of food. According to Clement et al. (2007), more than 70 percent of the decision to purchase a product is made right at the point of purchase, in front of the shelves. One visit to the store usually lasts about twenty minutes, and the decision-making process takes an average of twelve seconds, so the visual appeal of the packaging must be as effective as possible in a short time. The product packaging can determine the consumer's choice, influence decision-making process and purchasing behaviour (Tassawa & Khumhome, 2023). Visual packaging elements create a brand image and can directly affect the consumer's decision to buy (Wang et al., 2023) and affecting the consumer's emotions (Lopez-Mas et al., 2022).

Sound. This is especially effective in radio, TV and cinema advertisements, as well as in social media advertisements. The timbre of the voice, the manner of speech, the same words spoken quickly and loudly or quietly and emotionally cause opposite associations and create a completely different effect. A gentle and friendly tone is more pleasant to listen to (Čereška, 2004). Properly selected music helps to better remember the advertised object. The advertising effect of music has not yet been fully investigated; it cannot be precisely defined. Music not only conveys certain feelings but also evokes them.

Scientists have studied that the main properties of sound that determine the success of an advertisement are tempo (fast, slow) and tonality (high, low). Also, one of the important factors is whether people are familiar with these sounds from before (Shevy and Hung, 2013). Different tonalities or melodies can evoke different emotions: short and sharp melodies evoke feelings of happiness and excitement, while longer and softer ones evoke feelings of sadness and melancholy. And the ambient noise of a medium level (70 dB) in the environment increases the probability of purchasing new products, compared to the low level (50 dB) ambient noise (Mehta et al., 2012).

The results of other scientific studies show that the participants' preferences for products and the desire to buy depend on the frequency of the music. Participants who listened to high-frequency music rated the products more favourably, and their desire to buy was greater than that of participants who listened to low-frequency music. One possible explanation for this may be that high-frequency music tends to be perceived as louder (Mcbeath and Neuhoff, 2002), and loud music tends to increase excitement (Morrison et al., 2011; Welch and Fremaux, 2017). In addition, although this was not the focus, another noteworthy observation related to the participants' retrospective perception of answers emerged. When asked about the main criterion that could have influenced their answers, no participant indicated music as a decisive factor. This discovery was not surprising. However, even when directly asked about the possible influence of music on their answers, the results showed that the participants thought that music had almost no influence, if any. In summary, the results of this study highlight not only the possible influence of music frequency on consumers' emotional and behavioural reactions, but also the extent to which this influence can manifest itself mostly beyond their consciousness.

Speaking of perception, another part of sound frequency research was conducted in the context of sensory integration, especially in the field of taste perception and visual attention, where the integration of sound modality (i.e., frequency) with visual and taste modalities was examined. For example, in the context of taste, Zampini and Spence (2004) showed that by simply manipulating the frequency of the sound feedback generated by chewing, the perceived crispness and freshness of crisps can be improved. In the context of vision, Gallace and Spence (2006) found that if the frequency of the sound stimulus matched the size of the visual stimulus, participants were able to quickly and accurately assess size differences.

Based on these and similar findings about the nature of multi-sensory experience, marketing researchers have begun to explore the impact this interaction can have on consumer decisions (Krishna, 2012). In this regard, one of the first marketing studies, which focused on sound frequency, was conducted by Lowe and Haws (2017). Based on a similar

intermodal relationship and the basis of semantic compatibility, Sunaga (2018) found that music frequency (high versus low) can be used to adjust consumers' perception of psychological distance in marketing communication, which affects choice and willingness to pay. However, these studies are quite new and rare in the marketing literature.

Clearly, sounds do not have such an obvious effect as colours or forms and allow the person to create their own images. However, if a certain sound is used, which is clearly associated with certain images, it can be said that a controlled effect is created, because, when a person hears a sound, the imagination is limited by the image already created. The sounds we hear and associate with a certain brand, its advertising, inevitably affect our perception of the product. So, we can say that music is one of the parts of the brand image. It not only creates additional, aesthetic value for the brand, but at the same time can help increase brand recognition, emphasizing the attractiveness of the brand. Properly selected music helps to better remember the advertised object. In addition, music has a strange power to penetrate very deeply into people's subconscious, to stimulate imagination (Bakanauskas, 2012). In general, music touches consumers' lives at various moments (Kellaris and Kent, 1993; Rentfrow and Gosling, 2003). Sellers often use it as a weapon of influence (Kellaris and Cox, 1989). Music, a frequent feature of radio, television and internet advertising and an omnipresent feature of the retail environment, which consumers encounter when watching media, shopping, waiting for service, boarding planes, waiting for a phone call and in many other situations. It is nearby but so integrated into the general environment that the consumer does not feel its effect, perhaps does not even hear it, but the ability of music to act subconsciously determines its power and effect. It has close links with the emotional state of consumers and determines the emergence of certain feelings and moods. It is obvious that music can evoke feelings of pleasure (Sweeney and Wyber, 2002) and convey the intended emotions, such as anger, sadness, happiness and fear (Juslin, 2000). It can reduce stress and promote a feeling of relaxation in a stressful waiting situation (Lee, Henderson and Shum, 2004; Tansik and Routhieaux, 1999). Pleasant feelings caused by music can affect cognitive activity (Chebat, & Vaillant, 2001), encourage a positive evaluation of the overall waiting situation experience (Cameron, Baker, Peterson, & Braunsberger, 2003), although reactions can vary greatly depending on the appropriateness of the music (Vermeule, Beukeboom, 2016; North MacKenzie, Law, & Hargreaves, 2004). When the goal is persuasion, not memorization, the use of popular hits can increase message acceptance by attracting attention, reducing the ability to argue, and promoting a less critical mindset. This means that advertisements that play well-known popular music may seem more like entertainment than an attempt to influence. Therefore, such advertisements can be treated less critically. It has also been found that background music affects the desire to spend and the intention to buy (North and Hargreaves, 1998). For example, north et al. (2000) observed links between how much people like the style of music played in a bar and a bank (e.g., classical, easy listening, pop), the perception of the atmosphere, and the desire to spend.

One of the most interesting discoveries related to music is the obvious ability of music to contract or expand subjective time, compared to objective, clock time. This has many applications in shaping consumers' time experience as they shop, browse the internet, wait for service, or stand in queues at cash registers and other queues (Kellaris, 2018). Thus, as A. Pister states, in addition to the emitted immanent, purely musical information - melody, harmony, rhythm, form, texture, etc., - the art of sound is able to encode certain non-musical meanings by means of musical expression (2005).

The relationship between text, image and sound. The ability to positively and appropriately combine visual, verbal, and textual intensity manifests itself in the most effective emotional response, which is crucial for selling products or services (Bezijian, Calder, Iacobucci, 2008). Since each advertisement is a unique creative work, its overall appeal and impact are revealed not by individual components but by the whole (Dobržinskienė, 2012). However, scientific literature often examines and analyses only two components: image and text, text and sound, or image and sound. Less attention is given to the analysis of sound in advertisements. Studying the impact of sound is complicated by methodological research questions and challenges. This issue also pertains to analyzing all three main elements of advertising simultaneously – what methodology to base their interaction on, which influences consumer behaviour and decision-making regarding purchasing advertised products or services. Despite the complexity, some aspects are linked to consumer choice and attitude in individual studies (Heaton, Paris, 2006; Murray, 2020; Saputra & Santoso, 2021). On the other hand, the comprehensive multimodal influence of advertising text, image, and sound is felt only by the consumer, but when creating an advertising message, these elements can be linked by assessing each one's potential impact separately. The most important thing is that these elements collectively in one advertising message carry aesthetic, informational, emotional, or even psychological effects on the consumer. The latter manifests as appeals to people's weaknesses and desires (Rajasri et al., 2024), driven by stimuli, an endless human need for various solutions, advice, miraculous products, or objects. And these hopeful (or promising) solutions are provided by advertising (Džanič, 2013). Advertising professionals are left to discover hidden signals and signs that influence consumer attitudes and decisions and accordingly develop advertisements. It is very important to remember that not only the combinations of advertising elements determine the impact of advertising messages on consumer behaviour, but also their originality, novelty, relevance, usefulness, and the creativity that links them. Studies have shown that advertising creativity cannot be separated from two main elements

– novelty and relevance (Stathopoulou et al., 2017). Novelty includes originality and uniqueness (Rosengren et al., 2020), while relevance pertains to content appropriateness and usefulness (Smith et al., 2007). All elements complement each other, linking advertisements with brand strategy and consumer goals (Hayes et al., 2020) – and has also been confirmed to positively affect consumer attention, recall, and attitude (Lee and Hong, 2016). Creative advertising is defined as the ability to generate new, unique, original ideas in advertising, i.e., advertising must constantly seek new forms and methods to remain original and not necessarily template based. Continuous variation in the combination of text, image, and sound elements can help reveal advertising creativity. As competition for the discerning consumer's attention intensifies, advertisements are becoming more creative, inventive, and new channels for delivering advertisements are being developed. Advertisements now use a broader colour palette and soundtracks, creating both textual and visual stories, with an increase in video content broadcast by influencers. Greater attention is paid to aesthetic appeal, with claims that visually attractive products or advertisements can attract consumer attention (Kaspar et al., 2019), and evoke positive consumer evaluations (Shi, 2021). Stimulating multiple sensory stimuli simultaneously gradually increases the entertainment value of advertising, making viewing more interesting and enjoyable from the consumer's perspective (Febriyantoro, 2020). Such advertising can be called modern, which, according to Campbell (2014), works in a very strange way – showing that it doesn't matter whether it has an impact. Thus, when someone says, "advertising doesn't work on me", the advertising has achieved its goal. It gives us the feeling of being distant from it. Because modern marketing is not what is done for the consumer, but what is done on behalf of the consumer, i.e., the focus is on helping people buy and make decisions rather than pushing products or services on them. Therefore, the task of marketing professionals is to provide the buyer with information when needed and in the right form. Researchers have observed a real paradox in advertising – coercive compliance despite free choice. Even a term has been coined for this: *voluntary compliance*. Advertising must first emotionally attract the recipient's attention, then interest them with content, and finally evoke some reaction (Smetonienė, 2009). To achieve this, harmony among all elements used in advertising, purposeful application, and the right emphasis are important.

