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BREAKING THE MICRO-AGENCY ASSESSMENT BOTTLENECK: EMBEDDED ANALYTICS FOR E-COMMERCE PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT. PART II.

Micro-agencies specializing in WooCommerce services must manage many small client projects with limited resources, so profitability depends on maximizing throughput. This study conceptualizes the Micro-Agency Assessment Bottleneck (MAB) as the constraint in the initial client assessment phase, spanning data collection, cleaning, segmentation and reporting, that restricts agency capacity and delays value delivery. We evaluate ClientRank, a lightweight embedded analytics plugin for WooCommerce that automates this workflow by leveraging native transactional data and a standardized Recency, Frequency, Monetary (RFM) pipeline with K-means clustering. The tool was deployed and tested in a real-world micro-agency setting, with process metrics monitored before and after implementation. Results show a radical improvement in operational performance: Time-to-Assessment (TTA) is reduced by around 90% (from 13.5-24.5 to 1-2 days) and the client Dependency Index (DI) is effectively eliminated. These findings demonstrate how embedded analytics can break the assessment bottleneck, unlock latent agency capacity, and support new business models based on service-level agreements and throughput-oriented pricing. The study offers a replicable, low-friction design for micro-agencies seeking to scale e-commerce services while improving service quality and speed.

3 Methods ——— To assess the impact of the embedded analytics plugin on the micro-agency workflow, we adopted a single-case pre-test/post-test design. We compared the traditional manual assessment process with the redesigned workflow after the deployment of the ClientRank plugin, focusing on process metrics and workflow maps rather than on statistical generalization.

3.1 Research design ——— The unit of analysis is the client assessment process that turns raw e-commerce data into an actionable baseline. In the pre-test condition, we reconstructed the manual process used by the agency before the plugin, including main steps, hand-offs and waiting points. In the post-test condition, we documented the workflow after the plugin was integrated, when data extraction, RFM computation, clustering and reporting are performed inside WooCommerce. For both conditions we measured TTA and DI and summarized the process in comparable workflow maps. As a single-case design, the evidence is illustrative rather than statistically generalizable.

The study was conducted within P&F Technology, a micro-agency that manages multiple WooCommerce clients. For the empirical illustration we focus on one WooCommerce store, using transactional data (orders and customer records) extracted from the native database. The observation window covers monthly sales from January 2022 to January 2025, and all customers with at least one completed order in this period are included in the analysis. TTA and DI were computed for projects completed before and after the introduction of the plugin in the agency's assessment workflow.

ClientRank is installed as a standard WordPress/WooCommerce plugin on the client store. It connects to the WooCommerce transactional database using the platform's native access mechanisms and reads orders, customer identifiers and monetary values directly from the store, without manual exports or file exchanges. Configuration parameters (for example, date range and inclusion rules) are set through the plugin interface and can be updated by agency staff. The deployment took place in the live agency environment and was monitored to verify correct installation, database connectivity and acceptable performance.

We use two practitioner-oriented metrics to operationalize the MAB. TTA is defined as the elapsed time between project start and delivery of the first assessment report to the client. DI captures the share of that time spent waiting for client data, that is, from the first request for data to the moment a complete, usable dataset is available for analysis. Timestamps are obtained from project logs, calendars and email exchanges. In addition, we document qualitative features of the workflow (number of steps, hand-offs and external dependencies) in pre and post process maps.

3.2 Analytical pipeline (RFM and K-means) ——— The analytical pipeline implemented in the plugin is summarized in Figure 1 and consists of five automated steps:

- Data extraction: transactional data are read directly from the WooCommerce database for the selected period.
- RFM calculation: for each customer, recency, frequency and monetary values are computed from the order history.
- Data scaling: R, F and M variables are standardized so that they contribute on a comparable scale to clustering.
- Cluster selection: K-means solutions are estimated for a small range of candidate cluster numbers; for each solution, Within-Cluster Sum of Squares and silhouette coefficients are computed, and the selected number of clusters balances parsimony and segmentation quality.
- Customer clustering and reporting: customers are assigned to clusters, and the plugin generates summary statistics and visual panels (trend and seasonality, device mix, geographic concentration and cluster profiles).

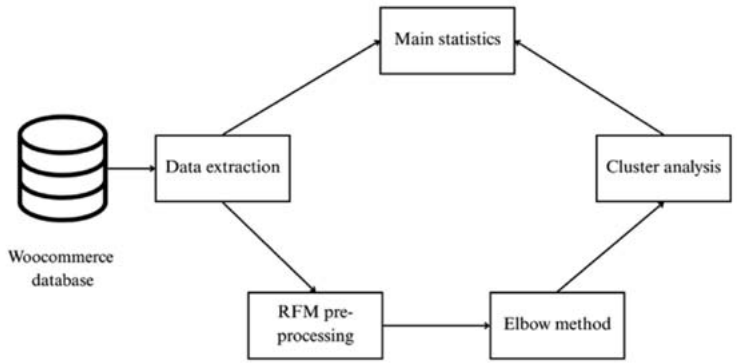

FIGURE 1: ANALYTICAL PIPELINE OF THE CLIENTRANK EMBEDDED PLUGIN FOR WOOCOMMERCE
SOURCE: AUTHOR BASED ON THE CLIENTRANK IMPLEMENTATION AT P&F TECHNOLOGY

Because the pipeline is fully embedded in WooCommerce and can be re-run by agency staff without additional coding, it provides a standardized segmentation routine that can be replicated across clients.

4 Results ——— The deployment of the embedded analytics plugin on WooCommerce (ClientRank) removed the micro-agency's assessment bottleneck and produced two classes of outcomes: (i) descriptive and segmentation outputs that now form a standardized assessment deliverable, and (ii) process outcomes on TTA and DI.

4.1 Descriptive analytics: trend, device, and geography ——— ClientRank's descriptive layer provides an immediate, standardized situational picture for new engagements. The focus is to surface a small set of patterns that are consistently useful in early-stage decisions. Figure 2 reports monthly sales over the full observation window. This view is used to frame discussions on trend and seasonality and to benchmark future interventions against past performance.

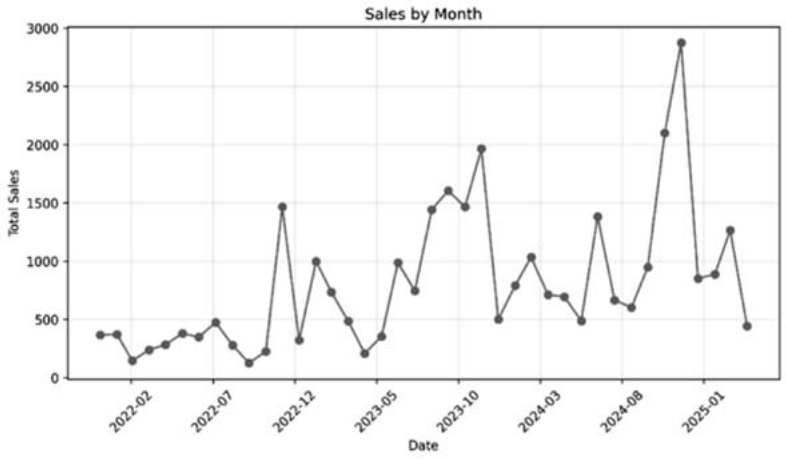

FIGURE 2: MONTHLY SALES EVOLUTION: JANUARY 2022 – JANUARY 2025
SOURCE: WOOCOMMERCE TRANSACTIONAL DATA EXTRACTED VIA CLIENTRANK PLUGIN

Figure 3 shows cumulative sales by device type. Mobile accounts for roughly 68% of total sales, materially outweighing desktop. This confirms that optimization efforts on mobile can have a disproportionate impact on revenue.

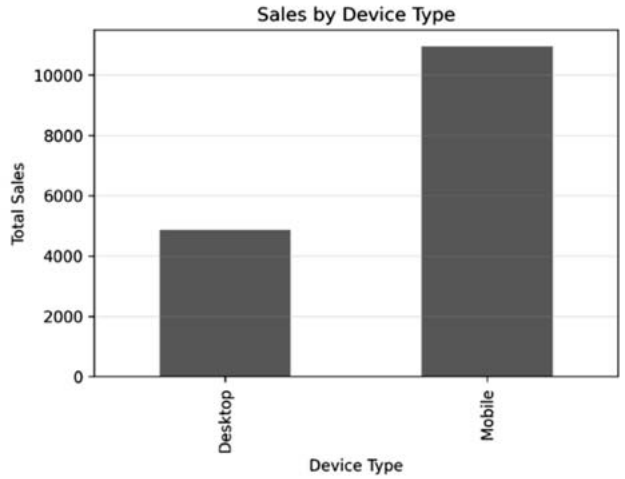

FIGURE 3: CUMULATIVE SALES BY DEVICE TYPE (MOBILE VS. DESKTOP): MOBILE ACCOUNTS FOR APPROXIMATELY 68% OF TOTAL SALES
SOURCE: WOOCOMMERCE TRANSACTIONAL DATA EXTRACTED VIA CLIENTRANK PLUGIN

Figure 4 reports the top Italian provinces by cumulative sales. Revenues are highly concentrated: the Rome province (RM) contributes more than 45% of total sales, followed by Perugia (PE) and Chieti (CH).

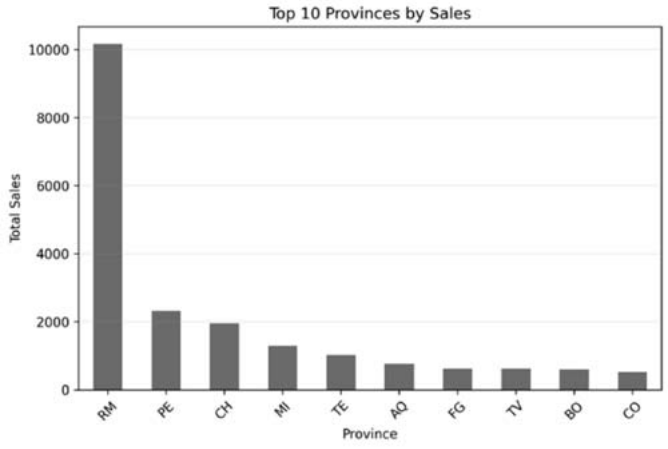

FIGURE 4: TOP 10 ITALIAN PROVINCES BY CUMULATIVE SALES (RM = ROME; PE = PERUGIA; CH = CHIETI)
SOURCE: WOOCOMMERCE TRANSACTIONAL DATA EXTRACTED VIA CLIENTRANK PLUGIN

These three standard views (time, device, geography) can be refreshed in minutes from the store database and reused across clients, providing a consistent „first pass" descriptive frame for the segmentation results that follow.

4.2 Automated segmentation: elbow-validated k and cluster profiles ——— The RFM and clustering pipeline implemented in ClientRank generates an embedded customer segmentation that can be directly reused in campaign and offer design. The elbow method applied to Within-Cluster Sum of Squares supports a three-cluster so-

lution (k = 3), and the corresponding silhouette plot shows consistently positive coefficients across clusters, with individual cluster coefficients of 0.518 (Cluster 0), 0.520 (Cluster 1) and 0.524 (Cluster 2), and an average silhouette coefficient of approximately 0.52. This indicates a well-separated partition suitable for operational use. The 3D RFM scatter for the 2024 sample (outliers removed) is shown in Figure 5.

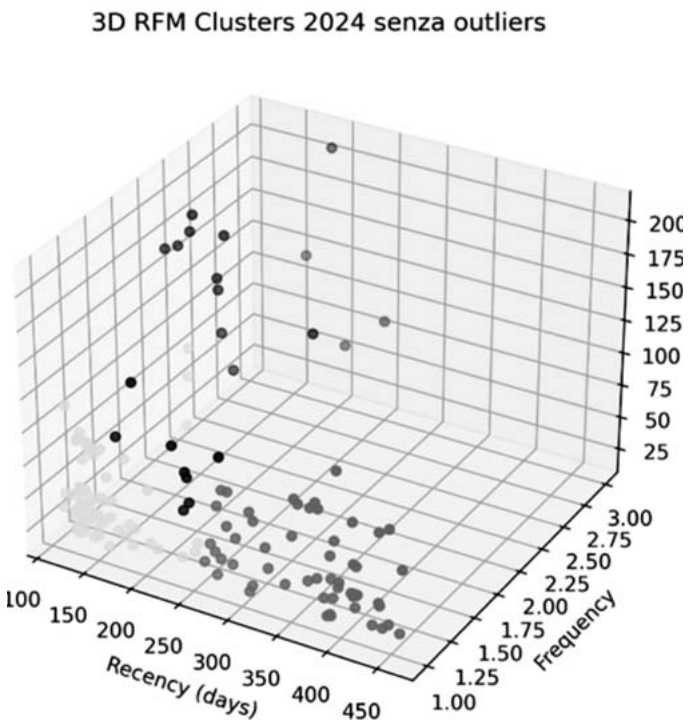

FIGURE 5: 3D SCATTER OF RFM CLUSTERS (2024 SAMPLE; OUTLIERS REMOVED), SHOWING VISUAL SEPARATION OF THE THREE K-MEANS CLUSTERS
SOURCE: CLIENTRANK OUTPUT ON WOOCOMMERCE DATA

Cluster-level descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation and variance for R, F and M, plus cluster sizes) are reported in Table 1.

RFM	Cluster	Label	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance	Count
Frequency	0	High-value loyal	1	3	1.7	0.66	0.43	20
Monetary value			66	208	137.85	44.54	1983.95	
Recency			117	278	195.1	46.97	2206.52	
Frequency	1	Occasional/ low-value	1	2	1.04	0.19	0.03	57
Monetary value			20	165	58.81	32.54	1058.68	
Recency			262	460	366.54	58.02	3365.9	
Frequency	2	Dormant with potential	1	2	1.04	0.2	0.04	74
Monetary value			20	118	52.86	24.48	599.11	
Recency			115	255	149.74	28.92	836.14	

TABLE 1: CLUSTER-LEVEL RFM DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (K-MEANS SOLUTION WITH K = 3)
SOURCE: CLIENTRANK OUTPUT ON WOOCOMMERCE DATA

At a high level, the three clusters can be summarized as follows:

- Cluster 0 – High-value loyal (n = 20). Small group with the highest monetary value and relatively recent purchases, representing core customers whose spend should be defended and gradually expanded.
- Cluster 1 – Occasional/low-value (n = 57). Broad base of customers with low frequency and modest monetary value, suitable for low-cost, scalable engagement initiatives focused on encouraging a second purchase.
- Cluster 2 – Dormant with potential (n = 74). Customers who have not purchased recently but exhibit a monetary history that justifies targeted re-activation attempts.

The segmentation output is intentionally minimalistic: only variables that can be acted upon in small projects are surfaced. Detailed marketing and operational plays derived from these clusters are discussed in the Discussion section.

4.3 Process evidence: pre/post workflow and TTA/DI ——— The second class of results concerns the micro-agency's assessment process. Figures 6 and 7 summarise the pre and post workflows, while Table 2 reports the corresponding TTA and DI ranges. Pre-plugin (Figure 6), the assessment path is long and fragile: data request, waiting for files, manual cleaning, import, exploratory analysis, manual segmentation, and reporting. Each node is a potential failure point and a source of delay, particularly the waiting time for client exports, which dominates TTA.

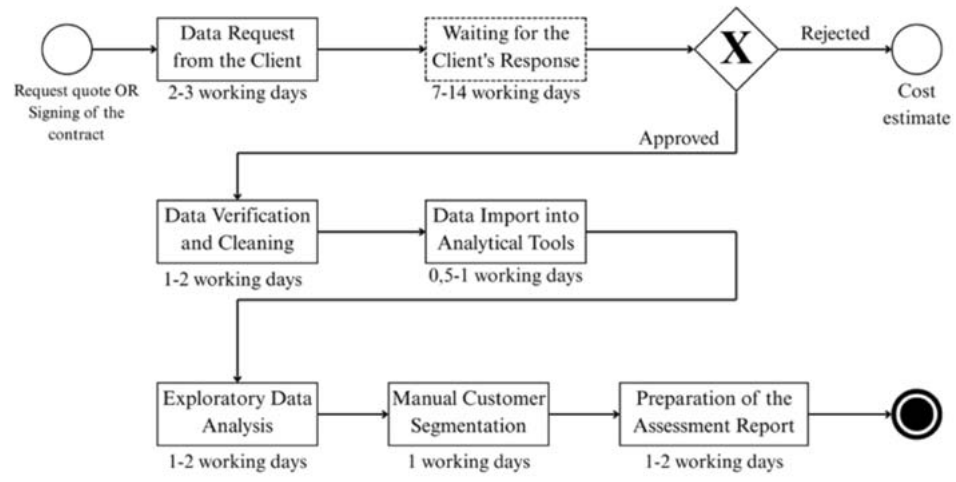

FIGURE 6: PRE-PLUGIN BUSINESS-PROCESS MAP FOR CUSTOMER ASSESSMENT
SOURCE: AUTHOR BASED ON P&F TECHNOLOGY PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

Post-plugin (Figure 7), the path is shorter and largely automated: one-time installation and configuration, automatic connection to the WooCommerce database, automatic extraction and descriptive statistics, automatic clustering, analyst interpretation, and reporting. The number of hand-offs is reduced and the critical path is no longer dependent on client responsiveness.

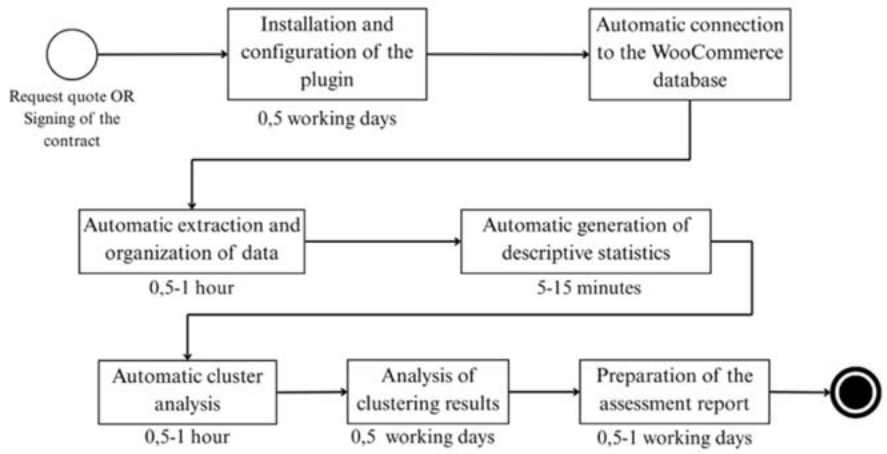

FIGURE 7: POST-PLUGIN BUSINESS-PROCESS MAP FOR CUSTOMER ASSESSMENT
SOURCE: AUTHOR BASED ON P&F TECHNOLOGY PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

Table 2 summarizes the observed changes in TTA and DI between the two conditions.

