Customer taxonomy for weekend long retail events

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Abstract

The purpose of the current paper is to understand the behaviour of consumers during a short term coupon based retail event: the Glamour Days (GD). In such cases, regular retail strategies - which are proved to be contributing greatly to retailer success - don't work, the gap which the present paper fills. Our study focuses on the analysis of this retail event that motivates women to exhibit both task-, and social shopping orientations with differing weights thus creating distinct shopper categories. Our results contribute valuable insights into retail shopping orientation and shopper taxonomic scheme literatures.

Keywords: shopper taxonomy; retail strategy; retail shopper segmentation; consumer behaviour

Introduction

While previous research found that Hungarian consumers still tend to view shopping as a form of work and find little or no pleasure in it (e.g. Lins et al., 2015; Millan and Howard, 2007), Hofmeister and Neulinger (2011; 2013) argue that Hungarian consumers can be characterized by an increased level of materialistic values, suggesting that shopping activities and consumerism in general play a more significant role in people's everyday lives than in the past. At same time better employment opportunities increased the financial independence of women, and their spending power. Thus today, women play an increasing role in decision making which result in dramatic changes in their consumer values and practices. Due to the strong development of the distribution sector, women today have many options to shop. Thus retailers need to understand the drivers and motivations behind their decisions to ensure share of wallet. The purpose of the current paper is to understand the behaviour of consumers during a short term coupon based retail event: the Glamour Days (GD). Introduced by the Hungarian edition of Glamour Fashion Magazine, GD. has been serving as an exclusive and extremely popular shopping event targeting women since 2005. GD. was the first shopping event in Hungary that enabled

consumers to purchase a wide range of products at a discount with coupons provided by the fashion magazine. For two weekends a year, GD. allows its participants to buy their favourite brands at reduced prices, but perhaps even more importantly, it exposes consumers to various hedonistic, impulse as well as self-gifting shopping experience, that in turn challenges former consumer values and preferences. By attracting tens of thousands of consumers each year this event serves as a unique opportunity for consumers wishing to fully immerse in a dedicated day for shopping, turning it into a new „cultural phenomenon” rather than just another retail promotional event. But it is not only about consumers. The overall expenditure is close to Christmas shopping revenues, thus retailers eagerly look forward to these days in order to achieve a strong financial performance before the end of the year Christmas period (April and October). Understanding the shopping habits of the participants will better allow retailers to target their heavy buyers and loyal customers along with new ones. Earlier research focused on holiday shopping and Black Friday periods (Boyd Thomas and Peters, 2011), but consumer behaviour during important short term, -but not festive - shopping periods, has not been examined in depth according to our knowledge research. GD. may be considered similar to Black Friday shopping, but as mentioned it is not related to holiday shopping as Black Friday (Swilley and Goldsmith, 2012; Smith and Raymen, 2017), and it does not represent "deviant leisure". Smith and Raymen (2017, pp.392) refers to it as "leisure activities of constituent parts thereof which have the capacity to cause harm". The authors explain that the attachment of "social value" to the acquisition and display of consumer goods became a source of self-determination and results in an overall competition for desired goods. Such attitudes drive individuals towards behaviours that allow social norms to be overwritten and result in violent actions. Our paper investigates GD. to understand if based on similar shopping motivations groups of consumers could be identified for an event that is not driven by festive shopping and does not generate deviant or violent behaviour among its consumers to secure symbolic commodities that play an important role in contemporary consumer culture and self-identity. The results of our research present new opportunities to create retail events that may be introduced independently from holiday periods, providing high sales value and still offering an opportunity for co-creation of a socially engaging event without the risk of deviant shopper behaviour.

The paper is organized as follows. First, the current work presents the contemporary theories of shopping orientation and underlying motivational drivers, hedonistic values including impulse buying, with particular attention to the ways these concepts may help practitioners and professionals alike to gain a better understanding of consumerism within special retailer events. Second, this study introduces a large-scale quantitative research based on which three shopper typologies have been identified. The appeal of such taxonomic schemes is their power to enable retailers to better reach or even differentiate their customer base, and customize their marketing strategy. Finally, implications for companies wishing to target consumers in a short period retail sales event along with future research directions are also discussed.

