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PRESENT-DAY TRENDS IN BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG FURNITURE BUYERS

Introduction

The system transformation in Poland and globalization processes that change the condition on the market, influence the behavior of consumers, the buyers of furniture including. Certain trends can be distinguished in consumer behavior that have occurred in recent years and – comparatively, to a great extent - they regard the furniture market. The most interesting ones, among others, are as follows: the globalization processes and the related advance in various communication forms (an almost unlimited access to the Internet, global advertizing campaigns), the increase of mobility (cheap airlines), the elimination of borders, etc. Such issues increase the homogenization of needs and behavior patterns and, as a result, the life-style of consumers, their systems of values, tastes and esthetics change due to the imitation of Western European - mainly German, but also English and French - models¹ that, in turn, follow consumer standards typical for the American market. The trend to acquire foreign behavior models of furniture buyers, including young consumers, can be also observed in Poland².

The aim of the paper is to analyze selected present-day trends in the behavior of young furniture buyers³.

¹ Generally, imitation consists in conscious or unconscious copying other people (their decisions, attitudes, behavior or preferences). However, imitation in the area of consumption means copying the level and structure of consumption or even the whole consumption models typical for other buyers or groups. See: A. Burgiel, *Przejmowanie wzorów konsumpcyjnych w kontekście stratyfikacji społecznej* [in:] Z. Kędzior, M. Jaciow (ed.), *Konsument. Gospodarstwo domowe. Rynek. Polska – Europa*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Centrum Badań i Ekspertyz, Katowice 2009, p. 65.

²For example in the purchasing preferences of Spanish furniture buyers, a lesser interest in expensive and traditionally manufactured furniture can be observed for the sake of simple, light, more functional and definitely cheaper products. Cf. J. Brzozowski, *Meble sprzedane za 5 mld*, „Dziennik – Gazeta Prawna” 27 January 2011, No 18. Thus, it may be assumed that such trend will occur in the case of Polish furniture buyers, who imitate the consumer behavior of western European consumer.

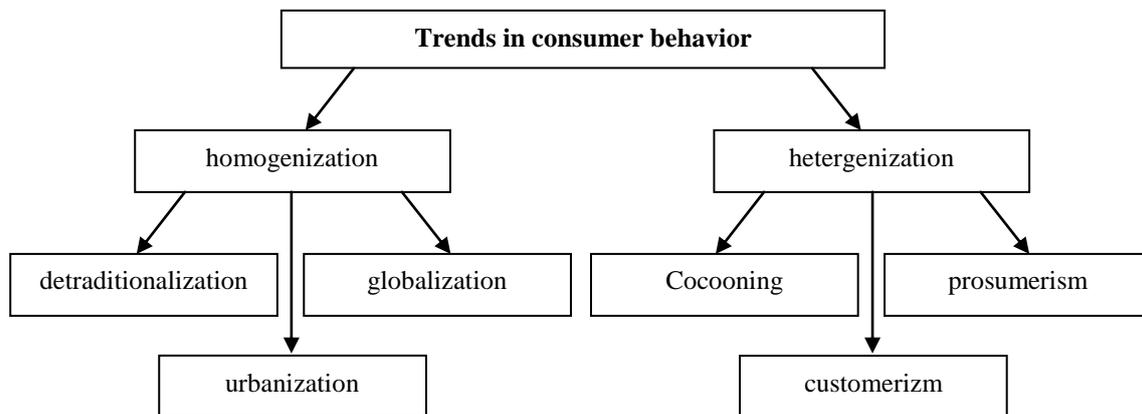
³ The article is based on the author’s doctoral thesis. Young buyers are considered to be 19-34 years of age. The terms *young buyers* and *young consumers* refer to the same group.

1. New trends in the behavior of furniture buyers

When investigating the accessible secondary sources that describe consumer behavior, it should be pointed out that the issue of new consumption trends in Polish society has been increasingly discussed⁴. Although the sources describe general tendencies in the behavior of present-day purchasers, the majority of them can be referred to the behavior of the consumers on the furniture market, young consumers including.

In the consumer behavior some apparent contradictions can be seen. On the one hand, consumer models created especially by contemporary media support the homogenization of consumption, and on the other, there is a distinct endeavor to express oneself, which results in a significant differentiation of consumer trends (heterogenization)⁵ - fig.1.

Fig. 1. Present-day trends in consumer behavior



Source: Author's study based on: C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój gospodarczy i społeczny*, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2010, p. 206-213; E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument i jego zachowania na rynku europejskim*, PWE, Warszawa 2010, p. 181-182; J. Woś, J. Rachocka, M. Kasperek-Hoppe, *Zachowania konsumentów – teoria i praktyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu, Poznań 2011, pp. 133-165.