Condition	TTA (working days, range)	Client waiting for data (days, range)	Qualitative DI
Pre-plugin	13.5-24.5	7-14	High
Post-plugin	1-2	≈ 0	≈ 0

TABLE 2: TTA AND DI BEFORE AND AFTER PLUGIN DEPLOYMENT
SOURCE: AUTHOR BASED ON P&F TECHNOLOGY PROJECT LOGS

Before deployment, the manual assessment required between 13.5 and 24.5 working days end-to-end, with 7 to 14 days typically spent waiting for client files. After deployment, the workflow collapsed to 1-2 working days (approximately 90% reduction), and DI effectively approached zero because data were pulled directly from the store rather than requested from the client. The scope of the deliverable remained unchanged: the first assessment still includes descriptive analytics and a segmentation-based playbook.

5 Discussion ——— The results confirm that the MAB behaves as a TOC-type constraint: before the intervention, assessment work required 13.5-24.5 working days, with 7-14 days spent waiting for client data; after the deployment of the embedded plugin, TTA falls to 1-2 days and client waiting time is essentially removed. This mirrors the TOC insight that system performance is governed by its scarcest resource, and that elevating the bottleneck increases throughput without proportional resource growth (Goldratt 1984; Gupta and Boyd 2008; Reid and Cormier 2003). At the same time, the RFM and K-means pipeline produces a stable three-cluster segmentation with satisfactory silhouette coefficients, offering a standardized analytical output that can be reused across projects.

5.1 Capacity and service design ——— From a service operations and TOC perspective, the embedded plugin transforms the assessment stage from a fragile, client-dependent bottleneck into a largely automated, internally controlled process

(Chakravorty and Atwater 2006; Bacelar-Silva et al. 2020). Removing the data hand-off and automating extraction and segmentation inside WooCommerce shortens the critical path, reduces hand-offs and frees capacity that can be redeployed to higher-value activities. This supports a more productized service design: the agency can package a rapid assessment as a clearly scoped offer and attach focused follow-on sprints to specific clusters, consistent with work on standardized service packages and modular offerings (Wirtz et al. 2021; Cagliano et al. 2001).

5.2 Agency as strategic partner ——— The embedded segmentation also reinforces the agency's role as a strategic partner. Starting the engagement with an objective picture of the customer base aligns with the customer-accounting view that customer level information is central to managing the customer portfolio as a strategic asset (Guilding and McManus 2002; Bordeleau 2025) and with relationship marketing research that highlights the role of systematic relationship building and service quality in driving performance in service settings (Boukhaoua et al. 2025). Even in its current sales-focused form, the three clusters support decisions on retention, reactivation and resource allocation. For SMEs that face the typical digitalization and skills constraints documented in the literature (Zamani et al. 2022; Shima 2026; Sagala and Őri 2024), this embedded, low-friction access to analytics can be more realistic than standalone business intelligence projects and helps the agency move from task execution towards co-owning a data-driven roadmap.

5.3 Throughput-based pricing and SLAs ——— Greater control over TTA and DI also opens the door to different pricing and contracting schemes. A compressed and predictable assessment process makes it possible to commit to service-level agreements for the initial assessment and to consider fixed-fee, per-assessment or subscription models that reward throughput rather than hours worked. This is in line with TOC-inspired arguments that revenue models should be aligned with system throughput and with calls in SME digitalization and embedded analytics research for simple, repeatable value propositions (Hagan et al. 2024; Bender 2024; Iden and Bygstad 2024).

5.4 Generalizability and boundary conditions ——— The patterns identified here are grounded in one micro-agency and one WooCommerce store, yet some elements are likely to extend beyond this context. The idea of diagnosing a service bottleneck through simple, practitioner-friendly metrics such as TTA and DI is applicable to other knowledge-intensive services, while the embedded, platform-native analytics pattern can in principle be replicated on different e-commerce or SME platforms. At the same time, the specific cluster structure, the magnitude of TTA reductions and the ease of deployment will depend on sector, digital maturity and local constraints, so the contribution is best interpreted as a design pattern rather than a universally calibrated solution.

6 Limitations and future work ——— This study has four main limitations. First, it relies on a single case in an Italian micro-agency and on one WooCommerce client. The results illustrate what can be achieved when an embedded solution directly targets a well-defined bottleneck, but they cannot establish how widespread similar gains would be. Multi-case and comparative studies across agencies, sectors and countries are needed to test the robustness of the TTA and DI improvements and to

identify contextual moderators. Second, the analytical specification is deliberately simple. The plugin implements a traditional RFM model and K-means clustering with a small number of clusters. This favors interpretability and robustness but may not capture more nuanced customer patterns. Future research could compare this baseline with alternative segmentation techniques and feature sets and assess whether additional complexity yields materially better decisions, or whether the current level of sophistication is sufficient for micro-agency settings. Third, the current implementation focuses on gross monetary value and does not incorporate cost data such as cost of goods sold or service delivery costs. Extending the data model to include cost and margin information would allow agencies and their clients to move from a sales-based segmentation towards a full customer profitability view, deepening the link with customer accounting and portfolio management (Guilding and McManus 2002; Bordeleau 2025). Fourth, the evaluation does not include a systematic comparison with alternative approaches, such as external business intelligence tools or improved manual processes, nor does it integrate non-transactional data. Future work could benchmark embedded analytics against these alternatives and explore how adding web analytics, customer service or campaign response data affects both the segmentation and the bottleneck metrics, in line with broader calls for richer digital traces in SME analytics (Shima 2026; Sagala and Őri 2024).

7 Conclusion ——— This paper examined whether a lightweight, embedded analytics plugin can relieve the MAB that constrains e-commerce micro-agencies. Building on TOC, SME digitalization, embedded analytics and customer accounting, we defined the MAB as the cluster of tasks required to turn raw client data into a strategic baseline and operationalized it through TTA and DI metrics. A field deployment of an RFM and K-means pipeline embedded in WooCommerce shows that automating data access and standardizing the assessment can reduce TTA by around 90% and effectively eliminate client-induced waiting time, while generating a segmentation that is analytically sound and operationally usable (Goldratt 1984; Gupta and Boyd 2008; Bender 2024; Iden and Bygstad 2024).

The study offers two main contributions. Conceptually, it introduces an operational definition of the MAB and proposes TTA and DI as practitioner-friendly metrics for diagnosing and monitoring constraints in service workflows. Design-wise, it presents an embedded analytics pattern that micro-agencies can adopt: connect directly to the operational platform, implement a minimal but robust segmentation pipeline and use the outputs both as a client-facing decision product and as instrumentation for their own process. For managers, the results suggest a concrete blueprint: mapping current workflows, measuring TTA and DI, and assessing whether an embedded, platform-native solution could remove critical dependencies, support productized services and enable SLA- and throughput-based pricing.

While the scope is intentionally narrow, the evidence indicates that even small, resource-constrained firms can leverage embedded analytics to turn a persistent bottleneck into a throughput engine. Further work on different agencies, sectors and platforms will be needed to validate and extend these findings, but the pattern outlined here points to a pragmatic way of aligning SME digitalization efforts with the operational realities of micro-agencies (Shima 2026; Hagan et al. 2024).

END OF PART II.

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Kľúčové slová | Key Words ——— micro-agency, bottleneck analysis, theory of constraints, RFM segmentation, e-commerce, WooCommerce, time-to-assessment, dependency index | *mikroagentúra, analýza úzkych miest, teória obmedzení, segmentácia RFM, elektronický obchod, WooCommerce, čas potrebný na posúdenie, index závislosti*

JEL klasifikácia | *JEL Classification* ——— M31, L86, O33

Résumé ——— ***Prekonanie prekážky v podobe hodnotenia mikroagentúr: Integrovaná analytika pre správu portfólia elektronického obchodu. Časť II.***

Mikroagentúry špecializujúce sa na služby WooCommerce musia spravovať mnoho malých klientskych projektov s obmedzenými zdrojmi, takže ziskovosť závisí od maximalizácie priepustnosti. Tento príspevok vytvára koncept hodnotenia prekážok mikroagentúr (MAB) v podobe obmedzení, v počiatočnej fáze hodnotenia klienta, ktoré zahŕňa zber údajov, čistenie, segmentáciu a reporting, ktoré obmedzujú kapacitu agentúry a spomaľujú dodávanie hodnoty. V príspevku sa hodnotí ClientRank, ľahký integrovaný analytický plugin pre WooCommerce, ktorý automatizuje tento pracovný postup využívaním natívnych transakčných údajov a štandardizovaného prepojenia aktuálnosti, frekvencie a príjmov (RFM) s K-means zhlukovaním. Nástroj bol nasadený a otestovaný v reálnom prostredí mikroagentúry, pričom sa pred a po implementácii monitorovali metriky procesu. Výsledky ukazujú radikálne zlepšenie prevádzkovej výkonnosti: čas potrebný na posúdenie (TTA) sa skrátil približne o 90% (z 13,5-24,5 na 1-2 dni) a index závislosti klienta (DI) bol efektívne eliminovaný. Tieto zistenia demonštrujú, ako môže integrovaná analytika prekonať prekážku posudzovania, odhaliť skrytú kapacitu agentúry a podporiť nové obchodné modely založené na dohodách o úrovni služieb a cenách orientovaných na priepustnosť. Štúdia ponúka replikovateľný dizajn pre mikroagentúry, ktoré sa snažia rozšíriť služby elektronického obchodu a zároveň zlepšiť kvalitu a rýchlosť služieb.

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UNPACKING THE BLACK BOX: HOW ALGORITHMIC TRANSPARENCY AND USER CONTROL SHAPE TRUST, SATISFACTION, AND PURCHASE INTENT IN THE AI ERA

This study investigates the „personalisation-privacy paradox" in AI-driven e-commerce, where consumers appreciate tailored experiences whilst growing concerned about extensive data collection by „black box" algorithms. The research addresses a critical gap in understanding how algorithmic transparency and user control influence consumer responses to AI personalisation, moving beyond monolithic conceptualisations of AI systems. Using structural equation modelling with 389 online shoppers from Algeria, this study empirically tests the distinct mediating roles of Algorithmic Explainability and Perceived User Control. The quantitative cross-sectional survey employed validated measurement scales to examine relationships between constructs. Key findings reveal two distinct pathways: explainability builds cognitive trust through transparency, whilst perceived control enhances satisfaction through user autonomy. Satisfaction demonstrates nearly double the direct influence on purchase intent compared to trust. Critically, high privacy concerns completely nullify personalisation's positive effects on trust. These results demonstrate that ethically responsible personalisation strategies must integrate both algorithmic explainability and user control with robust privacy practices, as transparency alone is insufficient without foundational respect for user privacy.

1 Introduction ——— Background: The rise of AI personalisation in e-commerce

——— The contemporary e-commerce landscape has been fundamentally transformed by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), with AI-driven personalisation emerging as a critical strategy for enhancing user experience and driving commercial success (Buhalis and Sinarta 2019). This technological revolution enables platforms to tailor goods, services, and digital experiences to individual consumer preferences, behaviours, and contexts through sophisticated machine learning algorithms and real-time data analytics (Sipos 2025). The scale and effectiveness of these systems are exemplified by industry leaders: Amazon's recommendation engine employs collaborative filtering and content-based filtering to analyse users' purchase histories, browsing data, and demographic attributes, whilst Netflix's AI models influence over 80% of content streamed on its platform, contributing to significant improvements in customer retention and engagement (Sipos 2025; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra 2002). These personalisation strategies optimise user experiences while simultaneous-

ly increasing revenue through higher conversion rates and customer loyalty(Aksoy et al. 2021).

However, the widespread adoption of AI-powered personalisation has simultaneously created a fundamental tension known as the „personalisation-privacy paradox“ (Rane et al. 2024). This paradox manifests as consumers appreciating the relevance and convenience of tailored experiences whilst growing increasingly concerned about the extensive data collection and processing required to power such systems (Kozyreva et al. 2021). The „black box“ nature of many AI algorithms compounds these concerns, as users struggle to understand how their personal data is collected, processed, and utilised (Carabantes 2020). Research indicates that perceived intrusion by overly personalised advertisements may decrease purchase intent by up to 4.5%, whilst consumers who trust the brand or platform are more likely to accept sophisticated personalisation strategies (Sipos 2025). This creates a complex environment where businesses must carefully balance the advantages of personalised recommendations with ethical and transparent data usage practices (Yin, Qiu and Wang 2025).

Research problem ——— Despite the recognised importance of AI personalisation in e-commerce, existing research frameworks largely treat algorithmic systems as monolithic entities without examining the specific mechanisms through which consumer trust and satisfaction are formed (Hassan et al. 2025). Current models fail to adequately address how the opacity of AI decision-making processes, the „black box“ problem, undermines consumer confidence and purchase behaviour (Valenzuela et al. 2024). While foundational research has established relationships between AI personalisation, trust, satisfaction, and privacy concerns, there remains a critical gap in understanding how algorithmic transparency and user control influence these relationships (Chan and Hu 2023). This gap is particularly significant given that consumers increasingly demand explanations for automated decisions that affect their lives (Kozyreva et al. 2021), yet most AI systems provide little visibility into their decision-making processes (Rane et al. 2024).

Research objective and contribution ——— This study aims to extend existing theoretical models by proposing and empirically testing the distinct mediating roles of algorithmic explainability and perceived user control in shaping consumer responses to AI personalisation. By investigating how these mechanisms mediate the relationships between AI personalisation and key consumer outcomes, trust, satisfaction and purchase intent, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how consumers navigate AI-mediated commerce experiences and offers actionable insights for developing ethically responsible and commercially effective personalisation strategies.

Specifically, this model advances current theory in two critical ways. First, while foundational frameworks like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) rely on general constructs such as perceived usefulness and ease of use, they fail to adequately capture the central challenge of AI systems: their opaque, „Black Box“ nature. Our model addresses this gap by introducing algorithmic explainability and perceived user control as crucial mediators that directly „unpack the black box“ for the consumer. Second, whereas many trust-based models propose a direct link between system characteristics (like transparency) and trust, our model specifies a more nuanced psychological process (Oyekunle et al. 2024). Its core novelty lies in proposing two distinct pathways: a cognitive route where Explainability builds trust, and an affective route where control enhances satisfaction (Shin 2021). By dissecting these mechanisms, the model provides a more granular and actionable framework than existing.

2 Literature review ——— 2.1 Core constructs of AI-driven consumer behaviour

AI-powered personalisation ——— AI-powered personalisation refers to the tailoring of digital experiences using machine learning algorithms that analyse user data to predict preferences and customise content, products, or services accordingly (Kozyreva et al. 2021). This technological capability integrates personal data, browsing history, purchase patterns, and geolocation information to generate customised recommendations with high accuracy (Roy 2024). The effectiveness of such systems is demonstrated by Amazon's recommendation engine, which utilises collaborative filtering and content-based filtering to analyse users' purchase histories and demographic attributes, and Netflix's AI models, which influence over 80% of content streamed by subscribers (Shin et al. 2020).

Research consistently demonstrates the positive impact of AI-powered personalisation on consumer engagement and commercial outcomes. Personalised experiences enhance user satisfaction by providing relevant content that aligns with individual preferences (Hardcastle et al. 2025). Studies indicate that dynamic personalisation systems, which adapt to changing customer behaviour in real-time, achieve significant improvements in key performance metrics, with click-through rates increasing by 18% and conversion rates by 10% (Roy 2024). Furthermore, personalised interactions create feedback loops where heightened satisfaction encourages consumers to return and fosters long-term brand loyalty (Sudirjo 2024). This application of AI is not limited to large corporations; research also explores how AI-powered tools on social media platforms can be leveraged to enhance customer engagement and drive sales growth for small and medium-sized enterprises in developing economies (Laki and Miklosik 2025).

However, the effectiveness of these personalisation strategies is not guaranteed. It hinges on a user's willingness to engage with the system, which brings the critical psychological construct of consumer trust to the forefront.

Consumer trust in AI ——— Consumer trust in AI systems is defined as a user's willingness to be vulnerable to an AI system's actions, characterised by confidence in the system's reliability, competence, and benevolent intentions (Bach et al. 2024). Trust encompasses multiple dimensions including integrity, benevolence, ability, and predictability concerning AI systems (Thiebes et al. 2021). Research demonstrates that trust serves as a critical antecedent to technology acceptance and purchase intent, with extensive literature establishing its fundamental role in human-AI interactions (Oyekunle et al. 2024).

The significance of trust is amplified in AI contexts due to the inherent uncertainty and complexity of algorithmic decision-making (Glikson and Woolley 2020). When consumers perceive AI systems as trustworthy, they are more likely to accept recommendations and engage with personalised services (Ding and Najaf 2024). Conversely, lack of trust can lead to algorithm aversion, where users reject AI recommendations even when they outperform human alternatives. Trust formation in AI systems is in-

fluenced by factors including perceived transparency, system performance, and the user's prior experience with similar technologies (Yang and Wibowo 2022).

Beyond the cognitive assessment of a system's reliability, the immediate user experience also generates a powerful affective response: satisfaction.

Consumer satisfaction ——— Consumer satisfaction in AI-driven contexts is best understood through Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), which posits that satisfaction arises from the alignment between user expectations and the AI system's actual performance (Shin 2020). According to ECT, when personalised experiences meet or exceed consumer expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, leading to increased satisfaction (Hossain and Quaddus 2012). This process can also be understood through the lens of prospect theory, where consumer expectations act as a reference point for evaluating the AI's performance; outcomes that exceed this reference point are perceived as gains, leading to satisfaction, while those that fall short are perceived as losses (Tarnanidis 2023).

Satisfaction functions as a crucial mediator between AI personalisation and purchase intent (Sipos 2025). Research demonstrates that consumers who experience satisfaction with AI-driven recommendations are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards the system and exhibit increased purchase intentions (Kim et al. 2021). The mediating role of satisfaction is particularly strong in AI contexts, where the quality of personalised recommendations directly influences user perceptions of system effectiveness and subsequent behavioural outcomes (Hassan et al. 2025). Yet, the very data collection that fuels effective personalisation and leads to satisfaction is also the source of a significant counteracting force: consumer privacy concerns.

Privacy concerns ——— Privacy concerns represent a critical moderator that can significantly diminish the positive effects of personalisation on trust and satisfaction (Chellappa and Sin 2005). The „personalisation-privacy paradox“ captures this tension, where consumers value personalised experiences whilst simultaneously worrying about extensive data collection and potential misuse (Kozyreva et al. 2021). Research indicates that perceived intrusion by overly personalised advertisements may decrease purchase intent by up to 4.5% when consumers believe their individual identity has been excessively tracked (Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015).

Privacy concerns moderate the relationship between AI personalisation and trust, with studies showing that as privacy concerns increase, the positive influence of personalisation on trust diminishes (Salih et al. 2025). However, transparent data handling practices and clear communication about data usage can mitigate these concerns and maintain consumer confidence (Schelenz et al. 2020).

2.2 The research gap: Moving from a black box to a glass box ——— The interplay between personalisation, trust, satisfaction, and privacy reveals a significant limitation in existing research. While these relationships are well-established, current frameworks often fail to examine the underlying mechanisms that can resolve these tensions, treating the AI system as an opaque „Black Box“. This study addresses that gap by proposing two key constructs that function as windows into the algorithm: explainability and user control.