Theory and hypotheses
Women love shopping (Fischer and Arnold, 1994) and have higher hedonistic motivations than men (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003;Wesley et al. 2006). The basic motivations for shopping behaviour were identified by Tauber as early as 1972, describing different psychological needs divided into two main fields: personal and social drivers. Considerable research has been also devoted to the understanding of consumer shopping motivations. Shopping orientation is defined as "a person's mental framework

of responses designed to navigate the shopping environment to achieve personal goals" (Baker and Wakefield, 2012, pp. 793.) Prior researches identified two fundamental orientations: hedonic and utilitarian.

In contrast to utilitarian consumption which can be viewed as a task-related and rational activity (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000), Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) argue that hedonic consumption "designates those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (pp. 92). Hedonic experiences hold stimulative and experiential values for consumers (Wakefield and Baker 1998), and therefore it is considered to be a more subjective and personal experience when compared to utilitarian consumption. Moreover, shopping incorporates various activities that may provide hedonistic and utilitarian value at the same time (Belk 1987; Fischer-Arnold 1990; Sherry 1983). Hedonic consumption, not surprisingly, has close linkages with pleasure-seeking and pleasure-maximizing (Alba-Williams, 2013); fantasies and arousal (Arnold & Reynolds, 2012); avoiding unpleasant emotions (Goldsmith et al. 2012) as well as engaging in joyful activities (Zhong and Mitchell 2012). However, consumers may exhibit both task- and social based consumer orientation. Evidence from prior research proved that consumers' will engage in one or the other motivation (Bloch et al. 1994; Leonadri and Gonida, 2007) and called for further research of shoppers exhibiting both orientations to understand the distinct responses of such groups to the shopping environment (Baker and Wakefield, 2012). Studies related to goal theory also suggest that in most cases task orientation declines as social orientation increases (Midgley et al, 1995; Baker and Wakefield, 2012). According to Arnold and Reynolds (2003) the knowledge of distinct customer segments is not only useful for retailers in constructing marketing communication strategies, but enables them to assess the motivational strength of different shopper groups. Thus, we extend this argument to understand the orientation of shoppers visiting GD. Consequently, we propose the following:

H1: GD. shopping event is positively related to both social and task related descriptive factors.

Field theory proposes the notion of one's "life-space", the interdependency between person and environment (Lewin, 1939, Baker and Wakefield, 2012). Time is also an essential part of this framework, as one must organize time with relation to the expected physical environment. GD being a short term opportunity for shopping at a discount, creates a crowded environment for participants, by which time becomes a key factor in achieving one's goals.

Josephs et al. (1992) argue that for women social interaction is a basis for self-esteem, thus viewing certain retail settings as an opportunity to socialize. Recalling the quote from a participant in our exploratory phenomenological interview: "You have to dress up for the GD., as it is not only about shopping, but it's a program like going to the cinema." Social shopping is defined as "the enjoyment of shopping with friends and family, socializing while shopping and bonding with other while shopping" (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003. pp. 80.; Babin et al. 1994).

The main objective of all shopper typologies is to categorize customers into certain groups in order to help retailers to achieve their strategic goals, be it related to profit, new customer acquisition or better targeting. Westbrook and Black (1985) offer a wide review of literature about shopper taxonomies and extend it by six clusters based on the differences in shopping motivations. Therefore we put forward the following hypothesis:

H2: GD. shoppers can be categorized into significantly differing groups based on their shopping orientation.

Considerable research has been devoted to the desire of social interaction while shopping, resulting in substantial approaches to shopper typologies. Therefore we suggest that GD consumers might be distinguished based on a number of factors related to their level of task- or social orientation. Hence:

H3: Social experience with regard to Glamour Shopping Days positively relates to experienced shoppers.

