

ASPECTS REGARDING THE CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOR WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE CLOTHING PRODUCTS, DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

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Abstract: This paper analyses the behavior of fashion online consumers in Romania during the pandemic period on decisions related to the purchase of clothing, by studying the responses of the respondents to a questionnaire, collected in 2021, also by studying international trends in the environment, industry or society, in order to better understand the needs and desires of the consumers, the dynamics and direction of the changes.

Keywords: consumers' s behavior, clothing products, online shopping, decision, pandemic period

1 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 Pandemics has had a strong impact on the global society, as well as the Romanian one, bringing opportunities as well as threats in all domains, including fashion, one of the industries that have the highest income in the world.

This paper aims to analyze the behavior of the fashion consumer in the online environment, by studying the answers that have been obtained when applying a questionnaire, data that has been collected in 2021, during the pandemics. It also aims to study the international tendencies within the industry as well as the entire society.

The subjects is very actual, at least for now, when we are living times of great changes, thus it is very important for everyone to be able to adapt to the new requirements in order to have an advantage.

2 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research is to find out the behavior of the Romanian consumer, especially the one that wants to buy fashion products, with the focus set on the online shopping, since in this domain there can be noticed many changes within the COVID-19 pandemics.

The main objectives are to analyze the Romanian market to conclude the type of consumption, if online shopping is being preferred to standard shopping or not, to identify the knowledge the Romanians have with respect to online shopping of clothing products, the frequency of buying clothes online or if the consumer's behavior has changes in any way during the pandemics.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a sample, the working instrument being the questionnaire, elaborated on Google Forms. The research is a cross-sectional study, transverse stud)

The questionnaire has been applied exclusively online through Google Forms and it has sampling limits, the number of respondents being low - 62, a disproportionate number of female respondents compared to male, respondents mainly from the age range 16-30, the research being relevant only at the level of the investigated sample. Thus, the results cannot be extrapolated to the general population.

The sample included people from 16 years old up to 60 years old, mainly between the ages of 16 to 25.

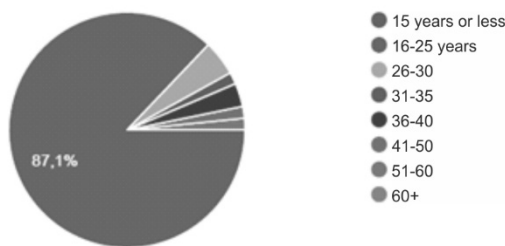


Figure 1. The distribution of the age categories

Also, 46 of the respondents are females, while 16 are males. (Figure 2)

The questionnaire includes 24 questions, out of which 20 items are closed, 3 items are opened and 1 has a hierarchical scale. The questions have all been elaborated based on the

proposed purpose and objectives. It is also based on the principle of funnel, from general to specific questions. It has been pretested on 8 respondents, thus trying to improve its quality.

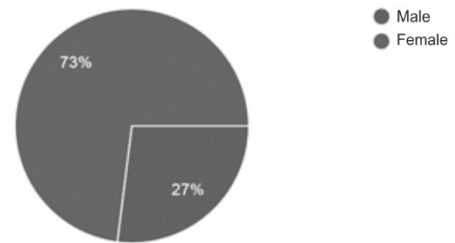


Figure 2. Distribution according to gender

4 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The article presents some of the results that have been obtained within the research that took place in 2021. The frequencies are taken into consideration, for multiple/free answer.

Hypothesis: Most of the consumers buy clothing products to replace the used clothes and to enrich their wardrobe.

The hypothesis is being confirmed, as it can be noticed from Figure 3, due to the fact that almost 88% of the respondents buy clothes to replace the used ones and to enlarge their wardrobe.

Table 1. Frequency to the question: „why do you buy clothes more often?”

\$motive_cumparare_haine Frequencies			
	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
q1_1motive_cumparare_haine_rutina	4	4.9%	6.8%
q1_2motive_cumparare_haine_pt_cadou	6	7.3%	10.2%
q1_3motive_cumparare_haine_imbogatire_garderoba	36	43.9%	61.0%
q1_4motive_cumparare_haine_inlocuire_uzate	36	43.9%	61.0%
Total	82	100.0%	139.0%

Hypothesis: Most of the consumers prefer producers who sell at small or medium prices.

The hypothesis is confirmed because almost 90% of the investigated consumers

prefer to buy at small or medium prices. This question has been codified on groups of brands on categories with respect to prices, based on the answers that have been received. (Table 2)

Table 2. Frequency to the question „please mention your favorite brand of clothes”.

