

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA  
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

**MINIMALISM AS A NEW MODE OF CONSUMPTION AMONG  
MILLENNIALS**

Ljubljana, February 2023

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## **AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern socio-economic processes are taking place in the context of increasing globalization. This requires an urgent solution to the problems of rational usage of raw materials and human resources. On the one hand, there is an increase in the extraction of raw resources, in the production volumes that in some cases exceed the real needs of society, and in manifestations of luxury and excesses. On the other hand, there is a worldwide spread of extreme poverty, misery and death from hunger. According to Bosakevich (2021), an average American throws away 37 kg of clothes a year. The latter accounts for a \$500 billion loss annually since the unworn clothes could be recycled.

The total volume of gas emissions from the textile industry is 1.2 billion tons per year, more than from all air travel and shipping. The fashion industry accounts for 8% of the world's carbon emissions. While some countries use water to produce tons of unnecessary clothes for artificially boosted demands (e.g., fast fashion, where new items automatically become trendy, while clothes that were trendy a week ago are not considered fashionable anymore), some countries are suffering from drinking water scarcity (UNICEF, 2021). Moreover, some nations deal with the open question of how to recycle food that is not sold at the market, while many people in the same country have a difficult time finding food to feed their families on a daily basis (The World Bank, 2021).

The relevance of the study is determined by the need to urgently address the issues of rationalizing consumption. However, this is a complex problem as it involves a vast number of factors that determine the motives and actions of different groups of customers. Understanding the problem and determining the relationship between one's consumer behavior, their social behavior and the impact on a global scale would give an opportunity to define the conscious socio-economic behavior of the population, of both consumers and producers (The World Bank, 2021).

Minimalism is a broad philosophical concept and means a person's desire not to surround oneself with unnecessary ideas, problems, objects, information, communication, etc. It is especially worth noting that, in this case, the concept of "unnecessary" can be understood by everyone in their own way. Minimalism is a mindset focused on living and enjoying what you already have instead of being approved by society or considered successful (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Minimalism manifests itself in various areas - art and everyday life. In each sphere, it has a certain form of manifestation.

Moreover, there are studies that, in the context of minimalism, describes Millennials (or Generation Y) as ethical consumers (Miles, 1998; Newman, 2020; Sadani, 2019) or as voluntary simplifiers (Shaw & Newholm, 2002; Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016). However, not all authors tend to define minimalistic behavior as typical of Millennials (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Skowrońska, 2013). Analyzing this particular issue in the current economic and societal conditions determined my research's direction.

The purpose of my study is to analyze the degree of Millennials' commitment to minimalism and the peculiarities of its influence on their consumer behavior.

The research objectives are the following:

1. To define minimalism as a concept in the context of consumer behavior.
2. To describe concepts similar to consumer minimalism.
3. To describe the specifics of Generation Y as consumers.
4. To provide an in-depth empirical examination of consumer attitudes toward minimalism and the application of minimalistic practices.
5. To empirically (quantitatively) examine the relationship between minimalism and the following concepts: well-being, financial security, ethical behavior, and de-ownership orientation.

Given the research objectives and after carefully analyzing theoretical background I formed following hypotheses that were tested later on in the empirical part of my study:

H1: The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

H2: The level of financial security positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

H3: Ethical behavior positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

H4: Psychological well-being is the most common reason for individuals to adopt minimalism.

H5: The level of de-ownership positively correlates with the level of consumer minimalism.

H6: The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of de-ownership orientation.

In Chapter 1, I focus on Millennials as a generation of consumers. Millennials are, at the core, different from any of their predecessors, and I thus believe it is crucial to understand the specifics of a particular generation. I discuss the general characteristics of Millennials, such as demographic data, life values, and business mentality. Followed by a more detailed description of Millennials as consumers and describes which segments, according to consumer behavior, they could be divided into and their specifics. Chapter 2 provides a broad definition of minimalism as a term while discussing other movements that are similar and aim at the same societal problem of overconsumption. Moreover, the thesis covers the connection of Millennials to minimalism and other minimalism-related practices – typologies of minimalism and the consequences of such a lifestyle. Chapter 3 presents my hypotheses and the analyzed data from the qualitative research – interviews with millennial respondents - and the quantitative research, composed of data from an online survey and analyzed using the SPSS package to make a meaningful conclusion.



# 1 MILLENNIALS AS A NEW GENERATION OF CONSUMERS

## 1.1 General Characteristics of Millennials

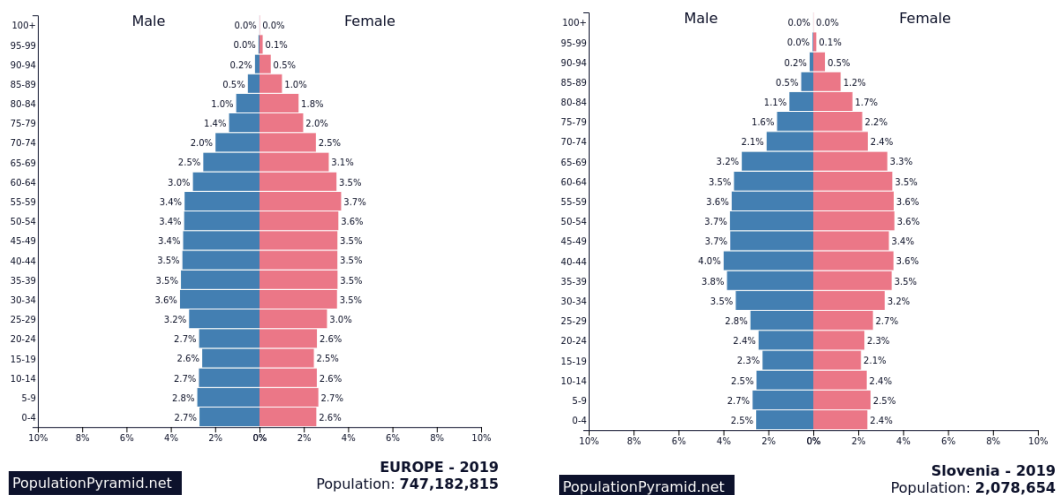
Nowadays, it is a common fact that millennials are entirely different from their predecessors: they have a different approach to education, work ethics, and lifestyle. They also behave differently as consumers. For companies, this means adapting the marketing strategies or even product/service offer to stay relevant for the new generation of consumers (Moreno, Lafuente, Carreon, & Moreno, 2017). Next, we will take a closer look at the general parameters that define Millennials as a generation.

### 1.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Millennials

In 2020, Millennials, or the so-called Generation Y, i.e., those born between 1981 and 1996, constituted approximately 23% of the global population, amounting to approximately 1.8 billion people worldwide (MSCI, 2020). However, Millennials are not evenly spread around the globe. For example, in 2020, 1.1 billion Millennials were living in the Asian region and 300 million in Africa. Only 150 million were residents of Europe, 150 million of Latin America/Caribbean and only 100 million were located in Oceania and North America (MSCI, 2020).

In Slovenia, there are around 404.972 representatives of Generation Y (Pust, 2020) that are entering the Slovene labor market. They provide their input in economic development and participate in the market as decision-makers with their unique consumer behavior patterns (Index Mundi, 2019; Statistični Urad Republike Slovenije, 2021b). The demographic situation of Europe and Slovenia is presented in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Population pyramid for Europe and Slovenia for the year 2019*



*Source: Population Pyramid.net (2019).*

The data summarized in Figure 1 clearly shows the proportion of Millennials in the EU and Slovenia in 2019: Male – 10.3%; Female – 10.0% in the EU and 9.1% and 9.4% in Slovenia, which is approximately the same. The group of the socially and economically active population (14 - 65+) in Slovenia in 2019 was 27.1%. At the same time, female Millennials in Slovenia made up 13% of the population, while male Millennials in Slovenia constituted 14.1% of the population. In the EU, Millennials constituted 27.3% of the socially and economically active population. Of these, 13.5% were female Millennials, while males accounted for 13.8%. It is worth noting that in Slovenia, male Millennials slightly prevail, while in Europe, the ratio of male and female Millennials is approximately the same (Population Pyramid.net, 2019). The latter means that Millennials represent a significant market segment and are, accordingly, the driving force that sets the trend and vector for the development of companies and their offerings, which requires significant attention from marketers.

An important factor influencing the level of income of the population, its purchasing power and market behavior is the level of education. In 2020, 14.3% of the Slovenian population aged 15 and over was undergoing lifelong education. However, this indicator dropped markedly in 2020 - by more than 8 percentage points compared with the 2010 data. For example, in 2020, 13.9% of males and 14.7% of females in Slovenia aged 15 years and older were undergoing formal or advanced training. The share of the educated was the highest (76.6%) among the young people and the lowest (3.0%) among the population aged 50 and over. Younger people were mainly engaged in formal education, and older in non-formal forms of education. At the same time, 10.9% of people aged 25-49 (potentially Millennials) were undergoing formal (school, institute) education and 89.1% were included in professional courses or other training programs. Slovenia is slightly below the EU average for adult participation in education. In 2020, 8.4% of adults (25-64 years old) in Slovenia were undergoing formal and / or non-formal education, which was the lowest share in the last 10 years and also slightly lower than the EU-27 average (9.2 %). The highest values of this indicator were recognized in Scandinavian countries and the lowest in the countries of Eastern Europe (Statistični Urad Republika Slovenija, 2021a).

### 1.1.2 Life Values

Regarding life values, Millennials are oriented toward sustainability, originality, self-expression, and tolerance. They are willing to achieve their goals of personal wealth and also to make a difference in the world (Rainer & Rainer, 2009). They are considered active and oriented towards a healthy lifestyle, preferring to have time off to focus on family, sports and traveling (Rainer & Rainer, 2009).

The main priority for the majority of Millennials is their family and their kids, with 52% of PewResearch Center survey (2010) respondents mentioning that they seek work-life balance

in order to be a good parent for their child, while only 15% of the respondents mentioned career as their main priority (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Gen Y representatives also prefer to live a healthier lifestyle. This is manifested in significant interest in such goods as sports equipment, exercise equipment, and equipment for outdoor activities - hunting, fishing, tourism, and mountaineering. As the share of such products on the market is constantly increasing, marketing research should reflect the specifics of the influence on their demand by millennials (Goldman Sachs, 2021).

Studies (Curtin, 2018; NielsenIQ 2015) show that the majority of Millennials are considered to be ethical consumers. Chapter 2 explores in detail the concepts of minimalism and ethical behavior as one of the forms of its manifestation. At this point, we note that the term ethical behavior in consumer behavior is usually understood as a form of political activism, with customers demanding that companies behave socially and environmentally consciously. Customers expect companies to have a more sustainable production model and offer eco-friendly, organic, cruelty-free goods to the society (Nguyen, 2020). According to the survey conducted by NielsenIQ (2015), 66% of global consumers were willing to splurge on sustainable goods, while the number among Millennials was 73%. The reason for that was that Millennials were aware of the current climate change and were willing to pay extra to support sustainable production and make a difference for the environment with their purchase. This once again defines Millennials as both rational and socially oriented consumers.

Millennials view the goods and services they purchase as reflections of their personality and lifestyle, not just commodities. Thus, the values of personal life, lifestyle, beliefs, financial ability and cultural background determine which models this person will adopt (Curtin, 2018; Yue, 2019).

The focus of Millennials is on creating products or services that not only serve a need but also offer a unique experience. Moreover, for Millennials who share the values of their generation, it is much easier to see the potential demand and create a solution than for companies that are more attached to traditional production. Therefore, by following these principles, Millennials act as ecological producers of goods and services and are, at the same time, ecological consumers (Rebernik et al., 2019).

In the business world, Millennials have proven themselves as very innovative with mainly entrepreneurial orientation. Their high education level, technological fluency and open-minded approach are the reasons why Millennials are so rapidly changing industries for the better. The noted business qualities of Millennials, namely that they are educated, active and creative people, are also represented in other areas of their lifestyle, ways and level of implementation of their plans and needs, and, in particular, their consumer behavior (Rebernik et al., 2019).

In terms of market opportunities, Millennials are mainly shifting industries to create digital or sustainable solutions. The main focus of modern advertising strategies is on advertising unique experiences offered to customers or on the effort that a company puts into making the production as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible.

Thus, the values of personal life, lifestyle, beliefs, financial capabilities and cultural background determine which consumption patterns a particular individual will adopt (Curtin, 2018; Yue, 2019).

## **1.2 Characteristics of Millennials as Consumers**

### **1.2.1 Principles for Researching Consumer Behavior**

Consumer behavior defines all actions associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including consumers' emotional, mental and behavioral reactions that precede or follow these actions (Kardes, Posavac, Cronley, & Herr, 2008).

One of the main stages in the study of consumer behavior is market segmentation, that is, the selection of typical consumer groups (Dolnicar, Grün, & Leisch, 2018). With the help of market segmentation, we can define the target group and nomenclature of goods, select methods and criteria for segmentation, structure interview questions and a questionnaire, appropiate questions for both quantitative and qualitative research with further data analysis, and finally detect customer segments (Ovsyannikov, Pettai, & Rimashevskaya, 1988).

The term market segment refers to a group of consumers with similar needs, desires, capabilities, and behaviors, thus, to people who are grouped based on similar characteristics for marketing purposes (Hayes, 2021). The types of customer segmentation are the following (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2006; McDonald & Dunbar, 2002):

- Demographic (city of residence, gender, age, education).
- Socio-economic (type of activity, occupation, income level, organizational status, self-assessment of income level).
- Behavioral (attitude to the product, to information about the product, to risk, attitude to the brand, the intensity of consumption).
- Psychographic (motives, values, interests, the degree of adherence to the ideas of minimalism and the degree of their implementation, style of behavior, the degree of satisfaction with one's consumer behavior and its results, an assessment of one's social position and the degree of its recognition by others).

In theoretical works and in practice, different approaches are used to identify segments and present them in a hierarchical structure. In one of the recent large-scale studies, "Cracking the code of millennial consumers" (Finneman, Ivory, Marchessou, Schmidt, & Skiles, 2017), the authors processed the data received from 11.000 respondents of Millennial consumers.

