

# Lifestyle changes and their influence on customer behavior

## *Zmeny životného štýlu a ich vplyv na spotrebiteľské správanie*

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**Abstract:** Globalization in trade, the continual expansion of the significant European and world-wide foreign trade networks into the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe and the rise in the number of shopping and entertainment centres cause changes in consumer behavior in the Slovak, as well as in the Czech Republic. Results of the marketing researches conducted by the Slovak Agricultural University employees in Nitra and the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry employees in Brno in the Polus and Aupark shopping and entertainment centres of Bratislava and the Olympia centre of Brno Modřice in 2006 gave us some more detailed information about the social-demographic features and consumer orientation in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Shopping in shopping – entertainment centres in both countries is becoming a part of the present lifestyle, spending free time and having fun.

**Key words:** consumer behavior, shopping-entertainment centre, trade, questionnaire research

**Abstrakt:** Globalizácia v obchode, neustála expanzia významných európskych a svetových obchodných sietí do krajín strednej a východnej Európy a rast počtu nákupno-zábavných centier majú za následok zmeny v spotrebiteľskom správaní tak v Slovenskej, ako aj Českej republike. Výsledky marketingových prieskumov uskutočnených pracovníkmi Slovenskej poľnohospodárskej univerzity v Nitre a Mendlovej zemédskej a lesníckej univerzity v Brne v roku 2006 v nákupno-zábavných centrách Polus a Aupark v Bratislave a Olympia v Brne Modřiciach poskytli niektoré detailnejšie informácie o socio-demografických charakteristikách a nákupnej orientácii zákazníkov na Slovensku a v Českej republike. Nakupovanie v nákupno-zábavných centrách v oboch krajinách sa stáva súčasťou súčasného životného štýlu, trávenia voľného času a zábavy.

**Klíčové slová:** spotrebiteľské správanie, nákupno-zábavné centrum, obchod, dotazníkový prieskum

The continual expansion of West European trade chains into the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe is visible in the massive development of shopping-entertainment centres. In 2005, 7 million m<sup>2</sup> of modern floor space was concentrated in the shopping centres of Middle and Eastern Europe. The highest concentration was registered in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia. It is assumed that in the following years, their floor space will develop by 3 million m<sup>2</sup>. Perspective development is awaited in Russia, Romania and Lithuania (Drahovský 2006, Longman 1992).

According to the consultant firm Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) focusing on European research, purchasing power of population in Praha, Bratislava and Lublan is comparable to purchasing power in Madrid, Barcelona,

Lisbon and Rome. Purchasing power of the Estonian capital city Tallin and in Budapest has not reached this level yet and it is compatible with Leipzig, Athens, Valencia or Liverpool. Countries of the former Soviet union, Belegrade and Tirana exercise a very low purchasing power (Drahovský 2005).

While the newest research results point out a decrease in visits of the shopping-entertainment centres in France, Italy and other European countries (because their population starts to use their free time for other activities), the results of research conducted by the GfK agency in the Czech and Slovak Republics, as well as by the Slovak Agricultural University employees in Nitra and the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry employees in Brno in 2005 and 2006 show a rising interest in shopping centres. The cru-

cial criteria for visits are accessibility, locality and structure of the trade network.

Lately, the social and entertainment program offered to visitors has started to play a significant role. When choosing the suitable forms of entertainment, the operators of the shopping-entertainment centres look for inspiration from abroad and make these experiences suitable for the requests of Slovak and Czech customers.

The symbiosis of good quality purchase together with social meetings is a basis of raising the interest. The shopping centres have a very common structure. The centre of purchase is always a hypermarket or a big supermarket with the network of branded shops and services premises linked to it. There is a wide range of fast food stands, restaurants, coffee shops, etc. Beside the grocery stores with a wide range of goods, there is a wide network of specialized stores, where, according to the floor space, the sale of electrotechnics, branded clothes and shoes, sporting goods and many other specialized branded stores dominate.

