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Oniomania in the purchasing behaviour of young Polish consumers – an economic approach

INTRODUCTION

Consumption is not something bad in itself; each individual living today is a buyer of various types of material goods and services. The problem arises when consumption becomes the main life goal, with the concern for better living conditions as a key area of human activity. Individuals then take a one-sided view and adopt a deformed hierarchy of values. They assess other people's behaviours and personalities from the perspective of material values.

Distortions in the area of consumption may refer to excessive consumption of certain material goods, their accumulation beyond the actual needs, or the desire to own the latest products despite those now possessed being equally good (Zalega, 2019). The most evident manifestations of consumerist civilisation tendencies – namely, what lies on the surface and is most visible – include shopping (i.e. acquisition of goods and services as a fully-fledged and independent anthropological function) and oniomania as its socio-psychological consequence. Oniomania is a dysfunctional form of excessive and pervading buying. The consumer experiences an unstoppable, chronic, and repeated impulse to go shopping and spend money and he or she loses control of this activity. Compulsive buying involves a preoccupation with shopping or an urge to buy, which is experienced as intrusive and uncontrollable. Oniomania is an issue still insufficiently explored in the field of economics – it is definitely more often discussed in psychiatric, psychological or sociological sources. Excessive shopping is a serious problem of today and it is increasingly affecting younger and younger people who do not yet have a mature psyche and system of values. The effects of excessive involvement in shopping are similar to the consequences of workaholism, netholism or gambling. They can be considered in various areas,

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notably in the sphere of emotions, finance and relations with the close ones. A shopaholic behaves like any addict: buying becomes a necessity, a compulsive consumer behaviour. Therefore, economists should take more interest in the issue of oniomania. In this context, a major economic challenge is the identification of significant factors affecting compulsive shopping, such as: attitudes of young people to shopping, time spent shopping, and shopping frequency. Considerations of the gender of young consumers, the motives and feelings accompanying individuals while shopping and the most frequently purchased products are of importance in this context. There seems to be an urgent need to educate young people so that they can recognise whether their consumer behaviour is addictive or not. In order to counteract oniomania, an appropriate system of values should be developed among young people, alongside the breeding of a personality that is resilient to marketing messages and encompasses proper consumer attitudes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE CONCEPT AND ESSENCE OF ONIOMANIA – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The word oniomania (from Greek *ωνίος* “for sale”) was introduced in 1915 by Emil Kraepelin, a German psychiatrist, to describe a pathological addiction to the desire to purchase goods and services (the so-called compulsive buying) and to spend free time shopping, and in 1924 by Eugen Bleuler, a Swiss psychiatrist, to identify pathological reflexes of buying. In other words, oniomania (from Greek *onios* + *mania* = for sale + insanity) means an obsession with buying. Its colloquial synonym is shopaholism. Close, although not analogous, terms also include the French *chosisme* (from *chose* “thing”), which can be translated as thingism, and the Russian *вещизм* (from *вещь* “thing”), identical as to the meaning of the root. Both words contain the concept of thing as the prime element. Thus, what is involved is not merely the desire to shop but also something deeper – a preference for material values over all other values. The first scientific studies on oniomania appeared in the second half of the 1980s in the United States and Canada, followed by those in Western Europe (mainly the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy) in the mid-1990s.

There is no single definition of oniomania because of its complexity. It can be said that oniomania (shopaholism, compulsive buying)² is an addiction to shopping, a compulsion to buy various (often unnecessary) items/products, uncontrolled

² Oniomania cannot be said to be the same as compensatory consumption. Compensatory consumption is not conscious; it is rather a form of unconscious self-help – one needs something from outside, something that will alleviate the pain of inner void and is present in the world of goods.

shopping that adversely affects the functioning of people. Oniomania, which is often a reaction to negative events or unacceptable emotional states, causes a decrease in mental tension and improvement of well-being shortly after the purchase. It can therefore be stated that oniomania is a form of diffusing internal tensions, reducing stress, frustration, problems, sorrows, feelings of inferiority. As argued by Monahan, Black and Gabel (1996), oniomania is characterised by an irresistible desire to buy and a sudden drop in tension after the purchase. They point out that buyers not only experience recurring acts of problematic shopping but also undesirable, repeated thoughts about buying, which indicates that they suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorders. Dittmar (2005) notes that oniomania (compulsive buying³) is maladaptive preoccupation with buying, characterised by impulses or behaviours that cause distress, require time, and entail financial, social and vocational problems. A similar definition was proposed by McElroy *et al.* (1994), who defined oniomania as a sense of strong compulsion to buy combined with a total or partial loss of control, causing much damage, including suffering, a strong feeling of guilt, financial and social problems. Oniomania is undoubtedly neurotic in nature, hence it is treated as a mental disorder that involves a strong, irrefutable inner compulsion to acquire numerous, even unnecessary, things, persistent thoughts about new purchases, spending large amounts of money to this end (often exceeding the financial capacities of the consumer and leading to debts), loss of control over the buying process and over the time spent shopping.

It should also be borne in mind that oniomania can involve just looking at various goods – the so-called window shopping. It is practised by people who cannot afford to actually shop and who satisfy the need to buy by watching and being surrounded by products.

Researchers are not of the same opinion about how to treat oniomania. Valence *et al.* (1988), D'Astous (1990) and Elliot (1994) note that the oniomaniac tendency should be regarded as a permanent feature and its intensity can be measured on a continuum. People who buy rationally are at one extreme, whereas those who buy compulsively are at the other. In this case, the addiction to consumption is not qualitatively different from the so-called “normal” consumption. This means

Compensatory shopping behaviour may lead to oniomania. According to psychologists, oniomania involves compensatory consumer behaviour displaying typical features of addiction, meaning that actions are narrowed to specific objects, one cannot refrain from them, increases the dose and suffers from the abstinence syndrome in many cases. The transition between compensatory consumption and oniomania is gradual.

³ Compulsive buying is often regarded as impulse buying. Impulse purchases are made suddenly and spontaneously, most often under the influence of an external stimulus (view of goods on a shelf). In the case of impulse buying, there is no element of reducing tension and coping with negative feelings or situations. Compulsive buying, on the other hand, is spread over time, primarily intended to deal with negative emotions (internal factor), requires much time and usually involves the purchase of unnecessary things. Compulsive buyers can also sometimes buy on impulse, but the main driver is the need to free themselves from tension and negative emotions, chiefly fear.

that some consumers exhibit dysfunctional behaviour while buying, and others' behaviours are normal, with the latter sometimes also succumbing to the shopping addiction. Clinicians, on the other hand, treat this type of disorder as dichotomous, understanding it as either present or not (Valence et al., 1988; Faber, O'Guinn, 1992; Maccarrone-Eaglen, Schofield, 2017).

