

THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION
AN EXAMINATION OF ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR IN LIGHT
OF UTILITARIAN AND HEDONIC MOTIVATIONS AND THE
INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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1. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The relevance of my chosen topic is due, on the one hand, to the growth of online commerce, changing consumer habits, and the rise of social media, which have had a significant impact on various areas of our lives.

Online commerce has grown dynamically in recent decades with the spread of the internet and technological innovations in commerce. The possibilities of online commerce are wide-ranging, as buyers are no longer faced with geographical constraints and retailers no longer need to maintain physical stores, enabling them to sell globally. According to BÁNYAI and NOVÁK (2016), online commerce refers to the sale of products or services over the internet, whereby administrative processes—bidding, ordering, and payment—can be handled electronically in a simple, fast, and secure manner. Thanks to the spread of the internet, from the mid-1990s onwards, more and more research began to focus on the study of online consumer behavior. This new direction in research was facilitated by the rapid spread of broadband internet, which was made possible by the rise of the first commercial internet service providers (CUMMINS, 2014). Over the past decade, the explosive growth of digitalization has fundamentally transformed the way we obtain information and consume content. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok now play a decisive role not only as entertainment platforms but also as channels that influence information and purchasing decisions (ELLISON-VITAK, 2015; KANE, 2017).

The transformation of media usage habits is particularly pronounced among younger generations, namely Generations Y and Z. Numerous studies have confirmed that these generations increasingly rely on the online space and opinions and reviews available on social media, as well as content conveyed by influencers, when making purchasing decisions (LISSITSA - KOL, 2016; EGER et al., 2021). While traditional media and personal opinions remain important to older generations, younger people are increasingly turning to digital sources, algorithm-selected content, and online community feedback.

This change has serious consequences for online commerce. Purchasing decisions are no longer based solely on the information, prices, and descriptions provided by online stores, but are made through a much more complex, socially embedded decision-making process

in which social media platforms play a key role. Opinion leaders (influencers), user reviews, comments, and ratings all contribute to a product or brand being viewed positively or negatively by consumer communities.

Key aims of the research

The main aim of my doctoral research is to explore the factors that influence online shopping behavior. My additional objectives are as follows:

C1: My research aim is to examine whether there are significant differences in online shopping habits between genders.

C2: My goal is to analyze intergenerational differences in e-commerce solutions that can be considered innovative.

C3: To map the role of social media in online shopping behavior.

C4: To examine the impact of social media on different generations.

C5: To explore whether generational differences can be verified in terms of online shopping motivations.

C6: To explore whether different motivations influence the purchase of different product types.

C7: To examine whether online shoppers can be segmented based on socio-demographic and online shopping habits.

Research hypotheses

H1: There is a significant difference between the sexes in online shopping habits. Women tend to shop more frequently, spend more, and purchase clothing, sports, and fashion items.

H2: There are significant differences between generations in terms of payment and delivery preferences. Consumers belonging to the younger generations (Y and Z) prefer mobile wallet payments and parcel machines for delivery, while Generation X prefers traditional solutions.

H3: Social media has a direct impact on utilitarian and hedonic motivations, thereby influencing online shopping behavior.

H4: Generational differences can be observed in the impact of social media. It has less influence on the online shopping behavior of Generation X, while it has a greater influence on that of Generation Z.

H5: There are significant differences between generations in terms of utilitarian and hedonic motivations. The online shopping behavior of Generation X is influenced more by utilitarian motivations, while that of Generation Z is influenced more by hedonic motivations.

H6: Significant differences in motivation can be observed in relation to product types. Utility-based motivations tend to influence purchases of FMCG products, while hedonistic motivations influence purchases of clothing, sports, and fashion items.

H7: Online shoppers form heterogeneous groups and can therefore be typified and divided into clusters based on their socio-demographic characteristics and online shopping habits.

2. DATABASE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODS USED

The aim of my PhD research is to find answers to the question of what factors influence online shopping. In my opinion, there is no doubt about the timeliness of this study, given the significant changes that have taken place in the field of e-commerce in recent years. According to the PWC (2024) industry report, the growth of the domestic e-commerce market has slowed down, which, together with the emergence of Temu and its significant market share, poses a serious challenge to domestic businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones. Based on this, I believe that research into the factors influencing online shoppers and analysis of their impact on purchasing behavior may also be of practical importance for Hungarian companies.

In my doctoral thesis, I explore both the utilitarian and hedonic motivational factors that influence online shoppers. In the case of shoppers, I examine their online shopping habits, the factors influencing their behavior, and the relationships between them.

In order to achieve my research objectives, I used both secondary and primary data and information collection methods. As a secondary research method, I analyzed the global and domestic e-commerce market and collected and processed previous international and domestic literature that I considered to be closely related to the topic. The method of my primary research is a questionnaire survey.

2.1. Data bases and methods used for secondary study

During my secondary research, I used the collected and processed international and domestic literature to define and interpret the most important concepts related to online commerce and to present the types of commerce. I then described global and domestic e-commerce trends, followed by online shopping habits. I considered it important to discuss consumer behavior in general and then specifically in relation to commerce. To lay the foundation for my primary research, I presented generational theory and its role in online shopping. In the literature review chapter, I also discussed one of the most significant social phenomena of our time, social media, and its social and economic impacts, including its role in e-commerce. Finally, based on international and domestic literature, I summarized the factors influencing online shopping and presented the motivational scales used to measure them. To access the necessary scientific journal articles, studies, and analyses, I used the

Scopus, PubMed, Science Direct, and Google Scholar search databases, as well as the Research Gate social platform. For the analysis of e-commerce market trends and online shopping habits, I relied on databases, surveys, and reports such as Statista, ECDB, MRSZ, NMHH, PWC, and GKID.

