

Ivan-Damir Anić*
Edo Rajh**

UDK 685.34:658.8.012.1 (497.5)
JEL Classification L67, M31
Izvorni znanstveni rad

AN ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND BENEFIT SOUGHT EFFECTS ON PURCHASING OUTCOMES IN THE CROATIAN FOOTWEAR MARKET

The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts of demographic factors and footwear benefits sought on consumer purchasing outcomes in the Croatian market. The proposed research questions were examined with data collected from consumer telephone survey carried out in May-June 2007 in Croatia. Data was analyzed using ANOVA and cluster analysis. Research results show that age, household size, education, occupation and income significantly affect amount of money spent, pairs of footwear purchased and purchase plans, but not average price paid. Gender and residence of respondent were not significantly related to purchasing outcomes. The study identified two groups of shoppers seeking significantly different benefits in purchasing footwear products: the functional shoppers and the alpha shoppers. As compared to the functional shoppers, alpha shoppers purchased more pairs of footwear, paid higher price for footwear and spent larger HRK¹ amount on footwear. The results are indicative for the segmentation strategy in the footwear market. It may help footwear manufacturers and retailers to better target their consumer segments.

Key words: Croatia, consumer behavior, footwear market, market segmentation, demographics, importance of product attributes

* I.-D. Anić, Ph. D. Senior Research Associate, The Institute of Economics, Zagreb (danic@eizg.hr)

** E. Rajh, Ph. D. Research Associate, The Institute of Economics, Zagreb (erajh@eizg.hr)
First version of the paper received on Feb 20th; the final version received on April 3rd 2008.

¹ On 30 June, 2007 the exchange rate of Croatian kunas (HRK) to US dollar was 5.41 (the Croatian National Bank, <http://www.hnb.hr>)

1. Introduction

The footwear sector is a diverse industry which covers a wide variety of materials (textile, plastics, rubber or leather) and products from different types of men's, women's and children's boots, shoes, sandals, indoor footwear and specialized footwear products. It is a small sector of manufacturing that belongs to the core of consumer and light industry. In general, the sector is a declining industry in many countries in the world (Harfield and Hamilton, 1997). Many factors contribute to this trend, including declining consumer footwear expenditure and fierce foreign competition (European Commission, 2005, IFM, 2007). Consumers have become more sophisticated and very demanding on many of the footwear product attributes. As a result, footwear manufacturers and retailers need to spend an increasing amount of HRK on improving their products, brand development, promotion and retail management activities. The key problem here is to develop a product that better adapts to customers' needs. Although a number of studies have examined various aspects of consumer purchasing behaviour in fashion clothing, leather and footwear industries (Belleau, Nowlin, Summers, Xu, 2001, Birtwistle, Tsim, 2005, Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen, Zhang, 2004, Fadiga, Misra, Ramirez 2005, Norum, 1999), very little is known about the association between demographic characteristics, footwear benefit sought and purchasing outcomes in the Croatian footwear market.

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between demographic factors, footwear benefits and consumer purchasing outcomes in the Croatian market. Specifically, the study focuses on the following research questions: (RQ1) How demographic characteristics affect purchasing outcomes? (RQ2) What is the relationship between different shoppers' subgroups with similar level of footwear benefits and their purchasing outcomes? Demographic variables include residence, gender, age, household size, education, occupation and income. Purchasing outcomes involve the pairs of footwear products purchased, average price paid, amount of money spent and shoppers' plans related to footwear purchases.

The present paper builds on the literature that links demographic and product benefit sought with purchasing outcomes. The paper contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between demographic characteristics and purchasing outcomes in the footwear market. Furthermore, the study seeks to develop a shopper typology based on the importance of footwear attributes. Taking into account the paucity of such research in Croatia, the present research might provide an additional insight into the consumer behaviour theory.

Several managerial implications may be derived from the study. A better understanding of the types of shoppers and their purchasing behaviour would be useful to footwear manufacturers and retailers in the formulation of their marketing

strategies. The information provided might help managers target company's offerings better to meet the needs of typical customer in the Croatian footwear market.

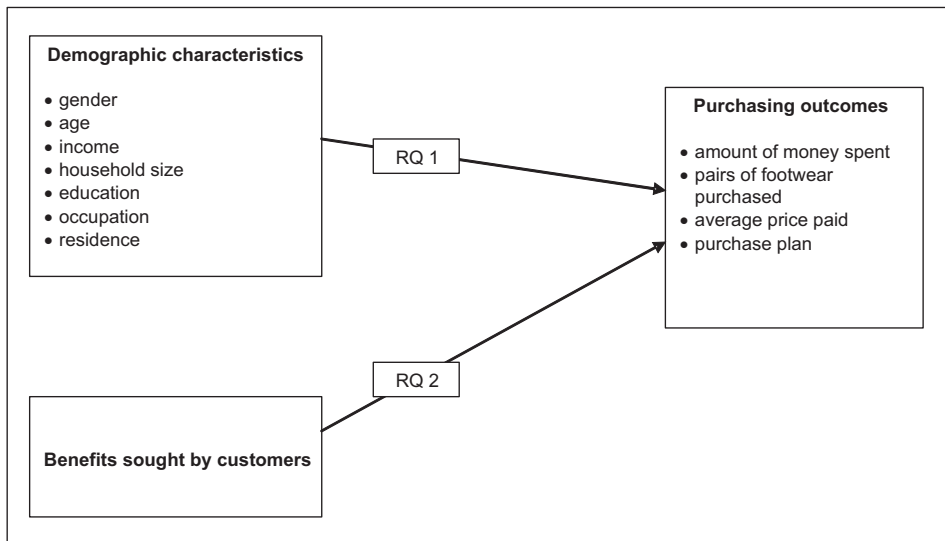
The telephone consumer survey was conducted in Croatia in May-June 2007 to collect data for this study. Data was analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and cluster analysis. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Conceptual framework, Methodology, Results, Conclusions with managerial implications and future research directions.