Algorithmic explainability and transparency ——— Algorithmic explainability represents a distinct construct from general personalisation, defined as the system's ability to provide human-interpretable explanations for its decisions and recommendations (Shin 2020). This capability is fundamental to transforming AI systems from opaque „black boxes“ into transparent „glass boxes“ that users can understand and trust (Rai 2020). Explainability encompasses both global transparency (understanding how the system works overall) and local explanations (understanding specific recommendations) (Rane et al. 2024).

The literature demonstrates a strong connection between transparency and trust formation. Studies show that when users understand why specific recommendations are made, they are more likely to trust the system, even when recommendations are imperfect (Shin 2020). Explainable AI (XAI) approaches such as SHAP and LIME have emerged as prominent methods for generating comprehensible explanations without modifying underlying models (Rane et al. 2024). Research indicates that transparency increases user confidence in system recommendations and promotes perceptions of fairness and accountability (Wanner et al. 2022). Furthermore, algorithmic explanations can improve user attitudes towards recommendation systems and increase overall satisfaction with personalised experiences (Thurman et al. 2019).

Perceived control and user autonomy ——— Perceived control is defined as the user's subjective belief in their ability to influence, adjust, or opt-out of the personalisation process (Aksoy et al. 2021). This construct contrasts sharply with covert personalisation, where users have little or no agency over algorithmic decisions affecting their experience (Shin 2020). User control encompasses various dimensions including input control (ability to provide preferences), process control (ability to adjust algorithms), and output control (ability to modify recommendations) (Khuat et al. 2022).

Research demonstrates that providing users with meaningful control over personalisation processes significantly enhances trust and satisfaction whilst mitigating privacy concerns (Chandra et al. 2022). When users feel empowered to influence AI systems, they experience reduced feelings of manipulation and increased autonomy (Choung et al. 2023). Studies show that control mechanisms serve multiple psychological functions: they reduce uncertainty about system behaviour, enhance perceptions of fairness, and satisfy fundamental needs for autonomy and self-determination (Sundar 2020). Furthermore, user control can act as a buffer against privacy concerns, as individuals who feel they have agency over their data are more willing to engage with personalised services (Kozyreva et al. 2021). This sense of agency and involvement can even trigger cognitive biases that benefit the platform, such as the IKEA effect, where users who actively collaborate with an AI to create a non-physical product (like a piece of text) value that output more highly and report greater satisfaction with the AI tool itself (Czuprak and Nemeth 2025).

2.3 Theoretical framework ——— To formally model the influence of these two mechanisms, explainability and control, it is necessary to situate them within established theoretical frameworks.

This study integrates multiple theoretical perspectives to understand AI personalisation effects. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides the foundation for understanding how perceived usefulness and ease of use influence technology adop-

tion (Abdullah and Almaqtari 2024). However, its predictive power is often enhanced by incorporating additional constructs tailored to specific contexts; for example, studies have demonstrated the critical importance of adding trust to the model when examining the adoption of travel apps (Kebab 2025), and similar extensions are being explored for user adoption of digital health services (Mechta et al. 2024). Trust theories contribute insights into the cognitive and affective dimensions of user confidence in AI systems (Yang and Wibowo 2022). Expectation-Confirmation Theory explains how satisfaction emerges from the alignment of expectations with AI performance (Ramasamy et al. 2024). The FATE framework (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Explainability) offers guidance for ethical AI design and evaluation (Shin 2020).

2.4. Synthesis and proposed conceptual model ——— Drawing upon these diverse theoretical foundations, this study synthesises key principles to construct a novel conceptual model that addresses the identified research gaps.

While existing models provide robust foundations for understanding AI personalisation effects, they predominantly treat AI systems as monolithic entities without examining the specific mechanisms through which trust and satisfaction are formed (Sipos 2025). Current frameworks fail to adequately address how the opacity of AI decision-making processes undermines consumer confidence (Radanliev 2025). By incorporating Algorithmic Explainability and Perceived User Control as mediating variables, the proposed model can better examine the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer responses to AI personalisation (Shin 2020).

The theoretical synthesis suggests that explainability and control serve as crucial bridges between AI personalisation and consumer outcomes. Explainability transforms opaque algorithmic processes into understandable explanations that foster trust through transparency (Bauer et al. 2023). Perceived control empowers users to influence personalisation, enhancing satisfaction through increased autonomy (Aksoy et al. 2021). Together, these mechanisms address the black box problem by making AI systems more interpretable and controllable.

3 Methods ——— **3.1 Hypotheses development** ——— Based on theoretical foundation, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Algorithmic explainability positively mediates the relationship between AI personalisation and consumer trust. ——— This hypothesis suggests that the positive effect of AI personalisation on consumer trust is not direct but is channelled through the user's ability to understand the AI's reasoning. The relationship can be broken down into two parts: AI personalisation enhances perceptions of explainability, and this enhanced explainability, in turn, builds consumer trust (Shin 2021).

H2: Perceived user control positively mediates the relationship between AI personalisation and consumer satisfaction. ——— This hypothesis posits that AI personalisation enhances a user's sense of control over the system, and this feeling of agency is a primary driver of consumer satisfaction (Schelenz et al. 2020).

H3: Consumer trust positively influences purchase intent. ——— This hypothesis proposes a direct, positive relationship where higher levels of consumer trust in an AI system lead to a greater likelihood of making a purchase. Trust is a foundational element in e-commerce, defined as a user's willingness to be vulnerable to an AI system's actions based on confidence in its reliability, competence, and benevolence (Shin et al. 2020). In the context of AI, trust is crucial for overcoming the uncertainty and complexity of algorithmic decision-making.

H4: Consumer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between AI personalisation and purchase intent. ——— This hypothesis suggests that while AI personalisation may have a direct effect on purchase intent, a significant portion of its impact is channelled through the creation of a satisfying user experience.

H5: Privacy concerns negatively moderate the relationship between AI personalisation and trust. ——— This hypothesis proposes that the level of a consumer's privacy concerns acts as a critical boundary condition that alters the strength and even the direction of the relationship between AI personalisation and trust.

This relationship is rooted in the „personalisation-privacy paradox“ a core tension where consumers appreciate tailored experiences but are simultaneously worried about the extensive data collection required to power them

These hypotheses extend current understanding by proposing that the effectiveness of AI personalisation depends not merely on algorithmic sophistication, but on the system's ability to provide explanations and user control-key factors in unpacking the black box of AI-driven consumer behaviour.

3.2 Research design ——— A quantitative, cross-sectional online survey design is employed to examine the proposed relationships between AI personalisation, algorithmic explainability, perceived user control, consumer trust, satisfaction, and purchase intent. This approach is ideal for capturing user perceptions and attitudes at a single point in time and is well-suited for testing structural equation models (Gursoy et al. 2019). Cross-sectional designs have been extensively validated in technology acceptance research, allowing for correlational analyses amongst variables whilst maintaining practical feasibility (Maier et al. 2023).

The research design follows established methodological frameworks in AI acceptance studies, incorporating both measurement validation and hypothesis testing phases. This quantitative approach enables statistical validation of the proposed theoretical constructs and their relationships, addressing the study's primary objective of understanding how explainability and user control mediate AI personalisation effects.

3.3 Participants and sampling ——— The target population comprises active online shoppers from Algeria who have recent experience with personalised e-commerce platforms. Participants are recruited through an online panel service, following established precedents in technology acceptance research (Moody, Lowry, Galletta 2017). This study recruited a total of 389 t to ensure sufficient statistical power for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, which exceeds the recommended minimum of 200 participants for complex models (Wolf et al. 2013).

The online panel provider identified potential participants from their database based on demographic and behavioural data, such as location (Algeria) and online shopping frequency. These individuals then received an invitation containing a preliminary screening survey. This screener included specific questions to verify their

recent experience with personalised e-commerce, ensuring that only qualified respondents proceeded to the main questionnaire.

This sampling approach mirrors successful studies in AI acceptance research, ensuring participants possess adequate experience with algorithmic personalisation to provide meaningful responses about trust, control, and explainability perception (Shin et al. 2020).

3.4 Scales and measurements ——— The study employed 23 measurement items utilising a 7-point scale, all derived from previously validated instruments. Explainability measures were adapted from (Renjith et al. 2020), whilst AI-based personalisation items were modified from (Aksoy et al. 2021). Perceived control measurements drew upon (Bartol et al. 2024), and trust measurements were derived from (Hong and Cha 2013) and (Ehsan 2019). Satisfaction measurements were grounded in established technology acceptance literature, whilst purchase intention measurements were adapted from (Yin et al. 2025).

3.5 Data collection procedure ——— Our data collection process followed a carefully structured, multi-stage validation approach based on established survey research practices.

- **Phase 1:** We began by adapting measurement items from well-validated AI acceptance scales. To ensure that these items accurately reflected the concept of AI personalisation, three academic experts and two industry professionals reviewed them for clarity, relevance, and construct validity.
- **Phase 2:** Next, we conducted a pilot study with 60 participants to test the reliability and validity of the survey. This step allowed us to examine internal consistency as well as convergent, indicator, and discriminant validity. Participants' feedback during the pilot helped us refine and improve the final questionnaire.
- **Phase 3:** We then launched the final version of the survey online through a professional platform. To maintain data quality, we included attention-check and validation questions throughout. Before answering, all participants received clear and detailed information about AI personalisation systems to ensure a shared understanding of the topic.

3.6 Statistical methods ——— We conducted the statistical analyses for this study using SPSS software. Initially, we calculated descriptive statistics, including means and distribution indices, to summarise the sample's characteristics and perceptions. We then rigorously evaluated the psychometric properties of our measurement scales. We assessed internal consistency and reliability using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE).

To establish the validity of the 7-factor measurement model, we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). We evaluated the model's fit using multiple indices, including the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio ( ), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). We confirmed convergent validity through factor loadings and established discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT).

We tested our core hypotheses using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyse the proposed path relationships. We specifically tested mediation effects using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to generate confidence intervals for indirect effects. We examined the moderating role of privacy concerns through an interaction analysis, using simple slopes tests to probe the nature of the significant interaction. Finally, we performed supplementary analyses, including Pearson correlation to assess bivariate relationships and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Bonferroni post-hoc tests to compare group means.

4 Results ——— **4.1 Descriptive statistics** ——— The descriptive statistics indicate a positive and consistent evaluation of AI-based personalization among participants (N = 389), with mean scores ranging from 4.41 to 4.92 on a seven-point scale. Respondents rated AI Personalisation (M = 4.92) highest, followed by Algorithmic Explainability (M = 4.56) and Perceived User Control (M = 4.41), reflecting strong perceptions of relevance, intelligibility, and autonomy within algorithmic systems. Comparable levels of Consumer Trust (M = 4.68) and Satisfaction (M = 4.83) suggest that transparency and control jointly foster user engagement and confidence, while Purchase Intent (M = 4.61) confirms the satisfaction-purchase linkage. Privacy Concerns were moderate (M = 4.02), implying awareness without significant deterrent effects. Distribution indices showed normality, and frequent users-particularly daily and weekly ones-reported higher perceptions of relevance and control, reinforcing a virtuous cycle of familiarity, trust, and continued interaction with AI-personalized platforms.

	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability CR	Average Variance Extracted AVE
AI Personalisation (AIP)	0.84	0.89	0.67
Algorithmic Explainability (EXP)	0.90	0.91	0.72
Perceived User Control (PUC)	0.86	0.87	0.62
Trust (TRU)	0.91	0.92	0.75
Satisfaction (SAT)	0.89	0.90	0.69
Purchase Intent (PI)	0.87	0.88	0.70
Privacy Concerns (PC)	0.84	0.85	0.59

TABLE 1: INTERNAL CONSISTENCY
SOURCE: AUTHORS

CFA (7-factor, ML):

- $\chi^2(674)=1557.2$,
- $\chi^2/df=2.31$;
- CFI=.955;
- TLI=.946;
- RMSEA=.058 (90% CI .054-.062);
- SRMR=.041.

Convergent validity: loadings .71-.91 ($p<.001$). Discriminant validity: Fornell-Larcker and HTMT<.85 satisfied.

The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity across all constructs. Cronbach's alpha values (.84-.91), composite reliability (.85-.92), and average variance extracted (.59-.75) exceeded recommended thresholds, confirming internal consistency and convergent validity. The confirmatory factor analysis indicated an excellent model fit (χ^2/df=2.31; CFI=.955; TLI=.946; RMSEA=.058; SRMR=.041), with all standardized loadings significant (p<.001, .71-.91), confirming that the items reliably represented their latent factors. Discriminant validity was also established, as the Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria were satisfied (HTMT=.27-.81), ensuring that constructs such as explainability, trust, and satisfaction remained empirically distinct and conceptually sound.

4.2 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) ——— Our structural path analysis confirmed most of the relationships proposed in the hypotheses (see Figure 1 and Table 2). All the paths linking the variables in the model turned out to be statistically significant.

Structural model fit: $\chi^2(689)=1634.5$, $\chi^2/df=2.37$; CFI=.951; TLI=.943; RMSEA=.060; SRMR=.048.

Explained variance (R^2): Trust=.56, Satisfaction=.54, Purchase Intent=.63, Explainability=.37, Perceived Control=.34.

Path	**β (Stanrdardized)**	**SE**	**z**	p-value	Supported ?
AI Personalisation → Explainability	0.61	0.05	12.2	<0.001	—
Explainability → Trust (H1)	0.39	0.06	6.5	<0.001	Supported
AI Personalisation → Trust (direct)	0.22	0.07	3.2	0.001	Partial
AI Personalisation → Perceived User Control	0.58	0.06	9.9	<0.001	—
Perceived User Control → Satisfaction (H2)	0.42	0.06	7.1	<0.001	Supported
AI Personalisation → Satisfaction (direct)	0.21	0.06	3.5	<0.001	Partial
Trust → Purchase Intent (H3)	0.28	0.05	5.7	<0.001	Supported
Satisfaction → Purchase Intent (H4)	0.54	0.05	10.9	<0.001	Supported
AI Personalisation × Privacy Concerns → Trust (H5)	−0.14	0.05	−2.9	0.004	Supported

TABLE 2: PATH RESULTS. SOURCE: AUTHORS

Direct influence analysis

AIP → TRU and AIP → SAT remain positive but shrink once EXP and PUC are included (partial mediation). SAT exerts the strongest direct effect on PI (β=.54).

Mediation analysis (Bootstrap, 5,000 resamples)

H1 (AIP → EXP → TRU): indirect β=.24; 95% CI [.17, .32]; VAF=52% → partial mediation. This aligns with the notion that transparency/explainability cues „unlock" trust formation.

H2 (AIP → PUC → SAT): indirect β=.24; 95% CI [.16, .33]; VAF=53% → partial mediation.

H4 (AIP → SAT → PI): indirect β=.25; 95% CI [.18, .33]; partial mediation (direct AIP → PI small but significant, β=.12, p=.038).

Moderation analysis (H5: Privacy concerns)

Interaction AIP × PC → TRU: β=−.14, p=.004.

Simple slopes: Low PC (−1 SD) β=.35, p<.001; High PC (+1 SD) β=.09, p=.11 (ns).

Thus, at higher privacy concern, personalisation no longer materially improves trust-consistent with privacy-trust trade-offs reported in prior research.

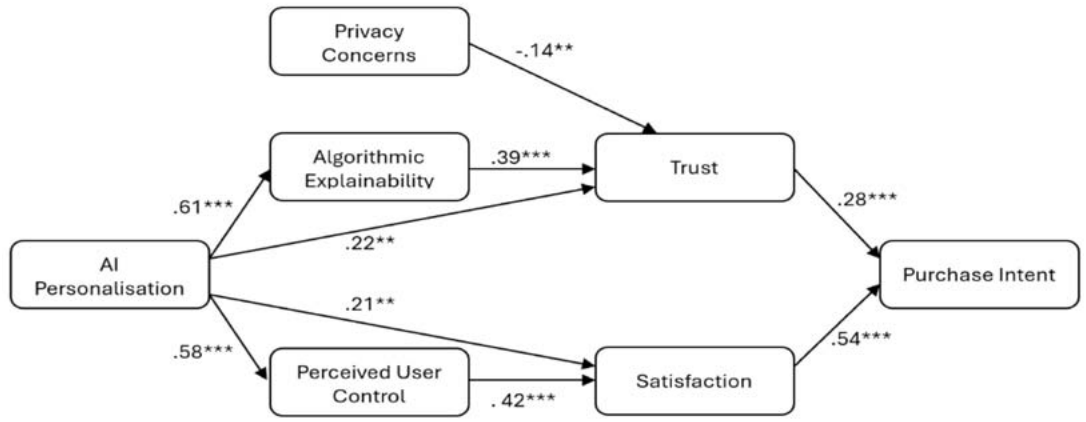

FIGURE 1: MODEL RESULTS
SOURCE: AUTHORS

5 Discussion ——— This study was designed to move beyond monolithic conceptualisations of AI personalisation by empirically testing the distinct psychological mechanisms through which it shapes consumer behaviour. Our central objective was to „unpack the black box" by examining the mediating roles of algorithmic explainability and perceived user control. The results provide robust support for our theoretical model, confirming that these two constructs serve as crucial, yet separate, pathways linking AI personalisation to consumer trust, satisfaction, and ultimately, purchase intent.

5.1 Summary and interpretation of key findings ——— Our analysis of 389 active online shoppers reveals a generally positive disposition towards AI-driven e-commerce experiences. The high mean scores for AI Personalisation, Satisfaction, and Trust suggest that users find value in tailored content. The structural model demonstrated an excellent fit and accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in key outcomes, including Trust, Satisfaction, and Purchase Intent.

Most importantly, the findings illuminate two distinct psychological pathways:

Pathway 1: The cognitive route to trust via explainability ——— Our results confirm that AI Personalisation is a strong predictor of Algorithmic Explainability, which, in turn, is a significant driver of Consumer Trust. The partial mediation analysis substantiates that a significant portion of personalisation's effect on trust is channelled

through the user's ability to understand the system's logic. This finding empirically validates the core tenets of the explainable AI (XAI) and FATE (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Explainability) frameworks in a consumer context. When users perceive that an AI system provides clear reasons for its recommendations, it demystifies the decision-making process. This transparency reduces uncertainty and counters the perception of the algorithm as an opaque „black box" fostering beliefs about the system's competence, reliability, and integrity. In essence, understanding why a recommendation was made builds the cognitive foundation necessary for trust.

Pathway 2: The affective route to satisfaction via control ——— Concurrently, AI Personalisation strongly predicts Perceived User Control, which is a powerful antecedent of Consumer Satisfaction. This pathway, also a partial mediation, highlights the importance of user agency. When consumers feel empowered to influence, adjust, or correct the personalisation process, their sense of autonomy is preserved. This control mitigates feelings of being manipulated and ensures the user remains an active participant rather than a passive recipient of algorithmic outputs. This aligns with Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT); control allows users to align the system's output with their own expectations, leading to higher confirmation and subsequent satisfaction. The positive affective experience of being in control directly enhances the overall enjoyment and contentment with the service.

5.2 The differential impact of trust and satisfaction on purchase intent ——— A particularly insightful finding is the differential impact of our two key psychological outcomes on Purchase Intent. While both Trust and Satisfaction are significant positive predictors, Satisfaction has nearly double the direct influence on the intention to purchase. This suggests that in the immediate context of an e-commerce transaction, the affective and experiential quality of the interaction (satisfaction) is a more potent driver of behaviour than the cognitive evaluation of the system's reliability (trust).