2.2. Theory and method of primer study

When writing my dissertation, in view of my research objectives and relying on the literature, I used a quantitative data collection method, specifically a questionnaire survey. I compiled the questionnaire based on the literature related to factors influencing online shopping behavior and online motivation scales. Among the mostly international sources I reviewed, I found the models of MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ et al. (2014) on utilitarian motivations and MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ et al. (2016) on hedonic motivations to be the most complex in terms of their professional and methodological aspects, so these formed the basis of my questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. In the first part, respondents had to answer questions related to their online shopping habits. In the second group of questions, they had to reflect on statements related to utilitarian motivations and then on statements related to hedonic motivations. Participants in the study were asked to rate the items on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 for both models, based on how much they agreed with them on the one hand, and how much they believed they influenced their online purchases on the other (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) I supplemented the adapted utilitarian and hedonic models with two additional factors, social media and willingness to purchase, each of which had three additional statements. The inclusion of these factors was justified by the subsequent PLS-SEM analysis, which aims to explore one of the objectives of my research, namely the impact of social media on online shopping. The final questions of the questionnaire, in the third part, concerned the demographic characteristics of the research participants.

Data collection took place at the beginning of 2025. The sample size was 506 people, representative of three demographic characteristics, gender, age, and type of settlement, for people aged 18-65. The reason for targeting people aged 18-65 is that this is typically the broadest commercial target group in market research.

Presentation of the questionnaire and research sample

I conducted my primary research using a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire contained a total of 84 questions, which I divided into three main sections based on their content:

- 1. Online shopping habits** (questions 1-7): The first section related to online shopping habits. It included nominal and ordinal variables, i.e., questions such as how many times the respondent had shopped online in the past year, what products they usually buy online, what type of products they buy most often online, how much they spent on online purchases in total in the past year, and what their payment and delivery preferences are.
- 2. Adapted utilitarian motivation scale** (questions 8-43): The second set of questions contained statements related to the utilitarian motivation scale, which respondents had to rate on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) based on how much they agreed with them and how much they influenced their online purchases. The factors belonging to the scale and the number of statements associated with them are presented in a table below.
- 3. Adapted hedonic motivation scale** (questions 44-73): After the utilitarian motivation factors, the questionnaire continued with the hedonic scale. Similar to the utilitarian scale, respondents were asked to rate various statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) based on how much they agreed with them and how much they influenced their online purchases. The factors of the scale and the number of items associated with them are presented in a table below.
- 4. Statements related to social media** (questions 74-76): After the motivations, respondents had to answer three additional statements that measured the impact of social media.
- 5. Socio-demographic characteristics** (questions 77-84): The third main part of the questionnaire examined the socio-demographic data of the research participants. The questions covered the respondents' gender, year of birth, type of settlement, educational attainment, marital status, number of people living in their household, occupation or legal status, and subjective income situation.

MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ et al. (2014) developed an utilitarian motivation validated model containing a total of 9 motivations and a varying number of statements, 36 in total (Table

1). The motivations include anonymity (3 items), payment services (2 items), assortment (4 items), information (7 items), desire for control (3 items), convenience (6 items), savings (5 items), social interaction (4 items), and customization (2 items).

Table 1. The motivations of the utilitarian model

Motivations	Number of items	Motivations	Number of items
Anonymity	3	Convenience	6
Payment services	2	Savings	5
Assortment	4	Absence of social interaction	4
Availability of information	7	Customization	2
Desire for control	3		

Source: Own editing based on MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ (2014)

When creating the hedonic model, MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ et al. (2016) identified nine motivational factors, similar to the utilitarian model, with a total of 30 statements. Hedonic motivations included escape (2 items), enjoyment (6 items), sensation seeking (4 items), hang out (2 items), self-expression (4 items), role shopping (2 items), socialise (2 items), enduring involvement (3 items), and visual appeal (5 items).

Table 2. The motivations of the hedonic model

Motivations	Number of items	Motivations	Number of items
Escape	2	Role shopping	2
Intrinsic enjoyment	6	Socialise	2
Sensation seeking	4	Enduring involvement	3
Hang out	2	Visual appeal	5
Self-expression	4		

Source: Own editing based on MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ (2016)

I have taken the statements related to social media from a study published by my former co-authors (BALOGH-KARDOS et al. 2025), in which we adapted the online shopping motivation scale developed by RAO et al. (2018). As mentioned earlier, respondents were asked to rate the statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), similar to the motivations.

Table 3. shows the distribution of the sample in terms of demographic variables. The sample is representative in terms of gender, age, and type of settlement. The total number of respondents was 506. The distribution of the sample by gender is balanced: 50% were men and 50% were women, reflecting the representativeness of the sample. The research targeted the active age group, i.e., the population between the ages of 18 and 65, and the sample is representative of the population of Hungary, which is why I created generational variables. The distribution of respondents by generation was as follows: 43.3% belonged to Generation X, 33.8% to Generation Y, and 22.9% to Generation Z. In terms of place of residence, most respondents live in cities (31.4%), followed by villages (29.2%), county-level towns (21.1%), and the capital (18.2%). In terms of educational attainment, 186 respondents in the sample stated that they had a high school diploma, representing 36.8% of respondents, followed by vocational school graduates, who accounted for 29.8%. 26.9% of the sample had a higher education degree, while only 6.5% had completed elementary school. In terms of marital status, most respondents were in a relationship, with 43.7% married and 26.7% living with a partner. Of the respondents, 19.6% are single, 2.2% are widowed, 6.3% are divorced, and the smallest number (1.6%) live separately from their household. When asked how many people live in their household, most respondents answered 3-4 people (40.7%), followed by 2 people with a ratio of 37.2%. The two extreme values, i.e., those living in a household of 1 person and those living in a household of more than 4 people, are almost equal in the sample. The number of people living alone is 57, or 11.3%, while the number of people living in households with more than 4 people is 55, or 10.9% of the sample. In terms of legal status, respondents could select from 9 categories.