The data were presented in seven behavioral segments combined into three main clusters, considering the respondents' orientation towards value, quality and self-image. However, the authors of this research did not aim to analyze the behavioral specifics of Millennials in the context of minimalism. In their research, I did not find a clearly defined cluster of minimalists. Yet, among the mentioned research clusters, the value-oriented cluster is, in my estimation, to some extent, the closest to minimalists. Of particular interest in this work are the structure of the identified segments and their specifics.

The Value-driven cluster is divided into economizers and risk avoiders who are conservative with their purchases and care relatively less about brands than other groups. As their name suggests, economizers mainly care about the value-price ratio. In the case of risk avoiders, the focus is on minimizing the risk that goes together with purchasing new, unknown products, while economizers tend to go after deals (Finneman, Ivory, Marchessou, Schmidt, & Skiles, 2017).

The image-oriented cluster is divided into segments such as YOLOTORS, Showcases and Explorers. The YOLOTORS, as the name suggests, are willing to enjoy their lives, even if that means they will suffer financially because of their decisions. The Showcasers are those who have higher incomes and are willing to show their purchases on social media, while the Explorers are those who are willing to pay a premium in order to set themselves apart and be the first ones who try new brands (Finneman, Ivory, Marchessou, Schmidt, & Skiles, 2017).

The smallest share of Millennials is quality driven. They are diligent loyalists and premium enthusiasts. The representatives of both subgroups value the high quality of products and brands. The diligent loyalists have a strong need for control and routine; they like to be informed, while the premium enthusiasts are willing to pay more for products of higher quality as they deeply care about their health (Finneman, Ivory, Marchessou, Schmidt, & Skiles, 2017).

Thus, the authors highlighted the following segments among Millennial consumers:

- Value oriented:
  - Economizers
  - Risk avoiders
- Quality oriented:
  - Premium Enthusiasts
  - Loyalists
- Image oriented:
  - YOLO-tors
  - Showcasers
  - Explorers

In my opinion, this work (Finneman, Ivory, Marchessou, Schmidt, & Skiles, 2017) is of significant practical and scientific interest since it considers the problem of consumer behavior as a complex phenomenon. The segment names suggested by the authors reflect their essence. Yet, a careful examination of the work showed that the authors did not aim to define minimalism and minimalistic features among the consumers they analyzed. Moreover, the results obtained in 2017 characterize the situation in the United States according to that time's economic and societal factors. Depending on the specific conditions and time, the list of segments and their hierarchy may differ. However, their number and essence are expected. There will always be people with limited incomes or modest needs who want excesses or those with limited financial resources who want to show off to be approved by society or a particular group.

### 1.2.2 Shopping Habits of Millennials

Given the COVID-19 restrictions on in-store shopping, a survey conducted by JungleScout.com (2020) on 1.006 US citizens shows that 91% of the surveyed Millennials mentioned that they mainly shop online, with only 9% mentioning that they only shop in stores. For Millennials, who are considered to be tech fluent and are currently busy at work, online shopping is the means of shopping that offers: time savings, access even during a work break, broader than an in-store-choice, potential discounts and the option to search and compare options in terms of price and quality characteristics (Drenik, 2019). Moreover, online shopping has the benefit of immediate access to the reviews and feedback Millennials value, providing them with an honest overview of product characteristics (Drenik, 2019).

The main issue of online shopping compared to in-store is that after purchasing a product in a store, the customer obtains the product immediately. In contrast, the customer must wait for delivery after completing an online purchase. Around 45% of Millennials said that the same-day-delivery option was often the reason why they chose to order from a particular store (Drenik, 2019; Melton, 2019).

The research carried out by Polanec (2020) shows that the attitudes of Slovenian Millennials toward shopping are not much different. Slovenian Millennials, on average, prefer online shopping with the possibility of a return. 55% of Slovenian Millennials regularly shop via the internet, 25% quite often shop in online stores, and 20% shop online occasionally. As an interviewee of the research (Polanec, 2020) mentioned, in 46% of all his online purchases, he made a purchase even though he understood that he would return what he had purchased. Just like US representatives, Slovenian Millennials are unwilling to wait long for their delivery to arrive. 29% of all customers using the service Ceneje.si requested a 1–2-day delivery, 25% were satisfied with waiting for 3–4-day delivery, while 6% of the customers demanded same-day delivery despite this option being relatively rare in Slovenia (Polanec, 2020).

However, in 2020, COVID-19 changed digital commerce and customer expectations. Nowadays, physical goods and services such as educational programs on different topics, podcasts, and sports classes that can be entered through Zoom are offered online. Today's customers are primarily oriented toward high-level service with fast delivery, low to no delivery cost, price reduction and unique experiences that businesses offered to customers to survive during the pandemic (Digital Commerce 360, 2021). They are willing to pay more to get a higher quality product, hoping it will last longer. Gen Y representatives not only want a product or service quality; they also demand quality of production and supply (Landrum, 2017).

Thus, the values and practices consistent with the principles of minimalism are widespread among Millennials. One of my research objectives is to determine the degree of commitment of Millennials to the principles of minimalism. Consequently, we will consider them in detail in the following chapter.

## **2 MINIMALISM AS A PRINCIPLE OF CONSUMPTION**

### **2.1 Essence of Minimalism and Forms of Manifestation**

Minimalism is one of the trends in consumer behavior that is gaining popularity among consumers (Millennial Marketing, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, with all its negative side effects, such as increased unemployment and decreased disposable income, people started to question and reflect on their consumption patterns (Kang, Martinez, & Johnson, 2021).

The term “minimalism” describes the behavior of voluntarily resisting the accumulation of goods on one's personal level and shifting the priority towards mindfulness. Mindfulness is a psychological and spiritual practice of living fully present, aware of needs and differentiating needs from wants, embracing human connection with emotions, body, and the environment a person lives in (MINDFUL.ORG, 2020). The focus is on satisfying needs and not wants and on finding meaningful connections with other community members without attaching value or assessing one's value through the number of materialistic possessions (Błoński & Witek, 2019).

Minimalism suggests removing any materialistic boundaries posed by a consumeristic approach by removing the value attached to particular things that one should have in order to be considered “valued.” Thus, minimalism is changing one's relationship with materialistic goods. Moreover, minimalism can be applied to human relations. The philosophy of minimalism suggests concentrating on relations that are meaningful and are made by choice, openness to the world and new relations without being tied up to the past and mobility with the assumption that meaningful connections can be obtained without a constant presence (Skowrońska, 2013).

Moreover, according to Lloyd and Pennington (2020), Millennials who claim to be minimalists or adopters of minimalistic practices (e.g., voluntary simplifiers, ethical consumers) reported feeling autonomous after refusing to follow social expectations and choosing to do what brings them inner peace and joy. For example, the respondents in an interview (2020) mentioned that they felt “trapped,” “tied down,” and “burnout” by their possessions and societal expectations. Consumerism and unrealistic societal expectations trap Millennials in monotony and routine, blocking their natural talents and linking societal approval or happiness to the amount of goods consumed. The respondents mentioned that they were mindlessly spending to “fix” their mood due to the pressure. On the other hand, minimalistic practices taught the respondents how to say no and focus on their own values rather than on societal expectations. The rejection of consumerism allowed the majority of survey participants to build their relationships based on emotional connection and interests, one’s authentic self rather than focusing on social position or the amount and value of physical possessions (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020).

Minimalism practitioners believe there is a link between the external (physical space) and the inner (mental space) world: a cluttered physical space results in a chaotic mind. As a solution, adopters of minimalism suggest starting with a “purge,” which means radical decluttering in order to bring back the focus. The process of “purging” was described as “gaining your freedom back,” “saving mental energy due to having fewer things to take care of,” and “finally being able to focus on more important things/relationships due to a clearer understanding of priorities” (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020).

However, ensuring one’s own mental space is part of several global practices, such as mindfulness, awareness and reflection. Defining a true driver for consumeristic behavior, whether it is sadness or willingness to change one’s routine and reflect on it, can help an individual to understand what (s)he is lacking in life and change it for the better. Another advantage of reflecting on one’s own spending pattern is understanding what amount was spent to get short-term satisfaction from unnecessary purchases and its long-term impact on the environment (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020).

Minimalism is often defined as voluntary simplicity, deconsumption or anti-consumption and does, to some extent, include ethical consumerism or eco-consumption. All these terms differ in their focus, orientation towards consumption and optimal quality of possessions. Consumption patterns of each individual thus vary due to personal beliefs, values, lifestyle and the extent to which a particular individual is willing to limit consumption. Minimalism suggests limiting individual consumption to a rational size and changing focus from quantity to quality and functionality. The main goal of minimalism is to refocus an individual from orientation towards excess consumption and attaching value to materialistic things towards reevaluating their consumption patterns, finding personal balance and focusing on interpersonal relationships. While minimalism does not totally resist consumption, it promotes defining a need and then acquiring a product that can satisfy the need the most and yet be durable to serve for a longer time (Błoński & Witek, 2019).



Minimalism can be expressed in various forms such as minimalistic and monochromic home designs, wardrobe capsules (limited amount of clothes and shoes that could be matched to a number of different outfits suitable for one particular season), decluttering and organizing the living space. In their research, Wilson and Bellezza (2021) identified dimensions through which consumer minimalism can be measured. The dimensions are the following: number of possessions (fewer possessions reflect a minimalistic approach), sparse aesthetics (simple and monochromic designs usually reflect orientation towards minimalism), mindful consumption with reflection on the post-purchase stage (a thoughtful selection of possessions is a sign of a minimalistic approach). However, minimalism is not only about purchasing aesthetical decorations but also about the art of decluttering, organization and tidying up (Wilson & Bellezza, 2021).

Orientation towards minimalistic consumption might have emerged as a response to intensified production. An increase in marketing stimuli and artificially created needs, such as fast fashion that suggests short living trends, leaves customers in need to change their clothes seasonally. Millennials have thus adopted minimalistic consumption to resist personal overconsumption (Jain, 2020; Smith, 2018). Another potential reason is that Millennials are more minimalism-oriented; thus, minimalism is not a widespread trend but a mode of consumption (Becker, 2017; Weinswig, 2016). In the following chapter, we will take a closer look at the correlation between the concepts of minimalism and ethical behavior.

## **2.2 Ethical Consumption**

As mentioned in section 1.1.2., ethical consumption is one of the characteristics of Millennials' consumer behavior. At this point, I will discuss it in more detail as one of the elements of minimalism.

According to Fisher (2018), 87% of Millennials surveyed mentioned that they would be more loyal to companies that are contributing to social and environmental issues. Millennials even place a premium on CSR efforts and are willing to pay more for goods produced by companies operating ethically or giving back to communities in need (Rudominer, 2016). According to Nielson Global Corporate Sustainability report (2015), 73% of global Millennials are willing to pay an extra margin for sustainability claims. This proportion is the highest in comparison with other generations. Moreover, according to Cone Communication Millennial CSR Study (2015), 9 out of 10 Millennials surveyed mentioned that they would switch to a brand with a cause and are ready to make a personal sacrifice in order to make a difference regarding issues they care about. The reason for this is that Millennials are aware of the current climate change and are willing to pay extra to support sustainable production and make an environmental impact with their purchases. This once again characterizes millennials as rational and socially oriented consumers (Cone, 2015).

A significant share of modern consumers have adopted anti-consumption practices and boycott the brands that are wasteful, test their products on animals, lack work ethics, produce environmentally harmful products and do not know yet how to reduce pollution from their own production (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016). Anti-consumption or boycotting a company due to either dissatisfaction with its values or production ethics is a sub-movement of a bigger and more complex movement with its primary focus on ethical consumption (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001).

Ethical consumerism or ethical consumption is the term describing consumption where consumers choose to consume goods associated with positive environmental and social processes (Compare ethics, 2020). Many consumers who have adopted ethical consumption choose to support sustainable and socially responsible companies. Moreover, customers refuse to purchase products that might violate human rights or initiate animal abuse (The Consumer Goods Forum, 2019).

Thus, ethical consumption is focused on three main problematics: 1) human rights, working conditions and fair trade; 2) environmental problems caused by overproduction and overconsumption; 3) protection of the environment, including animals (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001).

Studies reviewed above (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001; Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016) show that many external factors influencing Millennials have shifted their consumer behavior towards a more minimalist and ethical approach. At the same time, it is evident that Millennials are adherents of the principles of minimalism to varying degrees and that their consumer behavior is different. The analysis of this specificity requires the segmentation of minimalists (Becker, 2017; Millennial Marketing, 2021).

### **2.3 Typology of Minimalism**

As mentioned above, minimalism can be defined as voluntary simplicity, deconsumption or anti-consumption and does, to some extent, include ethical consumerism or eco-consumption. To carry out the identification and segmentation of specific groups of minimalists according to the differences and similarities of their consumer behavior, it is necessary to determine how the above-mentioned concepts (e.g., voluntary simplicity, deconsumption or anti-consumption and ethical consumerism or eco-consumption) correlate with each other in scientific literature and theoretical background and based on which characteristics they could be distinguished (Becker, 2017).

Minimalism is a broad philosophical concept and applies to a person's desire not to surround themselves with unnecessary ideas, problems, objects, information, or communication and have their own ways of spending personal time. It is especially worth noting that, in this

case, the concept of "unnecessary" can be understood by everyone in their own way. Minimalism is a mindset focused on living and enjoying what you already have instead of worrying about having enough possessions to be publicly approved or considered successful (Błoński & Witek, 2019).

In my work, I explore minimalism in the context of consumer behavior. Ethical consumption is one of the forms of its modern manifestation and is represented in the following practices (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001):

- refusal to buy unnecessary items;
- “voting with the dollar,” that is, the support shown by the buyer to companies that produce ecological products;
- proper disposition of used items and waste.

However, not all minimalists are fully committed to the mentioned principles of ethical behavior, and there is no clear understanding of whether all these terms reflect the same practice or if they differ in their focus. In other words, a methodology is needed to set clear principles for identifying individual segments of minimalist and ethical consumers (Becker, 2017).

In their research, Pangarkar, Shukla and Taylor (2021) provided argumentation on potential differences in the focus of each movement. Depending on how each individual understands the concept of minimalism and to what extent (s)he wants to accept this practice, the authors proposed four types of minimalism: “voluntary simplicity,” “reduced consumption,” “anti-consumption,” and “inconspicuous minimalism.” Each of the typologies will be discussed in detail below.

