GENDER TARGETING OF RESTAURANTS’ VISITORS – REPRESENTATIVES OF GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT
The study examines the presence of persistent gender stereotypes in the behaviour of restaurant visitors. Gender stereotypes about food preferences and eating behaviour are characterized, most clearly represented in the niche of “public consumption” (food consumption in restaurants). The most typical lines of female and male behaviour in the choice of dishes in the restaurant by consumers of generation Z are highlighted, and the results of the authors’ empirical marketing research are presented.

Key words: Consumers, Gender, Men, Menu, Restaurant, Stereotype, Women
1. INTRODUCTION

Tools for influencing human behaviour are of growing interest in the realities of the "battle for the consumer of the XXI century." Despite the steady trend of gender equality and the spread of unisex style in various spheres of modern life, the stereotypes of "male" and "female" food remain stable, so should be taken into account by restaurateurs in the holistic concept of business development. According to an article in The Wall Street Journal, when choosing food and eating on a first date, during business lunches, with colleagues or friends, people are increasingly guided by gender attitudes because they want to give the impression of "the best representative of their sex" [1]. A similar view was expressed by Theo Lieven in The Effect of Brand Gender on Brand Equity: Consumers are more likely to choose products with a strong gender segmentation because it allows them to associate the brand image with their personality [2].

In working on the study, we were guided by the classical theoretical concepts of gender differences in nutrition:

- the amount of food consumed: a man "should" eat well and take a supplement, and a woman – to limit consumption and refuse food [3];
- manner of food consumption [3-5];
- advantages for specific products: consumption of meat food and demonstration of it in the gender display helps to maintain masculinity, but poses a threat to femininity [6-7]; consumption of "light" food – for example, fish, vegetables and fruits – corresponds more to women's style of eating [2; 8-10];
- attitudes towards healthy eating and diet: women are more concerned about appearance, health, weight control, etc., while men are driven by the desire to get a taste of food [11-14].

Note that until the 2000s, gender stereotypes were divided into three groups:

1) the actual stereotypes of masculinity-femininity;
2) consolidation of family and professional roles;
3) differences in the content of labour.

The development of a "consumer society" has helped to identify a fourth significant group of gender stereotypes associated with consumer practices. This group includes food behaviour – in a broad sense and gender behaviour of consumers – visitors to restaurants – in a narrow sense. The problem of gender targeting is actively broadcast in modern works on marketing and advertising. For example, in the book "Advertising image: man and woman" by A. Dudareva, the author gives physiological arguments about dietary predispositions depending on gender: the volume of blood in the male body is 5-6 litres, in the female – 4-4.5 litres. The fat content in the tissues of the male body averages 12% by weight, in women – 26% [15]. Men need 700 kcal more per day, due to faster metabolism and higher body temperature. An example of the radically opposite view, when the idea of "female" and "male" food is characterized as advertising and marketing manipulation, are articles such as "Yogurt against steak", "Article War: how gender marketing works", etc., placed on professional marketing sites in the restaurant business. Thus, the ideas of gender stereotypes are opposed to the ideas of shifting gender roles and gender neutrality.
2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The inconsistency of the chosen problem contributed to the following hypotheses, confirmation or refutation of which became the purpose of the study:

- gender stereotypes of food preferences are most clearly represented in the niche of "public consumption", the choice of food and beverages is perceived as an expression of identity (lifestyle, worldview, self-concept, preferences, tastes, financial status, etc.), food consumption in restaurants is a significant component of identity generation Z;
- women are more influenced by gender stereotypes than men; women are more loyal to the eating preferences/behaviour of a partner of the opposite sex than men;
- for men, the volume, satiety, taste of food are more significant, for women - atmosphere, design, level of service; men are more "profitable" restaurant customers than women;
- a significant factor is the "first date" effect (this also includes a business lunch or dinner with a new business partner) when the party/parties tend to change their eating behaviour to succeed with the opposite sex;
- depending on the duration of the relationship/marriage, the food of the partners is "agreed" at the household level, but continues to differ in the restaurant;
- most restaurateurs take into account the presence of more or less high-calorie dishes in the menu concept, but do not develop unique "women's" and "men's" menus;
- staff training programs usually do not include the development of individual skills to build service based on the gender of customers.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS
The volume of the publication does not allow to present the results of all aspects of the study. We will focus on the analysis of gender differences in eating behaviour and the choice of dishes in the restaurant by respondents - representatives of Generation Z and characterize the results following the hypotheses.

![Figure 1](http://www.iaeme.com/IJM/index.asp) Expenses of Monobank customers (average amount per client per month, UAH), December 2019 (generated by the authors based on [17])

The consumption of food by a person goes through three stages of awareness: introjection (E. Perls) [16], assimilation and projection. In the first quarter of the XXI century all goods and services, thanks to advertising and branding, have become as personalized as possible, so they contribute to the formation of a specific projected "image" relevant to generation Z.
argument in favour of the hypothesis that generation Z is among the most active consumers of restaurants were the results of the analysis of statistics on the use of bank cards by customers of Monobank for December 2019 [16], which show that most expenditures were made in the category: products, supermarkets, cafes, restaurants (Fig. 1).

We characterize the results of marketing research – a questionnaire survey of student youth aged 18-23 (94 respondents, a parity of women and men, 72% combine study and work) (Fig. 2). The category of top dishes and drinks of women's choice included cheeses, fish dishes, poultry dishes, seafood salads, vegetable salads, desserts, tea, wine. Male respondents preferred meat dishes, strong alcohol, meat salads, sauces, bread and hookah. Dishes of common choice were coffee, alcoholic cocktails, cold drinks, snacks, first courses, sushi, rolls, pizza. 72% of women compared to 34% of men are ready to choose favour of new dishes on the menu.