Most of these are active manual workers (37.9%), followed by active white-collar workers (35%). The number of mothers on maternity leave is 4.5%, pensioners 7.3%, students 4.3%, homemakers 3.6%, unemployed 5.1%, other inactive earners 1.8% and only 0.4% are other dependents. Respondents had to answer subjectively about their family's net income,

choosing from the following options: -they live very well on it and can even save some; - they live on it, but can save only a little; -it is just enough to live on, but they cannot save anything; - sometimes it is not even enough to live on, - they regularly have daily subsistence problems, and they do not know or do not answer. Most of those in the sample say that they can live on it, but can save little from their income (37.5%), followed by those for whom this amount is just enough to live on, but they cannot save anything (34.8%). A small proportion of respondents believe that they can live very well on their income and are able to save (11.7%), followed by those who sometimes do not have enough to live on (7.9%). Those who regularly have daily livelihood problems account for 4.2%. In contrast, 4% of respondents were unable or unwilling to answer the question about their legal status.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the research sample

Variable	Categories	Frequency (persons)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	253	50%
	Female	253	50%
Generation	X	219	43,3%
	Y	171	33,8%
	Z	116	22,9%
Place of residence	Capital city	92	18,2%
	City with county status	107	21,1%
	City	159	31,4%
	Village	148	29,2%
School education	Elementary school	33	6,5%
	Vocational training school, technical school	151	29,8%
	High school graduation	186	36,8%
	Higher education degree	136	26,9%
Marital status	Married	221	43,7%
	Lives with partner	135	26,7%
	Widow	11	2,2%
	Unmarried	99	19,6%
	Divorced	32	6,3%
	Lives separately from his/her household	8	1,6%
Number of people living in households	1	57	11,3%
	2	188	37,2%
	3-4	206	40,7%
	More than 4	55	10,9%
Legal status	Active physical worker	192	37,9%
	Active intellectual worker	177	35,0%
	On parental leave/maternity leave	23	4,5%
	Retired	37	7,3%
	Student	22	4,3%

	Household	18	3,6%
	Unemployed	26	5,1%
	Other inactive search engines	9	1,8%
	Other dependents	2	0,4%
Income situation	Does not know/does not answer	20	4,0%
	They make a very good living from it and are able to save money.	59	11,7%
	They make a living from it, but they can't save much.	190	37,5%
	It is just enough to live on, but they cannot save any.	176	34,8%
	Sometimes it's not even enough to live on.	40	7,9%
	Regular daily livelihood problems	21	4,2%

Source: Own research (2025)

3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

In this chapter, I present my main findings based on my primary research results related to my research objectives. The main objective of my research was to identify the factors influencing the behavior of online shoppers.

In order to achieve my objectives and verify my hypotheses, I sought to develop a complex and coherent picture of the factors influencing online shopping behavior by reviewing relevant international and domestic literature related to the topic of my doctoral dissertation and using my primary research methods.

In relation to my objectives and hypotheses, I formulated the following conclusions:

My first aim was to examine whether there are significant differences between the sexes in online shopping habits.

H1: There is a significant difference between the sexes in online shopping habits. Women tend to shop more frequently, spend more, and purchase clothing, sports, and fashion items.

The cross-tabulation analysis showed some differences between the sexes in terms of shopping frequency, but this difference was not significant (Chi-square: 6.422; $p > 0.05$). Similar to purchasing frequency, the cross-tabulation analysis did not reveal any significant differences in spending on online purchases (Chi-square: 7.650, $p > 0.05$). However, we did find significant differences in product types (Chi-square: 57.924; $p < 0.05$). Women were significantly more likely to purchase FMCG products, clothing, sports, and fashion items, while men were significantly more likely to order ready-made meals and purchase technical and electronic goods. The results for product types confirmed the findings of previous studies, such as those by BOUSTANI et al. (2022), but based on the results of the cross-tabulation analysis of purchase frequency and spending, **I reject my hypothesis.**

The second aim was to analyze intergenerational differences in solutions that can be considered innovative in e-commerce.

H2: Significant differences can be observed between generations in terms of payment and delivery preferences. Consumers belonging to the younger generations (Y and Z) prefer mobile wallet payments and parcel lockers for delivery, while Generation X prefers more traditional solutions.

Contrary to the findings of previous international studies (AGÁRDI – ALT, 2021; PUIU et al., 2022; DUARTE et al. 2024), the cross-tabulation analysis did not reveal any significant differences in terms of solutions considered innovative in the field of online shopping. There were no differences between generations in terms of preferred payment method (Chi-square: 8.480; $p > 0.05$) or preferred delivery method (Chi-square: 9.238, $p > 0.05$). The results may be partly due to the fact that the studies referred to were not based on a representative sample or were conducted in a social and cultural context different from that of Hungary, which may have had an impact on online shopping habits. On the other hand, it is conceivable that the knowledge and attitudes of the older generation have changed significantly in recent years, whether we consider mobile wallet payments or parcel locker delivery.