Oniomania may be considered an aspect of an impulse control disorder, or an obsessive-compulsive disorder. Also referred to as compulsive shopping, shopping addiction, shopaholism or compulsive buying, oniomania, as is indicated by research, has become a significant concern in our society, right up there with addictions such as alcoholism, eating disorders or substance abuse (Claes et al., 2010; Müller et al., 2014). About 90% of those affected are female, with the age of onset starting in late teens or early twenties, and the condition is chronic. Some researchers report that there is a higher prevalence of compulsive shopping in women due to lower levels of serotonin. These women tend to shop compulsively, binge eat, or exhibit kleptomania. In addition, compulsive shoppers have been shown to have significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, binge eating and impulse control disorders (Klein, 2013).

The most characteristic features of oniomania mentioned by researchers include:

- walking around shops without a specific purpose (this can be described as a spatial addiction, that is an addiction to a place – a supermarket, a shop, a market);
- viewing most products at a shop (this is connected with the fascination with abundance, visual fascination, and can be referred to as a kind of voyeurism);
- an irrational desire to buy an unnecessary item (this is a strict addiction to objects, linked with the lack of self-control and infantilism);
- constantly talking about the purchased product (a kind of fetishism, or exaggerated fascination with things that becomes madness);
- changed mental states when refraining from visiting shops (a state similar to the bipolar disorder, neurosis and anxiety).

It is worth noting, however, that oniomania, along with excessive consumerism, is a visible manifestation of the civilisational tendency that underlies today's consumer society.

Compulsive shoppers try to counteract feelings of depression, anger, loneliness or low self-esteem through the emotional "lift" and momentary euphoria provided by compulsive shopping. Purchases can sometimes act as a symbol for the person's ideal self. For example, a woman who is insecure about her looks may compulsively buy fashionable clothing or jewellery to feel more beautiful. When the compulsive shopper shops, endorphins are released and there is an adrenaline rush – shopping is exciting! The rush may often be followed by a sense of shame, disappointment and guilt (Williams, Grisham, 2012; Unger et al., 2014; Robbins, Clark, 2015; Spinella, Lester, 2015; Raudsepp, Parts, 2015; Shehzadi *et al.*, 2016). Naturally, you want to feel the rush again. This behaviour can spiral dramatically into an abyss of significant mental, financial, emotional, marital and

familial distress. This type of shopping is a behavioural addiction characterised by a reduced capacity for self-control and a lower resistance to external triggers. It causes serious psychological, social and financial consequences for sufferers and their families⁴.

On the basis of her research, McElroy *et al.* (1994) distinguished four groups of oniomania:

1. Bargain hunters. These are people who buy mainly at sales, at discount prices and at bargain online auctions. Such consumers are not interested in what happens to the products that they have bought, and they often fail to even unpack them. What matters to them is the very act of purchase, the “bargain” that once found, gives a sense of uniqueness and pride.
2. Shopaholics – collectors. Such people are interested in buying only selected products. They have appropriate competences to buy such things, which increases their self-esteem.
3. Innovators. These are people generally keeping up with novelties, meaning that they chiefly buy new, fashionable and most popular products.
4. Window shoppers. These are people who cannot afford to actually shop and who satisfy the need to buy by watching products in display windows and by being surrounded by products on the shelves.

Another typology of oniomania was developed by the American neurologist Sorrentino. He also divided compulsive buyers into four categories (Muroff *et al.*, 2009):

1. Promotion hunters buying all kinds of products at an “attractive” price.
2. Collectors interested only in a few selected items.
3. “Omnivores” buying anything that happens to be at hand.
4. Virtual buyers spending much time shopping online.

The consequences of compulsive buying behaviour can be just as severe as those of other types of addiction – such as alcoholism and problem gambling – with people falling into serious debt and their relationships falling apart. But unlike these addictions, there is no national charity dedicated to compulsive buying.

The percentage of young people suffering from oniomania is increasing. In addition, young people are very susceptible to marketing tricks and have little knowledge in the field of consumer education. Slogans such as “Feel the freedom, liberty, unleash your energy” have a strong impact on their minds and strengthen their belief that they are always satisfied after having done shopping. People with higher disposable incomes notice the negative consequences of excessive shopping with a certain delay, while those earning less from the very beginning struggle with such problems as: lying, stealing from relatives, loans, overdrafts,

⁴In 2001, oniomania was classified under the category of impulse control disorders not otherwise specified. Oniomania is an addiction, like alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, sexoholism or netoholism. It is driven by an unrestrained, irrevocable and irresistible need to perform a certain act. It differs from drug addiction or alcoholism only in that there is no physiological addiction.

credits, liquidity problems, loss of creditworthiness, debt, and in extreme cases – troubles with bailiffs and debt collectors, and the resultant family and marital crises.

KEY DETERMINANTS OF ONIOMANIA

Oniomania is an extremely complex and poorly understood disorder influenced by many determinants. It is supported by civilisational, social and cultural changes that have been taking place in recent years. Not only ontogenesis but also life experience is important in human development. External factors that are determined by the environment can lead to misconceptions and wrong decisions. In the developed countries of the world, where the quality of life is high, citizens have greater access to various types of consumer goods. By emphasising the value of objects and purchases, the media, especially television and the Internet, create and reinforce materialistic values, and thus consumerist attitudes, contributing to the increased risk of excessive shopping.

An important determinant of oniomania is the reference group. Wishing to belong to a specific group that values various material goods of frequently reputable brands sold only at selected shops of producers, young people, in order not to feel inferior to others, have to buy expensive fashionable clothes, cosmetics, gadgets, because “their” social group requires this. Suggestions and recommendations from others, usually peers, are treated as a reference point for the decisions made. A big role of friends’ influence may result from weakened family bonds characteristic of contemporary society. Polish research conducted among young people has confirmed that oniomaniac inclinations were associated with strong sensitivity of teenagers to their friends’ opinions (Niesiołowska, 2010).

Significant factors in oniomania include stress, ways of coping with it and resistance to it. A lack of satisfying relationships with the environment and personality traits of addicts make them exposed to an increased sense of stress which, in turn, is positively correlated with an addiction to compulsive buying (Harvanko et al., 2013). In the case of oniomania, people usually try to cope with stress by adopting ineffective strategies such as avoidance and social withdrawal, while less often trying to resort to efficient techniques such as: affirmation (the ability to accept yourself as you are), meditation (a method of dismissing intruding thoughts), coaching (support on the path out of addiction) and art therapy (a therapy based on evoking hidden emotions in a shopaholic, emotions that are difficult to verbalise or acknowledge).

An important determinant of oniomania is age. The relationship here is negative, meaning that younger people seem to be more likely to lose control of shopping. This tendency decreases with age. This correlation is confirmed by numerous studies. As claimed by Christenson *et al.* (1994), a strong oniomaniac tendency usually appears in young people around the age of 18 and decreases after the age of 35 (Christenson et al., 1994; Schlosser et al., 1994; Zhang et al., 2017;

Islam et al., 2018). Research conducted among young Scots aged 16–18 showed that almost 46% of teenagers exhibit early oniomanic tendencies (Dittmar, 2005). Research among young people in the USA and Mexico demonstrates that they display a stronger oniomanic tendency than representatives of the older generation surveyed in earlier years (Roberts, Manolis, 2000).

