

**THESIS**

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**Examining Consumer Behavior in  
Low-Involvement Products: The Role  
of Habitual Buying Behavior.**

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## **1 Introduction**

Consumer behavior is a fascinating area of study particularly when it comes to habitual buying behavior. It is evident that individuals tend to make purchasing decision with minimal effort or cognitive processing. This phenomenon is particularly interesting to me, and I am eager to conduct research on the topic of habitual buying behavior (Assael 1987) to better understand this aspect of consumer behavior. Through this investigation, I hope to gain insights into my own decision-making process, as well as contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior as a whole.

As consumers, we are constantly making choices about which products to buy and which to avoid. The study of consumer behavior in low-involvement products, with a specific focus on the role of habitual buying behavior, is an essential area of research that can have many benefits for consumers. This is because a better understanding of the factors that influence consumer behavior in low-involvement products can help consumers make more informed decisions when purchasing products, leading to better outcomes in terms of product satisfaction, value for money, and overall well-being.

In this study, I will be examining consumer behavior from the perspective of the consumers themselves. Specifically, I will be looking at how consumers make their purchasing decisions when it comes to habitual buying behavior, with a focus on cleaning products (such as toothpaste) and groceries. Additionally, I will be examining how inflation affects consumers' habitual buying decisions.

To gather data for this study, I will be using online surveys designed to ask specific questions of consumers. These surveys will allow consumers to reflect on their own buying behavior, and I will be using a Likert 5-point scale to measure their level of agreement with various statements. This will allow me to analyze the data in a more structured way and gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer behavior.

Once the data is collected, I will be using Tschuprow's T as a statistical tool to analyze the results of the survey. This will allow me to draw meaningful conclusions about the factors that influence consumer behavior in low-involvement products and habitual buying behavior.

In conclusion, this study is essential for consumers because it will shed light on the factors that influence their purchasing decisions in low involvement products and help them make more informed decisions when purchasing these types of products. It will also provide insight into

how inflation affects consumer behavior, which can be especially useful during times of economic uncertainty.

**Research objective:**

1. This thesis aims to investigate the consumer behavior and decision-making process in the context of habitual buying behavior.
2. Examine the key factors that influence consumers' decision-making processes when they engage in habitual buying behavior.
3. To investigate the Relationship between income level and frequency of shopping trips per week among consumers.
4. To examine the impact of increasing in price on consumer's buying behavior in terms of changes in product preferences.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The root of Consumer Behavior Research: Tracing the Field's Beginnings and Influential Thinkers**

The study of consumer behavior can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when psychologists and economists began to examine the ways in which individuals make purchasing decisions. One of the early pioneers in the field was John B. Watson, an American psychologist who is credited with founding the school of behaviorism. In 1913, Watson published an influential paper titled "Psychology as the Behaviorist View It," in which he argued that the study of consumer behavior should be grounded in observable, measurable behaviors rather than subjective experiences or internal states. (Watson 1913)

Other notable early researchers in the field of consumer behavior include Walter Dill Scott, who wrote a seminal text on advertising and consumer psychology in 1903, and Ernest Dichter, who conducted influential research on consumer motivation and desire in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, the study of consumer behavior has become a multi-disciplinary field that draws on insights from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics to understand how people make decisions about what to buy and why. (Scott 1903)

### **2.2. Definition of consumer behavior**

The definition of consumer behavior is subject to varying interpretations, with multiple definitions available in the literature. However, based on my extensive review and analysis, the following definitions are considered to be the most precise and accurate.

The field of *consumer behavior* is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins 2016)

Consumer behavior is the observation of the decision-making, purchasing patterns and habit of the general public. (Yadin, 2002)

The totality of consumers' decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services, time, and ideas by human decision-making units (over time). (Hoyer, et al 2012)

Consumer behavior: It is the study of processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas, experiences to satisfy needs and desires. (Solomon. 2017)

	2.3. Four types of Buying Behavior	Low involvement
	High involvement	
Significant differences between brands	Complex buying behavior	Variety-seeking buying behavior
Few differences between brands	Dissonance-reducing buying behavior	Habitual-buying behavior

*1. Table Four type of Buying Behavior (Assael, H 1987)*

Level of involvement is the interest and importance of consumer place when buying a product, and Henry Assael identified four types of buying behavior based on the level of involvement and differences between brands.

**1. Complex buying behavior.**

This behavior happens when the consumer is highly involved with his decision buying, and he is aware of significant differences between brands. This kind of behavior is common in the case of high prices, risky and self-express products.

**2. Dissonance-reducing buying behavior.**

is when the consumer is deeply involved in a decision buying but perceives a few differences between brands. Highly involvement in decision happens because of the product is expensive, not frequently purchased, and risky.

**3. Variety-seeking buying behavior.**

is characterized by low consumer involvement and significant brand differences. Brand switching is very common in it, which occurs because consumers seek variety rather than dissatisfaction.

**4. Habitual buying behavior.**

There exist certain products such as salt, sugar, washing liquid, toothpaste, milk, cereal, and the like that exhibit distinct patterns of habitual buying behavior among consumers. This curious phenomenon is characterized by consumers resorting to making purchasing



decisions with minimal cognitive effort, perceiving little differentiation between competing brands. This tendency is predominantly observed in low-cost, frequently purchased items, leading to consumers forgoing extensive information searches and evaluations prior to committing to a purchase decision. (Kumar, A., & Gupta, S 2021)

It is noteworthy to mention that this empirical finding was originally posited by Henry Assael, a pioneering marketing scholar, in the year 1987. His research shed light upon the various factors that contribute to habitual buying behavior among consumers, including the convenience and accessibility of the product, brand loyalty, and overall satisfaction with previous purchase experiences. Additionally, he observed that repetitive advertising, product packaging, and pricing also play crucial roles in influencing consumers' habitual buying behavior.(Assael,1987, Silayoi, & Speece, 2002)

#### **2.4. The Psychology of Choice: Understanding the Factors that Affect Consumer Decisions**

As I think of the concept of Habitual Buying Behavior, I am immediately reminded of the insightful book titled "The Power of Habit" by the acclaimed author Charles Duhigg. This riveting book, published in 2012, expounds upon the nature of habits as behaviors that become automatic through repetition, performed without any conscious thought. According to Duhigg, habits are incredibly potent because they allow the brain to conserve energy by making certain actions automatic and unconscious.(Duhigg, 2012)

This same principle applies to the phenomenon of habitual buying behavior, as noted by Henry Assael way back in 1987. It is worth noting that when we need to purchase a product, say toothpaste, for instance, we are more likely to buy it from the same shop and with the same brand that we have repeatedly bought before. This is primarily due to the fact that the act of making a purchase has become a habitual behavior that requires minimal cognitive effort and evaluation (Assael 1987).

Another theory that explains our decision-making processes has been posited by a Nobel prize winner psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2011) in his book “thinking, fast and slow” in this theory, two distinct modes of thinking are described and labeled as System 1 and System 2.

- System 1 thinking is fast, automatic, and intuitive. It operates largely outside of conscious awareness and requires little effort or attention. System 1 thinking is useful in many situations where quick decisions must be made, such as when reacting to a

sudden danger or recognizing familiar objects. System 1 thinking is efficient and useful for routine tasks, and this aligns with the characteristics of Habitual buying behavior. These findings suggest that the influence of System 1 thinking extends beyond decision making in isolation and can also impact purchasing behavior.

- On the other hand, System 2 thinking is slow, analytical, and deliberate. It requires conscious effort and attention and is more rational and logical than System 1 thinking. System 2 thinking is useful in situations that require more careful consideration, such as solving complex problems, planning for the future, or analyzing data. (Kahneman 2011)

There was a study in 2002 in the paper “Habits in everyday life: Thought, Emotion and Action” by a group of researchers, with 70 undergraduate students (35 women, 35 men). Participants were assigned to do two self-report diaries every hour on their behavior, thoughts, and emotions when they are doing their habitual and non-habitual behavior. This study revealed that Habits offer benefits in terms of cognitive efficiency, reduce stress, and a greater feeling of control. They also allow individuals to conserve energy for important decisions. However, habitual behavior may result in reduced awareness and potentially negative consequences if the habit is harmful or inappropriate. Overall, the findings suggest that cultivating positive habits can be beneficial for individuals in their daily life. (Wood., et al 2002)

Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, introduced a renowned motivation theory in his 1943 paper “A theory of human motivation.” This theory explains how human needs are prioritized and fulfilled. According to the theory, there are five distinct levels namely: Physiological needs, Safety needs, love and belonging needs, Esteem needs, and Self-actualization needs. (

Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs states that individuals have five levels of needs that must be satisfied before they can progress to higher-order needs. These levels are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. According to Maslow, individuals must satisfy lower-order needs before they can move up to higher-order needs. (Maslow 1943)