NEUROMARKETING

The Impact of Neuromarketing Research on Consumer Behaviour

The study of consumer behaviour and the desire to better understand why people make certain decisions and why these decisions differ under the same conditions has led to increasing interest in neuroscience, which has evolved into neuromarketing, supplemented by knowledge from psychology and sociology (Ahmed, NorZafir, Rami Hashem et al., 2023; Lim, 2018; Stanton, Armstrong, and Huettel, 2017). Marketing has always aimed to understand consumers, identify their tastes and needs, and stimulate the market through supply and demand. In the 1990s, technological advances allowed for more in-depth brain research, leading to the development of neuromarketing as a discipline studying brain processes that influence behaviour and decision-making in marketing (Ortegon and Muniz, 2025). Neuromarketing is based on methods from neurological sciences, aiming to identify and understand fundamental brain activities of consumers to increase the effectiveness of marketing activities (Boricean, 2009). It is defined as the application of neurological methods to analyse and understand human behaviour in markets and marketing exchanges (Mansor and Isa, 2020). Its goal is to understand consumer behaviour by studying brain activity, physiological reactions, and other biological signals. This is a rapidly growing interdisciplinary research area that is gaining increasing interest. It was found that traditional neuromarketing methods often do not match actual consumer behaviour with declared responses, leading to the understanding that consumers often cannot recognize or articulate many things about themselves (Ackermann and Mathieu, 2015; Singh, Alhassan, and Khoshaim, 2023). This can be explained by the fact that conscious consumer decisions are only the "tip of the iceberg," as 90% of information received is processed unconsciously (see Krajnovic et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2025). One of the main reasons for the growth of neuromarketing science is the perception that human decision-making deviates from rational choice (Jain, 2022). Accordingly, neuromarketing research focuses on the unconscious phase of decision-making, where consumers process and evaluate stimuli at an unconscious level before moving to conscious, rational decision-making (Misra, 2023). The mysterious aspect is that our brains make decisions before we are aware of them and before presenting a choice. Although the brain weighs only about 1.5 kg, it controls all body functions, including memory, emotions, creativity, and intelligence. The brain receives information through five main senses: hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste. Therefore, neuromarketing research can reveal what *sensory stimuli* to incorporate into product development to evoke consumer satisfaction. People can usually say what they want and what they like, but they often do not know where that value comes from or what determines their desires. But it's very simple: by inducing certain emotions, using hypnotic words and pleasant images in advertising, changing the colour, lighting, and music in a store slightly, we are already ready to buy (even things we don't really need). Using advanced

brain activity monitoring technologies, neuromarketing offers a unique opportunity to better understand consumers' subconscious reactions to marketing stimuli, opening new perspectives for creating more effective and personalized marketing strategies (Bhardwaj, Rana, Behl, & Caceres, 2022; Zeng & Marques, 2023).

The origins of neuromarketing began when interest in consumer behaviour, decision-making, and emotions was sparked to better adapt marketing strategies to consumer expectations and needs (Kumar, 2015). The impetus for these studies was the discovery of the "pleasure centre" in the brain (hypothalamus) in the early 1960s, but the formation of neuromarketing as a scientific discipline began only in the early 21st century. The first use of the marketing term was by Ale Smidts in 2002, defining it as the application of neurological methods for commercial purposes (Casado–Aranda, Rodriguez–Sanchez, & Sancho–Esper, 2024).

Neuromarketing is a rapidly growing field aimed at understanding how various stimuli affect emotions, perception, and decision-making processes. In today's competitive market, neuromarketing allows organizations to delve deeper into the emotional and cognitive motivations behind consumer behaviour, which is crucial for attracting consumer attention. The applications of neuromarketing are broad – from product design to increasing advertising effectiveness, providing valuable insights into the emotional connection in brand building (Cruceana et al., 2024). Neuromarketing examines consumer thinking processes and identifies factors influencing purchase decisions. Thanks to neuromarketing, physiological changes can be measured (using neuromarketing tools) and emotional or cognitive reactions decoded. Therefore, the neural responses of consumers' brains to advertising campaigns can be studied by observing physiological changes during viewing and analyzing the emotions that triggered these changes (Montakhab Madani et al., 2025). Neuromarketing measures physiological and neural signals to gain insights into clients, motivations, preferences, and decisions. This helps companies shape creative advertising, product development, pricing, and marketing strategies. Neuromarketing can also be used to better understand consumer behaviour, including subconscious and emotional responses to brands. The main function of neuromarketing is to explore and understand the subconscious of consumers, which influences their decision-making process, providing specialists with more structured insights into brain activity (Almeida et al., 2025). Neuromarketing is a marketing technique focused on individual emotions and subconsciousness to create a strong connection between clients and the offered product or service. Its methods involve various processes and utilize brain functions that influence cognitive, attention, and emotional abilities to affect and stimulate consumer preferences.

Neuromarketing is a dynamic field combining principles of neuroscience with marketing strategies. Essentially, it seeks to explore the depths of the human brain to uncover hidden motives, emotions, and cognitive processes that influence consumer behaviour. The importance of neuromarketing lies in its ability to provide marketers with unprecedented insights into unconscious and emotional factors affecting decision-making. Using neuroscientific data, marketers can better understand consumer preferences, attention patterns, and the neural mechanisms underlying purchasing behaviour. This knowledge can be used to improve marketing strategies, optimize product packaging, and enhance overall advertising campaign effectiveness (Hussain, 2025).

Researchers can assess how consumers react to different product features, service quality, and overall customer experience by evaluating consumer responses to products and services (Elizbaryan, 2024). The strength of neuromarketing lies in its ability to identify hidden patterns of consumer behaviour. For example, studies have shown that brain areas associated with pleasure, such as the nucleus accumbens, are activated when exposed to attractive brands, indicating a direct link between visual stimuli and desires (Zenozain, 2025). Based on neurological reactions, this discipline helps predict consumer behaviour in the market, thus enabling companies to make more informed decisions about product development and marketing strategies that meet consumer expectations and evoke positive emotions and associations (Beličková & Kusá, 2023). This allows organizations to create more personalized and effective advertisements. One of the key insights of neuromarketing is that a large part of consumer decision-making is driven by emotions rather than rational analysis. Neuromarketing explores the emotional reactions triggered by colours, sensory perceptions associated with packaging, and subconscious associations related to brand logos. It investigates the neural pathways that shape long-term memories of advertising campaigns and products, shaping consumer preferences and loyalty (Elizbaryan, 2024).

In retail, companies use neuromarketing techniques to optimize store layouts and product displays. For example, studies have shown that products placed at eye level are more likely to be noticed and purchased. In addition, companies can use specific colours, lighting, and sounds to evoke certain emotions in shoppers. For example, warm, welcoming colours like red and yellow can encourage impulsive purchases, while calming blues and greens can create a sense of trust and reliability. Online companies also use neuromarketing techniques to improve user experience and drive conversions. By analyzing how users interact with websites, companies can optimize their digital platforms to attract and retain consumer attention. For example, strategically placed images, call-to-action buttons, and personalized recommendations can trigger emotional responses that increase click-through rates and boost sales. Websites can also be designed to create a sense of urgency (e.g., countdown timers for promotions) or a sense of exclusivity (e.g., limited time offers), both of which can stimulate the brain's reward system and encourage purchasing behaviour.

Neuro-marketing research shows that a sensory environment, such as smells, sounds, or colours, can have a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Neuromarketing is closely related to sensory marketing because it helps us understand the brain processes associated with perception and behaviour (Bortolotti, 2025).

Vision. Vision is undoubtedly the most used sense in marketing. Colours, product and packaging design, logos, and images are all visual elements that can influence consumer perception (Bortolotti et al., 2023). Vision is the most seductive sense and very often dominates over other senses and has the greatest power of persuasion. This sense allows people to notice certain differences or changes in new packaging, a new store interior, or a new product design. The power of sensory marketing lies in its ability to delve into *subconscious processes*. This is consistent with the findings of neuroscience that sensory stimuli can activate specific brain regions associated with emotions and memory (Bortoletti, 2025). In addition, sensory marketing can be particularly effective in differentiating products in crowded markets. Visual stimuli such as colours, shapes, proportions, and movement can subconsciously influence consumer attention, perception, memorization, and final decision-making. For example, round shapes are often perceived as softer, cozier, while angular shapes are perceived as stronger and more reliable (Juarez, 2020).