Gender is an important factor linked to oniomania. Women are far more frequently compulsive buyers than men. Based on the results of studies conducted so far, it is estimated that women can account for up to 94% of all addicts (Black et al., 1998). Moreover, women are thought to tend to cope with stress by focusing on emotions. Shopping frees them from tension and allows them to gain pleasure. It should be added, however, that some researchers argue that a group of compulsive male buyers could be more numerous than it would appear from the past research if they were not afraid to admit to such a weakness. The proportions of women and men suffering from such an addiction even out if e-commerce is taken into account. Research shows that the majority of people using such services are young men aged approximately 20 and women who are eager to pay for purchased goods by credit card (Guerreschi, 2005).

Another factor associated with the inclination to shop in excess is of neurobiological nature, related to genetics and heredity. Oniomanics more often than average have relatives with similar conditions, suffer from anxiety and depressive disorders, tend to develop other conditions such as eating disorders and, above all, overeating and bulimia, and are more often addicted to alcohol and other substances (Faber, O'Guinn, 1992). It should be noted that a common element of these disorders is the low level of serotonin, which is a chemical substance contributing to well-being and impulsive behaviour. That serotonin is important is also evidenced by reduced propensity to shop after taking drugs that increase its level (McElroy et al., 1994).

Also consumer behaviour patterns followed in the family are connected with oniomania. Compulsive shopping among young people may (although do not have to) be founded in behaviour patterns taken over from their parents. The development of oniomania in young people may also result from excessive saving and irrational spending by their parents. It appears that a similar role is played by rewarding children's behaviour with money. Engagement in shopping in adulthood may also ensue from mental needs unmet in childhood, including the need for love and acceptance. DeSarbo and Edwards (1996) argue that a significant percentage of oniomanics includes those who experienced psychological abuse in family as children.

The fact that oniomania is associated with young age of consumers is strongly correlated with the problems of adolescence and the beginnings of economic independence with first bank accounts and credit cards predisposing to compulsive buying.

Oniomania has an ally, namely payment cards used instead of real money (Jung, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017; Islam et al., 2018). One does not see the denomination of spent banknotes, and the transfer of financial resources becomes "unrealistic". The consumer's need is met by the purchase of a specific product or service, while the

payment itself is deferred. The consequences of the purchase are noticed only with a certain delay, such as for example credit card charges, overdue credit instalments, overdraft.

The structure of personality also contributes to oniomania. The inclination to buy compulsively may be an effect of a histrionic or antisocial personality. According to the analytical approach, shopaholism is a destructive defence reaction to inner tension. It can result from defence mechanisms or be a substitute for one's other unmet needs. In the second half of the 1980s, Malhotra (2009) conducted research on the meaning of the "self" structure in terms of addiction to shopping. On that basis, he stated that the inclination to shop is more related to the ideal than the real image of "self". This is mainly because advertisements referring to self-acceptance attempt to change consumer attitudes towards products by stimulating positive feelings about things and show how having a specific product can contribute to increased self-esteem. This is especially important to some young people who are unsure of their own worth, shy and who have different complexes. Polish research has partially confirmed the relationship between personality dimensions and uncontrolled shopping. There are positive correlations of extraversion and negative correlations of conscientiousness and agreeableness with the propensity to do unplanned shopping. In other studies covering female shopping centre customers, it was shown that out of five personality traits in the Big Five model, only two were significantly correlated with shopping behaviour: neuroticism correlated positively and conscientiousness correlated negatively (Ogińska-Bulik, 2010).

A review of research on the personality of shopaholics revealed that most of them are characterised by such traits as: dependence on others, impulsiveness, penchant for fantasising, anxiety and depression, the use of escape strategies to cope with stress, including denial, lack of impulse control, low self-esteem, search of acceptance from others, materialistic tendencies, and sensation seeking (DeSarbo, Edwards, 1996).

THE SCALE OF ONIOMANIA IN THE WORLD AND IN POLAND

Oniomania is particularly evident in Western societies, although the problem extends globally and affects 2–16% of the whole population. Shopping episodes happen 2–3 times a week, although there are shopaholics who go shopping several times a day. As research shows, material status is generally of little importance; both rich and low-income individuals buy. Data obtained in the late 1990s in the USA demonstrated that over 15 million Americans are oniomaniacs, and about 20% of their income is spent to cover credit card debt (Woronowicz, 2009). Data obtained from approximately 2.5 thousand adult respondents showed that 6% of surveyed women and 5.8% of men in the USA admitted being shopaholics (Koran et al., 2006). Faber and O'Guinn (1989) indicate that from 2 to 8% of

Illinois inhabitants suffer from a compulsive buying disorder. According to other research, almost 10% of the American population are oniomanics, and 15% of UK citizens admit being addicted to shopping. In Germany, the percentage of compulsive buyers is estimated at 6.9% (Müller et al., 2010; 2015). Oniomania also affects Italy, where between 1 and 8% of people are obsessed with shopping. 80–90% of compulsive buyers are women, mostly aged 30–40, although recent years have seen an increased share of men (Faber, O’Guinn, 1992; Lee, Workman, 2015). An even higher percentage of 92% of compulsive female buyers is noted by Dittmar (2005). Recent research indicates that compulsive buying behaviour affects almost 5% of the adult population in developed countries – particularly young women in low-income groups. And the condition is on the rise, with latest estimates indicating that around 14% of people have a mild form of the condition.

The excessive shopping index is steadily growing in Poland. It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of Poles who are oniomanics. Statistical data suggest that this condition affects approximately 2–5% of the population, notably those with middle incomes. Surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) in 2011–2012 (www.kbpn.gov.pl) among over 4 thousand respondents, reveal that the percentage of shopping addicts in Poland is estimated at 3.5%, which is almost one million compulsive buyers, including 5% of women and 1.9% of men. Most addicts have completed secondary education and are single (Badora et al., 2012; Ogińska-Bulik, 2014). On the other hand, CBOS surveys of 2014 showed that the problem of oniomania may affect 4.1% of the population of Poles aged over 15. More than 80% of those addicted to excessive shopping are women (*Pracoholicy....*, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH CONCEPTUALISATION

The tool used to conduct the research was an original questionnaire comprising 50 closed-ended questions regarding alternative consumer trends⁵, including oniomania. The survey was carried out from 1st February to 1st May 2018. The difficulty lay in an appropriate definition of the study subject because the category

⁵ “Alternative” consumer trends are objective and long-term trends in general choices, behaviours and preferences of consumers that are a consequence of socio-political, legal, cultural, demographic and technological changes continuously taking place in the market environment. They are a rich source of incentives to develop new products (Zalega, 2015). The research analysed selected alternative consumer trends such as oniomania, consumer cosmopolitanism, cocooning collaborative consumption, sustainable consumption and prosumption. It should be noted that both research and analysis of consumer trends largely boil down to deductive reasoning based on a wide spectrum of observations that are difficult to generalise.