1. Figure Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs ( Mcleod 2023)

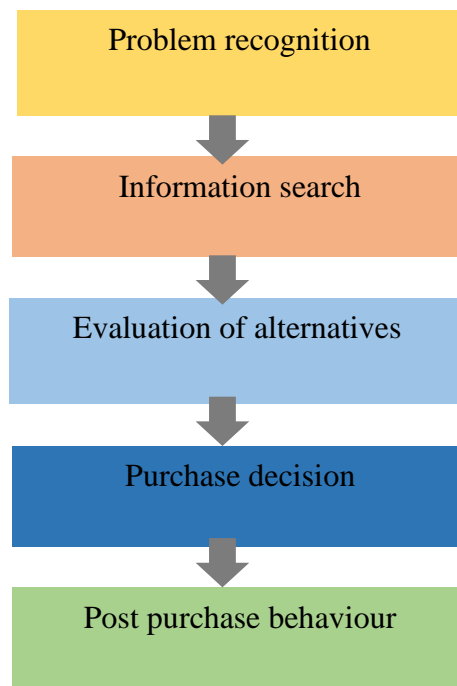
In a 2006 study conducted by Bas Verplanken and Wendy Wood, it was suggested that habitual buying behavior may be linked to a desire to satisfy lower-level needs like physical and safety needs. The study found that individuals who were more inclined towards habitual buying behavior were more likely to prioritize meeting their physiological and safety needs. This finding suggests that habitual buying behavior may be a means of satisfying basic human needs. For example, an individual who is hungry or thirsty (need 1) will prioritize meeting those physiological needs before they focus on safety (need 2), love (need 3), esteem (need 4), or self-actualization (need 5). In such cases, the individual may choose to purchase a familiar and easily accessible product that satisfies their immediate physiological needs. This is often referred to as habitual buying (Verplanken & Wood 2006)

In summary Maslow's theory of needs emphasizes the importance of satisfying fundamental needs first before progressing to higher-order needs.

Decision making is a process, The five-stage model

1. Problem recognition: the consumer recognizes that they have a need or problem that requires solution.

2. information search: the consumer will begin to search for information about potential solutions. This can involve researching different products, brands, and features as well as asking friends and family for suggestions.
3. evaluation of alternatives: once the consumer has gathered information, they will evaluate the different options available to them. This involves weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each product, comparing prices, and considering factors such as quality and brand reputation.
4. purchase: the consumer will decide about which product to buy. This involves choosing a specific brand or model, including where to make the purchase.
5. Post behavior purchase: the consumer will evaluate whether or not they are satisfied with their decision. If they are not satisfied, they may seek a refund or return the product. If they are satisfied, they may become loyal customers and may recommend the product to others.



*2. Figure five-stage model of consumer buying process (Kotler & Keller 2016)*

However, according to a research article titled “Consumer Decision Process towards Products” by Sheikh Qazzafi (2019), it was discovered that consumer tend to use all five stages when purchasing products that are high-involvement and bought infrequently or occasionally. At the same time, for low-involvement products such as those used daily or

with a low cost, consumers are more likely to skip one or more stages in the decision-making process, and they make purchase of those products as soon as they have a need for them (Qazzafi 2019).

### **2.5. When Buying Becomes Automatic: Exploring Products Purchased through Habit**

1. **Grocery items products:** such as bread, milk, eggs, salt, sugar, cooking oil. These items are purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are consumed on a daily basis and need to be replenished often. This notion is supported by scholars such as Dhar (2018) and Kotler & Keller (2016).
2. **Personal care products:** such as toothpaste, shampoo, and soap. These items are used every day and need to be replaced frequently, which is why they are often purchased without much thought or deliberation (Solomon, 2017).
3. **Snacks and beverages:** such as chips, soda, and candy are frequently purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are consumed regularly and often bought on impulse (Dhar, 2018).
4. **Cleaning supplies:** such as laundry detergent, dishing liquid and paper towels also make the list of items that are commonly purchased through habitual buying behavior. They are used often and require frequent replacement (Kotler & Keller, 2016)
5. **Pet foods and supplies:** such as pet food, cat litter and toys are often purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are used frequently and need to be replaced often, leading to repeated purchases without much consideration (Solomon, 2017).
6. **Fuel for vehicles,** another necessary expense for daily transportation, is often purchased through habitual buying behavior. This is because it requires frequent replenishment and is an essential part of daily life (Dhar, 2018).
7. **Household supplies:** like light bulbs, batteries, and trash bags are frequently purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are used regularly and need to be replaced frequently (Solomon, 2017)
8. **Office supplies:** such as pens, paper and printer ink are often purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are used regularly and need to be replaced frequently (Solomon, 2017)

9. **Medication for chronic conditions** are often purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are necessary for ongoing treatment and require frequent refills (Dhar,2018)
10. **Magazine or newspaper subscriptions** are often purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are a regular source of entertainment or information and are often automatically renewed (Kotler & Keller, 2016)
11. **Clothing basics:** such as socks and undershirts are often purchased through habitual buying behavior because they are essential items that require frequent replacement (Solomon,2017)

## **2.6. Typical Traits of Consumer who engage in Habitual Buying Behavior**

Economist Stern H (1962) suggested that Habitual Buying Behavior related to the easiness to buy. The purchase of an item involves the expenditure of a number of resources as the following:

- money: for the item itself and for any costs that incurred in going to and coming from the store.
- time: transportation time going and coming back from the place of purchase, along with any time spent browsing or making a decision within the store.
- physical effort: how consumer choose their transportation by walking or by driving to or from the place of purchase.
- mental effort: of scheduling trip to the store and budgeting for the purchase.

Consumers who exhibit habitual buying behavior often make purchasing decisions without much conscious thought or effort, relying on past behavior and routine. They may not have a strong preference for any particular brand or products, and their decisions to purchase may be based on convenience, availability, or familiarity with the product (Solomon, 2017)

According to a study conducted by Hoyer, consumers not only rely on past experience to make purchase decisions, but they also continuously evaluate those decisions. Consumer satisfaction with their past purchases helps them to develop a set of simple and quick decision-making strategies. Through repeated trials of buying a product, consumers develop a habit of making similar decisions in the future without having to put too much thought into the process. Overall, consumer behavior is shaped by repeated experiences and evaluations, leading to the formation of simple choice tactics that quick and satisfactory decision-making. (Hoyer 1984)

Research suggests that consumers who engage in habitual buying behavior are influenced by factors such as brand recognition, availability and convenience, price, past experience, and peer influence (Kotler et al., 2019). Brand recognition is particularly important for these consumers, as they perceive brands they recognize and trust to be more reliable and consistent (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Consumers also be more likely to buy products that are easily accessible and convenient to purchase, such as those that are available at their local stores or supermarket. Price is also a factor, particularly if consumers are on a budget or looking for a good deal (Dhar, Simonson, 2016).

The research conducted by Macdonald and Sharp established that brand awareness is a critical factor influencing consumer decision-making, particularly for those within the awareness group. The study observed that when presented with a selection of brands with distinct levels of awareness, participants overwhelmingly favored the high awareness brand, regardless of quality or price differences. Additionally, the study showed that participants in the awareness group tended to make decisions more quickly and consider fewer brands than those in the non-awareness group. The study suggested that brand awareness can have a long-lasting impact on consumer choices, even after repeated present to different options. (Macdonald & Sharp 2000)

However, brand recognition is not the only thing consumers take into consideration when engaging in habitual buying behavior. A study title: determinate of habitual behavior for national and leading brands in China found that brand recognition does play a significant role in the habitual buying behavior, but another important factor that consumer take into consideration. when making a purchasing decision is convenient. In the situation where consumers are unable to find their preferred national or leading brand, they tend to overlook brand recognition and purchase a local brand instead. This behavior is especially frequently in areas where consumer have limited access to national or leading brands (Lin & Chang 2003)

Brand recognition is just a perception of consumer. An experiment was conducted where participants blindly tasted beer without knowing the brand and could not recognize taste differences among various beer brands. However, labels and their associations influenced their evaluation to buy. Therefore, the success or failure of beer brands was attributed to their marketing efforts and brand images, rather than actual differences in taste. This emphasizes the significance of a strong brand image in gaining recognition from consumers. (Allison & Uhl 1964)

Another study on brand awareness indicates that consumers are more likely to select a brand they are familiar with, highlighting the impact of having a strong brand awareness. The study further suggests that advertising campaigns aimed at increasing brand awareness can successfully increase the likelihood of consumers choosing a specific brand. Additionally, the effects of brand awareness on consumer choices persist even after their initial purchase. (Hoyer & Brown 1990)

Past experience can also play a role in consumers' decisions to buy products in the category of habitual buying behavior. Consumers base their purchasing decision on their past experiences with the product or brand, especially if they have had positive experiences in the past (Solomon, 2017). Peer influence is another factor that influences a consumer's buying decision, particularly if the opinions of friends and family members are taken into account (Kotler & Keller, 2019).

Word of mouth, which refers to the sharing of opinions and recommendations among individuals, has been found to have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Consumers often seek out the opinions of their friends and family when searching for information about a product, particularly with regards to quality, value, and price. This may be because individuals trust the honest opinions of those who are close to them and seek out first-hand experiences. However, this is typically the case for high involvement products that require more consideration and thought prior to purchase. For low involvement products, consumers may be less likely to seek out opinions and instead choose to make a purchase and evaluate the product later. (Mangold, et al 1999) In conclusion, consumers who exhibit habitual buying behavior may be less influenced by advertising or promotional efforts, as their decisions to buy are often based on pre-existing habits and routines (Luce & Payne, 1998).