\$marca_preferata_haine_price_range Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$marca_preferata_haine_price_range ^a	q3marca_preferata_medium_high	32	61.5%	61.5%
	q3marca_preferata_veryhigh	5	9.6%	9.6%
	q3marca_preferata_vlow_low	15	28.8%	28.8%
Total		52	100.0%	100.0%

Hypothesis: The main fear of the Romanian fashion consumers in the online environment is the lack of match of sizes. Other fears are related to quality and the differences between the products presented online and the delivered ones.

The hypothesis is confirmed because 79% of the respondents admit that their main fear is related to the wrong size.

Table 3. Frequency to the question: „what are the main fears when buying clothes online?”

\$temeri_cumparare_online Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$temeri_cumparare_online ^a	q18_1temeri_cumparare_online_calitate	7	10.6%	12.3%
	q18_0temeri_cumparare_online_aspect	7	10.6%	12.3%
	q18_3temeri_cumparare_online_marime	52	78.8%	91.2%
Total		66	100.0%	115.8%

Hypothesis: Most of the consumers prefer neutral/dark colors (black, white, grey, dark blue, nude) when they buy clothes.

The hypothesis is also confirmed because 76% of the respondents prefer neutral clothes.

This is a question where the answers have been codified in neutral colors (white, black, grey, dark blue, nude) and other colors (red, blue, green, orange, yellow).

Table 4. Frequency to the question: „what is your favorite color for clothing?”

\$culaore_preferata Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$culaore_preferata ^a	q7_0culoare_preferata_imbr acaminte_neutru	47	75.8%	79.7%
	q7_1culoare_preferata_imbr acaminte_pastel	15	24.2%	25.4%
Total		62	100.0%	105.1%

Hypothesis: Most of the online consumers spend less than 300 lei per month is confirmed by the answers of the investigated consumers (almost 86%).

Table 5. Frequency to the question: „how much do you spend for clothes per month (in lei)?”

q10cheltuieli luna imbracaminte					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	0-50	5	7.8	8.2	8.2
	50-100	19	29.7	31.1	39.3
	100-300	27	42.2	44.3	83.6
	300-600	5	7.8	8.2	91.8
	600-1200	3	4.7	4.9	96.7
	6	2	3.1	3.3	100.0
Total		61	95.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.7		
Total		64	100.0		

Another hypothesis was: the majority of the investigated consumers are paying attention to the way they dress in everyday life. The hypothesis is confirmed due to the fact that almost 88% of the respondents consider as being important the way that they dress every day, with a grade of 7 or more. (Table 6)

Most of the investigated consumers prefer to buy clothes online as physically, but mostly physically – is another hypothesis.

This hypothesis is confirmed because 49.2% of the respondents prefer to buy clothes both

ways, with an emphasis on the standard way – 37.7%, in comparison the just online – 13.1%. (Table 7)

Table 6. Frequency to the question: „how important is the way you dress everyday (form 1-10)?”

q11importanta_mod_imbracare					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	2	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	3	2	3.1	3.3	4.9
	5	1	1.6	1.6	6.6
	6	3	4.7	4.9	11.5
	7	13	20.3	21.3	32.8
	8	21	32.8	34.4	67.2
	9	10	15.6	16.4	83.6
	10	10	15.6	16.4	100.0
	Total		61	95.3	100.0
	Missing	System	3	4.7	
Total		64	100.0		

Table 7. How do you prefer do by clothes?

q12preferinta achizitionare haine					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Fizic, in magazin	23	35.9	37.7	37.7
	Online	8	12.5	13.1	50.8
	Ambele	30	46.9	49.2	100.0
Total		61	95.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.7		
Total		64	100.0		

Another hypothesis was: the majority of the investigated consumers buy clothes online once a month at the most.

The answers obtained within the research confirm the hypothesis, since 67% of the respondents buy clothes online once a month. (Table 8)

Table 8. How often do you buy clothes online?

q13frecventa_cumparare_haine				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
De cateva ori pe saptamana	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
De cateva ori pe luna	6	9.4	9.8	11.5
O data pe luna	13	20.3	21.3	32.8
Valid De cateva ori pe an	28	43.8	45.9	78.7
Mai rar de atat	10	15.6	16.4	95.1
Niciodata	3	4.7	4.9	100.0
Total	61	95.3	100.0	
Missing System	3	4.7		
Total	64	100.0		

Legend: de cateva ori pe saptamana, luna, an / a few times per week, month, year; niciodata/never)

The majority is willing to wait for more than 3 days for the package to arrive if the acquisitions has been done online and it has a free delivery is the following hypothesis.