Impulse buying is closely related to hedonic consumption. Rook (1987) defines impulse buying as that "occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict" (pp. 191). Impulse buying can be characterized by rapid decision-making and a strong need to acquire immediate possession without paying little or no attention to potential negative consequences (Kacen and Lee, 2002). Buying impulses are also culture-specific in nature demonstrating that consumers may differ in how they engage in impulse buying practices (Rook, 1987; Kacen and Lee, 2002). In addition, albeit impulse buying often invokes negative feelings, such as shame or guilt, consumers do not necessarily view it as a "bad" activity. Previous research portrayed that impulse buying is also afforded by environmental clues. Certain settings, such as sales events, are more likely to encourage consumers to engage in impulse buying than other activities (Rook and Fisher, 1995).

Considerable research was devoted to suggestions to retailers what to do to attract or better serve consumers. The few academic literature that was devoted to the investigation of "strategies" that consumers develop in order to succeed and satisfy their motivations, were linked to festive periods such as Black Friday. Our research focuses on a non-festive short term retail purchasing situation that is possible to recreate as it attracts women by offering a few days dedicated to shopping. Baker and Wakefield (2012) argue that task shoppers have a higher need for control and view crowd as a stressful factor, in contradiction with social shoppers who in turn feel excited and are not bothered by the crowd. We suggested that GD. consumers exhibit both: task and social orientation during the event implicating different behaviour related to different needs. At the same time fashion items are highly hedonic products with relation to self-esteem management, therefore it is increasingly important that long awaited items are obtained along with the preference for the intimacy of people with the same interest in the mall. Black Friday shopping strategies and rituals have already been identified, focusing on securing blockbuster deals and emphasizing the importance of familial bonds. Black Friday as a collective consumption ritual that is shared among family members and friends and so are strategies and tactics. Therefore we have developed the below hypothesis to understand whether GD. shoppers also form strategies:

H4. GD. shoppers have different strategies to ensure the need for control to avoid crowd and secure the successful purchase.

The objective of the current paper is also to investigate whether such strategies are descriptive to certain groups of consumers and if GD. maybe considered as a collective family event. The paper also intended to provide recommendations on how retailers may integrate into such consumer driven strategies.

Methodology

In order to provide a comprehensive exposition of the research question with regard to consumers' behaviour during GD., the current study applied mixed method design (Morse, 2003). The qualitative and quantitative phase was conducted sequentially. First the qualitative research was implemented by using phenomenological interviewing techniques to gain a deeper understanding of the multiple perspectives on participants'

"lived experience" (Spiegelberg, 1982). Participants were selected based on personal judgement and snowball sampling. As a result, phenomenological interviews were conducted with 18 experienced GD. women shoppers between the age of 16-35. Based on the result of this exploratory phenomenological research (Kelemen et al. 2016) we have developed a quantitative study to understand how these experiences may be applied to the total population of the event.

Our initial scale is based on the hedonic and utilitarian shopping value scale (Babin et al. 1994) and the impulse buying behaviour scale developed by Hausman (2000), incorporating items from our interview data. The initial pool of items was tested online for a week and modifications were made to several items to create our final scale.

The results of the qualitative and quantitative data were analysed separately, and were integrated at the interpretative level of the research (Teddlie and Tashakorri, 2003).

Data for the current study was obtained on the Facebook page of Glamour Magazine, just after Glamour Shopping Days. 761 people were reached. All data were handled anonymously and confidentially. Since GD. target primarily women consumers, the final sample consisted of 579 women shoppers, between the ages of 18 and 35, with an average age of 24.9 years (st.dev= 7.25). In terms of family status, 85% of the respondents had no children, therefore our participants were mainly young and independent adults. 93.2% of the respondents have already participated in the GD. at least once, with 63.6% having already visited the event at least 4 times.

The survey for the present study was formulated on the basis of the relevant literature (Babin et al., 1994; Hausman, 2000, Boyd and Peters, 2011) as well as the results from our in-depth interviews with Glamour Days shoppers. Our final scale consisted of 31 items. Exploratory factor analysis revealed an eight-factor structure of the items (see also Table 1). All items were measured using five-point Likert type scales.

