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## THE IMPACT OF IMPULSIVE BUYING ON CUSTOMER RETURNS

**Abstract:** *The aim of this publication was showing the place of returns in logistics customer service and highlighting the need to take care of returns, as a large part of them is caused by the abuse of the returns policy by customers. The research process included the development of research tool such as questionnaire. Surveys of anonymous nature were made by CAWI technique among individual customers from Poland on a sample 327 respondents. The research process carried out as well as the analysis of the obtained results allowed to respond to the research questions. As a result, it can be stated that returns play an important role in customer service management process. Moreover, consumers honestly admit to the abuse of return policies.*

**Keywords:** *Customer returns; Impulsive buying; Logistic customer service; Abuse of return policies.*

### 1. Introduction

Due to the economic situation, increased competition inside the market and more liberal policies towards customers, returns are unavoidable in the supply chain, and the best way to work against them is to try manage them well. One of the most common reasons for the returns increase is the highest level of Internet sales, where the probability of returns is much higher, and there is a huge risk that the product will not meet the buyer's expectations. Moreover, a large part of consumer returns is caused by an impulse shopping, or is a result of a sudden emotion. Nowadays, companies still have lack of awareness about what are the reasons for returns and what benefits they can bring to the company. To change this situation managers, need to incorporate the return process into their overall strategy, so, both customers and the company will have profits. The interest in return in a highly developed economy and changes in purchasing behavior of clients (also in Poland) indicates the need for a wider analysis of this problem.

The role played by customer returns as an element of logistics customer service and organisational performance is now widely acknowledged and has led to a major research thrust in recent years. For example, Rogers and Tibben-Lembke (1999) have proved that well clarified and attractive return policy is one of the most important ways to attract customers. Davis et al. (1995) identified the effect of the retailer's return policy on its profit. Chen and Chen (2017), investigated when retailer should offer full refunds or no returns. In turn Yan (2009) found that a partial return policy is the best choice for the retailer, especially if the product can be sale online. Wood (2001) showed that the return policy leniency helps reduce consumer's product search time and increase their pre-purchase trust. Pei, Paswan, Yan (2014) have investigated that e-retailer's return depth has a positive influence on the consumer's perceived fairness of the return policy and purchase intention. Robertson at al. (2020) have shown how product returns are transforming the customer journey. In his research on consumer behavior while

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shopping, Lee was looking for an answer to the question of what are the main motives of consumers who return 100% functional goods. (Lee 2015). Wang et al. (2019) were looking at the relationship between expectations shaped by the product return policy and the repurchase intention. Harris (2010) explored how consumers exploit firms' return policies and fraudulently defraud retailers.

In summary, while researchers have examined the causes and effects of return policy, we still do not know enough about the importance and place of returns in customer service and the customer tendency to make unnecessary purchases due to their awareness of the possibility to return goods. For this purpose, survey research was carried out among individual customers from Poland on a sample 327 respondents. It was specially sought to answer the following questions:

1. What elements of customer service are most important to the consumer?
2. Where did the consumer most often deal with the return of goods? During online/offline shopping?
3. What is the respondents' tendency to make unnecessary purchases because of the awareness of the possibility of making a return?

The intention of the article is to highlight the place of returns in logistics customer service. Because a large part of the returned goods is caused by the subjective reasons of the consumers, companies should manage returned staff by planning, organizing, leading, and controlling them.

This paper has four additional sections. The next section provides a review of the literature related to the customer service management in terms of returns in support of the questions addressed in this research. Section 3 formulates the research questions and explains the research methodology, while Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 provides a discussion of the study findings, including theoretical implications. This section includes limitations of the study,

conclusions, and areas for future research.

## 2. Literature review

More often, logistics activities play the most important role in customer service, as they significantly contribute to the delivery of the right product at the right time and at the right cost to the customer's door (Mentzer, Flint, Hult 2001). These elements are components of logistic customer service, the task of which is to ensure the availability of space and time, and also to handle after-sales transactions such as returns and complaints. The importance of logistic factors believed to be higher in e-commerce business than in any other industries. E-commerce orders are always small but the shipment of these orders is rather complex and distracted (Gajewska et.al 2020).