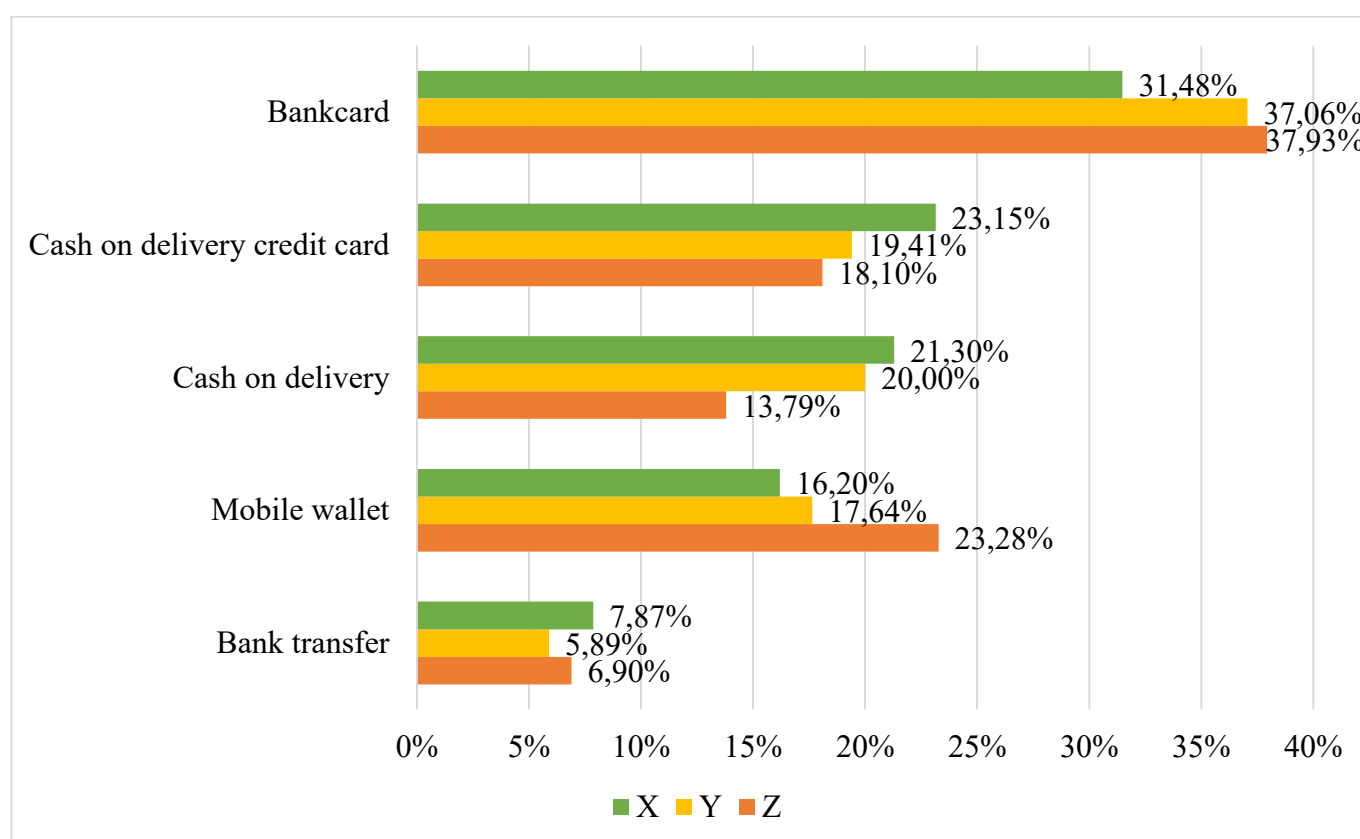


Figure 1. Payment method preferences across generations

Source: Own research, 2025

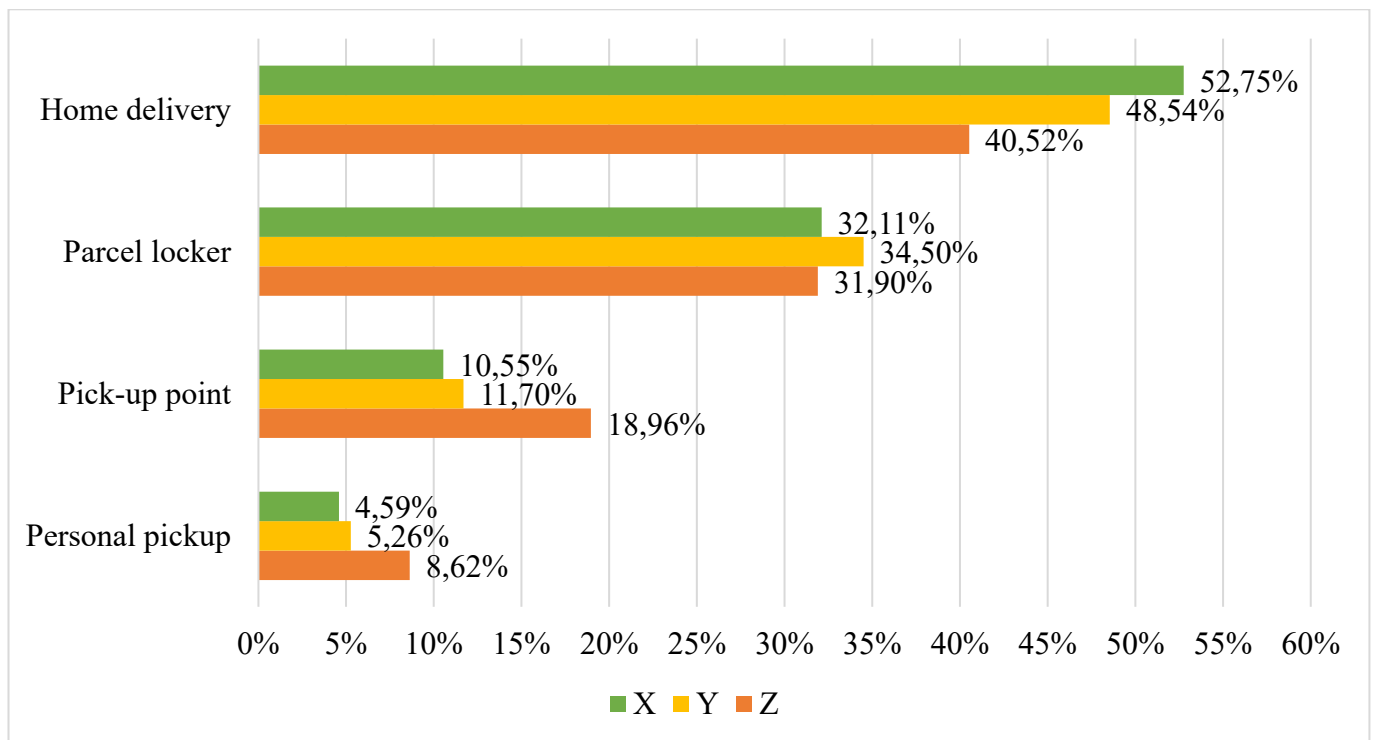


Figure 2. Transport preferences in a comparison of generations

Source: Own research, 2025

Based on the results, **I reject my hypothesis.**

My third aim was to explore the role of social media in online shopping behavior.