## **2.7. The impact of Price Sensitivity on Habitual Buying Behavior**

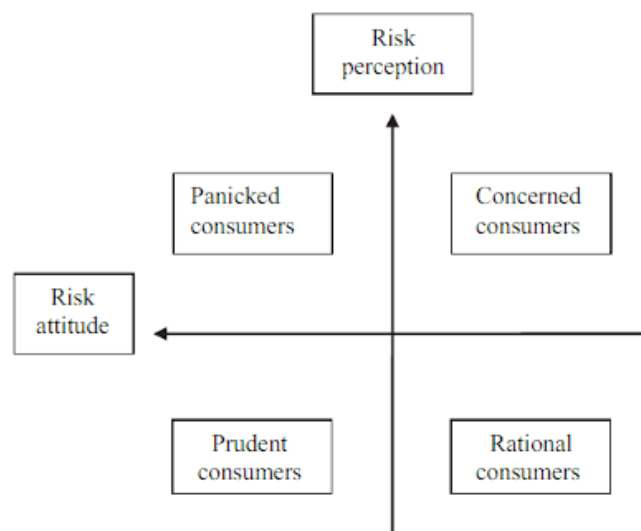
In this perplexing and ever-changing era of globalization, the world has become smaller, thanks to rapid technological advancements and the flow of information. The internet has made it effortless for us to connect with people from around the globe. However, globalization has also caused negative effects, such as the current pandemic of Covid-19 and the ongoing war in Ukraine, which have significantly impacted people's lives worldwide, especially in terms of their economic well-being.

Hungary, in particular, has not been spared from the ongoing crises, which have resulted in a skyrocketing inflation rate of 25.7% as of January 2023 this includes energy (+35,1%) and



food(+44,8%) ([worlddata.info](http://worlddata.info)). The high inflation rate has caused a substantial increase in the prices of goods and services, further worsening the economic situation for people living in the country.

According Amalia and Ionut demonstrate that individuals differ in their perceptions of situations with negative consequences, such as an economic crisis. The primary factors that shape consumer behavior in such situations are risk attitude and risk perception. Risk attitude refers to how consumers interpret the content of risk and how much they dislike it. Risk perception refers to how consumers interpret the likelihood of being exposed to the risk content. (Amalia & Ionut 2009) By using these factors, consumers can be classified into four categories:



3. Figure risk attitude and risk perception (source: Amalia & Ionut 2009)

- **Panicked consumers:** Those who have high risk attitudes and high-risk perceptions. These consumers are in a stressful situation and are highly averse to risk. They tend to overreact during a crisis and drastically cut their spending, reduce consumption, and switch brands or even product categories. They are not loyal to any brand and only look for the best price.
- **Prudent consumers:** Those who have high risk attitudes but low risk perceptions. Even though they are risk-averse, they do not consider themselves to be in a stressful situation because they are not highly exposed to risk. Thus, these consumers carefully plan their spending, postpone major purchases, and in some cases, switch brands. They are well-informed in the purchasing process.
- **Concerned consumers:** Those who have low risk attitudes but high-risk perceptions. Although they believe they are highly exposed to the risk content, they are not risk-

averse and typically assume risks. This type of consumer plans their spending and will continue to make major purchases, but only if they obtain a good deal. If risk perception increases, they will tend to postpone major purchases. They tend to remain loyal to brands, but in some cases, they switch to less expensive options. Companies could introduce a lower-priced version of their premium or middle brand in their portfolio to retain them. Interestingly, this type of consumer is willing to try new and innovative products despite difficult times.

- Rational consumers: Those who have low risk attitudes and low risk perceptions. They are not risk-averse and do not believe they are exposed to the risk content. They avoid information regarding the crisis effects and generally maintain their usual behavior. It is expected that these consumers will not reduce their spending and will continue to buy their favorite brands and try innovative products.

A study by Pual Flatters and Michael Willmott (Flatters & Willmot 2009) identified The main changes in consumer behavior which are result from economic crisis could be summarized as follow:

- The need for simplicity: Consumers are accustomed to limited offers during a recession and tend to simplify their demand. After the crisis, it is expected that consumers will continue to purchase simpler offerings that provide the greatest value.
- Temperance: Even rich people save, although they are not required to do so. This is one way they show their dissatisfaction with excessive consumption. They began to recycle and to teach children traditional values.
- Smart consumption: Today's consumers are agile and respond quickly to price changes. They have the ability to switch brands, sacrificing quality and loyalty in pursuit of the lowest price.
- Green consumerism: The recession has slowed the demand for green, environmentally friendly products as people are unwilling to pay more when there are cheaper substitutes available. However, it is expected to recover after the recession.
- People are less willing to charity actions, because they are more concerned about the welfare of their families. This trend is expected to slowly recover after the crisis.

Increasing prices triggers a consumer demand shift that economists refer to as "price elasticity of demand." This term was coined by British Economist Alfred Marshall in 1890. A Dutch economist, Peter van Westendorp, introduced the Price Sensitivity Meter in 1976 to measure how much consumers react to price increases. The Price Sensitivity Meter shows that

consumers who are more price-sensitive are more likely to switch to cheaper products or services. Conversely, less price-sensitive consumers are less likely to change products or services and tend to stick with their favorite brands, even if the price rises. (Kagan 2022)

The price sensitivity of consumers is a crucial factor that marketers need to consider while pricing their products. Consumers may have varying levels of sensitivity towards prices, and this can be influenced by several factors. One such factor is the power of brand recognition. Well-known brands that invest heavily in marketing and advertising can reduce the price sensitivity of consumers towards their products. This is because consumers may associate these brands with quality and reliability, and thus, may be willing to pay a higher price for them. Mood-based advertising is an effective way for brands to create a strong emotional connection with consumers, which can further reduce their price sensitivity. (Wakefield & Inman 2003)

In a study on advertising, found that mood-based or emotional advertising has a positive effect on advertising attitudes than rational appeal advertising for low involvement products. Emotional advertising uses feelings and values to persuade consumers, which is more effective than just presenting facts and logic. Consumers tend to pay more attention to emotional messages. This type of advertising has a positive impact on the intention to buy low involvement products. On the other hand, for high involvement products, rational advertising is more suitable. Rational advertising focuses on providing information about the product's practicality, usefulness, and facts, which consumers need to make an informed decision before buying. (Akbari 2015)

The study aimed to investigate the impact of advertising on consumer price sensitivity for low involvement products such as liquid detergents and yogurt. The findings indicate that advertising increases product differentiation, reducing consumers' sensitivity to price for the advertised brands. Moreover, the study revealed that brands differ in their response to advertising, with those that are less likely to be compared with other products benefiting more from increased advertising. The study's results were consistent for both product categories, liquid detergents, and yogurt. (Papatla 1995)

Mela argues that advertising has a long-term effect, reducing the price sensitivity of consumers, particularly non-loyal ones, and decreasing the size of the non-loyal consumer segment. However, advertising has different effects on loyal and non-loyal consumers. It reduces the price sensitivity of loyal consumers while non-loyal consumers tend to focus even more on prices. On the other hand, discounts or sales increase the price sensitivity of both loyal and non-

loyal consumers in the long run. Regular use of sales or discounts trains consumers, especially non-loyal ones, to seek deals in the market. (Mela, et al 1997). Shamout's study found that promotional tactics such as offering samples, price discounts, and "buy one, get one free" deals are effective in boosting sales during the promotion period. These tactics are useful in encouraging consumers to purchase promoted products. (Shamout 2016)

In the context of low-involvement products, specifically food, consumers can exhibit both price sensitivity and habitual buying behavior. A study conducted in 1993 revealed that consumers tend to purchase food from the same store on a regular basis, without actively seeking out lower prices at alternative retailers. However, if motivated by cost savings, consumers may seek out cheaper prices elsewhere. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumers can demonstrate both a tendency towards habitual buying behavior and price sensitivity, depending on their motivation and circumstances. (Kujala & Johnson 1993)

The income level of consumers is an important variable in determining their price sensitivity. A study conducted in Malaysia investigated the reaction of low-income consumers to low involvement products and found that consumers with lower income tend to make purchases based on habitual buying behavior. These consumers do not exhibit strong brand preferences and do not view price as a reliable indicator of product quality. Due to their price sensitivity, the primary motivation for their purchase decisions is the value for money they receive. As a result, they are more likely to change their buying behavior in response to sales, discounts, and coupons. (Gbadamosi 2009)

When making purchasing decisions, low-income consumers are guided by their income and product prices, which plays a significant role in their buying behavior. Research has shown that low-income consumers tend to buy private label products, as they perceive them to have similar quality to national label products, or they prioritize price over quality differences. Where low-income consumers take more time to think and compare prices. Additionally, low-income consumers have higher price elasticities of demand, meaning they are more responsive to price changes, and they purchase the least expensive products within a given product category. (June, et al 1994)

Moreover, addiction also plays a significant role in price sensitivity, particularly in the case of smokers. A study conducted in Taiwan found that higher cigarette prices usually lead to lower cigarette consumption, except for the lightest smokers. Interestingly, the biggest reductions in smoking were seen among heavy smokers, suggesting that taxation could be an effective way

to reduce smoking among them. Conversely, light smokers are less affected by price increases because cigarettes make up a small part of their spending. (Chen, et al 2013).