of “young consumer” is not clearly specified in the literature. Scholarly publications refer to various age ranges for the group of young consumers, for example 15–29 years (Szulce, 2009, p. 637), 15–34 years (Olejniczuk-Merta, 2001, p. 40), 18–25 years (Grønhoj, 2007, p. 243), 18–30 years (Kumar, Kapoor, 2017, p. 218), 18–35 years (Phillips, Stanton, 2004, p. 8; Ofosu et al., 2013, p. 288). In this article, those between 18 and 34 years of age are considered to be the population of young people. The upper age limit, that is 34 years, is regarded as the end of youth in the Polish literature. The participants were recruited via the “ankietka.pl” website and social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Messenger, and e-mail. In order to partake in the survey, those interested had to visit a specific website containing the questionnaire. It was also distributed across special forums as well as university and private school fanpages. In accordance with the research assumptions, the sample included persons aged 18–34, representatives of Generations Y and Z⁶, who took independent purchasing decisions in the market. In order to select the sample, the selective quota sampling procedure was used. The characteristics (quotas) covered by the research were: gender and age. During the data processing, information from respondents was eliminated if the questionnaires were incomplete or incorrect (17 instances). From among 606 initial questionnaires, 589 were considered eligible, representing 97.19% of the total sample. Further, they were coded, and the data set thus created was processed by a statistical package. For the statistical analysis of the data, the statistical package SPSS, version 25, was used.

Young consumers were chosen for the research in view of their growing importance and decision-making power in today’s households, and because they respond to the changing environment, globalisation and its impact on consumption, lifestyle and emerging new consumer trends more intensely than other market participants. Undoubtedly, understanding their reasons, behaviours and market attitudes can help enterprises not only to decide on appropriate innovative marketing strategies but also to determine the right development path, allowing companies to remain in the market and make their product (service) offer attractive to new customers, especially young ones, despite dynamic changes in consumption and ever faster development of mobile technologies and applications.

⁶ Consumers representing Generation Y (people born between 1978 and 1994) and Generation Z (those born after 1994) primarily communicate through social media such as Facebook or Twitter, and their purchasing decisions are determined by their peers’ opinions posted on online forums. What is characteristic of this group is impulse buying and a large share of online transactions. Generation Y consumers excel at modern technologies and feel good in virtual communities. They expect diverse products, competitive prices, new experiences and pleasure, and products and services tailored to their individual needs and preferences. Generation Z, on the other hand, is the youngest group of consumers in the market, with such characteristics as: connected, computerized, always clicking, community-oriented, and content-centric. Compared to Generation Y, they use new technologies even more. More in: Cohen (2009, pp. 57–59) and Williams and Page (2011, pp. 1–17).

Studies on the prevalence of oniomania among young people are relatively rare. Studies on cross-social phenomena in the population of young people are prognostic. Young people are a sensitive barometer of the state of and changes in the awareness of adults, even if they look for sense and authenticity in a slightly more sensitive way than the latter. Considering compulsive buying among young people, not only can theses be formulated but also various factors influencing the development of this phenomenon in the future can be analysed. Undoubtedly, such variables as age, gender or household income largely affect compulsive behaviour of young consumers. While the results obtained in different countries are principally convergent in the case of the first variable, the research conclusions are ambiguous for the other ones. Most results indicate that women suffer more from oniomania than men, yet there are also findings – especially of research carried out on large national samples – that do not confirm these relationships. The same holds true of the variable concerning the wealth of young people. On the one hand, studies show, in some countries, a greater propensity for compulsive buying among people with a lower income than among those with a higher income; on the other hand, they show the reverse relationship. When comparing research results from different countries, it should be remembered that individual studies differ in terms of methodological background, which can have a significant impact on the results obtained. These methodological differences relate to data acquisition techniques, sampling methods or the period in which the research was carried out. All this makes it difficult to compare results internationally.

The key aim of the study was to identify oniomania in consumer behaviour of young people and to prove that these behaviours are largely determined by demographic and social characteristics such as: gender, age, marital status, wealth, and place of residence. The study focused on the analysis of selected factors (attitudes to shopping, time spent shopping, shopping frequency, motives and feelings accompanying consumers when shopping, and most often bought products) that affect compulsive shopping among young consumers. With this in mind, three research hypotheses were put forward:

H_1 : Oniomania is visible among less affluent and less educated young consumers.

H_2 : Young women tend to buy in excess more often than young men.

H_3 : Oniomania is more common among single people who treat shopping as an opportunity to interact with others.

SELECTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

Studying consumer behaviours is an extremely intricate process. This is due to the complexity of consumption and consumer purchasing behaviours in the field of consumer decision-making. Such research encompasses an important step

to explain the phenomenon examined, namely adoption of specific indicators. This is essential because an indicator is used to define a certain characteristic of an object or phenomenon which is in such a relation with another characteristic that indicates the occurrence of the latter when it occurs itself. An indicator is a measurable, i.e. empirically available, variable. When consumer behaviours are investigated, indicators explaining the complexity of this phenomenon include demographic (gender, age, place of residence, household size) and socio-economic indicators (education, disposable income).

Table 1. The structure of respondents

Items	Number of respondents (N=589)	Percentage share
Age:		
18–23	228	38.7
24–29	175	29.7
30–34	186	31.6
Gender:		
Female	325	55.2
Male	264	44.8
Marital status:		
Single	236	40.1
In a cohabitation or LAT relationship	278	47.1
Married	72	12.3
Divorced	3	0.5
Education:		
Primary	15	2.5
Basic vocational	57	9.8
Secondary	180	30.6
Bachelor/engineer	226	38.3
Master	111	18.8
Income per capita (monthly, in PLN):		
Up to PLN 2000.00	75	12.7
PLN 2001.00–3000.00	214	36.3
PLN 3001.00–4000.00	166	28.2
More than PLN 4000.00	128	21.8
I have no income of my own	6	1.0
Place of residence:		
Rural area	29	4.9
City of up to 20 thousand inhabitants	39	6.6
City of 20–100 thousand inhabitants	53	9.0
City of 100–200 thousand inhabitants	71	12.1
City of 200–500 thousand inhabitants	109	18.5
City of over 500 thousand inhabitants	288	48.9

Source: own study.