Consumption homogenization is accompanied by the detraditionalization of consumer behavior that shows in the decrease of the role of local traditions, folklore and ceremonies. It

⁴ More on global trends in consumer behavior in : F. Popcorn, L. Marigold, *Clicking: 17 Trends That Drive Your Business And Your Life*, Harper Paperbacks, New York 1998; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja w teorii i praktyce gospodarowania*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 137-164; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój gospodarczy i społeczny*, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2010, p. 194-238; J. Woś, J. Rachocka, M. Kasperek-Hoppe, *Zachowania konsumentów – teoria i praktyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu, Poznań 2011, p. 138.

⁵ Observations and research indicate that together with the consumption homogenization, the process of heterogenization appears which is increasing. See: E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument i jego zachowania na rynku europejskim*, PWE, Warszawa 2010, p. 180-182; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., p. 209-210. It is interesting that both these trends, contradictory in nature, are in a way complementary. Their relation, depending on the circumstances, may be complementary or substitutional, and while they evolve, it would not be difficult to observe some co-operation between them.

can be assumed that such trend will also appear in the purchasing decisions of furniture buyers, who – influenced by global standards – will prefer modern furniture instead of regional. Detraditionalization is supported by the urbanization of consumption, i.e. the spread of the urban style of life in villages. Consequently, the differences, not only between the city and village dwellers but also men and women, disappear (similar dresses, the same hobbies and passions). It can be observed that the detraditionalization in cultures where local customs and traditions are cherished may result in the differentiation of consumption, i.e. in its heterogenization. It is predicted that these trends will in time become stronger and will have an impact on the preferences and decision-making processes among furniture buyers⁶.

The endeavor to express oneself and the emergence of the trend of maximal personalization of products purchased (e.g. interior design elements and facilities) are significantly connected with the trend to join the utility and aesthetics functions as they are conceived to be tightly interwoven⁷. The increase of the significance of aesthetics in the closer and further surrounding as well as the changes in aesthetic canons are visible in buyers' behavior (there are evident changes in house designs and decorating, in the surroundings of new housing neighborhoods and the modernizations of the existing areas, especially in cities)⁸.

Present-day consumers increasingly more often do not want to be just purchasers but they desire to be the co-creators of the product they use. The co-operation between manufacturers and consumers is becoming more popular and results in significant, almost revolutionary, changes in technology and organization of goods production and distribution⁹. The interest in products that identify their owners leads to the phenomenon called prosumerism or prosumption¹⁰. Prosumerism is a new pro-active consumer approach that consists in the tendency to take over some of the manufacturer's work with the aim to pay less

⁶ Based on: E. Ratajczak, *Spoleczne czynniki popytotwórcze oraz zachowania nabywcze na rynku mebli i wyrobów drewnianych*, „Przemysł Drzewny” 2008, No 7-8, p. 46-48.

⁷ E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument...*, op. cit., p. 182.

⁸ See: E. Ratajczak, *Spoleczne...*, op. cit., . 46-48.

⁹ Cf.: C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., p. 212.

¹⁰ Thus, the consumers who are partly manufacturers and designers of the products and services that are meant for them, are referred to as prosumers. The term generates from **proactive+consumer, producer+consumer, or professional + consumer**. Irrespectively of the fact which explanation is accepted, they all assume consumer's activity. See: N. Hatalaska, *Nie tylko wielka piątka, czyli ambient media i marketing szeptany jako alternatywne formy komunikacji* [in:] H. Mruk (ed.), *Reklama i PR na rozdrożu?*, Wydawnictwo Forum Naukowe, Poznań 2008, pp. 51-61. More about prosumption in: A. Toffler, *Trzecia fala*, Wydawnictwo Kurpisz S.A., Poznań 2006; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja w teorii...*, op. cit., p. 153; E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument...*, op. cit., p. 182; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., pp. 220-222; J. Woś, J. Rachocka, M. Kasperek-Hoppe, *Zachowania...*, op. cit., p. 161.

or to acquire a product that is suited to individual needs¹¹. Such co-operation of consumers in manufacturing products also occurs on the furniture market, when customers buy furniture and then assemble it at home or when they play an active role in the design process (made-to-order furniture). The demand for personalized products creates another consumer trend called customization. Manufacturers and sellers have special offers that match the taste and preferences of a particular customer; thus, they maintain a relationship with consumers and, at least partially, abandon mass production. Such a strategy increases production costs, but – according to the literature on the subject – buyers are ready to pay more for the comfort obtained this way as they choose either products at the lowest prices or goods whose prices are very high. As a result, products in the medium price range are not taken into consideration¹².

It should be mentioned that the modification of products, furniture including, and the methods of distribution and application are an important transformation factor in consumer behavior. In the last decades, there has been a continuous modernization of products and change in their functional parameters, which has a significant impact on the demand and ways of meeting the needs. In the behavior of consumers one can see their preference for products that are multifunctional, stylized, personalized, etc. It means that their function does not result only from their technical parameters but the products should have the so called identification value; they should make the user feel better and they should even express the user's personality¹³. Thus, it may be assumed that present-day consumers value greatly the external, visual features of a product, a piece of furniture including. Consequently, there is an opinion that industrial design that increases product aesthetics reached the level of art. Houses, flats and many objects used on a daily basis (furniture including) have become almost works of art and they are products of professional artists¹⁴.