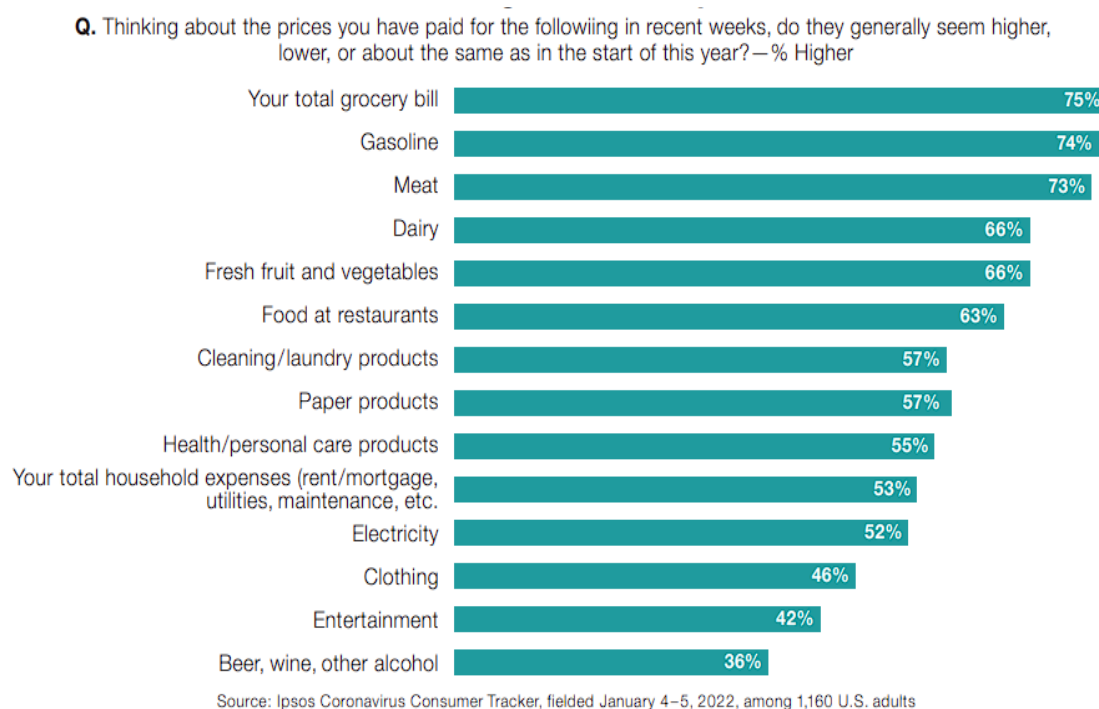
In addition to cigarettes, the effects of pricing on consumer behavior have also been observed in the context of alcohol. A study conducted in Switzerland investigated the impact of lower alcohol prices on consumption and found that a decrease in price led to an increase in alcohol consumption. The study's authors recommended that the government implement policies that increase alcohol prices in order to reduce consumption. This suggests that pricing is a key factor in determining consumer behavior and can have significant effects on consumption patterns. (Kou, et al 2003)

In 2002, a group of researchers, Tülin Erdem, Joffre Swait, and Jordan Louviere, conducted a study that delved into the price sensitivity of consumers in relation to products that require different levels of involvement. The study focused on examining high and low involvement products, which are products that require varying degrees of consumer engagement. Products such as personal computers and jeans were considered high involvement products because they require significant consumer input, while products like frozen concentrated juice and shampoo were classified as low involvement products because they require minimal consumer engagement. (Erdem, et al 2002).

A study conducted in 2009 found evidence supporting the previous claim regarding the impact of consumer involvement on price sensitivity. The study concluded that the level of involvement plays a significant role in determining whether a consumer is price sensitive or not. When it comes to highly involved products, consumers tend to see more differences among brands, and as a result, they become more loyal to specific brands and less sensitive to price. In contrast, for low involvement products, consumers tend to see fewer differences among brands and therefore, are less loyal to a specific brand, which makes them more price sensitive. This implies that consumer involvement is an important factor in determining price sensitivity. (Ramirez, et al 2009)

A new study conducted by Andrew Buss and Wendy Wallner in 2022 examined how inflation affects American households and found that it has a significant impact on consumer spending and shopping behaviors. The study revealed that 80% of consumers expect to modify their shopping behavior if inflation persists. Increasing prices result in consumers buying fewer things, but most of them will look for lower-priced items (35%), seek out products on promotion

(42%), and shift to private label products (26%). The study also showed that the products most affected by inflation are usually those purchased through habitual buying behavior. The highest expenditures were on groceries, which saw a 75% increase from last year, followed by gasoline at 74%, meat at 73%, and dairy at 66%. (Buss. & Wallner. 2022) as show in the figure 3 below



4. Figure inflation effect on consumer (Buss & Wallner 2022)

### **3. Material and Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research method**

In this research paper there are two methods that are used in order to collect the data and analyse the results:

- Quantitative research
- Qualitative research

Quantitative research is a type of exploratory research that seeks to investigate into the meaning and experiences that underpin a particular phenomenon or behavior. It is a methodology that involves the collection of non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, or open-ended survey responses. These techniques enable the researcher to gather responses to questions that are based on the reflection by the respondents on their expression of emotions and experiences on the topic. Qualitative research on the other hand is particularly useful when dealing with complex phenomena that are difficult to quantify or measure. It allows the researcher to explore the nuances and subtleties of a particular phenomenon or behavior, and to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of those involved. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on statistical analysis and numerical data, qualitative research focuses on interpreting the meaning and context of the data collected. (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015)

In this research, a quantitative research method is used to quantify general experiences, buying behavior and opinion of the respondents toward habitual buying behavior, while the qualitative research is used to collect information that includes respondent age, level of income, spending habits and shopping frequency.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in this study is particularly beneficial as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior. By combining the strengths of both approaches, I can generate high-quality data that provides valuable insights into the factors that influence habitual buying behavior. Such as, the quantitative data can be used to identify broad factors or patterns, while the qualitative data can be used to explore the underlying reasons for these factors or patterns.

#### **3.2 Sample group**

The main purpose of the study is to examining consumer behavior in low-involvement products: the role of habitual buying behavior among the university students. The research included a

sample population that varies between university students from different educational institution of universities and adults in Hungary and Laos.

### **3.3 Data collection**

In the world of research, the methods used to collect data can have a significant impact on the quality and usefulness of the resulting information. In this particular study, I have chosen to utilize an online questionnaire to gather primary data from a sample of respondents.

One of the key advantages of an online questionnaire is its ability to provide anonymity to the respondents. This can encourage more honest and accurate responses, as respondents may be more willing to share sensitive or personal information when they are not required to provide identifying details. Additionally, the online format of the questionnaire makes it easily accessible to a wider audience, as respondents can complete it from anywhere with an internet connection.

The online questionnaire used in this study was conducted over a four-day period from the 26th to the 29th of April 2023. This relatively short time frame was chosen to ensure that the data collected was timely and relevant. To reach a larger audience, the survey was shared through various social media platforms, including Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp groups. This allowed for a wider range of potential respondents to access the survey and provide their insights.

Once the data was collected, it was downloaded from Google Sheets and exported to an Excel file for analysis. The decision to use Excel was based on my proficiency in the program, which made it easier to analyze the data. All the data presented in the article was analyzed using Excel, with the results interpreted by the author after careful analysis.

While online questionnaires can be a cost-efficient and affordable way of collecting data, it is important to recognize that there are limitations to this method. For example, the sample of respondents may not be representative of the population as a whole, as those who choose to respond may have different characteristics or experiences than those who do not. Additionally, online questionnaires may suffer from issues of response bias, as respondents may not provide accurate or complete information.

Despite these limitations, the use of an online questionnaire in this study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence purchasing behavior. By collecting data from a wide range of respondents, the author was able to identify common patterns and factors in consumer



behavior, providing useful understanding for consumers to allow them make a better buying decision.

### **3.4 Construction of survey questionnaire**

The survey consist of 22 questions and was composed of 3 parts. The survey asked about consumer perspective and based on consumer experience, opinion and how consumer make decision when it comes to habitual buying behavior specially personal care product (toothpaste) and groceries. the survey aimed to understand how price increased affect consumer behavior.

#### **Consumer buying behavior**

1. how many time do you go to grocery stor or supermarket in a week?
2. how much money do you usually spend during a single trip to a store or supermarket?
3. what types of items do you typically purchase during a shopping trip in a store or supermarket?
4. do you usually make a shopping list before going to the store or supermarket?
5. have you noticed any price increases in groceries (cooking oil,salt,egg...) in the last 6 months?
6. if yes, how have these price increases affected your purchasing behavior?
7. do you remember since when you use the same brand of toothpaste?
8. have you noticed any price increase in personal care products (shampoo, toothpaste) in the last 6 months?
9. if yes, how have these price increase affected your purchasing behavior?

The purpose of these questions is to explore consumer behavior when engaging in habitual buying patterns and examine how price increases may impact their purchasing decisions.