2. Conceptual framework

The present paper links demographic variables and consumer segments, formed on the basis of attributes important in footwear purchases, with purchasing outcomes of shoppers. The conceptual model for this research is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND BENEFIT SOUGHT IMPACTS ON PURCHASING OUTCOMES



2.1. The relationship between demographic characteristics and purchasing outcomes (RQ 1)

As demographic characteristics may explain differences in consumer behaviour, they have been identified as the potential basis for segmentation in a variety of consumer markets (Levy and Weitz, 2004). Previous studies have shown inconsistent relationships between customer characteristics and purchasing outcomes. Past research suggests that income, family size and education positively affect expenditures on accessories, footwear and hosiery, while the results for age, occupation and region vary depending on product categories (Norum, 1999). Consumers have been shown to have different requirements for fashion and clothing based upon gender and age. Demographic variables such as age, income, occupation and education may influence the fashion adoption process (Belleau, Nowlin, Summers, Xu, 2001).

The conventional wisdom is that women are more involved in shopping and spend more than men. They tend to make more purchases and purchase a higher percentage of products on unplanned basis (Kollat and Willett 1967). Past research indicates that the effects of gender on clothing vary according to product categories. While the expenditure shares of female jeans, female slacks, skirts, and female shorts were higher for female buyers compared to male buyers, the expenditure shares of male jeans, male shorts, male slacks, and dresses were lower (Fadiga, Misra and Ramirez, 2005). Females and males have different expectations of fashion products. Female consumers were more concerned than males with variety of product attributes and appeared to be less price sensitive (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004). However, some researchers suggest that the increasing tendency for males and females to share common social experiences (e.g. child care, household duties) may reduce differences in their purchasing and shopping pattern. Evidence suggests that female's employment and type of occupation (i.e. career, job only) influences the amount of time and effort spent shopping (Eastlick and Feinberg, 1994). As women are more involved in employment, they are becoming like men in shopping behavior. Some studies did not find significant difference between male and females in purchasing outcomes (Zeithaml, 1985). Although this study was conducted in food retailing setting, identified gender behavior pattern might be indicative of the one in footwear market. Therefore, the common pattern of gender differences in purchasing behaviour might not be confirmed in the footwear product market.

With regard to age, older consumers may differ from younger ones on many dimensions. Younger consumers are more influenced by fashion and liked to try new products, and prefer famous brand names, and are less sensitive to higher prices (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004). Although the con-

sumer apparel expenditures vary according to product categories (Fadiga, Misra and Ramirez, 2005), some research suggests that the age group in the middle tend to spend more than other younger and older shopper groups (Zaithaml, 1985). The age profile of consumers is changing with people living longer due to improved health care and more enjoying a higher standard of living. As adults mature and move through the different life stages, many experience an increase in personal disposable income. This might enhance spending opportunity for older shoppers. Therefore, the impact of age on purchasing outcomes appears to be more complex.

Income of a person might explain purchasing habits and consumer buying preferences (Mihić and Čulina, 2006), and has a strong impact on choice decisions. In the Croatian market, consumer footwear expenditures per household decreased from HRK 1,634 in 2003 to HRK 1,594 in 2005, while disposable income experienced an upward trend (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Yearbook). This indicates that footwear as necessity good is in general income inelastic. Past research, however, indicates that apparel expenditures for different income-level shoppers vary according to product category. Households with higher income levels have shown to spend more on female jeans, male shorts, male slacks, female slacks, and skirts. Expenditure shares of male shirts and male jeans appear to decrease with higher income levels. The relatively high magnitude of the effects of these variables was indicative of their potential impacts on apparel demand growth (Fadiga, Misra and Ramirez, 2005). Income might also be a predictor of consumer benefits sought. As suggested by Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang (2004), those with higher incomes rate brand and comfort more important than those with lower incomes.

Past research indicate that household size, education, occupation and residence of the respondent may also produce differences in consumer purchasing behaviour. Household size (the number of members in the household) was found to be associated with unplanned purchasing (Kollat and Willett, 1967). Since unplanned purchases are positively associated with grocery bill size, household size should be positively related to money spent. Some research has explicitly explored the relationship between education and level of information processing capacity. Less well-educated consumers have a smaller information processing capacity, are less likely to search for and use information and are less likely to comprehend information (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). Education is positively related with quality consciousness, suggesting that educated consumers are more likely to use simplifying decision heuristics: for instance, buying only more expensive and/or branded products (Walsh and Mitchell, 2005). As suggested by Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang (2004), higher education is associated with higher ratings of importance of fit, comfort, style, color, brand, and fibre content. Income and education tend to be positively correlated, indicating that more educated con-

sumers enjoy a greater consumption latitude that makes them less likely to engage in cognitively demanding comparison shopping. Occupation partly influences fashion adoption process and purchasing outcomes. Those who worked full-time had a higher fashion leadership score, and the shoppers that are fashion-oriented purchase more and spend more than other shoppers (Belleau, Nowlin, Summers and Xu, 2001). Brand was of more importance and price less important to managers, professionals, and consumers with higher incomes than students, labourers, and those with lower incomes (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004). Therefore we hypothesise that well-educated shoppers are more likely to be involved in shopping of footwear products than less-educated shoppers. Similarly, managers, professionals and consumers with higher income should exhibit higher purchasing outcomes than other shoppers. Furthermore, there is some evidence that regional differences might affect consumer purchasing behaviour (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004).