This does not diminish the importance of trust. Rather, it clarifies its role. Trust may function as a foundational prerequisite, a „licence to operate", that enables continued engagement and willingness to share data. However, it is the moment-to-moment satisfaction derived from a relevant, controllable, and pleasant user experience that most directly converts browsing into buying. This is further supported by the partial mediation of Satisfaction on the path from AI Personalisation to Purchase Intent, indicating that much of personalisation's commercial benefit is realised through the positive experience it creates.

5.3 The critical boundary condition: Privacy concerns ——— Our model's most significant theoretical contribution may be the confirmation of Privacy Concerns as a negative moderator of the relationship between AI Personalisation and Trust. The simple slopes analysis is revealing: at low levels of privacy concern, personalisation has a strong, positive effect on trust. However, at high levels of privacy concern, this positive effect is completely nullified.

This result provides stark empirical evidence for the personalisation-privacy paradox. It demonstrates that transparency and explainability are not panaceas. No matter how well a system explains its logic, if users fundamentally distrust the underlying data collection and usage practices, trust will not be established. This finding implies that efforts to „open the black box" through explainability are necessary but insufficient. They must be coupled with robust, transparent, and user-respecting privacy policies to be effective. When privacy concerns are salient, the benefits of personalisation are overshadowed by the perceived risks, effectively short-circuiting the cognitive pathway to trust.

5.4. Theoretical implications ——— This study makes several contributions that refine and extend established theories in the context of human-AI interaction:

- Extends the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) for the AI Era: The research moves beyond the traditional TAM constructs of perceived usefulness and ease of use. It demonstrates that for complex, autonomous AI systems, new constructs reflecting the system's opaque nature are critical. By empirically validating Algorithmic Explainability (EXP) and Perceived User Control (PUC) as essential mediating variables, the study proposes an evolved acceptance model for AI. It suggests that trust and satisfaction are not direct outcomes of system use but are complex, mediated states shaped by the user's ability to understand (explainability) and influence (control) the algorithm.
- Refines Trust Theories in Human-AI Interaction: The model provides a more granular understanding of trust formation in AI contexts. It empirically separates two pathways: a cognitive route to trust channelled through explainability and an affective route to satisfaction channelled through control. This dissection clarifies that trust in AI is not a monolithic belief but is built on a cognitive foundation of transparency and predictability. Furthermore, the powerful moderating effect of privacy concerns shows that trust in AI systems depends not only on perceptions of their competence and ability but, more critically, on their perceived integrity and benevolence in data handling.
- Enriches Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT): This study adds a critical antecedent to the ECT framework in AI-driven environments. ECT posits that satisfaction results from the alignment of expectations with performance. Our findings reveal that Perceived User Control is a key mechanism that empowers users to actively manage this alignment. By giving users the agency to adjust, correct, or guide the personalisation process, control helps ensure the AI's output meets or exceeds their expectations, thereby facilitating the positive confirmation that leads to satisfaction. This introduces a proactive, user-driven element into the traditionally passive confirmation process described by ECT.
- Provides an Empirical Model for the Personalisation-Privacy Paradox: The study moves beyond the conceptual description of the „personalisation-privacy paradox" by operationalising and testing its boundary conditions. The confirmation of privacy concerns as a significant negative moderator of the AIP Trust relationship provides a quantitative model of the trade-off. The finding that explainability's benefits are nullified at high levels of privacy concern demonstrates that transparency alone is an insufficient solution to the paradox. This implies that ethical AI frameworks like FATE (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Explainability) must be built upon a foundational respect for privacy to be effective in practice.

5.5 Practical implications ——— The findings offer clear, actionable guidance for designing and managing AI personalisation systems in e-commerce. To move from theory to practice, managers and system designers should prioritise the following four strategic areas:

- a) Implement a dual-feature strategy for trust and satisfaction: The research demonstrates that trust and satisfaction are built through different mechanisms and should be addressed with distinct features.
  - To build trust (The Cognitive Route): Integrate clear, in-context explainability features that demystify the algorithm's logic. Simple explanations like, „Recommended because you viewed [Product X]“, address the user's cognitive need for transparency and reduce uncertainty.
  - To drive satisfaction (The Affective Route): Provide tangible user control mechanisms that enhance agency. Features such as preference sliders, feedback buttons („show me less like this“), and accessible data dashboards empower users, directly boosting satisfaction and mitigating feelings of being manipulated.
- b) Focus user experience (UX) design on satisfaction to maximise conversions: While trust is a crucial foundational element, the results show that user satisfaction has nearly double the direct influence on purchase intent.
  - Prioritise experiential quality: UX design should be optimised to create seamless, relevant, and empowering interactions that generate immediate positive feelings.
  - Leverage control as a satisfaction driver: Perceived control is a key lever for improving the user experience, as it allows users to align the system's output with their own expectations, directly leading to greater satisfaction and converting browsing into buying.
- c) Adopt a „Privacy-by-Design“ approach as a foundational priority: The study provides strong evidence that algorithmic transparency is ineffective if users have high privacy concerns.
  - Go beyond compliance: A reactive, compliance-focused approach to privacy is insufficient. Instead, embed privacy considerations into the core of the system design.
  - Communicate and empower proactively: Clearly communicate how user data is used, minimise data collection to what is essential, and provide users with meaningful, easy-to-use controls over their personal information. Failing to address privacy proactively will fundamentally undermine all other trust-building efforts.
- d) Segment users and adapt the personalisation experience: The finding that frequent users perceive higher levels of control and relevance indicates that a one-size-fits-all approach is suboptimal.
  - Design for the learning curve: for new users, create an adaptive onboarding process that gradually introduces personalisation features and explains how they work. This helps build an accurate mental model and fosters initial confidence.
  - Cater to power users: For experienced users, offer more advanced controls and nuanced personalisation options. This creates a virtuous cycle of engagement, familiarity, and deepened trust.

5.6 Limitations and directions for future research ——— This study has limitations that present opportunities for future work. First, its cross-sectional design prevents definitive causal claims. Experimental studies that manipulate levels of explainability and control are needed to confirm the causal directions proposed. Second, our reliance on self-report measures is a limitation. Future studies should incorporate behavioural data (e.g., click-through rates, actual purchases, use of control features) to triangulate findings. Third, the sample was drawn from a single country (Algeria), which may limit the generalisability of the findings across different cultural and regulatory contexts. Replications in diverse markets are essential. Finally, this study conceptualises explainability as a user perception; future research could manipulate the specific types and quality of explanations provided to identify which are most effective.

6 Conclusion ——— In seeking to unpack the „black box“ of AI personalisation, this research demonstrates that the path from algorithmic output to consumer action is not direct. It is mediated by crucial psychological perceptions of understanding and agency. By providing users with both algorithmic explainability to build cognitive trust and perceived control to foster affective satisfaction, businesses can transform opaque AI systems into transparent and empowering partners.

However, these efforts will only succeed if they are built on a foundation of respect for user privacy. Ultimately, the most commercially effective personalisation strategies will also be the most ethically responsible ones.

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Kľúčové slová | Key Words ——— AI personalisation, algorithmic explainability (XAI), perceived user control, purchase intent, privacy concerns, black box algorithms | *personalizácia pomocou umelej inteligencie, vysvetliteľnosť algoritmov (XAI), vnímaná kontrola zo strany používateľa, nákupný zámer, obavy o súkromie, algoritmy typu „čierna skrinka"*

JEL klasifikácia | *JEL Classification* ——— D82, L81, L86, M31, C83

Résumé ——— ***Rozbalenie čiernej skrinky: Ako algoritmická transparentnosť a kontrola zo strany používateľov ovplyvňujú dôveru, spokojnosť a nákupné zámery v ére umelej inteligencie***

Táto štúdia skúma „paradox personalizácie a súkromia" v elektronickom obchode poháňanom umelou inteligenciou, kde spotrebitelia oceňujú personalizované zážitky, zároveň však rastie ich obava z rozsiahleho zberu údajov algoritmami typu „čierna skrinka". Výskum sa zameriava na kritickú medzeru v pochopení toho, ako algoritmická transparentnosť a kontrola zo strany používateľa ovplyvňujú reakcie spotrebiteľov na personalizáciu prostredníctvom umelej inteligencie, čím prekračuje monolitické chápanie systémov umelej inteligencie. Pomocou modelovania štrukturálnych rovníc s 389 online nakupujúcimi z Alžírska táto štúdia empiricky testuje odlišné sprostredkovateľské úlohy vysvetliteľosti algoritmov a vnímanej kontroly používateľa. Kvantitatívny prierezový prieskum využíval validované meracie škály na preskúmanie vzťahov medzi premennými. Kľúčové zistenia odhaľujú dve odlišné cesty: vysvetľovanie buduje kognitívnu dôveru prostredníctvom transparentnosti, zatiaľ čo vnímaná kontrola zvyšuje spokojnosť prostredníctvom autonómie používateľa. Spokojnosť vykazuje takmer dvojnásobný priamy vplyv na nákupný zámer v porovnaní s dôverou. Kľúčové je, že vysoké obavy o súkromie úplne rušia pozitívne účinky personalizácie na dôveru. Tieto výsledky ukazujú, že eticky zodpovedné stratégie personalizácie musia integrovať vysvetliteľnost algoritmov aj kontrolu používateľa s robustnými postupmi v oblasti ochrany súkromia, keďže transparentnosť sama o sebe nestačí bez základného rešpektovania súkromia používateľa.

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN THE MARKETING PROFESSION: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF STRESSORS

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of the marketing profession on the perceived level of occupational stress among marketing professionals and to compare the findings with previous empirical research in the field of work-related stress. The research employed a mixed-methods design: the quantitative part was conducted using the standardized Job Stress Scale (JSS), while the qualitative part relied on semi-structured interviews. A total of 90 respondents from three professional sectors participated in the study. The results indicate that marketing professionals report significantly higher levels of stress compared to other occupational groups, particularly in connection with stressors such as time pressure, ambiguous client demands, and rapidly changing project objectives. The discussion compares these findings with earlier studies and provides recommendations for HR management and for the prevention of burnout within the marketing profession.

1 Introduction ——— Workplace stress is a phenomenon with well-documented consequences for employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall health (Conte and Landy 2010). Marketing, as a dynamic and highly competitive field, combines creative demands with strict deadlines and rapidly shifting market conditions (Mohezar 2021). These factors create an environment that can lead to chronic distress and, ultimately, burnout (Maslach and Leiter 2013).

Individual responses to stress are not uniform. Previous research (Paulík 2017; Castellini et al. 2023) has shown that personality traits – particularly neuroticism and conscientiousness – significantly influence how employees perceive stress and which coping strategies they employ. In marketing, this interaction between personality and stressors is especially relevant due to the need to balance quick decision-making, creativity, and intensive client communication. The aim of this study is twofold:

1. To determine whether marketing professionals experience higher levels of stress compared to other occupational groups.
2. To identify the main stressors specific to the marketing profession.

2 Theoretical framework ——— The theoretical framework introduces the main theories and approaches that guide this study. It serves as a foundation for interpreting the results and connecting them with existing literature.

2.1 Conceptualizing stress ——— Stress can be defined as a state of strain or tension in which the human organism responds to external or internal stressors (Plamínek 2008). Paulík (2017, p. 65) interprets stress as a state of overload that exceeds an in-

dividual's capacity to manage emotional strain. Similarly, Kassin (2007) defines stress as an unpleasant state of physiological and psychological activation. Stressors, the causes of stress, can be categorized into catastrophic events, major life changes, and daily hassles – so-called microstressors (Kassin 2007). Other classifications distinguish between real and potential stressors (Paulík 2017), external and internal stressors (Pugnerová and Kvintová 2016), or physical, social, and psychological stressors (Pešek and Praško 2016). Microstressors, such as lack of time, are among the most frequent sources of stress in modern society (Pugnerová and Kvintová 2016).

2.2 Stress in the workplace ——— In today's hypercompetitive market environment, occupational stressors are particularly salient, with long-term effects on employees' mental and physical health. Stressors in the workplace can be divided into physical and psychological dimensions (Conte and Landy 2010). For example, Ardiyansyah et al. (2023) found a strong relationship between noise exposure and stress levels, with higher noise intensity corresponding to increased perceived stress. Similarly, Hahad et al. (2019) confirmed negative cardiovascular and psychological effects of excessive noise exposure. According to Lukan et al. (2022), these findings are supported by recent clinical evidence highlighting the association between workplace stress and both psychological and physiological health outcomes.

Employers, therefore, face growing responsibility to provide safe and health-conscious working conditions that foster employee well-being, ultimately contributing to organizational performance (Mohezar 2021). Environmental factors, such as workplace greenery, also play a significant role. Colley et al. (2015) demonstrated that access to natural elements enhances employees' mental well-being in urban office settings, findings further supported by Ríos-Rodríguez et al. (2023). Fayyad and Evans (2024) likewise emphasized that background noise undermines workplace well-being, whereas visual access to plants and natural elements has restorative effects.

Stress in the workplace may also arise from poor management practices. Castellini et al. (2023), in a study of 1,493 employees, found that workplace conflicts and organizational restructuring were significantly associated with negative health outcomes, particularly among middle-aged employees replaced by younger, lower-paid workers. Technological demands also intensify stress levels. For instance, intensive care nurses must continuously deploy cognitive resources such as vigilance, precision, and rapid decision-making to function effectively in high-tech environments (Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998). Marketing professionals, similarly, face both cognitive and emotional strain, as competitiveness requires constant professionalism and a „consumer-friendly" approach (Landstätter and Garrosa 2008).

Work overload and organizational culture also play a role. In many contexts, long working hours are perceived as a marker of success and dedication. However, extreme demands combined with insufficient recovery can lead to serious health outcomes, including death from overwork (Paulík 2017). For example, Kim et al. (2019) documented persistent high mortality rates linked to cardiovascular disease and suicide among South Korean managers despite reductions in average working hours. Similarly, Takahashi (2019) identified cerebrovascular and cardiovascular disorders as prevalent among overworked Japanese employees, with long working hours as the main risk factor. Conversely, organizations that promote work-life balance show 25% lower turnover rates, and employees with access to such programs report higher happiness and productivity (Sirgy and Lee 2023).

2.3 Stress in the marketing profession ——— The Chartered Institute of Marketing (2023) defines marketing as "the process by which companies anticipate, identify, and satisfy customer requirements profitably." Marketing professionals are expected to possess a broad understanding of organizational functioning (Stanley 2003). Recent surveys by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (2024) highlight several stressors specific to this profession.

More than half of respondents (56%) reported concerns about exhaustion and burnout, particularly among younger professionals aged 25-34. Economic pressures also play a significant role: 59% of marketers expressed concern that financial uncertainty may lead to budget cuts, thereby increasing demands for efficiency and creativity with fewer resources – ultimately raising stress levels. In addition to these factors, role ambiguity and unclear expectations represent significant psychological stressors, particularly in dynamic and performance-driven environments such as marketing (Sharma and Singh 2016).

Given these challenges, this study builds on existing literature and provides an empirical investigation into the specific stressors faced by marketing professionals. The methodological approaches of selected previous studies are summarized in Table 1.

Author(s)	Year	Conclusions and study findings
Abdullah et al.	2015	Marketing professionals experience a negligible level of stress.
Sharma; Singh	2016	Factors triggering stress include ambiguity and lack of career growth, work-life imbalance, unattainable goals, poor communication systems, and poor interpersonal relationships.
Farooq	2017	Occupational stress significantly reduces individual performance.
Kazmi.; Dubey	2020	A negative correlation was found between occupational stress and job satisfaction.
Shetty; Ansari	2021	There is a relationship between emotional labor and perceived stress levels, as well as between respondents' experience and perceived stress levels.
Tello et al.	2022	Work-life imbalance contributes to high stress levels and negatively affects marketers' job performance.
Radhika; Lakshmi	2023	The majority of respondents experience work-related stress.
Sharma et al.	2024	A considerable number of respondents report various physical and psychological issues, such as pain, memory and concentration problems, mood disorders, and depression.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM SELECTED STUDIES
SOURCE: AUTHORS

The methods employed were also of critical importance for this research study. A comprehensive overview of the number of respondents and the instruments used in all the studies mentioned above is presented in the Table 2. below.

Author(s)	Year	Number of respondents	Method	Instruments used
Abdullah et al.	2015	51 marketing specialists (50 men; 1 woman)	Survey	NSAD Stress Questionnaire; Likert scale
Sharma; Singh	2016	600 marketing managers from the banking sector	Survey	Job Stress Questionnaire (JSQ); Job Descriptive Index (JDI); NUT Teacher Stress Survey; Organizational Role Stress Scale (ORS); Likert scale
Farooq	2017	3,200 marketing employees (1,800 managers; 1,400 assistant managers)	Survey	Self-designed questionnaire; Likert scale
Kazmi.; Dubey	2020	30 marketing professionals (15 from banking; 15 from marketing) aged 25-35	Survey	Cognitive Style Inventory (CSI); Occupational Stress Index (OSI); Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ-OH); Likert scale
Shetty; Ansari	2021	208 marketing professionals (175 men; 33 women)	Survey	Emotional Labor Scale; Perceived Stress Scale (PSS); Likert scale
Tello et al.	2022	200 marketing specialists from the pharmaceutical industry (100 men; 100 women)	Survey	Self-designed questionnaire; Likert scale
Radhika; Lakshmi	2023	30 marketing employees from four different companies (21 men; 9 women)	Survey	Job Stress Scale (JSS); NIOSH Generic Job Stress Questionnaire; Likert scale
Sharma et al.	2024	250 marketing professionals (141 managers; 109 assistant managers)	Survey	Self-designed questionnaire; Likert scale

TABLE 2: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF SELECTED STUDIES
SOURCE: AUTHORS

It can be concluded that occupational stress is a key factor significantly affecting the performance and job satisfaction of marketing professionals across various sectors. All the studies examined focused on different aspects of occupational stress, its causes, and consequences, primarily employing quantitative methods based on survey research. The studies utilized either self-designed or standardized questionnaires, often inspired by validated psychological instruments such as the Job Stress Scale (JSS), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), or Occupational Stress Index (OSI).

These tools enabled the measurement of perceived stress levels and the identification of specific stressors. The Likert scale played a prominent role in the methodologies of all studies, as it allowed for a more detailed assessment of the frequency and intensity of stress on a scaled range.

3 Methodology ——— The literature review indicated that the Job Stress Scale (Pugnerová and Kvintová 2016) is a valid instrument for measuring occupational stress across various professions. The Job Stress Scale (JSS), developed by Parker and in 1983, was specifically designed to measure dimensions of occupational stress. Stress levels are assessed using 15 items, with responses evaluated on a Likert scale. In later revisions, two items were removed, resulting in the official 13-item version completed by respondents (Fields 2002). The scale addresses two dimensions: the first dimension examines time-related stress (the feeling of constant pressure), while the second focuses on work-related anxiety. Responses are typically recorded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. In some cases, a four-point scale is used, eliminating a neutral option (George 2018).