#### **Likert 5 point scale**

10. I often buy the same brand of a product repeatedly.
11. Convenience is an important factor in my buying decisions.
12. price significantly influences my decisions to buy a product repeatedly.
13. perceived of quality of a product influences my habitual buying behavior.
14. advertising and marketing influence my habitual buying behavior.
15. the opinion of my friends, family influence my habitual buying behavior.

16. my previous experience with a product influences my habitual buying behavior.

The purpose of these questions is to identify the factors that influence consumers to repeatedly purchase a product.

#### Personal information

17. gender

18. age

19. what is your employment status?

20. can you give me a general idea of your income range?

### 3.5 Method for analyzing data

#### Tschuprow's T

To investigate the correlation between the frequency of shopping trips per week and income level of consumers, as well as the correlation between gender and the use of shopping list during shopping trips, I decided to utilize Tschuprow's T as a statistical tool. Furthermore, I also sought to explore the correlation between the use of shopping list and frequency of shopping trips per week. By using Tschuprow's T, I aimed to identify any potential correlations between these variables and determine the strength of these relationships. (Schlegel 2020)

#### Formula:

$i$  = number of rows

$j$  = number of columns

$F_{ij}$  = real frequency

$F_{ij}^{\#}$  = suppose frequency

$n$  = number of samples

1. for an  $c \times r$  contingency table with  $c$  rows and  $r$  columns

$$F_i = \sum_{j=1}^c f_{ij} \text{ and } F_j = \sum_{i=1}^r f_{ij}.$$

2. suppose frequency equal

$$F_{ij}^{\#} = \frac{f_i \times f_j}{n}$$

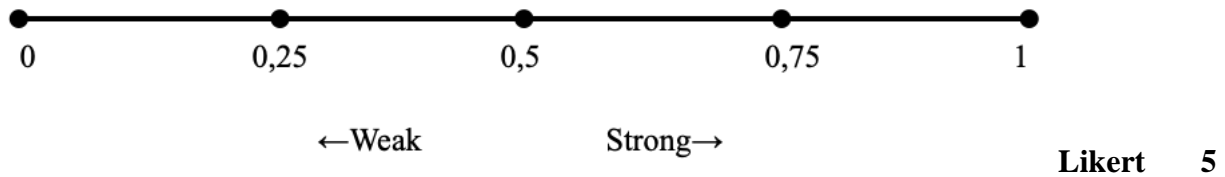
3. Then the mean square contingency is given as:

$$\lambda^2 = \frac{(F_{ij} - F_{ij}^{\#})^2}{F_{ij}^{\#}}$$

4. And Tschuprow's  $T$  as:

$$T = \sqrt{\frac{\lambda^2}{n \cdot (i-1) \cdot (j-1)}}$$

5. measurement of the correlation



**point scale**

to interpetate level of how respondet agree or disagree with a statement I use the likert 5 point scale to estimate the result.

Likert scale description	Likert scale	Likert scale interval
Strongly disagree	1	1.00-1.80
Disagree	2	1.81-2.60
Neutral	3	2.61-3.40
Agree	4	3.41-4.20
Strongly agree	5	4.21-5.00

2. Table Qualitative Interpretation of 5-Point Likert Scale Measurements (Cobern, W., et al 2020)

Formula:  $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$

$\bar{x}$ = mean

**n= number of sample.**

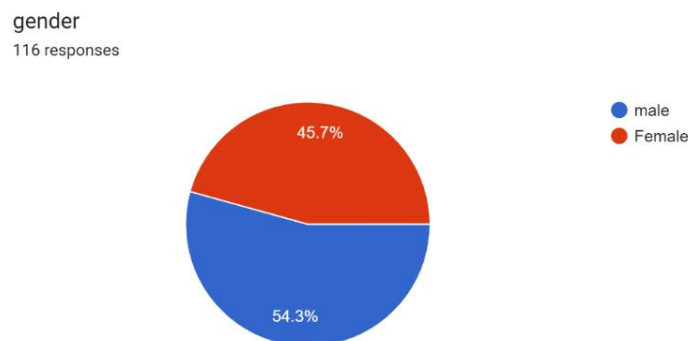
## 4. Result and Evaluation

### 4.1 Composition of sample

Characteristics	Survey
Sample size	116
method of gathering data	Google online survey

3. Table Composition of survey (source: own research)

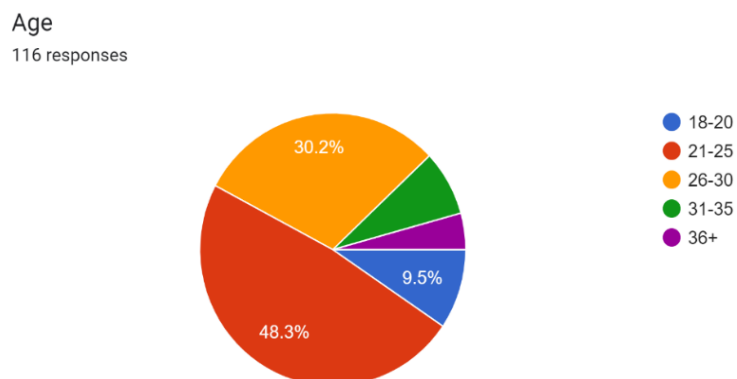
### Gender



5. Figure Gender (source: own research)

Figure 5 illustrates the gender distribution of respondents. Out of a total of 116 participants, 63 individuals (54.3%) identified as male, and 53 individuals (45.7%) identified as female.

### Age



6. Figure Age (source: own research)

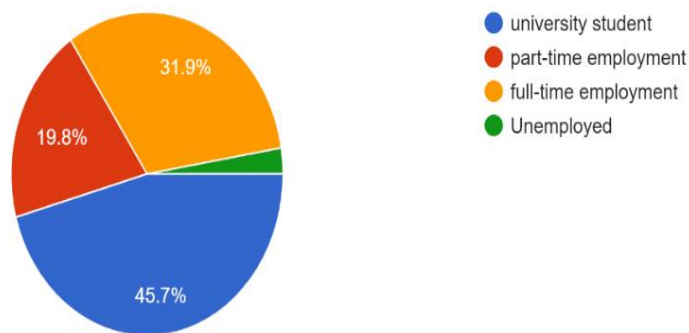
Figure 6 shows the ages of the 116 respondents. Here is a breakdown of the age groups:

- 11 people (9.5%) were between 18-20 years old.
- 56 people (48.3%) were between 21-25 years old.
- 35 people (30.2%) were between 26-30 years old.
- 9 people (7.8%) were between 31-35 years old.
- 5 people (4.3%) were older than 36 years old.

## Occupation

what is your employment status?

116 responses



7. Figure occupation (source: own research)

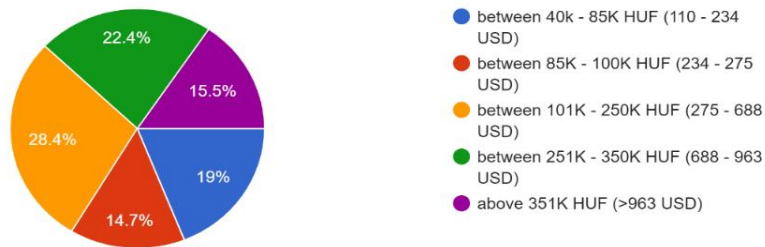
Figure 7 shows the occupation of the 116 respondents. Here is the breakdown of the occupation:

- 53 people (45.7%) are university students.
- 23 people (19.8%) are part-time employment.
- 37 people (31.9%) are full-time employment.

3 people (2.6%) are unemployed.

## Level of income

Can you give me a general idea of your income range?  
116 responses



8. Figure level of income (source: own research)

note: 1 USD=363 HUF in 20th January 2023([US Dollar to Hungarian Forint Exchange Rate Chart | Xe](#))

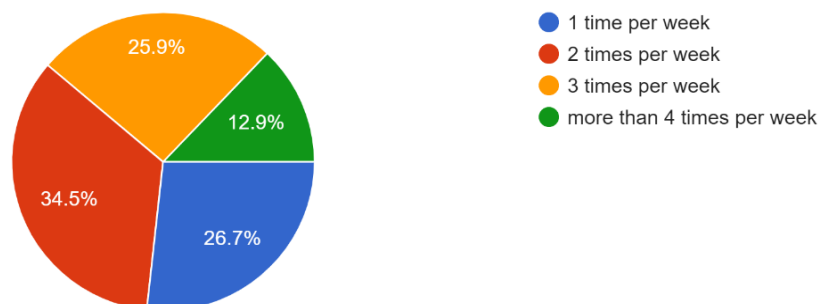
Figure 8 shows the level of income range of the 116 respondents. Here is the break down:

- 22 people (19%) have the income range between 40K to 85K HUF
- 17 people (14.7%) have the income range between 85K to 100K HUF
- 33 people (28.4%) have the income range between 101K to 250K HUF
- 26 people (22.4%) have the income range between 252K to 350K HUF
- 18 people (15.5%) have the income range from 351K

#### 4.2. Consumer Behavior and Repeat Purchases: An Analysis of Habitual Buying.

##### Shopping frequency.

How many times do you go to grocery store or supermarket in a week?  
116 responses



9. Figure shopping frequency (source: own research)

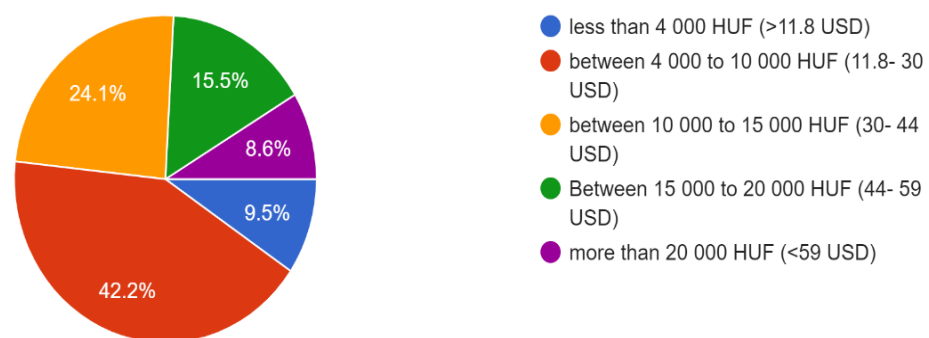
Figure 9 illustrates the shopping frequency of the 116 respondents. Here is the break down:

- 31 people (26.7%) go to shopping 1 time per week.
- 40 people (34.5%) go to shopping 2 times per week.
- 30 people (25.9%) go to shopping 3 time per week.
- 15 people (12.9%) go to shopping 4 time or more than 4 times per week.