### 2.3.1 Type 1: Voluntary Simplicity

Voluntary simplicity as a movement is focused on mindfulness and finding a life balance without letting materialistic possessions define one’s happiness. Voluntary simplifiers shift their focus from consumption to finding pursuits in life that are more meaningful to them and bring happiness and peace. The main focus is living a simple life (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Voluntary simplifiers are not driven by economic constraints, and they voluntarily choose to live a simple life, limiting their consumption to only necessities (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

Many representatives of the voluntary simplicity movement are mainly interested in their own production. For example, growing herbs, vegetables or fruits in their garden, making clothes for themselves, and avoiding technological devices if they are not of vital importance. The main focus of voluntary simplifiers is the simplicity of living and mindfulness, with greater attention on achieving life goals rather than what to consume. They prioritize spirituality, connection with nature and happiness. For example, voluntary

simplifiers can afford to buy food in stores. Nevertheless, they choose to grow their own as they consider the whole process as something that helps them relax, find inner peace and focus on the connection with the environment (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

Voluntary simplifiers do not base their decisions on environmental issues but instead choose what can help them avoid day-to-day stress and focus on mindfulness (Denham, 2016). However, it is impossible to reject consumption entirely. In the case of voluntary simplifiers, they choose to buy second-hand goods if they cannot produce what they need. Many buy not only second-hand clothes but also used furniture and even technical devices if needed. According to Kathy Myers (1986), the choice of second-hand consumption can be considered as bypassing the responsibility for its production. Moreover, many old technological devices consume much more energy than their newer versions. By buying second-hand clothes, people are, in some sense, recycling what would otherwise be thrown away; thus, with their behavior, they are prolonging a product's life cycle. Shaw and Newholm (2002) found that before buying second-hand goods, many consumers make sure that the product is of good quality. The reason behind this behavior is that they do not see the purpose of "valuing new things too high" (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

Based on the information mentioned above, I can conclude that voluntary simplifiers mainly emphasize achieving personal physical and mental comfort using minimal material resources, while they do not tend to prioritize social and environmental problems (Błoński & Witek, 2019; Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

### 2.3.2 Type 2: Reduced Consumption

As the name suggests, reduced consumption is centered around lower consumption due to budget limitations. Reduced consumption is a temporary state with a strategy of avoiding consumption due to economic constraints. In the long term, an individual might return to a previously adopted consumption pattern once the financial situation improves. For example, many people had to adopt reduced consumption during the pandemic of COVID-19, when the majority either lost their jobs or were limited in the budget due to decreased disposable income (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

An important detail is that adopters of reduced consumption do not boycott consumption but are temporarily avoiding particular products (for example, expensive premium products) or are moderately consuming such products (in lower quantities). Reduced consumption consumers, contrary to voluntary simplifiers, are heavily led by budget constraints and, contrary to anti-consumption adopters, they do not boycott consumption due to societal or environmental concerns; they are driven by temporary financial distress with the ability to occasionally splurge on something that brings them joy (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

### 2.3.3 Type 3: Anti-consumption

Anti-consumption consumers are heavily driven by a purpose, either societal or environmental. The classic example of anti-consumption behavior is when an individual boycotts buying products from real fur as (s)he does not support killing animals for fur. Another example of anti-consumption behavior is when the customer never purchases any products that come in plastic packages as (s)he is aware of how harmful plastic products are (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

Some researchers describe anti-consumption adopters as idealists who are highly engaged with social causes and are willing to impact the number of industries using their consumption as a vote (supporting only approved companies). Anti-consumption adopters usually have strong self-identity; they know their priorities and preferences. An important difference between anti-consumption adopters and reduced consumption adopters is that those who are oriented towards anti-consumption boycott particular brands and companies due to their societal, environmental, or welfare beliefs without feeling financial constraints (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

Anti-consumption consumers can be divided into four groups based on their main focus, due to which they are willing to boycott either particular companies or overall consumption. These subcategories are the following (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016):

- consumers who care about environmental and societal issues and want to boycott companies that are behaving harmfully towards welfare or the environment;
- consumers who boycott particular companies or brands as they believe that they negatively influence society;
- consumers who do not want to be bothered by stress that goes together with constant want to acquire and possess materialistic goods;
- consumers who choose whom to support or boycott based on whether a company's values match their own values.

It is imperative to note that anti-consumption is a complex phenomenon. Its focus is not only on minimalism for personal interests but on intentions and actions that solve political, environmental and social problems (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

On the other hand, the practice of anti-consumption, in my opinion, is quite similar to the practice of ethical consumption. However, anti-consumption has a more radical manifestation. The latter is supported by the research of Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, (2001). The authors distinguish three types of ethical consumption:

1. Positive ethical consumption manifests itself in the purchase of products that have been produced ethically or that are sold under the label of an ethical company. Customers are willing to “vote with their dollar” to support companies they approve of.

2. Negative ethical consumption is oriented toward customers boycotting and avoiding products with unethical features. Quite often, such customers might boycott companies due to their unethical behavior.
3. Consumer action practice includes lobbying of government and direct communication with brands, brand managers or even manufacturers.

As we can see, these three types, to some extent, detail and duplicate the earlier type 3 anti-consumption types (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016). Moreover, I consider the practice of “consumer actions” as a manifestation of the highest degree of adherence to minimalism, and I take it into account while ranking the values of the corresponding answers of the questionnaire. Furthermore, I use principles and characteristics of segmentation proposed by the authors Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001, and Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016, to formulate interview questions and identify segments among Slovenian customers, with the main focus on identifying a cluster of minimalists. To complete the typology of minimalism, we will consider the last of the types of consumption identified by the authors (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016) - inconspicuous minimalism.

#### 2.3.4 Type 4: Inconspicuous Minimalism

Inconspicuous minimalism is inspired by inconspicuous consumption, which suggests that consumers are interested in products with only a subtle sign of a brand. Inconspicuous minimalists usually choose goods with subtle logos, simple designs, and muted colors. Soft and discrete cuts, styles and fashion are common for them. It is important to emphasize that this customer segment does not boycott brands that do not share their values; the customers simply choose only products that suit their aesthetic preferences. Usually, the products that inconspicuous minimalists choose can be valued only by insiders (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

Inconspicuous minimalism consumers usually belong to the higher social class, are well educated and have stable employment. Customers of that segment can be influenced into a purchase by their social circle as they have to correspond to its expectations. Hermes and Loro Piana are some of the best examples of brands that inconspicuous minimalism consumers support. These brands have subtle logos but use designs and materials that distinguish them from other brands. Both brands are known to be of high quality and luxurious. Nevertheless, they are not widely spread among the masses and are thus unknown. However, the people who move in certain circles understand the value of such products. Inconspicuous minimalism consumers are often conscious of their status and image. They are willing to choose luxurious and sophisticated designs and materials to communicate their position to others in their circle (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016). That is why I believe that inconspicuous minimalists are not minimalists in nature; even though they consume less than consumerists, they are still mainly driven not by their needs but want to purchase attributes of high status that correspond to their social circle.

### **3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON CONSUMER MINIMALISM**

#### **3.1 Qualitative Analysis of Millennials' Consumer Behavior**

The main objectives of the qualitative research are the following:

1. Gaining insights into Millennials' attitudes towards the principles of minimalism, ethical behavior and the possibility of implementing these practices in modern conditions.
2. Approbation of interview questions and construction of a survey questionnaire that corresponds to the objectives of the research.
3. Additional argumentation of statistical hypotheses which were tested in the quantitative study.

##### **3.1.1 Methodology of Qualitative Analysis**

According to Robinson and Mendelson (2012), the qualitative approach offers an opportunity to define the real attitude of the respondent towards the topic based on definite answers, body signs, and potentially specifying questions. During face-to-face interviews, respondents have two-way communication with the interviewer; thus, all inconsistencies (such as misunderstanding) can be detected beforehand and eliminated with no harm to the overall research. The main reason I have chosen qualitative research as the first part of my empirical study is that such analysis would provide a more profound understanding of the "human" side of the issue, such as motives, concerns, beliefs and emotions. The qualitative analysis is mainly descriptive; its result is the identification of the general picture and structure of the phenomena. At the same time, the relationship between the factors is not revealed. Thus, to define a further connection between variables, we will apply quantitative analysis, described further in the work (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

The qualitative research was conducted in the form of twelve in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted from 4 to 17 October 2021. The transcriptions of the interviews are presented in Appendix 6. The main goals of my qualitative study were to get insights into the emotions, motives and thoughts of the sample regarding the topic of minimalism, test the comprehension of questions to develop a set of questions that would be inclusive and would provide relevant data for further quantitative analysis using the SPSS statistical package.

An informal face-to-face conversation was conducted according to a previously compiled guide presented in Appendix 5. However, depending on the situation, the course of the conversation was corrected in order to obtain detailed answers or relevant comments from the respondents. During question formulation, my goal was to make them open-ended, requiring the respondent to provide details and share emotions. Moreover, detailed answers

received during the qualitative stage enabled coding in the stage of quantitative analysis, as coding was mainly done using a nominal or ordinal scale. Unlike the quantitative method implemented later, the interview data were obtained from a small sample (n=12) and represent the respondents' logical generalizations, comparisons and interpretations. At the same time, the emphasis was placed not on general trends or characteristics of the sample but on identifying internal motives, impulses and diversity among individuals. During the interview, nuances that cannot be obtained during an online survey were obtained. To test the sincerity and consistency of the respondents, the interview contained interrelated and cross-cutting questions.

Before starting the interview, I ensured that every respondent understood the scientific/unfamiliar terms correctly. The differences in some generally accepted terms (e.g., "ethical consumption," "rational consumption," "disposable income," "personal care products," etc.) were also explained. The crucial factor for obtaining relevant, valid information was providing an opportunity for the respondents to formulate their understanding of the phenomenon and critically assess their consumer behavior.

### 3.1.2 Sample Characteristics

The interviews were conducted on a sample (n=12) of 12 people, with the youngest participant born in 1996 and the oldest in 1981. Out of 12 participants, 6 were female, and 6 were male. Six individuals were between the age of 25-30, 2 individuals were between 31-35, and 4 respondents were between 36-40 years old. The average age of the respondents was 29 years. The respondents were mainly from the Koroška region of Slovenia (Ravne na Koroškem, Prevalje, Radlje ob Dravi, Holmec); however, 1 respondent lives Locovica (Velenje), and 2 respondents originally came from Baku (Azerbaijan).

Among the respondents, there were two family couples. All the respondents have a high education level. Four individuals completed a higher educational program; three had bachelor's, and five had master's degrees. Moreover, most of the respondents held high positions across different industries; the most common occupations were engineer and economist. The respondents had average (for Slovenia) salaries with disposable income between 1001-1500 euros/month

My sample was convenient, yet I believe it sufficiently reflected the socio-demographic structure of Millennials in Slovenia. The analysis of qualitative analysis is presented in the next chapter.



### 3.1.3 Analysis of Qualitative Survey

#### 3.1.3.1 *Financial Security*

During my qualitative and quantitative research, I aimed to avoid questions regarding income, even in the anonymous interviews, as the respondents tend to provide evasive or underestimated answers. However, income level is one of the main factors in consumer behavior. Therefore, I included an additional question about self-assessment of the income level and several indirect questions that can provide insight into whether an individual provided consistent information (attitude to promotional goods, etc.).

Upon asking what respondents would do if their monthly disposable income would increase by 500 euros, I received different results with majority claiming they would transfer that amount to savings. Yet the quote of one of the respondents is reflecting her approach to consumption: “I would spend this money on something luxurious, and when all of my wishes came true, I would start saving” (female, 31).

Based on the data received, I can conclude that no individuals were in need of essential everyday items and would, therefore, be forced to limit their purchases due to a lack of financial resources. However, in general, in almost any society, there are such people, and in order to identify such a segment, the online survey must contain the question about the self-assessment of one's income.

#### 3.1.3.2 *General Consumption Preferences*

An important characteristic of minimalistic consumer behavior is the frequency of purchasing a specific category of goods. The most often mentioned categories were: clothes, shoes, make-up and products for personal care (e.g., shampoos, shower gels, body creams, sun protection, etc.). I received no particular answers for the categories such as accessories, books, or stationary. Moreover, the frequency at which individuals purchase clothes and footwear depends not only on the specific type (winter, summer, sport, casual, etc.) but on the presence of a family and its composition. Therefore, in the online survey, I added a question about the preference for quantity or quality in relation to some specific categories. During the discussion over this issue, 75% of the respondents claimed to shop only in physical stores, while the other 25% combined shopping in physical and online stores. Moreover, the respondents mentioned that they mainly shop online for such categories as cosmetics and personal care, underwear, socks, or other categories of goods that an individual is acquainted with or which could not bring any major unpleasant surprises.

On the question regarding most important product characteristics that influence the choice to purchase, respondents mainly mentioned quality, price and aesthetics. Additionally, the respondents named: the delivery time of the purchased goods, the possibility of warranty

service and professional help in the post-purchase stage as important factors influencing their decision-making.

It is important to note that some people cannot or do not want to go into details, and it is difficult to get a specific answer from them, even in a personal conversation. For example, one respondent said, “It is important for me to find what I am looking for. I usually shop in the same place and know the price range” (male, 36 years). Two other interviewees mentioned that they find as the most important that the product is visually appealing and inexpensive. It is clear that answers to these questions during the online survey would be highly limited to the options I offer and thus would not be as informative as during the face-to-face interview. Thus, the online survey included several different questions regarding the criteria for choosing a product, with the option of providing one’s own criteria for selection. Moreover, disappointment was expressed regarding some categories of goods from premium stores (male, 29). The respondents noted that the significance of a particular product characteristic highly depends on the category of the product. For example, some respondents mentioned that they only search for quality while shopping for footwear, while the price is often the primary determinant in choosing clothes.