Colour is one of the key aspects of visual marketing. Consumers perceive colours subconsciously, creating associations and forming opinions even before they consciously perceive them (Bortolotti et al., 2023). Studies have shown that changing the hue or intensity/saturation of colours in food and beverages can sometimes have a dramatic effect on consumer expectations (Spence, 2018; 2015). Warm and cool colours can stimulate consumer appeal and interact with other visual cues. In addition, colour temperature can affect consumption. Therefore, understanding the role of colour in sensory marketing can provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour and decision-making processes (Bortoletti, 2025). Colour is a powerful communication tool that can influence our mood, feelings, and even consumer behaviour. Brands strategically use colours to evoke specific emotions and sensory experiences that align with their brand identity. As Elliot and Maier (2014) noted, colour can significantly affect consumer perception and behaviour, for example, consumers are attracted to warm colours such as red and yellow, so they are designed to attract consumer attention and for purchasing situations associated with impulsive purchases.

Taste. Lindstrom (2008) confirms that taste is recognized by special structures called taste buds. Humans have about ten thousand taste buds, but everyone perceives taste differently. Girls are thought to be more sensitive to taste than boys because they have more taste receptors. As people age, their sense of taste changes and weakens, making them more likely to enjoy food that they considered too strong as children. Taste and smell are closely related chemical senses; during tasting, the smell is perceived together with the tastes, so taste marketing is closely related to smell marketing. Nevertheless, due to its specificity, taste is considered the least effective sense, except in the food industry (Hong, 2022), although properly selected tastes and smells can subconsciously affect consumer emotions and purchasing decisions.

Smell is one of the most important senses that has a great influence on consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. The connection between smell and memory allows brands to deeply embed themselves in the consumer's subconscious. In addition, smell is the only sense that cannot be turned off and is incredibly powerful in evoking memories. Lindstrom (2008) claims that smell can change our mood: research results have shown that the effect of a pleasant smell on mood improves by 40%, especially if that smell reminds of a happy moment. It also has a positive effect on consumer image, the price level they are willing to pay, and the amount spent.

Hearing. Music can stimulate customer perception emotions (Meyers-Levy, Bublitz, & Peracchio, 2011). Most products and services have branded sounds that create brand awareness in the target market (Krishna, 2011). For example, the sound of a certain brand's door closing, the crunch of crisps, etc.

Touch. Touch is very important because it enhances an individual's experience when interacting with a product. It is estimated that there are 50 receptors per 100 square millimetres, each with 640,000 micro receptors in the brain for sensations (Lindstrom, 2008). As people age, the number of micro receptors decreases and some sensitivity in the hands is lost. There are more than 400,000 sensory receptors in the human skin that can be activated when people touch different surfaces and materials of a particular product. For example, it has been observed that rougher, matte packaging gives the impression of higher product quality and luxury, while smooth, glossy packaging is associated with modernity and technological progress (Hong, 2022).

Neuromarketing Ethics

Neuromarketing is used to better understand consumer habits, desires, and needs. Since it uses medical devices to obtain the necessary knowledge about the consumer, this raises questions of ethical compliance. The greatest concern in neuroscience is the possibility of manipulating consumers in making purchasing decisions: that specialists could discover a 'buy button' or 'mind control' and activate it even without the consumer's wish (Onyedi, 2023; Ferrell, 2025). The possible invasiveness of neuromarketing technologies is criticized, arguing that the information obtained about the consumer's subconscious behaviour can be used to manipulate consumer behaviour in such a way that commercial

interests are prioritized over individual well-being (Hussain, 2025). Neuro-marketing research requires access to highly sensitive personal data, including brain activity information, which provides unique insights into consumer behaviour and decision-making processes, but at the same time poses a threat to individual privacy. To avoid this, it is crucial that neuroscientific methods are used ethically in neuromarketing experiments. This includes ensuring proper participant protection, full disclosure of research objectives, risks and benefits, obtaining informed consent, establishing clear protocols for addressing both basic and accidental neuroscientific findings, and conducting ethical review before conducting the research. In addition, the scientific rigor of neuromarketing research must be established and proven, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings through transparent reporting (e.g., detailed experimental procedures and public disclosure) (Hussain, 2025). The intersection of artificial intelligence and neuromarketing has further strengthened these ethical aspects. As AI-powered algorithms become more sophisticated in analyzing and interpreting neurological data, the potential for targeted and personalized marketing strategies that can exploit consumer vulnerabilities has increased (Hussain, 2025). AI-based insights should be used to improve the consumer experience, not to take advantage of it. Despite the doubts and fears that arise, there is still documentation, codes of ethics for neuro-marketing research protect against the exploitation of people's unconscious behaviour, especially since the research itself does not yet provide completely clear answers about consumer choices, so it cannot be said that universal laws of consumer behaviour have been discovered that could harm the well-being of society. However, without a doubt, there must always be defined limits so that they are not crossed and no harm is done to people.

CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

To analyse consumers' attitudes towards their purchase behaviour, a quantitative research method was chosen – an anonymous questionnaire survey. The prepared survey consisted of closed-ended multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, and questions where respondents were asked to evaluate statements on a Likert scale. The survey questions covered demographic data, purchasing habits, product selection criteria, and opinions about advertising. The study analysed the frequency of purchases, considering certain product/service groups. Respondents were asked to evaluate statements related to financial behaviour and impulsiveness when purchasing. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis to identify key trends and patterns. 359 respondents participated in the survey.

The respondents who participated in the survey were evenly distributed by age (Fig. 1). Most of the questionnaires were completed by those aged 31–35 (15%), but there were slightly fewer aged 16–20 (14%), 36–40 and 21–25 (12% each), and 26–30 (11%) respondents. Older respondents make up a smaller proportion, but this was probably since the survey questionnaire was distributed through social channels, which are used less frequently by this demographic. It can be observed that the survey was mostly attended by middle-aged respondents, who also constitute the largest purchasing power. Younger respondents have less purchasing power, but they are more attentive and actively notice advertising communication, which shapes them as potential consumers. Older people have more experience in consumer behaviour, but may be less attentive and tolerant of advertisements, and the reach of some advertisements may also be limited due to the increasingly popular social advertising broadcasting channels.

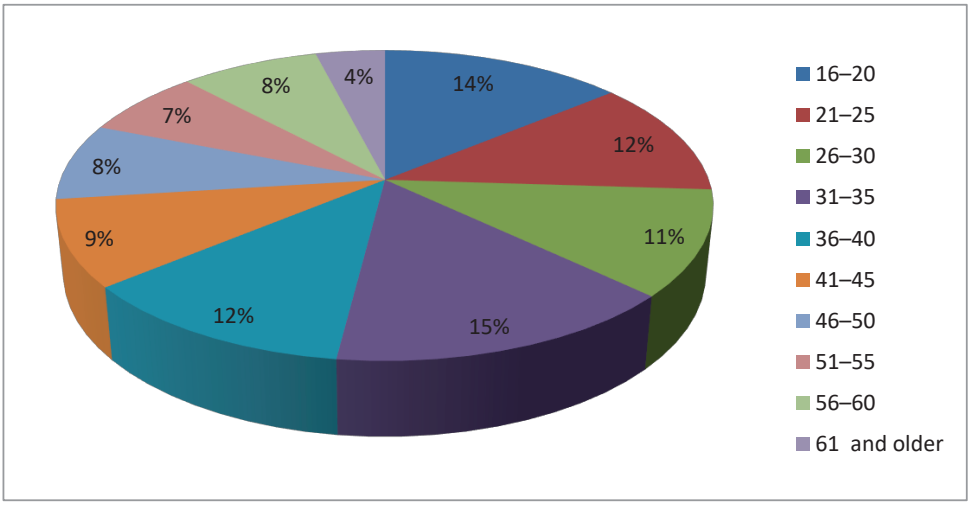


Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age

The respondents were divided unevenly by gender, with most of the active survey participants being women (75%), and men being more passive (25%). This shows that women are more active and willing to express their opinion.

When assessing the impact of advertising communication on consumer behaviour, it is important to mention the amount of monthly income, as this can be one of the factors that can influence attitudes towards advertisements and advertised products (services). When evaluating our financial capabilities, we react accordingly to certain products, pay more attention to discounts, or seek to maintain our status and prestige by choosing luxury goods. Of the respondents who participated in the survey, most receive average or slightly lower monthly income (35%) (Fig. 2). Considering that a significant number of young respondents participated in the survey, clearly their monthly income is not yet very high: 19% have an income of up to EUR 500 and 21% EUR 501–1,000. Higher than average income (EUR 1,501–2,000) is received by 16% of respondents, and 6% (EUR 2,001–2,500) and 3% (EUR 2,501+) of respondents receive high monthly income. In other words, the respondents who participated in the survey receive average or lower monthly income.