At this point, it should also be noted that, apart from logistics, marketing activities are an important aspect of customer service. Marketing includes intangible issues, such as creating additional value, integrating with the client, creating a specific bond between the client and the company, and ensuring a certain standard of service (AMA, 2017).

Logistic customer service is a specific measure of how well the company's logistics system provides the right time and place for a specific product or service (Lambert, Stock, Ellram 1998). If the logistics system does not function properly and the customer does not receive the ordered delivery, the company is at risk of losing sales. (Coyle, Bardi, Langley, 2002). So, what if the company will produce an excellent product and the marketing department will advertise it if the logistics department is unable to deliver it to the customer? Without an efficient logistics system, that will provide fast customer service, any company will not survive at the market (Gajewska et al.2020). It is also worth remembering that the relationship between the quality of logistic customer service and the level of logistics costs is the most important trade off in logistics management.

(Amaral & Guerreiro 2014). Logistic customer service is a process that creates value for both parties. Both the client and the company have benefits - the client in the form of fast delivery and guaranteed after-sales service, and the company in the form of a competitive advantage.

Customer service management is a process of planning, organizing, motivating, implementing and controlling all activities aimed at shaping the relationship with the customer from the moment of developing service standards, through the implementation of orders, to after-sales service (Bolumole, Knemeyer, & Lambert, 2003). The customer service management process is the firm's face to the customer. It provides the single source of customer information, such as product availability, shipping dates and order status (Croxtton et al. 2001). Customer service management is a comprehensive activity involving all business areas that work together to collect, analyze and interact with customer information throughout the customer lifecycle. This is done in a way that satisfies the customer and contributes to the progress in achieving the goals of the enterprise (Kashif 2015). It is worth mentioning that processes and quality of services are decisive factors for customer satisfaction (Zimon, 2017). One of the stages of customer service management is handling returns and complaints.

In this paper, the concept of returns means all flows that take place from the consumer to the retailer and the producer, regardless of the reason for their occurrence. The complaint takes place when the customer occurs due to the non-compliance of the goods with the contract, for example in the in case of defect in the goods or incorrect performance of the service. The customer is also entitled to a complaint if the seller assured that there was no defect, the existence of which was probably known during the purchase and sale. In turn, the return of goods consists for more subjective reasons, such as the wrong size or color. The item is returned for other reasons than inherent defects. Complaints most often

carry information coming directly from the source about what needs to be changed or improved.

Returns occur due to the following reasons (Rogers, Tibben-Lembke, 1999):

- the product did not meet the customer's expectations (e.g. in terms of size, color, quality),
- the customer was unable to properly handle the purchased device,
- the product was defective,
- there was no specific reason - a situation caused by an abuse of the company's liberal return policy (treating the store as a rental company).

Lee listed the following reasons for returning goods: lack of determination, honesty or ignorance of consumers (Lee 2015). According to Blumberg, consumer returns are often caused by an impulse or are the result of a sudden emotion. It happens that customers buy a certain product because they want to check how it will behave or look (e.g. its color or size) in everyday life (Blumberg 2005). The most common factors stimulating care for the return policy and proper management are economic effects, legal regulations and increased consumer awareness (de Brito M., Dekker 2004).

In practice, a significant part of returns occurs only because customers were unable to install the product properly or did not know how to use the product. In order to avoid this problem, companies must ensure that clear information about the use of a specific product is provided on leaflets or on their website, thus educating their consumers. So, it can be concluded that very often the customers are not "dissatisfied" with the goods, but are "dishonest" towards the seller.