It is confirmed by the answers obtained within the research – 62% of the respondents are willing to wait for more than 3 days (a maximum of ten) until the package is being delivered if there is a free delivery.

Table 9. How much time are you willing to wait for you package to be delivered?

q14zile_asteptare_transport_gratuit				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
< 2 zile	3	4.7	4.9	4.9
2-3 zile	14	21.9	23.0	27.9
3-4 zile	9	14.1	14.8	42.6
Valid 4-5 zile	13	20.3	21.3	63.9
5-7 zile	12	18.8	19.7	83.6
Maxim 10 zile	10	15.6	16.4	100.0
Total	61	95.3	100.0	
Missing System	3	4.7		
Total	64	100.0		

Hypothesis: Most of the consumers prefer to dress casual most of the time.

A hypothesis that is confirmed by the obtained answers, since 70% of the respondents dress casual most of the time.

Table 10. What type of clothes are you used to wear more often?

q15articole_imbracate_cel_mai_des				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sport	7	10.9	11.5	11.5
Elegant	10	15.6	16.4	27.9
Valid Casual	43	67.2	70.5	98.4
Hippie	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	61	95.3	100.0	
Missing System	3	4.7		
Total	64	100.0		

Hypothesis: Most of the online consumers are not influenced by the facts that the products are products are made in Romania or not.

The hypothesis is also confirmed because the consumers are not interested by the fact that the products are manufactured in Romania, 22% being slightly against it and 50.8% of them being indifferent.

Table 11. How important is to you for the products to be made in Romania when you buy online?

q16produse_ro_detrimnt_strain				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
foarte important	2	3.1	3.3	3.3
important	11	17.2	18.0	21.3
nici important, nici neimportant	31	48.4	50.8	72.1
Valid putin important	6	9.4	9.8	82.0
deloc important	11	17.2	18.0	100.0
Total	61	95.3	100.0	
Missing System	3	4.7		
Total	64	100.0		

The following hypothesis was: the majority of the consumers buy easily fashion products online.

This hypothesis is also confirmed by the answers that have been given by the respondents – 70% consider that it is easy to buy online, while only 6.6% consider it difficult.

Table 12. Do you find it easy to buy fashion products online?

q17usurinta achizitionare vestimentie online				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	acord total	22	34.4	36.1
	acord	21	32.8	70.5
Valid	nici acord, nici dezacord	14	21.9	93.4
	dezacord	2	3.1	96.7
	dezacord total	2	3.1	100.0
	Total	61	95.3	100.0
Missing	System	3	4.7	
	Total	64	100.0	

Legend: acord/agreement; dezacord/disagreement

The research also includes a series of correlations, out of which we present as follows one with two variables. Correlation is a statistical technique that shows how strong are related two variables, as well as their association degree.

When a variable moves in the same direction with the other one, then there is a positive correlation and high scores in one variable are being associated to high scores in the other one.

When a variable moves towards one direction and the second one towards the other way, then we talk about a negative correlation (high scored in a variable lead to small scores to the other one).

Thus, in the present research, there is a positive correlation between the two variables (q10cheltuieli_luna_imbracaminte and q1_1motive_cumparare_haine_rutina) that have been submitted to analyses.

They represent the amount of money used to buy clothing products per month and the fact

that the person buys fashion products not out of routine, but for replacing the used clothes.

The correlation exists and it is significant, SPSS underlining this fact by placing stars.

Table 13. Correlation between the amount spent in a month on fashion products and routine

Correlations			
		q10cheltuieli_luna_imbracaminte	q1_1motive_cumparare_haine_rutina
q10cheltuieli_luna_imbracaminte	Pearson Correlation	1	.354**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	61	61
q1_1motive_cumparare_haine_rutina	Pearson Correlation	.354**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	61	61

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5 CONCLUSIONS

It can be noticed that most of the Romanian consumers are used and comfortable with shopping online for clothing products, still maintaining the standard type of buying from stores, and they usually buy their clothes to replace the used ones and to enlarge their wardrobe.

They also prefer the small and medium process for their products, considering it important the way to dress and preferring casual outfits.

They also spend no more than 300 lei per month on fashion articles, taking into consideration the price and the quality of the products.

Most of the consumers rather buy clothes from retailers and are not taking into account if the products are made in Romania or not.

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