589 people took part in the survey, including 325 women and 264 men. Nearly half of the respondents lived in cities of more than 500 thousand inhabitants. Every third participant had completed secondary education, less than 2/5 of the respondents held a bachelor's or engineering degree, and every fifth held a master's degree. The average age of the respondents is around 25 years. They were mostly students who combined studies with work, whereas the unemployed formed the smallest group. Almost half of the respondents lived in cohabitation or LAT (Living Apart Together) relationships. More than 2/5 of them were single and one in eight was married. As regards monthly disposable income per capita, the largest group earned from PLN 2001.00 to PLN 3000.00. However, an astonishingly great number (almost half of the respondents) assessed their current financial situation as good, and 5.9% as very good.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research examined the attitudes of young consumers that can be classified as compulsive buying. It essentially checked whether young people understood the concept of oniomania and whether their possible competences translated into practical behaviour. To this end, respondents were asked about their understanding of the term "oniomania". Based on the results, it was established that only every twentieth respondent not only knew the notion but also understood its essence. In turn, 15% of those surveyed had merely heard this term but could not explain its meaning correctly. Nearly 4/5 of young respondents did not know this concept at all or had heard it for the first time.

The research also concerned the attitudes of young people towards shopping. This is an extremely important element to consider when analysing shopping habits and preferences of young consumers (Table 2).

In the context of the findings, it can be concluded that over 4/5 of the respondents like shopping or like it very much. Only 6% of young people claim to be reluctant to shop, and every eighth respondent admits disliking shopping. A positive or negative attitude towards shopping is determined by the age, education level and wealth of those surveyed. Shopping is a big or very big pleasure for people aged 24–29, predominantly single women or women in cohabitation relationships, with secondary education or a bachelor's degree, earning a monthly income of up to PLN 3000.00 per capita and mostly living in cities of over 100 thousand inhabitants. The survey results reveal that young people with basic vocational or secondary education declared that they liked shopping more often than university graduates (Kendall's tau-b coefficient was 0.247 for $p \leq 0.01$). The greatest reluctance to shop, on the other hand, was exhibited by consumers aged 30–34, mainly men (living in LAT relationships or divorced), holding a master's or engineering degree, earning a monthly income of above PLN 3000.00 per capita and living in large urban agglomerations.

Table 2. Young consumers' attitudes towards shopping (%)

Items	Attitude towards shopping			
	I like it very much	I like it	I do shopping because I have to	I don't like it
Total	59.4	21.9	6.2	12.5
Age:				
18–23	57.9	23.5	1.3	17.3
24–29	64.5	24.1	6.1	5.3
30–34	55.8	18.1	11.2	14.9
Gender:				
Female	63.2	20.9	4.1	11.8
Male	55.6	22.9	8.3	13.2
Marital status:				
Single	61.0	22.9	6.0	10.1
In a cohabitation or LAT relationship	61.2	22.3	3.2	13.3
Married	56.8	21.6	8.4	13.2
Divorced	58.6	20.8	7.2	13.4
Education:				
Primary	60.3	22.7	5.9	11.1
Basic vocational	55.7	22.4	9.7	12.2
Secondary	61.2	21.6	4.4	12.8
Bachelor/engineer	61.3	21.0	4.7	13.0
Master	58.5	21.8	6.3	13.4
Income per capita:				
Up to PLN 2000.00	58.3	23.7	5.6	12.4
PLN 2001.00–3000.00	59.6	22.6	5.4	12.4
PLN 3001.00–4000.00	58.7	20.5	7.2	13.6
More than PLN 4000.00	59.1	21.1	6.7	13.1
I have no income of my own	61.3	21.6	6.1	11.0
Place of residence:				
Rural area	58.2	22.2	6.7	12.9
City of up to 20 thousand inhabitants	59.9	20.8	6.5	12.8
City of 20–100 thousand inhabitants	63.2	22.5	3.9	10.4
City of 100–200 thousand inhabitants	57.6	22.8	6.5	13.1
City of 200–500 thousand inhabitants	59.0	22.0	6.4	12.6
City of over 500 thousand inhabitants	58.5	21.1	7.2	13.2

Source: own study.

The respondents' motivation to shop was an important issue. It should be noted that a significant percentage of purchases is conditional upon a relevant motive the effect of which is the achievement of the intended result. The psychological classification includes six different types of motivation, namely: hedonic, impulsive, compulsive, identity-related, compensatory, and socio-emotional

(Zawadzki et al., 2010). The study focused on the first four psychological aspects of shopping (Table 3).

Table 3. Motivation of the young consumers surveyed to shop (%)

Type of motivation	Gender	
	Female	Male
Hedonic	38.6	29.3
Impulsive	30.4	32.4
Compulsive	21.3	25.1
Identity-related	9.7	13.2

Source: own study.

The motivations of young consumers to shop are varied and depend on gender. The presented data show that the hedonic motivation, which involves buying those products that have a certain meaning to the consumer and carry their symbolism, e.g. jewellery, branded clothes, etc., is very important for almost 2/5 of women and for every third man. The purchase itself is perceived by consumers as a pleasant process that does not make them feel guilty. The impulsive motivation, closely associated with impulse control disorders and usually conditioned by weak willpower and a compulsion to shop, was indicated by 30.4% of women and 32.4% of men. Every fifth woman and every fourth man, when shopping, are driven by compulsive motivation, where internal factors including persistent thoughts and anxiety are significant. In turn, every tenth woman and every eighth man do shopping for identity-related reasons. This motive for shopping is directly related to the expression of one's "self" through the acquisition of specific items.

When analysing the issue of oniomania, the frequency of shopping done by young people is significant (Table 4).

Table 4. Frequency of shopping done by the young consumers surveyed (%)

Items	Gender	
	Female	Male
Less than once a month	0.0	1.7
Once a month	1.8	5.6
Once a week	6.7	3.5
A few times a week	91.5	89.2

Source: own study.

The analysis makes it possible to conclude that a vast majority of the respondents do shopping a few times a week. Only every fifteenth woman and fewer than every thirtieth man do shopping once a week, and almost 6% of men

shop once a month. The socialisation model adopted by society, where it is women who “should” do shopping, may to some extent explain the apparent differences in the shopping frequency between the sexes. The second possibility is that women and men have different reasons to shop.

The research also focused on the feelings experienced by respondents while shopping (Table 5).

Table 5. Feelings experienced by the young consumers surveyed while shopping (%)

Items	Gender	
	Female	Male
I don't feel any emotions when shopping	37.6	49.2
I feel great pleasure when shopping	12.5	5.1
I sometimes feel anxious before shopping	15.2	19.8
I try to do shopping quickly, sticking to a previously made shopping list	1.1	10.2
I feel relaxed when shopping	33.6	15.7

Source: own study.

The analysis shows that much more women than men tend not only to shop more frequently but also declare that they enjoy shopping (Kendall's tau-b coefficient was 0.342 for $p \leq 0.01$). It can therefore be concluded that in the context of shopping addiction, gender is a risk factor: the probability that a problem of compulsive buying will arise is higher among women than among men. It should be noted here that all the research conducted so far both in Poland and abroad confirms the hypothesis that shopping addiction is more common in women than in men. While the percentage of people struggling with this disorder varies depending on the type of analysis, the results of such analyses are consistent as regards the distribution of this disorder by gender. The proportions of women and men suffering from this addiction even out if e-commerce is taken into account. Research shows that the majority of people using such services are young men aged 18–25 and women who are eager to pay for purchased goods by credit card (Guerreschi, 2005).