### Money Spent in a Trip

How much money do you usually spend during a single trip to a store or supermarket?

116 responses



*10. Figure Money spent in a trip (source: own research)*

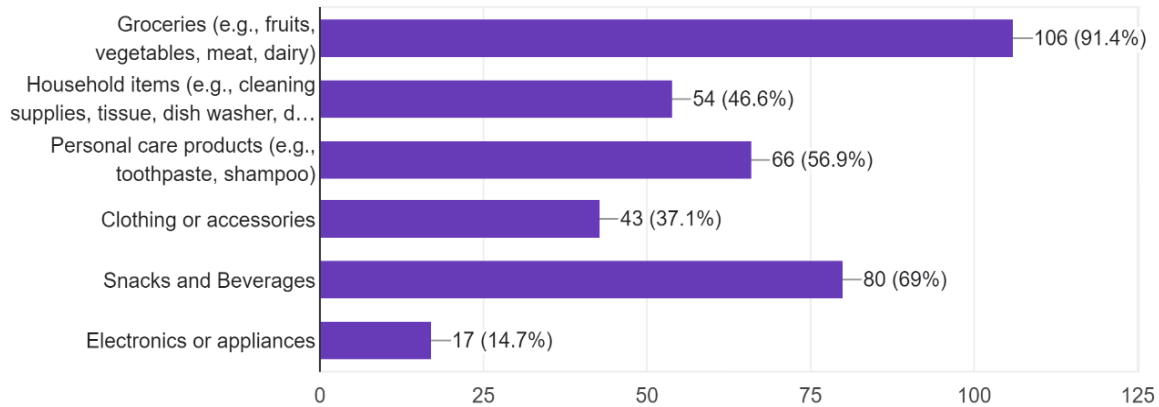
Figure 10 illustrates money spent in a trip of the 11 respondents. Here is the breakdown:

- 11 people (9.5%) spent less than 4 000 HUF.
- 49 people (42.2%) spent 4 000 to 10 000 HUF.
- 28 people (24.1%) spent 10 000 to 15 000 HUF.
- 18 people (15.5%) spent 15 000 to 20 000 HUF.
- 10 people (8.6%) spent more than 20 000 HUF

### Putting It in the Basket: Examining Grocery Shopping Product Preferences

What types of items do you typically purchase during a shopping trip in a store or supermarket?  
(Select all that apply)

116 responses



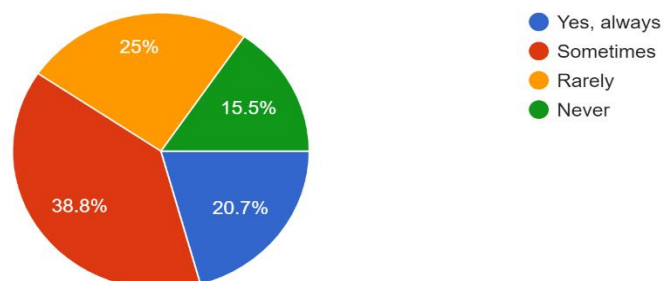
**11.** Figure products that respondents put in their basket (source: own research)

Figure 11 reveals that the majority of people tend to buy groceries (such as fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy) during their shopping trips, with 91.4% of participants reporting such purchases. Snacks and beverages were the second most commonly purchased items at 69%, followed by personal care products (such as toothpaste and shampoo) at 57.4%, household items (including cleaning supplies, tissues, and dishwasher detergent) at 47%, and electronics or appliances being the least commonly purchased items at 14.8%.

## Shopping list

Do you usually make a shopping list before going to the store or supermarket?

116 responses



**12.** Figure with or without shopping list (source: own research)



Figure 12 illustrates how often consumers use shopping for the 116 respondents. Here is the breakdown:

- 24 people (20.7%) always shopping with shopping list.
- 45 people (38.8%) use shopping sometimes.
- 29 people (25%) rarely use shopping list.
- 18 people (15.5%) never use shopping list.

#### **Brand loyalty to toothpaste.**

	number of people	percent
less than 1 year	<b>26</b>	<b>22.4%</b>
1 to 2 years	<b>32</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
3 to 5 years	<b>25</b>	<b>21.6%</b>
6 to 10 years	<b>11</b>	<b>9.5%</b>
more than 10 years	<b>8</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
I don't remember	<b>14</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

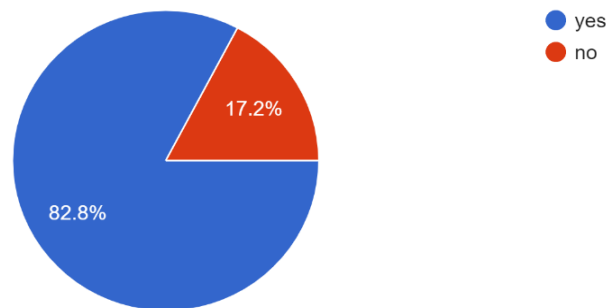
*4. Table how long do you use the same brand of toothpaste. (source: own research)*

According to the data presented in Table 5, it is evident that the majority of the participants, 78 individuals or 71%, have been using the same toothpaste brand for an extended period of time, ranging from one year to more than a decade. These findings highlight the impact of habit on consumer behavior, as evidenced by the participants' loyalty to a particular brand of toothpaste for their personal care needs.

#### **Analyzing Consumer Awareness of Increasing Prices.**

Have you noticed any price increases in groceries (cooking oil, salt, egg...) in the last 6 months?

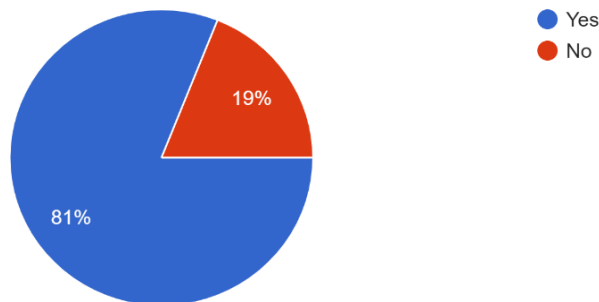
116 responses



13. Figure awareness in groceries (source: own research)

Have you noticed any price increases in personal care products (shampoo, toothpaste) in the last 6 months?

116 responses



14. Figure awareness in personal cleaning products (source: own research)

5

According to 13 and 14, the majority of consumers were aware of price increases in both groceries (82.8%) and personal care products (81%). A small minority of consumers were unaware of price increases in groceries (17.2%) and personal care products (19%).

### Price Increases and Consumer Behavior

if yes, how have these price increases affected your purchasing behavior?

116 responses



15. Figure Consumer reaction to price increases in groceries (source: own research)

Data from the Figure 15 indicates that 25.9% of consumers switch to a cheaper product when the price increases, 24.1% buy smaller sizes or quantities, 28.4% are not affected by the price increase, 16.4% shop less frequently, and only 5.1% do not notice any price increase.

if yes, how have these price increases affected your purchasing behavior?

116 responses



16. Figure Consumer reaction to price increases in personal care products (source: own research)

According to figure 16, 17.2% of consumer switch to a cheaper product when the price increases, 20.7% buy smaller size or quantities but surprisingly 43.1% did not affected by price increase, 13.8% shop less frequently and 5.1% did not notice any price increase.

#### **4.3. Factor influencing Consumers' Decision-Making Processes in Habitual Buying Behavior Using Likert Scale**

The Likert 5-point scale has become a widely used method in survey research to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement. This method has been proven to be highly effective in identifying respondents' attitudes and opinions on a variety of topics. In fact, it has become a standard tool in social science research and is regularly used in studies across different fields, including psychology, economics, marketing, and sociology. (Joshi, A., et al 2015)

The Likert 5-point scale consists of a statement followed by five response options that range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Respondents are asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement. The responses are then assigned numerical values, with the lowest score representing strong disagreement and the highest score representing strong agreement. The scores are then used to calculate a mean score, which indicates the level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. (Joshi, A., et al 2015)

In my study, I chose to use the Likert 5-point scale to identify the most significant factor influencing consumer behavior when engaging in habitual buying behavior. I believe that this method provides a reliable and valid way to measure consumer attitudes and opinions, and it has been shown to produce consistent results across a range of different studies.

