

И. Матусевич (*ГУО «Средняя школа № 153 А. К. Талая г. Минска»*)
Е. Н. Левкович (*научный руководитель*)

OVERCOMING OVERCONSUMPTION BEFORE IT CONSUMES US

Overconsumption is a global issue that has serious consequences for the environment and consumers. It is the action of consuming something in excess or using available goods to a point where one is unable to replenish or reuse them.

A quick scroll on any media platform like TikTok or Instagram will likely result in being bombarded with ads or review videos, showing all the must-have things that afterwards you can easily find on any marketplace like Wildberries or Ozon. The introduction of one-day shipping, navigable websites and millions of options at the tips of our fingers has worsen this problem by making it easier than ever to participate in online shopping. A rise in overconsumerism can be seen in day-to-day life. Goods are overproduced, social media is saturated with advertisements and personal debt levels are reaching unprecedented heights. People are indulging in goods on impulse, failing to consider the economic losses it will have on them or the harm it will do to the environment.

The language is a mirror of the processes happening in the society. Today we can see overconsumption in different fields: natural resources, goods, media resources and even words.

The importance of the conscious consumption makes the topic of our research **relevant**.

New effective ways to overcome overconsumption are being in the focus nowadays, but for a lot of people it is still a mystery. That is why we got interested in the topic to do the research in the sphere of overconsumption. In this research one will find the information how to deal with consumption in a new way; how to recognize opportunities to reduce the risk of getting in an overconsumption trap by making necessary changes in the way of consuming goods and words.

The practical value of the project is that it can help learn about the rules how to be more mindful of buying/using sustainably that will allow consumers to break the habit of overconsumption.

The aim of our research is to find out the ways and possibilities to make people understand how to be more mindful of buying and using sustainably.

The objectives of our research are:

- to examine the fields where overconsumption is critical;
- to trace the changes in customers' behaviour that lead to overconsumption;
- to find out the possible ways to overcome overconsumption;
- to point out the problems of overconsumption of words in the modern communication in the English Language;
- to outline a short guide to work out better shopping and talking habits.

The methods of the research:

- the research of scientific and world literature on this topic in the English language sources;
- analysis and synthesis of research literature;
- survey and questioning;
- analysis and conclusions.

The **hypothesis** of our research: understanding the problem of overconsumption and knowing how to avoid it leads to the higher level of economic wellbeing, improved health, education and quality of life as the basis of the state prosperity.

Among 36 respondents were people of 20–50 years old, married (with children) and single (without children) couples with household income from below 2.500 BYN to above 3.500 BYN per month.

CONCLUSION

The most obvious advantage of living in a consumerist society is creating goods and better living standards to the consumer. This stimulates economical growth, technological advancement and innovation generating more work opportunities for people. The biggest disadvantage is that by over-consuming, we harm our environment creating the unhealthy link between unnecessary material possessions and psychological well-being.

A significant shift from offline to online shopping during and after the period COVID-19 is in the focus of our research. The online stores and marketplaces employ strategies to make it easier to consume more. By making online shopping easy and accessible, unnecessary items are bought and the things that are returned often go to waste and end up in landfills.

The shopping trend will grow in the future, and the pattern of overconsumption is here to stay. It is undoubtedly vital to raise awareness on conscious consumption as it may positively contribute to our environment. We see it as our duty as a young society to recognize some negative shopping habits and work to fix them before it is too late for both our bank accounts and our planet. It is necessary to make it possible for people to be aware of the steps to be taken to avoid the trap of overconsumption. As a result The Guide to Conscious Consumption has been created.

Overconsumption of words has also drawn out attention as the language is a mirror of the processes happening in the society. People are inundated with social media, YouTube, chat apps and streaming services as success today is measured by how much attention we can get. It has been discovered there's a word for the problem of overtalking: *talkaholism*. Neologisms and an idiom connected to "*overtalking*" have been found out. The guide "The Power To Talk Less" has been practiced and there is a positive feedback loop: the less I talk, the more I say. As a result the guide "How To Stop Overtalking" has been created.

It has been figured out that it is crucial for people in today's fast-moving world to slow down the purchasing process and give the power to our mind over our emotions and learn the power of talking less but saying more. Thus, to feel better, both emotionally and physically we should avoid everything that is "over" and know how to control our mind.

