

## REVIEW

by **Prof. Todorka Stoyanova Atanassova-Kalaydzhieva, PhD**  
Department of "Management", Faculty of Economics of Trakia University, Stara Zagora,  
scientific specialty "Organization and management of production", professional direction  
3.7 Administration and management

The author of the peer-reviewed dissertation is **Tonya Todorova Petrusheva**, a doctoral student in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Trade)" at the Department of "Trade Business", Faculty of "Production and Trade Business", Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov.

The topic of the dissertation is: „**RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF RETAIL FORMATS ON THE CONSUMPTION OF FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS**“

### **I. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION:**

The dissertation of Tonya Todorova Petrusheva was discussed and admitted to public defense in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Academic Staff Development of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov at a meeting of the Department of Commercial Business, Faculty of Production and Commercial Business.

The review was assigned to me on the basis of Order No. 1302/11.12.2024 of the Rector of the Economic Academy "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov, as a member of the Scientific Jury, elected by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Production and Commercial Business, Protocol No. 5/10.12.2024. The same was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Academic Staff Development of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Economic Academy "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov.

Doctoral student Tonya Petrusheva obtained a bachelor's degree in "Economic and Financial Control" in 2009 and a master's degree in "Accounting and Auditing in the Public Sector" in 2011 at the "D. A. Tsenov" Economic Academy - Svishtov. She currently works as a teacher at the "D. Blagoev" Secondary school in the town of Svishtov.

The total volume of the dissertation work is 222 standard pages, and is structured as follows: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, list of figures, list of tables, declaration of originality and reliability, appendices.

The literature used includes a total of 162 literary sources, of which: 52 are in Cyrillic (Bulgarian and Russian) and 110 in English. All are cited correctly.

The results of the study are presented in 47 figures, 41 tables and 5 appendices with a volume of 31 pages.

### **II. EVALUATION OF THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION:**

#### **1. Relevance and significance of the scientific problem developed in the dissertation:**

The relevance and significance of the scientific problem developed in the dissertation stems from the significant influence that the commercial formats used for the sale of FMCG have. On their basis, the structure of consumption is built and the customer's choice is formed. In order to satisfy the growing needs and expectations of the buyer, various factors of a different nature must be taken into account - economic, regional, demographic, social and cultural. There is a need to study and

analyze consumer behavior, since it influences the development of each commercial format. On the other hand, the positioning of retail outlets, the choice of commercial format, the offered assortment and variety of goods and brands, the quality of service and the implementation of additional services, advertising, pricing, promotional policies, programs for loyal customers, etc. are of great importance.

The scientific issue is broad. It is the focus of research by a number of economists – Bulgarian and foreign, and is also in the field of view of other fields of science – sociology, psychology, social anthropology, marketing, etc. These studies can be seen as a source of new ideas, an opportunity to apply established methods, approaches and/or introduce new ones for the study of commercial business, in response to the contemporary challenges facing its development. Through the chosen topic, the dissertation focuses on an essential aspect of commercial business, namely the study of the influence of commercial formats on the consumption of FMCG. In this sense, I believe that the chosen topic of the dissertation is relevant and significant not only for economic theory, but also very important for commercial practice. It is dissertable in terms of the scope of the study.

## **2. Subject and object, goal and tasks, research thesis, methods, information base of the study:**

The subject of research in the dissertation is the consumption of fast-moving consumer goods, influenced by commercial formats and other factors of consumer behavior.

The object of research is the consumers of fast-moving consumer goods in Bulgaria, making purchases and consumption in the household.

The goal of the dissertation is precisely formulated, corresponds to the content of the dissertation and is feasible.

The main tasks that are solved in order to achieve the set goal are five. They are derived on the basis of the set goal and are logically connected with the structure of the dissertation.

In the dissertation, the doctoral student formulates a research thesis that is demonstrable and fully corresponds to the research problem.

The implementation of the set goal, the solution of the main tasks and the proof of the research thesis in the dissertation is carried out through a complex of methods: historical, descriptive, inductive, deductive, etc. Analytical methods are used, such as: synthetic, comparative, dispersion analysis, regression and correlation analysis to study relationships and dependencies using the SPSS Statistics and Excel programs. To collect empirical data, the survey method is used, through which households from two regions of Bulgaria are surveyed: Veliko Tarnovo (North Central Region) and Burgas (Southeastern Region), purchasing and consuming fast-moving consumer goods. The sample covers a total of 600 households from the two studied regions. The survey was conducted during the months of June - August 2024.