2.2. The relationship between benefits sought and purchasing outcomes (RQ2)

Benefit segmentation, used in this study, splitters consumers into groups, where consumers in each benefit segment would have a similar set of importance weights on the attributes of a product. The theory posits that consumers base their purchasing decisions on the evaluation of importance and performance of relevant product attributes (Levy and Weitz, 2004). An individual's attitude toward performing behaviour is a good determinant of his/her intention of performing that behaviour, which was viewed as the immediate predictor of his/her actual behaviour. Several studies have addressed the issue of benefit segmentation in various areas of marketing research (Anić and Vouk, 2005, Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004, Alfansi and Sargeant, 2000). However, very little is known about the market segments that exist in the footwear market in Croatia.

Benefits sought by consumers in clothes purchases might be relevant for our study. A variety of intrinsic criteria have been identified to be important for purchasing apparel products (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004), including fit, comfort, style, color, workmanship, and either fabric, fibre content, or fabric comfort, price and brand (Forsythe, Kim, and Pete, 1999, Zhang, Li, Gong and Wu, 2002). Forsythe, Kim and Pete (1999) found that price, along with design and quality, significantly influenced purchase intentions regarding a jacket. Some findings from the mature women clothing market in the UK indicate that comfort, quality, the material used to make the garment and style and design are

more important factors than price or fashionable clothes (Birtwistle and Tsim, 2005). As consumer perceptions vary depending on the product category, culture and economic development of a country (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen and Zhang, 2004), it is useful to investigate factors important in footwear products purchasing in Croatia.

3. Methodology

3.1. Consumer survey and sample profile

Research questions were explored with the data collected from a telephone survey carried out in May-June 2007 in Croatia. Four biggest Croatian cities (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split and Osijek) were selected to participate in the survey. A multi-stage design was used in developing a sample. In doing this, we first selected four biggest cities in Croatia (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split and Osijek) using disproportional judgemental sampling. Each of the cities contributed approximately 25 % to the sample. Pages in telephone book containing names and addresses of potential respondents were selected using systematic sampling procedure, while simple random sampling technique was employed to choose potential respondents within the selected telephone book pages. A sample of 202 shoppers was obtained. Summary statistics on sampled shoppers is presented in table 1.

Table 1

THE SAMPLE PROFILE, N = 202

| Consumer profile | Value |
|--|--------|
| 1. Residence (%) | 100.0 |
| 1.1. Rijeka | 25.2 |
| 1.2. Osijek | 24.3 |
| 1.3. Split | 25.2 |
| 1.4. Zagreb | 25.2 |
| 2. Gender (%) | 100.0 |
| 2.1. Male | 49.5 |
| 2.2. Female | 50.5 |
| 3. Average age (years) | 45.2 |
| 4. Average number of people in a household | 3.2 |
| 5. Education | 100.0 |
| 5.1. Primary School | 4.0 |
| 5.2. Secondary School | 64.9 |
| 5.3. University degree or higher | 31.2 |
| 6. Occupation (%) | 100.0 |
| 6.1. Manager | 2.5 |
| 6.2. Professional (npr. medical doctor, lawyer, Scholar) | 14.4 |
| 6.3. Entrepreneur | 2.0 |
| 6.4. Clerk | 13.9 |
| 6.5. Technician | 12.4 |
| 6.6. Worker | 10.9 |
| 6.7. Craftsman | 2.5 |
| 6.8. Student | 12.4 |
| 6.9. Retiree | 24.3 |
| 6.10. Unemployed person | 5.0 |
| 7. Monthly income (HRK) | 100.0 |
| 7.1. up to 2500 | 6.4 |
| 7.2. 2501 – 5000 | 26.2 |
| 7.3. 5001- 7500 | 25.2 |
| 7.4. 7501 – 10000 | 19.3 |
| 7.5. 10001 – 12500 | 7.9 |
| 7.6. 12501 and more | 13.9 |
| 8. Purchasing outcomes, HRK | |
| 8.1. Average amount of money spent (N=193) | 2774.7 |
| 8.1.1. For yourself (N=184) | 1116.2 |
| 8.1.2. For male family members (N = 98) | 1345.3 |
| 8.1.3. For female family members (N =96) | 1240.0 |
| 8.1.4. For children (N=67) | 1261.7 |
| 8.2. Average pairs of footwear purchased (N = 193) | 6.6 |
| 8.2.1. For yourself (N=184) | 2.6 |
| 8.2.2. For male family members (N = 98) | 2.7 |
| 8.2.3. For female family members (N =96) | 2.9 |
| 8.2.4. For children (N=67) | 4.0 |
| 8.3. Average price paid (N=193) | 382.2 |
| 8.3.1. For yourself (N=184) | 401.0 |
| 8.3.2. For male family members (N = 98) | 433.2 |
| 8.3.3. For female family members (N =96) | 377.8 |
| 8.3.4. For children (N=67) | 312.4 |
| 8.4. Purchase plan for the next 12 month (pairs of footwear) | 5.2 |

The sample was equally distributed across Zagreb, Rijeka, Split and Osijek. Respondents were 49.5 per cent males and 50.5 per cent females. During the last 12 months, on average consumers purchased 6.6 pairs of footwear products and spent on them HRK 2774.6. Consumers reported the plan to purchase about 5 pairs of footwear products in the next 12 months.