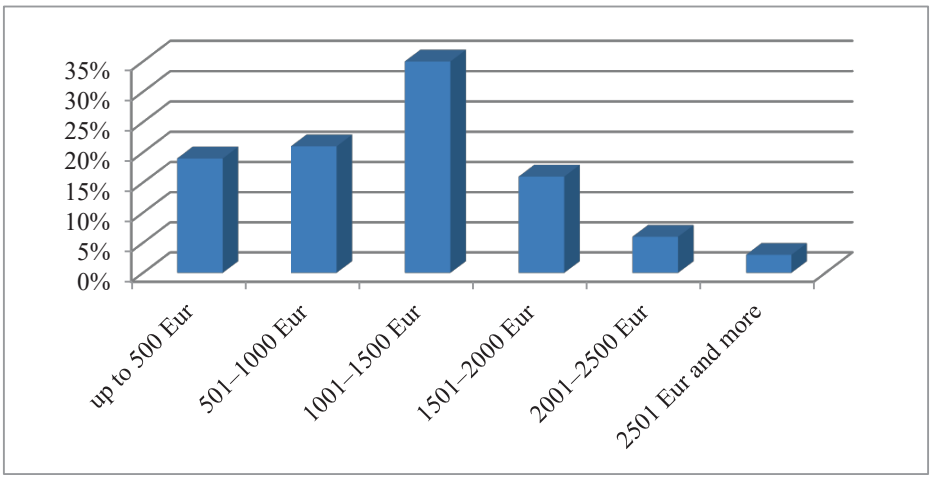


Figure 2. Respondents' Monthly Income

The amount of income most likely determines the answers to the next question about the factors influencing product selection. Many respondents cite price (40%) and needs (37%) (Fig. 3). It can be assumed that the amount of income received is directly related to the corresponding factors determining the respondents' purchases. However, the discount factor was not chosen among the most frequent (11%). It can be assumed that respondents more often look for cheaper products rather than chasing discounts, but it may be that respondents simply think so, and only an experimental study could reveal how they actually behave. As stated in scientific literature, consumers do not always behave exactly as they answer in surveys. Of other factors, brand (4%), product reviews (3%), other people's opinions (2%), and advertising itself (1%) should be mentioned. Another 4% of respondents mentioned that they simply shop spontaneously, without paying attention to various factors. The most surprising result is the very rare selection of the advertising factor, which makes one doubt whether respondents are really so resistant to this type of communication, or merely confirm the theoretical assumptions that the best and most modern advertising is the one that is not felt, which does not force one to acquire something, does not push products or services, but is only an advisor helping to make decisions. That advertising which seems not to care whether it has an impact, but in reality, reaches its ultimate goal (Campbell, 2014). In most cases, consumers in such situations claim that advertising does not affect them.

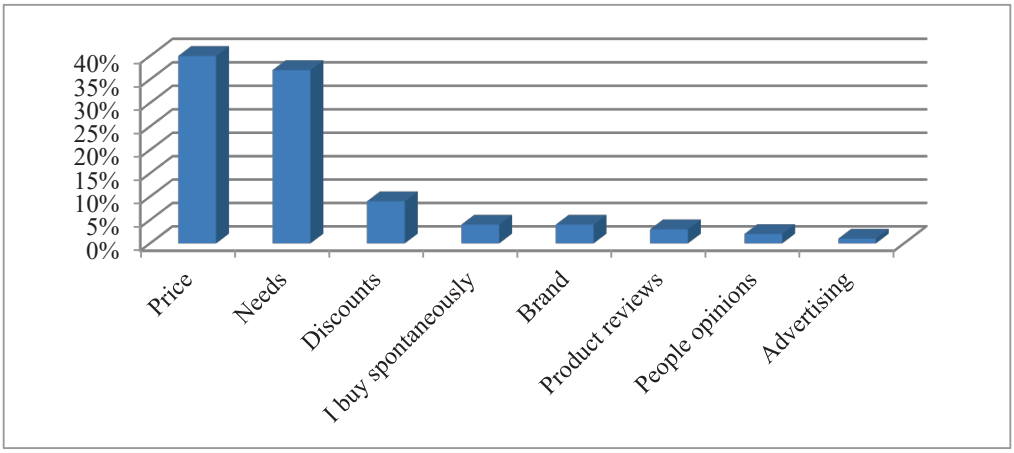


Figure 3. Factors Determining Product Choice

The mentioned assumption is confirmed by another question in the survey – how often do you buy products of unknown brands. As can be seen in the diagram (Fig. 4), more than half of the respondents answered that they rarely buy products of unknown brands (58%), very rarely buy 12%, never - 4%. This means they buy only the production of well-known brands. And to know the brand itself and its production, one needs to have information about it. This information is usually in the field of advertising communication. Therefore, it can be assumed that the respondents simply do not evaluate the advertising factor, but when making a purchase decision, they choose products they have seen and heard about. And only a third said they very often (2%) or often (24%) choose products of unknown brands.

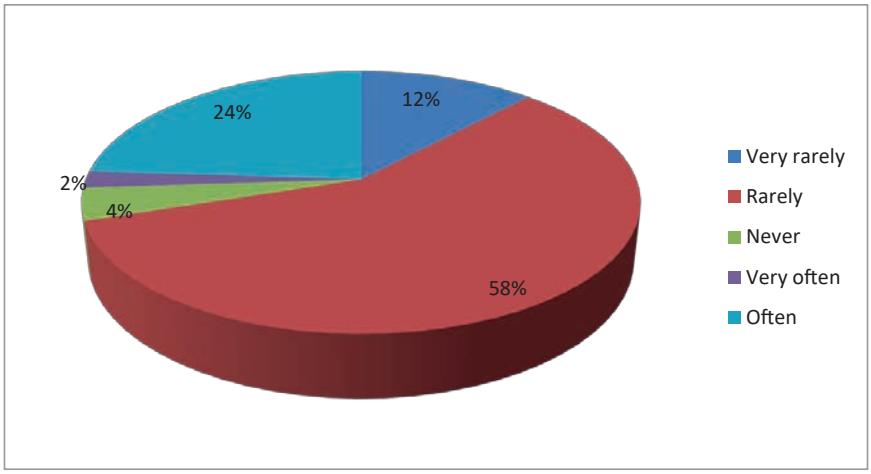


Figure 4. How Often do you Buy Products from Unknown Brands?

Today's advertising should really be called modern, teaching to be close to the consumer and push them towards the choice to buy a particular product, as soon as they need this help. This is shown by the respondents' evaluation of advertising: 24% believe that advertising is needed to inform about the emergence of new goods, and 23% to introduce the brand. In other words, we return to the idea that advertising, according to respondents, is important because of the information it provides. Only a small part of the respondents (7%) think that it manipulates the feelings of buyers, a little more chose the answer that advertising has an influence (18%). In other words, respondents do not think that advertising is only intended to somehow deceive. This is confirmed by 4% saying that advertising forces them to buy certain products (Fig. 5).

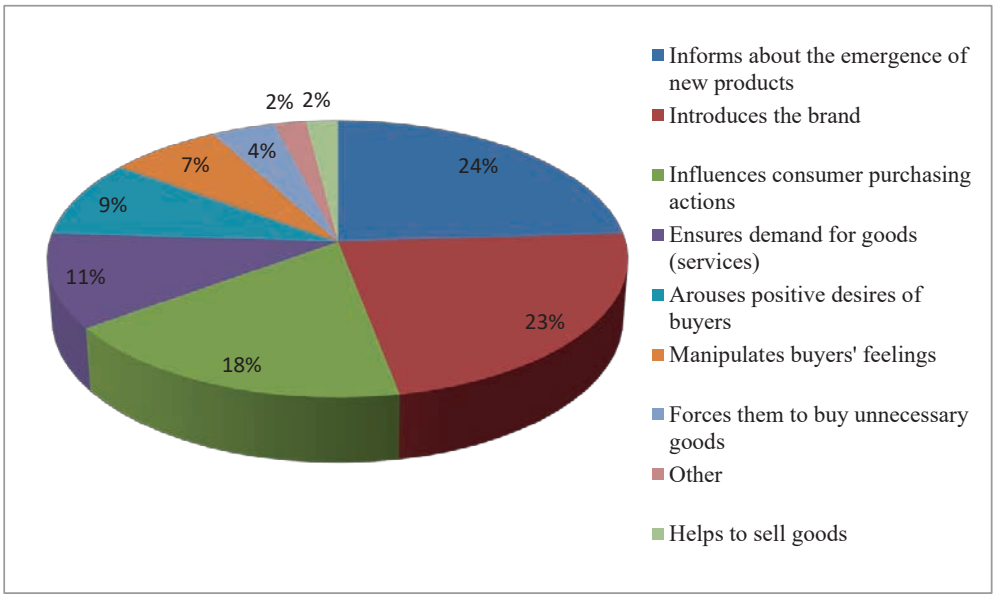


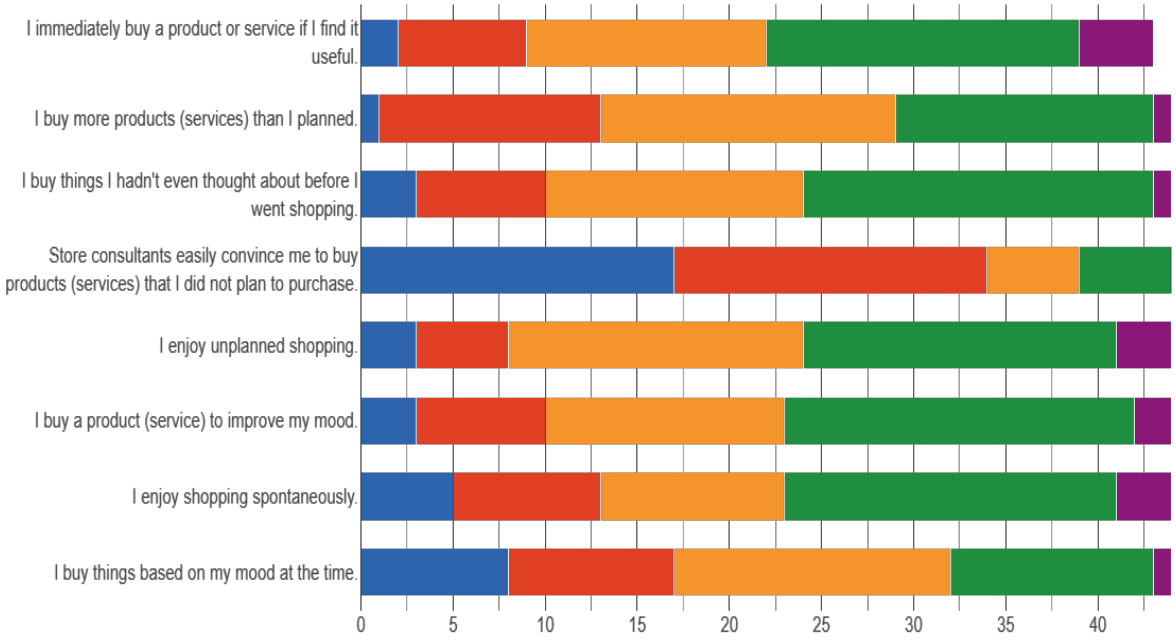
Figure 5. Why do we Need Advertising?