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of the paper was to point out the current changes in the Slovak and Czech trade and their influence on consumer behavior. Operating the shopping-entertainment centres, changes in lifestyle, interest in a more effective use of free time brought new trends in shopping, entertainment and spending free time. The conducted marketing research gives the information about the segment of the shopping-entertainment centres visitors, their consumer orientation and using the facilities and services for cultural activities, sport activities and entertainment offered by the centres.

The material used to compose the paper was gained from literary resources dealing with objective problematics. The primary information was gained by the means of marketing research conducted by the Slovak Agricultural University employees in Nitra and the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry employees in Brno. The research objects were the shopping-entertainment centres Polus and Aupark in Bratislava and the Olympia in Brno Modřice. Questioning using the standardized interview technique was conducted in March and April 2006. The questionnaire had two parts. In the A part, the questions were constructed in a way to gain the basic features of respondents and in the B part to gain information about consumer behavior on the Slovak and Czech market. The gained answers were processed by the means of computer

techniques. By the means of statistics processing, we tried to point out the differences between the visits of shopping centres during the regular week and weekends. In order to do this, the Cramer's coefficient was used (Foret, Stávková 2003, Brabenec, Šarecová 2001).

## Cramer's Coefficient ( $V$ )

It is useful for comparing the multiple  $X^2$  test statistics and is generalizable across the contingency tables of varying sizes. It is not affected by sample size and therefore is very useful in situations where you suspect a statistically significant chi-square was the result of the large sample size instead of any substantive relationship between the variables. It is interpreted as a measure of the relative (strength) of an association between two variables. The coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 (perfect association). In practice, you may find that a Cramer's  $V$  of 10 provides a good minimum threshold for suggesting there is a substantive relationship between two variables (Stávková, Turčínková 2005).

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{X^2}{n(q-1)}}$$

Where:  $q$  = smaller number of rows or columns

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Changes in Slovak and Czech trade

In 1999, seven international developer companies together with two domestic investors opened premises in new centres of goods, services and entertainment sale on the same place in Bratislava. After almost two-years break, the second shopping and entertainment centres building wave began in 2005. While before this year 11 such centres with floor space over 400 000 m<sup>2</sup> were operating, this number will be doubled in 2006–2007. Besides the most active Slovak developer in 2005, who opened the Max centres in Trenčín, Poprad and Nitra, new and much larger shopping-entertainment centres will be opened in Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Nitra and other significant towns.

When buying groceries, the most visited places in the Czech Republic are the business-entertainment centres. According to the newest results of the "Shopping Center & Hypermarket 2006" research conducted by the INCOMA Research and the GfK Praha, 6 new large area shopping centres and 31 hypermarkets

were built in 2005, what is the highest number from the past up to now. Within the conducted research, 206 shopping centres were mapped in detail. It is visible that the modern shopping complexes are moved closer to the town centres in the Czech, as well as in the Slovak Republic. Four out of five shopping centres were located close to town centres. Expanding the average size of the shopping centres is another trend. The mentioned trends reflect to changes in consumer behavior according to the researches conducted in the shopping entertainment centres Polus and Aupark in Bratislava by the Slovak Agricultural University employees in Nitra and the Olympia Centre in Brno Modřice by the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry employees in Brno (Potůček 2005, Drahovský 2005, Tonkovičová 2005).

### Characteristics of shopping centres

*The Polus City Center* was opened as the first shopping-entertainment centre in Slovakia in 2000. It is located in the strategically significant town part Bratislava New City with excellent transport connection. Since its opening up to now it keeps its position of the leader of shopping in Bratislava and its surroundings. In 2001, the Polus was awarded the ICSC Maxi Award and in 2003 it was a finalist in this contest. The Polus City Center with its for rent floor space 40 100 m<sup>2</sup> has a multi-purpose utilization connecting the high quality retail, entertainment and office premises. Its surroundings offer a wide range of

leisure time activities – the Kuchajda Lake, the swimming pool area, the football stadium and the tennis court. It owns 2000 parking spaces and a parking lot for the disabled, no-barrier access and possibilities to lend a wheelchair free of charge. The network of stores, catering establishments, entertainment, sport and services facilities is shown in Table 1.