The limiting conditions in the theoretical, empirical and territorial aspects of the research are presented accurately and with arguments.

The diverse information base used in the dissertation makes a positive impression, which includes: a study of specialized literary sources; household surveys; statistical information for a ten-year period (2012-2022) from the National Statistical Institute, etc. The sources used are cited accurately. The collected information is a good basis for in-depth analysis and evaluation.

## **3. Structural and content assessment of the dissertation:**

The dissertation in terms of structure and volume meets the requirements for acquiring the ONS "doctor" in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Trade)". The ratio between the individual structural parts is balanced.

In the introduction to the dissertation, the relevance and significance of the topic being developed is argued, the object and subject of the study, the goal and objectives, the research thesis

are presented. The theoretical and methodological framework of the study and the restrictive conditions that are observed are presented in a synthesized form.

The first chapter of the dissertation is theoretical in nature. Based on research by domestic and foreign authors on the issue, the doctoral candidate conducts an in-depth literature analysis. By synthesizing the analyzed theoretical concepts, the author's definition of the concepts of "fast-moving consumer goods" and "retail formats" is formulated. Criteria for classifying fast-moving consumer goods are derived. The evolutionary development and typology of retail formats are also examined. In the third paragraph, more significant factors that determine consumer behavior when choosing a retail format are analyzed and grouped. In addition, basic factors that influence consumer behavior when purchasing and consuming fast-moving consumer goods are also highlighted. The presentation in the first chapter demonstrates the doctoral candidate's very good knowledge of the economic literature on the researched topic. Reasoned generalizations are made, arising from the content of the analyzed literary sources, in which her own understanding of the issues under consideration is clearly highlighted. Based on the literary analysis carried out, the author synthesizes true and accurate conclusions.

The second chapter of the dissertation is of a theoretical and methodological nature. It is structured in three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, based on analysis and interpretations of literary sources on the issue, supplemented with her own perceptions, the doctoral student determines and categorizes five more significant approaches to studying the consumption of FMCG and the choice of retail format by consumers, presented in Fig. 3 (p.62). On their basis, specific variables are highlighted that arise from the selected categories of determinants - Fig. 4 (p. 63). In the second paragraph, the four groups of consumer models presented in the literature are analyzed, very well synthesized by the doctoral student in Table 15 (p.79), in order to establish the factors (external and internal) that influence consumer choice and the stages of the purchase decision-making process. A typology of fundamental models of consumer behavior applicable to the study of the process of consumption of FMCG is presented, which the doctoral student summarizes in Table 16 (p. 81-82) and analyzes in depth. In the third paragraph, an adaptation of a model for studying the influence of retail formats on the consumption of FMCG is carried out. Within this model, three basic stages of its implementation are defined - Fig. 23 (p. 109). Each of the indicated stages is explained in detail. A positive impression is made by the argumentation when building the sample, the structure of the questionnaire itself, providing the study with empirical information, as well as the correctly selected dispersion, regression and correlation analysis of the data to establish connections and dependencies. Based on the literature analysis performed, the author formulates precise conclusions. The presentation in the second chapter is logically connected, distinguished by thoroughness and scientific precision in clarifying the methodological foundations of the study.

The third chapter is distinguished by its analytical-constructive nature. Structurally, this chapter of the dissertation includes three logically related paragraphs.

In the first paragraph, an in-depth analysis of the FMCG subsector in Bulgaria is carried out. The analysis of changes in the subsector is carried out through the prism of its presentation as an integral part of sector G "Trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles" according to the NACE Rev. 2008. The analysis is carried out in two directions - starting from the entire sector "G", and then focusing on the FMCG subsector in the main trade formats - supermarkets and hypermarkets. The time period of the study of the sector/subsector is 10 years (2012–2022). Key economic indicators have been selected, outlining its state and development trends. The accurate interpretation of the results of the analysis combined with their very good visualization through numerous figures and tables is impressive. The conclusions drawn are correct.