#### *3.1.3.3 Channels of Information*

The next question referred to the channels from which the respondents prefer to receive information and potential recommendations regarding goods they are considering purchasing. This question was asked to assess the level of criticality, as well as the ability of the buyer to find, select and use the right information. These qualities are essential both in the context of consumer behavior and in social processes. Results show that respondents often count on personal experience and feedback from friends, family members and professionals working in the industry when choosing a product. Moreover, many respondents mentioned that they often count on the recommendations of sales assistants. However, the respondents indicated that the choice of information sources is largely determined by the category of goods. Technical descriptions, user manuals, labels, and personal experiences are most often considered qualified sources for decision-making regarding purchasing of products for children, food, and personal care. Advertising was mentioned less often than other sources, and none of the sources were marked as insignificant.

#### *3.1.3.4 Attitude towards Price*

During the interviews, no one was identified who would specifically be looking for cheap goods or avoiding goods at regular prices.

An important factor in consumer motivation is understanding the price-to-quality ratio. The closest connection between a higher price and higher quality was noted by two interviewees.

At the same time, one person (female, 25) indicated that this highly depends on the category and that this statement is mainly true for the footwear category. An interesting remark was made by one of the respondents (female, 33): “I never purchase anything based on the brand name as I believe that brand names are often used for marketing purposes; moreover, the prices for some premium brands are sometimes ridiculous.” Another respondent (male, 26) clarified his thoughts regarding high prices on some premium brands: “My experience shows that the quality of some of the famous premium and highly advertised brands is often quite standard if not even below average.” Most of the respondents noted that it is possible to judge the price-to-quality relationship more objectively in relation to specific categories of goods. Thus, the results of the survey showed that most consumers compare price, quality and brand when choosing a product. However, in this case, the ratio of priorities is different for different segments.

#### *3.1.3.5 Clarity of Intentions*

The features of consumer behavior, such as clarity of intentions and sequence of their implementation, are shown by the answers to the questions, “Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?”. Majority of respondents claimed that they do usually plan their shopping list/budget. Out of four people who mentioned that they usually do not plan, three were female and said they “prefer to navigate on the spot”. I double-checked respondents’ sincerity with asking how often they make spontaneous purchases question on the later stage of interview. The comparison of the results to these questions shows that out of five people who plan purchases, three almost never make them spontaneously, while two claim never to make any spontaneous purchases. Among four respondents, who claimed that they do not plan their purchases, one person claimed that (s)he almost never makes compulsive purchases, two often make compulsive purchases, and one mentioned that (s)he quite often makes compulsive purchases.

#### *3.1.3.6 Attitude towards Premium Segment and Status Signaling*

The majority of respondents mentioned that they were not ready to pay a premium for items that might position them as individuals of high status. Moreover, all the respondents expressed concern about social circles that require some expensive attributes so as to be considered “successful,” “worth,” and “included.” For example, the main comments on that topic were: “I do not care if an individual is wearing branded clothes as I mainly appreciate the personality” (female, 38); “I consider myself as a professional individual and as a good person who is ready to help, I do not think I need brands for that” (male, 29); “I like to be well-dressed, clean clothes, not too overdressed, yet enough to express my personality. I never feel pressured in my circle of friends to show any status or to dress in a particular way to be accepted” (female, 33).

In comparison, the results to the question regarding replacing an old item with a newer from a premium segment four respondents mentioned that they would like to replace an item they

own with a premium item due to the low quality of the item they already have. Moreover, the respondents who chose that option mentioned that they would like to get a more premium item from the tech category (TV, phone, computer). One respondent (male, 25) provided the following comment, “If I see a good quality product in a higher price segment, I will buy it, but I do not want to pay only for the trademark or marketing.” Thus, the questions mentioned above show that most of the respondents are critical of brand names and rationally select items they are willing to own.

### *3.1.3.7 Attitude towards Minimalism*

A certain characteristic signaling one’s attitude towards minimalism could be one’s orientation towards selecting particular forms of interior design, decoration items, etc. During the interview, two photographs of two different interiors, one of which, according to experts, is considered minimalistic, were shown to the respondents. The examples of pictures presented are shown in Appendices 2 (examples of minimalistic design) and 3 (examples of non-minimalistic designs). The minimalistic design was selected by ten respondents, and the non-minimalistic by two, both of which are women. However, the question about interior design might not be representative as it shows the respondents’ interior preferences and personal tastes. This is confirmed by the explanations to the answers provided: “I like the first design better, it is cleaner. But I would still add some decorations to it, for example, pictures” (female, 31); “The first design is better, it looks neat, but it lacks soul” (male, 31). The conversation with the respondents about minimalism in a general sense - in architecture, and art, showed a wide range of people's understanding and attitude to this concept.

Given the goal of my research, the following set of questions was asked during the interviews:

- “Can you say that you are minimalist?”
- “Who are minimalists, in your opinion, and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?”
- “Can you say that you live a more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?”

Most of the respondents agree with the principles of minimalism to some extent. However, it should be emphasized that one-third of the sample described their behavior as somewhat more rational than minimalistic. This could be because the respondents associated minimalism with a certain minimum. I did not provide any definition of the term minimalism on purpose, and I asked whether an individual is a minimalist before asking for one’s understanding of the terminology. My intention was to test whether an individual, based on self-assessment, can relate to minimalists and what the definition of “minimalism” is, given that each individual understands it uniquely. As minimalism is mainly about quantity limitation, I was interested in getting an insight into whether an individual is able to assess what the personal quantity limit is and whether (s)he is living in the frame of that limit,

below (radical minimalism) or above (consumerism). The comments were as follows: “I think minimalism is more about a limited number of things. We buy what we need, and I have three pairs of jeans, and I am comfortable with this quantity. If I were a minimalist, I would need only pair” (male, 35); “I imagine minimalism as something more than a life with one backpack of possessions” (female, 33); “I think we are somewhere in the middle and we are between minimalists and rational consumers” (female, 29).

Who, according to the respondents, is a minimalist? The most typical answers are as follows: “Minimalists are those who have a really limited number of possessions and who buy only what they need” (female, 25); “Minimalists buy only what they need and when they need it, and also get rid of the items that they do not need any more” (female, 29); “...you purchase something when you need it, and you know that with that item you can be more efficient and productive than without so such a purchase is economically beneficial” (male, 29). It can be said that the majority of the respondents have a similar idea and image of minimalism, but its level and degree of commitment are understood differently. In other words, the assessment of this characteristic varies. Some people even associate it with asceticism – “...minimalists can put their things in one bag, and these people often have very ascetic houses” (female, 31).

Interesting results were obtained after I asked the individuals to assess and compare their consumption practices and level of minimalism with someone in their close circle. Eight respondents answered affirmative to the question which required them to compare their consumption to the consumption of their friends or family. Some of the respondents turned out to be self-critical - “...in relation to some, my behavior is more minimalistic, in relation to others - less” (female, 26).

The significant difference between segments of minimalism is determined based on the ratio of their priorities – personal and social. To the group of personal priorities, I allocated personal comfort and satisfaction with personal possessions. In contrast, to social priorities, I allocated the respondents' attitudes towards the disposal of unnecessary items, waste disposal, boycotts of unethical companies and participation in environmental protection movements. Regarding the ethics of enterprises, I received the following answers: “I would say that it is quite difficult to track whether a particular company behaves ethically on the market. Many companies are still not very transparent, and some are transparent partially due to marketing reasons. Yet as production is a very complex function, and many big companies outsource it, it is challenging to track further whether all the supply chain is behaving ethically or not” (male, 26); “I believe that it is not enough to rely on companies to change the world fully; every customer should start with their consumption habits” (female, 33). An important characteristic of the social activity of minimalists is their reaction to the actions of companies - support or boycott. “If the product turns out to be of poor quality, then I will not buy from them anymore, but this does not mean that I will boycott the company only on the basis of whether they are ethical or not” (female, 31); “I make my choice based on the activities of the general director of the company, as well as on how the

brand behaves in general and what their products are” (female, 26); “I do not boycott any of the brands based on their behavior in the market. However, there are companies I am ready to support with my purchase because I believe in their values and consider their actions positive” (male, 25). On the other hand, there were people in my sample who believed that the ethical orientation of companies is nothing more than a marketing strategy to attract customers with a great cause: “Ethical production is nothing more than a marketing strategy. I do not want to pay companies to become socially and environmentally responsible. This is what they should be doing by default” (male, 29); “I never look at it” (female, 25). In general, the idea of boycotting or supporting companies is supported by 25% of the respondents, partially supported by 33%, and not supported by 42%. As can be seen, almost half of the respondents understand the need for ethical behavior of companies but do not take any real action in this direction.

The most important regarding the analysis of consumer behavior of an individual is the buyer’s self-assessment of their desires, actions and results. At the end of each interview, I asked the question, “Can you say that making purchases makes you feel excited and happy?” As expected, the variation of the level of sensations was extensive: from the minimum – “I don’t feel anything like that” (male, 36) to the maximum – “purchases make me happy and relaxed” (female, 38).

It is important to emphasize that while comparing these answers with the answers to the question “Do you consider yourself a minimalist?”, it turned out that both respondents who did not develop any special emotions from shopping (group 1) previously stated that they are “more minimalist than not;” out of two individuals enjoying shopping (group 2), one declared to be “not minimalist,” the second “rather not minimalist.” The rest positioned themselves as minimalists and “rather minimalists” or “rational consumers” who are satisfied only in case of successful purchases of goods of certain categories and travel. As we can see, the respondents were relatively consistent with their answers and stable in their opinions, although the second question was asked some time after the first one, and they might no longer remember their earlier answers.

#### 3.1.4 Conclusion

To conclude the part of the qualitative analysis, I would like to highlight the following points:

1. The approbation of the interview questions showed a fairly good understanding by the respondents of the essence of the questions asked, the research topic and its objectives.
2. The wording of the majority of questions showed their good selectivity.
3. The qualitative analysis showed the openness of the respondents. This is confirmed by the logical consistency of the answers of individual respondents to blocks of interrelated questions. For example, “Do you consider yourself a minimalist?”, “How often do you make spontaneous purchases?” and “Are you ready to pay for goods that will testify to

your high status?” This allowed me to note some tendencies already at the stage of the qualitative analysis. At the stage of the quantitative analysis, this was analyzed by measuring the statistical relationship with the assessment of statistical significance.

4. Almost all the respondents were ready for an open conversation, and after a formal answer (often, rarely, rather agree, etc.), they gave valuable explanations and comments. Their analysis showed the following:
  - The questionnaire for online data gathering must clearly state that questions refer to items purchased for personal usage and not for production, donation or collecting.
  - The frequency of purchases for certain product categories varies by household, and the frequency does not always reflect the shopper's habits. Therefore, the interview question, “How often do you buy non-food and drink items from regular stores via the Internet?” in the questionnaire was worded as follows: “How do you feel about the phrase “quality is more important than quantity” in relation to goods of the same type (gloves, bags, belts, etc.)?”
5. Most of the respondents correctly understood the term minimalism in the context of consumer behavior and supported its principles. However, many perceived it as synonymous with “rational” or “conscious” behavior. To some extent, this may reflect their degree of commitment or criticism of minimalism. The interview showed the practicality of using a rank scale for coding the values of some variables and the corresponding re-coding.

### **3.2 Quantitative Analysis of Millennials’ Consumer Behavior**

In the quantitative analysis, I analyzed the data received during the online survey using the SPSS package in order to confirm or reject my hypotheses. In the first part of my quantitative analysis, I present my hypotheses; then, I describe the methods used for coding and analyzing the data received; finally, I provide an analysis of the descriptive statistics and hypotheses testing. My quantitative study aims to define whether millennials as consumers are oriented towards minimalistic consumption. The objectives of my quantitative research are to gather information from my target group - Millennials by using an online survey, to analyze the quantitative data using the SPSS package and to provide a meaningful conclusion based on the results.

#### **3.2.1 Presentation of Statistical Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1: The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

Several studies (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Matte, Fachinelli, Toni, Milan & Olea, 2021) have researched the connection between the level of minimalism and the level of one’s psychological well-being and concluded that adopters of lower-consumption lifestyles are happier, feel fulfilled and have higher degrees of freedom. The respondents of the study by

Chabot (2020) mentioned that minimalism and reduced consumption enabled them to shift their focus from excessive consumption and instead prioritize relationships, ideas and activities that bring unmaterialistic value. Moreover, several respondents mentioned that materialistic possessions could not “make them happy” or bring psychological satisfaction, while turning towards minimalism finally brought peace into their lives (Chabot, 2020).

Hypothesis 2: The level of financial security positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

According to the research by Chabot (2020), the individuals who adopted minimalistic consumption patterns claimed that their new behavior positively impacted their financial security level. More precisely, after lowering their consumption level, many respondents mentioned that they allocated their attention to more important segments of their life, such as family, hobbies, and career. Thus, they were able to gain financial security that many could previously not afford due to constant shopping.

Hypothesis 3: Ethical behavior positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

According to Pangarkar, Shukla and Taylor (2021), ethical behavior is a manifestation of minimalism. Ethical consumers limit their consumption not only to minimize their own possessions or improve their own well-being but also to reduce harmful environmental impact. Moreover, ethical behavior is often a part of the minimalism movement and a trait that those prone to minimalism have. With this hypothesis, I tested whether ethical behavior is exclusively a trait of minimalists or whether non-minimalistic consumers could also adopt it.

Hypothesis 4: Psychological well-being is the most common reason why individuals adopt minimalism.

According to the research conducted by Chabot (2020), the respondents selected psychological well-being as the most common reason for choosing low-consumption practices. Other less popular reasons were religious or spiritual practices and willingness to reduce environmental impact.

Hypothesis 5: The level of de-ownership orientation positively correlates with the level of consumer minimalism.

According to the study of Błoński & Witek (2019), minimalists show a positive attitude towards de-ownership. The latter means that individuals who have adopted minimalism prefer to rent or lease instead of owning property. This might be connected to one's willingness to be more flexible (like in the case of traveling, for example, as it is easier to leave) or to one's willingness to be more financially stable as the purchase of a flat or a car is a significant investment while renting what you need (for example renting a car for the



time of traveling) might mean saving financial resources. With this hypothesis, I tested whether consumer minimalism is correlated to de-ownership orientation.

Hypothesis 6: The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of de-ownership orientation.