That consumers are unpredictable is confirmed by several further control questions. When respondents were asked whether advertising helps them choose and buy products (services), the vast majority again chose a positive answer (60%), but they do not think that advertising influences them (62%). And yet, only 16% of respondents answered that they believe in advertising, and as many as 40% of them do not know whether to believe it or not. Such controversial answers to similar questions only confirm the statements of scientific literature about consumers' perception that they

provide rational answers about their conscious actions related to product selection and purchase. But comparing the answers obtained, it is assumed that consumers do not even know themselves very well.

The fact that advertising communication works and the advertising factor was rejected, probably unjustifiably, is shown by the answers to the question in the survey questionnaire as to whether the respondents have bought products advertised by influencers. 44% of respondents answered positively. Consequently, almost half of them have purchased what was obviously advertised.

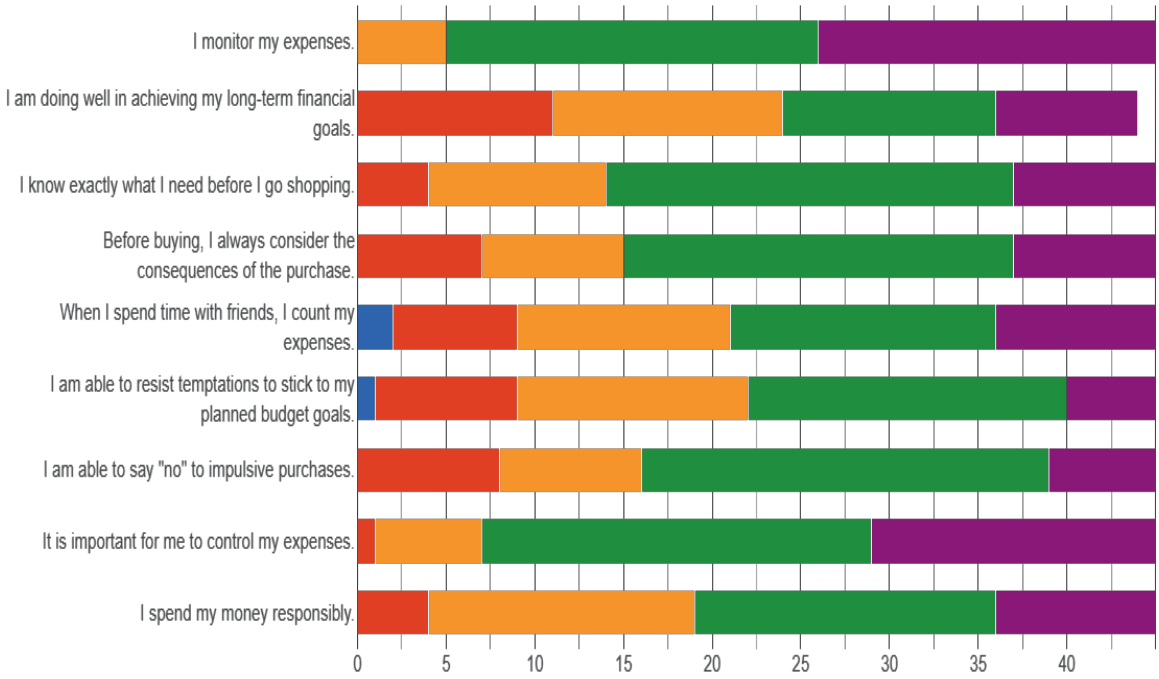
Although it was mentioned that only a very small part of the respondents shops spontaneously, another question revealed slightly different results. It showed that respondents like to shop spontaneously, it is fun for them, because out of the statements about the peculiarities of shopping, as many as 40.9 % agreed, and 6.8 % completely agreed with the mentioned factor. Even more respondents agreed with the statement that they are inclined to buy products to improve their mood (47.7%). It turns out that a significant part of the respondents is pleased with unplanned shopping (45.4%) and the purchase of unplanned items (45.5%). The greatest agreement was expressed by the respondents regarding the sudden (impulsive) purchase of a product if they thought the item was useful at the time (48.8%). The least agreement was received by the statement about the consultants convincing them to buy something that was not planned (11.4%) and, accordingly, the most disagreeing were with it (77.2%). The least disagreeing were about unplanned purchases (18.2%) and the purchase of unplanned items and to improve their mood (22.7% each). Also, many statements were evaluated with the answer option in part (Fig. 6.).



(*Colour meanings: blue – I completely disagree; red – I disagree; orange - I neither agree nor disagree; green – I agree; violet – I completely agree)*

Figure 6. Respondents' Shopping Habits

Despite the fact that respondents claim to like being spontaneous, buying items that are not always thought out, when asked about their spending, they hold the firm opinion that they monitor it (88.9%: 46.7% completely agree and 42.2% agree) and control it (84.5%: completely agree 48.9% and agree 35.6%), know their needs precisely (68.9%: completely agree 51.1% and agree 17.8%) and consider the consequences of purchases (66.7%: completely agree 48.9% and agree 17.8%) and are able to resist impulsive purchases (64.4%: completely agree 51.1% and agree 13.3%) (Fig. 7). Respondents completely disagreed with limiting spending when with friends (4.4%), and the ability to resist temptations to stick to their planned budget goals (2.2%). The fewest disagreeing respondents were regarding spending control, and there were no respondents who completely disagreed with the statement about monitoring spending. This leads to the conclusion that respondents are attentive to their income and possible expenses. Many try to manage rationally and not overspend, but, unfortunately, the question discussed earlier reveals that it is fun to behave freely when shopping, and to choose and purchase products impulsively and spontaneously.



(*Colour meanings: blue – I completely disagree; red – I disagree; orange - I neither agree nor disagree; green – I agree; violet – I completely agree)*

Figure 7. Respondents' Attitudes towards their Spending

These results are further supported by the respondents' answers to another question about whether they feel they have bought unnecessary things when they return home from shopping (Figure 8). The vast majority answered that this happens very rarely (58%), and 16% of respondents said rarely. Some say that they never buy unnecessary things (13%). And only a small part of respondents say that they often buy such things (11%) or very often (2%). Therefore, the respondents' answers regarding cost control seem to be closely related to the respondents' firm determination to buy as few unnecessary things as possible in shopping malls. But it is likely that they would enjoy it if they could bother themselves less often and could afford to shop more spontaneously and impulsively (cf. Fig. 6).

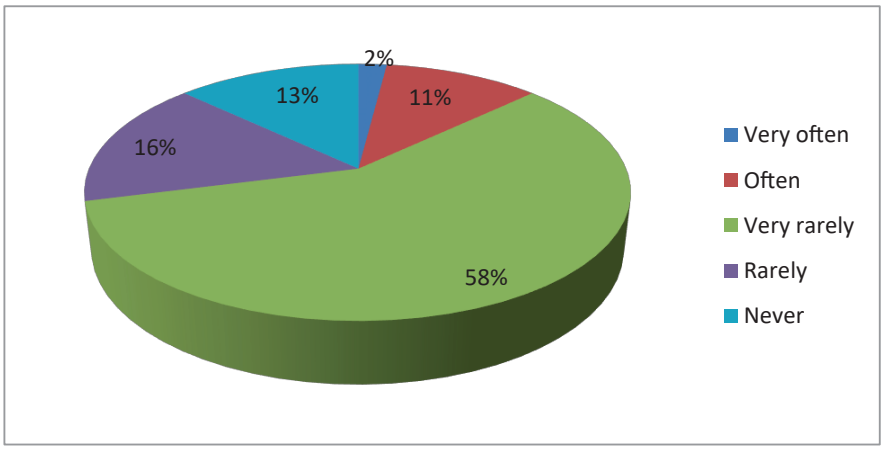


Figure 8. Do you Feel You've Bought Unnecessary Things after you Return from Shopping?

It is also worth mentioning the question – does it happen that you are overwhelmed by emotions when shopping and you buy what pleases you at that moment – again, conflicting answers were given compared to the responses received. Even 65% of respondents say that they buy driven by emotions, moreover, they go shopping even to be overwhelmed by negative emotions (60%). The effectiveness of shopping is evidenced by the responses given by respondents: many buy nothing (38%), even 31% of respondents said they buy something to lift their mood. Even 24% do not buy what they needed in the store, and ultimately 7% of respondents said they buy unnecessary items. This shows that bad moods when shopping can only be a reason to go if shopping really cannot be avoided. In all other cases, it is best to wait until the mood improves at least a little – then additional unwanted expenses can be avoided and generally buy what is needed (Fig. 9).