Table 1 – Categorization of factors linked to Glamour Days

Factor1 - Shopping process		
SHPROC1	Prepare wish-list	0.675
SHPROC2	Plan shopping trip ahead	0.639
SHPROC3	Cut coupons out in advance	0.606
SHPROC4	Arrive on first day	0.595
SHPROC5	Arrive by store opening	0.559
SHPROC6	Search internet before	0.497
Factor2 - Securing purchase		
SECPROC1	Try on clothes before GD	0.816
SECPROC2	Have items put away for GD	0.761
SECPROC3	No planning of what to purchase	-0.516
SECPROC4	Wait out for GD (gratification delay)	0.393
Factor3- Sharing emotions linked to new purchases		
SHAMOT1	I love showing my new items to others	0.681
SHAMOT2	I like talking to others during GD	0.598
SHAMOT3	I have to fight for items	0.522
Factor4 - Sharing coupons		
SHACOUP1	I have already shared my coupon at least once	0.78
SHACOUP2	I have already shared my coupon at least once with a stranger	0.692
SHACOUP3	I would share my coupons with others	0.646
Factor5 - Values linked to shopping		
SHVALUE1	I love GD shopping	0.754
SHVALUE2	GD is about shopping	0.731
SHVALUE3	Crowd is disturbing	-0.594
SHVALUE4	GD is about friends and family	0.405
SHVALUE5	GD. is about discounts	-0.357
Factor6- Planed impulsiveness		
PLIMP1	Plan budget for GD	0.858
PLIMP2	Overspending many times	-0.825

PLIMP3	I plan most of the times	0.512
Factor7 - Guilt feeling		
GUILT1	I regret unplanned purchases	0.678
GUILT2	I buy a lot of unnecessary items	0.557
Factor8- Who do you shop for		
SHFOR1	Who do you shop for? Myself	-0.667
SHFOR2	Who do you shop for? My partner	0.643
SHFOR3	Who do you shop for? Gift	0.6
SHFOR4	Who do you shop for? Xmas gift	0.564
SHFOR5	Who do you shop for? My children	0.553

Results

Consumer strategies were measured using 10 items calculated by the previously presented factor analysis. Results suggest that participants were likely to collect coupons (m= 6.19) as well as plan their purchases (m= 5.76) prior to their trip to GD.. They tended to do the shopping on the first day of the event (m= 5.31). Consumers were likely to have utilitarian approach towards the GD. such as preparing for the event or arriving at the shops on time but they were less likely to visit the shops to try on clothes before GD.

Based on these strategies, the current study employed hierarchical cluster analysis to identify consumer groups. Using the Ward's method, 3 consumers group were identified: the Loyalists (N= 144), the Enthusiasts (N= 201), and Newbies (N= 234).

Table 2 - Shopper clusters' strategies

		Loyalists (N=144 people)		Enthusiasts (N=201 people)		Newbies (N=234 people		Total (N=579 people)	
		Mean	St.D	Mean	St.D	Mean	St.D	Mean	St.D
Strategies for the shopping procedure/trip T(SHPROC)	I cut coupons out in advance	6.87	0.49	6.36	1.43	5.63	1.97	6.19	1.61
	I try to go on the first day	6.72	0.75	5.56	1.74	4.24	2.07	5.31	1.98
	I try to plan my GD trip in advance	6.66	0.79	6.07	1.25	4.93	1.81	5.76	1.59
	I make a wish list	6.17	1.24	5.03	1.95	1.87	1.25	4.04	2.39
	I search the internet in advance	5.82	1.45	4.40	2.07	2.88	1.94	4.14	2.21
	I try to get there by store opening	5.68	1.64	3.64	2.26	1.73	1.28	3.38	2.35
Secure most important items to buy (SECPROC)	I wait out with purchase for GD to come	6.22	0.93	4.95	1.91	4.45	1.93	5.07	1.86
	I try items on before GD.	4.09	2.34	2.96	2.09	2.10	1.71	2.89	2.16
	I have it put away in the store for GD.	2.81	2.13	1.58	1.16	1.42	0.90	1.82	1.50
	I do not plan purchases	2.07	1.50	3.15	1.82	4.22	1.96	3.32	1.99

The results of the cluster analysis largely support our H2 hypothesis, as three strongly distinctive consumer groups were identified. Below we introduce the shopping behaviour of the different customer groups.