According to the studies of Błoński & Witek (2019) and Chabot (2020), individuals who have adopted minimalism and are prone to de-ownership practice show a higher level of well-being and its psychological side. Thus, the authors propose that those who consciously limit their consumption and materialistic possessions feel less stressed and overall happier with their lives. However, I would like to point out that the term de-ownership is not the same as minimalism, yet it is part of minimalism. Under the term de-ownership, the authors (Lindblom & Lindblom, 2017) consider one's voluntary limitation of property, thus the preference toward renting over owning. This might be connected to the fact that owning a car or an apartment is relatively expensive and rejects some level of flexibility (it is harder to sell an apartment in case one wants to move to another city/country). Given the analyzed articles and the proposed hypotheses, I wanted to check whether Millennials feel happier when oriented toward de-ownership.

### 3.2.2 Methodology of Quantitative Research

The data for the quantitative analysis were collected using the online survey method. The online survey consisted of prepared questions with provided options of answers, ranging from the most positive to the most negative response. The advantages of the chosen method are the simplicity and speed of the procedure, the ability to cover a vast number of respondents in a short period of time, the required completion of answers and the easiness of accessing and processing the collected data at the end of research (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

The quantitative research of my work was focused on analyzing the data received during the online survey. The online survey was created and active on the 1KA platform from January 17, 2022, to February 5, 2022. The respondents received an invitation to participate in the survey through social media networks such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as via e-mail. The average time to complete the survey was 10 minutes. In total, there were 204 submissions registered, out of which 165 were relevant – no data missing. The survey structure is presented in Appendix 8, and it contains 17 questions that could be divided according to their main purpose:

- Questions that gather socio-demographic characteristics;
- Questions that gather attitude towards consumption characteristics.

Each question represented a block of statements that were oriented towards measuring a particular attitude of the respondents towards different consumption practices or their own characteristics, such as financial or personal well-being. The statements used represent

measurement scales for financial well-being suggested by authors Hampson, Grimes, Banister, & McGoldrick (2018) for Q2; attitude towards minimalism suggested by Wilson & Bellezza (2021) for Q3; ethical consumption suggested by Lee & Cheon (2018) for Q4; for personal well-being or satisfaction with one's life, the Flourishing scale was used for Q8; one's ability to pay essential financial obligations suggested by authors Hampson, Grimes, Banister, & McGoldrick (2018) for Q10; and one's attitude towards ownership suggested by authors Lindblom & Lindblom (2017) for Q12. Question 5 was an open end-question that required the respondents to write down their own definition of minimalism. Questions 6 and 7 covered the reasons why a particular individual has adopted or is thinking about adopting minimalistic consumption. Finally, questions 9 and 11 required customers to reflect on their emotions regarding their financial position and their emotions after their pay main financial obligations. Questions 14-17 aimed to gather demographic information about the respondents. The overview of the measurement systems is presented in Appendix 7.

Each question represented a scale to measure the attitude of the respondents to a particular problem. To define which methods (parametric or non-parametric) I could use, I tested my whole sample on the normality test. The test of normality for my sample (n=165) is presented below.

*Table 1: Test of Normality*

Kolmogorov-Smirnov				Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SumQ2	.105	165	.000	.980	165	.017
SumQ3	.121	165	.000	.942	165	.000
SumQ4	.169	165	.000	.927	165	.000
SumQ6	.152	165	.000	.892	165	.000
SumQ8	.288	165	.000	.806	165	.000
SumQ9	.295	165	.000	.752	165	.000
SumQ10	.294	165	.000	.786	165	.000
SumQ12	.235	165	.000	.890	165	.000

*Source: own work.*

The test for normality tested the null hypothesis that the distribution of a given variable does not differ from the normal distribution. The p values obtained were less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected, and the distribution of the variables should be considered different from normal. This fact should be considered when comparing the estimates and interpreting the results. Therefore, in this section, in order to quantify the differences in attitudes of respondents to various statements of a particular scale, one should use not the average values but the tables of frequencies and percentages. This feature of the distributions of variables is taken into account when testing the hypothesis and analyzing correlations. Hypotheses and methods of testing are presented below:

*Table 2: Summary of hypotheses*

<b>Hypothesis no.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Test</b>
H1	The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of minimalism.	Spearman's correlation analysis.
H2	The level of financial security positively correlates with the level of minimalism.	Spearman's correlation analysis.
H3	Ethical behavior positively correlates with the level of minimalism.	Spearman's correlation analysis.
H4	Psychological well-being is the most common reason for individuals to adopt minimalism.	Binomial test.
H5	The level of de-ownership orientation positively correlates with the level of consumer minimalism.	Spearman's correlation analysis.
H6	The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of de-ownership orientation.	Spearman's correlation analysis.

*Source: own work.*

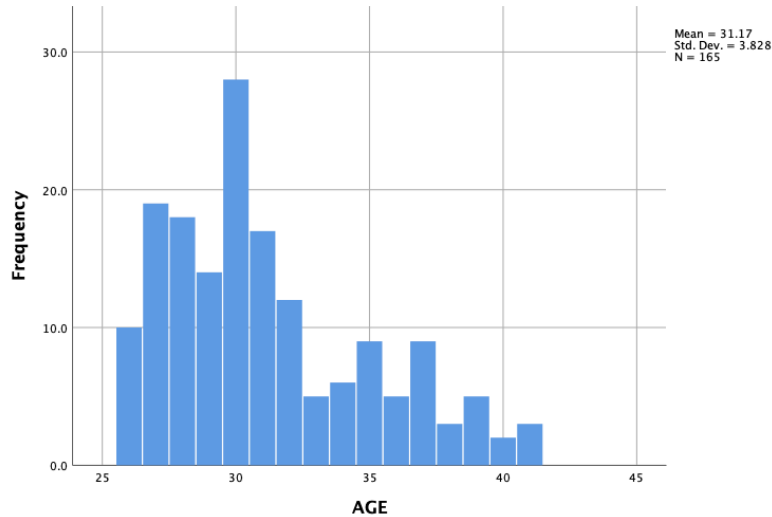
### 3.2.3 Data Analysis of Quantitative Research

#### *3.2.3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

The final sample included 165 respondents, of which 61% were women (n=101) and 39% were men (n=64). Since my research aims to determine the attitude of Millennials toward minimalism, I intentionally limited the required age range to those born between 1981 and 1996. Those who were either younger or older were redirected after the first question and did not have the option to fill out the rest of the survey. Thus, all the respondents included in the final sample were aged 25 to 41.

The distribution of the respondents according to age is presented in Figure 2.

*Figure 2: The distribution of the respondents according to age*



*Source: own work.*

In terms of age, those who were 32 years old or younger accounted for 71.5% of the sample, while the rest of the sample included 33–41-year-old respondents. The majority of the respondents, 79% (n=132), have a Bachelor's degree or have completed higher secondary education, while 14% (n=23) have a Master's degree. 5% completed high school or grammar school, one individual (0.6%) graduated high school with a specialization, and one individual (0.6 %) has a Ph.D.

The respondents were also asked to indicate their monthly net income in comparison to the average Slovenian net income, which amounts to 1.218,40 euros. Almost half of the sample (46% or n=76) reported that their net earnings are average, 26% (n=43) said that their net income is lower than the average amount of 1.218,40 euros, and 21% (n=35) of the respondents claimed their net monthly income is higher than average. 7% of the respondents reported not receiving any income at the time of the survey. Thus, I may conclude that 67% of the respondents received at least an average net income.

Finally, out of 165 respondents surveyed, 57% (n=94) lived in the city, while 43% (n=71) lived in the countryside.

### *3.2.3.2 Analysis of Consumer Behavior Characteristics of the Respondents*

The first question that I analyzed descriptively pertains to financial planning (Q2). The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements about financial planning. To assess the initial reliability of the statements used to measure financial planning, I determined the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, which is equal to 0.8. As the number is higher than 0.7, it is considered sufficient. Table 3 contains descriptive statistics for statements that aim to measure financial independence.

*Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the variable financial well-being*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I set financial goals on what I want to achieve with my finances	4.0	0.7
I decide in advance how my money will be allocated in the next 1-2 month	3.8	0.8
I discipline myself to make the most of my money	3.8	0.8
I am actively thinking about the steps I need to take to stick to my budget	3.7	0.8
I do not buy things on purpose so that I can save money for the future	3.7	0.8
I often buy things spontaneously	2.6	1.0
The phrase "I see, I buy" describes me well	2.5	1.0
I often buy things without thinking	2.4	1.0

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

As seen from the table, the respondents set financial goals on what they want to achieve with their finances (AS 4.0) and were relatively positive about shorter-term financial planning. The following statements received high positive evaluations from the respondents: Q2b, "I decide in advance how my money will be allocated in the next 1-2 months" (AS 3.8); Q2d, "I discipline myself to make the most of my money" (AS 3.8); Q2c, "I am actively thinking about the steps I need to take to stick to my budget" (AS 3.7) and Q2e, "I do not buy things on purpose so that I can save money for the future" (AS 3.7). The attitude towards financial planning is thus clearly positive. Moreover, the respondents had a negative attitude towards statements regarding spontaneous consumption, which once again confirms that the respondents from my sample plan their finances and act financially wisely. The statements with which the respondents did not agree were the following: Q2h, "I often buy things spontaneously" (AS 2.6); Q2f, "The phrase "I see, I buy" describes me well" (AS 2.5) and Q2g, "I often buy things without thinking" (AS 2.4).

Following the question regarding Millennials' attitudes toward financial planning, there was a set of statements that were oriented to define the respondents' tendency toward minimalism. The statements used in my work represent a scale to measure the level of propensity towards minimalism. The results are presented in Table 4.

*Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the variable minimalism*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is important for me to think about items I am willing to own	4.1	0.5
Items I own have been carefully selected	4.0	0.5
I am mindful of what I own	4.0	0.7
I am drawn to visually sparse environments	3.8	0.7
I prefer simplicity in design	3.7	0.8
I prefer leaving spaces visually empty over filling them	3.5	0.9

I restrict the number of things I own	3.4	1.0
I avoid accumulating lots of stuff	3.4	1.0
I keep the aesthetic in my home very sparse	3.4	0.9
“Less is more” when it comes to owning things	3.2	1.1
I actively avoid acquiring excess possessions	3.0	1.1
I live a minimalistic lifestyle	2.9	0.9

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale used was 0.9.

While analyzing the data obtained, my attention was immediately drawn to the clearly expressed positive attitude of the respondents to almost all the statements that characterize the principal behavior of minimalists. This is especially true for Q3g, “It is important for me to think about items I am willing to own” (AS 4.1), as 92,7% of all the respondents rated it with a high mark, and the statement Q3f, “Items I own have been carefully selected” (AS 4.0), with 89,7% of respondents claiming that they agree. Moreover, the respondents, on average, agreed that they are mindful of what they own (AS 4.0), are drawn to visually sparse environments (AS 3.8), prefer simplicity in design (AS 3.7), would rather leave living space empty than filling it with the clutter (AS 3.5), limit the possessions they have (AS 3.4), and avoid accumulating lots of possessions (AS 3.4). On the other hand, the respondents were relatively neutral regarding the minimalistic aesthetics of their living space (AS 3.4), the notion that less is more (AS 3.2) and that they actively avoid acquiring excess possessions (AS 3.0). It is important to note that, on average, the respondents disagreed with the statement Q3l, “I live a minimalistic lifestyle” (AS 2.9). The statement also stands out, as it received approximately the same number of positive and negative ratings - 23.6% and 28.5%. Moreover, it received the largest number of neutral ratings - 47.95%. Perhaps the average resident of Slovenia is not very familiar with the concept of minimalism, but in his/her heart (s)he positively assesses its principles. As a rule, (s)he is not familiar with the specialized literature on this topic, and the mass media, perhaps, do not cover this topic widely enough. Indeed, as the interview showed, the expression “rational consumption” is more understandable to the majority.

The next question (Q4) focused on determining ethical consumption. The results obtained during the survey are presented in Table 5.

*Table 5: Descriptive statistics for the variable ethical consumption*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I buy organically grown food	3.6	1.0
I buy energy-saving products	3.6	1.0
I buy recycled products	3.5	1.0
I participate in boycotts	2.9	1.2

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale used is 0,9.

According to the data, the attitude of the respondents towards purchasing organic (Q4b), energy-saving products (Q4a) and purchasing recycled products (Q4c) is relatively positive – more than 60% of the respondents agreed with the statements Q4a, “I buy energy saving products” (AS 3.6), Q4b, “I buy organically grown food” (AS 3.6) and Q4c, “I buy recycled products” (AS 3.5). It can clearly be noticed that the respondents deeply care about their health and are conscious regarding the items they purchase for themselves, which influence their well-being. However, there was a completely different attitude towards the statement related to the public interest - participation in boycotts. 37,6% of respondents had a positive attitude toward participation in boycotts, 32,1% negative, and 30,3% neutral. It must not be forgotten that participation in boycotts does not necessarily mean violent demonstrations. What is discussed here is the refusal to buy goods from manufacturers who behave unethically, even if their product suits an individual. Thus, participation in boycotts creates personal discomfort as it means that one might refuse personal comfort for the interests of society. Naturally, not everyone is ready for this. However, the respondents were neutral (AS 2.9) regarding participation in boycotts. The latter may mean that my sample of Millennials prefers to support companies that they enjoy buying from rather than using their position as a consumer to influence companies that, in their opinion, may not operate ethically on the market.

Question 5 was an open-ended question that required the respondents to provide their understanding of the definition of minimalism. Overall, only 74 respondents (44.8%) provided their definition of minimalism. However, their answers provided a great insight into the level of understanding of minimalism. They showed to what extent the respondents are interested in the topic and to what extent they are educated about it.

I would like to point out that minimalism as well as rational consumption are very subjective terms and often do not necessarily indicate any kind of constraint. To one individual, minimalism could mean ownership of particular goods that are needed daily and to another, living with a bare minimum of items, even refusing to own furniture or a car.

Based on the respondents' understanding of the term minimalism, I divided the answers into four categories as follows:

1. Minimalism as a new/ trendy movement in fashion.
2. Minimalism as rational consumption.
3. Minimalism as a restriction of consumption.
4. Minimalism as a movement concerned with saving resources, raw materials, and environmental protection.