The questionnaire included data on consumer purchases of footwear products, consumer perceptions of attributes important in purchasing footwear products and demographic characteristics.

3.2. Measurement and data analysis

A review of relevant literature was used to develop measures for variables applied in this study, which was then adapted to the study context. Variable definitions and measurements are presented in table 2.

Table 2

VARIABLE DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENTS, N = 202

| Variable name | Variable description |
|--|---|
| Purchasing outcomes | <p>We asked the respondents:</p> <p>(a) How many pairs of footwear products did you buy for yourself or other family members (female, male members and children) in the last 12 months?</p> <p>(b) What was the average price you paid for those products? (HRK)</p> <p>(c) How many pairs of footwear products do you plan to purchase in the next 12 months?</p> <p>Average amount of money spent was determined as the product of average price and number of pairs of footwear products purchased for each type of consumer (purchases for you, for other female and male family members and for children).</p> |
| Demographic variables | <p>We asked the respondents:</p> <p>(a) Gender of the respondent (1=male; 2= female)</p> <p>(b) What is your age?</p> <p>(c) How many members are there in your family?</p> <p>(d) What is your education? (1=Primary School, 2= Secondary School 3= University degree or higher)</p> <p>(d) What is your occupation? (1= Manager; 2= Professional (npr. medical doctor, lawyer, Scholar), 3 = Entrepreneur; 4 = Clark; 5=Technician; 6= Worker, 7= Craftsman, 8= Student, 9 = Retiree, 10 = Unemployed person)</p> <p>(e) What is your household's income (1= less than 2500; 2= 2501-5000; 3= 5001-7500; 4= 7501-10000; 5=10001-12500; 6=12501 and more)</p> <p>(f) What is your residence?</p> |
| Benefits sought by shoppers in purchasing footwear | <p>In determining product benefits sought the respondents were asked to rate the importance of product attributes in purchasing footwear products on the scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 equals it is not important and 5 equals it is very important. Footwear attributes on which consumer perceptions were measured were: price, quality, manufacturer's image, fashion, style, colour, comfort, ease of care, material used for making footwear.</p> |

Data was analysed using analysis of variance method (ANOVA). K-means cluster analysis was employed to develop footwear shopper typology. In general, k-means clustering procedure can be understood as ANOVA in reverse. Analyzed objects are moved in and out of clusters until the most significant ANOVA results are achieved. As an indicator of how well the respective variable discriminates between clusters, the magnitude of the F values is used. In k-means cluster analysis statistically generated cluster centres are computed by procedures in which objects are organized according to the distance between themselves. After that, k number of cluster centres is chosen in order to classify all objects in k number of clusters (k is a predetermined number of clusters). Objects are assigned to particular clusters according to their distance from particular cluster centres. The procedure is repeated until cluster centres are found that allow classification of all objects in k number of clusters with the most significant ANOVA results. In k-means cluster analysis distances between objects and between objects and cluster centers are measured by unscaled squared Euclidean distances. For example, the distance $D(i, k)$ of an object i from cluster centre k for M analyzed variables X_j is calculated as follows:

$$D(i, k) = \sqrt{\frac{1}{M} \sum_{j=1}^M (X_{ij} - \bar{X}_j^{(k)})^2}$$

where $\bar{X}_j^{(k)}$ is the mean value of variable j for cluster k . Values X_j are not rescaled in any way, therefore distances between objects and between objects and cluster centers are expressed in measurement units of analyzed variables.

4. Results

The results are presented in terms of the impacts of demographic characteristics and footwear benefits sought on purchasing outcomes.

4.1. The relationships between demographic characteristics and footwear product shopping outcomes (RQ1)

Table 3 summarizes the results on the relationships between demographics and purchasing outcomes.