Using different methods such as questionnaires, surveys and analysis we have come to the conclusion that there is a tendency for people aged 20–45 to go shopping online and after the pandemic people got used to buying online more

often. It has been found out that overcoming overconsumption can help increase prosperity and wellbeing – not just greater incomes but improved health, education and quality of life (Appendices 3–6).

Appendix 3. The Survey

Diagram 1. The influences of the COVID-19 pandemic on sustainable consumption
Extent to which respondents practised online shopping during the lockdowns

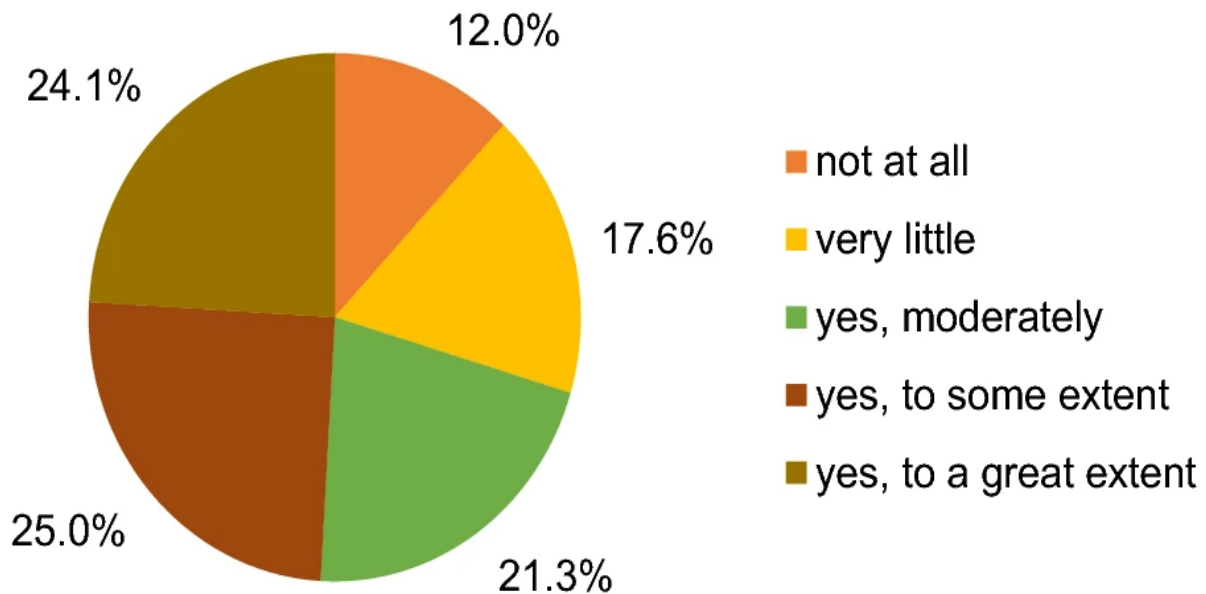


Diagram 2. Extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic contributed (a) to more sustainable lifestyles and (b) to make society rethink consumption habits