## 5. Minimalism as a lifestyle, spiritual practice.

Ten (13.9%) respondents (out of 72) understand minimalism as something which is currently in trend, whether it is fashion or interior design. A few examples of how the respondents in this category defined minimalism are: “something which is modern nowadays,” “trend in interior design,” “the opposite of kitsch, the minimum amount of furniture in the apartment, neutral colors of the interior or clothes without patterns and excessive decorations, clothes or furniture that, due to their simplicity are durable (for example, a capsule wardrobe),” “things around me that do not burden my vision.” However, none of those ten respondents implied that they associate minimalism with a conscious limitation of consumption.

Such definitions, however, were provided by 43 (59.7%) respondents forming the second category (minimalism as a restriction of consumption). They believe that minimalism is a restriction from buying extra items - things one does not need at the moment. Several respondents from this category provided interesting definitions of the concept, such as: “less is more,” “purchasing only what you really need at the time you really need it,” “choosing one multitasking item rather than buying several different items that serve the same purpose,” “using the items you already own before purchasing new ones.”

19 (26.4%) respondents belonged to the third category, which consisted of definitions describing minimalism as a movement concerned with saving resources, raw materials, and environmental protection. Insights provided by the respondents who fall into this category were as follows: “understanding of the harm we cause to the environment with our consumption,” “rational use of natural resources,” “understanding that not only materialistic things are important in life,” “less materialistic possessions for a better mental state”.

Next, I analyzed questions 6 and 7, which were interrelated. The purpose of question 6 is to identify all possible reasons for becoming a minimalist, while question 7 asks the respondents to identify the **two most important reasons** for becoming a minimalist. After having analyzed the data, I can conclude that the important reasons for becoming a minimalist are the desire to reduce the impact on the environment (120 respondents or 72.7%), spiritual or religious reasons (111 respondents or 67.3%), reducing the financial burden (110 respondents or 66.7%) and improving mental well-being (110 respondents or 66.7%). The less common reasons include the desire to reduce stress (93 respondents or 56.4%), have a visually appealing space (77 respondents or 46.7%), reduce the burden of household chores (68 respondents or 41.2%), gain more time (68 respondents or 41.2%) and improve relationships with other people (52 respondents or 31.5%).

*Table 6: Distribution of frequency of individual causes to adopt minimalism*

	Count	Column N%
Reduce impact on the environment	120	72.7
Spiritual or religious reasons	111	67.3
Reduce stress	93	56.4



Reduce financial stress	110	66.7
Improve mental well-being	110	66.7
Improve relationships with others	52	31.5
Reduce the stress from household chores	68	41.2
Gain more time	68	41.2
The visual appeal of minimalistic space	77	46.7

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

Interestingly, the respondents of the sample selected the answer “reduction of impact on the environment,” which once again proves that minimalism and ethical consumption are interconnected, and thus ethical consumers are more common among minimalists than among non-minimalists.

In Question 7, the respondents indicated two reasons for adopting minimalism. As the most important reasons, they selected reduction in financial stress (69 respondents or 39.6%) and improvement in mental well-being (67 respondents or 43.3%). Spiritual or religious practices (53 respondents or 31.3%) and environmental impact reduction (46 respondents or 29.9%) were ranked as less important reasons. The least important reasons were reducing the stress from household chores (19 respondents or 12.7%), the visual appeal of a minimalistic space (16 respondents or 9.7%), gaining time (12 respondents or 6.7%) and improving relationships with others (3 respondents or 1.5%).

To adequately assess the respondents' attitudes to their consumer practices, the next question about satisfaction with one's own life was asked. For evaluation, I used the prosperity scale - Flourishing scale. The results are provided in Table 7.

*Table 7: Descriptive statistics for the variable psychological well-being*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am competent and capable of doing the activities that are important to me	4.4	0.5
I am a good person and live a good life	4.4	0.6
I lead a purposeful and meaningful life	4.3	0.6
My social relationships are supportive and rewarding	4.3	0.6
I am optimistic about my future	4.3	0.7
People respect me	4.3	0.6
I am engaged and interested in my daily activities	4.3	0.7
I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others	4.3	0.7

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale used is 1.0.

As seen from the table above, the respondents rated their satisfaction with well-being as very high. In percentage, 87.9% of all the respondents marked answers 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly agree) for the statement Q8d, “I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others” (AS) and 98.1% of the respondents agreed (answers 4 and 5) with the statement Q8e, “I am competent and capable of doing the activities that are important to me.” However, the most significant percentage of the respondents – 11.5%, were neutral regarding the statement Q8d, “I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others;” no other statement got such a significant share of neutral answers. However, it should be noted that the Flourishing scale is an integral self-assessment scale, and the respondents may have overestimated their responses for various reasons. The reasons for overestimations are various and often depend on social status and the fear of being removed from the community.

Another important component of a person's satisfaction with themselves and their life is material well-being. Therefore, I also analyzed the following aspects that reflect one's perception of their financial state.

In question 9, I asked the respondents to indicate their feelings regarding their current financial position. The data shows that most of the respondents feel neutral regarding their financial position (AS 3.2), with 82 respondents or 61.2% selecting this answer. About a third, or 46 respondents (34.3%) were satisfied with their current financial position, followed by those who were pretty upset (6 respondents or 4.4%).

Question 10 was oriented toward defining the level of the respondents' ability to pay their bills and unexpected expenses. Descriptive statistics results are presented in Table 8.

*Table 8: Descriptive statistics for financial security*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ability to pay rent/mortgage	4.2	0.8
Ability to pay for utilities	4.0	0.6
Ability to pay telephone subscriptions, internet, television, etc.	3.9	0.4
Ability to pay an unexpected bill of 1000 EUR	3.2	1.1

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale used is 0.7. Overall, the respondents were optimistic about their abilities to pay their financial obligations such as rent (AS 4.2), utilities (AS 4.0), telephone subscriptions, etc. (AS 3.9) and answered that it is easy for them to pay the mentioned bills. However, on average, the respondents remained relatively neutral regarding paying an unexpected bill of 1000 euros (AS 3.2).

Question 11 required the respondents to indicate their emotions given the current socio-economic state after they pay their main financial obligations. On average, the respondents claimed to be relatively neutral and even rational consumers while accepting that some purchases could be avoided (AS 3.5). Interestingly almost an equal share of the respondents selected answers 3 and 4: “Rather neutral, I am rational, yet sometimes some purchases could be avoided” (63 respondents or 47%) and “Neutral, I am a rational consumer, and I purchase what I need” (64 respondents or 47.8%). Only 2 respondents, or 1.5%, claimed they felt guilty and could be more rational with their spending. In comparison, 5 respondents or 3.7% claimed they felt happy and had no issues regarding the payment of their main financial obligations.

My questionnaire concludes with a question about the preference for owning property. This question was aimed at determining whether the respondents prefer to own property or whether they prefer to borrow and/or rent. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with four different statements about de-ownership orientation. Table 9 provides the descriptive statistics of the results of the responses regarding property ownership preferences.

*Table 9: Descriptive statistics for the variable de-ownership*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
In my opinion, lending and renting are good alternatives to buying and owning	3.9	1.0
I am willing to rent property from others	3.7	1.0
I am willing to lend or lease my property to others	3.7	1.0
I prefer renting or lending to buying and owning	3.6	1.1

Valid N =165

*Source: own work.*

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale used is 0.9.

The data presented in Table 9 reflects a fairly high interest of the respondents in real estate ownership. The respondents agreed that they were willing to rent property from others (AS 3.7), willing to lend or lease their property to others (AS 3.7), and preferred renting to owning (AS 3.6). Moreover, 77.5% of the respondents agreed with the statement Q12d, “In my opinion, lending and renting are good alternatives to buying and owning” (AS 3.9).

The analysis of the respondents’ answers regarding their material well-being showed a positive assessment of their current situation and willingness to improve it in the future.

### *3.2.3.3 Hypotheses Testing*

*H1: The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of minimalism.*

To test Hypothesis 1, I used the data about the respondents' satisfaction with their own life (Flourishing scale) from question 8 and the data about consumer minimalism from question 3. Since the data were not normally distributed, I approached the analysis by conducting Spearman's correlation analysis. For that, I summed up all the responses within a particular category (separately for satisfaction and minimalism). Spearman's correlation did not show any statistically significant result at  $p = 0.589$ , which is higher than 0.05 (Table 10).

*Table 10: Spearman's correlation for the variables psychological well-being and minimalism*

Correlations				
			Psychological well-being	Minimalism
Spearman's rho	Psychological well-being	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.042
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.589
		N	165	165
	Minimalism	Correlation Coefficient	.042	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.589	.
		N	165	165

*Source: own work.*

Hypothesis 1 is not supported, indicating no significant connection was discovered between the level of psychological well-being and the level of minimalism.

*H2: The level of financial security positively correlates with the level of minimalism.*

To analyze Hypothesis 2 regarding financial security, I used the data obtained from the question regarding one's ability to pay their basic financial obligations, and the previously used variable that reflects the level of minimalism. Results are presented in the Table 11 below.

*Table 11: Spearman's correlation for the variables financial well-being and minimalism*

Correlations				
			Financial well-being	Minimalism
Spearman's rho	Financial well-being	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.149
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.056
		N	165	165
	Minimalism	Correlation Coefficient	.149	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.056	.
		N	165	165

Source: own work.

Spearman's correlation analysis shows that  $p = 0.056$ , which is higher than the critical value of 0.05. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is not supported, with only a marginal connection found between the level of financial security and the level of consumer minimalism.

*H3: Ethical behavior positively correlates with the level of minimalism.*

To test Hypothesis 3, I used two variables: one that measures the level of minimalism and another for ethical consumption. The result is presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Spearman's correlation for the variables ethical behavior and minimalism

Correlations				
			Ethical behavior	Minimalism
Spearman's rho	Ethical behavior	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.181
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.020
		N	165	165
	Minimalism	Correlation Coefficient	.181	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.
		N	165	165

Source: own work.

The result is 0.181 with a p-value of 0.020. Based on this result, Hypothesis 3 is supported. I can conclude that the level of ethical behavior and well-being of the respondents positively correlates with the level of minimalism.

*H4: Psychological well-being is the most common reason why individuals adopt minimalism.*

I conducted a binominal test for the variables of question 6, asking about the **two most important reasons** for becoming a minimalist. In this case, the probability of occurrence of 1 is 0,5. Table 13 presents the analysis of whether the share of the respondents who answered positively (1) differs significantly from 0,5.

Table 13: Binomial test for the most important reasons why the respondents may choose or have already chosen to turn towards minimalism

Binomial Test						
		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Reduce impact on the environment	Group 1	Yes	120	.73	.50	.000
	Group 2	No	45	.27		
	Total		165	1.00		
	Group 1	Yes	111	.67	.50	.000

Spiritual or religious reasons	Group 2	No	54	.33		
	Total		165	1.00		
Reduce stress	Group 1	Yes	93	.56	.50	.119
	Group 2	No	72	.44		
	Total		165	1.00		
Reduce financial stress	Group 1	Yes	110	.67	.50	.000
	Group 2	No	55	.33		
	Total		165	1.00		
Improve mental well-being	Group 1	Yes	110	.67	.50	.000
	Group 2	No	55	.33		
	Total		165	1.00		
Improve relationships with others	Group 1	No	113	.68	.50	.000
	Group 2	Yes	52	.32		
	Total		165	1.00		
Reduce the stress from household chores	Group 1	No	97	.59	.50	.029
	Group 2	Yes	68	.41		
	Total		165	1.00		
Gain more time	Group 1	No	97	.59	.50	.029
	Group 2	Yes	68	.41		
	Total		165	1.00		
The visual appeal of minimalist space	Group 1	Yes	77	.47	.50	.436
	Group 2	No	88	.53		
	Total		165	1.00		

Source: own work.

The binomial test referring to the percentage of the respondents who indicated 1 (Yes) or 0 (No) revealed a significant difference for the variables: Q6a, “Reduce impact on the environment”- 73%, Q6f, “Improve relationships with others”- 68%, Q6b, “Spiritual or religious reasons”- 67%, Q6d, “Reduce financial stress” – 67% and Q6e, “Improve mental well-being” - 67%.

Given that the majority of the respondents chose willingness to reduce the harmful impact overconsumption has on the environment, I can reject Hypothesis 4.

*H5: The level of de-ownership orientation positively correlates with the level of consumer minimalism.*

To test Hypothesis 5, I used the data about the respondents’ attitude towards de-ownership, which is focused on individuals’ voluntary limiting of their possessions, and the data on the level of consumer minimalism. Results of Spearman’s analysis are presented in the Table 14 below.

Table 14: Spearman's correlation for the variables level of de-ownership and minimalism

Correlations
--------------

			Level of de-ownership	Minimalism
Spearman's rho	Level of de-ownership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.055
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.483
		N	165	165
	Minimalism	Correlation Coefficient	.055	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.483	.
		N	165	165

Source: own work.

Since the p-value is 0.483, which is higher than the critical value of 0.05, I cannot confirm that de-ownership orientation and minimalism are positively correlated, Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

*H6: The level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of de-ownership orientation.*

To test Hypothesis 6, I used the respondents' evaluation of their psychological well-being and their attitude towards de-ownership.

The result is 0.228 with a p-value of 0.003. Based on this result, Hypothesis 6 is supported. I can conclude that the respondents' level of psychological well-being positively correlates with the level of de-ownership orientation.

*Table 15: Spearman's correlation for the variables psychological well-being and level of de-ownership*

Correlations				
			Psychological well-being	Level of de-ownership
Spearman's rho	Psychological well-being	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.228
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
		N	165	165
	Level of de-ownership	Correlation Coefficient	.228	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
		N	165	165

Source: own work.

### 3.3 Interpretation of Findings

As the goal of my research was to investigate to what extent is minimalism the new mode of consumption among Millennials, I conducted a quantitative study in which I analyzed the attitudes of Millennials towards minimalism and other minimalism-related consumption practices such as ethical consumption, de-ownership practices, voluntary simplicity and minimalism in interior design. Moreover, to make relevant conclusions regarding the consumption practices of Millennials and their influence on life, I also included questions regarding the respondents' well-being, both psychological and financial, and satisfaction with their own life. The aim was to find a potential connection between the above-mentioned. The statistical analysis revealed that a statistically significant connection exists only between the level of minimalism and ethical consumption and the level of well-being and de-ownership. No statistically significant connection was found between the levels of minimalism, one's psychological well-being, financial security and the level of de-ownership.