Besides, there are mobile stands : others (4), flowers, gift shop (2), fast food (1), cosmetics (2), fashion, leather haberdashery (1), other (1), GSM (1), coffee shops, confectioneries (1), watches/jewelery (1), sport (1), services – Ticket Portal (1).

*The Aupark Bratislava* is situated in the oldest public park in Europe established in 1775 which used to be a traditional culture-social and recreational place. The new urban type shopping –entertainment centre established in 2001 is linked to this tradition. The Aupark is a modern city Shoppingmall. On the for rent floor space of 42 500 m<sup>2</sup>, there are 230 retail facilities including the foodstuffs supermarket, different services facilities, catering establishments, the biggest fitness center in Slovakia and an entertainment centre offering many occasions for relaxing. The Aupark provides its visitors with fast food in the facilities of international cuisine, in stylish pubs, coffee shops and confectioneries. The customers can use 2 300 parking spaces. In 2002, a multicinema with 12 halls started to operate as well as an 8 tracks bowling room. The most modern technologies are used in the complex. The information system based on complex data collecting of the number of cars and customers coming on foot, evaluating the marketing campaigns

Table 1. The Polus City Center – stores, catering establishments, entertainment, sport and services

Stores	Catering establishments	Entertainment, sport	Services
Foodstuffs hypermarket (1)	Coffee shop/confectionery (13)	Game World	Banks (7)
Women's and men's fashion (55)	Restaurants (4)	Self video	Photo service (2)
Sport (10)	Fast food (8)	Multicinema	Grand Pharma
Electrotechnics (5)		Intropolis	Klier
Watches/Jewelery (9)		Cinema Center	Lamda Printware
Leather haberdashery (3)		Radio City	Post office
Flower and gift shops (9)			Exchange (2)
Shoes (7)			Solarium
Toys (2)			Image and Beauty Studio (2)
Cosmetics (7)			Ticket Portal
Books, jewelery, etc. (19)			Top Service
Others			Žblnk – fast clothing cleaning

Source: www.poluscitycenter.sk (2006)

Table 2. Aupark – stores, catering establishments, entertainment, sport, services

Stores	Entertainment, sport	Catering establishment	Customer service
Housing (8)	Aulandia Aqua & SPA Paradise	Coffee shop/confectionery (6)	Financial services (7)
Breeding ware (1)	Brunswick bowling	Pub, wine-room(2)	Carwash
Gift shops (6)	Igames	Restaurants (5)	Packaging service
Kids fashion (9)	Nike	Fast food(6)	Children´s room
Women´s and men´s fashion(49)	Senator Sport Roulette Club		Tailor workshop
Electro/PC/Multimedia (4)	Snooker club		Flower machine
GSM (2)	Terno Tipos		Advisory service Nezábudka
Hobby (5)	Fitness		Tailor workshop
Watches/jewelery (11)	Multicinema		Watches quick service
Toys/Children ware (5)	Palace Cinemas		Dressing-rooms
Books/paper (3)			Ticketportal
Leather/fur (3)			
Leather haberdashery/accessories (7)			
Flowers (2)			
Pharmacy (1)			
Newspaper/tobacco (2)			
Shoes (10)			
Glass (3)			
Parfumery/drug stores (7)			
Groceries (5)			
Lingerie/pantyhose (8)			
Maternity clothes (2)			

Source: www.aupark.sk (2006)

Table 3. Olympia Centre – stores, catering establishments, entertainment, sport, services

Stores (82)	Catering establishments (19)	Entertainment, sport (4)	Services (14)
Consumer goods, books, gift shops (4)	Coffee shop/confectionery (5)	Children's room	Bontonland
Fashion, accessories (32)	Pub/wine-room (4)	Palace Cinemas	Cleaning Clean Touch
Sport, hooby, leisure (9)	Restaurants (5)	PG Cyber Café	eBank
Shoes, leather haberdashery (8)	Fast food(5)	Planet Bowling	Exchange Office
Cosmetics, drug store, health (6)			Information stand
Children's world (6)			Hairdresser's Cut & Color
Furniture, household furnishings (5)			Kodak Express
Hypermarket (1)			Morava Pharmacy
Watches/Jewelery (6)			Mr.Minit
			Olympia center administration
			Valmont

Source: www.olympia-centrum.cz/brno

according to sales, up to the modular loyalty system are unique in Europe.