With the development of market and the increase of furniture traders, buyers have become not only more demanding as regards the features of the furniture purchased and the standard of shops but they also expect a complex and professional service, both at the time of purchase and afterwards. That phenomenon is referred to as the generally understood

¹¹ See.: http://www.crnavigator.com/art6/prosument_producent_profesjonalista.html (Accessed: 1 June 2012).

¹² A. Cybulska, *Nic między premium a economy?*, „Marketing w Praktyce” 2008, No 5; E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument...*, op. cit., p. 183.

¹³ Cf. C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

¹⁴ According to the literature on the subject *contemporary industrial design connects „high art” with „low art” i.e. with utility art* (...) The beginnings of such synthesis can be traced back to 1950s in the USA and Great Britain, where, among other factors, the dynamic development of consumption and marketing resulted in the creation of pop-art (popular art), which then spread to the whole area of culture and was called pop-culture, meaning popular mass culture. See: C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., p. 213.

customer's convenience and consists in complex services related to the purchase of furniture - starting with providing the customer with advice, then designing the flat/house interior with all necessary elements, immediate delivery and assembly and the opportunity to buy supplementary elements even after a long time after the purchase¹⁵.

At present, cocooning or nesting is another trend that can be observed in consumer behavior and it shows in performing at home the activities that traditionally used to be done elsewhere. It consists in focusing on one's home and family and the desire to meet one's needs, cultural or recreational, without going out. Thanks to rapid developments in technology, shopping and working can be done at home. As a consequence of such consumer behavior, the necessity is created to equip the house with various products¹⁶. That influences the behavior of furniture buyers who – wishing to spend more time at home – will need different types of furniture. In other words cocooning is associated with the priority of privacy. The weariness of buyers with a constant search for advance in every area and the rush in everyday life result in the escape from general and public problems to privacy. People run away from cities to the countryside; a house, its standard and facilities become highly esteemed and preferred values, and frequently are a proof of their social status. In such consumption model, the significance of the house and the furniture is proved, among others, by an increasing amount of money spent on them¹⁷.

Cocooning or nesting is closely connected with free time. After the analysis of the literature on the subject, it can be stated that consumer habits regarding the ways of spending free time have changed significantly in the last few years. A favorite leisure activity of Poles in 2008 were visits to shopping centers and TV watching (one third of Poles declared spending almost 3 hours a day in front of TV)¹⁸. As a result of such a model of spending free

¹⁵ See: E. Ratajczak, *Ważniejsze tendencje w europejskim meblarstwie*, „Świat Mebli” 1999, No 2, p. 17.

¹⁶ Based on: J. Berbeka, *Nowe tendencje w zachowaniach konsumentów*, „Marketing i Rynek” 1999, No 1, p. 17; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja w teorii...*, op. cit., pp. 142-143; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., pp. 202-205; E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument...*, op. cit., p. 187; J. Woś, J. Rachocka, M. Kasperek-Hoppe, *Zachowania...*, op. cit., pp. 160-162.

¹⁷ Cf.: E. Ratajczak, *Ważniejsze...*, op. cit.; E. Ratajczak, *Rynek drzewny. Analiza struktur przedmiotowych*, Instytut Technologii Drewna, Poznań 2001, p. 47.

¹⁸ The data come from press information provided by TNS OBOP (public opinion surveying center) from surveys carried out in 2008 (discussion panel: „Konsument przyszłości”, see: <http://www.obop.pl/centrum/2008/2008-09/2008-09/wid/6286> (Accessed: 10 May 2012) and in 2009 (electronic TV viewers survey on 3003 people aged over 4 years, See: http://www.obop.pl/centrum/archiwum_raportow/2009/wrzesie/wid/6413 (Accessed 10 May 2012). The trends were confirmed by the survey of Shopper Trends (See: <http://www.marketingnews.pl/theme.php?art=393> (Accessed 1 June 2012) conducted by the AC Nielsen marketing research agency in 2006 and indicate that 60% of Polish consumers find pleasure in shopping and for some of them window shopping is a favourite pastime. Shopper Trends is a cyclical research of the C Nielsen that is conducted annually in 50 countries, mainly European. The Shopper Trends respondents were 1000 people aged 18-65, responsible for buying food and clearing products for the households, living in 15 towns with the population of over 100 000 inhabitants.

time, the buyers have an opportunity to get acquainted with the offer on the market, furniture shops included. What is more, the appearance of modern trade centers (shopping malls, shopping centers, etc.) on the Polish market has changed not only the way of spending free time but also the ways of doing the shopping. Shopping has become a pleasure and not a necessity. The literature on the subject mentions *recreational shopping*, which has recently become a standard behavior of Polish shoppers¹⁹.