It is worth identifying the place of returns in the customer service process. The customer service management process consists of three stages: pre-transactional, transactional and post-transactional. (LaLonde, Zinszer, 1976). Handling returns and complaints, being one of the stages of customer service, takes place

when the customer intends to return the goods after the purchase in post-transactional stage (regardless of the reasons). It is worth noting that although returns are handled only after the transaction is finalized, but the standards, rules for returns and complaints and return policy should be specified at the pre-transactional planning stage.

The place of returns in customer service can be described with reference to the product structure (tab.1). The product is one of the elements of the 4P marketing composition. When talking about a product, we mean, among others: assortment, quality, brand, packaging, services. In addition, this element includes activities supporting the product (warranty, technical support, complaint).

**Table 1.** Product levels

Level	Interpretation
Core benefit or service	It is the purpose of the buyer's purchase
Tangible or physical product or service itself	It is the subject of purchase
Augmented product	It includes benefits that are secondary but integral to a physical product being purchased by the customer. It is an additional value in the form of fast delivery or efficient handling of returns or complaints
Potential product	It represents a future improvement that can be made in the future

Source: (Coyle, Bardi, Langley 2002)

Logistic customer service, which includes the handling of returns, is considered to be the property of the augmented product. According to the authors, recognizing customer service as a specific "product" is very effective and helps to achieve a competitive advantage (Coyle, Bardi, Langley 2002).

### 3. Research Methodology

The subject of empirical research were consumers returns occurring in B2C relation both in offline and online shopping on the Polish market. The survey looks for answers to the questions about the place of returns in logistic customer service:

Q1. What elements of customer service are most important to the consumer?

Q2. Where did the consumer most often deal with the return of goods? Durung online/offline shopping?

Q3. What is the respondents' tendency to make unnecessary purchases because of the

awareness of the possibility of making a return?

The selection of the sample was non-random, and the applied selection method was a quota selection. The quota selection was used due to the inability to obtain a sampling frame that would allow to determine the exact number of units included in the general population (adult residents of Poland returning a product at least once in their life), and thus the procedure of drawing respondents for the sample, therefore it was necessary to select non-probabilistic. Before starting the survey, it was assumed that demographic variables such as gender, place of residence, age and education are the features that can differentiate the respondents in terms of the obtained results. The amounts established before the survey reflected the demographic structure of the Polish population. The following gender and age amounts were used in the study:

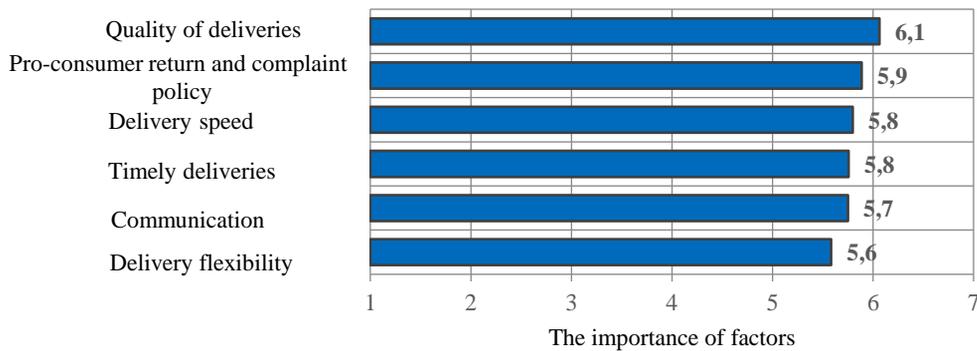
- 48% of male and 52% of female,
- 60% of people aged 25 to 46.

The research process related to the collection of primary data consisted of two stages: pilot

and proper studies. In each of them, questionnaire surveys were used to collect primary data. The actual survey was carried out in April and May 2018 among 327 people representing Polish adult final buyers. Care was taken to ensure that the respondents had realised a return at least once. According to the Central Statistical Office, 38.434 million people lived in Poland at the time of the research.