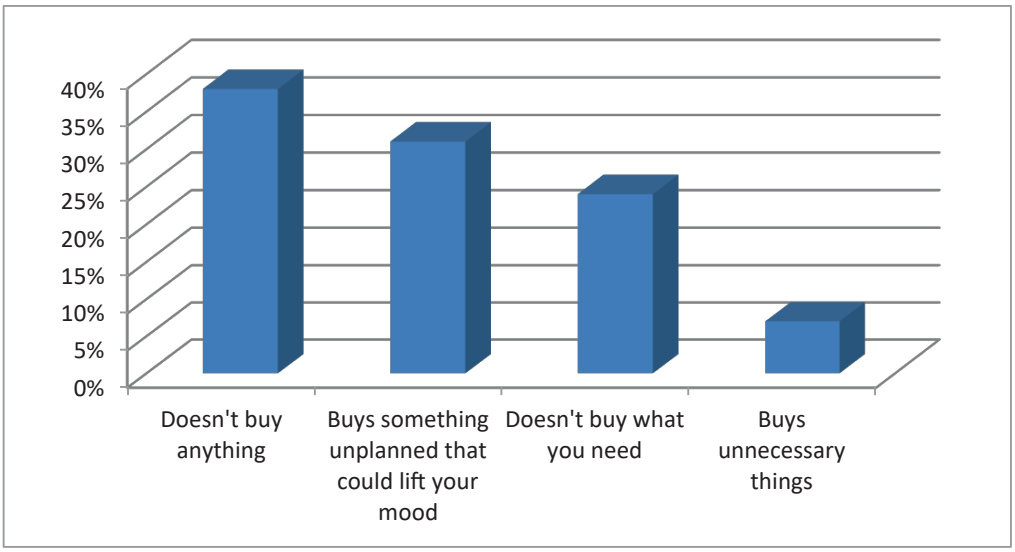
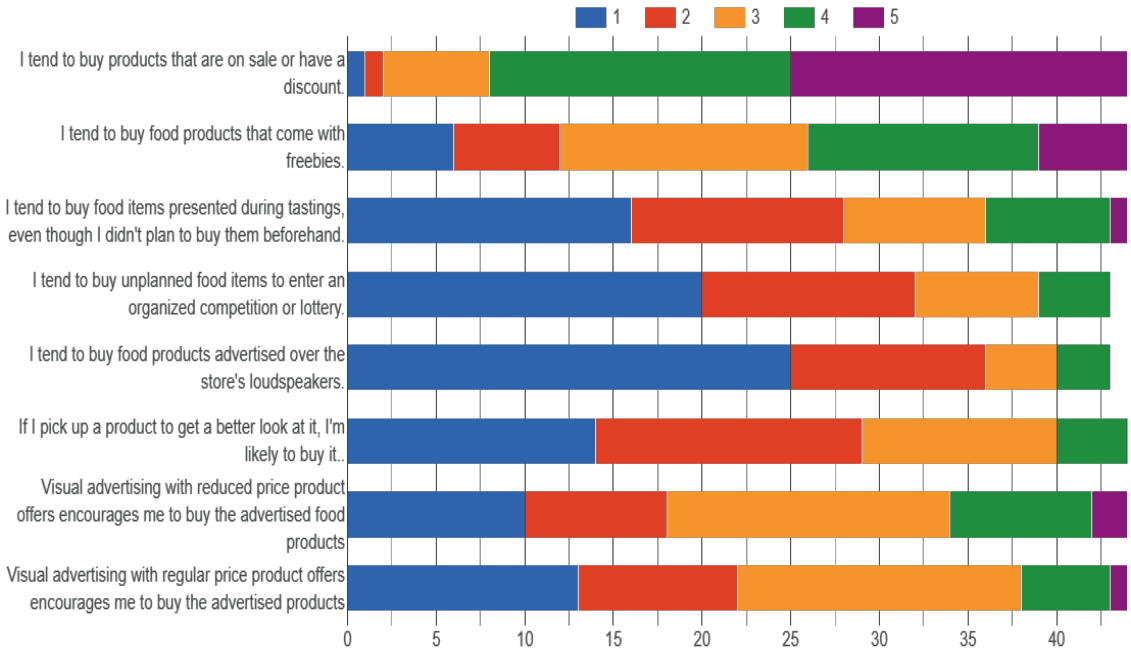


Figure 9. Respondents' Shopping Behaviour when in a Bad Mood

Returning to the rarely chosen discount factor by respondents, it can be observed in another survey question that the answers are still contradictory to the previous ones. Respondents were asked to express their agreement/disagreement with certain statements by marking from 1 to 5, where 1 means complete disagreement and 5 means complete agreement (Fig. 10). As many as 43.2% of respondents completely agreed with the statement that they tend to buy products with discounts, 38.6% agreed with this statement, and only 4.6% completely disagreed and disagreed, while 13.6% partially agreed. Thus, the offered discounts have an impact on consumer purchasing decisions, although it may initially seem otherwise. The least appealing to respondents are advertising announcements made through speakers in shopping centres, with 58.1% stating that they completely disagree with this promotional measure as an effective factor. They were completely sceptical about game or lottery (46.5%), tasting (36.4%) promotional factors, and denied that a product just picked up could become a potential purchase (31.8%). When evaluating the visual advertising factor with a discount and with a regular price, the choices were almost evenly distributed. Slightly more disagreed about the visual advertising appeal when the price is regular (29.5%) than when the visual advertisement is with a reduced-price offer (22.7%). The proportion of those partially agreeing with both promotional measures was the same (36.4%). Of course, the promotional measure of visual advertising with a discount received more favour: overall, 22.7% agreed with this factor. Thus, the most valued promotional measure is discounts, much less appreciated are small gifts given with a purchase, and advertising heard through speakers in the shopping centre is evaluated least positively.



(*Colour meanings: blue – I completely disagree; red – I disagree; orange - I neither agree nor disagree; green – I agree; violet – I completely agree)*

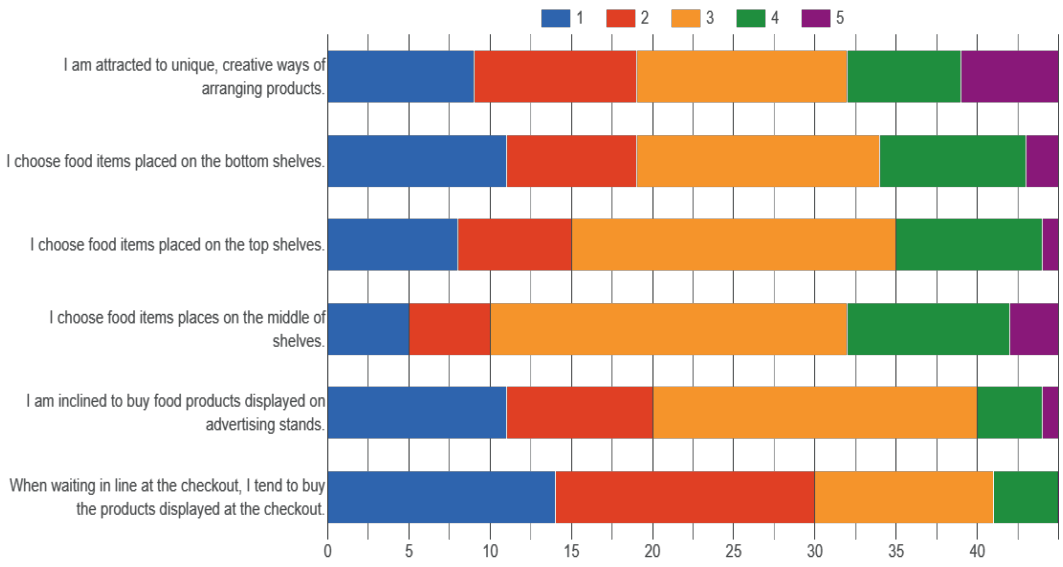
Figure 10. The Impact of Promotional Measures on Purchases

Discounts are not forgotten when answering the question about actions before going shopping (Fig. 11). As many as 44% of respondents review discounts and promotions, which means this aspect is not random or unimpressive during shopping. 36% of respondents behave more rationally, stating that they make a shopping list. 20% of respondents act unplanned and impulsively, of which 18% decide on purchases upon arriving at the store and 2% shop spontaneously.



Figure 11. Respondents' Actions before going Shopping

When assessing consumers' attention to products they intend to buy in retail locations, respondents were asked to rate their agreement with certain statements about the placement of food products in stores on a scale of 1 to 5. This question aims to determine where respondents focus their attention most when shopping. Of the statements provided, the majority of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with attention-grabbing creative product placement methods (27.3%) compared to the other statements, but at the same time, this statement received significantly more dissenting opinions regarding this factor (43.2%). The same number of respondents agreed that they tend to choose products on the middle shelves of retail locations (27.3%), but similarly, the fewest disagreed with this statement (22.8%). The fewest respondents agreed with the statement that they tend to buy products while waiting in line to pay for goods (9.1%), but there were a great many who disagreed with this statement (65.9%). Overall, the statements in this question were mostly rated on average - there was a sufficient abundance of respondents who partially agreed when evaluating all the statements provided (Fig. 12).