When spending their free time, present-day consumers largely make use of the Internet, which has also an impact on their purchase decisions. Together with the development of technology (and of the Internet as a tool used on the daily basis) and market globalization, the process of purchasing has changed. It happens more frequently that consumers contact shop assistants and manufacturers by the Internet, they use it to look through their catalogues and offers, make orders, payments and complaints. Shopping on the Internet has become a common way of acquiring goods, and going to shops or shopping malls is treated more often, which was mentioned before, as a pleasure and pastime.

It should be added that a considerable influence on the behavior of furniture buyers and the decision making processes is exerted by an intensive development of the market of such goods and services competitive to some type of furniture (especially the luxurious ones) as cars, TV equipment, white goods and trips abroad. This is due to the fact that consumers decide to refrain from purchasing furniture for the sake of other products²⁰.

It can be noticed in the purchase decisions of present-day furniture buyers that – despite the disappearance of certain national features – they prefer local products. Such trend is referred to as consumer ethnocentrism and it consists in the conviction on the part of consumers of their obligation and moral duty to buy products of local origin. Choices made in that way emphasize consumers' sense of belonging to a particular geographical area (e.g. a country, region, etc.)²¹.

That approach may originate from their will to support national production, which consequently leads to the economic growth of the country, or from their conviction that their

¹⁹ See: B. Mróz, *Sarmata czy obywatel świata? Polski konsument w globalnej wiosce* [in:] Z. Kędzior, M. Jaciow (ed.), *Konsument. Gospodarstwo domowe. Rynek. Polska – Europa*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Centrum Badań i Ekspertyz, Katowice 2009, p. 23.

²⁰ E. Ratajczak, *Spoleczne...*, op. cit., p. 46-48.

²¹ More on consumer ethnocentrism in: A. Figiel, *Etnocentryzm konsumentki*, PWE, Warszawa 2004; A. Szromnik, *Etnocentryzm konsumentki – istota i uwarunkowania rozwoju*, „Marketing i Rynek” 1998, No 11, p. 9; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja w teorii...*, op. cit., p. 148; E. Kieźel (ed.), *Konsument...*, op. cit., p. 184; C. Bywalec, *Konsumpcja a rozwój...*, op. cit., p. 211; J. Woś, J. Rachocka, M. Kasperek-Hoppe, *Zachowania...*, op. cit., p. 147; L. Rudnicki, *Zachowania konsumentów na rynku*, PWE, Warszawa 2012, p. 94.

country's products have the best quality²². That trend can be seen among furniture buyers as in 2005 48% stated that they preferred furniture manufactured in Poland and only 2% chose foreign furniture (for 50% of respondents the origins of furniture manufacturers was of no significance)²³. Thus, it can be assumed that Polish furniture buyers consider Polish furniture to be a good value. However, it is difficult to say whether they want to support national industry intentionally.

In the past few years the issues of ecology and environmental protection (ecological consumption) as the criteria for the selection of a product have become increasingly important²⁴. The trend includes the concern whether the furniture is harmless to people and environment; that issue appeals either mainly to very wealthy buyers or the buyers that support strongly the ideas of living closely to the nature²⁵. Such approach is the result of the increasingly common idea of sustained consumption perceived as "the sensible use of consumption goods and attempt to maintain the equilibrium of the global eco-system for the sake of future generations and the fate of our planet. The implementation of the principles of sustained production and consumption has become one of the main priorities both of the EU, several governments and international groups and organizations"²⁶. However, the survey conducted among 200 inhabitants of Warsaw in 2008²⁷ which concerned the application of sustained consumption principles in everyday consumption habits of Poles proved that Polish consumers do not follow the requirements and recommendations of sustained consumption and that their behavior differs from the socially desired model and it rather reflects their

²² According to the CBOS survey conducted in February 2002 in which the opinion of Poles about their purchasing preferences, 57% of Poles choose Polish products, while only 28% – foreign ones; 49% of respondents admitted that the purchase of Polish made products was influenced by patriotic reasons. The Mareco survey indicates that 62,5% Poles pay attention whether the product they are buying is labeled with the Teraz Polska (Poland Now) logo, based on: L. Rudnicki, *Zachowania...*, op. cit., p. 95.

²³ A. Wiśniewska, A. Paginowska, J. Michałowska, T. Dziedzic, *Badania rynku meblarskiego w Polsce. Badania na próbie celowej klientów indywidualnych*, Ogólnopolska Izba Gospodarcza Producentów Mebli, Sopot 2005, październik [maszynopis], s. 68.

²⁴ In recent years a higher environmental awareness among Poles has been observed. Polish consumers have begun to appreciate the significance of natural environment in the quality of life. They are increasingly more interested in the offer of environmentally-friendly products, although their main objective when buying them is to protect their health and the health of their families; the care about sustained development and the condition of natural environment come second. Cf.: K. Mazurek-Łopacińska, *Przemiana kulturowa Polaków w warunkach transformacji systemowej* [in:] Z. Kędzior, M. Jaciow (ed.), *Konsument. Gospodarstwo domowe. Rynek. Polska – Europa*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Centrum Badań i Ekspertyz, Katowice 2009, p. 46.