H3: Social media has a direct impact on utilitarian and hedonic motivations, thereby influencing online shopping behavior.

The impact of social media on online shopping behavior has been confirmed by several previous studies (SHARIFI FARD et al. 2019; NAM et al., 2020; CHATTERJEE et al. 2022). I interpreted the impact of social media narrowly, focusing on the possibility of obtaining information, eWOM, and purchase incentives when formulating the statements for the factor creation, and did not address influencers and influencer marketing. I analyzed and interpreted the effects only in relation to motivations, taking into account the two adapted models. Based on the results of the PLS-SEM analysis, social media has a direct impact on both utilitarian and hedonic motivations. Its influence on utilitarian motivations is moderate, based on path coefficients, while it has a strong influence on hedonic motivations. In light of this, **I maintain my hypothesis.**

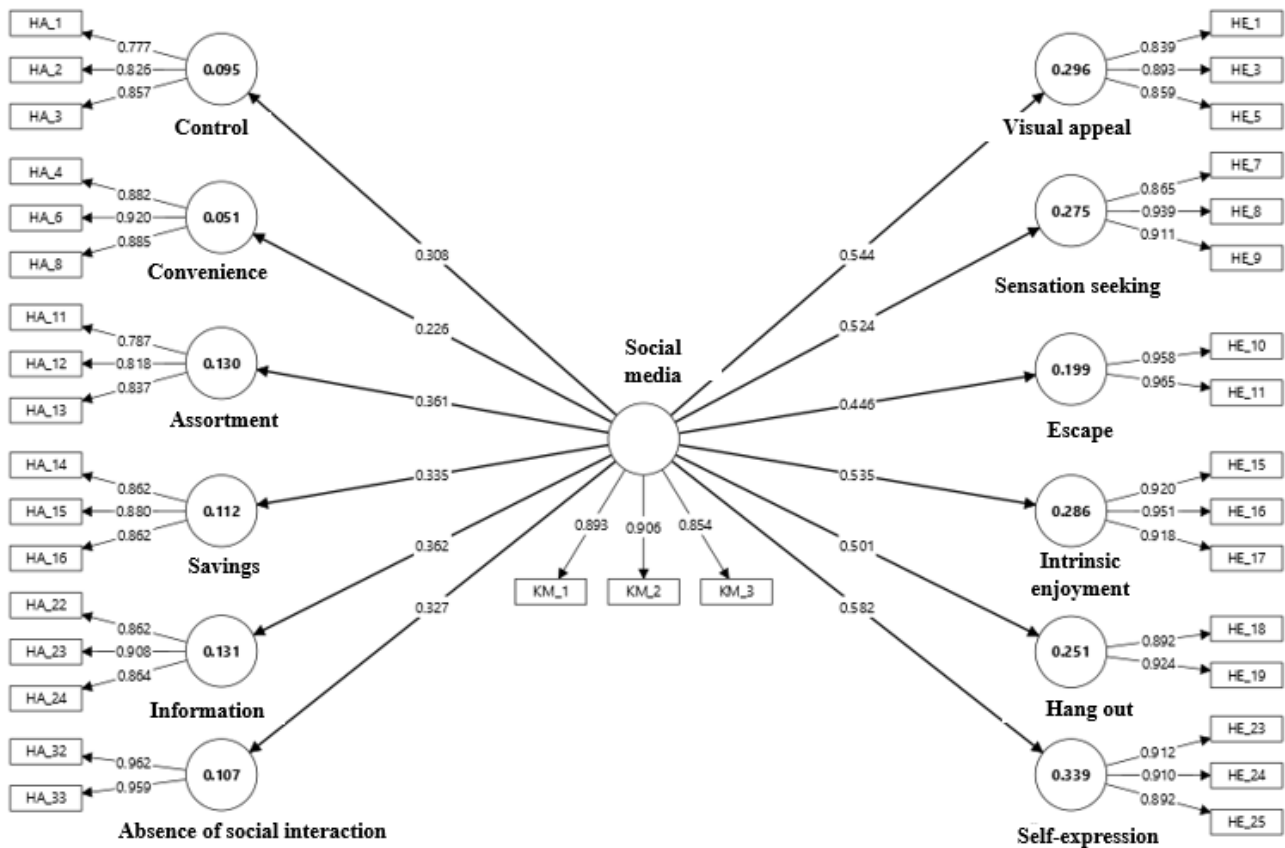


Figure 3. The impact of social media on utilitarian and hedonic motivations

Source: Own research, 2025

My fourth aim was to examine the impact of social media in a generational context.

H4: Generational differences can be identified in terms of the impact of social media. It has less influence on Generation X, while it has a greater influence on the online purchasing behavior of Generation Z.

Generations did not differ in their assessment of social media as a factor influencing online shopping or in their assessment of its influence. Based on the mean scores (X: 246.85; Y: 232.83; Z: 255.28), there is, of course, some difference between the generations, but based on the results of the hypothesis test, this difference was not found to be significant ($p > 0.05$).