#### 4. Analysis of the obtained research results

Returns management is a part of logistics customer service. In order to identify its importance, the respondents were first asked about the logistic factors of customer service that had the greatest impact on their satisfaction while making purchases (Fig. 1).



n = 327

**Figure 1.** Average values of assessments of the importance of factors affecting satisfaction during purchases [scale from 1 to 7, where 7 is a very important factor]

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

The quality of deliveries comes first among the factors influencing satisfaction (6.1 on a scale of 7), i.e. the share of a delivery without natural losses or transport damage in the total delivery (Figure 1). The quality of delivery is created by the manufacturer and defined and assessed by the customer. In second place (5.9 out of 7) is a convenient pro-consumer policy of returns and complaints. The pro-consumer return policy means offering the longest possible time for making a decision regarding a return from the consumer and the shortest possible period of processing a return or considering a complaint from the store. In the third place was the speed of delivery (5.8 on a scale of 7) - this is the period between the acceptance of the order and the execution of deliveries, and the timeliness of deliveries (5.8 on a scale of 7) - the probability of meeting the agreed delivery or delivery date. For the customer, the delivery time must be as

short as possible and the timeliness must be as precise as possible. It is followed by communication (5.7) and delivery flexibility (5.6).

Analyzing the respondents' opinions about the importance of pro-consumer returns policy in the context of logistics customer service, it was noted that it was highly evaluated. As many as 68.5% of the respondents selected the answers "important" and "very important" (Tab. 2). This factor ranks second on the list after "quality of supply", which received 76.5% of "important" and "very important" responses. Relations with the customer do not end with the finalization of purchases, on the contrary - the customer most often appreciates the company's service in a crisis situation, when he wants to return the goods or make a complaint about it.

**Table 2.** The importance of factors influencing satisfaction when making purchases

Factor	IMPORTANCE (1 - negligible factor, 7 - very important factor)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
timely deliveries	2,1%	1,8%	4,3%	10,1%	14,7%	25,4%	41,6%
quality of deliveries	0,9%	1,5%	4,6%	8,3%	8,3%	20,8%	55,7%
delivery speed	0,9%	1,5%	3,7%	9,8%	16,8%	29,4%	37,9%
communication	0,9%	0,6%	5,5%	11,3%	17,1%	26,3%	38,2%
delivery flexibility	0,6%	1,2%	3,7%	16,5%	18,7%	30,3%	29,1%
pro-consumer return and complaint policy	0,9%	1,2%	3,7%	10,4%	15,3%	23,2%	45,3%

n = 327

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

The results of the Spearman's rank correlation coefficients show that age has a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) impact on the assessment of the importance of 4 factors

taken into account when making purchases: quality of deliveries, communication, flexibility of deliveries and pro-customer returns and complaints policy (Tab.3).

**Table 3.** The significance of the factors influencing satisfaction while shopping, taking into account the age of the respondents [scale from 1 to 7, where 7 is a very important factor]

Factor	Up to 25 years [n = 41]	26–45 years [n = 128]	46–60 years [n = 48]	over 60 years [n = 110]	Statistical significance
timely deliveries	5,9	5,6	6,0	5,8	$r_s = 0,068965$ $p = 0,213566$
quality of deliveries	6,0	5,9	6,3	6,2	$r_s = 0,146162$ $p = 0,008117$
delivery speed	5,9	5,7	5,9	5,8	$r_s = 0,060149$ $p = 0,278143$
communication	5,8	5,5	5,9	5,9	$r_s = 0,136036$ $p = 0,013817$
delivery flexibility	5,4	5,4	5,8	5,8	$r_s = 0,14556$ $p = 0,008385$
pro-consumer return and complaint policy	5,8	5,6	6,1	6,1	$r_s = 0,183084$ $p = 0,00088$

n = 327

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

The positive results of the coefficients ( $r_s$ ) indicate that the higher the age of the respondents, the more important these factors

are. This may be related to the fact that respondents' awareness increases with age. The older the person is, the more meticulous he pays attention to details, in this case:

- delivery quality, e.g. whether the goods are safely packed,
- communication, e.g. whether the company replies to e-mails,
- flexibility of deliveries, e.g. whether the company will deliver the goods at times convenient for the customer,
- customer-friendly return and complaint policy, e.g. whether the company will accept goods whose

packaging has been slightly damaged.

