

## O P I N I O N

on a dissertation of Doctor's Educational and Scientific Degree in the professional field: 3.8. Economics, Doctoral Program in Economics and Management (Commerce), at Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov

Prepared the opinion: Assoc. Prof. Dobrin Ganchev Ganchev, PhD, Department of "Social and Economic Sciences", Technical University - Gabrovo, scientific specialty 05.02.18 Economics and Management.

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Thesis topic: "RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF RETAIL FORMATS ON THE CONSUMPTION OF FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS"

Reason for preparing the opinion: Order № 1302 of 11 December 2024 on the opening of a procedure for public defense of a dissertation and approval of the composition of the scientific jury, as well as a decision of the scientific jury at the first meeting held on 13.12.2024.

### **I. General presentation of the dissertation work**

The scientific work submitted for opinion covers 222 pages. It consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, appendices. The dissertation includes 41 tables and 47 figures. The bibliography includes 162 sources in English, Bulgarian and Russian.

The topic of the dissertation is dedicated to a significant and contemporary economic problem from a theoretical and practical point of view. The relevance of the study is dictated by the dynamics of the development of the trade sector in the country, by the growing influence that trade formats, taken in their diversity, have on the structure of consumption and consumer choice.

**The introduction** formulates the subject, object, main research thesis, goal, objectives, methods and restrictive conditions related to the dissertation research.

**The subject** of research is the consumption of fast-moving consumer goods, determined by the influence of retail formats and other factors of consumer behaviour.

**The main research thesis** defended by the doctoral student is that in the consumption structure, fast-moving consumer goods occupy a significant relative share and their purchase and consumption in the household are determined by the influence of various determinants offered by retail formats, as well as other factors.

**The main goal** of the dissertation is, by analysing and systematizing theoretical, methodological and empirical studies on the place of fast-moving

consumer goods (FMCG) in the consumption structure, to approve and adapt to a certain extent a model for studying the influence of retail formats on the consumption of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) at the household level.

The goal was achieved by solving five specific research tasks.

In accordance with the goal of the study, six important restrictive conditions were adopted.

## **II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation**

**In the first chapter**, the doctoral student explores basic economic categories. He examines the commodity from a historical perspective and introduces us to existing classifications of commodities. According to him, the concept of "consumer goods" is important for clarifying one of the basic concepts in this work - "fast-moving consumer goods" (p. 12). Performs a systematization of basic characteristics of "fast-moving consumer goods" by various authors. Defines the category of fast-moving consumer goods based on the researched sources.

Traces the evolutionary development of commercial formats. Performs a systematization of definitions of the essence of the concept of "commercial format" by noting the relevant research emphases and views of researchers. Develops his own definition of commercial format.

Examines and systematizes the main groups of factors for typifying commercial formats (p. 39). Performs a classification of commercial formats based on various criteria and in different "projections". Distinguishes three categories of commercial formats, which he characterizes with extremely high precision. The emphasis is placed on the consumer profile, the desired price, assortment, convenience and quality of service, as well as the basic determinants of their purchase decision and alternative choices. It performs an analysis of significant and basic factors in the choice of retail format. It systematizes the basic factors based on the studied specialized literature. On this basis, it interprets existing research emphases.

The doctoral student summarizes that, in essence, consumer behavior when choosing a commercial format is a combined process of internal and external manifestations under the influence of economic, social, demographic and psychological variables, as well as assessments following a purchase.

**In the second chapter**, the doctoral student presents the methodological foundations of his research. The emphasis is placed on approaches to researching the consumption of FMCG and the choice of retail format. It is necessary to note that the systematization of more significant approaches to characterizing the consumption of FMCG and the choice of retail formats helps to better and more purposefully group certain categories of determinants related to the research process.

The doctoral student studies consumer behavior patterns, assuming that the main function of consumer models is to reveal the factors that influence



consumer choices and thus clarify the stages of the purchase decision-making process. As a result of the in-depth study, a generalized definition of the very essence of the models is achieved. It identifies three stages that are organically integrated into the adopted methodological framework.

The developed model considers the main specific features of consumer behavior models, observing the characteristics of individual types of retail formats and analyzes certain determinants of consumer behavior. Its usefulness is demonstrated in identifying general trends, regional similarities and differences at the household level.

**The third chapter** is dedicated to the results of the practical studies conducted. The doctoral student conducts an analytical study of the FMCG sector in our country. He identifies two large groups of factors influencing trade, one group of which has a positive impact, and the other group has a negative impact on FMCG trade. It also considers the impact of changes in the structure of commercial establishments according to their size, noting an increase in those of medium and large size, and a decrease in small enterprises and microenterprises.