²⁵ It is estimated that in western European countries over 80% consumer prefer buying „green” products. E. Ratajczak, *Ważniejsze...*, op. cit.; E. Ratajczak, *Rynek...*, op. cit., p. 51.

²⁶ B. Mróz, *Sarmata...*, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁷ See: B. Mróz, *Wzorce zrównoważonej konsumpcji a zachowania polskich konsumentów*, Raport z badania statutowego nr 04/S/0016/08, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa 2008; B. Mróz, *Sarmata...*, op. cit., pp. 25-28; B. Mróz (ed.), *Oblicza konsumpcjonizmu*, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa 2009.

fascination in the philosophy of consumption hedonism²⁸. It may be assumed that similar attitude is still typical for furniture buyers.

When analyzing the articles and papers concerning the behavior of present-day buyers, one must agree that Polish society is becoming rapidly a modern consumption society with all the drawbacks and advantages that are related to the globalization of consumption, which means the access to the global product range offer and the opportunity to make up for the civilization backwardness and to increase the standard of living on the one hand, and the desire to possess, the endangered natural environment and commercialization of social relationships on the other²⁹.

2. Trends in the behavior of present-day young furniture buyers

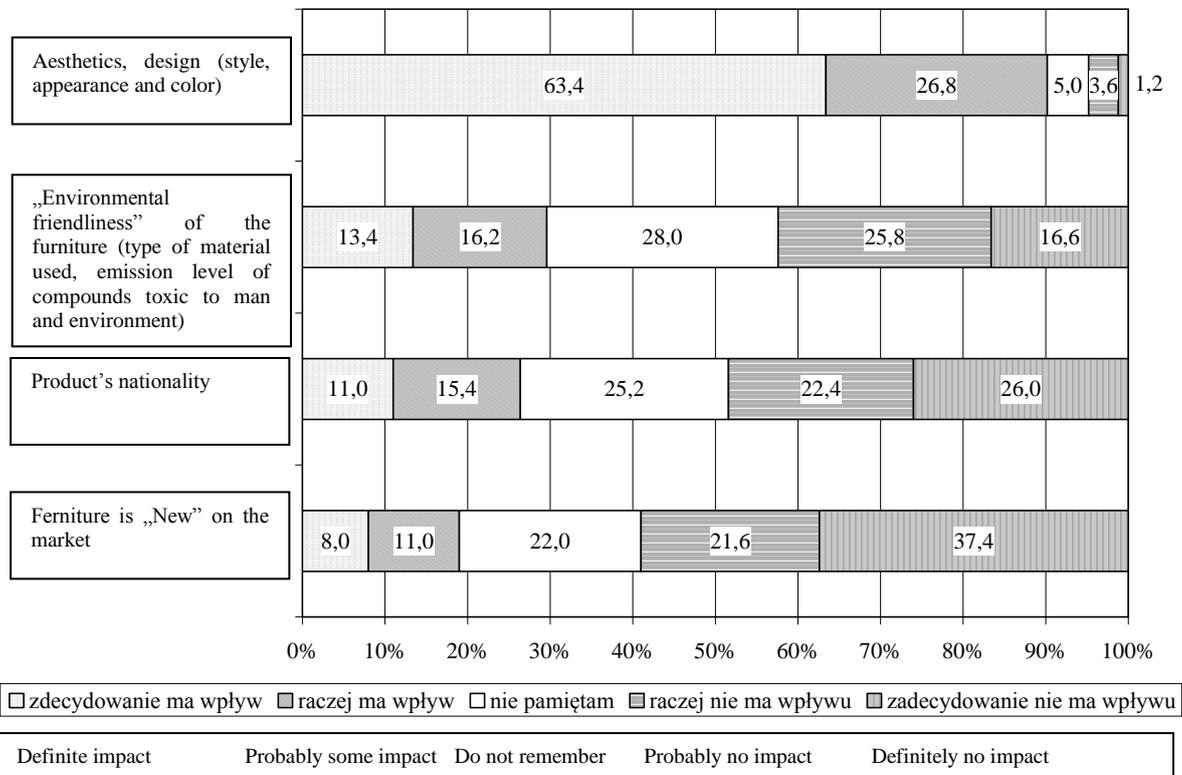
In February and March 2012, in order to analyze present-day trends in the behavior of young furniture buyers, a survey was carried out among 500 people aged 19-34, who declared buying furniture in the previous 3 years. The survey group was chosen by means of a proportional quota selection. Quotas for each survey group were based along the criterion of sex and place of living (division into town and countryside). The area of the survey covered the Małopolska region. The questionnaire included 21 yes/no questions. Due to a limited space, only selected results of the survey are presented in the article.