The older the consumer is, the greater his expectations are, both in relation to himself and the environment.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests showed that there is a statistical relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the assessment of the significance of all factors taken into account when making purchases and gender (Table 4).

**Table 4.** The significance of factors influencing satisfaction when making purchases, broken down by gender of the respondents [scale from 1 to 7, where 7 is a very important factor]

Factor	female [n = 162]	male [n = 165]	Statistical significance
timely deliveries	6,1	5,4	$Z = 4,202079, p = 0,0001$
quality of deliveries	6,3	5,8	$Z = 3,423997, p = 0,000589$
delivery speed	6,0	5,6	$Z = 3,236586, p = 0,001167$
communication	6,0	5,5	$Z = 3,240774, p = 0,00115$
delivery flexibility	5,8	5,4	$Z = 3,073384, p = 0,002059$
convenient return and complaint policy	6,1	5,7	$Z = 3,03456, p = 0,002347$

n = 327

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

Women pay more attention to each of these factors. The results of statistical tests did not show a statistically significant correlation between the importance of the factors influencing satisfaction while shopping and such sociodemographic variables as place of residence, average income, professional status or education. The original assumption was that the higher the education is, the more attention is paid to individual factors. However, for these studies, this assumption did not hold true.

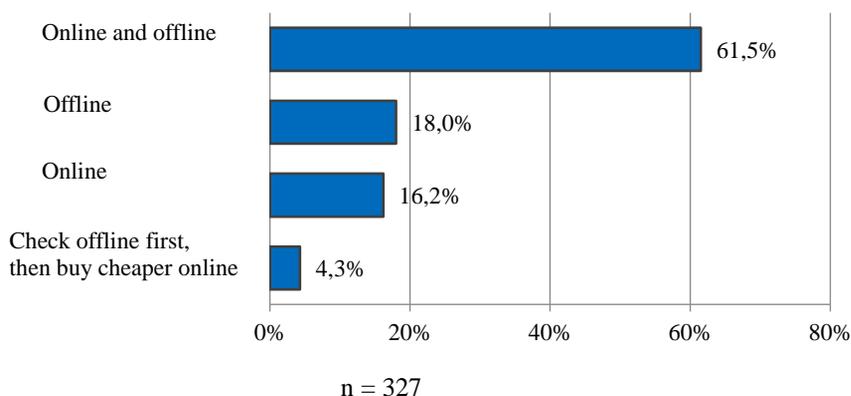
Next, the respondents were asked about their purchasing preferences and experiences during the return of goods. 18% of respondents prefer the classic form of shopping in stationary stores, 16.2% buy only

online. The largest group of consumers - 61.5%, are people who prefer to buy both online and in stationary stores (Figure 2).

There are consumers who want to choose a product stationary, measuring it in the fitting room or choosing the right size or color, and then surf the web looking for the chosen product at the lowest price (4.3% of respondents). It is worth adding that there is an opposite situation based on the model of making purchasing decisions known as Research Online, Purchase Offline (ROPO). ROPO is based on the fact that the customer searches for a specific item on the Internet, but purchases it in a stationary store. Currently, it is very easy to find a detailed description, photos, as well as reviews of

almost every product available on the market on the Internet. The customer searches for a model they are interested in and then goes to the stationary store, because they would like to watch it live before buying. Social media, such as Instagram and Facebook, as well as video blogs on Youtube or classic blogs, e.g. in Wordpress, have a significant impact on the development of this mixed form of shopping. According to the PWC (2018) report, visiting traditional stores is also

associated with positive experiences caused by the proximity of the items sought and the possibility of touching and checking them. An additional advantage of traditional stores is the employment of qualified sellers, who provide advice and can help the customer make the optimal choice. Based on the data in Figure 2, it can be concluded that economic values are the most important factor for Polish consumers - they prefer to shop where the price is most favorable.