Table 3

ANOVA RESULTS FOR PURCHASING OUTCOMES BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, MEAN VALUES

| Grouping Variables (Demographics) | Dependent Variables | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | Amount spent | Pairs of footwear purchased | Average price paid | Purchase plan |
| 1. Gender | F=0.288; p=0.592 | F=0.026; p=0.872 | F=0.257; p=0.613 | F=0.932; p=0.336 |
| 1.1. Female | 2907.73 | 6.7 | 373.78 | 5.4 |
| 1.2. Male | 2640.21 | 6.6 | 390.76 | 4.9 |
| 2. Age (years) | F=2.459; p=0.064 | F=4.987; p=0.002 | F=1.860; p=0.138 | F=7.524; p=0.000 |
| 1.1. less than 30 | 2466.46 | 6.3 | 393.67 | 5.0 |
| 1.2. 30-44 | 3327.60 | 8.2 | 375.44 | 6.2 |
| 1.3. 45-59 | 3358.33 | 6.8 | 427.98 | 5.9 |
| 1.4. more than 59 | 1692.44 | 4.9 | 316.84 | 3.4 |
| 3. Household size | F=3.358; p=0.037 | F=15.435; p=0.000 | F=0.909; p=0.404 | F=13.385; p=0.000 |
| 3.1. 1-2 | 1817.90 | 4.4 | 348.22 | 3.6 |
| 3.2. 3-4 | 3182.02 | 7.4 | 398.05 | 5.7 |
| 3.3. more than 4 | 3079.62 | 8.5 | 382.29 | 6.6 |
| 4. Education | F=4.315; p=0.015 | F=3.633; p=0.028 | F=4.925; p=0.008 | F=4.959; p=0.008 |
| 4.1. Elementary school or less | 708.33 | 2.5 | 237.50 | 2.0 |
| 4.2. High school | 2405.24 | 6.6 | 355.49 | 5.0 |
| 4.3. Undergraduate degree or more | 3740.98 | 7.2 | 451.69 | 5.8 |
| 5. Occupation | F=2.345; p=0.016 | F=2.876; p=0.003 | F=2.597; p=0.008 | F=4.001; p=0.000 |
| 5.1. Manager | 4250.00 | 8.6 | 472.50 | 5.2 |
| 5.2. Professional | 3739.66 | 6.8 | 465.72 | 6.1 |
| 5.3. Entrepreneur | 7650.00 | 9.8 | 648.57 | 9.3 |
| 5.4. Administrative staff | 3391.85 | 8.4 | 380.44 | 6.0 |
| 5.5. Technician | 3188.00 | 7.7 | 419.04 | 5.9 |
| 5.6. Worker | 2288.64 | 7.7 | 288.67 | 6.5 |
| 5.7. Craftsman | 1230.00 | 4.8 | 262.75 | 5.0 |
| 5.8. Student | 2083.60 | 4.8 | 418.97 | 4.7 |
| 5.9. Retired person | 1566.83 | 4.9 | 297.18 | 3.1 |
| 5.10. Unemployed | 3110.00 | 6.9 | 423.62 | 4.5 |
| 6. Income (HRK) | F=5.487; p=0.000 | F=5.744; p=0.000 | F=5.998; p=0.000 | F=4.789; p=0.000 |
| 6.1. less than 2501 | 692.00 | 3.5 | 223.50 | 3.0 |
| 6.2. 2501-5000 | 1556.94 | 4.7 | 303.84 | 4.0 |
| 6.3. 5001-7500 | 2717.60 | 7.5 | 355.35 | 5.6 |
| 6.4. 7501-10000 | 3218.42 | 7.3 | 431.01 | 5.4 |
| 6.5. 10001-12500 | 2684.38 | 6.8 | 396.62 | 5.3 |
| 6.6. more than 12500 | 5256.07 | 8.6 | 546.88 | 7.2 |
| 7. Residence | F=1.718; p=0.165 | F=0.772; p=0.511 | F=3.338; p=0.021 | F=0.308; p=0.820 |
| 7.1. Zagreb | 2372.92 | 6.4 | 353.42 | 4.9 |
| 7.2. Split | 2054.47 | 6.6 | 311.09 | 5.2 |
| 7.3. Rijeka | 3334.31 | 7.4 | 418.52 | 5.5 |
| 7.4. Osijek | 3297.87 | 6.1 | 443.40 | 5.1 |

The findings of one-way ANOVA indicate that age, household size, education, occupation and income significantly influenced the most of the purchasing outcomes except average price paid. As age increased, HRK amount spent on footwear increased except for the group of shoppers who are older than 59 years. The shoppers between 45 and 59 years were willing to spend the largest amount of money and to pay the highest price for footwear products. One possible explanation is that older shoppers tend to economize in shopping more than younger consumers (Zeithaml, 1985). Similar pattern of relationships can be found for household size and income with the shopper groups in the middle exhibiting the highest purchasing outcomes. Shoppers with higher education level and high-paying jobs (such as entrepreneurs or managers) tend to be more involved in shopping of footwear products than consumers with lower education level and lower-paid jobs (such as workers for example). Shoppers who spend higher amounts on footwear, relative to shoppers who spend lower amounts, appeared to be high-income earners. This evidence is consistent with results from previous research, which explain the higher income in terms of the higher levels of educational achievement (Chang and Samuel, 2004). In our study education level is significantly and positively related to income (correlation coefficient is 0.34).

No significant differences were found between males and females in the amount spent, pairs of footwear purchased, average price paid and purchase plans. Males exhibited similar purchasing behaviour as females. Contrary to expectations, residence was not significantly related to purchasing outcomes. This can be attributed to the fact that all four cities belong to urban areas with higher than average income level.

4.2. The relationship between benefit sought and purchasing outcomes (RQ2)

Based on mean importance of footwear product attributes, our sample of 202 Croatian shoppers revealed that the most important benefit sought was comfort (4.87). The other highly ranked benefits were quality (4.40), material (4.38), design (4.32), and ease of care (4.18). Consumers' interest in low prices was high, but seventh-ranked in importance (3.43). Above average or average importance score was attached also colour (4.08), fashion (3.09), and manufacturer's image (2.84). Mean importance of footwear product attributes is presented in table 4.