Table 2 shows the network of stores, catering establishments and entertainment, sport and services facilities.

In order to lure as many customers as possible, the following actions are organized during the year: the Valentine's Day with Diva Marionnaud Parfumeries, singers giving autographs, 10. Slovak squash championship, the "Mountains and city" festival, Milky Way, the biggest Children's Day in Aupark, summer Aulife issue, etc.

The shopping-entertainment centre *Olympia in Brno Modřice* was opened in 1999. The Hypernova hypermarket is the biggest renter.

Besides grocery store, the centre offers many stores with consumer goods, catering establishments, services and entertainment facilities (Table 3).

Besides, the customers are offered the ware in 11 mobile stands –Black Sun Glasses – sun and sport glasses, decorative cosmetics, Etno –Gift shop, handbags, leather haberdashery, liquers and spirits, stainless steel objects, gingerbread, products for funny bath, cell phones accessories.

The research team considered the question "Where are the customers shopping in the chosen shopping-entertainment centres in the Slovak and Czech Republics from?" to be one of the most important questions.

In the Polus and Aupark Centres in Bratislava, the customers mainly came from Bratislava (85% in the Polus, 77% in the Aupark) and also from other Slovak towns. The majority of the Olympia visitors came from Brno (55%), 40% from other Czech districts and only 5% came from abroad, mainly from Slovakia because this center is located near the highway connecting Brno and Praha or Bratislava.

Most visitors came to the centres accompanied by a spouse, partner, friends, relatives or colleagues from work (Figure 1).

The differences occurred by visiting the shopping entertainment centres during the regular week and weekends. From Monday to Friday, the visitors were coming mostly alone (34–38%) while during the weekend their share decreased significantly (by 32% in the Polus, by 77% in the Aupark, in the Olympia down to 1/5). On the contrary, the share of pairs rised (32–43%) as well as the share of other family members (27–31%).

58% of respondents visit the shopping entertainment centre Polus by car. When going to the Aupark, the means of city transport are mostly used and 20 % of visitors walk there. The Olympia is situated out of town, so it is needed to use public transport (Figure 2).

Answers to question about the amount of time spent in shopping-entertainment centres are different. While in the Aupark 45% of visitors spend 2–4 hours in average, in the Polus most respondents (50%) spend