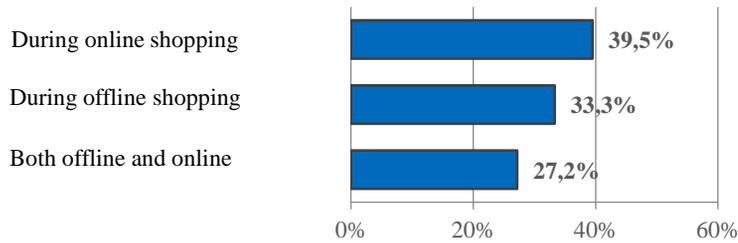


**Figure 2.** The preferred form of making purchases  
Source: own study based on the results of the research.

The results of statistical tests did not show a statistically significant relationship between the form of shopping preferred by the respondents and such sociodemographic variables as age, gender, place of residence, average income, professional status or education. It seemed that age would be a factor differentiating the place where the respondents make purchases, e.g. people aged 16-40 make more purchases online, aged 41-50 will first find goods on the Internet, then buy online, and people over 51 years of age they buy only at classic points of sale. It turned out to be a stereotypical assumption. Now everyone, regardless of age or professional status, has access to the Internet

and easily navigates the online stores.

Next, the respondents answered the question about the sales channels in which they had the most experience with returning goods. Most returns are made after shopping in online stores, because it is more likely that the product will not meet the tastes of customers. When buying online, the customer does not have the opportunity to check the parameters and appearance of the article. According to Figure 3 39.5% of respondents returned goods purchased online, in stationary stores - 33.3%, while 27.2% had experience of returning both online and stationary.



**Figure 3.** Sales channels in which goods were returned more often

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

The difference between online and offline returns is not very big, only 6.2%.

The result of the chi-square test ( $p < 0.05$ ) showed a statistically significant relationship

between the sales channels in which returns were more frequent and the age of the respondents (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Sales channels in which goods were returned more often, taking into account the age of the respondents

Sales channels	Up to 25 years [n = 41]	26–45 years [n = 128]	46–60 years [n = 48]	over 60 years [n = 110]
during offline shopping	19,5%	25,8%	39,6%	44,6%
during online shopping	48,8%	46,9%	35,4%	29,1%
both - during offline and online shopping	31,7%	27,3%	25,0%	26,4%
<b>altogether</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
<b>Statistical significance</b>	<b><math>\chi^2 = 15,555041, df = 6, p = 0,016352</math></b>			

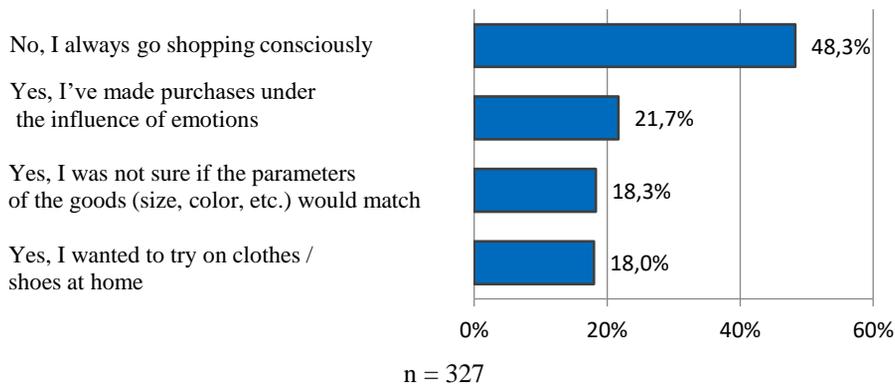
n = 327

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

People over 60 (44.6%) and 46-60 years old (39.6%) more often than others made returns while shopping. This is due to the fact that, despite education and various training courses, not all elderly people are fluent in the Internet and information technology and prefer to make purchases and returns in stationary. It is also possible that they are distrustful and more used to visiting stationary stores. Going to the shopping mall is often a great attraction for them. The results of statistical tests showed no statistically significant correlation between sales channels and such sociodemographic variables as gender, place of residence, average income, professional status or education. The original

assumption was that gender would be a variable differentiating sales channels. Women seemed to make online returns more often.