Table 4

PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES IMPORTANT IN
 FOOTWEAR PURCHASING, N = 202

| Footwear product attributes | Mean value |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Comfort | 4.87 |
| 2. Quality | 4.40 |
| 3. Material used to make footwear | 4.38 |
| 4. Design | 4.32 |
| 5. Ease of care | 4.18 |
| 6. Colour | 4.08 |
| 7. Price | 3.43 |
| 8. Fashionable footwear | 3.09 |
| 9. Manufacturer's image | 2.84 |

Cluster analysis was performed using footwear benefits sought. Two different types of shoppers with varying priorities for footwear purchasing were identified. The analysis of variance was then employed to test the differences between consumer segments and purchasing outcomes. Summary statistics on two shopper groups is given in table 5 and figure 1.

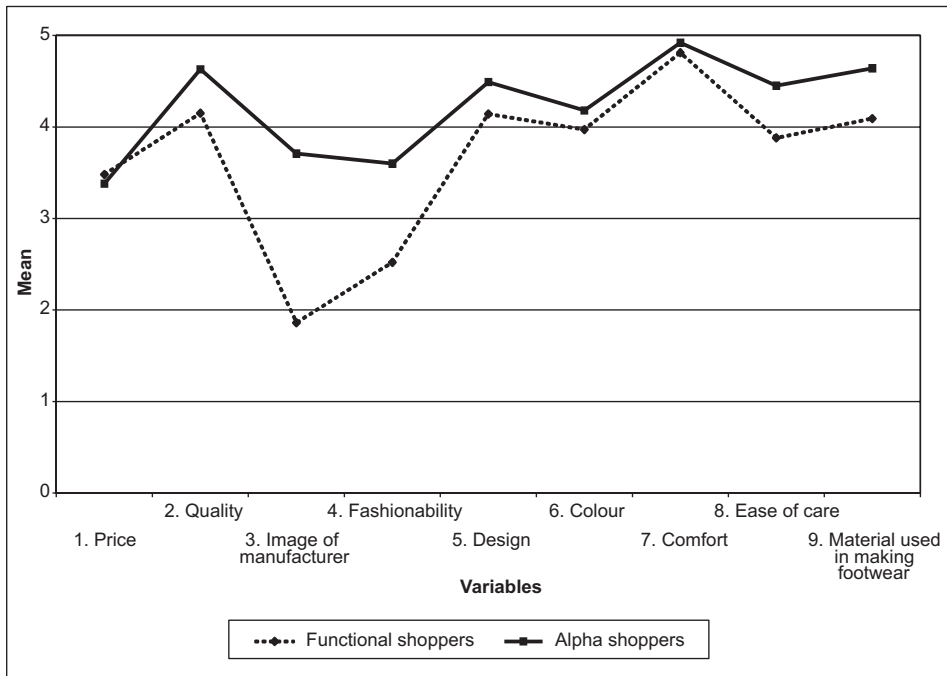
Table 5

K-MEANS CLUSTERING RESULTS, MEAN VALUES

| Variables | Functional shopper (N = 95) | Alpha shopper (N = 107) | p-value |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| 1. Price | 3,48 | 3,38 | 0,48 |
| 2. Quality | 4,15 | 4,63 | 0,00 |
| 3. Image of manufacturer | 1,86 | 3,71 | 0,00 |
| 4. Fashionable footwear | 2,52 | 3,60 | 0,00 |
| 5. Design | 4,14 | 4,49 | 0,00 |
| 6. Colour | 3,97 | 4,18 | 0,08 |
| 7. Comfort | 4,81 | 4,92 | 0,05 |
| 8. Ease of care | 3,88 | 4,45 | 0,00 |
| 9. Material used in making footwear | 4,09 | 4,64 | 0,00 |

Figure 2

CONSUMER CLUSTERS BASED ON PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES
IMPORTANT IN FOOTWEAR PURCHASING, MEAN VALUES



Significant differences between groups were found for all product attributes except for price. For colour and comfort significant differences between two shopper segments were found at 0.10 levels. The characteristics of each cluster were examined based on the cluster means and the following labels were developed: Cluster 1: the functional shoppers, and Cluster 2: the alpha shoppers. The functional shoppers placed high importance on the functional aspects of footwear product, while fashionable elements and manufacturer's image was considered to be the least important. They appeared to be price-sensitive. The alpha shoppers forming cluster 2, emerged as the leader of sampled shoppers. They appeared to be very demanding shoppers, placing very high scores on all footwear product attributes, except on price. The alpha shoppers showed the strongest scores on comfort, material, quality and the appearance of footwear. This shopper segment is more interested in fashion and manufacturer's image than consumers in cluster

1. As compared to the functional shoppers, alpha shoppers purchased more pairs of footwear, paid higher price for footwear and spent larger HRK amount on footwear (Table 6). Consistent with other research, consumers inclined to fashion tend to purchase more and spend more than other shoppers (Belleau, Nowlin, Summers and Xu, 2001).