Almost half of young men and less than 2/5 of women do not feel any specific emotions when shopping. Every third woman and every sixth man feel relaxed, whereas every eighth woman and every twentieth man admit that shopping is sheer pleasure and feels great. In turn, every sixth female respondent and every fourth man surveyed feel some anxiety before shopping, and only every tenth young man admits feeling tense and sticking to a previously made list when shopping.

The survey shows that 12.5% of young consumers (74 respondents) buy compulsively. The respondents who indicated, in the survey questionnaire, that they were very pleased while shopping and that they shopped a few times

a week were asked questions about their motivation to shop frequently and often recklessly, as oniomaniacs do (Table 6).

Table 6. Factors motivating young consumers to buy compulsively

Items	Number of respondents (N=74)/Percentage share	Percentage share	
		Female	Male
Self-esteem	(40) 53.9	55.2	52.6
Weakened family ties	(14) 19.3	24.5	14.1
Loneliness and lack of self-acceptance	(29) 39.6	44.3	34.9
Sensitivity to opinions of friends and acquaintances, related to seeking acceptance from others	(18) 24.6	35.8	13.4
Stress caused by a lack of a satisfying relationship with the environment (avoidance of and withdrawal from social contacts)	(28) 38.5	41.7	35.3
Unmet mental needs in childhood (psychological abuse in the family)	(8) 10.2	9.2	11.2
Low self-esteem	(28) 37.9	46.3	29.5
Sensation seeking	(16) 21.6	20.7	22.5
Poor money management skills	(14) 18.9	21.6	16.2

N.B.: Respondents could choose several answers.

Source: own study.

The survey shows that the strongest motive for young consumers to buy compulsively is self-esteem (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = -0.321$, $p < 0.01$). It can thus be concluded that the lower the self-esteem, the greater the inclination of young consumers to shop, hence the higher the risk of shopaholism. What motivates the respondents to do frequent and reckless shopping is also loneliness and lack of self-acceptance, stress caused by a lack of a satisfying relationship with the environment, and low self-esteem. All these reasons for shopping and purchasing unnecessary things frequently have a psychological basis and are strongly associated with the personality structure. Almost 2/5 of the respondents who bought compulsively indicated these answers, with women admitting that much more frequently than men. This means that the inclination to shop in excess is associated with a wish to increase the sense of self-esteem among the respondents (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = 0.197$, $p < 0.01$), which is particularly significant among young consumers who are insecure, shy, and have various complexes. In the context of the survey results, oniomaniacs most commonly describe themselves as singles, belong to the 24–29 age group, have completed secondary education or hold a bachelor's/engineering degree, earn a monthly per capita income of below PLN 3000.00, and live in cities of up to 100 thousand inhabitants. On

the other hand, oniomania drivers that were less frequently mentioned by the respondents include unmet mental needs in childhood, weakened family ties and poor money management skills. These motives are polyetiological, with the personality of young consumers being of great importance among many reasons. It is formed under the influence of factors such as: family structure, interpersonal relationships between adults and children, lifestyle, and money management. The first two factors are related to young people's sense of inferiority and inadequacy felt from their parents in childhood or adolescence, which they compensate by excessive shopping in order to experience calm, relief, acceptance and social recognition. Poor money management skills, in turn, are a consequence of unreasonable money management and a lack of saving abilities, weak assertiveness and resistance to various types of marketing gimmicks. These drivers were most frequently mentioned by the youngest respondents, mostly women aged 18–23, with secondary or basic vocational education, a per capita income not exceeding PLN 3000.00 and living in cities of up to 200 thousand inhabitants.

Another issue in the survey was to check how much time young consumers spend shopping (Table 7).

Table 7. Time that respondents spend shopping (%)

Items	Time spent shopping		
	Up to 1 hour	Up to 3 hours	More than 3 hours
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Total	52.4	26.6	21.0
Age:			
18–23	50.2	33.2	16.6
24–29	54.4	22.8	22.8
30–34	52.6	23.8	23.6
Gender:			
Female	45.3	25.1	29.6
Male	59.4	28.1	12.5
Marital status:			
Single	51.6	25.0	23.4
In a cohabitation or LAT relationship	53.9	27.1	19.0
Married	52.6	26.5	20.9
Divorced	51.5	27.8	20.7
Education:			
Primary	51.4	25.9	22.7
Basic vocational	51.9	25.6	22.5
Secondary	52.0	27.6	20.4
Bachelor/engineer	52.3	27.6	20.1
Master	54.4	26.3	19.3

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Income per capita:			
Up to PLN 2000.00	53.8	23.6	22.6
PLN 2001.00–3000.00	51.9	24.4	23.7
PLN 3001.00–4000.00	52.4	27.9	19.7
More than PLN 4000.00	52.1	28.8	19.1
I have no income of my own	51.8	28.3	19.9
Place of residence:			
Rural area	54.2	28.1	17.7
City of up to 20 thousand inhabitants	54.5	25.7	19.8
City of 20–100 thousand inhabitants	52.3	26.4	21.3
City of 100–200 thousand inhabitants	50.6	25.8	23.6
City of 200–500 thousand inhabitants	52.6	26.2	21.2
City of over 500 thousand inhabitants	50.2	27.4	22.4

Source: own study.

The greatest amount of time is spent shopping by respondents aged 30–34, chiefly single women who have completed basic or basic vocational education, earn a monthly per capita income not exceeding PLN 3000.00, and usually live in cities of up to 200 thousand inhabitants. The shortest time, on the other hand, is spent shopping by consumers aged 24–29, mainly men (living in LAT or cohabitation relationships), holding a master's or engineering degree, earning a monthly income of above PLN 3000.00 per capita and living in small cities of up to 20 thousand inhabitants.

The findings concerning the attitudes of young respondents towards shopping, shopping frequency, time spent shopping and feelings experienced while shopping are very much in line with studies carried out in many countries around the world (Faber, O'Guinn, 1989; Fries et al., 2007; Müller et al., 2010; Klein, 2013; Lee, Workman, 2015; Islam et al., 2018). Virtually all studies confirm that the problem of oniomania is the most prevalent among young women between 30 and 40 years of age, although the age of onset of this disorder is estimated to be 18–20. If untreated or underestimated, it can become chronic and more severe over time. The hypothesis that shopping addiction affects women to a greater extent than men has its source in the analysis of cultural and civilisational realities in which shopping has always been considered a typically feminine and socially accepted activity. It should be added, however, that some researchers argue that a group of compulsive male buyers could be more numerous than it would appear from hitherto research if they were not afraid to admit to such a weakness. What should also be noted is that women and men have different reasons to shop. Research carried out by Badora *et al.* (2012). on the Polish population reveals that women do shopping rather on the basis of characteristics of the socio-emotional model, whereas men

value a certain element of competition associated with the purchase of an item and with properties emphasising its uniqueness. The proportions of women and men suffering from oniomania even out if e-commerce is taken into account. Research shows that the majority of people using such services are young men aged approximately 20–25 and women who are eager to pay for purchased goods or services by credit card (Guerreschi, 2005).