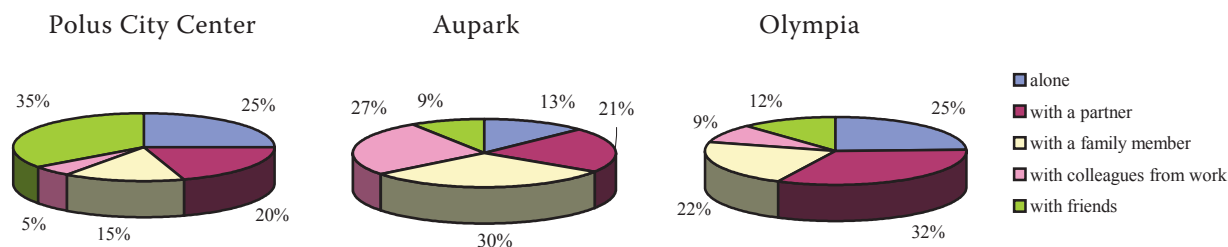


Figure 1. Polus City Center, Aupark and Olympia visitors

Source: Own research and processing

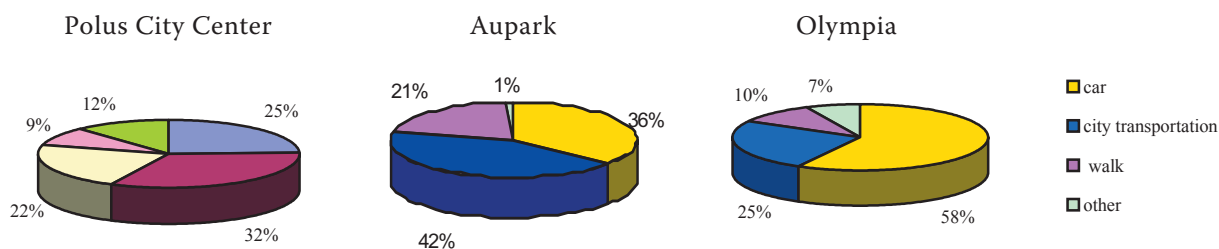


Figure 2. Used means of transportation – Polus, City Center and Aupark

Source: Own research and processing

less than one hour (Figure 3). This considerable time difference is caused by the offer of services and entertainment activities. The Aupark visitors responded that they visit this centre rather because of sport and kids entertainment facilities than because of shopping, mainly during the weekends.

In the Olympia, 1/5 of respondents spend less than 1 hour, 1/3 more than 1 hour and 14 % more than 4 hours (Figure 3).

Differences between visitors are much more visible during the regular week and weekends. (Cramer's coefficient  $V = 0.3$ ). During working days, 2/3 of visitors spend here less than 2 hours. On the contrary, 2/3 responded that during the weekends they spend there more than 2 hours. The visiting frequency of the Bratislava shopping centres was approximately the same. 20% of visitors stated that they keep coming several times a week, over 30 % keep coming once a week, 10% once in two weeks, 20% once a month and the rest stated "several times a year", "this is my first time here", etc.

5% of the Olympia visitors keep coming several times a week, 17% once a week, 24% once in two

weeks and 34% once a month. The remaining 1/5 of visitors keep coming more seldom.

The goal of 38% of the Polus visitors is the purchase of consumer goods in boutiques and 28% buy groceries in hypermarkets. 23% of visitors use the offered restaurant services, 11% use the cultural and sport services. While 26% of the shopping centre visitors' focus only on one type of commercial unit, the goal of 59% questioned visitors is the visit of two or more facilities. Besides buying groceries and consumer goods, the remaining 15% visit the catering establishments.

Different results were noticed by the Aupark visitors. The main purpose of visits is buying groceries and consumer goods. 4% of respondents stated that their only goal is the visit of the cinema, 9% stated the visit of sport facilities and 15% go to restaurants and coffee shops to meet friends or business partners. During the weekends, the Bratislava residents use the outer spaces for sport, the families with children go to playgrounds.

The visit of only one commercial unit is the goal of 1/3 of the Olympia visitors. The most frequent