Based on the above, I reject my fourth hypothesis. Based on my research on the social impact of social media, I can conclude that the difference between generations is no longer really in whether or not they use social platforms, but rather in their habits and activities in terms of how long they use them and which ones are popular among them. While Generation X can be described as the “Facebook generation,” both TikTok and Instagram are more popular among Generation Z (BALOGH-KARDOS, 2025). Based on this, I believe that in

the future, social media and its effects should be examined not as a whole, but rather in a diversified, platform-specific manner.

My fifth aim was to explore whether generational differences can be verified in terms of online shopping motivations.

H5: There are significant differences between generations in terms of utilitarian and hedonic motivations. The online shopping behavior of Generation X is influenced more by utilitarian motivations, while that of Generation Z is influenced more by hedonic motivations.

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed significant differences between generations in terms of their motivations, a result that is consistent with the findings of previous international studies. Based on the rank averages, Generation X rated utilitarian motivations (desire for control, convenience, assortment, savings, and information) significantly higher, while Generation Z rated hedonic motivations (escape, intrinsic enjoyment, hang out and self expression) higher. The results confirm the findings of previous studies, according to which Generation X online shoppers are influenced by factors embodying rationality (FÜLÖP et al. 2023), while Generation Z members are more likely to engage in experience-based shopping (LIMA – ALMEIDA, 2022).

Table 4. Generational differences in factors influencing online shopping

Factors	Generation	Rangmean	Kruskal-Wallis	Level of significance
Control	X	263,22	14,379	0,00*
	Y	248,75		
	Z	201,78		
Convenience	X	270,53	22,471	0,00*
	Y	244,69		
	Z	194,39		
Assortment	X	266,98	16,459	0,00*
	Y	244,90		
	Z	200,58		
Savings	X	265,62	20,549	0,00*
	Y	251,82		
	Z	192,84		
Information	X	269,77	18,800	0,00*
	Y	242,48		
	Z	199,04		
Escape	X	221,41	9,849	0,01*
	Y	255,94		
	Z	267,73		

Intrinsic enjoyment	X	209,19	26,644	0,00*
	Y	255,19		
	Z	291,23		
Hang out	X	205,00	29,988	0,00*
	Y	263,740		
	Z	286,27		
Self- expression	X	219,02	11,818	0,00*
	Y	258,10		
	Z	268,92		

Source: Own research, 2025

Based on the results, **my hypothesis was confirmed.**

My sixth aim was to map out the different product types in terms of whether motivations influence their purchase in different ways.

H6: Significant motivational differences can be identified in relation to product types. The purchase of FMCG products is influenced more by utilitarian motivations, while clothing, sports, and fashion items are influenced by hedonic motivations.

The hypothesis test confirmed significant differences between product types in terms of utilitarian and hedonic motivations ($p < 0.05$). In the case of utilitarian motivations, FMCG goods (food, cleaning products, personal hygiene products, etc.) had the highest average ratings without exception. In contrast, other product types came to the fore in the case of hedonic motivations, namely clothing, sports, and fashion items. The results showed that fashion product buyers are most influenced by the visual appearance of an online store, and their typical online shopping behavior is characterized by thrill-seeking and escapism from everyday tasks. The results confirm the findings of previous studies (VOSS et al. 2003; SCARPI, 2020), according to which products can be classified as either utilitarian or hedonic. Naturally, when it comes to everyday consumer goods, shoppers tend to put their rational selves first. When buying products, whether they are cleaning supplies or any other household items, the dominant considerations are likely to be functionality, favorable prices, and ease and convenience of purchase. In contrast, the purchase of clothing or jewelry, for example, can be experienced as a form of self-expression.

Table 5. Differences between product types in terms of factors influencing online shopping

Factors	Product type	Rangmean	Kruskal-Wallis	Level of significance
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Control	Interior design, gardening, and DIY	179,68	15,905	0,01*
	FMCG	257,47		
Convenience	Interior design, gardening, and DIY	180,35	25,963	0,00*
	FMCG	281,87		
Assortment	Interior design, gardening, and DIY	168,56	31,889	0,00*
	FMCG	290,16		
Savings	Interior design, gardening, and DIY	184,35	23,813	0,00*
	FMCG	257,44		
Information	Interior design, gardening, and DIY	170,35	23,863	0,00*
	FMCG	271,08		
Absence of social interaction	Interior design, gardening, and DIY	187,40	16,049	0,00*
	FMCG	279,52		
Visual appeal	Ready-made meal	212,45	14,468	0,01*
	Clothing, sports, and fashion	259,02		
Sensation seeking	Entertainment industry	195,48	16,087	0,01*
	Clothing, sports, and fashion	260,24		
Escape	Entertainment industry	193,91	16,2120	0,01*
	Clothing, sports, and fashion	264,51		

Source: Own research, 2025

Based on the results, **hypothesis 6 was confirmed.**

My final, **seventh aim** was to examine whether online shoppers can be segmented based on socio-demographic and online shopping habits.

H7: Online shoppers form heterogeneous groups and can therefore be typified and divided into clusters based on their socio-demographic and online shopping habits.