A very good or good financial situation of the young consumers surveyed did not motivate them to shop more often, nor did it make them say more frequently that they did not enjoy shopping and treated it as a necessity (Kendall's tau-b coefficient was 0.185 for $p \leq 0.01$). Furthermore, some of them (mostly married women) claimed that they usually went shopping with their partner, parents (mainly mothers) or girlfriends. Oniomania is more visible in less affluent respondents who do uncontrolled shopping leading to financial difficulties, which then translates into deteriorated relationships with other people. A negative correlation between the level of disposable income and compulsive shopping among young consumers is confirmed by numerous research results (Faber, O'Guinn, 1989; Dittmar, 2005; Ogińska-Bulik, 2014; Unger et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2015; Jung, 2017).

When analysing oniomania, the types of products most often purchased by young consumers are also important (Table 8).

Table 8. Products most frequently purchased by the young consumers surveyed (%)

Product group	Gender	
	Female	Male
Food	30.2	41.3
Clothing and footwear	42.4	26.2
Cosmetics	15.1	2.7
Jewellery and accessories	3.5	0.5
Sports equipment	2.4	12.2
Household electronics (TV sets, smartphones, laptops, etc.)	1.8	10.3
Household appliances	1.0	1.6
Books	1.3	1.4
CDs (music)	2.3	3.8

Source: own study.

More than 2/5 of women say that most frequently they spend money on clothing and footwear. In turn, over 41% of men admit that they spend most money on food. When analysing the types of products that are particularly popular among the surveyed young consumers, it can be stated that women prefer buying products that improve their appearance and attractiveness, including cosmetics and jewellery. The interest in this product category derives from the desire to

increase self-esteem by improving one's image, yet it should be stressed that the reasons behind the addiction are not limited to appearance only. The purchased items are unnecessary in all cases and buyers tend to give or throw them away or hide them somewhere at home where they cannot be found by other household members who are quite often completely unaware of the problem. Men, on the other hand, prefer electronic gadgets and sports equipment. These products are somehow related with prestige and power. According to Guerreschi (2005), men concentrate on things associated with power and progress, striving to show themselves as better than viewed by themselves or other people. It can therefore be concluded that women are more likely to shop along the lines of the socio-emotional model whereas men value a certain element of competition connected with the purchase of an item and with properties emphasising its uniqueness. Statistically significant differences have been found in the range of products most often purchased by women and men. These differences are visible for clothing and footwear (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = 0.098$, $p \leq 0.01$), jewellery and accessories (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = 0.074$, $p \leq 0.01$), cosmetics (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = 0.056$, $p \leq 0.01$) and food products (Pearson's correlation coefficient $r = 0.021$, $p \leq 0.01$). It can thus be concluded that the "consumption of objects" may be a coping response to unpleasant emotions deriving from insecurity about individuals' selves and identities and disappointing self-evaluations. Some people may use shopping to improve their appearance, self-confidence, consideration by others, and social relationships (Donnelly et al., 2013). Material possessions respond illusorily to the inner security need to compensate feelings of low self-esteem and, at the same time, current consumer culture suggests that a sense of self-confidence and well-being can be purchased. Therefore, the "consumption of objects" may be both a symptom of insecurities and a "coping strategy" to offer relief from problems and to satisfy certain needs (Biolcati, 2017; Djudiyah, 2019).

With overall knowledge of the shopping frequency and time as well as feelings experienced by respondents while shopping, an attempt was made to identify consumer behaviours of young people that can be classified as oniomania. To this end, the Compulsive Buying Measurement Scale⁷ (Valence et al., 1988) was used. The scale consists of 16 statements referring to three areas of shopping addiction,

⁷ In 1992, Faber and O'Guinn initially developed a Compulsive Buying Screening Scale containing 29 statements about the feeling of necessity or unrestrained need to act and failed attempts to control the behaviour. In the next version, 14 statements were retained. These allowed for differentiating between compulsive buying and normal shopping behaviour. The individual scale items concern, among others, self-esteem, materialistic attitude, the use of credit cards, but this scale is unidimensional. Surveys carried out by means of it showed that the percentage of shopping addicts was 5.9%. In recent years, the Richmond Compulsive Buying Scale has been developed with 9 items to be responded to by people surveyed using scores from 1 to 6 (Ridgway et al., 2008).

namely the tendency to spend money, reactive aspects (reaction to the compulsion to buy in terms of loss of control), and the feeling of guilt after shopping. The original version of the scale included four areas and concerned also the family environment of a compulsive buyer. Due to poor psychometric properties, the statements in this sub-scale were, however, removed. Another version of the tool thus comprised 13 items.

The research described in this article used a short version of the Compulsive Buying Measurement Scale containing 13 statements. While designing the scale, the following assumption proposed by many researchers was adopted: shopping behaviour should be considered on a continuum, with compulsive buying at one extreme and rational buying at the other. Measures were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). The surveys carried out by means of this scale confirmed its high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.91). The results ranged from 12 to 55 points, although the maximum value is 65 points on this scale. The average result for the whole group was 32 points – the higher the value, the stronger the involvement in shopping, yet only 42 points and more indicate oniomania. The average result for the women surveyed was 34 points, for men the figure was 30 points. This means that young male respondents are less involved in shopping than the women surveyed. Taking into account marital status, the average score for singles was 36 points, and 24 points for married respondents. The results were also compared with account being taken of respondents' place of residence. Considering this criterion, the average result for respondents living in rural areas or smaller towns (up to 20 thousand inhabitants) was 31 points, whereas for respondents from larger cities (population of over 200 thousand), it stood at 27 points. The survey also shows that every eighth respondent scored 42 points and more. In this group, 68% were women and 32% men. They were mostly respondents aged 30–34, single or living in a cohabitation relationship, with secondary or basic vocational education, a monthly per capita income not exceeding PLN 3000.00, and usually living in cities of up to 100 thousand inhabitants. It may be concluded that the survey findings confirm all the research hypotheses put forward in this article. It appears that this is corroborated by results delivered by other researchers (Claes et al., 2010; Lange, 2012; Raudsepp, Parts, 2015; Maccarrone-Eaglen, Schofield, 2017; Islam et al., 2018).

Taking into account the presented survey results, some limitations ensuing from a small research sample should be borne in mind. Following the conclusions made, they should not be treated as representative of the population of young Polish consumers. They only provide some insight into the actual consumer behaviours of young oniomaniacs. It should also be highlighted that since shopaholism largely affects young people, it seems necessary to disseminate relevant popular-science information more broadly at schools, among students and in the media in order to prevent the oniomania addiction, identify the symptoms of this disorder

in early stages of its development, and provide adequate professional training in psychological, sociological and economic studies.