To gain deeper insight, the study incorporated a qualitative component – semi-structured interviews – recommended in similar studies (e.g., Ríos-Rodríguez et al. 2023; Fayyad and Evans 2024) to identify contextual stress factors. The interviews aimed to analyze sources of occupational stress in detail, identify key factors contributing to perceived stress, and understand individual coping strategies. The discussions focused on specific stressors, factors affecting participants' psychological well-being, and subjective assessments of the work environment, particularly in terms of interpersonal relationships and team dynamics. Furthermore, the interviews examined stress management methods, including targeted relaxation techniques, engagement in sports, meditation, or other forms of recovery. The interview protocol employed open-ended questions, a seven-point Likert scale, and projective questions.

3.1 Sample selection ——— The selection of respondents was divided for the quantitative survey (using the JSS) and the subsequent qualitative interviews. For the quantitative survey, three sub-criteria were established to classify respondents into three professional fields based on their area of employment: marketing, information technology, and commerce. Including respondents from diverse professional sectors allowed for a comparative analysis of stress differences across these groups.

The choice of these three specific professional areas was intentional, based on shared characteristics that ensure comparability in terms of cognitive demands, work pace, and responsibility levels. All three professions require psychological resilience, the ability to respond quickly to changes, the management of complex tasks, and frequent communication with clients, customers, teams, or management. These fields are also typical of dynamic work environments with frequent exposure to stressors related to time pressure, performance, and expectations. This selection facilitated a meaningful comparison of perceived stress levels among professional groups operating in similarly demanding work contexts.

The total research sample consisted of 90 respondents, with 30 participants from each professional area, all based in Prague or the Central Bohemian Region. This approach ensured balanced representation across the professional groups, enabling relevant comparisons.

For the qualitative in-depth interviews, 10 marketing professionals were purposefully selected. The selection did not adhere to strict criteria such as professional experience, employment type, gender, or age.

The goal was to capture diverse perspectives on occupational stress, including participants with different positions and levels of experience. All selected participants had previously completed the JSS survey. Based on survey results, respondents were divided into two groups according to their perceived stress levels. First group A – lower stress levels (5 respondents), second group B – higher stress levels (5 respondents).

This division enabled an analysis of differences in stress experiences, their causes, and coping strategies between participants with varying stress levels. A total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted, 5 with participants from Group A and 5 from Group B.

Data collection took place in March 2025. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes, beginning with a brief introduction that informed respondents about the anonymity of their responses and data handling procedures. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed for detailed analysis. The interviews were conducted in an undisturbed environment to allow participants to express their experiences and opinions freely.

A semi-structured approach was used, allowing not only responses to pre-defined questions but also exploration of topics based on individual experiences and reactions, providing both comparable data and deeper insights into participants' personal experiences.

4 Results ——— This section presents the main findings of the study, based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The results are reported in line with the research objectives and are structured to allow comparison across professional groups as well as within the marketing profession itself. Descriptive statistics and survey outcomes are followed by an overview of key themes emerging from the in-depth interviews.

4.1 Quantitative analysis ——— Data from the survey were evaluated according to the JSS scoring guidelines. All data were entered into Microsoft Excel, where each respondent received two sub-scores for the two dimensions and an overall perceived stress score.

Results were then aggregated and averaged by professional field, enabling comparisons between groups. The following section summarizes the evaluation of results for the three professional groups studied.

Profession	Time-related stress	Anxiety	Total score
Marketing	30	16	46
Information technology	22	13	35
Commerce	29	15	44

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF AVERAGE JSS SCORES BY PROFESSIONAL GROUP
SOURCE: AUTHORS, QUESTIONNAIRE (2025)

4.2 Quantitative findings ——— Respondents working in marketing reported the highest level of perceived work-related stress among all surveyed professional groups. The average score for the time pressure dimension was 30 points, indicating a high level of stress related to deadlines, workload, and time demands. The anxiety dimension scored 16 points, reflecting a moderate level of psychological strain, including internal tension, irritability, or feelings of overload. The overall JSS score was 46 points, corresponding to a higher-moderate level of stress. These results reflect the demanding nature of the marketing environment, typically characterized by fast-paced work, high performance and creativity expectations, and frequent communication with clients, superiors, and the public. Marketing work thus requires increased adaptability and psychological resilience.

Respondents from the information technology (IT) sector showed the lowest average scores across both JSS dimensions. Time pressure scored 22 points, indicating a moderate level of perceived time stress. Anxiety scored 13 points, suggesting milder manifestations of psychological stress compared to the other groups. The overall JSS score for IT professionals was 35 points, corresponding to a lower-moderate level of stress. Factors contributing to these results may include more flexible working arrangements, less direct client contact, and greater autonomy in managing tasks.

Employees in the sales sector achieved an average score of 29 points for time stress, indicating a higher-moderate level of perceived pressure related to time, performance, and work intensity. The anxiety score was 15 points, reflecting a moderate level of psychological strain. The overall JSS score was 44 points, also within the higher-moderate range. This may be explained by the constant need for customer interaction, high expectations for sales performance, and performance pressure, which are typical in sales-related professions.

This analysis highlights significant differences in perceived stress levels across professional groups, with marketing employees exhibiting the most pronounced stress burden.

4.3 Qualitative analysis of stressors ——— The interview data were processed qualitatively, with selected questions supplemented by quantitative overviews in tables or charts for clarity. The interviews were transcribed, followed by data coding (Kozel 2013) and qualitative analysis. This methodology aimed to identify recurring patterns in responses, capture differences between respondents with higher and lower stress levels, and formulate conclusions to inform recommendations.

A key finding is that the most significant stressors in marketing are time pressure and the need to meet tight deadlines. Respondents rated time pressure on average at 5.2 points on a 7-point scale, with the higher-stress group scoring up to 6 points, compared to 4.4 for the lower-stress group. Frequent changes in assignments and client requirements were similarly stressful, with an overall mean of 5.1 points (5.6 for the higher-stress group, 4.6 for the lower-stress group). Notable differences also emerged in interpersonal interactions: for some respondents, workplace relationships were minimally stressful (1.8 points), whereas others identified communication as a major stressor (4.6 points).

Stressor	Group A	Group B	Overall average
Time pressure and deadlines	4.4	6.0	5.2
Interactions (clients, management, team)	1.8	4.6	3.2
Unexpected changes in tasks and requirements	4.6	5.6	5.1
Unclear role expectations	2.6	3.6	3.1
Overtime work	3.8	5.2	4.5
Average per group	3.4	5.0	4.2

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF AVERAGE JSS SCORES BY PROFESSIONAL GROUP
SOURCE: AUTHORS, QUESTIONNAIRE (2025)

Adaptation to new technologies was generally perceived as relatively easy, with an average rating of 3.1, reflecting a high level of confidence and the ability to quickly respond to industry changes. The frequency of experienced stress differed depending on respondents' group classification. Marketing professionals with higher stress levels reported stress as occurring „often" to „very often," whereas others described it as occasional or rare.

Group	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	Total
Group A	0%	20%	30%	0%	0%	50%
Group B	0%	0%	0%	30%	20%	50%
Commerce	29	15	44			

TABLE 5: FREQUENCY OF STRESS OCCURRENCE AMONG MARKETING PROFESSIONALS
SOURCE: AUTHORS, QUESTIONNAIRE (2025)

Negative consequences of stress were most evident in decreased concentration, reduced productivity, and difficulty managing personal responsibilities, including fatigue and sleep disturbances. Most respondents (80%) employed various coping strategies, most commonly physical activity, relaxation, or creative activities. The regularity of these practices varied – only two respondents used techniques daily, while the majority practiced them several times per week.

Table 6 shows the frequency of stress-relief practices for each group of respondents as well as the total percentage of answers.

Frequency of practice	Group A	Group B	Total
Daily	10%	10%	20%
Several times a week	10%	20%	30%
Once a week	10%	10%	20%
Less often	10%	0%	10%
Never	10%	10%	20%
Total	50%	50%	100%

TABLE 6: FREQUENCY OF STRESS-RELIEF PRACTICES
SOURCE: AUTHORS, QUESTIONNAIRE (2025)

Employer support correlated with lower stress levels – employees satisfied with stress management and mental health support rated it on average 5.67, compared to only 2.75 where support was lacking. Most respondents (7 out of 10) observed burnout symptoms among colleagues, emphasizing the need for systematic prevention.

Individual coping strategies included relaxation, physical activity, the ability to say „no," setting realistic boundaries between work and personal life, and seeking peer support. Half of the participants highlighted the importance of positive interpersonal relationships, fair communication, and sharing work and personal experiences. Small rewards and motivation outside work – such as recognition after completing a project or planning leisure activities – also played a role. Time management strategies, including planning the day according to energy cycles or using the „eat the frog" approach, contributed to more effective task management.

Recommendation	Frequency
Open communication	80%
Team collaboration	70%
Personal life and hobbies	80%
Setting boundaries	60%
Never	10%
Total	50%

TABLE 7: PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING WORK-RELATED STRESS
SOURCE: AUTHORS, QUESTIONNAIRE (2025)

Employers and employees were advised to use specialized educational platforms focused on soft skills development and fostering supportive work environments. Implementing flexible working hours or remote work options proved effective in reducing time pressure and improving work planning.

5 Key findings and recommendations ——— The survey and individual in-depth interviews identified several critical insights into stress experiences among marketing professionals. Time-related stress emerged as a dominant factor, with the marketing group scoring an average of 30 out of 40 on the time stress dimension of the JSS questionnaire, indicating substantial pressure from deadlines, high work pace, and responsibility. All respondents (100%) agreed that marketing is a dynamic and turbulent environment characterized by frequent changes.

The most significant stress-inducing factors included tight deadlines (average rating 5.2) and unexpected changes in tasks or requirements (5.1), reflecting the fast-paced nature of the field. Group A (lower stress) rated time pressure at 4.4, while Group B (higher stress) rated it 6.0. Similarly, frequent changes in tasks were rated 4.6 (Group A) versus 5.6 (Group B). Interpersonal interactions showed notable differences: Group A considered them minimally stressful (1.8), whereas Group B reported high stress levels (4.6), suggesting communication can be a major stressor for highly stressed individuals. Conversely, adaptation to new technologies and trends was a minor stressor (average 3.1), indicating confidence in handling technological changes.

Given that interpersonal interactions and time pressure were identified as the most significant stressors, organizations should implement structured workload management approaches, such as job redesign and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which emphasizes the balance between job demands and available resources to reduce stress and prevent burnout (Maslach and Leiter 2013; Bakker et al. 2023). Introducing flexible workload allocation, clear role definitions, and regular performance feedback can further mitigate role ambiguity and time pressure.

Recommendations to reduce stress included promoting open communication, improving team collaboration, raising awareness about stress prevention, and supporting employee education in interpersonal skills. Long-term strategies emphasized work-life balance, enabling employees to engage in personal interests and rest outside the work environment.

6 General discussion ——— The results of this study confirm that occupational stress is a significant issue within the marketing profession, which is consistent with

findings from broader occupational health research done by Ishimatu et al. (2023). In contrast to the study by Abdullah, Raza, and Akhtar (2015), which reported a relatively negligible level of stress among marketing professionals, with personal factors being the dominant stressors, this research highlights a higher level of stress, with organizational aspects of work – specifically time pressure, constant changes in tasks, and the necessity of overtime – being the primary stressors. This discrepancy may be explained by differences in methodology, sample size, sample characteristics, or cultural and economic context.

The findings are consistent with studies by Farooq (2017) and Sharma et al. (2024), which similarly report that occupational stress significantly impacts employee performance and that high stress is common in marketing. This is reflected in the average JSS score of marketing respondents (46 points), falling within the higher mid-range stress category. Compared to Sharma and Singh (2016), who identified lack of clarity and career growth as the main stressors, this study indicates that tight deadlines and frequent changes in requirements are the dominant stressors, potentially reflecting the specifics of marketing positions in the studied sample.

Group B reported higher levels of stress related to interpersonal interactions. This may be associated with increased emotional labor demands, as individuals are required to regulate their emotions in interactions with clients, colleagues, and management (Shetty and Ansari 2021).

An interesting observation, in line with the findings of Shetty and Ansari (2021) and Radhika and Lakshmi (2023), is that respondents with higher stress levels perceive less support from employers and more difficulties in interpersonal communication, which was also confirmed through the qualitative part of the study. Emotional labor, including the requirement to exhibit certain behaviors or maintain emotional composure toward clients, plays a significant role and may contribute to psychological overload.

Regarding stress-coping strategies, the results align with recommendations from most cited studies. Respondents frequently mentioned the need for active psychohygiene, work-life balance support, physical activity, and relaxation techniques, supporting conclusions from Tello et al. (2022). However, it is notable that some highly stressed respondents did not actively use any stress management techniques, highlighting the need for education in stress management, particularly for younger professionals, self-employed individuals, or those in managerial positions who perceive stress as an inherent aspect of their work.

7 Conclusion ——— This study demonstrates that marketing professionals are exposed to a combination of stressors, which, without effective coping strategies, can lead to long-term distress and burnout. The primary aim of the study – examining the impact of the marketing profession on perceived stress levels – was achieved. It was confirmed that marketing professionals indeed experience elevated stress levels compared to selected other professional fields, such as information technology and sales. Marketing professionals reached a total stress score of 46 out of 65, corresponding to a higher mid-range stress level. This finding is also consistent with the qualitative component, where respondents repeatedly described their profession as time-demanding, dynamic, and requiring high flexibility and adaptability to unexpected changes.

When interpreting these results, certain limitations must be considered, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The survey was not designed to be representative of the entire marketing sector but rather aimed to provide deeper insight into stress among a selected sample of workers in Prague.

Therefore, individual in-depth interviews with respondents were a crucial methodological component. Despite not aiming for full representativeness, the study reveals interesting trends that could be further investigated in larger samples and across other regions of the Czech Republic.

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Kľúčové slová | Key Words ——— burnout syndrome, Job Stress Scale, marketing profession, occupational stress, stressors | *syndrom vyhoření, Job Stress Scale, marketingová profese, pracovní stres, stresory*

JEL klasifikácia | *JEL Classification* ——— M31, J28, M12, D91

Résumé ——— ***Pracovní stres v marketingové profesi: empirická analýza stresorů***

Cílem této studie bylo zkoumat vliv marketingové profese na vnímanou úroveň pracovního stresu u marketingových pracovníků a porovnat získané výsledky s předchozími empirickými výzkumy v oblasti pracovního stresu. Výzkum byl realizován pomocí smíšeného designu: kvantitativní část byla provedena prostřednictvím standardizované škály pracovního stresu (Job Stress Scale – JSS), zatímco kvalitativní část vycházela z polostrukturovaných rozhovorů. Studie se zúčastnilo celkem 90 respondentů ze tří profesních oblastí. Výsledky ukazují, že pracovníci v marketingu vykazují významně vyšší míru stresu ve srovnání s ostatními profesními skupinami, zejména v souvislosti se stresory, jako jsou časový tlak, nejasné požadavky klientů a rychle se měnící cíle projektů. Diskuse porovnává tato zjištění s předchozími studiemi a nabízí doporučení pro řízení lidských zdrojů a prevenci syndromu vyhoření v marketingové profesi

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ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF SELECTED SOCIAL NETWORKS IN SLOVAK THEATRES

This study summarises the performance results of social network profiles of selected Slovak theatres in the 2024/25 season. AVG proved to be a key quantitative KPI that should be monitored continuously to ensure reliable evaluation. Using the full theatre season as the observation period strengthened the objectivity of the findings. The results may support the creation of effective marketing communication strategies and enable theatres to compare their online performance with competitors, serving as a basis for SWOT analyses. Social media represent essential marketing communication tools that facilitate direct interaction with spectators. The evaluated KPIs on Facebook and Instagram were flexible and time specific, reflecting the dynamic nature of online communication. As they change continuously, long term monitoring is necessary. Theatre programmes and attractive online content may attract new followers and enhance engagement. Users today divide their attention across multiple platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, LinkedIn, X, Telegram, etc. It is therefore likely that new communication platforms will continue to emerge. The social media environment is rapidly evolving and requires theatres and marketers to react promptly and adapt their communication strategies.

Information and communication technology has affected multiple areas of life and all types of communication. The implementation of online marketing tools can also be observed in theatres. In addition to providing a theoretical background, this study presents an analysis of the use of selected social networks in the marketing communication conducted by theatrical institutions in Slovakia; it also examines the performance of their social media profiles, quantified through relevant media indicators (KPIs). Two types of theatres were included in the analysis: theatres under the competency of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and the municipal (regional) theatres under the competency of the self-governing regions. The primary research methods involved a quantitative and comparative analysis conducted over a single theatre season (from 1 September 2024 to 30 June 2025).

1 Introduction ——— The changes that have occurred in the field of communication, associated with the use of digital data processing and telecommunication transmission, i.e. the beginning of the use of the information and communications technology (ICT), have significantly transformed the nature of communication as such. Digitalisation has affected all aspects of life, including the marketing communication. Online marketing, also referred to as the internet marketing, involves the use of interactive, virtual spaces for promoting and selling goods and services via inter-

net. It combines the innovative tools and methodologies that are used for marketing products and services via the internet. It encompasses a wide range of marketing strategies and enables organisations to reach large audiences at minimal cost. Moreover, online marketing provides an instant feedback and analytical data; it is flexible, fast and has a global impact.

The nature, intensive use, and popularity of ICT have had significant quantitative and qualitative effects on the original principles of what once the dominant communication paradigm (face-to-face interaction). A change in the form of information necessarily affects the content (Cenková 2020, p. 276). Current trends represent a shift from written and verbal expressions towards a more visually artistic mode of communication, with a preference for large images, photos, striking headlines, and only a limited amount of information encoded in text. The purpose of presenting a message in this style is to use its intrinsic effects to achieve the highest possible efficiency (the largest possible number of views, likes, clicks, responses, shares, comments, etc.).

2 Theoretical background ——— Active marketing communication is important when designing any promotional campaign. The marketing environment is developing and regularly innovated. Since the beginning of the massive use of the internet, subjects have been confronted with a challenge to reorganise their marketing strategies, in particular to transform them from the conventional to the online marketing forms. In conventional marketing, products were offered using the tools of the marketing communication mix (advertising, word of mouth, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing). With the onset of online platforms, and due to constantly changing customer behaviour, the conventional marketing mix had to be supplemented with online marketing communication tools such as SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), PPC (Pay-Per-Click) advertising, email marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, etc. As a result, marketers now have better access to the user's data and can therefore improve targeting. However, online marketing has not eliminated the conventional forms of communication. Despite the widespread use of the internet and several years of the pandemic, the majority of customers still appreciate interpersonal contact. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, electronic commerce accounted for only about 15 percent of total retail revenues in 2022. The Euromonitor revealed that the penetration rate of electronic commerce is much higher – and the highest globally – in China, but still remains below 30 percent (Kotler 2023, p. 30). Therefore, it is now necessary to achieve a synergy between conventional and modern marketing tools. The currently popular social media marketing consists of creating and distribution content on social media platforms. It is aimed at attracting the attention of both new and existing customers and keeping them engaged in communication. Community management is of equal importance; it focuses on what happens after messages are posted in social media. It comprises customer service, social media monitoring, tracking trends, engaging in discussions, etc. (Kumar 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic was a powerful stimulus that intensified the digitalization of activities in cultural institutions (Parkhomenko et al. 2024, p. 121; Cirlugea and Farago 2024, p. 143). Social media represent an important part of online marketing and may be used at minimal or even zero cost. This financial advantage makes

them convenient carriers of information and advertising, especially for low-budget organisations, including the non-profit institutions.