When analyzing the reasons for returns, many of them are caused by the fact that the client changed his mind without significant reasons. Some consumers abuse the return policy that is actual in the store. They buy with the thought to return because they have the right to do so. Own research shows that 48.3% of the respondents always reasonably approach purchases, saving both their own and the seller's time (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Tendency to make unnecessary purchases due to the awareness of the possibility of returning goods

Source: own study based on the results of the research

21.7% of respondents admitted that they made purchases under the influence of emotions, and then had to return the goods to the store. It can be assumed that such persons were misled by advertising messages or had subjective reasons, such as good mood or a raise at work. Another 36.3% of respondents made quick purchases because they were not sure if the product would fit in terms of size,

color and other parameters.

The results of the chi-square test showed a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the tendency to make unnecessary purchases due to the awareness of the possibility of making a return and the age of the respondents in one answer (Table 6).

**Table 6.** The respondents' tendency to make unnecessary purchases due to the awareness of the possibility of returning goods, broken down by age of the respondents

Answer	Up to 25 years [n = 41]	26–45 years [n = 128]	46–60 years [n = 48]	over 60 years [n = 110]	Statistical significance
yes, I wanted to try on clothes / shoes at home	17,1%	21,9%	18,8%	13,6%	$\chi^2 = 2,757868$ df = 3 p = 0,430483
yes, I've made purchases under the influence of emotions	34,2%	25,0%	18,8%	14,6%	$\chi^2 = 8,114734$ df = 3 p = 0,043699
yes, I was not sure if the parameters of the goods (size, color, etc.) would match	14,6%	17,2%	18,8%	20,9%	$\chi^2 = 0,979284$ df = 3 p = 0,806264
no, I always go shopping consciously	43,9%	43,0%	47,9%	56,4%	$\chi^2 = 4,641379$ df = 3 p = 0,200021

n = 327,

The data do not add up to 100%, because the respondents had the option to choose more than 1 answer.

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

Younger people clearly more often admitted that they made purchases under the influence of emotions. This is due to a lower level of awareness and a greater degree of disregard for all kinds of rules that are characteristic for young people. Moreover, young people are more likely to be influenced by marketing messages. In addition, today's youth follows the statements of bloggers and YouTubers who advertise various products on their

channels. This is a very good impulse to make ill-considered purchases.

The results of the chi-square test showed a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the propensity to make unnecessary purchases due to the awareness of the possibility of making a return and the net income of the respondents for one answer (Table 7).

**Table 7.** The respondents' willingness to make unnecessary purchases due to the awareness of the possibility of returning goods broken down into the average net income of respondents per person in the household

Answer	up to PLN 1000 [n = 23]	PLN 1001–2000 [n = 98]	PLN 2001–3000 [n = 93]	PLN 3001–3000 [n = 60]	above PLN 4000 [n = 53]	Statistical significance
yes, I wanted to try on clothes / shoes at home	13,0%	14,3%	12,9%	21,7%	32,1%	$\chi^2 = 10,5761$ df = 4 p = 0,031765
yes, I've made purchases under the influence of emotions	26,1%	17,4%	30,1%	15,0%	20,8%	$\chi^2 = 6,832615$ df = 4 p = 0,145003
yes, I was not sure if the parameters of the goods (size, color, etc.) would match	30,4%	14,3%	15,1%	21,7%	22,6%	$\chi^2 = 5,08904$ df = 4 p = 0,278283
no, I always go shopping consciously	43,5%	57,1%	49,5%	46,7%	34,0%	$\chi^2 = 7,760305$ df = 4 p = 0,100764

n = 327, 1 PLN is 0,22 EUR (31.10.2020)

The data do not add up to 100%, because the respondents had the option to choose more than 1 answer

Source: own study based on the results of the research.