The majority of the participants in my qualitative study perceive minimalism as a radical limitation of consumption which means living ascetically, satisfying basic needs and owning as little as possible. Yet, in essence, minimalism is about owning items one needs and rejecting overconsumption (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Moreover, the majority of the participants in both the quantitative and qualitative study avoided the term "minimalists" when defining their own consumption practices and instead chose the term "rational consumers." This might be connected with the fact that the term minimalism became popular recently, and the vast majority of consumers, especially earlier Millennials, are probably not familiar with the essence and differences between minimalism, asceticism, voluntary simplicity, ethical consumption and rational consumption. Interestingly, the respondents of my survey also consider minimalism to be a trend in fashion or interior design rather than a consumption practice. This might be because, currently, minimalism is popularized as a consumption practice strongly linked with design. The results of my survey show that the vast majority (59.7%) of the respondents believe that minimalism is connected to asceticism, 26.4% of the respondents believe that minimalism is about adjusting their consumption in order to minimize harm to the environment, and 13.9% of the respondents see minimalism as a trend.

Another interesting insight was found while analyzing the quantitative responses to the question regarding the main reasons for adopting or thinking about adopting minimalism. The statistical analysis of the responses has shown that the largest share of Millennials believes that reducing the harmful impact on the environment is an important reason (72.7% or 120 respondents chose this) for adopting or thinking about adopting minimalism. It is especially interesting to note that although most of the respondents believed that minimalism is primarily connected to ascetism, they chose spiritual or religious reasons as second (111 respondents or 67%). To continue, the decision to support minimalism might be connected to the current ecological problems, as most conscious respondents were ready to minimize



their consumption to decrease the harmful impact of overconsumption. The other two frequently selected reasons were that one would reduce financial stress and improve mental well-being, with 110 respondents or 67% choosing those options. In the following steps, I explored whether there is any significant connection between financial well-being, psychological well-being, orientation towards ethical consumption and minimalism.

The statistical analysis has not revealed any significant connection between the level of minimalism and psychological well-being, although several researchers (e.g., Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Matte, Fachinelli, Toni, Milan, & Olea, 2021) pointed out that minimalism has a positive impact on psychological well-being and moreover, many Millennials choose psychological well-being as the reason why they have adopted or may adopt minimalism (Chabot, 2020). Given my sample, I was unable to support this hypothesis. It was quite interesting and unexpected that even during the qualitative research phase, several respondents mentioned that they avoided shopping as it stressed them out and that they had turned towards a more minimalistic design and de-cluttering in order to lead a happier life. There seems to be a discrepancy between the results of my study and the theoretical background (Chabot, 2020; Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Matte, Fachinelli, Toni, Milan, & Olea, 2021) that supports the connection between the level of minimalism and the level of one's psychological well-being. The scale for consumer minimalism may have been tested in limited contexts, given that it was only recently published (in 2021). The studies I am referring to in substantiating my hypotheses used different measures of minimalism.

Moreover, no significant statistical connection was found between the level of minimalism and de-ownership orientation. As was mentioned in the theoretical background, adopters of minimalism might be prone to some level of de-ownership orientation as such practice provides some degree of freedom. For example, adopters of de-ownership might rent a car and a space for living not due to financial distress but voluntarily, as such a practice allows them to travel whenever they want and even save on expensive maintenance (in the case of a car, yearly service and fuel) (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Interestingly, the majority of the respondents in my qualitative research, 78%, mentioned that they believe that renting and leasing are great substitutes for owning, with 62% of the respondents agreeing that they would rather lease or rent instead of own. Although the respondents seem to support the idea of de-ownership, the link to consumer minimalism – as measured with the novel measurement instrument – is very weak.

However, a statistically significant connection was found between the level of psychological well-being and de-ownership orientation. As already mentioned, de-ownership practices were claimed to provide some level of stress relief (Chabot, 2020). According to the above example, those who prefer to rent over owning do not pay maintenance costs. Moreover, they only pay for what they need at the time they need the service. In current times, almost everything is available for rent, and such flexibility is highly valued by Millennials. I would like to point out that one's satisfaction with one's life and societal position is positively related to the de-ownership orientation. This may mean that choosing renting over ownership

enables Millennials to find their spot under the sun in any place around the globe without being attached to one particular place where they potentially do not fit in (Lindblom & Lindblom, 2017).

Furthermore, no statistical connection was revealed between the level of minimalism and financial security. According to one research (Chabot, 2020), one clear benefit that adopters of minimalism experience is the improvement of their financial position. This might be connected to the fact that those individuals who voluntarily limit their consumption and focus on satisfying needs rather than wants have more financial resources that they can potentially invest in more important projects or keep as a safety net. Yet, given my sample and the measurement system I adopted, I could not support this hypothesis.

The statistical analysis showed a statistically significant connection between the level of ethical behavior and minimalism. Ethical consumer behavior is not directly linked to minimalism and could be adopted by individuals who care about the environment yet do not particularly limit their consumption. The researchers Pangarkar, Shukla and Taylor (2021) claim that ethical behavior is indeed a practice that is included in the overall movement of minimalism and is a separate branch of minimalism, just as, for example, voluntary simplicity. For the purposes of my research, I assumed that ethical consumer behavior is focused on purchasing organic food, energy-saving products and, most importantly, recycling. I believe that nowadays, it is not difficult to be an ethical consumer as many brands are shifting towards a more ethical and environmentally friendly operation approach. However, the key difference is when consumers consciously recycle or re-sell items they do not need instead of simply throwing them away.

### **3.4 Limitations and Opportunities for Future Studies**

The problem of minimalism is relevant, socially significant and requires further extensive research concerning Slovenia's society. In this regard, I would like to point out a few limitations and make some suggestions for future research.

The interview phase was very helpful. However, its implementation requires the coverage of consumers with varying degrees of minimalistic practices. Although my qualitative sample included 12 individuals, data saturation has not been achieved in all areas and to do so, conducting more interviews would be needed. Additionally, each interview requires appropriate conditions so that the respondent can focus and be frank. A conversation in a cafe or square does not always provide this. The work of 2 - 3 trained interviewers is required on the premises of an enterprise, office, educational institution or medical institution.

During the interviews, more emphasis should be placed on clarifying the respondent's understanding of the concepts and terms: minimalism, rational behavior, reasonable sufficiency, ethical consumption, and consumption norms. As was discovered, many participants in my qualitative study believe that minimalism is only oriented toward extreme

limitations, such as having just enough resources to survive. Yet, in its essence, minimalism is a practice of resisting overconsumption and living with as many materialistic possessions as one is willing to have without the amount being overwhelming.

The staging of the online questionnaire and data analysis indicated the following. Many respondents did not thoroughly delve into the content of the questions and gave contradictory or, sometimes, illogical answers. When processing the data, the entries that had any data value missing, thus anyone, who missed a question, were excluded from further analysis. If I had a large enough sample (more than 200 – 250 respondents), I would pay special attention to the assessment of the shares, the specifics, and the features of inaccurate respondents, as that might give additional insight into their psychology and consumer behavior. Moreover, given the qualitative finding about minimalism not being a particularly defined term, it might be helpful for the quantitative study to have a surveyor available so that the respondents can ask for clarification. Considering the missing values in my database, it seems that not all the respondents, who participated in my survey, were able or willing to answer the questions.

When conducting a large-scale study on a large sample, I consider it appropriate to conduct a factor analysis and to determine the hierarchical structure of the minimalists – the cluster analysis. I believe that on a bigger sample of respondents, which would cover different social groups, it would be possible to implement the approach that was suggested by Finneman, Ivory, Marchessou, Schmidt, & Skiles (2017). Consequently, a cluster analysis to define clusters of Millennials and analyze consumer behavior of each cluster with a special focus on defining minimalists could be conducted.

Moreover, my sample could not represent the whole general population of Millennials and was thus biased. The individuals I reached out to were from my circle of friends, and they further shared my questionnaire with their friends. I assume that the respondents were representatives of one and the same social group and thus had similar interests, views and opinions. I believe that with a bigger sample, other different insights might be gathered, especially if I had been able to gather insights from those who might be experiencing different life positions and thus might have a different view on minimalism.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a generation, Millennials exhibit completely different consumer behavior from their predecessors. They are ethically oriented consumers who care deeply about the impacts their actions have on the environment and society in general (Curtin, 2018; NielsenIQ, 2015). Moreover, Millennials show some level of interest in minimalism. Minimalism describes the behavior of voluntarily limiting consumption in order to shift focus from materialistic benefits towards spirituality, relationships with others and mindfulness (psychological and spiritual practice) (Błoński & Witek, 2019). Minimalism can be expressed in different forms and to different extents. For example, many consumers adopt minimalism in style and home

decor; many choose to go through their social circle and focus only on those connections that make them happy. Moreover, many choose to revise their needs and wants and consume only what they really need instead of investing in materialistic items that give them the illusion of happiness. Minimalism can take any of the following forms: voluntary simplicity, reduced consumption, anti-consumption and inconspicuous minimalism (Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016). The borders between different types of minimalism are quite unclear, and every adopter can have their own combination of views and practices. As mentioned, Millennials are naturally oriented toward ethical consumption, while ethical consumption is, in fact, connected to minimalism. Nevertheless, it is different from case to case. Some consumers may limit their consumption and turn towards more eco-friendly products and services. Still others might only substitute non-eco-friendly items with eco-friendly ones and still be consumeristic (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001; Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

The purpose of my empirical study was to examine the attitudes of Millennials toward the practice of minimalistic consumption. During the stage of qualitative research, I was able to gather in-depth arguments regarding the respondents' motives and views on the topic. In contrast, the quantitative research provided information on how some motives and views are spread among Millennials. Both the quantitative and the qualitative research showed some level of consumers' indifference toward minimalism. When asked directly, the vast majority did not declare themselves minimalists, whereas while responding to other indirect questions, they showed signs of minimalistic behavior (for example, through low and reflective consumption) and provided a clear definition of minimalism as a term.

During the qualitative research, the interviewees were able to reflect on their answers and argument them on a deeper level. For example, several informants mentioned that describing themselves as minimalists feels a bit radical. They thus prefer the term "rational consumers." I believe that might be connected to the fact that minimalism is still a modern term that many millennials are not yet familiar with, and thus avoid it, the same as other modern labels they do not particularly understand. Moreover, the majority of the respondents mentioned that they prefer to rationalize their consumption and purchase products only when they really need them and know they would use them. I also found that people, who demonstrate a more minimalistic consumption, do not actually analyze their consumption practices and are, on average, trying to be rational and purchase things when they need them. Thus, they do not attach any psychological value to shopping – they view it as a necessary routine. On the other hand, the respondents who mentioned that they could be much more rational with their consumption claimed that shopping makes them feel better, and they often do it for pleasure rather than out of necessity. Those who claimed to be rational consumers mentioned that they prefer to purchase less yet purchase the best options in terms of quality if the price for that particular product is reasonable. Thus, they see any purchase as an investment that should last long. Meanwhile, individuals who see shopping as a relief mentioned that they care about the price and would not invest a big amount even if the products were of high quality. This might be because shopping is an expensive hobby, and to maintain it,

consumers have to give up quality in order to afford quantity. Another interesting insight was gained after showing the respondents two pictures of a design - one minimalistic and another non-minimalistic (non-minimalistic was full of different decorations, but not cluttered or messy). Several respondents who showed a clear orientation towards minimalistic consumption chose the non-minimalistic design. They mentioned that minimalistic design lacks personality and does not feel like home.

Based on the insights from the qualitative research and the existing literature, I designed a quantitative study and defined a measurement system for the variables used during the statistical analysis. Overall, the respondents, on average, agreed with all the statements that were used to measure minimalism. The only statement they disagreed with was, “I live a minimalistic lifestyle.” Surprisingly, none of the hypotheses regarding minimalism and related variables I formed based on the well-established theoretical background were supported. Namely, no significant connection was found between minimalism and the three variables: psychological well-being, financial security and level of de-ownership orientation. A statistically significant connection was revealed between ethical behavior and minimalism and the level of psychological well-being and de-ownership.

As a measurement for ethical behavior, the following types of behavior (or intent) were used: the tendency to purchase energy-saving products, ecologically grown or processed food and the tendency to purchase recycled products. On average, the statements mentioned above were rated highly among the respondents, which means that the respondents practice these behaviors. Still, they disagreed with practicing boycotting companies that act unethically. When examining the relationship between ethical behavior and minimalism, a significant positive correlation was revealed; namely, the level of ethical behavior positively correlates with the level of minimalism. This association could be explained by the qualitative study insight – several informants who practice minimalism but do not call themselves minimalists mentioned that they prefer ethically produced or ecological products. This might be connected to the fact that those who consume consciously and only purchase what they need might be interested in more ecological and ethical solutions offered on the market (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001; Walther, Sandlin, & Wuensch, 2016).

The quantitative study revealed an interesting statistically significant connection between the level of psychological well-being and the level of de-ownership. This connection again supports the definition of minimalism in the “less is more” sense. The respondents explained that after they had decreased their consumption, they felt better. The same connection was drawn by Błoński and Witek (2019) in their research. The authors claimed that a more minimalistic approach to consumption made the respondents who participated in their research feel less stressed and focus more on the non-materialistic side of life and relationships with others.

Overall, I may conclude that both types of study, the qualitative and the quantitative, were beneficial, with each having its merits and drawbacks. However, using a mixed method

approach enables detailed insights into qualitative data and generalizable, externally valid insights into quantitative data.