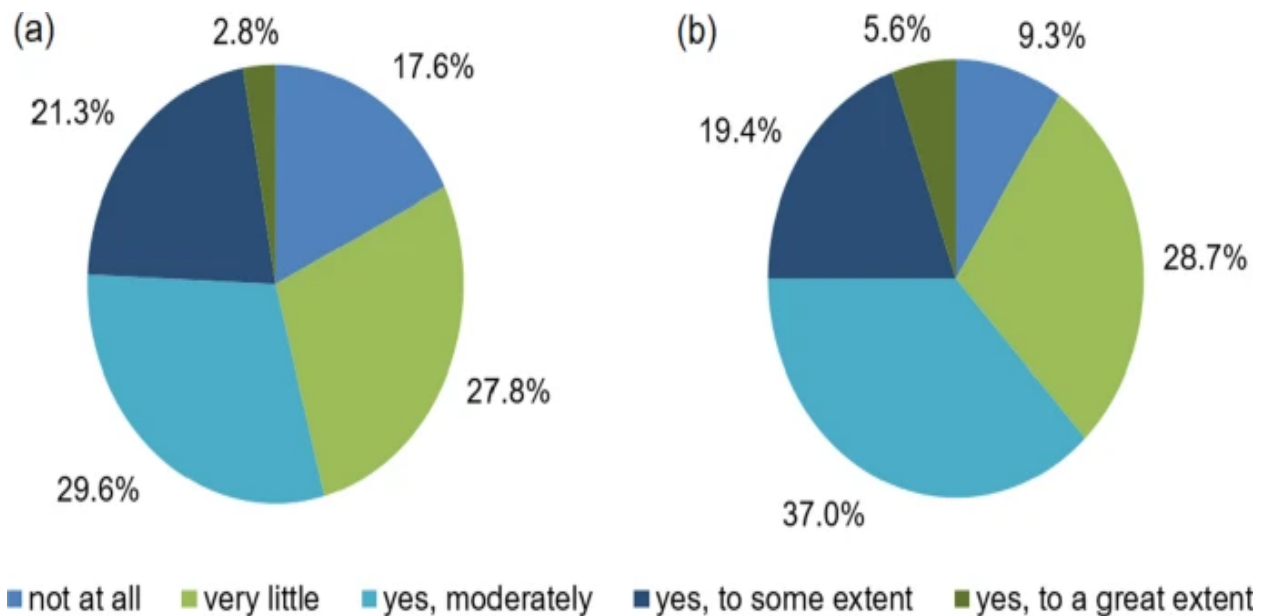
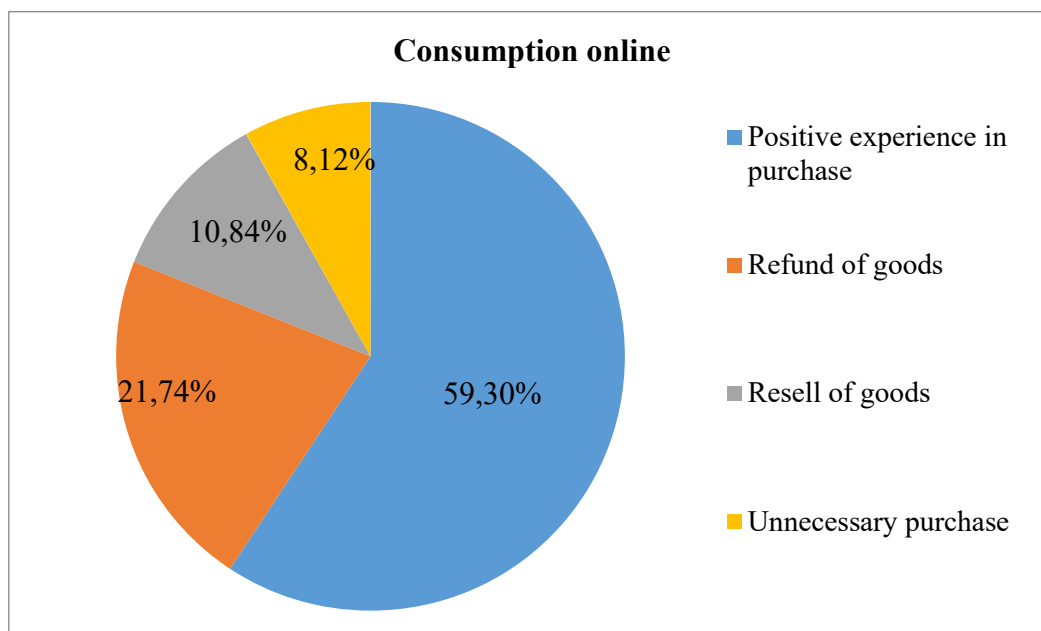


Table1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The survey has been carried out by the author of the project within a year of 2022–2023. The quantity of respondents is 36 families that live in Minsk, Leninsky district.

Category	Quantity	%
Age range	36	100
20 to 30	12	33,3
31 to 40	14	38,9
41 to 50	10	27,8
Marital status	36	100
Married	30	83,3
Single	6	16,7
Household composition	36	100
Married with children	30	83,3
Single with children	6	16,7
Household income	36	100
Below 2500 BYN	11	30,6
2500 BYN to 3500 BYN	17	47,2
Above 3500 BYN	8	22,2

Diagram 3. Consumption online



The results of this research were announced in A. K. Talai school № 153 at class and informative hours as well as at parents' meetings, the guides have been downloaded on our school website sch153.minsk.edu.by at pages "To the Parents" and "To the Students". The students and their parents were given the recommendations on how to consume mindfully and practice minimalism. It

should be noted that 15 % of the families (36) that took part in the survey have started practicing the mindful approach to consumption which in a way confirms the practical value of the research.