When analyzing the trends in the behavior of young furniture buyers, it is worth considering consumer preferences regarding the features of the furniture purchased. The survey proved a high significance of the aesthetic factor and the role of design, understood here as the style of a piece of furniture, its appearance and color (90.2% indications) that influenced the purchase decision of young buyers (Fig. 2)

²⁸ According to the survey, 70% of the buyers are not interested (or very rarely) who produced a particular product and where the profits go; only 1/3 of the respondents consider whether instead of purchasing a new product, a second-hand or a borrowed product could replace it, 61% of respondents never (or very rarely) is concerned whether the rules of environmental protection were followed in the manufacturing process. See: B. Mróz, *Wzorce...*, op. cit.; B. Mróz, *Sarmata...*, op. cit., pp. 25-28; B. Mróz (red.), *Oblicza...*, op. cit.

²⁹ According to: B. Mróz, *Sarmata...*, op. cit., p. 28.

Fig. 2. Selected features of furniture conditioning the purchase by Young buyers



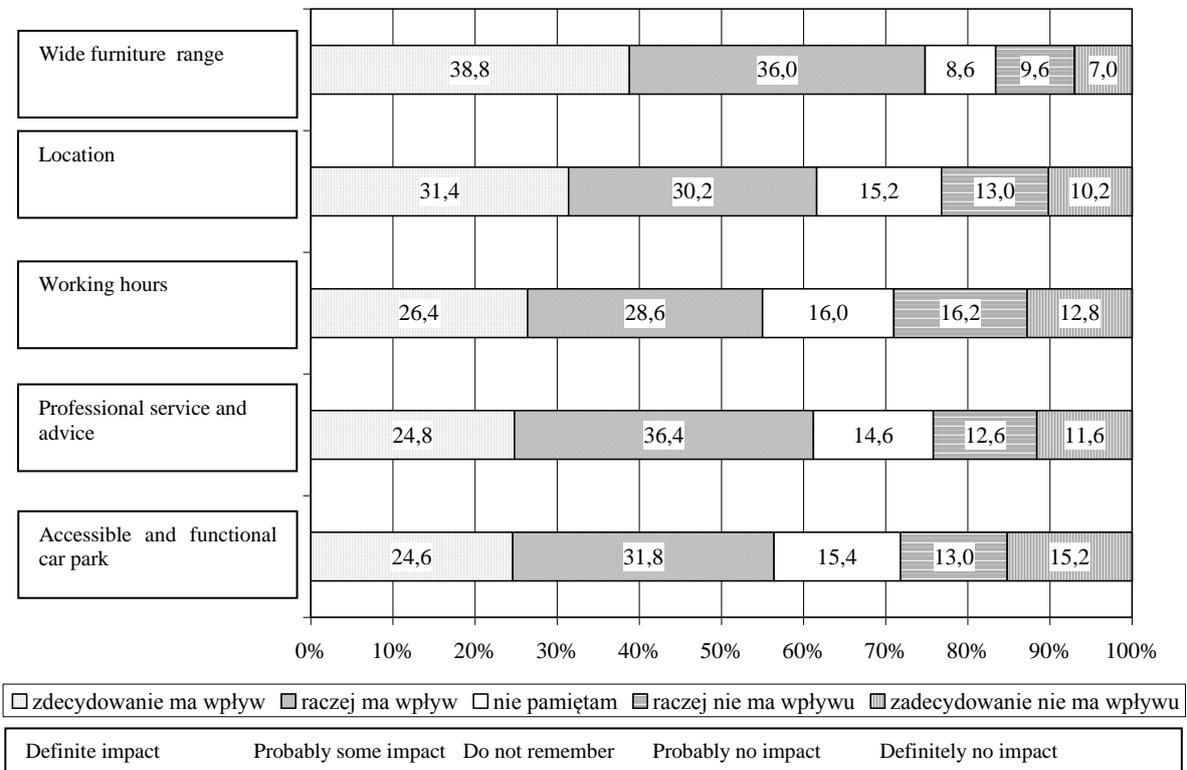
Source: Author's survey research

Environmental awareness is a relatively new phenomenon among Polish consumers. It is commonly perceived as the will to act in the way that the choice of the products on the market and the way of meeting the needs should not deteriorate the natural environment, including one's own health and the health of all the other members of the household. The common belief that young furniture buyers have pro-environmental approach was not proved by the survey. Young buyers pay little attention to the ecological friendliness of these products, as only 29.6% of the respondents admitted that it had any impact on their purchase. Only every fourth young buyer admits that the nationality of furniture is a factor determining the purchase. It is also interesting that young buyers find it insignificant whether the piece of furniture that they are buying is a novelty on the market (it is a significant factor for 19% respondents)

Present-day furniture buyers pay attention to the features of the outlet selling the furniture. Empirical investigations show that young consumers prefers outlets with a wide offer range – three

out of four respondents make their purchase decisions in a shop that offers a wide selection of durable goods (Fig.3)

Fig. 3. Features of sales outlets that influence furniture purchase decisions made by young consumers