Using two-step cluster analysis, I identified four types of online shoppers based on gender, type of settlement, shopping frequency, spending, payment, and delivery preferences. I named the first cluster "Digitally open, occasional urbanites," as they can typically be considered occasional shoppers, their preferred payment method is cash on delivery by credit card, and they mostly request their orders to be delivered to a parcel locker. The second group consists of Traditional Restrained Shoppers, who are moderate in both their purchase frequency and spending, and conservative in their payment and delivery methods (cash on delivery and home delivery). The third consumer type is Urban, active online shoppers, which consists of women living in county-level or other cities who shop online at least once a month, spend more than HUF 80,000 per year, and primarily pay by credit card. Finally, I named the fourth cluster "Modern Regular Buyers in the Capital." This group consists exclusively of men, the vast majority of whom live in the capital. They shop most frequently and are also characterized by a high willingness to spend. They most often pay by credit card and prefer parcel machines as their delivery method. In addition to demographic characteristics and purchasing habits, I also compared the clusters based on utilitarian and hedonistic motivations. The Kruskal-Wallis test confirmed that motivational differences can also be identified among consumer types, in the case of the utilitarian types. The results of the cluster analysis are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. The result of cluster analysis

Variable		1. cluster	2. cluster	3. cluster	4. cluster	Sig.
Gender	Male	50%	45%	0%	100%	p<0,01
	Female	50%	55%	100%	0%	
Place of residence		Other city	Village	Other city and City with county status	Capital city	p<0,01
Frequency of purchases		occasional	occasional	frequently	regular	p<0,01
Spending		Between 40,000 and 80,000 Ft	Under 40,000 and between 40,000 and 80,000 FT	Over 80,000 Ft	Over 80,000 Ft	p<0,01
Payment method		Cash on delivery credit card	Cash on delivery	Bankcard	Bankcard	p<0,01

Delivery method	Parcel locker	Home delivery	Home delivery	Parcel locker	p<0,01
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Source: Own research, 2025

Based on the results, **my hypothesis was confirmed.**

4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION

Most domestic research on online shopping behavior has previously focused on e-commerce trends and significance, shopping habits, or individual factors influencing purchasing behavior. I consider the novelty of my doctoral dissertation to be that I approached online shopping behavior from the perspective of motivations, examining both utilitarian and hedonic motivations in a complex manner. Another novelty of my research is that, in addition to motivations, I analyzed the impact of social media using several methodological approaches.

I consider the following to be new and novel results of my dissertation:

1. Domestic adaptation and validation of the utilitarian motivation scale developed by MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ et al. (2014). Following adaptation, the adapted utilitarian motivation model included 6 factors and 17 corresponding items. The 6 factors are: 1) Desire for control [3 items], 2) Convenience [3 items], 3) Accessibility [3 items], 4) Savings [3 items], 5) Information [3 items], and 6) Lack of social interaction [2 items].
2. Based on my research findings, I concluded that, contrary to previous studies, no significant gender differences can be identified in a representative sample in terms of shopping frequency and spending on online purchases.
3. I found that there are no significant differences between generations in terms of innovative solutions related to online shopping. There are no significant differences between generations in terms of paying by credit card or mobile wallet, or using parcel machines, so it can be said that these novel shopping options have now become widespread among Generation X.
4. Using PLS-SEM analysis, I demonstrated the direct impact of social media on utilitarian and hedonic motivations. Social media has a moderate influence on utilitarian motivations based on path coefficients, while it has a strong influence on hedonic motivations.
5. With regard to generations, I found that while Generation X online shoppers are influenced by factors that embody rationality, such as the desire for control,

convenience, accessibility, savings, and information, Generation Z members are more likely to engage in experience-based (escapism, enjoyment, relaxation).

6. I have demonstrated that there are significant differences between product types in terms of whether their purchase is influenced more by utilitarian or hedonic motivations. Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, utilitarian motivations dominate in the purchase of FMCG products, while hedonic motivations dominate in the purchase of clothing, sports, and fashion items.
7. Using two-step cluster analysis, I identified four types of online shoppers based on gender, type of settlement, shopping frequency, spending, payment and delivery preferences. I named the first cluster digitally open, occasional urbanites, the second traditional, restrained shoppers, urban, active online shoppers, and the fourth modern regular shoppers in the capital. Based on the results, the clusters differ significantly from each other in terms of socio-demographics, purchasing habits, and three utilitarian motivational factors.

Implications of the results

The results of the research are also relevant from a marketing perspective. The rational motivations of Generation X (convenience, information, and savings) justify prioritizing corporate solutions that support simple, fast, and cost-effective purchasing. Generation Z, on the other hand, shops primarily based on experience, which makes it essential for companies to enhance the visual experience, provide interactive content through social media, and build brands that support self-expression. Although the results did not reveal significant differences between generations in terms of the impact of social media, secondary data clearly shows that they are not present on the same platforms or do not use the same ones. For members of Generation X, Facebook remains the primary and most popular site, while Generation Y is more likely to use Instagram, and Generation Z is most accessible through TikTok. Therefore, it is reasonable for companies operating in online commerce to apply a differentiated social media strategy that adapts platform selection and content types to generational characteristics. Taking generational differences into account when choosing social media platforms and developing content strategies enables more

targeted outreach and communication that aligns with purchasing motivations. This increases consumer loyalty and brand competitiveness in the long term.

For Generation X, it is primarily worth using a communication strategy on the Facebook platform that builds on rational benefits. In this target group, discounts, price comparison options, fast delivery, and reliable customer service are of paramount importance. Accordingly, action-oriented ads and remarketing campaigns that emphasize convenience and security can effectively support purchasing decisions. Another relevant tool is the creation of closed groups or communities that provide a more direct connection between consumers and the company.

In the case of Generation Y, which is most accessible on the Instagram platform, visual presentation and inspiring content come to the fore. Lifestyle photos, product usage ideas, and collaborations with influencers effectively contribute to strengthening the brand experience. The Story and Reels features are particularly useful for presenting new products and promotions, while interactive tools such as polls, questions, and prize games are effective for increasing engagement.

When it comes to reaching Generation Z, TikTok is the primary platform, where short, entertaining, and creative videos prove to be effective. This generation's purchasing motivations are largely influenced by experience-based content, so it makes sense to link products to experiences. Encouraging user-generated content (UGC), for example in the form of challenges or content that fits current trends, further increases the credibility and relevance of the brand. In addition, involving influencers and micro-influencers can be particularly effective, as they are able to address members of this generation in an authentic way. The practical implications of the differences in motivation related to product types can be summarized as follows: while rational arguments (price, speed, accessibility) proves to be effective, while for fashion and sporting goods, communicating the promise of experience, relaxation, and self-expression is more effective.