Significantly, 57% of women already in the process of eating in a restaurant often think that they ate too much and this will affect the appearance or health, about 31% of women and 27% of men comfort themselves with the thought that "drive away" excessive consumption in the gym. In comparison, almost 48% of men never think about it.

The distribution of answers to the question: "Are you inclined to choose dishes that are not peculiar to you to make a better impression on your companion?", which confirms our research hypotheses, was indicative of the stability of gender roles.

![Figure 2](image-url) Gender differences in the choice of dishes on the menu (formed by the authors based on the results of an empirical study)

Thus, in total, 76% of women tend to change their eating behaviour to make a better impression, while this figure among men is 24%. To study the behaviour of young consumers in an exclusively male or female society the question was asked: "Do you change your eating habits when you have lunch/dinner in the company of friends?" From the distribution of answers it is clear that the vast majority - almost 81% of men and almost 67% of women tend to change their food preferences in the case of agreeing on a joint menu (so-called "company order"), 21% of women and 17% of men what conditions do not agree to change their dietary preferences.
The established requirements for women's behaviour are clearly demonstrated by the distribution of answers to the question: "Is it acceptable when a woman eats the same portion of food as a man?". And the option "no, it is unacceptable" was chosen by almost the same number of women and men – 31 and 26%, respectively, "it is acceptable, but not feminine" 33% of men and 43% of women (Fig. 3).

![Figure 3 Results of the answer to the question "Is it acceptable when a woman eats the same portion of food as a man?" (formed by the authors based on the results of an empirical study)](image)

To assess the loyalty of young women to the eating behavior of the opposite sex, the following situation was suggested for analysis: "The first date. You have ordered a light dinner, and your companion - a few dishes that he eats with taste, while you maintain a secular conversation with a glass of wine. Describe your attitude to this situation".

4% of women consider this situation normal, unacceptable – 36% while most show loyalty, choosing the answer "Men sometimes behave this way, if I plan to continue the relationship, I will try to influence it" (51% of respondents).

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Consolidated with the results of the questionnaire are the conclusions obtained through the use of the Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire (DEBQ) [18], developed by Dutch psychologists (Fig. 4-5). According to the indicator of restrictive (dietary) nutrition, 68% of surveyed men and 51% of women demonstrated the "norm". In 42% of women and 26% of men, the rate is slightly above the norm, which allows classifying these respondents as "cautious" or "professional" eaters who are afraid to eat in order not to gain weight, or guided by the argument of usefulness. It was found that emotional eating behaviour (tendency to "get stuck" in problems) is characteristic of 64% of women and only 12% of men. In terms of external eating behaviour, 79% of men showed an average or below average, which indicates a lack of tendency to overeat in social situations or because food is "insight" and available.

Given that the main goal of any business is to make a profit, we analyzed the food and markup of the most common restaurant dishes (according to a study of the cloud system Poster "What do restaurants earn"), again grouping them in the positions of "women's choice", "male choice", "joint choice".

http://www.iaeme.com/IJM/index.asp
According to the integrated indicator, which takes into account the food cost, markup and the number of orders, the Poster cloud system has identified the top 10 most profitable categories of restaurant dishes, drinks and services. These include hookah, pizza, meat dishes, beer, sushi and rolls, coffee, salads, burgers and sandwiches, snacks, desserts. Having singled out coffee and pizza, which belong to the category of "unisex", we summarize that five of the eight top dishes belong to the group of "male", which confirms the hypothesis of male consumers as more profitable than women, restaurant customers.

**Figure 4** Food, drinks and restaurant services in the categories "women's choice", "men's choice", "joint choice" (generated by authors based on Poster cloud system data [19])
5. CONCLUSION

Recently, the study of consumer preferences and consumer behaviour in Ukraine has become a scientific area within the framework of economic psychology. Abroad, such studies began to be carried out more than 25 years ago; the concept of "consumer preferences" is actively used in various marketing research. The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that the identification of consumer preferences allows the company to better plan its commercial activities and improve the level of service. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the study of consumer preferences is extremely important for management decisions. The study of consumer preferences should be complete, reliable and relevant.

The presented results confirm the hypotheses about the presence of stable gender stereotypes in the food behaviour of Ukrainian consumers of generation Z – restaurant

![Figure 5 Margin of food, drinks and restaurant services in the categories "women's choice", "men's choice", "joint choice" (generated by authors based on Poster cloud system data [19])](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Women's choice</th>
<th>Joint choice</th>
<th>Men's choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pizza</td>
<td>155%</td>
<td>130%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi, rolls</td>
<td>180%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>155%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First courses</td>
<td>124%</td>
<td>224%</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appetizer</td>
<td>124%</td>
<td>230%</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold beverages</td>
<td>145%</td>
<td>206%</td>
<td>400%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>323%</td>
<td>300%</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong alcohol</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
<td>155%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat dishes</td>
<td>124%</td>
<td></td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauces, bread, toppings</td>
<td>132%</td>
<td></td>
<td>400%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hookah</td>
<td>180%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry dishes</td>
<td>155%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable salads</td>
<td>124%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood salads</td>
<td>124%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish dishes</td>
<td>145%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desserts</td>
<td>323%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
customers, which increases the importance of further research on the outlined problem and its contexts.

REFERENCES