By using the Likert 5-point scale, I was able to gather data on how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed with statements about their buying behavior, which allowed me to identify the most influential factors. This information can be used to develop strategies that help companies to better understand consumer behavior and to tailor their marketing efforts accordingly.

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Overall, the Likert 5-point scale is an effective and widely used method for measuring attitudes and opinions in survey research. It provides a simple and easy-to-use way for respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement, and it has been shown to produce reliable and valid results in a variety of different settings. Question 10 I often buy the same brand of a product repeatedly.

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	0	0%
disagree (2)	2	1.7%
neutral (3)	18	15.5%
agree (4)	61	52.6%

strongly agree (5)	35	30.2%
total	116	100%

6. Table how likely consumer to buy the same product (source: own research)

$$\text{Mean} = (1*0) + (2*2) + (3*18) + (4*61) + (5*35) / 116 = 4.1$$

According to the mean value of 4.1, which falls within the "agree" interval on the Likert scale, it can be concluded that the respondents agree with the statement that they repeatedly purchase the same brand of a product.

Question 11 Convenience is an important factor in my buying decisions.		
	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	0	0%
disagree (2)	5	4.3%
neutral (3)	28	24.1%
agree (4)	49	42.2%
strongly agree (5)	34	29.3%
total	116	100%

7. Table do consumer considered convenience when making buying decision (source: own research)

$$\text{Mean} = (1*0) + (2*5) + (3*28) + (4*49) + (5*34) / 116 = 3.96$$

According to the mean value of 3.96, which falls within the "agree" interval on the Likert scale, it shows that convenience holds significant for consumers in their buying decision. Question 12 Price significantly influences my decisions to buy a product repeatedly.

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	0	0%
disagree (2)	6	5.2%
neutral (3)	22	19%
agree (4)	44	37.9%
strongly agree (5)	44	37.9%
total	116	100%

8. Table How price affects consumer behavior. (Source: own research)

$$\text{Mean} = (1*0) + (2*6) + (3*22) + (4*44) + (5*44) / 116 = 4.08$$

According to the mean value of 4.08, which falls within the "agree" interval on the Likert scale,

It means that consumers look at price and compare the price of a product before they make their buying decision.

Question 13 Perceived of quality of a product influences my habitual buying behavior.		
	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	1	0.9%
disagree (2)	4	3.4%
neutral (3)	21	18.1%
agree (4)	54	46.6%
strongly agree (5)	36	31%
total	116	100%

9. Table quality of a product (source: own research)

$$\text{Mean} = (1 \times 0) + (2 \times 4) + (3 \times 21) + (4 \times 54) + (5 \times 36) / 116 = 4.03$$

According to the mean value of 4.03, which falls within the "agree" interval on the Likert scale, The result shows that the majority of respondents agreed that the quality of a product is an important consideration when making a purchase.

Question 14 Advertising and marketing influence my habitual buying behavior.		
	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	14	12.1%
disagree (2)	45	38.8%
neutral (3)	26	22.4%
agree (4)	22	19%
strongly agree (5)	9	7.8%
total	116	100%

10. Table Advertising and marketing ( source:own survey)

$$\text{Mean} = (1 \times 14) + (2 \times 45) + (3 \times 26) + (4 \times 22) + (5 \times 9) / 116 = 2.71$$

According to the mean value of 2.71, which falls within the "Neutral" interval on the Likert scale, the findings indicate that there is a neutral relationship between advertising and marketing and consumer behavior. This implies that consumers are not significantly swayed by advertising and marketing strategies in their decision-making process to purchase a product.

Question 15 The opinion of my friends, family influence my habitual buying behavior.		
--	--	--

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	4	3.4%
disagree (2)	13	11.2%
neutral (3)	19	16.4%
agree (4)	38	32.8%
strongly agree (5)	42	36.2%
total	116	100%

*11. Table opinion of friends and family (source: own research)*

$$\text{Mean} = (1 \times 4) + (2 \times 13) + (3 \times 19) + (4 \times 38) + (5 \times 42) / 116 = 3.87$$

According to the mean value of 3.87, which falls within the "agree" interval on the Likert scale,

The data obtained from the survey indicates that consumers are more likely to take into account the opinions of their friends and family when they make a decision to buy a product.

Question 16 My previous experience with a product influences my habitual buying behavior.

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree (1)	0	0%
disagree (2)	3	2.6%
neutral (3)	16	13.8%
agree (4)	53	45.7%
strongly agree (5)	44	37.9%
total	116	100%

*12. Table previous experience with product (source: own research)*

$$\text{Mean} = (1 \times 0) + (2 \times 3) + (3 \times 16) + (4 \times 53) + (5 \times 44) / 116 = 4.18$$

According to the mean value of 4.18, which falls within the "agree" interval on the Likert scale,

It shows that the respondents' previous experience with a product plays a significant role in influencing their decision to purchase the same product again.

### **Summarize the Likert scale in one table.**

list of statements	mean	result
I often buy the same brand of a product repeatedly	4.1	agree
Convenience is an important factor in my buying decision	3.9	agree
price significantly influences my decisions to buy a product repeatedly.	4.08	agree

perceived quality of a product influences my habitual buying behavior.	4.03	agree
advertising and marketing influence my habitual buying behavior.	2.71	neutral
the opinion of my friends, family influence my habitual buying behavior.	3.87	agree
my previous experience with a product influences my habitual buying behavior.	4.18	agree

---

13. Table the Likert scale in one table.(source: own research)

According to the findings of this study, the majority of the respondents agreed that they often buy the same brand of a product repeatedly, with a score of 4.1 out of 5 on the Likert scale. This indicates that brand loyalty is a significant factor that influences habitual buying behavior. Customers tend to stick to a particular brand that they trust and are familiar with, rather than taking a chance with a new brand.

Furthermore, convenience also plays an important role in the buying decision, as indicated by a score of 3.9 on the Likert scale. This suggests that customers prefer products that are easily accessible, readily available, and require minimal effort to purchase. In today's fast-paced lifestyle, customers are always looking for ways to save time and effort, which is why convenience is such an important factor.

Price is another significant factor that influences habitual buying behavior, as confirmed by a score of 4.08 on the Likert scale. This suggests that customers are price-sensitive and are always looking for a good deal. A lower price can often sway customers into buying a particular product or brand, even if they are not particularly loyal to it.

The perceived quality of a product is also an important factor that influences habitual buying behavior, with a score of 4.03 on the Likert scale. This indicates that customers place a high value on the quality of a product, and they are more likely to buy a product repeatedly if they perceive it to be of high quality.

Interestingly, advertising and marketing only received a neutral score of 2.71 on the Likert scale, suggesting that they do not have a significant impact on habitual buying behavior. This finding is somewhat surprising, given the enormous amount of money that companies spend on advertising and marketing campaigns.

The opinion of friends and family members is also a factor that influences habitual buying behavior, as indicated by a score of 3.87 on the Likert scale. This suggests that customers often seek advice and recommendations from their social circle before making a purchase decision.



Finally, the respondents also indicated that their previous experience with a product influences their habitual buying behavior, with a score of 4.18 on the Likert scale. This confirms that customers are more likely to buy a product repeatedly if they have had a positive experience with it in the past.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence habitual buying behavior.

#### 4.4. relationship between level of income and shopping trips

##### Frequency of shopping per week

Level of income	1 time	2 times	3 times	more than 4 times	Sum	
	40k- 85k HUF	11	5	4	2	22
	85k- 100k HUF	4	9	3	1	17
	101K-250k HUF	9	11	9	4	33
	251K-350k HUF	3	12	8	3	26
	above 351k HUF	4	3	6	5	18
	sum	31	40	30	15	

14. Table the real frequency of income level and trip to a store.(source: own research)

n= 116

$F_{ij}^{\#} = \frac{f_i \times f_j}{n}$			
5.87	7.58	5.68	2.84
4.54	5.86	4.39	2.19
8.81	11.37	8.53	4.26
6.94	8.96	6.72	3.36
4.81	6.20	4.65	2.32
15. Table 2nd step of Tschuprow's T (source: own research) $\lambda^2 = \frac{(F_{ij} - F_{ij}^{\#})^2}{F_{ij}^{\#}}$			
4.45	0.88	0.50	0.25
0.064	1.67	0.44	0.65
0.003	0.012	0.025	0.016

2.24	1.02	0.24	0.03
0.13	1.65	0.38	3.06

16. Table result of T (source: own research)

$$\lambda^2 = 17.79 \quad T=0.11$$

The findings of the study (T=0.11) reveal that there exists a weak or no correlation between an individual's level of income and their shopping frequency. In other words, the results suggest that consumers do not necessarily base their shopping behavior solely on their income level. This implies that other factors, such as personal preferences, convenience, and availability of products, may play a more significant role in determining shopping behavior.