Loyal consumers

Loyal consumers represent the smallest group. They were likely to plan their purchases (m=6.66), wrote a wish-list (m=6.17) and tried on clothes before the GD. (m=4.09) (Table 2.). Time management was an important factor for this group of consumers. It was closely linked to task related strategies to ensure successful purchase after which they could enjoy the social aspect of the event.

Not surprisingly, they have attended more GD. than Enthusiasts or Newbies (m=5.31), and they tended to take part in the event alone (30%). For this latest factor, differences are significant (chi2 (20)= 37.10, p=0.041) between groups. As expected, one of the strategies applied by Loyalists is to visit GD. alone in order to be able to stick to the

carefully planned shopping trip. At the same time during shopping they look for possibilities to socialize even by sharing coupons with strangers. During these days consumers are more open to the interaction with others fuelled by the excitement and common interest of the same event.

Impulsivity, understandably, was less pronounced among Loyalists when compared to Enthusiasts or Newbies. As such, they appeared to be planned purchasers who actively budgeted and strategized their purchases (Table 3). Findings from the qualitative study suggest that GD. is also considered a significant source of a wide range of social experiences, which allow consumers to spend time with their friends, share coupons. When compared with other groups, loyal consumers appeared to articulate more vehemently the positive as well as negative social aspects of GD., but Enthusiasts were more likely to show their newly purchased items to others than Loyalists (H4, m= 4.69).

Table 3 – Other significant differences between groups (1- not agree at all, 7- fully agree)

	Loyalists (N=144 people)	Enthusiasts (N=201 people)	Newbies (N=234 people	Total (N=579 people)	
PLIMP1 - Plan budget for GD	5.45	5.10	4.75	5.04	F-value(2.574)=8.74 p=0.001
PLIMP3 - I plan most of the times	5.62	5.36	4.19	4.95	F-value(2.578)=45.15 p=0.014
SHAMOT1 - I love showing my new items to others	4.57	4.69	4.05	4.41	F-value(2.573)=5.70 p=0.004
SHAMOT2 - I like talking to others during GD	2.75	2.68	2.30	2.54	F-value(2.573)=4.27 p=0.014
SHAMOT3 - I have to hurry to get items	3.90	3.49	2.68	3.26	F-value(2.574)=19.84 p=0.000
SHACOUP1 - I have already shared my coupon at least once	3.67	2.98	3.01	3.17	F-value(2.574)=4.35 p=0.013
SHACOUP3 - I would share my coupons with others	4.97	4.61	4.43	4.63	F-value(2.574)=2.86 p=0.058

Enthusiasts
Although similarly to loyal consumers, Enthusiasts also tended to collect coupons and plan their purchases, they spent less time on searching for information on the Internet (m= 4.40), writing wish-lists (m=5.03), and trying on clothes before the GD. (m= 2.96) (Table 2).This group of consumers does not exhibit task orientation at as high level as Loyalists, but they still have above average planning of the event. Despite the fact that Enthusiasts were found to engage in self-gifting practices more frequently when compared with Loyalists or Newbies, these results were not significant - the means were nearly identical among the three groups.

Newbies
In contrast to Loyalists and Enthusiasts, Newbies were less likely to plan their purchases (m=4.93). While they collected coupons, they did not seem to strategize their shopping behaviours (Table 2). Newbies appeared to attend GD. with their boyfriends (24%) or friends (20.6%) to focus more on the social aspect of the event as they do not have plans in advance. They did not have a priority list of shops to visit or planed a budget or a wish list, therefore are more open to impulse purchasing and visiting of stores (Table 3).

Discussion
This study is the first to theoretically investigate a coupon based retail event that turned into a cultural phenomenon with strong retail performance implications. The importance of the investigation behind GD. shoppers behaviour lies within the fact that it is not related