Oniomania in Poland has not been well described and is certainly worth further holistic research. Publications that address research on this topic are usually at the borderline of psychiatry and clinical psychology but there are few studies that analyse the issue of oniomania from an economic point of view. Undoubtedly, the survey that provided the basis for this article enriches the existing knowledge about shopaholism and the role of shopping in the lives of young Polish consumers. In addition, it confirmed that young oniomaniacs are most often single, usually women, and less affluent and less educated people. This publication should contribute to a broader discussion and exchange of views on oniomania, thereby encouraging other Polish scholars and researchers from various scientific and research centres to carry out extensive research in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the insufficient number of studies, compulsive buying has not yet been classified in DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) or ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems) as an addiction. The literature often defines it as an addiction, an obsessive compulsive disorder or a mood disorder. The cause of oniomania is difficult to define unequivocally. According to psychologists, shopping addiction most often occurs in people who tend to develop depressive conditions as a compensation for negative emotions. Those who are addicted to compulsive buying are generally not interested in owning the products that they purchase. They buy for sheer buying and hardly ever use the purchased products. Shopping is often a mood booster as it is accompanied by euphoria and contentment. However, these quickly transform into remorse and sorrow. Thus, one falls into a vicious circle – in order to get out of depression, one feels a strong inner need to do more shopping.

A preliminary analysis of the empirical material obtained in the survey indicates that behaviours of young oniomaniacs are determined by demographic and social characteristics such as sex, age, wealth, and place of residence. 12.5% of young consumers participating in the survey suffer from oniomania. Compulsive shopping is most evident among the respondents aged 30–34, usually single, with basic vocational or secondary education, earning a monthly disposable income of up to PLN 3000.00 per capita, and mostly living in smaller towns (up to 20 thousand inhabitants). It should also be noted that young female respondents more frequently suffer from oniomania than men. Not only do they shop several times a week and feel relaxed then but also they spend more

than 3 hours shopping. Young women usually buy clothes, shoes, jewellery and perfumes, that is products that are associated with image. Young men buy phones, computers or sports equipment, i.e. lifestyle-related gadgets. In recent times, it has also been observed that more and more young people are suffering from this type of compulsive behaviour. This increase can be explained by the strategies of advertising companies whose campaigns ever more frequently refer to a change of mood after the purchase.

The empirical research confirmed a positive correlation between the sex of respondents (mainly women) and oniomania, and a negative one between compulsive buying on the one hand and the level of education and disposable income of young respondents on the other.

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Summary

Oniomania (shopaholism) is not commonly perceived as an impulse control disorder, addiction to a specific activity, but rather as a trivial issue often taken lightly, more as a fad than a serious problem. The literature analyses oniomania in anthropological, socio-pedagogical, psychological, psychiatric and economic terms. This article focuses solely on the economic explanation of compulsive buying in the consumer behaviour of young people. Its aim is to identify oniomania in the consumer behaviour of young persons and to prove that such behaviour is determined by demographic and social characteristics such as: gender, age, marital status, wealth, and place of residence. The study focused on the analysis of selected factors (attitudes to shopping, time spent shopping, shopping frequency, motives and feelings accompanying consumers when shopping, and most often bought products) that affect compulsive shopping among young consumers.

The tool used to conduct the research was my original questionnaire comprising 50 closed-ended questions regarding alternative consumer trends, including oniomania. The survey was carried out from 1st February to 1st May 2018. The participants were recruited via the *ankietka.pl* website and social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Messenger, and e-mail. In order to partake in the survey, those interested had to visit a specific website containing the questionnaire. It was also distributed across special forums, university and private school fanpages. The survey covered people aged 18–34 belonging to the Y and Z generations.

The survey suggests that young females suffer from oniomania more frequently than men. Not only do they shop several times a week and feel relaxed as a result, but also they spend more than 3 hours shopping. Moreover, the survey has confirmed a positive correlation between the sex of respondents (mainly women) and oniomania, and a negative one between compulsive buying on the one hand and the level of education and disposable income of young respondents on the other.

Keywords: oniomania, excessive shopping, consumer society, young people.

Oniomania w zachowaniach nabywczych polskich młodych konsumentów – ujęcie ekonomiczne

Streszczenie

W artykule, w oparciu o krytyczną analizę literatury, podjęto się próby wyjaśnienia pojęcia i istoty oniomanii. W literaturze przedmiotu problem oniomanii analizowany jest w ujęciu: antropologicznym, socjopedagogicznym, psychologicznym, psychiatrycznym i ekonomicznym. Niniejsze opracowanie koncentruje się wyłącznie na ekonomicznym wyjaśnieniu kompulsywnych zakupów występujących w zachowaniach konsumenckich osób młodych. Jego celem jest uchwycenie oniomanii w postawach i zachowaniach konsumenckich osób młodych, i wykazanie, że zachowania te są determinowane cechami demograficzno-społecznymi, takimi jak: płeć, wiek, poziom zamożności i miejsce zamieszkania. W przeprowadzonym badaniu skoncentrowano się na analizie wybranych czynników (stosunek do robienia zakupów, ilość czasu spędzanego na zakupach, częstotliwość ich robienia, uczucia towarzyszące konsumentom w trakcie robienia zakupów oraz produkty najczęściej nabywane), które wpływają na kompulsywne zakupy młodych konsumentów.

Narzędziem wykorzystanym do przeprowadzenia badania był autorski kwestionariusz składający się z 50 pytań zamkniętych, dotyczący alternatywnych trendów konsumenckich, w tym oniomanii. Badania zostały przeprowadzone w okresie od 1 lutego do 1 maja 2018 roku. Uczestnicy byli rekrutowani poprzez stronę internetową „ankietka.pl”, a także poprzez kanały społecznościowe, takie jak Facebook, Whatsapp, Messenger oraz pocztę elektroniczną. Aby wziąć udział w badaniu,

zainteresowane osoby musiały wejść na konkretną stronę internetową, gdzie widniał przygotowany dla nich kwestionariusz. Był on także rozesłany na specjalne fora, fanpage uniwersytetów i uczelni prywatnych. W badaniu wzięły udział osoby w wieku 18–34 lata należące do pokolenia Y i Z.

Z przeprowadzonego badania wynika, że młode kobiety częściej cierpią z powodu oniomanii aniżeli mężczyźni. Nie tylko kilka razy w tygodniu chodzą na zakupy i są rozluźnione podczas ich robienia, to spędzają na nich powyżej 3 godzin. Ponadto potwierdzono w badaniu pozytywną korelację ale między płcią badanych (dotyczy to głównie kobiet) a oniomanią, oraz negatywną między kompulsywnymi zakupami a poziomem wykształcenia młodych respondentów i poziomem ich rozporządzalnych dochodów.

Słowa kluczowe: oniomania, nadmierne zakupy, społeczeństwo konsumpcyjne, osoby młode.

JEL: D12, M30.