The core of communication on social media platforms is a piece of content (a post), which may take various forms (Cenková 2017, p. 549) It represents a basic unit of communication on social networks. Mutual communication between a sender and a receiver, as well as the content creation and sharing, are the crucial aspects of social networks (Cheonsoo 2017, p. 443) Posts induce responses, and comments lead to rational and interactive functions and sharing (Dhanesh 2022, p. 48-49).

The use of social media is very popular in Slovakia as well. For example, a GO4Insight survey clearly showed that the most widely used social platform in Slovakia is Facebook, followed by YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc. (Go4Insight 2024, online). According to DataReportal: Digital 2025 Slovakia, at the beginning of 2025, the internet was used by 5.05 million of people in Slovakia (91.8% of the population), while social networks were used by 3.60 million users aged 18+ years, corresponding to 80.7% of the total population aged 18+. In Slovakia, Facebook had 2.60 million users at the beginning of 2025 while Instagram had 1.60 million users (Kemp 2025).

Facebook has been globally the most used social network (Bačík 2015, p. 677), and it continues to hold this position (Statista, 2025, online). All social networks provide their users with the opportunity to communicate and share multimedia content in various formats (Cenková 2008, p. 19). Instagram is a free social network, primarily designed for sharing photos and videos. Its users can edit and share photos and short videos through a mobile application. To each post, they may add a description and use hashtags (#) and geographical tags. The success of an Instagram profile is directly proportionate to the quality of the shared photos and videos. Since the platform is strongly focused on the visual content, the main message should be integrated directly into the shared photo (image).

3 Research section ——— The research sample of the study was analysed for selected online marketing KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) of two (the most used) social networks in Slovakia – Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG) – used by the selected theatre institutions, which were divided into two research groups. The framework applied to such a division was the relevant legislation, in particular Act No. 103/2014 Coll. on Theatrical and Musical Activities and on Amendments and Supplementations to Certain Acts (hereinafter referred to as the Act on Theatres) (Act on Theatres 2025, online). The first group comprised the theatres operating under the competency of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (within the meaning of Section 3 of the Act on Theatres), in particular: Slovak National Theatre (SND), National Theatre in Košice (ND KE), and Nová Scéna Theatre (DNS) [Art and Creativity 2025]. This group included art institutions that conduct theatrical activities as specified in Section 2(1) and are theatrical institutions as specified in Section 2(4) of the Act on Theatres. All institutions included in this group had active profiles on both FB and IG.

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Act on Theatres, the self-governing regions and municipalities are the authorities with the competency over theatrical and musical activities at the regional level. Therefore, the second group of the research sample consisted of municipal theatres which primarily conduct dramatic performances; the puppet theatres and dance theatres were excluded from the analysis (Municipal Theatres 2017, online):

The following institutions were included in the second group:

- **Western Slovakia** – Andrej Bagar Theatre (DAB), Aréna Theatre (DA), Astorka Korzo ´90 Theatre (DAK), Ján Palárik Theatre (DJP), Ludus Theatre (DL), Jókai Theatre (Komáromi Jókai Színház (KJS)), Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav City Theatre (DPOH), Karol Spišák Old Theatre (SDKS);
- **Central Slovakia** – Jozef Gregor Tajovsky Theatre (DJGT), City Theatre in Žilina (MDZA), Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin (SKDMt);
- **Eastern Slovakia** – Alexander Duchnovič Theatre (DAD), Jonáš Záborsky Theatre (DJZ) (unfortunately, its FB profile was not compatible with the analytical tool used in the study), Romathan Theatre (DROMA), Thália Theatre (Thália Színház Theatre (DTS)), ACTORES City Theatre in Rožňava (this theatre did not have a business FB profile), and the Spiš Theatre (SPD).

The analysis of the FB KPIs included 15 municipal theatres while the analysis of the IG KPIs included 17 municipal theatres; at the time of conducting the research, they had active business profiles on the analysed social networks. The analytical tool used to interact with those profiles was the ZoomSphere (ZoomSphere 2025, online). The research included only those theatres that employed their own dramatic ensembles, whereas theatres that merely provided their stages to guest actors were excluded (e.g. the City Theatre in Košice).

3.1 Methodology ——— The theatrical institutions listed above were divided into two research groups (state theatres and municipal theatres). The following step was a survey of whether they had their own business profiles on FB and IG. The profiles were monitored already in the 2024/25 theatre season in order to obtain the most relevant results. Using the ZoomSphere, a tool designed for social media management that facilitates the analysis, monitoring, and assessment of activities conducted on social networks, the selected FB and IG metrics were evaluated. Due to the scope limitations of this paper, it is impossible to report on all of the analysed KPIs. Therefore, only those indicators that are the most relevant from a marketing perspective are presented here. The purpose of the study was to provide the available quantitative data rather than to examine the content of the monitored communication. Each theatrical institution has its specific group of followers (a target group) who are offered the theatre's programme and with whom the theatre communicates using a special language. The aim of the study was not to assess these qualitative aspects, but to present a quantitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the marketing strategies implemented on social networks.

3.2 KPI identification ——— The core research activity consisted of monitoring specific online marketing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), i.e. the key and measurable performance metrics used for assessing the success rate and performance of organisations, products, services, or processes. Tools designed for analysing social media offer a wide range of KPIs, such as page views, the number of external accesses to a website (most frequently from google.com), and the number of interactions (the engagement). Most content creators strive to increase the engagement, i.e. to increase the number of likes and comments on the news feed (the content displayed on social networks).

Selecting relevant KPIs for research is a complex issue addressed by numerous scholars and marketing professionals. One of the key works in this field can be considered the publication by Trunfio and Rossi: Conceptualising and measuring social media engagement: A systematic literature review comprising an analysis of 259 academic articles focused on social media engagement. The authors state: „The systematic literature review confirms that there is no theoretical certainty or solid consensus among scholars about measuring engagement on social media." (Trunfio and Rossi 2021, p. 281-284)

The paper, among other things, suggests the COBRA model as a conceptual tool to classify and interpret social media, that can be traced to the three dimensions of consumption, contribution and creation (Schivinski et al. 2016). „When measuring social media engagement, researchers should pay attention not only to 'contribution' but also to 'consumption' and 'creation', which are important indicators of the attention a post receives (Oviedo-Garcìa 2014; Schivinski et al. 2016), giving them a different weight. It becomes even more important if considering that the same social networks provide different weights to users' actions" (Trunfio and Rossi 2021, p. 285-286).

Despite the conceptual and qualitative research on the topic, even the most recentmetrics offer measurements that do not allow engagement to be widely represented in its multidimensional and polysemic nature (Oviedo-García et al. 2014; Peltier et al. 2020 In: Trunfio and Rossi 2021 p. 286). Some authors (Rogers 2018; Abuljadail and Ha 2019) point out that an exclusively quantitative approach does not provide a complete picture of user engagement on social media; therefore, it should be complemented with qualitative research, which makes it possible to gain deeper insight into the motivations, context, and meaning behind user interactions.

The KPI with the highest explanatory power for brand and for awareness building on social networks is the Engagement Rate (ER). It represents the percentage of all engaged users (EU) – that is the number of unique users who made any click on the website's content, but did not necessarily have to add a like, share it, or post a comment, divided by the Reach parameter, i.e. the number of people who viewed a particular post, and multiplied by 100 (Eger, 2024, p. 162). We consider this parameter to be key to our research. The ZoomSphere analytics tool offers a similar metric to ER in its portfolio, called "The average number of interactions per fan" (AVG). It calculates this value by dividing the KPI called "account of interactions" by the number of fans and multiplying the result by 100. This KPI is one of the crucial metric for monitoring FB and IG pages, as it builds brand awareness and fosters interaction between users and the FB/IG page.

The resulting ER depends primarily on the published posts, their format, and their frequency. It is therefore necessary to publish posts with a certain regularity. In other words, AVG may be used to measure the performance of social networks. With AVG, you can measure the performance of social media platforms. Due to the fact that the monitored theatres operated in cities with populations of various sizes, the Page Fans/Fan´s Trend parameter was not considered a KPI relevant to this study. In certain cases, a large number of fans may even hinder performance in other KPIs, as demonstrated, for instance, by research conducted by Rival IQ based on large-scale internet data. It indicated that as the number of members or followers of an organisation increases, achieving a high engagement rate becomes more difficult compared to smaller organisations (Feehan 2024).

3.3 KPI evaluation/Results ——— The aim of this study was to identify the KPI that is capable of indicating the quantity and quality of activity on a particular social medium based on various parameters. The parameter identified as the most appropri-

ate for this purpose was the AVG, representing the average number of interactions with a FB/IG profile per fan. This indicator has the highest explanatory power. The selected parameter was monitored on both social networks, FB and IG, in both research groups (theatres under the competency of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and in the municipal theatres). A comparison was made for both groups. The same procedure was applied to the both social media – FB and IG.

The four tables below show the performance of social network profiles of the analysed theatres. The first column shows their position based on their market share achieved in the AVG KPI. The second column shows the current calculated value of AVG, and the third column shows the market share expressed as a percentage (calculated as the market share within the selected group). The fourth column indicates the values for the previous period (2023/24 theatre season) compared to the monitored period (2024/25 theatre season), and the last fifth column shows the difference between the two periods.

The borderline values (particularly the recorded increases) may have resulted not only from organic impact but also from the influence of additional external variables—most notably paid advertising, as well as algorithmic changes of platforms, current societal developments, PR campaigns, and shifts in audience and competitor behaviour. However, no data on these factors were available, and we acknowledge that their absence represents a limitation of this research.

Differences can also be observed between state and municipal theatres. The decline in values within the group of state theatres is most likely attributable to several factors: their smaller number, historically older profiles discovered by audiences in earlier years, lower levels of interaction with the profiles—potentially due to a higher average age of their audiences — insufficient calls to action (CTAs), the absence of content formats associated with higher engagement rates (such as reels or carousels), and other related aspects.

	AVG	Share	Previous AVG	Difference
ND KE	0.877	72%	1.516	42%
DNS	0.223	18.3%	0.325	31%
SND	0.118	9.7%	0.321	63%

TABLE 1: AVERAGE PER FAN (AVG) FOR THE FACEBOOK PROFILES OF THE THEATRES UNDER THE COMPETENCY OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND THEIR SHARES IN THE ABOVE-SPECIFIED MARKET IN THE PERIOD FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2025.
SOURCE: AUTHOR

The values in the last columns of Tables 1 to 4 indicate the percentage difference between the monitored and the previous periods. A decrease is displayed by the analytical tool as a percentage without a minus sign (highlighted in red) whereas an increase is indicated with a plus sign (in black). The analysis shows that NDKE achieved the highest share of interactions during the monitored period (72%), although it recorded a 42% decrease in interactions per fan compared to the previous season. By contrast, the smallest decrease in interactions per fan was observed for DNS, which had an 18.3% market share and exhibited a 31% decline in the AVG parameter.

	AVG	Share	Previous AVG	Difference
SPD	0.943	16.3%	0.440	+114%
DTS	0.603	10.4%	0.454	+33%
SDKS	0.580	10%	0.675	14%
MDZA	0.469	8.1%	0.325	+44%
KJS	0.417	7.2%	0.444	6%
DROMA	0.402	6.9%	0.181	+122%
DAB	0.401	6.9%	0.458	12%
DA	0.376	6.5%	0.139	+171%
DJTG	0.369	6.4%	0.598	38%
SKDMT	0.356	6.1%	0.256	+39%
DPOH	0.280	4.8%	0.752	63%
DAK	0.196	3.4%	0.101	+95%
DAD	0.168	2.9%	0.372	55%
DJP	0.158	2.7%	0.275	43%
DL	0.079	1.4%	0.102	23%

TABLE 2: AVERAGE PER FAN (AVG) FOR THE FACEBOOK PROFILES OF MUNICIPAL THEATRES AND THEIR SHARES IN THE ABOVE-SPECIFIED MARKET IN THE PERIOD FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2025.
SOURCE: AUTHOR

As for the AVG parameter, which indicated the strength of the relationships between the fan community and their interactions with the page, the Spiš Theatre achieved the highest market share (16.3%) among all municipal theatres with its FB profile, as well as a 114% increase in the Interactions Per Fan parameter. The highest annual increase was recorded for by the Aréna Theatre (DA), which achieved a rise of +171%. By contrast, the largest decrease in interaction compared with the previous period, was observed for DPOH, amounting to 63%. The lowest market share was observed for DL – 1.4%, accompanied by 23% decrease in the AVG parameter.

The table below presents the analysed AVG parameter for the Instagram social network.

	AVG	Share	Previous AVG	Difference
ND KE	2.027	65.2%	0.795	+155%
SND	0.671	21.6%	2.585	77%
DNS	0.410	13.2%	0.705	42%

TABLE 3: AVERAGE PER FAN (AVG) FOR THE INSTAGRAM PROFILES OF THE THEATRES UNDER THE COMPETENCY OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND THEIR SHARES IN THE ABOVE-SPECIFIED MARKET IN THE PERIOD FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2025.
SOURCE: AUTHOR

Table 3 shows that the best results on the IG social network were achieved by the National Theatre in Košice, which reached a 65.2% market share and recorded an in-

crease of +155%. The largest decrease compared to the previous season was observed for SND – 77%, whereas the lowest market share (13.2%) was generated by the Nová Scena Theatre. Which showed a decline of 42%.

Table 4 presents the values for municipal theatres regarding their performance on the IG social network

	AVG	Share	Previous AVG	Difference
SDKMT	1 958.086	99.3%	0.000	+100%
MDZA	1.756	0.09%	1.512	+16%
DA	1.747	0.09%	0.488	+258%
DJZ	1.417	0.07%	1.287	+10%
DAB	1.358	0.07%	0.306	+344%
KJS	1.214	0.06%	1.326	8%
DJGT	1.034	0.05%	0.808	+28%
SPD	0.979	0.05%	0.462	+112%
DJP	0.957	0.05%	1.531	37%
DPOH	0.816	0.04%	0.768	+6%
SDKS	0.803	0.04%	0.429	+87%
DTS	0.595	0.03%	0.848	30%
ACTOR	0.488	0.02%	0.575	15%
DAK	0.375	0.02%	0.309	+21%
DAD	0.235	0.01%	0.472	50%
DROMA	0.187	0.01%	0.249	25%
DL	0.161	0.01%	0.225	28%

TABLE 4: AVERAGE PER FAN (AVG) FOR THE INSTAGRAM PROFILES OF MUNICIPAL THEATRES AND THEIR SHARE IN THE ABOVE-SPECIFIED MARKET IN THE PERIOD FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2025.
SOURCE: AUTHOR

The data in Table 4 indicate that the IG profile of the SKD in Martin was created during the analysed theatre season, which explains why it reached the highest market shared – as much as 99.3% (a +100% difference compared to the previous season). As for the already existing profiles, the highest value of this KPI (an increase in the number of interactions per fan by 344%) was achieved by DAB, whereas the greatest decrease was observed for the Alexander Duchnovič Theatre (-50%). This decline was most likely caused by the age structure of its target group (the dominant age category: being middle-aged and older audiences , who show a stronger preference for interaction via FB).

4 Conclusions ——— This study presents the performance results of the analysed social network profiles of selected Slovak theatres in the 2024/25 theatre season. For the sake of objectivity of the research results, it should be added that no data was available on whether any of the analysed theatrical institutions had used any paid FB or IG campaigns, which could significantly increase the number of interactions. Nevertheless, AVG is a parameter that should be monitored and optimised on a daily basis, and the choice of an entire theatre season as the observation period reflects the autor´s intention to obtain results with the highest possible degree of objectivity. The presented results may be used in the process of designing an optimal marketing communication mix for the individual theatres and creating their online marketing strategies. They also enable the theatres to compare their performance with that of competitors and may be used as a starting point for a SWOT analysis.

Social media are important tools of marketing communication. Their advantage lies in the fact that they facilitate engagement of spectators in communication. The metrics used for the assessing profiles on social networks – Facebook and Instagram – were created within a specific time and context and remain flexible (i.e. not final). They were predominantly quantitative in nature. Since the analysed KPIs are constantly evolving, it is important to monitor them over a longer time period and, in future research, supplement the data with content analysis As stated by Kupec et al. (2020, p. 9).: „This, in most cases, risky development needs to be monitored in order to eliminate risks, control changes, and uncover ineffectiveness." A theatre´s programme, as well as attractive content published on its social network profiles, can attract new fans (spectators). At present, user´s interest in particular social media platforms is diversified. In addition to FB and IG, they also follow YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, LinkedIn, the X social network, Telegram, and other networks. It may be assumed that the future will bring even more new platforms of online communication. The "market" of social networks is a rapidly changing environment that requires quick and flexible responses from marketers.

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Kľúčové slová | Key Words ——— theatre, marketing communication, social networks, Facebook, Instagram, analysis, KPIs | *divadlá na Slovensku, marketingová komunikácia, KPI, sociálne médiá, online výkonnosť*

JEL klasifikácia | *JEL Classification* ——— M31, M37, Z11

Résumé ——— ***Analýza využívania vybraných sociálnych sietí v prostredí slovenských divadiel***

Štúdia prezentuje výsledky výkonnosti profilov sociálnych sietí Facebook a Instagram vybraných slovenských divadiel. Zameriava sa na dve kategórie divadelných inštitúcií – divadlá v zriaďovateľskej pôsobnosti Ministerstva kultúry Slovenskej republiky a tzv. samosprávne divadlá. Základnými výskumnými metódami sú kvantitatívna a komparatívna analýza, realizovaná počas jednej divadelnej sezóny 2024/25 (od 1. 9. 2024 do 30. 6. 2025). Za kľúčový kvantitatívny ukazovateľ online mediálnej výkonnosti (Key Performance Indicator – KPI) sa považuje ukazovateľ miery zapojenia používateľov (Engagement Rate), v niektorých metrikách nazývaný aj ako AVG (The Average Number of Interaction per Fan), ktorého kontinuálne sledovanie je nevyhnutné pre zabezpečenie reliabilného hodnotenia. Prezentované výsledky môžu prispieť k tvorbe efektívnych online stratégií marketingovej komunikácie a umožniť analyzovaným divadlám porovnávať vlastnú výkonnosť s konkurenčnými subjetmi, napríklad ako východisko pre realizáciu SWOT analýz. Sociálne médiá v súčasnosti predstavujú neoddeliteľnú súčasť marketingovej komunikácie kultúrnych inštitúcií a poskytujú priestor pre priamu interakciu s (platiacimi) divákmi. Hodnotené KPI majú flexibilný a časovo špecifický charakter, čím reflektujú dynamickú povahu online komunikácie. Vzhľadom na ich premenlivosť si vyžadujú dlhodobé a systematické spravovanie a sledovanie. Kvalitný divadelný program v kombinácii s atraktívnym online obsahom na sociálnych sieťach môžu podporiť získavanie nových sledovateľov a zvýšiť ich mieru zapojenia smerom k budovaniu stálej diváckej základne. Používatelia pritom rozdeľujú svoju pozornosť medzi viaceré sociálne platformy: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, LinkedIn, X, či Telegram, pričom možno predpokladať vznik ďalších nových komunikačných kanálov. Prostredie sociálnych médií sa vyznačuje vysokou mierou dynamiky, čo kladie zvýšené nároky na schopnosť divadiel a marketingových profesionálov flexibilne reagovať a adaptovať komunikačné stratégie na neustále meniace sa podmienky v online prostredí.