The researched issue is refracted first of all through the prism of sector G "Trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles" according to the Classifier of Economic Activities (CIE - 2008), part of which constitutes the FMCG subsector (p. 121). Secondly, data on major retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets are primarily systematized and analyzed. Development and modernization indicate an increase in these medium and large-sized retail outlets, and a decrease in small and micro-enterprises. This leads to an increase in investments and an inflow of foreign capital.

The doctoral student tracks key indicators for the main economic results for the period 2012-2022 in dynamics. He conducts a comparative analysis between the two types of stores - specialized and non-specialized (p. 127). The finding is that the changes in the size of retail outlets are due to retail chains operating with different formats.

It is necessary to note that in order to characterize the state and development trends of the FMCG subsector, data on the main retail formats - supermarkets and hypermarkets - are primarily processed and analyzed. Entities that are from the subcategory of wholesale producers, respectively distributors of FMCG, are not included in the study. Large retail formats account for 52% of the size of the analyzed market, and smaller retail formats - about 36% in 2022.

Using correlation-regression analysis, the relationship between food and non-alcoholic beverage spending and household disposable income was studied. The doctoral student tracks the dynamics of key financial indicators of retail chains (supermarkets and hypermarkets) - Kaufland, Lidl, T-market, Lidl, Billa and Fantastico.

It presents a model for studying the influence of retail formats based on the results of a survey conducted, structured in several stages. Based on a



specific methodological framework, a study is conducted in two districts - Burgas and Veliko Tarnovo, focusing on the preferences and habits of consumption of FMCG at the household level.

It focuses on the key economic determinant of FMCG consumption – the weekly consumer spending of households. The survey is complex in nature and was conducted in many and varied “projections”.

A dispersion, regression and correlation analysis of data was performed to study the dependence of the monthly expenditure on the purchase of FMCG in the household. Based on multiple linear regression and correlation with the use of appropriate software, the dependence of the monthly expenditure on two factors is analyzed - the disposable monthly income of the household and the age of the respondents.

In the third stage, the doctoral student draws his conclusions and generalizations. The usefulness should be directed towards future business development policies of the studied retail formats, considering consumer requirements. He makes specific structured recommendations for the development of the consumption of fast-moving goods based on the results obtained during the testing of the Model.

It formulates detailed recommendations for improving the overall commercial activity of the studied commercial formats. Their innovative practices are studied. It formulates four conclusions in which it synthesizes the results of its research work.

**The research tools** include historical, descriptive, inductive, deductive and other methods. Analytical methods are applied, such as: synthetic, comparative, variance analysis, regression and correlation analysis to study relationships and dependencies. The statistical software product IBM SPSS Statistics (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and the Excel program are used in data analysis.

**The language and style** demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the specific terminology in the scientific field being studied.

The presented **abstract**, consisting of 41 standard pages, reflects the structure and content of the developed dissertation work to the necessary extent. Six publications are attached to the abstract – one study and five reports. All of them were developed independently. The abstract is written in Bulgarian and English. The scientific results achieved by the doctoral student and the submitted declaration provide confidence in the independent scientific research and do not question the correctness of the work developed.

It is necessary to evaluate the role of the scientific supervisor - Assoc. Prof. Simeonka Petrova, Ph.D, in the research development process.

### **III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation work**

The developed dissertation has fulfilled the set goal and research tasks. The

following more important scientific and applied scientific contributions can be highlighted:

1. Based on theoretical interpretation, generalization and synthesis of scientific judgments about FMCG, their significance in the structure of consumption is justified and existing knowledge is enriched through derived author's definitions.

2. Based on a study of fundamental approaches, models and factors of consumer behavior when choosing a commercial format and purchasing FMCG, determinants of significant economic, demographic, psychological, social, cultural and marketing nature have been structured.

3. A methodological framework has been constructed and a sequence of stages of a model for studying the influence of retail formats on the consumption of FMCG has been proposed and argued as a result of a systematized and critical analysis of existing theoretical propositions.

4. In summarizing the research results obtained from the empirical testing of the proposed model, recommendations have been formulated for developing the consumption of FMCG, considering the influence of retail formats.

#### **IV. Questions about the dissertation**

1. How does changing values affect changing consumer behavior?
2. What are the induced tertiary effects in the FMCG subsector?

#### **V. Summary assessment of the dissertation work and conclusion**

In conclusion, I believe that the dissertation work submitted for defense meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the Regulations for the Application of the Law in D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.

That gives me reason to give a positive assessment and recommend to the honorable members of the scientific jury to vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" post-doctoral program "Economics and Management (Commerce)" to the doctoral student Tonya Todorova Petrusheva.

03 February 2025  
city of Gabrovo

Prepa

(Associate Professor D. Ganchev, Ph.D)