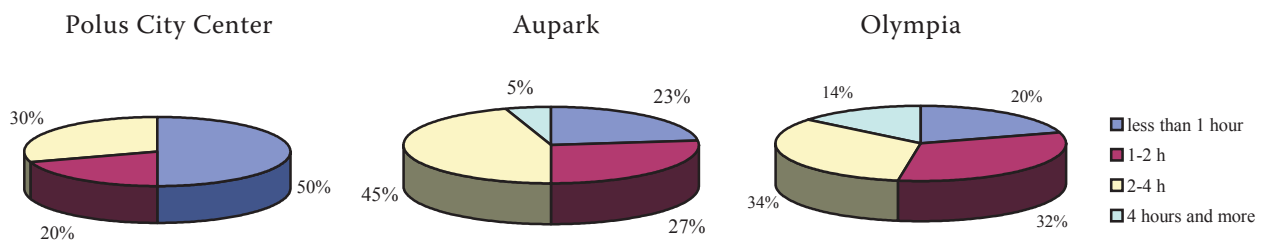


Figure 3. Time spent in Polus, City Center and Aupark

Source: Own research and processing

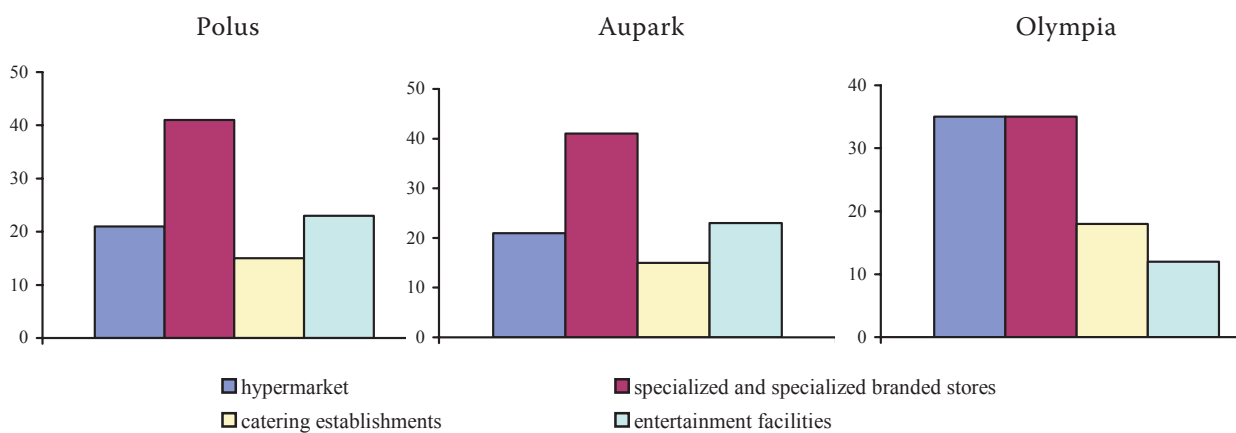


Figure 4. Polus, Aupark and Olympia visitors share in visits of individual commercial units and facilities

Source: Own research and processing



shopping area is the hypermarket (20%) followed by the specialized stores and the specialized branded stores (9%). Entertainment facilities are visited by only 3% of visitors and restaurants only by 2%. More than 2/3 of visitors visit 2 or more commercial units. 21% combines shopping in grocery and specialized stores. When visiting the centre, 14% visit the hypermarket, specialized and specialized branded stores and restaurant facilities. Only 4% combine buying groceries with visits of catering establishments.

The research results pointed out that the primary goal of the visitors of all 3 shopping centres is shopping and they visit many different facilities (Figure 4).

The largest Polus visitors group regarding the money spent on shopping point of view is formed by the category "less than 500 SKK" (50%), 18% of respondents spend there 1 001–2 000 SKK, 16% more than 2 000 SKK. 4% spend nothing a 12% did not want to answer this question.

In both Bratislava centres, the visitors spend more money during the weekend (Cramer's coefficient Polus  $V = 0.23$ , Aupark  $V = 0.26$ ).

18% of the Olympia visitors spend shopping less than 500 CZK, 36% 500–1 000 CZK, 23% 1 001–2 000 CZK and the same percentage more than 2 000 CZK. Also in this case the changes between the regular week and weekend are visible (Cramer's coefficient  $V = 0.26$ ). During the regular week, almost 2/3 of visitors spend maximum 1 000 CZK, while during the weekend 29% spend more than 2 000 CZK. During the weekend, a bigger shopping, mainly of groceries, is done but the results showed higher expenses also in restaurant and entertainment facilities.

## CONCLUSION

The conducted consumer behavior researches in two Bratislava shopping entertainment centres and one in Brno showed that the most frequent purpose of visitors is buying groceries and consumer goods. The visitors come for the shopping.

Besides shopping, they use services of the catering establishments. During the weekends, when shopping is combined with relaxing, the entertainment facilities are used with a higher intensity than during the regular week. (Cramer's coefficient Polus  $V = 0.24$ , Aupark  $V = 0.33$  and Olympia  $V = 0.31$ ).

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