The second paragraph includes a phased testing of the model for studying the influence of retail formats on the consumption of FMCG, defined in the second chapter of the dissertation. The

results of the survey of 600 households from 2 districts are presented: Veliko Tarnovo region - 299 households and Burgas region -301, in order to determine the influence of different retail formats on the process of purchasing and consuming FMCG. The study was conducted in 2024, June - August. The established values from the empirical study of the selected indicators are visualized through a large number of tables and figures. Dispersion, regression and correlation analysis were used, through which the doctoral student establishes connections and dependencies between certain values. The interpretation of the results is distinguished by accuracy and demonstrates excellent knowledge of the topic and the applied scientific methods. In summary of the results of the survey, conclusions and recommendations are formulated that are correct. I believe that through the three-stage model thus tested, there is a research contribution in identifying general trends, regional similarities and differences at the household level in consumer preferences towards retail formats when purchasing and consuming FMCG in the country.

The third paragraph formulates recommendations for developing the consumption of fast-moving consumer goods, taking into account the influence of retail formats. Taking into account the characteristics of the studied retail formats and the growing consumer expectations, the doctoral student argues eight main (groups) of recommendations, which I fully accept.

Overall, the presentation in the third chapter is distinguished by its thoroughness. The doctoral student's knowledge of the research topic is evident, and the presented conclusions and recommendations are properly justified.

The conclusion presents basic summaries of the results obtained from the study.

I formulate the general assessment of the structural and content characteristics of the dissertation work of doctoral student Tonya Petrusheva as follows: The set goal has been achieved and the main tasks have been solved; The research thesis has been proven; The style of the presentation is scientific and understandable; The rules of scientific ethics have been observed when developing the dissertation work. The authors have been cited accurately and correctly. The dissertation is very well structured, and the results are visualized through a large number of tables and figures.

#### **4. Publications on the dissertation:**

Doctoral student Tonya Petrusheva on the topic of the developed dissertation has applied one independent scientific study, printed in the Annual Almanac "Scientific Research of Doctoral Students", publishing house of EA "D. A. Tsenov", Svishtov. Also, three printed independent scientific reports, presented at international scientific conferences in the country. Two of the scientific reports are in Bulgarian and one in English. The topics of the scientific publications fully reflect the content of the dissertation. The published scientific works of the doctoral student prove that the results of the dissertation have gained popularity in the country.

The abstract objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

In the report-declaration for the fulfillment of minimum national requirements for awarding the ONS "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences" with the required 30 points, the doctoral student achieves 65 points - more than 2 times more.

### **III. SCIENTIFIC AND SCIENTIFIC-APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION:**

I accept and synthesize the four contributions presented in the reference of doctoral student Tonya Petrusheva in the following way:

1. A contribution that arises from the in-depth analysis of the specialized scientific literature, with its subsequent supplementation and enrichment through derived author's definitions and justified significance of basic economic concepts.

2. A contribution that has a theoretical-applied nature and is based on a developed and tested methodological model for studying the influence of retail formats on the consumption of FMCG, including a step-by-step reasoned sequence of work.

3. An original contribution of a practical-applied nature, arising from the results obtained from the conducted own survey of households from two regions in Bulgaria, identifying general trends, regional similarities and differences at the household level in consumer preferences towards retail formats when purchasing and consuming FMCG. Conclusions have been drawn, connections and dependencies between the studied quantities have been revealed, and recommendations for commercial practice have been proposed.

#### **IV. CRITICAL NOTES, QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The qualities of a dissertation work that meets the requirements for acquiring the ONS "doctor" are undeniable, therefore my notes and recommendations to the doctoral student are linked to her future scientific development, namely:

- I recommend that the author publish the results of the study in a monographic work, in which the scope of the study can be expanded, by including households from other regions of Bulgaria, as well as from other European countries; ;

- For a wider popularization of the results of the study, I recommend that the results be published in international scientific journals with an impact factor and/or impact rank.

I have a question for the doctoral student:


What measures should small-specialized stores, especially in large cities in Bulgaria, take to resist the expansion of supermarkets and hypermarkets?

#### **V. GENERAL CONCLUSION:**

In summary of the above, I believe with full conviction that doctoral student Tonya Todorova Petrusheva has developed her dissertation at the necessary scientific level. I fully confirm that the author is very familiar with and successfully applies modern methods of analysis in the field of economics and trade, in particular in the study of the influence of trade formats on the consumption of fast-moving consumer goods. She accurately and correctly interprets the results of the study, and has proven scientific and applied contributions.

In this regard, I would like to propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to evaluate the highly developed dissertation work and to vote positively for the awarding of Tonya Todorova Petrusheva the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Trade)" in the professional direction 3.8. "Economics", field of higher education 3 "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences".

07.02.2025  
Stara Zagora

Reviewer:   
(Prof. Todorka Atanassova-Kalaydzhieva)