#### 4.5. Correlation trip to store and shopping list

Let's explore if there is a correlation between the frequency of trips to the store and the use of a shopping list by using statistical method of Tschuprow's T.

		the use of shopping list				
		always	sometimes	rarely	never	sum
Shopping frequency per week	1 time	10	5	8	8	31
	2 times	10	16	11	3	40
	3 times	2	19	6	3	30
	more than 4 times	2	5	4	4	15
sum		24	45	29	18	

17. Table shopping frequency and the use of shopping list. (Source: own research)

$F_{ij}^{\#} = \frac{f_i \times f_j}{n}$			
6.41	12.02	7.75	4.81
8.72	15.51	10	6.2
6.20	11.63	7.5	4.65
3.1	5.81	3.75	2.32

18. Table 2nd step of Tschuprow's T (source: own research)

$\lambda^2 = \frac{(F_{ij} - F_{ij}^{\#})^2}{F_{ij}^{\#}}$			
2	4.1	0.008	2.11
0.35	0.015	0.1	1.65
2.85	4.65	0.3	0.58
0.39	0.11	0.016	1.2

19. Table result of T (source: own research)

$$\lambda^2 = 20.48 \quad T=0.14$$

According to the study's results, which show a T value of 0.14, there is a very weak correlation between the frequency of shopping trips and the use of shopping lists. This suggests that the decision to use a shopping list is a personal preference that varies between individuals. While some people may find shopping lists helpful as a memory aid, others may not see them as necessary when preparing for a shopping trip. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of a shopping list is not necessarily a universal practice among all consumers.

#### 4.6. Correlation between using of the shopping list and gender

the use of shopping list	Gender			
		male	female	sum
	always	10	14	24
	sometimes	24	21	45
	rarely	18	11	29
	never	11	7	18
	sum	63	53	

20. Table use of shopping list and gender (source: own research)

$F_{ij}^{\#} = \frac{f_i \times f_j}{n}$	
13.03	10.96
24.43	20.56
15.75	13.25

9.77	8.22
------	------

21. Table 2nd step of Tschuprow's T (source: own research)

$\lambda^2 = \frac{(F_{ij} - F_{ij\#})^2}{F_{ij\#}}$	
0.7	0.83
0.007	0.009
0.32	0.38
0.15	0.18

22. Table result of T (source: own research)

$$\lambda^2 = 2.6 \quad T=0.08$$

The findings (T=0.08) indicate that there is no gender-based correlation in the use of shopping lists. Both males and females exhibit similar behaviors, suggesting that gender does not influence the use of shopping lists in consumer buying decisions.

## **5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Research finding**

My study gathered data from 116 participants comprising university students and young adults from Hungary and Laos, with the aim of exploring the most frequently purchased products by consumers when they visit stores or supermarkets. The results indicate that grocery items such as fruits, vegetables, and meat are purchased almost 91.4% of the time, followed by snacks and beverages at 69%, personal care products at 56.9%, and household items at 46.6% of the time.

From these findings, it can be concluded that stores and supermarkets play a crucial role in providing consumers with their low-involvement product needs. Consumers typically visit these places to purchase the products they need on a regular basis, such as groceries and personal care items. The results highlight the importance of stores and supermarkets as the go-to destination for consumers to purchase low-involvement products.

The majority of respondents were aware of the effect of inflation which ultimately led to an increase in prices of the products. Consequently, the buying behavior of consumers experiences a change. For instance, with regard to grocery products, almost two-thirds of consumers switched to cheaper brands, purchased smaller quantities, or choose to shop less frequently. Only one third of the consumers continued with their previous buying behavior. However, the same cannot be said for personal care products, where only half of respondents changed their buying behavior, while the other half remained unchanged. This could be due to the familiarity of the consumer with the product, and their reluctance to try out a new brand. Even if the prices of the product increase, consumers tend to stick with the same brand.

These findings shed light on the consumer behavior in the face of inflation and price changes in different product categories. Consumers tend to react differently to price changes based on the type of product. (Buss & Wallner 2022)

The results obtained from the Likert 5-point scale statements indicate that consumers take into consideration various factors when making decisions to purchase low-involvement products. Factors like habit of consumer, convenience, price, quality, previous experience, and word of mouth play a crucial role in the buying decision of low involvement products. However, consumers tend to remain neutral towards advertising and marketing for such products.

Based on the data, there is no correlation between the income level of respondents and their frequency of store trips. It appears that respondents purchase products whenever they feel the need to do so. This pattern is also evident in the use of shopping lists and the frequency of shopping trips. While some consumers find shopping lists to be a useful tool for remembering what to buy, others may not consider them necessary. As such, it can be concluded that the use of a shopping list is not a universal practice among all consumers.

Furthermore, the study found no significant correlation between gender and the use of a shopping list. This indicates that both men and women have similar attitudes towards using a shopping list when it comes to their shopping behavior. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the underlying factors that influence the use of shopping lists, as it cannot be simply attributed to gender alone.

## **5.2. Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that stores and supermarkets should prioritize the availability and affordability of grocery and personal care products, as these are the most frequently purchased items by consumers. It is important to take into account the changing buying behavior of consumers during times of inflation, and to offer options that are affordable and meet the needs of consumers. Additionally, it is important for companies to understand the various factors that influence the buying decision of consumers for low-involvement products, and to tailor their marketing strategies accordingly. This could involve emphasizing convenience, quality, and positive word of mouth.

One possible recommendation for further study in the area of consumer behavior for low-involvement products is to investigate the impact of packaging on consumer behavior. Although the present study found that factors such as habit, convenience, price, quality, and previous experience with a product play a crucial role in low-involvement purchasing decisions, the study did not examine the influence of packaging on consumer behavior.

Packaging is an important factor that can influence a consumer's perception and purchasing decisions. The color, shape, and design of a product's packaging can all impact a consumer's perception of the product, and ultimately, their decision to purchase it. For example, bright colors and unique designs may attract a consumer's attention and increase their interest in a product, while plain or unremarkable packaging may lead a consumer to overlook a product or perceive it as low-quality.

Furthermore, continuing with the study of sensory aspects of consumer behavior in the area of low-involvement products may be beneficial. This could involve investigating how sensory factors such as taste, smell, and texture influence consumer behavior in relation to low-involvement products. Understanding how sensory factors impact consumer behavior can help companies develop more effective marketing strategies and product designs that appeal to consumers.

Overall, conducting further research into the impact of packaging and sensory factors on consumer behavior in low-involvement product categories could provide valuable insights into consumer decision-making processes. This, in turn, could help businesses and marketers develop more effective strategies to target and engage consumers in these product categories.

## **6. Summary**

The consumer behavior towards low involvement products has been a topic of interest for many researchers in recent years. Low involvement products refer to items that are inexpensive, frequently purchased, and require minimal decision-making effort. These products are often viewed as necessary purchases, and consumers tend to rely on habit and convenience when making their purchasing decisions. Groceries and personal care items are two examples of low involvement products that are commonly purchased by consumers.

To better understand how consumers respond to price increases in these products and the factors that influence their purchasing decisions, a research study was conducted. The aim of this study was to examine consumer behavior towards low involvement products, with a focus on groceries and personal care items. The research study collected data through an online survey of 116 participants, mainly university students and young adults from Hungary and Laos.

The survey revealed that the majority of respondents were aware of the increase in prices of their grocery and personal care products, and most consumers changed their buying behavior in response. When faced with price increases, 66.4% of respondents switched to cheaper products, bought smaller quantities, or shopped less frequently for groceries, while only 51.7% did so for personal care products. This finding suggests that consumers are more price-sensitive when it comes to groceries compared to personal care products.

The research study also found that stores and supermarkets are the primary destinations for consumers to purchase low involvement products. Consumer behavior is influenced by various factors such as habits, convenience, price, quality, opinions from friends and family, and previous experience with a product. Interestingly, the study revealed that respondents were neutral towards advertising and marketing in low involvement products, indicating that these factors do not play a significant role in influencing their purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, the use of a shopping list is not a universal practice among consumers, and they tend to purchase these products based on habit and need rather than conscious thought unless there is a change in the product itself, such as a price increase. This finding highlights the importance of understanding consumer behavior towards low involvement products to develop effective marketing strategies.

Notably, the research study revealed that 65.6% of respondents used the same brand of toothpaste for more than a year, indicating strong brand loyalty. This finding emphasizes the



importance of building brand loyalty in the low involvement product category, as consumers tend to stick with the same brand for an extended period.

In conclusion, the research study provides valuable insights into consumer behavior towards low involvement products, with a focus on groceries and personal care items. The study's findings suggest that consumers are price-sensitive when it comes to groceries and tend to rely on habit and convenience when making their purchasing decisions. The study also highlights the importance of building brand loyalty in the low involvement product category to develop effective marketing strategies.

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As a supervisor of **Obee Xaythavone** (Student's name) **D4ZW60** (Student's NEPTUN ID), I here declare that the final essay/thesis/master's thesis/portfolio<sup>1</sup> has been reviewed by me, the student was informed about the requirements of literary sources management and its legal and ethical rules.

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### Appendix 3: Student's declaration

#### DECLARATION

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Student's Neptun ID: D4ZW60

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Year of publication: 2023

Department: Business Administration and Management

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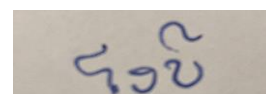
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