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UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL: DOES THIS PRINCIPLE STILL APPLY TO MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA?

Marketing communications today operate in an environment shaped by social media algorithms that prioritize engagement (clicks, shares, and comments) and in doing so often reward emotionally hyped, even polarizing content. This creates a strategic dilemma for marketers: should they align their communication with algorithmic logic, amplifying strong emotions and potentially dividing audiences, or should they pursue inclusive messaging that seeks to unite people, hence expand the customer base? This question is not merely tactical; it reflects deeper considerations about brand identity, long-term growth, and the broader social role of marketing.

On one side, aligning with algorithm-driven dynamics offers clear advantages. Social media platforms inherently favor content that provokes reactions – whether excitement, outrage, or strong identification. Campaigns that tap into these emotional triggers can achieve rapid visibility and substantial reach. In crowded markets, where attention is scarce, bold and even controversial messaging can help brands stand out and establish a distinctive voice. By defining values and positions, brands may foster a sense of belongingness among like-minded consumers, strengthening loyalty and encouraging advocacy. In this sense, dividing audiences into supporters and non-supporters can be a deliberate outcome rather than a weakness.

Additionally, emotionally charged communication can deepen consumer relationships. When individuals feel that a brand represents their beliefs or identity, they are more likely to engage with it beyond transactional interactions. This emotional alignment may translate into stronger brand communities, repeated purchases, and organic brand ambassadorship (aka word-of-mouth promotion). For brands targeting niche or value-driven segments such clarity and intensity can be more effective than broad but shallow appeal.

However, the benefits of polarization are coupled with immanent risks. By appealing strongly to one group, brands may simultaneously alienate others, limiting their ability to grow and diversify their customer base. What drives engagement in the short term may constrain scalability in the long run. Emotionally (in)tense messaging can be difficult to sustain; audiences may become fatigued or skeptical if they perceive communication as manipulative or opportunistic. Overreliance on algorithmic incentives can thus erode long-term brand equity.

There is also a critical reputational dimension. In an era of heightened social awareness, consumers increasingly expect brands to act responsibly and authentically. Deliberately divisive communication can provoke backlash, boycotts, or be a source of lasting reputational damage. The volatility of this approach makes it inherently unpredictable: the same campaign that generates attention and loyalty can also trigger widespread criticism and loss of trust.

Inclusive and unifying marketing communication, in contrast, offers an alternative path. Rather than drawing boundaries, it seeks to build bridges by emphasizing shared values, common experiences, and broad accessibility. This approach enables brands to connect with diverse audiences and foster a sense of belonging. By avoiding exclusion, inclusive communication supports market expansion and adaptability, particularly in a globalized and culturally diverse environments. It also aligns with growing consumer expectations around diversity, equity, and social responsibility.

From a long-term perspective, inclusivity contributes to more sustainable brand growth. While it may not always generate immediate spikes in engagement, it builds trust, consistency, and emotional goodwill over time. These qualities are important for maintaining customer relationships in competitive markets, where alternatives are readily available. Brands perceived as respectful, empathetic, and authentic are more likely to retain customers and withstand periods of crisis or criticism.

Surely, inclusive marketing is not without its limitations. Efforts to appeal to everyone can result in vague or generic messaging that fails to capture attention. In the fast-paced and crowded social media landscape, content that lacks emotional intensity may struggle to achieve visibility. Algorithms may deprioritize such communication, making it harder for brands to reach their audiences organically. As a result, inclusive campaigns may require greater creativity, compelling storytelling, and strategic execution to remain engaging without becoming divisive.

The contrast between these approaches suggests that the choice is not strictly binary. Effective marketing communications often lie in balancing emotional resonance with inclusivity. Brands can evoke strong emotions without resorting to division by focusing on universally relatable themes such as aspiration, resilience, or connection. Additionally, modern digital tools enable precise audience segmentation, allowing brands to tailor messages to specific groups without fragmenting their overall identity (thus communicating potentially divisive message to separate and distinct groups of customers). This hybrid approach makes it possible to remain relevant and engaging while maintaining an inclusive brand image.

Real-world campaigns illustrate this tension clearly. For instance, the 2018 Nike Dream Crazy campaign by Nike demonstrated the power of divisive communication. By featuring Colin Kaepernick and aligning with a controversial social issue, Nike generated massive attention and strengthened its connection with certain audience segments, particularly younger and socially conscious consumers. At the same time, it alienated others and sparked backlash, highlighting both the effectiveness and the risks of polarization as a strategy.

In contrast, the annual Spotify Wrapped exemplifies unifying communication in the social media age. By transforming individual listening data into shareable, personalized stories, Spotify creates a global moment of participation that encourages users to connect, compare, and celebrate their identities through music. The campaign regularly achieves substantial engagement not through division, but through a blend of personalization and inclusivity, demonstrating that social media success does not necessarily depend on controversy.

Ultimately, the question of whether marketing communication should divide or unite audiences depends on the brand's goals, values, and context. While algorithm-driven polarization can deliver short-term visibility and strong engagement, it often comes with trade-offs in scalability, stability, and trust. Inclusive communication, although sometimes less immediately impactful, provides a foundation for long-term growth and resilience. The statement „united we stand, divided we fall" remains relevant, but not absolute. In marketing, division can indeed create a momentum, yet it rarely sustains enduring success on its own. It is unity – expressed through trust, inclusivity, and shared meaning – that ultimately enables brands to grow, thrive, adapt, and endure.

Résumé ——— ***V jednotě je síla: Má marketingová komunikace v čase polarizujících algoritmů sociálních médií sjednocovat či rozdělovat?***

V prostředí, kde algoritmy sociálních médií upřednostňují obsah vyvolávající silné emoce, stojí marketingová komunikace před zásadní volbou: má publikum rozdělovat, nebo sjednocovat? Na jedné straně může polarizující obsah přinést rychlou pozornost, vyšší engagement a reach, či jasně vyhraněnou skupinu loajálních zákazníků. Na straně druhé s sebou nese riziko odcizení širšího publika, omezení možností růstu a oslabení důvěry ve značku. Sjednocující komunikace, která staví na sdílených hodnotách, inkluzi a autenticitě, sice nemusí vždy generovat okamžité virální reakce, ale vytváří potenciálně pevnější a udržitelnější vztahy se zákazníky. I když rozdělení publika může krátkodobě fungovat, skutečná síla marketingu spočívá spíše ve schopnosti spojovat – tedy naplňovat myšlenku, že v jednotě je síla.

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ČESI A REKLAMA 2026

Česká marketingová společnost vydala tlačovú správu, ktorá obsahuje výsledky pravidelného prieskumu zameraného na postoje českej verejnosti k reklame. V tomto príspevku uvádzame jej znenie.

Výsledky výzkumu „Češi a reklama 2026" byly prezentovány na společenském setkání téměř 50 odborníků dne 26. 2. 2026 v prostorách Scény 5 v sídle ČMS na Novotného lávce, Praha 1 – Staré Město. Setkání zahájil Tomáš David, viceprezident ČMS. Výsledky výzkumu představil význačný český sociolog Stanislav Hampl, hlavní analytik společnosti ppm factum research. Následovala živá diskuse, kterou moderovala Ladislava Knihová, prezidentka ČMS. Setkání se zúčastnili představitelé univerzit, firemní praxe i studenti. Zastoupení byli odborníci z oblasti marketingu, managementu, ekonomie a HR, což potvrdilo velký zájem o téma i význam dlouhodobé zpětné vazby pro současnou marketingovou komunikaci a manažerské rozhodování podložené daty. Přinášíme vám video prezentaci vybraných výsledků výzkumu a článek s výběrem zajímavých momentů tohoto již v pořadí 43. výzkumného šetření.

Dlouhodobý výzkum postojů české veřejnosti k reklamě ——— Komunikační proces je neoddělitelně spojen se zpětnou vazbou. V marketingové komunikaci ji představuje výzkum, který umožňuje porozumět tomu, jak veřejnost reklamní sdělení vnímá, jak na ně reaguje a jakou roli reklama v každodenním životě skutečně hraje. Projekt Češi a reklama, jehož vznik iniciovala Česká marketingová společnost již v roce 1993 díky iniciativě zakladatelky výzkumu Jitky Vysekalové, představuje v českém prostředí unikátní dlouhodobou výzkumnou řadu sledující proměny vztahu veřejnosti k reklamě.

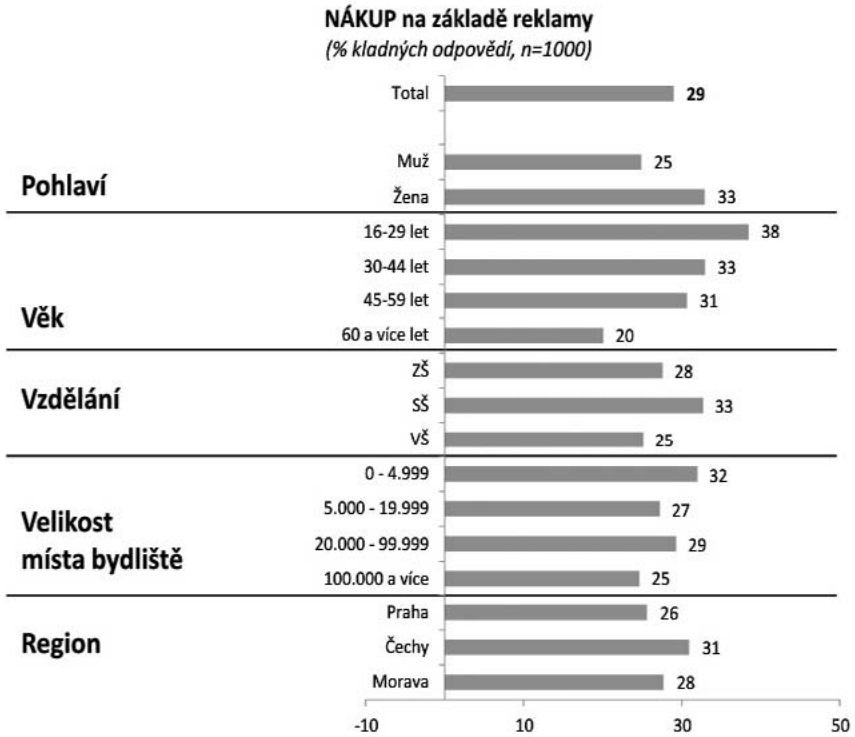
Právě možnost sledovat postoje v dlouhodobém časovém horizontu je největší hodnotou tohoto šetření, které se díky kontinuitě a srovnatelnosti postupně stává pomyslným drahokamem českého marketingového výzkumu. Výsledky totiž často neukazují dramatické zvraty, ale spíše pozvolné posuny a stabilitu názorů, které jsou pro pochopení fungování marketingové komunikace neméně důležité, možná i důležitější než náhlé změny. V době rostoucí mediální fragmentace, digitalizace a společenských diskusí o společenské odpovědnosti značek a jejich odolnosti získává tato zpětná vazba ještě větší význam.

Výzkum je realizován z iniciativy České marketingové společnosti ve spolupráci s Českým sdružením pro značkové výrobky (ČSZV), POPAI CE a agenturou ppm factum research a dlouhodobě navazuje na předchozí šetření realizovaná agenturou Marktest a dalšími odbornými institucemi a partnery.

Role reklamy při nákupním rozhodování ——— Jedním z dlouhodobě sledovaných témat je vliv reklamy na nákupní chování. Výsledky roku 2026 potvrzují trend postupného oslabování přímého deklarovaného vlivu reklamy na nákup.

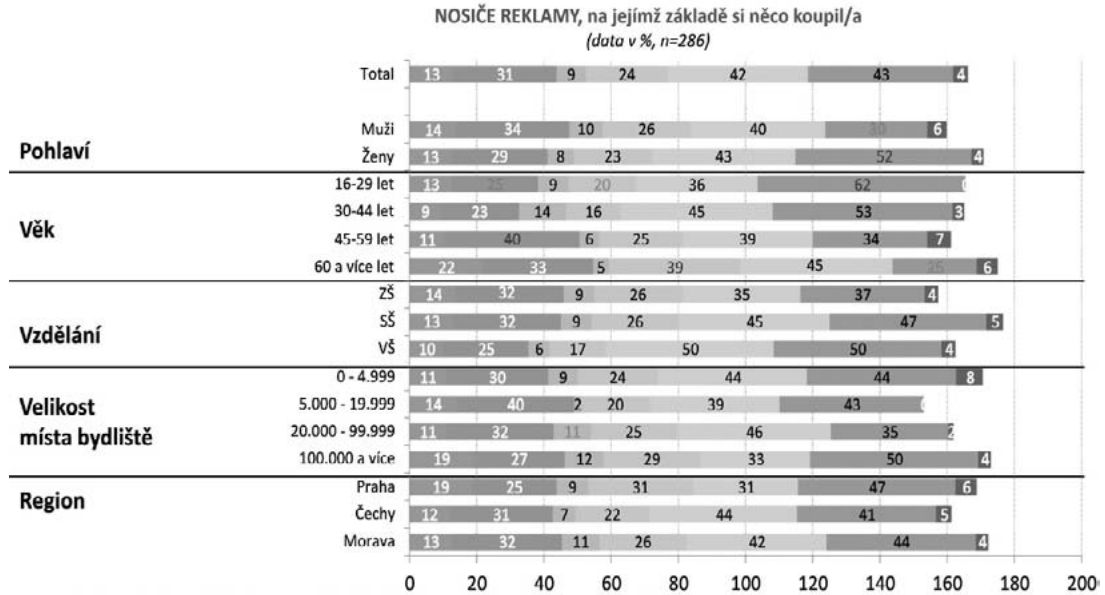
Podíl lidí, kteří uvádějí, že jim reklama alespoň částečně pomáhá při nákupním rozhodování, **stagnuje a aktuálně činí 36% populace. Ještě výraznější změnu však vidíme** u přiznaného nákupu na základě reklamy. Zatímco v předchozím roce uvedlo takovou zkušenost 38% respondentů, letos tento podíl klesl na 29%, což představuje nejnižší hodnotu od roku 2009.

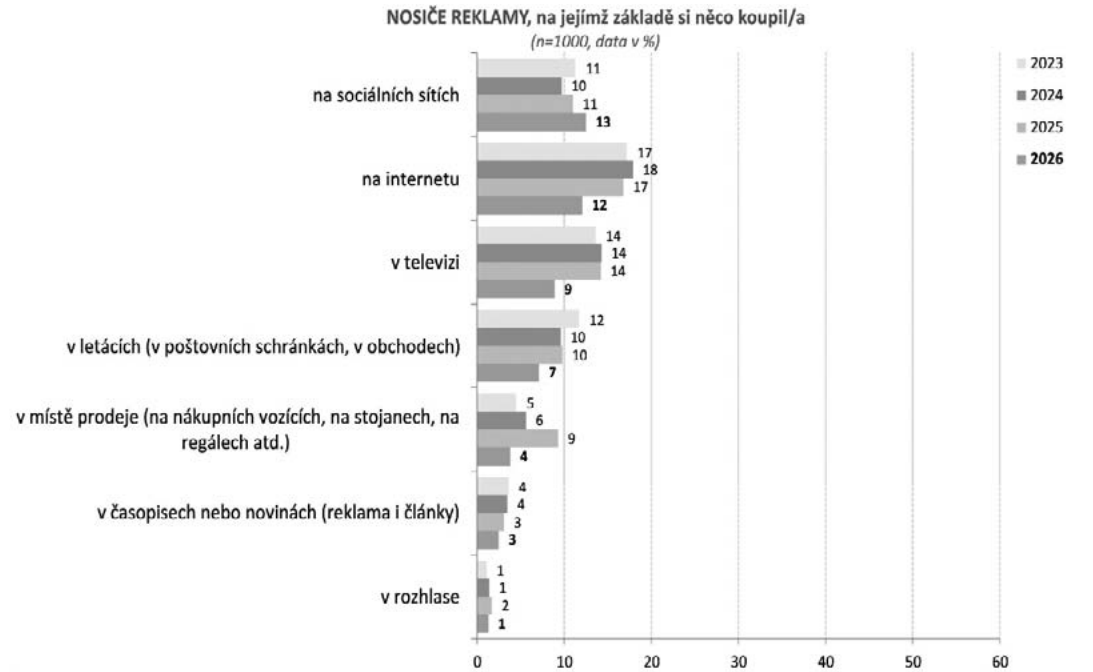
Stejně jako v minulosti platí generační rozdíly. Mladší lidé častěji přiznávají nákup inspirovaný reklamou, především na sociálních sítích. Naopak střední a starší generace reagují více na televizní reklamu a letákové kampaně. Nejčastěji uváděné reklamy, které ovlivnily nákup, propagují prodejce potravin nebo značky oblečení a obuvi.



Nejčastěji zmiňované reklamy, které ovlivnily nákup, propagují především prodejce potravin (19%) a značky oblečení a obuvi (16%), následované kategoriemi spojenými s volným časem a domácností (zábava/zahrada/sport/domácí mazlíčci/cestování – 11%) a internetovým prodejem (internetové obchody s různým sortimentem – 9%).

Zajímavým zjištěním je, že vliv reklamy na nákup meziročně poklesl téměř u všech reklamních nosičů – jedinou výjimkou zůstávají sociální sítě, jejichž význam nadále roste. Překvapivý a historicky nejvýraznější zlom však nastal u televizní reklamy: její deklarovaný vliv na nákup se meziročně snížil o 36%. V dlouhodobém výzkumu platí, že jednotlivé vlny mohou přinášet i dočasné odchylky, zároveň je ale tato změna natolik výrazná, že si zaslouží pozornost jako možný náznak trendu – tedy otázky, zda televize postupně neztrácí v očích části populace roli přímého nákupního impulzu ve prospěch digitálních kanálů, zejména sociálních sítí. Tento posun může být do určité míry dán i tím, jak lidé svůj nákup zpětně interpretují: u televize se vliv reklamy častěji rozplývá v širším mediálním kontextu, zatímco u sociálních sítí je pro respondenty snazší zaznamenat a přiznat bezprostřední nákupní impuls. A to ještě ani nezohledňujeme tzv. shoppable posts (příspěvek, z nějž je možné přímo nakupovat) a další prvky sociálních sítí, které cestu od zhlédnutí sdělení k nákupu zkracují na minimum.