to holidays, and provides opportunity to recreate a successful retail event elsewhere by a deeper understanding of consumer motivations. The quantitative results of our study indicated that GD. shoppers are both task and social orientated at the same time. Shopper taxonomy was formed based on task driven strategies that shoppers have developed in order to avoid the crowd and to secure items that were important to them. These intense shopping motives have created a strong goal-attainment drive (Dawson et al., 1990) which led to creative tactics employed by participants such as going to the stores to try on items in advance, in order to just "grab and go" the products (knowing its the right size and fit) during the event. There is a great deal of time spent on the preparation for the event as well. This includes purchasing the magazine as soon as it comes out to the news stand, cutting out and organizing the coupons, and checking out websites. Based on these preparations customers plan the route of the shopping trip based on the priorities of obtainable items. This way customers can minimize the time spent on goal specific purchases, and later on can concentrate on the social aspect of the event. In our exploratory interviews few participants even mentioned that they go on the first day alone to buy the most important items, and then go back the following day with a friend or their Mom for browsing the stores and just enjoying the shopping trip. It is important to mention, that there was no mentioning of violence or deviant social behaviour – as during Black Friday shopping (Raymen, Smith, 2016)- despite of the big crowd.

Our research has identified three distinct shopper groups based on their motivational strength. Customer groups differ on the balance between task and social orientation. Although, interestingly all include certain traits of both motivations, their behaviour is significantly different based on the dominance of task or social aspects. Loyalists exhibit both traits the most. Our finding extends previous research results (Baker and Wakefield, 2009), by proving that social and task oriented shopping may go hand-in-hand, but consumers will apply strategies to satisfy both expectations. Thus, the knowledge of these shopper segments and their already existing strategies may support retailers in assessing the motivational strength of these different groups. Prior research reported the direct relation between shopping motivations, store preference and brand loyalty, including hedonic and utilitarian shopping value (Babin et al. 1994). As one of the most important goals of retailers is to target heavy users, it is important to know how these customers behave and what their preferences are, being the most loyal customers with the highest life-time-value. GD. is an event which included mostly beauty and fashion brands targeting women. According to prior research, shopping trips focusing on these categories are hedonistic, just as grocery is mostly utilitarian or task oriented. Our study proved that GD. has a unique group of customers with strong social and task orientation at the same time. The social aspect of GD. is also unique as it shows for example that "loyal consumers" have the highest need for task orientation besides being socially engaged. The fact, that a short term retail event limits time to purchase, puts high pressure on experienced participants (Loyalists) to attain their goal. By using their previous experience about the event, they are able to gain competitive advantage over other customers – Enthusiasts and Newbies- in successfully fulfilling their wish lists. Therefore the majority of them decide to go alone or with a carefully chosen friend with the same interest and decision making time contradicting to the expectation that they should have been the most hedonistic consumers of all.

Impulse buying has high value within sales and is closely linked to hedonic buying (Rook, 1987). Impulsive purchasing by definition relates to immediate, irresistible buying which help to decline the psychological disequilibrium. In case of GD. both Loyalists and Newbies admitted to planed impulsiveness, which means that they know they will find things that they did not plan. The ambiguous psychological disequilibrium linked to

impulse purchasing resulting in guilt feeling (Rook, 1985) is negatively associated with GD. purchasing. It is considered to be a part of the GD. shopping experience. Retailers may also use this knowledge to better prepare and use strategies which are specially tailored to this event to drive impulsiveness of customers being already in a deliberative mindset (Büttner et al., 2013).

Limitations and future research

We acknowledge the limitations of our research. While we have provided evidence that GD. is an important shopping day in retailers' and consumers' calendar alike in Hungary, its uniqueness may limit the generalizability of our findings. Prior research had already recognized the importance of special shopping days such as Black Friday (Swilley and Goldsmith, 2013) with the necessity to extend and test results in other retail settings as well.

Our research did not consider the role of store ambiance factors, such as well-organized store layout, friendliness and professionalism of store personnel, parking possibility of the malls etc. As these factors may interact to alter reactions and perception of the event, future research may explore their role and extend our results. The social orientation of participants includes also the fact who is chosen as accompanying person. 20% of the enthusiasts group is joined by their mother. The average age of the ample was 24,9 years, young adults, therefore the question arises, whether it is still a part of the socialization process or rather an opportunity for reciprocal socialization (LaPorchia, 2015). Some participants go with their Mom to spend quality time and help her choosing clothes. The relevance of reciprocal socialization should be further investigated, as it may be a new tendency to search for ways of family bonding in the postmodern world.

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