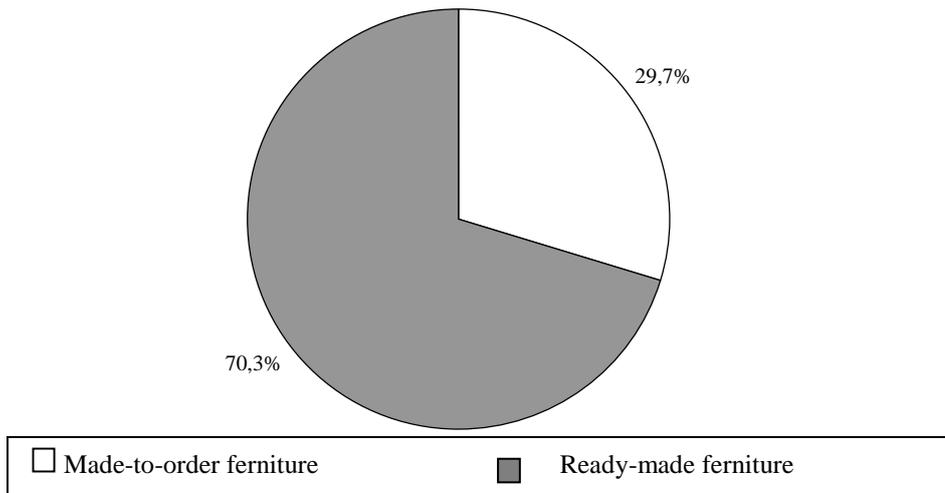


Source: Author's survey research.

For over 50% of young consumers the furniture purchase decision was influenced by the location of the sales outlet (61.6%), its working hours (55%), professional service and advice in the sales outlet (61.2%) and also the accessibility and functionality of the car park adjacent to the sales outlet (56.4%)

Active participation in designing the furniture is a current trend visible in the behavior of young furniture buyers. According to the survey results, the majority of young consumers (70.3%) buy made-to-order furniture, which may testify to their desire to have products adjusted to their needs, preferences and tastes (fig.4)

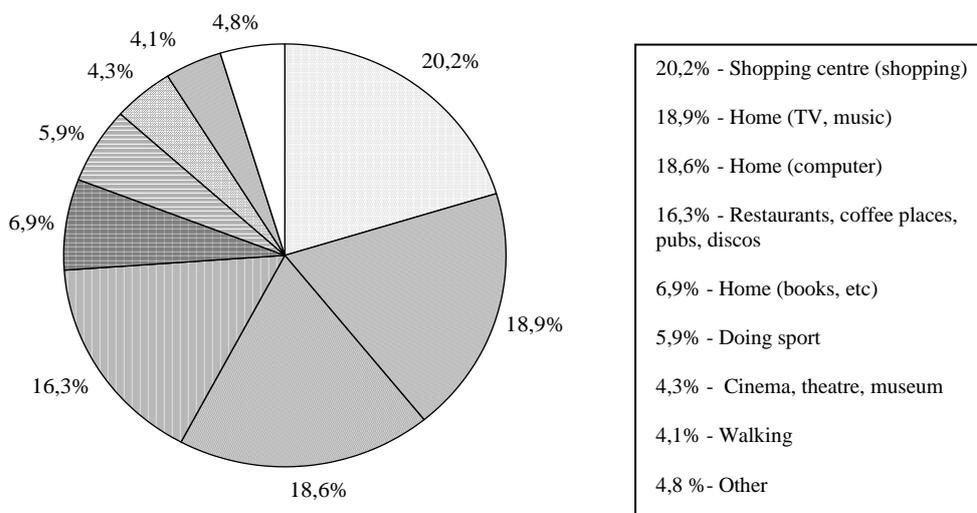
Fig. 4. Type of furniture purchased by young consumers



Source: Author's survey research.

The ways of spending their free time have a significant impact on the behavior and purchasing decisions of young consumers, furniture shopping included. Young furniture buyers are keen on spending their free time shopping in shopping centers (20.2%) and at home, watching TV, listening to music (18.9%) or at a computer (18.6%) – figure 5. As it has been said before, such a way of spending time gives them the opportunity to get acquainted with the product range on the market and with the advertisements and other commercial information offered by the manufacturers and the shops.