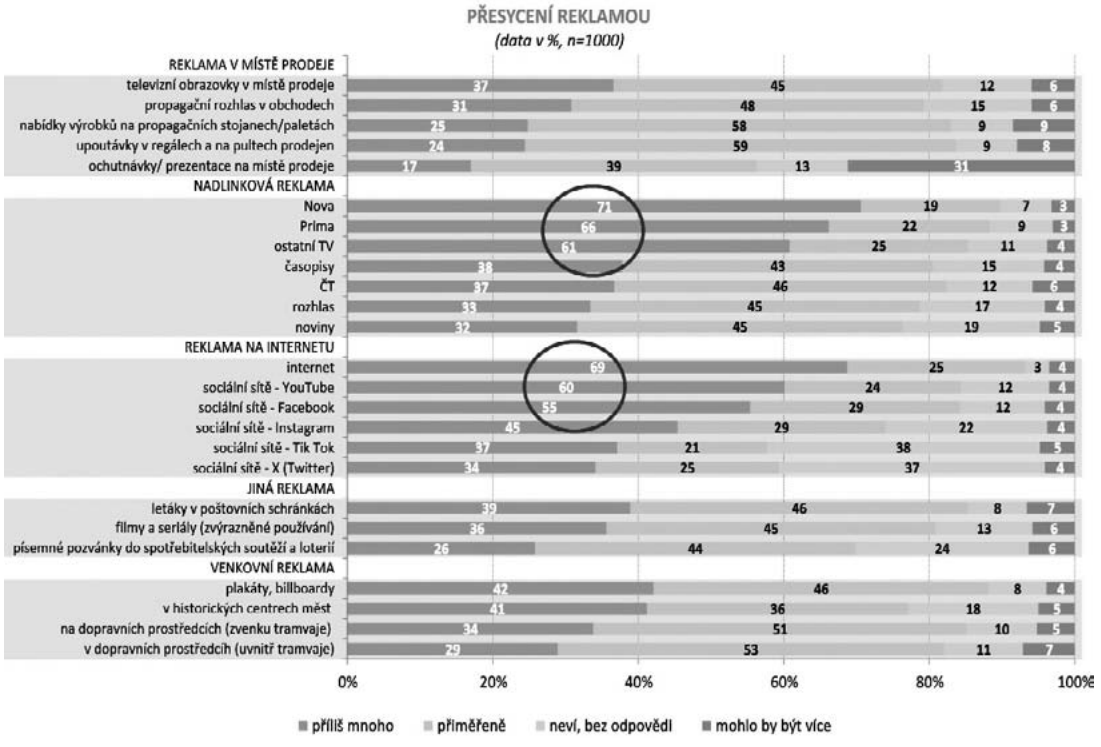


Přesycenost reklamou: stabilní obraz s mírným posunem ——— Pocit přesycenosti reklamou patří mezi nejstabilnější ukazatele celého výzkumu. Ani rok 2026 nepřináší zásadní změnu základního obrazu.
Češi jsou dlouhodobě nejvíce obtěžováni reklamou:

- na komerčních televizních stanicích,
- na internetu,
- a na sociálních sítích.

Přesycenost reklamou na sociálních sítích navíc též mírně roste, což odráží jejich stále intenzivnější využívání v marketingové komunikaci.

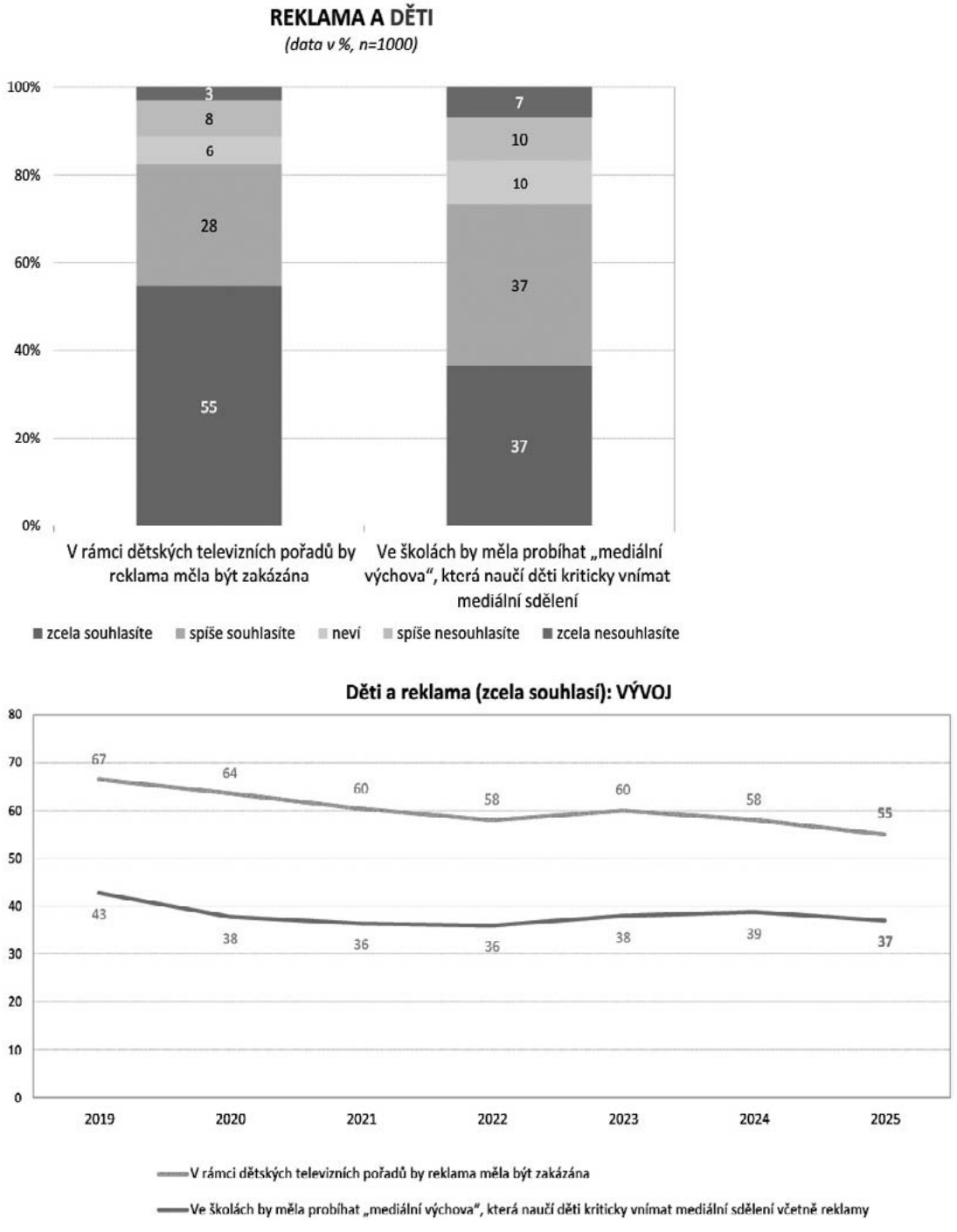
Naopak reklama v místě prodeje zůstává nejpozitivněji přijímanou formou komunikace. Přibližně polovina populace ji považuje za přiměřenou, přičemž nejlépe jsou hodnoceny ochutnávky a produktové prezentace. Potvrzuje se tak význam osobního kontaktu se značkou a multisenzorického působení při rozhodování o nákupu. Například více ochutnávek a dalších prezentací produktu přímo v místě prodeje by si přálo 31,2% respondentů.



Kontroverzní témata v reklamě ——— Postoje k regulaci reklamy vykazují dlouhodobou stabilitu. Největší odmítání veřejnosti se nadále týká reklamy na cigarety – její zákaz by podpořily více než dvě pětiny respondentů. Přísnější postoje tradičně zastávají starší lidé a osoby s vyšším vzděláním.

Poměrně benevolentně jsou naopak přijímány reklamy na volně prodejné léky, pivo a víno. Reklamu na tvrdý alkohol by zakázala přibližně třetina populace a více než čtvrtina respondentů by omezila reklamu na energetické nápoje.

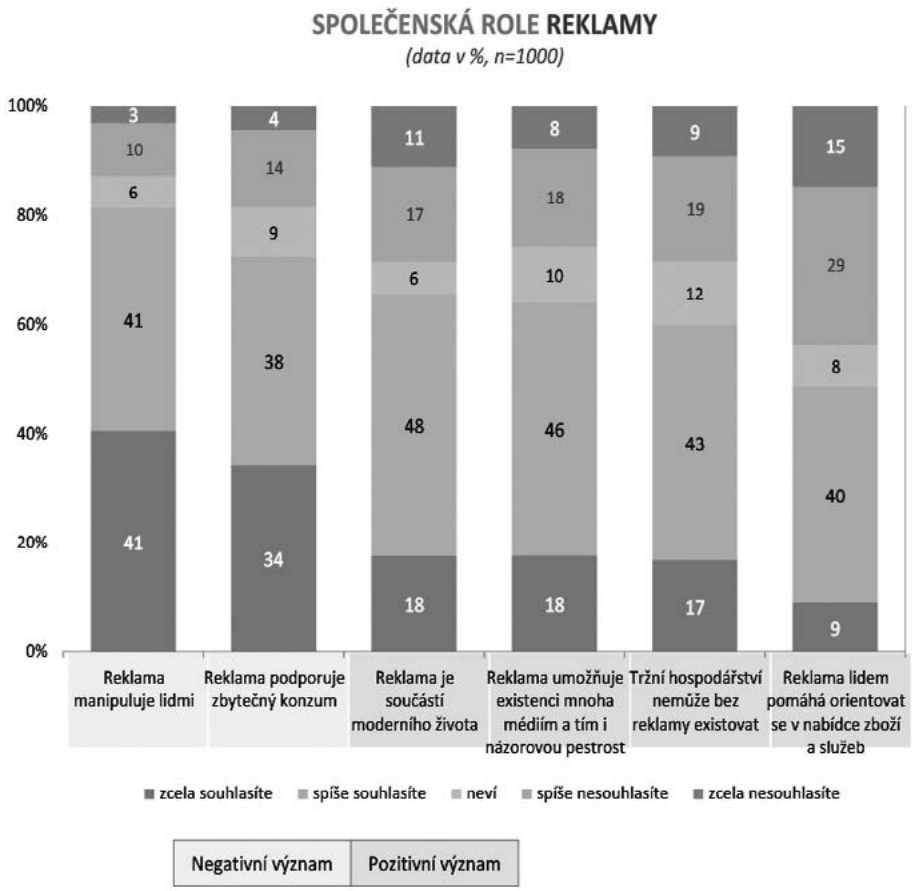
Silná shoda panuje u reklamy zaměřené na děti. Více než 80% Čechů se domnívá, že reklama do dětských pořadů nepatří. Současně téměř tři čtvrtiny populace podporují zavedení mediální výchovy ve školách, která by pomáhala dětem kriticky interpretovat mediální sdělení, včetně reklamy.



Společenská role reklamy: ambivalence přetrvává ——— Výsledky potvrzují dlouhodobě ambivalentní vztah české veřejnosti k reklamě.

Více než 80% respondentů souhlasí s tvrzením, že reklama manipuluje lidmi, a přibližně 70% ji spojuje s podporou konzumu. Současně však většina populace uznává její praktickou a ekonomickou funkci – reklama je vnímána jako součást moderního života, předpoklad existence médií a přirozená součást tržní ekonomiky.

Pozitivním signálem je mírné oslabování přesvědčení o manipulativním charakteru reklamy v posledních letech.



Důvěryhodnost a zábavnost reklamního sdělení ——— Důvěra v reklamu zůstává relativně nízká – plně jí věří necelá čtvrtina respondentů. Podíl lidí, kteří jednoznačně souhlasí s tvrzením, že většině reklam nelze věřit, v posledních letech postupně klesá.

Z hlediska emocí přetrvává kritický postoj: přibližně dvě třetiny Čechů uvádějí, že reklamy nepovažují za zábavné. Zapojení známých osobností zvyšuje důvěryhodnost reklamy podle méně než poloviny populace, což naznačuje postupné oslabování univerzální účinnosti celebrity marketingu.

Navzdory tomu je dobré připomenout, že kreativita v českém marketingu rozhodně nechybí – zvlášť když ji vidíme u mladé generace, která ji pravidelně potvrzuje i v soutěžích typu Marketér roku Junior. O to zajímavější je otázka, proč se tento potenciál v běžné reklamní praxi nepromítá výrazněji do sdělení, která by lidé vnímali jako zábavná a nápaditá. Jedním z vysvětlení může být opatrnost značek v nejisté době a tlak na rychle měřitelné výkony, který někdy vede spíše k „bezpečné“ komunikaci než k odvážnějším kreativním řešením. Právě zde se otevírá prostor pro hledání rovnováhy: jak spojit účinnost s originalitou tak, aby reklama nepůsobila jen jako další šum, ale jako sdělení, které stojí za

Reklama jako stabilní, ale proměňující se společenský fenomén ——— Dlouhodobý výzkum Češi a reklama opět ukazuje, že vztah veřejnosti k reklamě je komplexní a mnohovrstevnatý. Reklama je současně kritizována i přijímána jako nezbytná součást moderní společnosti.

Rok 2026 nepřinesl dramatické změny, ale spíše potvrzení postupných trendů:

- oslabování deklarovaného vlivu reklamy na nákup,
- rostoucí význam sociálních sítí,
- stabilní odmítání některých kontroverzních témat,
- a trvající ambivalenci mezi kritikou manipulace a uznáním ekonomické role reklamy.

Právě kontinuita těchto zjištění představuje největší hodnotu výzkumu. Poskytuje zadavatelům reklamy, agenturám i institucím dlouhodobý kompas umožňující lépe porozumět očekáváním veřejnosti a přizpůsobovat komunikaci tak, aby byla nejen efektivní, ale i společensky odpovědná.

Pár slov závěrem ——— Z pohledu současné marketingové praxe se k této dlouhodobé zpětné vazbě přidává ještě jeden nový rozměr: umělá inteligence (AI). Ne proto, aby nahradila výzkum nebo lidský úsudek, ale aby pomohla lépe pracovat s komplexitou dat a rychlostí změn. AI dnes dokáže zefektivnit třídění otevřených odpovědí, pracovat se sémantickými významy, odhalovat jemné vzorce v postojích různých skupin a v kombinaci s prediktivními přístupy naznačovat, jaké komunikační strategie mohou v budoucnu fungovat – a kde naopak hrozí přesycení reklamou, nedůvěra či dokonce její odmítání. Právě spojení dlouhodobých časových řad s moderními analytickými nástroji tak může posílit to nejcennější: schopnost komunikovat s lidmi s respektem, zaujmout jejich pozornost a citlivě vnímat, co je v dané době ve společnosti důležité.

DICTIONARY OF USEFUL MARKETING TERMS P

personal | ***osobný*** ——— Consumers appreciate personal communication that reflects their preferences and behavior. | *Spotrebitelia oceňujú osobnú komunikáciu, ktorá odráža ich preferencie a správanie.*

personal selling | ***osobný predaj*** ——— Personal selling is crucial in complex B2B solutions. | *Osobný predaj je kľúčový pri komplexných B2B riešeniach.*

pitch | ***krátka prezentácia*** ——— The agency prepared a persuasive pitch to secure the new account. | *Agentúra pripravila presvedčivú prezentáciu na získanie nového zákazníka.*

place | ***miesto / distribúcia (v marketingovom mixe)*** ——— Place refers to the distribution channels that bring the product to the customer. | *Miesto sa vzťahuje na distribučné kanály, ktoré prinášajú produkt k zákazníkovi.*

place a high premium on something | ***veľmi si niečo ceniť / klásť na niečo vysoký dôraz*** ——— Modern consumers place a high premium on brands that act sustainably and transparently. | *Moderní spotrebitelia si veľmi cenia značky, ktoré konajú udržateľne a transparentne.*

placement | ***umiestnenie*** ——— Good shelf placement increases product visibility. | *Dobré umiestnenie v regáli zvyšuje viditeľnosť produktu.*

position | ***umiestniť / pozicionovať*** ——— The company decided to position its new product as a premium solution for demanding customers. | *Spoločnosť sa rozhodla pozicionovať svoj nový produkt ako prémiové riešenie pre náročných zákazníkov.*

positioning | ***pozicionovanie*** ——— Effective brand positioning helps a company stand out in a crowded market. | *Efektívne pozicionovanie značky pomáha spoločnosti vyniknúť na preplnenom trhu.*

practical | ***praktický*** ——— Students appreciate practical examples that show how theory works in real marketing situations. | *Študenti oceňujú praktické príklady, ktoré ukazujú, ako teória funguje v reálnych marketingových situáciách.*

practice | ***prax / postup / spôsob práce*** ——— It is a common marketing practice to test campaigns before launching them. | *V marketingu je bežnou praxou testovať kampane pred ich spustením.*

practitioner | ***odborník z praxe / praktik*** ——— The conference invited several marketing practitioners to share their real-world experience. | *Na konferenciu bolo pozvaných niekoľko marketingových odborníkov z praxe, aby sa podelili o svoje reálne skúsenosti.*

pragmatic marketing | ***pragmatický marketing*** ——— Pragmatic marketing focuses on practical solutions rather than theoretical models. | *Pragmatický marketing sa zameriava na praktické riešenia namiesto teoretických modelov.*

pre-launch campaign | ***predspúšťacia kampaň*** ——— The company invested heavily in a pre-launch campaign to build interest. | *Spoločnosť výrazne investovala do predspúšťacej kampane na vyvolanie záujmu.*

predictive analytics | ***prediktívna analytika*** ——— Predictive analytics helps marketers forecast future consumer behavior. | *Prediktívna analytika pomáha marketérom predpovedať budúce správanie spotrebiteľov.*

preference | ***preferencia*** ——— Consumer preference shifted towards sustainable products. | *Preferencie spotrebiteľov sa presunuli smerom k udržateľným produktom.*

premium brand | ***prémiová značka*** ——— The company repositioned itself as a premium brand. | *Spoločnosť sa repozicionovala ako prémiová značka.*

press release | ***tlačová správa*** ——— The brand issued a press release about its sustainability commitment. | *Značka vydala tlačovú správu o svojom záväzku k udržateľnosti.*

pre-testing | ***predtestovanie*** ——— The advertisement went through pre-testing before its official launch. | *Reklama prešla predtestom pred oficiálnym spustením.*

price discrimination | ***cenová diskriminácia*** ——— Airlines often use price discrimination to maximize revenue. | *Letecké spoločnosti často využívajú cenovú diskrimináciu na maximalizáciu príjmov.*

price elasticity | ***cenová elasticita*** ——— Price elasticity measures how demand responds to price changes. | *Cenová elasticita meria, ako dopyt reaguje na zmeny cien.*

price level | ***cenová úroveň*** ——— The price level of the product reflects its positioning within the premium segment. | *Cenová úroveň produktu reflektuje jeho umiestnenie v prémiovom segmente.*

price perception | ***vnímanie ceny*** ——— Price perception influences how consumers evaluate the value and quality of a product. | *Vnímanie ceny ovplyvňuje, ako spotrebitelia merajú hodnotu a kvalitu produktu.*

Literatúra | *List of References* ——— [1] Cambridge Business English Dictionary. [online]. [cit. 2025-11-21]. Dostupné na: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>

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UNPACKING THE BLACK BOX:
HOW ALGORITHMIC TRANSPARENCY
AND USER CONTROL SHAPE TRUST,
SATISFACTION, AND PURCHASE
INTENT IN THE AI ERA

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN
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ANALYSIS OF THE USE
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