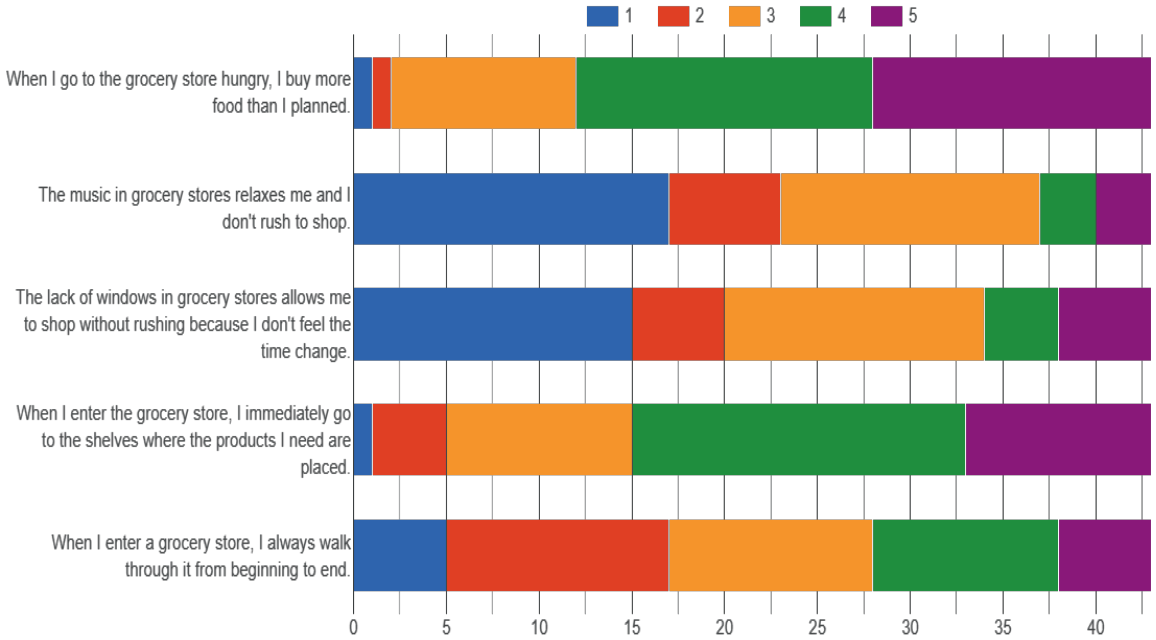


(*Colour meanings: blue – I completely disagree; red – I disagree; orange - I neither agree nor disagree; green – I agree; violet – I completely agree)*

Figure 12. Factors in the Display of Food Products in a Store that Attract Consumers' Attention.

When evaluating the stimuli that influence consumer purchasing decisions, respondents were asked about certain factors (hunger, music, light, product positioning in stores) that can impact their shopping characteristics. Most respondents agree with the statement that when they go to a grocery store hungry, they buy more food than planned (34.9%

completely agree and 37.2% agree), and only 4.6% disagree with this statement. Most disagree with the statement that music playing in stores relaxes and therefore consumers do not rush shopping (39.5% completely disagree and 14% disagree). This again confirms the idea expressed in the scientific literature that consumers are least consciously aware of the impact of music, although studies have shown that consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions are influenced by the music, melody, background, or certain sounds associated with the product. Respondents also tend to disagree with the statement that windowless stores, when there is no natural light, have an impact on the time of purchase: 34.9% completely disagree and 11.6% disagree. Only 20.9% agreed with this statement, and only 14% agreed with the influence of music. Respondents probably misunderstood the influence of product positioning, which is why they say that when they enter the store, they immediately head towards the aisles where the products they need are placed (23.3% completely agree with this statement and 41.9% agree, and only 2.3% completely disagree). 34.9% of respondents are inclined to walk around the entire store from start to finish, while 11.6% of respondents disagree (Fig. 13).



(*Colour meanings: blue – I completely disagree; red – I disagree; orange - I neither agree nor disagree; green – I agree; violet – I completely agree)*

Figure 13. Factors Influencing Respondents' Shopping Process

The factors influencing consumer behaviour are discussed, particularly focusing on the most attention-grabbing form of advertising (Fig. 13).

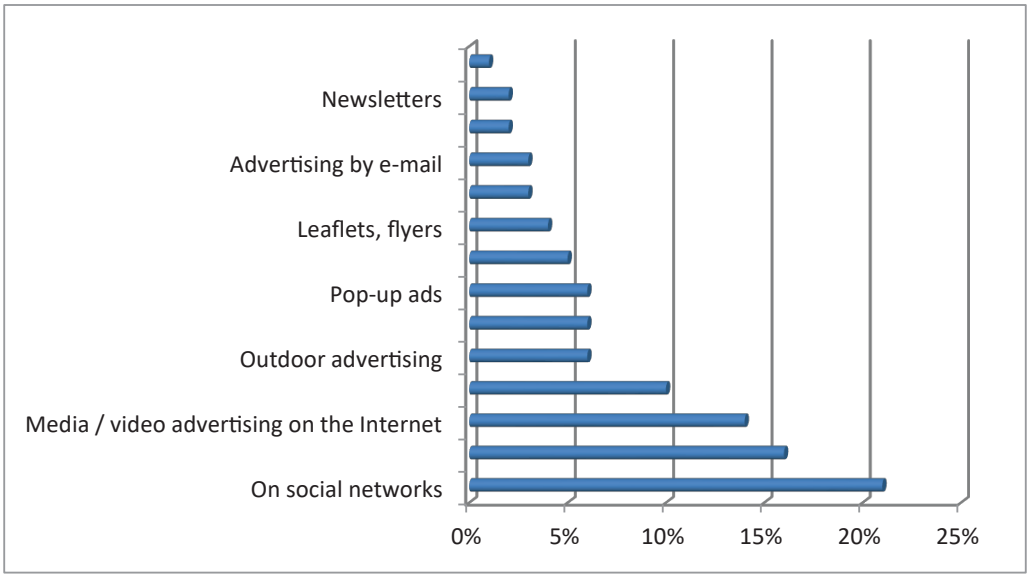


Figure 14. The Most Attention-grabbing Types of Advertising

The responses clearly reflect current realities, as respondents most often mentioned advertising on social networks (23%). A fairly strong position is maintained by TV advertising (16%), although it has been forecasted to decline for many years, but in this survey, it holds second position among the most attention-grabbing ads. It competes with online video advertisements (14%) and influencers (10%). All other types of advertising, according to respondents, are less effective, receiving between 6% and 1% of the votes. Interestingly, despite the increasing popularity and common occurrence of pop-up advertisements, respondents do not find them particularly attention-grabbing. Also not valued are newsletters, which are currently very popular, especially for developing small businesses.

From the main persuasive elements of the advertisement, respondents most often chose an attractive image (60%) – this confirms the classical statement widespread in scientific literature that the image is the most noticeable and impactful for the consumer (Figure 15). And conversely – the complete non-evaluation of the sound advertising environment (2 %) – as mentioned earlier, scientific studies have proven and confirmed this. Consumers do not notice and do not evaluate the music, sounds, background, etc. that are playing in the advertisement. Even the illusion of scents in the advertisement was noticed more by respondents (7%). In this case, it is referred to as an illusion, as it is a difficult task to convey a scent in an advertisement. You can only see how someone else experiences the aroma of the scent, so you just have to identify with it and imagine that scent. However, in the marketing of trade itself, scent is a very important element and is used very widely. The impression of touch in advertisements was not chosen by any of the respondents. This is perhaps the least researched area of the senses, which is not easy to transmit, yet respondents, apparently, simply do not consciously record that sensation. It simply remains a visual part of the advertisement.

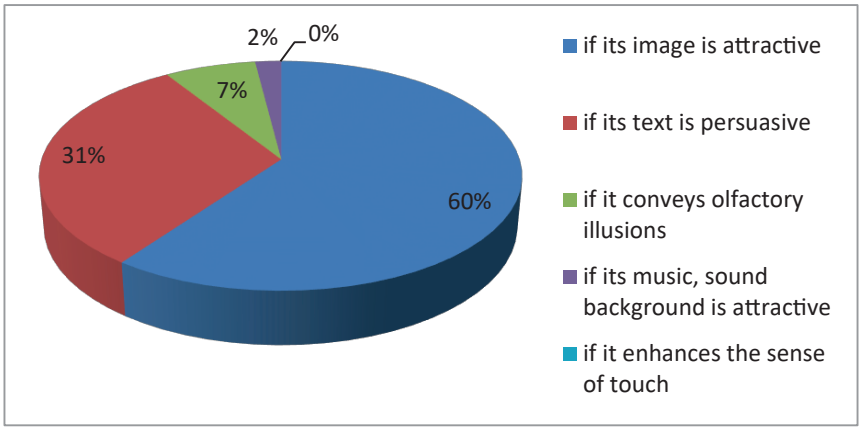
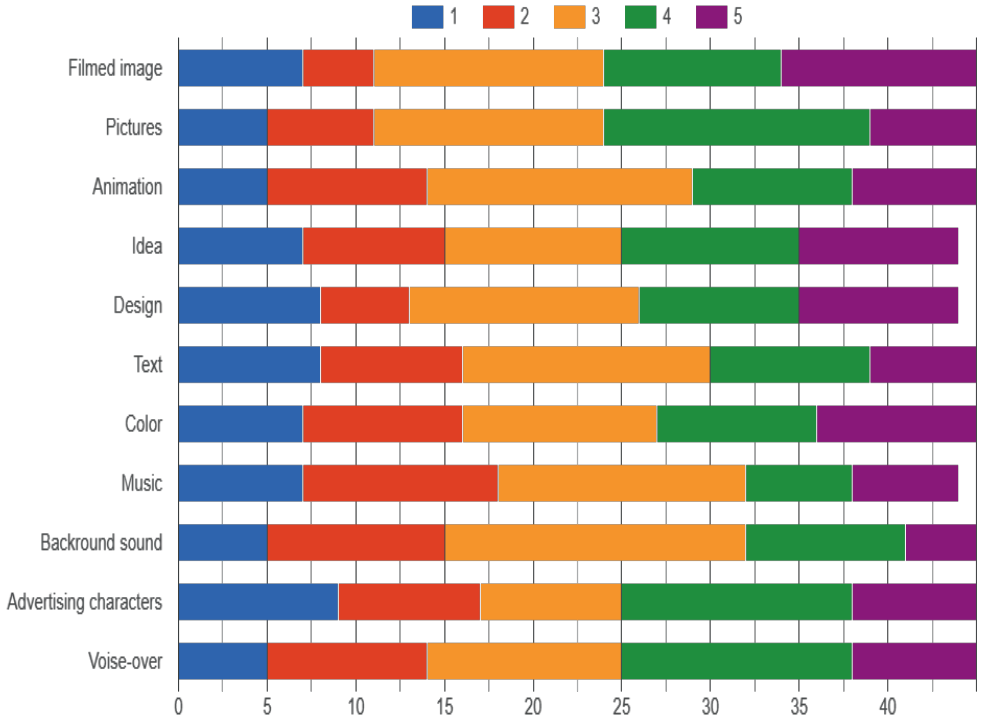