The customer types identified by cluster analysis enable the development of differentiated segmentation and communication strategies. Targeted offers based on socio-demographic and motivational differences, as well as the development of loyalty programs, can contribute to strengthening consumer commitment. Based on the above, the results of the research

support the fine-tuning of corporate marketing strategies and the establishment of competitive advantage in the online commerce environment.

5. THE PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE RESULTS

The results of my PhD research examining online shopping behavior have enabled me to draw a number of conclusions that are particularly useful for online stores. The analysis of consumer habits and attitudes has revealed that shopping in the digital space is becoming increasingly diverse and complex, with socio-demographic factors, motivational structures, and technological adaptation jointly determining consumer decision-making. Accordingly, the following recommendations can be made.

First and foremost, it should be emphasized that online shoppers cannot be considered a homogeneous group. The consumer types identified in the two-step cluster analysis clearly reflect that consumers enter the online space from different life situations, with different attitudes and technological preferences. It follows that it is crucial for companies to accurately segment their target groups, based not only on demographic characteristics but also on behavioral and motivational dimensions. It is therefore recommended to regularly analyze customer data and develop personas for each customer type, which can form the basis for targeted marketing communications, the operation of recommendation systems, and the fine-tuning of promotional strategies.

Mapping the purchasing motivations associated with product types also provided important insights. The research confirmed that utilitarian and hedonic motivations carry different weight in different product categories. While functionality, value for money, and easy accessibility dominate in the case of FMCG products, the focus on fashion, sports, and lifestyle items is on the experience, self-expression, and thrill-seeking. It follows that e-commerce players are advised to develop a motivation-based communication strategy. For utilitarian products, it is advisable to convey messages that focus on simplicity, speed, and savings, while for hedonic product categories, greater emphasis should be placed on the visual experience, inspiring content, and the emotional value of the products.

The impact of social media on purchasing proved to be significant during the study, especially in terms of motivational factors. Both utilitarian and hedonic purchasing motivations were significantly influenced by the use of social media. This justifies the conscious development of eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) management, ensuring the prominent role of reviews and opinions, and strengthening sales promotion activities on

social platforms. At the same time, the research also highlighted that the differences between generations are not primarily reflected in the existence of social media use, but in its form, intensity, and platform preferences. Therefore, it is advisable for companies to plan their social media presence on a platform-specific basis, taking into account the online activity habits of the target group and their preferred social spaces (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok).

In terms of payment and delivery methods, the differences between generations were not statistically significant, but cluster analysis revealed clearly defined preference systems. Consequently, it is recommended that online stores offer adaptive delivery and payment options that match user profiles. It is also advisable to introduce algorithms that automatically prioritize consumer preferences based on previous purchasing behavior, thereby speeding up and optimizing the purchasing process. It is particularly recommended to integrate modern solutions such as parcel locker-based delivery or BNPL ("Buy Now, Pay Later") payment schemes, which can increase willingness to buy, especially among younger segments.

Knowing these differences in motivation, it's also worth rethinking the user experience and visual appearance of online stores. For buyers who are motivated by utility, it's best to provide a simple, clean, easy-to-navigate interface that highlights practical information, prices, and shipping terms. In contrast, hedonistic shoppers require an experience-based approach, with inspiring visual content, emotional engagement, and storytelling about the product being important to them. Accordingly, online stores should offer a personalized, motivation-based user experience whenever possible.

Last but not least, it is recommended to create or fine-tune recommendation systems based on artificial intelligence that are motivation- and segmentation-based. The integration of customer clusters and motivation profiles enables the display of relevant product recommendations, which not only helps to increase conversion rates but also contributes to strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty in the long term. The use of predictive analytics and machine learning can dynamically shape the customer experience by continuously monitoring consumer behavior.

In summary, it can be concluded that e-commerce players will need to place greater emphasis in the future on differentiated, data-driven, motivation-based strategies that enable them not only to attract customers, but also to retain them in the long term.

6. PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

Scientific journal in a foreign language

1. BALOGH-KARDOS V. – BALOGH R. – GÁL T. (2025): The role of demographic characteristics and shopping habits in online shopping behavior. *Innovative Marketing*. 21(1), 170-181.

Foreign language in a domestic journal

2. BALOGH-KARDOS V. (2025): Caught in the web of generations: social media and online shopping habits in the digital age. *Gradus*. 12(2), 11.

Scientific journal in hungarian journal in hungarian

3. BALOGH-KARDOS V. – BALOGH R. (2025): Az online vásárlási magatartás haszonelvű motivációi. *Közgazdasági Szemle*. LXXII. évf., 2025. június.
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5. BALOGH-KARDOS V. - GÁL T. (2022): Webáruházak fogyasztói megítélésének vizsgálata netnográfival a COVID-19 időszakában. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Sciences*. 7 (1), 33-42.
6. KARDOS V. - GÁL T. (2021): A közösségi média hatása a médiafogyasztásra és a reklámpiacra. *Régió kutatás Szemle*. 6 (1), 121-132.

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9. KARDOS V. - GÁL T. (2021): Webáruházak fogyasztói megítélésének vizsgálata netnográfival a COVID-19 időszakában, „Kihívások és tanulságok a menedzsment területén.Fókuszban az Ipar 4.0 kihívásai” konferencia, Debrecen,



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List of publications related to the dissertation

Articles, studies (6)

1. **Balogh-Kardos, V.**, Balogh, R.: Az online vásárlási magatartás haszonelvű motivációi.
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2. **Balogh-Kardos, V.**: Caught in the web of generations: Social media and online shopping habits in the digital age.
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International Journal of Engineering and Management Sciences. 6 (2), 11-22, 2021. EISSN: 2498-700X.

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