Table 6

ANOVA RESULTS FOR PURCHASING OUTCOMES
 BY SHOPPER GROUPS (CLUSTERS), MEAN VALUES

| Grouping Variable (Cluster Membership) | Dependent Variables | | | |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Amount spent | No. of items purchased | Average price paid | Purchase plan |
| Cluster | F=8.262; p=0.005 | F=7.855; p=0.006 | F=6.033; p=0.015 | F=7,933; p=0.005 |
| Functional shoppers | 2030.99 | 5.8 | 339.33 | 4.5 |
| Alpha shoppers | 3438.14 | 7.4 | 420.50 | 5.8 |

Table 7 shows the description of each cluster on a variety of demographic characteristics. Significant differences found between the clusters only for gender (at 0.1 levels) and age (at 0.05 level). On average, there are more females in the segment of functional shoppers and more males in the alpha shopper cluster. There are more the youngest shoppers in the segment of functional shoppers, while alpha shopper cluster appeared to be predominantly formed of older shopper groups.

Table 7

ANOVA RESULTS FOR PURCHASING OUTCOMES
BY SHOPPER GROUPS (CLUSTERS), MEAN VALUES

| | Functional shopper (N = 95) | Alpha shopper (N = 107) | p-value |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Gender | | | p=0.089 |
| 1.1. Female | 56.8% | 44.9% | |
| 1.2. Male | 43.2% | 55.1% | |
| 2. Age (years) | | | p=0.049 |
| 2.1. less than 30 | 32.6% | 15.9% | |
| 2.2. 30-44 | 21.1% | 28.0% | |
| 2.3. 45-59 | 24.2% | 29.9% | |
| 2.4. more than 59 | 22.1% | 26.2% | |
| 3. Household size | | | p=0.831 |
| 3.1. 1-2 | 35.1% | 32.1% | |
| 3.2. 3-4 | 53.2% | 53.8% | |
| 3.3. more than 4 | 11.7% | 14.2% | |
| 4. Education | | | p=0.423 |
| 4.1. Elementary school or less | 3.2% | 4.7% | |
| 4.2. High school | 69.5% | 60.7% | |
| 4.3. Undergraduate degree or more | 27.4% | 34.6% | |
| 5. Occupation | | | p=0.443 |
| 5.1. Manager | 3.2% | 1.9% | |
| 5.2. Professional | 10.5% | 17.8% | |
| 5.3. Entrepreneur | 2.1% | 1.9% | |
| 5.4. Administrative staff | 12.6% | 15.0% | |
| 5.5. Technician | 8.4% | 15.9% | |
| 5.6. Worker | 11.6% | 10.3% | |
| 5.7. Craftsman | 4.2% | 0.9% | |
| 5.8. Student | 15.8% | 9.3% | |
| 5.9. Retired person | 26.3% | 22.4% | |
| 5.10. Unemployed | 5.3% | 4.7% | |
| 6. Income (HRK) | | | p=0.432 |
| 6.1. less than 2501 | 9.6% | 3.8% | |
| 6.2. 2501-5000 | 29.8% | 23.6% | |
| 6.3. 5001-7500 | 23.4% | 27.4% | |
| 6.4. 7501-10000 | 19.1% | 19.8% | |
| 6.5. 10001-12500 | 6.4% | 9.4% | |
| 6.6. more than 12500 | 11.7% | 16.0% | |
| 7. Residence | | | p=0.347 |
| 7.1. Zagreb | 30.5% | 20.6% | |
| 7.2. Split | 24.2% | 24.3% | |
| 7.3. Rijeka | 21.1% | 29.0% | |
| 7.4. Osijek | 24.2% | 26.2% | |

5. Conclusion

This paper explored the impacts of demographic characteristics and product benefits sought on purchasing outcomes for footwear products. The results indicate that age, household size, education, occupation and income significantly affect amount of money spent, pairs of footwear purchased and purchase plans, but not average price paid. Gender and residence of respondent were not significantly related to purchasing outcomes. The results indicate that demographic segmentation might be useful for the design of marketing strategies.

Our second contribution is the identification of the following two consumer segments with significantly different wants and purchasing behaviour: the functional shoppers and the alpha shoppers. The functional shoppers placed high importance on the functional aspects of footwear product, while fashionable elements and manufacturer's image was considered to be the less important. They appeared to be more price-sensitive. As compared to functional shoppers, the alpha shoppers were very demanding shoppers, placing very high scores on all footwear product attributes, except on price. They showed the strongest scores on comfort, material, quality and the appearance of footwear. They placed stronger scores on fashionable footwear products and manufacturer's image than functional shoppers. As compared to the functional shoppers, alpha shoppers purchased more pairs of footwear, paid higher price for footwear and spent larger HRK amount on footwear.

Several managerial implications might be derived from the findings of this study. The results are indicative for the marketing segmentation strategy in the footwear market. Footwear manufacturers and retailers need to be aware of the shopper demographics and the differences in purchasing behaviour between functional shoppers and the alpha shoppers. This would imply developing different merchandise, brands, pricing policy and merchandising approach to meet each segment's needs. As it is very costly for manufacturers to please to all shopper segments, specific market-oriented initiatives become important. Companies may provide to functional shoppers low-priced merchandise with basic styles, easy-care materials, traditional styling. Retailers may please this consumer segment with better price signing and "save stories". As compared to functional shoppers, alpha shoppers should be attracted with more selection, comfortable fit tailored look and newer colors. Merchandise should be well-coordinated at the retail level. Different brands tailored to the requirements of specific consumer segments should be developed.

Although this study produced some interesting and meaningful findings, there are some limitations as well. First, although the data employed in this research were better than previously available ones, more abundant and richer data would

have enlarged the scope of analysis. Like most marketing research, this study took a “snapshot” of a sample of the industry at a single point in time. Several years of data would have provided further information as to how consumer behaviour changes. Despite these limitations, the results of this study offer useful insight into the shopper behaviour in the footwear market.