Figure 15. Advertising is More Persuasive

To persuade, it is important for advertising specialists to choose appropriate advertising elements that have the greatest impact, attract and retain the consumer's attention, etc. Therefore, respondents were asked which advertising elements attract their attention the most. Among the presented advertising elements, respondents most often identified advertising characters (20%), design (18.2%), and text (17.8%) as the most attention-grabbing. However, it is most surprising that music (25%), sound background (22.2%), and voice-over (20%) – audio advertising elements that were not mentioned as important in previous questions – are among those that attract slightly less attention. Also, animation and colour (20% each), idea (18.2%), text and advertising characters (17.8% each) are not far behind. By the way, it is interesting that filmed images (24.4%) ended up among the least attention-grabbing, because theoretically, a changing image should be one of the main attention-grabbing elements. Also, among the least attention-grabbing elements are idea, design, and colour (20% each), and the least frequently mentioned elements that do not attract attention are music (8.96%), music (13.6%), photos and text (13.3% each) (Figure 16). As can be seen, the same element can be perfectly evaluated on a certain scale compared to others, but if we were to evaluate only the attractiveness of the element itself, we would notice that many elements were evaluated as moderately attention-grabbing, in other words, respondents share their attention to all elements. Only some are singled out as very attention-grabbing or not attention-grabbing at all. This shows how important the complexity of advertising is, focusing on many factors, not just one.



(*Colour meanings: blue – very attention-grabbing; red – attracts attention; orange - neither attracting attention nor not attracting attention; green – does not attract attention; violet – completely unattractive)*

Figure16. Advertising Features that Attract the Most Attention

Concluding the discussion of the study, it's noteworthy that 78% of respondents believe that they make rational decisions during shopping. This supports theoretical assumptions that consumers believe their decisions are thoughtful, evaluated, and rational. Although the results of other responses show that their behaviour is influenced by certain factors, for example, they choose products from known brands, select products from middle shelves, stand in line at the checkout, and so on. Therefore, modern advertising communication achieves its goal: it influences the consumer in such a way that they do not notice, but respond as the advertisement suggests. It is evident that certain elements of neuromarketing are also reflected in these results. It can be concluded that neuromarketing studies are successful; they complement traditional marketing research and allow for seeing new opportunities to influence consumer behaviour. It is important that consumers - although they lack personal insight - believe they behave rationally and make thoughtful decisions.

Conclusions

Consumer behaviour is a complex and dynamic process that includes both rational and emotional, as well as subconscious, aspects of decision-making. Classical decision-making models define a sequential purchasing decision process: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, selection, and post-purchase behaviour. At each of these stages, the consumer is influenced by various internal (motivation, values, emotions) and external (social environment, culture, marketing communication) factors. However, modern studies show that in real consumer behaviour, this process is often non-linear, intuitive, and strongly linked to emotional and social influences. The decision to purchase is increasingly based on quick, emotional impulses formed by the intersection of advertising, environment, and personal experiences.

One of the key driving forces of behaviour is motivation – an internal need or stimulus that encourages the consumer to seek a certain value, solution, or experience. Consumer motivation is based on both biological (e.g., security, comfort) and psychological needs (recognition, identity, self-expression). Advertising often consciously appeals to these motivational sources – offering not only the product, but also emotional or social value. It is important to emphasize that consumers often make purchasing decisions based not only on information or price, but also on motivational and emotional impulses that act subconsciously. Therefore, motivation initiates behaviour and influences the course of choice – it can determine how much attention is paid to advertising content, which alternatives are evaluated, and how the product itself is interpreted.

Advertising communication is one of the most important marketing communication tools, with a significant impact on consumer behaviour. It operates both at the informational and emotional levels, encouraging consumer attention, engagement, recall, and ultimately the decision to purchase. Advertising, as a form of marketing communication, often

acts as the primary impulse that awakens consumer interest, provokes a need, or forms a perception of value even when such a need was not previously conscious. The structure of advertising content – image, text, sound, colours, symbolism, and emotional messages – interacts with the consumer's cognitive and sensory processes. Properly structured advertising communication can influence the consumer's attitude toward the brand, strengthen the emotional connection with the product, and encourage behaviour favourable to the seller. An important feature of advertising communication is its ability to create an emotional connection with the consumer. Emotions conveyed through advertising content (image, music, storytelling) can enhance brand recall, encourage trust, and even form loyalty. Studies show that advertisements that activate an emotional response not only last longer in memory, but also more effectively encourage action – purchasing, recommending, or showing interest. Moreover, consumers influenced by emotional advertising often decide more intuitively, evaluating alternatives less.

Neuromarketing is an interdisciplinary research field that combines knowledge and methods from neuroscience, psychology, and marketing. This field opens new opportunities to study subconscious and unconscious consumer reactions to advertising communication. Traditional research methods based on self-assessment often do not reflect true emotional or sensory responses, so neuromarketing technologies allow for a more accurate evaluation of consumer engagement, attention concentration, emotional experiences, and memory activation. The application of neuromarketing in advertising research enables the optimization of advertisement structure, the identification of the most effective communication elements, and a better understanding of how consumers process different advertising signals. Studies show that even a fraction-of-a-second emotional reaction can determine a subsequent purchase decision, making these technologies particularly significant for increasing advertising effectiveness.

The conducted empirical study, based on a quantitative anonymous questionnaire survey, revealed consumers' attitudes toward the influence of advertising communication on their behaviour and decision-making. The study involved 359 respondents representing various age and income groups, with data collected on digital platforms, ensuring respondent anonymity and representativeness. The study results showed a certain dissonance between consumers' perceptions and their actual behaviour: most respondents claim that advertising has no influence on their decisions, but the same study's data showed that as many as 44% have purchased products advertised by influencers, and nearly half (45–48%) are inclined to buy spontaneously or due to emotional factors. It was observed that although only 4% stated that advertising 'forces' them to purchase a product, as many as 60% indicated that it helps them choose or buy, and 62% do not believe that advertising affects them. This reveals a phenomenon often discussed in scientific literature – the unawareness of conscious and subconscious advertising influence. This insight aligns with neuromarketing study conclusions, indicating that advertising influence often manifests subconsciously through emotional and sensory channels, subtly shaping choices. The study also showed that visual advertising elements (e.g., attractive visuals) have the greatest impact on respondents' attention (60%), while auditory and musical aspects remain almost unnoticed (2%), although literature emphasizes that they can have a subconscious effect. This demonstrates a discrepancy between subjective consumer assessments and objectively recorded behaviour patterns. The study confirms that advertising communication has a multi-layered impact on consumer behaviour, often expressed through emotional, impulsive, and subconscious decisions. Although consumers often declare rational behaviour, their responses show that advertising remains an important factor in shaping behaviour, especially in digital environments where visual and interactive advertising formats intensively operate. The study results justify the need for businesses to invest in targeted, personalized, and emotion-based advertising content, and to encourage further mixed-method studies that combine consumer self-assessments with neuromarketing technologies.

Considering that which has been reviewed and studied, it is suggested that in the future more attention should be paid to research on personalized advertisements broadcast on new social media channels, in order to better explain the inconsistency of consumer behaviour between declared and actual choices. In addition, it is increasingly necessary to include neuromarketing elements in research that help to better understand consumers. Attention should also be paid to the synthesis of text, video and audio in advertisements and its possible impact on the consumer emotions that influence decision-making. Such research could contribute to a deeper understanding of the links between advertising communication and consumer behaviour, and establish the prerequisites for creating more effective, more meaningful advertising strategies directed at consumers.

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CONTENTS

MECHANISM FOR ENSURING RESILIENCE IN CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY: APPLYING CRISIS MANAGEMENT TOOLS IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP 9

1.1. Restoring the economic potential of Ukraine: social entrepreneurship as a tool to minimise labour risks 9

1.2. Social and economic stability in Ukraine: the role of social entrepreneurship in times of crisis 24

1.3. Establishing a crisis management system as a mechanism for enhancing enterprise competitiveness in Ukraine 37

1.4 Key issues in improving the competitiveness of industrial enterprises in contemporary conditions 53

1.5. Digital corporate social responsibility in action: a strategic pathway to sustainability and economic security in the European Union 64

1.6. Social business transformation in Lithuania 106

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY 152

2.1. Economic communication and young people's perception of the future 152

2.2. The relationship between advertising communication and consumer behaviour in purchase decision-making 182

2.3. Discourse of economic security: dominant narratives in contemporary media 237

2.4. Human resource management strategy 304

2. 5. Intellectual technologies in the economic security system: data-driven restructuring of enterprises 315

2.6. Entrepreneurial aspirations of students: barriers and plans to start business 329

2.7. Collaboration between science and business is a prerequisite for success in building a knowledge-based economy 336