The most affluent people (income above PLN 4,000) decided most often (32.1%) to buy clothes or shoes at home, which increased the likelihood of their returns. From the company's perspective, this is the most undesirable type of return as it is beyond the company's control. The only option is consumer education.

## 5. Discussions

An overview of the customer perception of returns and their purchase behavior that have

the greatest impact on returning goods to the seller made it possible to identify more new information. In this section, the above conclusions will be summarized.

1-st research question: *What elements of customer service are most important to the consumer?* - By analyzing the overall customer service, it can be concluded that time is a key factor in customer satisfaction.

The customer needs the fastest possible delivery, the longest possible time to make a decision, the shortest possible waiting time

for the company's decision to consider the complaint or accept the return and the shortest possible time to process the complaint (e.g. repair or regeneration of the product). In addition, respondents confirmed that returns handling is an important part of logistical customer service.

2-st research question - *Where did the consumer most often deal with the return of goods? During online/ offline shopping?* The results obtained are surprising as the differences between online and offline returns are small. It is believed that online returns are more frequent and this is due to the greater uncertainty about the correct parameters of the goods. Often the store has inaccurate photos or does not provide a size grid.

3-st research question - *What is the respondents' tendency to make unnecessary purchases because of the awareness of the possibility of making a return?* Study shows that emotions directly affect the purchase of products, especially if customers know that they have the right to return the goods. Analyzing the age of the respondents, young people are more often confess to make unnecessary purchases.

Based on the research, similar conclusions were drawn by Harris (2010). Customers dysfunctional behaviors caused by the liberal law is common problem for each retailer. Perceived leniency was found to be the most influential factor for return purchase intention but it also significantly impacted the perceived fairness and the quality of the return process. (Wang et.al. 2019). But on the other hand, it should be noted, that the implementation of perceived return policy is an important and supporting factor which differentiates seller's offer and affects its competitiveness.

### 5.1 Findings and implications

The findings of the study have a range of implications for practitioners, policy makers and managers. Retailers can use this information to structure their returns policies,

interactions, and processes to better meet and exceed customer expectations. Moreover, it can be helpful for entrepreneurs to improve their after-sales service. The presented knowledge is necessary for a better understanding of customer behavior during a return process.

The presented conclusions enrich the theoretical understanding of customer behavior. It also offers retailers a quantitative benchmark and new perspective on the design of return policy in order to improve customer satisfaction.

### 5.2 Limitations and future research

As with other type studies, the findings and implications are limited because of the research design and methods employed. However, these limitations also indicate potential avenues of future research.

There are many challenges to conducting research in the area of customers returns. The topic is dynamic and multidisciplinary, and it requires different points of view. Although some future directions of research can be related to multichannel/omnichannel research. A similar study can be done on a wider research sample by questioning respondents from different countries, analyzing the law of returns that prevails in each country.

## 6. Conclusions

Although customers purchase behavior has been studied for a while, the field of customer return behavior is a relatively new area for future research. It is important to investigate customer perception, attitude and awareness during the whole journey, from the moment of obtaining the need to have a specific product until the moment it is tested at home.

In this article, it was shown the place of returns in logistics customer service and highlight the need to take care of returns, as a large part of them is caused by the abuse of the returns policy by customers. This was

confirmed by the results of conducted research.

This study suggests that returns play an important role in customer service management process. Managing returns is a

great way to ensure customer satisfaction and a cost-effective way to differentiate the retailer. Retailers can use this information to structure their returns policies, interactions, and processes to better meet and exceed customer expectations.

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