There are several areas in need for further research. Further research should investigate the differences in consumer behaviour between urban and rural areas. Research is also needed to examine more in detail the relationships between other aspects of footwear shopping behaviour (such as deal proneness, promotion search, fashion consciousness, brand awareness, selection of retail stores) and purchasing outcomes. More research is needed to compare consumer behaviour in Croatia and both developed and emerging-market countries.

REFERENCES

1. Alfansi, L., Sargeant, A. (2000). “Market segmentation in the Indonesian banking sector: the relationship between demographics and desired customer benefits”, *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, (18), 2, 64-74.
2. Anić, I. D., Vouk, R. (2005), “Exploring the relationships between store patronage motives and purchasing outcomes for major shopping trips in the Croatian grocery retailing”, *Ekonomski pregled*, (56), 9, 634-657.
3. Belleau, B. D., Nowlin, K., Summers. T. A., Xu, Y.J. (2001). “Fashion leaders’ and followers’ attitudes towards exotic leather apparel products”, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, (5), 2, 133-144.
4. Birtwistle, G.; Tsim, C. (2005). “Consumer purchasing behaviour: An investigation of the UK mature women’s clothing market”, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, (4), 6, 453-464.
5. Chang, J., Samuel, N. (2004). “Internet Shopper Demographics and Buying Behaviour in Australia”, *Journal of American Academy of Business*, (5), 1/2, 171-176.
6. Dickson, M., Lennon, S. J., Montalto, C. P., Shen, D., Zhang, L. (2004). “Chinese consumer market segments for foreign apparel products”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, (21), 5, 301-317.
7. Eastlick, M.A., Feinberg, R.A. (1994). “Gender differences in mail-catalog patronage motives”, *Journal of Direct Marketing*, (8), 2, 37-44.

8. European Commission (2005). *Economic and competitiveness analysis of the footwear sector in the EU25*, report, <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/footwear/documents.htm>.
9. Fadiga, M. L., Misra, S. K., Ramirez, O.A. (2005). "US consumer purchasing decisions and demand for apparel", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, (9), 4, 367-379.
10. Forsythe, S., Kim, J.O. and Pete, T. (1999). "Product cue usage in two Asian markets: a cross cultural comparison", *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 16, 275-92.
11. Harfield, T., Hamilton, R.T. (1997). "Journeys in a declining industry: stories of footwear manufacturing", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Volume 10, Issue 1, pp. 61-70.
12. IFM (2007). *Study on the competitiveness, economic situation and location of production in the textiles and clothing, footwear, leather and furniture industries*, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/footwear/index_en.htm.
13. Kollat, D.T., Willett, R.P. (1967). "Customer Impulse Purchasing Behavior", *Journal of Marketing Research*, (4), 1, 21-31.
14. Levy, M., Weitz, B.A. (2004). *Retailing management*, McGrawHill/Irwin.
15. Mihić, M., Čulina, G. (2006), "Buying behaviour and consumption: Social Class versus income", *Management*, (11), 2, 77-92.
16. Norum, P. (1999). "The demand for accessories, footwear and hosiery: An economic analysis", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, (3), 1.
17. Walsh, G., Mitchell, V. W., 2005, "Demographic characteristics of consumers who find it difficult to decide", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, (23), 3, 281-295.
18. Zeithaml, V.A., (1985). "The New Demographics and Market Fragmentation", *Journal of Marketing*, (49), 3, 64-75.
19. Zhang, Z., Li, Y., Gong, C. and Wu, H. (2002). "Casual wear product attributes: a Chinese consumers' perspective", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, (6), 1, 53-62.

ISTRAŽIVANJE UTJECAJA DEMOGRAFSKIH ČIMBENIKA I ČIMBENIKA KUPNJE NA PONAŠANJE POTROŠAČA U KUPNJI OBUĆE U HRVATSKOJ

Sažetak

Svrha je ovog istraživanja analizirati utjecaj demografskih čimbenika i čimbenika kupnje na ponašanje potrošača u kupnji obuće u Hrvatskoj. Podaci su prikupljeni telefonskim upitnikom. Anketiranje je provedeno u svibnju i lipnju godine 2007. Podaci su analizirani primjenom analize varijance (ANOVA) i klaster analize. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da godine starosti anketiranoga, veličina kućanstva, obrazovanje, zanimanje i dohodak značajno utječu na izdatak potrošača, na broj pari kupljene obuće i planove za kupnju, ali ne i na prosječnu cijenu koju su potrošači platili za obuću. Spol i mjesto prebivališta anketiranih nisu značajni za predviđanje kupnje. Klusterskom analizom identificirane su dvije grupe kupaca: funkcionalni kupci i alfa kupci. U odnosu na funkcionalne kupce, alfa kupci kupili su više pari obuće, platili su višu cijenu za obuću i imali su veće izdatke na obuću. Poduzeća se mogu koristiti rezultatima istraživanja u kreiranju asortimana proizvoda, a koje bi bilo prilagođeno zahtjevima specifičnih skupina kupaca.

Ključne riječi: Hrvatska, ponašanje potrošača, tržište obuće, segmentacija tržišta, demografski čimbenici, čimbenici kupnje obuće