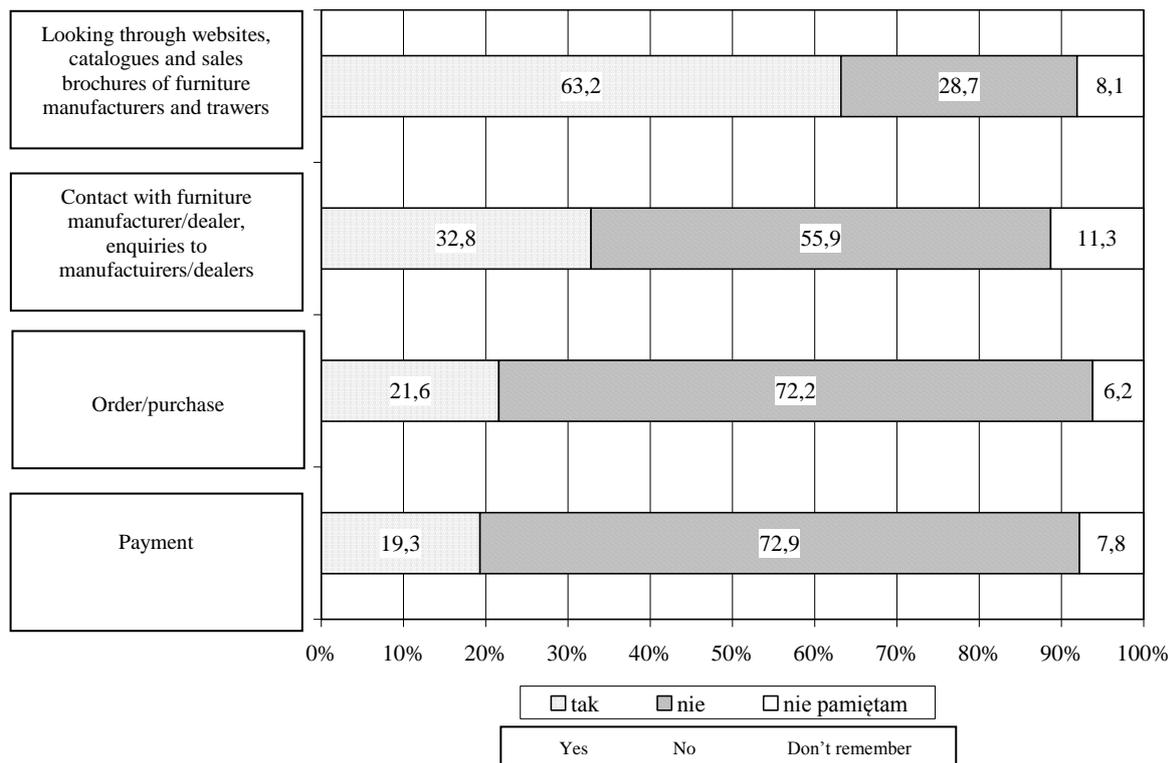
Fig. 5. Ways of spending free time by young furniture buyers



Source: Author's survey research.

The results of the survey research not only confirmed the common opinion that present-day consumers spend a considerable part of their free time at a computer and the Internet, but also that they use the Internet as a supporting tool in purchasing furniture. A decisive majority of young furniture buyers (63.2%) admit looking through websites, catalogues and sales brochures of furniture producers and sellers (fig.6)

Fig. 6. The use of the Internet by young consumers when buying furniture



Source: Author's survey research.

Every third consumer points out that he/she contacted the manufacturer or dealer through the Internet. Thus, it can be stated that young consumers comparatively rarely order, buy and pay through the Internet.

When summarizing the considerations on the contemporary trends in the behavior of young furniture buyers, it should be mentioned that in the case of this group of consumers the aesthetics and design (i.e. the style, appearance and the color of the furniture) have a significant impact on their purchase decision. Moreover, young consumers pay close attention to the features of the outlet selling the furniture and take into consideration the range of products that it offers, its location, working hours, professional service and advice and the

accessibility and functionality of the car park. Young buyers prefer made-to-order rather than ready-made furniture and their favorite pastime is doing the shopping in shopping centers. Furthermore, they make use of the Internet on a fairly large scale and when buying furniture they comparatively frequently look through websites, the Internet catalogues and sales brochures and are keen on contacting manufacturers/dealers through the Internet.

Conclusion

New consumer trends appear in times of economic changes, the increase of mobility, the development of IT and many other global processes. Present-day buyers show new approaches that are typical for the consumption models throughout the world. The consumption changes in developed societies are not uniform; they are sometimes contrasting and sometimes synergic in nature. In the time of system transition in Poland, the globalization of markets and the rapid pace of new product launches, the knowledge of contemporary trends in consumer behavior, young furniture buyers including, is of particular importance.

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Summary

In the era of market globalization, which is characterized by an intensive competitive rivalry between companies, the role of a wide knowledge about consumers, their needs, expectations, habits, aspirations and, first of all, the regularities in their conduct has become increasingly significant. It is especially important to learn about contemporary trends in consumer behavior, young consumers including, on the market of such vital durable goods as furniture since furniture is considered to be a product of first necessity in the majority of developed societies.

The paper analyzes contemporary trends among young consumers on the furniture market both in the light of secondary sources and the author's own empirical research. New trends in the behavior of consumer group under investigation are described on the basis of the

author's survey research. It is presented that young consumers pay attention to furniture aesthetics and design and they take into consideration the features of furniture outlets (their product range, location, working hours, professional service and advice, accessibility and functionality of the car park). Moreover, it is stated that young buyers willingly buy made-to-order furniture and are keen on spending their leisure doing the shopping in shopping centers. The group under investigation makes use of the Internet when making decisions regarding the purchase of furniture.