

Abstract

The research presented in doctoral dissertation entitled “Cultural vs. hedonic and material purchases – the relationship with memory functioning and consumer well-being” is an attempt to capture selected benefits (in the cognitive and emotional domains) that may result from cultural purchases, such as attending theatre performances or art exhibitions. The aim of the conducted studies was to explore the relationships between cultural purchases (analyzed both as a preferred type of purchase and as short-term exposure) and selected cognitive processes (i.e., memory-related processes), as well as eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. These relationships were analyzed in comparison to other types of purchases – hedonic and material, and in relation to moderating factors such as personal values and socio-economic status.

The research sample consisted of 1,116 individuals aged between 18 and 35 years ($M = 24.88$; $SD = 4.76$), including 636 women, 466 men, and 14 individuals who did not disclose their gender.

A total of seven studies were conducted: two qualitative studies (an ethnographic study and a pilot study), one correlational study, and four experimental studies. The qualitative studies served as preliminary research – their aim was to identify the benefits of experiential purchases (comparing cultural and hedonic purchases in the ethnographic study), and to identify specific products, also to gather materials for constructing activation stimuli (in the pilot study). The correlational and experimental studies were designed to test the proposed hypotheses. In the correlational study, participants completed questionnaires on purchasing behavior, personal values, socio-economic status, psychological well-being, and self-assessed memory functioning. They also performed a memory task. In three experimental studies, participants completed tasks intended to activate (prime) a specific category of purchases, after which their memory

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performance and hedonic well-being were measured. The fourth experiment examined the impact of recalling a past purchase on subjective memory evaluation.

The analysis of the research results revealed that the category of cultural purchases deviates from the predictions outlined in the hypotheses. In a few cases, the findings align with the hypotheses (e.g., improved memory performance after the manipulation in the third experimental study). However, more often, the outcomes were contrary to expectations (e.g., a negative relationship with psychological well-being in the correlational study and lower subjective assessment of memory functioning in the fourth experimental study).

With regard to the other types of purchases, the following findings were established: (1) the amount of time spent on material purchases negatively correlates with subjective

memory functioning (while it correlates positively in the case of hedonic purchases); (2) thinking about material purchases lowers the subjective memory evaluation (in comparison to hedonic purchases). Additionally, external values – such as the pursuit of power – reduce the efficiency of memory processes in the context of material purchases. In the experimental studies (Studies 2 and 3), a high preference (vs. low) for power values was associated with decreased memory performance among participants exposed to material purchases. Therefore, the findings may be interpreted to suggest that material purchases are linked to less effective memory functioning.

Keywords: types of purchases, experiential purchases, cultural purchases, cognitive functioning, memory, well-being, values