My study carries important implications for companies that aim at targeting Millennials. The analysis showed that Millennials, in general, choose quality over quantity. The qualitative study showed that the respondents were willing to invest in products of a higher quality even if they also carried a higher price tag. However, how high a price one is ready to pay depends on each individual. Given that, I believe that it is crucial for companies that are willing to acquire Millennials as customers to focus on providing quality and emphasizing what customers get for a particular price. The participants in the survey and the interviews mentioned that they do not purchase eco or ethically-produced products on purpose; however, the eco and ethical efforts of companies might serve as added value. I believe that many modern companies do not market enough about how eco or ethical production might be connected with high quality. Another way to improve customers' perception of minimalism and eco or ethical initiatives could be more transparent communication to Millennials about what input they are making with a purchase and how it is incorporated into the price. It is important that companies evoke feeling with their eco and ethical initiatives to connect with the customers on more subconscious levels in order to create stronger bond between customer and the brand. Nowadays, it has become rather popular for companies to use different initiatives that benefit the environment or the community. Still, customers often only see intense advertisements or additional expenses (for example, paying for a plastic bag, a higher price due to more sustainable delivery or premium materials, etc.). In my opinion, changing customers' attitudes towards eco and ethical initiatives, connecting them emotionally to the initiatives of the brand and educating them about how quality is connected with a sustainable approach would help companies win Millennial customers.

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## **APPENDICES**



## **Appendix 1: Povzetek**

Milenijci so opredeljeni kot generacija posameznikov, starih od 26 do 41 let, in ta generacija trenutno prevladuje na trgu. Zato je z ekonomskega vidika ključnega pomena opredelitev vrednot in prepričanj te skupine, ki sedaj aktivno oblikuje na eni strani kriterije, po katerih naj podjetje deluje, po drugi strani pa povpraševanje po izdelkih in storitvah. V magistrskem delu se osredotočam na minimalistično potrošnjo, saj gre za relativno nov pojav, ki je v zadnjih letih pritegnil vse več pozornosti. Minimalizem je miselnost s poudarkom na zadovoljevanju potreb ter na iskanju pomembnih povezav z drugimi člani skupnosti brez pripisovanja vrednosti ali ocenjevanja vrednosti skozi materialistične dobrine. Tako se je pojavilo veliko znanstvene in poljudne literature na temo minimalizma, ki razpravlja o različnih področjih, na katera je možno prenesti principe minimalizma, na primer moda, notranja oprema, osebno in družabno življenje in duhovnost. V slovenskem prostoru je tovrstnih raziskav malo, zato je namen mojega magistrskega dela raziskati potrošniško vedenje milenijcev in njihov odnos do minimalistične potrošnje. Glede na pomen minimalizma v obstoječi literaturi se mi zdi zanimivo raziskati, kakšno je stališče slovenskih milenijcev do minimalizma in kako lahko minimalizem kot trend vpliva tako na slovenski kot svetovni trg.

Prvi del magistrskega dela se osredotoča na pregled obstoječe literature, kjer opredelim prakso minimalizma in njegovih tipologij ter zajamem opis splošnih stališč milenijcev, pri čemer orišem njihov generacijski portret. Razumevanje minimalizma kot pojava, njegovega jedra in morebitnih razlogov, zakaj porabniki (ne) zanima minimalistični način življenja, je pomembna podstat kasnejše empirične študije.

V empiričnem delu sem analizirala stališča slovenskih milenijcev do minimalizma in sorodnih praks. Ta del je sestavljen iz kvalitativne in kvantitativne raziskave. Pri kvalitativni raziskavi sem opravil več poglobljenih intervjujev s porabniki z namenom, da pridobim vpogled v stališča milenijcev do minimalizma in etičnega vedenja ter načine implementiranja tovrstnih praks. Pri kvantitativni raziskavi pa sem izbrala metodo spletne ankete in zbrane podatke analizirala s programom SPSS. Namen te študije je bil raziskati stopnjo prisotnosti minimalizma med porabniki ter odnos med minimalizmom in koncepti dobrobiti, finančne varnosti, etičnega vedenja in usmerjenosti k nelastništvu. Spoznanja, pridobljena s kvalitativno raziskavo, so zagotovila tudi pomembne vpogled v dojetje minimalizma pri milenijcih, ki so bili kasneje uporabljeni za oblikovanje kvantitativne študije.

Izsledki kvalitativne študije so pokazali, da milenijci sami sebe ne imenujejo minimalist in se dejansko izogibajo temu izrazu, vendar pa so se v povprečju strinjali s trditvami, ki so bile uporabljene za merjenje njihove stopnje minimalizma. Na splošno so bili porabniki, ki so sodelovali v kvalitativni raziskavi, skeptični do minimalizma in so ga močno povezovali z nekaterimi strogimi omejitvami. Tisti, ki so prakticirali precej omejeno porabo, so se raje imenovali »racionalni porabniki«. Poudarjali so, da svoje porabe ne omejujejo, a na trgu

delujejo racionalno in odgovorno ter ne kupujejo izdelkov, ki jih ne potrebujejo ali jih ne bodo uporabljali.

Kvantitativna raziskava je pokazala zanimivo povezavo med stopnjo psihične dobrobiti in usmerjenostjo k nelastništvu. Ta povezava ponovno podpira opredelitev minimalizma v smislu »manj je več«. Poleg tega se je pokazala pomembna pozitivna korelacija med etičnim vedenjem in minimalizmom; stopnja etičnosti namreč pozitivno korelira s stopnjo minimalizma. Zanimivo je, da porabniki izražajo pozitivno stališče do minimalistične potrošnje, vendar pa se nimajo za minimaliste. Morda je to povezano z dejstvom, da je minimalizem precej nov izraz in se povezuje predvsem z notranjim dizajnom ali zelo radikalnimi praksami, kot je asketizem. Na podlagi svoje raziskave sklepam, da je izraz "minimalizem" v Sloveniji manj uveljavljen. Kupci se raje imenujejo racionalni porabniki in se izogibajo izrazu minimalizem.

Magistrsko delo ponuja tudi nekaj praktičnih implikacij, ki izhajajo iz ugotovitev empirične študije. Ena izmed njih je, da milenijci bolj cenijo kakovost kot kvantiteto in bi raje kupili izdelek, ki bi služil dlje, tudi če je cena višja. Poleg tega milenijci kot kupci vidijo dodano vrednost v etičnih in ekoloških pobudah podjetja, vendar hkrati izražajo skrb, da so takšne pobude le predmet trženja in izgovor za višjo ceno podjetja. Zato podjetjem, ki želijo pridobiti milenijce kot kupce, predlagam preglednejšo komunikacijo glede tega, kako posamezna pobuda prispeva k ceni. Pomembno je tudi čustveno vključiti stranko v različne pobude podjetij, z namenom, da se ustvari močnejša vez med porabnikom in blagovno znamko. Magistrsko delo ima kljub teoretičnemu in empiričnemu doprinosu tudi več omejitev. Ena izmed njih je nereprezentativen vzorec v kvantitativni raziskavi, ki ne omogoča posploševanja ugotovitev na širšo populacijo. Dodatna omejitev je tudi pomanjkanje vpogleda v to, kako skrbno so respondenti odgovarjali na vprašanja in prebrali opredelitve ključnih pojmov.

## Appendix 2: Visual examples of minimalistic design

*Figure 3: Examples of minimalistic aesthetics*





*Source: Pinterest.com.*



### Appendix 3: Visual representation of non-minimalistic designs

*Figure 4: Examples of non-minimalistic aesthetics*



*Source: Pinterest.com.*

## Appendix 4: Interview sample characteristics

Table 16: Overview of sample characteristics

	Gender	Year of birth	Education level	Employment status	Disposable income	Rural/urban area
Interviewee 1 (Barbara)	F	1983 (38)	Higher education program	Employed (Employed at accounting company)	>1000	Rural (Ravne na Koroškem)
Interviewee 2 (Ožbej)	M	1985 (36)	Bachelor degree	Employed (Engineer, employed at control department)	1001-1500	Rural (Holmec)
Interviewee 4 (Danilo)	M	1986 (35)	Bachelor degree	Employed (Self-employed, entrepreneur)	1501+	Rural (Radlje ob Dravi)
Interviewee 3 (Tatjana)	F	1988 (33)	Bachelor degree	Employed (Advisor at personal finance and insurance)	1001-1500	Rural (Radlje ob Dravi)
Interviewee 5 (Urška )	F	1990 (31)	Higher education program	Employed (nanny at kindergarden)	>1000	Rural (Holmec)
Interviewee 6 (Urban)	M	1991 (30)	Master's degree	Employed (Engineer, employed as project manager)	1001-1500	Rural (Ravne na Koroškem)
Interviewee 7 (Nejc)	M	1992 (29)	Higher education program	Employed (Self-employed as farmer)	1501+	Rural (Lokovica)
Interviewee 8 (Neja)	F	1993 (28)	Master's degree	Employed (Chemist at a metallurgic company)	1001-1500	Rural (Ravne na Koroškem)
Interviewee 9 (Raya)	F	1995 (26)	Master's degree	Employed (Economist, employed at consulting)	1001-1500	Urban (currently living in Budapest, originally from Baku)
Interviewee 10 (Baha)	M	1995 (26)	Master's degree	Employed (Economist, employed at consulting)	1001-1500	Urban (currently living in Budapest, originally from Baku)
Interviewee 11 (Andraž)	M	1996 (25)	Master's degree	Employed (Engineer, employed as project manager)	1001-1500	Rural (Prevalje)

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year of birth</b>	<b>Education level</b>	<b>Employment status</b>	<b>Disposable income</b>	<b>Rural/urban area</b>
Interviewee 12 (Helena)	F	1996 (25)	Higher education program	Employed (Engineer)	>1000	Rural (Prevalje)

*Source: own work.*

## **Appendix 5: Interview structure – qualitative research questions**

I would like to thank you for your time and willingness to participate in the interview that will help me to understand Millennials' consumer behavior and purchasing patterns. I really do appreciate your help!

### **Interview questions:**

1. How often you purchase products not related to food and beverage during shopping in physical stores? ( several times per week, once per week, every week, several times per month, once per month )
  - 1.1 How often you purchase products not related to food and beverage while shopping online ? ( several times per week, once per week, every week, several times per month, once per month )
2. Which category of products not related to food and beverage ( e.g. home decor, clothes, shoes, beauty products, accessories, tech products, books, stationary, products of self-care) you buy most often?
3. Based on which parameters you choose the product? (quality, price, innovative design, health/wellness benefits, value per money, risk avoidance, self-image)
4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? (yes/ no/ depends on category )
  - 4.1 Who you contact before making a purchase? ( friends, family, sales assistants, I search information on internet, I visit fairs, etc.)
5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage? ( I am not interested in sales, I usually wait for a sale to get a deal, I always wait for the sale )
6. What is you opinion regarding phrase : “Quality over quantity”? Can you say that you can relate ? (I can relate/ No, I cannot relate) Why ? (provide your opinion on why it is hard or no to rather follow quality consumption or why it is difficult to resist quantity. Is it potentially more psychologically satisfying to buy more items of lower quality rather than one item of high quality? Can you say that products of high quality are too expensive and you are not able to afford it ?)
7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand? (Yes/ No; why do you plan or do not plan? What are benefits from your current strategy?)
8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status? (Yes/ No, why ?)
9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ? (Important/ Not important; why so? Here I ask respondent to provide one's own idea regarding importance of ethical production and whether to him/her it is important while making a decision about purchase?)
10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ? What was the reason for such decision? (Yes/ No; I boycotted due to poor quality,

bad attitude, unethical production, etc.; I supported due to ethical production, company's good cause, etc.)

11. Do you make compulsive purchases? (Yes/ No; if yes how often then )
12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)
13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns? ( Here respondent is ask to define minimalism and minimalistic behavior based on one's own subjective perception)
14. Can you say that you are minimalist? (With this question I would like respondent to self-assess his/her own consumption patterns and, given one's own definition about minimalistic consumption, drive conclusion on whether (s)he is a minimalist or not )
15. Can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members? ( I agree/ I somewhat agree/ I somewhat disagree/ I disagree; here I also ask respondent to position himself/herself based on consumption patterns in relation to his/her family, friends)
16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?
17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?
18. Can you say that making purchases makes you feel excited and happy? (Yes/ No; please provide argumentation)

## Appendix 6: Transcripts of interviews

### Interview 1&2:

Tatjana and Danilo

03.10.2021

Basic info:

Name:	Tatjana	Danilo
Year of Birth:	1988	1986
Gender:	Female	Male
Region:	Koroska, Radlje ob Dravi	Koroska, Radlje ob Dravi
Occupation:	Economist	Work with wood
Education:	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree
Current position:	Works in bank	Entrepreneur
Income:	1001-1500e	1501+

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores?  
Via Internet?

T&D: once a month at most, we purchase clothes seasonally and personal care as we run out of it. If we have everything we don't purchase anything.

T: I usually purchase clothes via Internet while most often we just select one day and go for a family shopping as via Internet it is difficult to see the quality of an item. Products of a personal care I always buy via Internet as I don't have time to go to the store for that and I usually order it from Apotcare web pages.

D: I never buy via Internet, I always want to see an item before making purchase.

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

T: as said personal care as we run out of it, it is approximately once a month, difficult to say, always depends. Clothes we buy approximately 3-4 times a year according to season. Now as kids grow we have to buy it more often for kids otherwise for ourselves we don't buy that often.

D: Quite often we buy sport equipment as we like to go camping and we must be sure that we are prepared for everything that we might need while traveling. But again we like to buy goods of a high quality so for already 2 or 3 years we did not have to buy anything connected to sport equipment as we are covered. However, this year we had to buy several kitchen devices as old ones stopped working. So we only buy what we need but when we need something we go for quality so the product would work as long as possible.

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

T&D: Definitely quality. We do not want to repurchase one item several times. We buy good quality once and hope it will work as long as possible.

T: I also look at design so I prefer classic design, no glitter, as durable as possible. I don't want to change my wardrobe every month. Moreover, I know what works for me so I have some kind of capsule wardrobe. If I have something that I never wear I feel that I spent money for nothing and I am trying to be as rational with my purchases as possible.

D: I agree, I feel bad if I spent money on something I will never wear. I care about design too, I like durable items, that look subtle, I do not like loud brands. I never liked home decorations, just useless clutter that attracts dust.

T: We try to avoid useless home decorations and keep our interior as simple as possible. It is less dust, easier to find anything if we are in a hurry. Kids are also getting older and we teach them to always put everything on its place and be organized.

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

T&D: It depends on product category.

T: For personal care I just buy products based on my own experience. I do not complicate. I only look that product works and of course it should be allergy safe because of kids. While choosing clothes I look for good quality items, made from nice materials so they are nice on skin and does not feel plastic or itchy. Sometimes I hear suggestions from my family or colleagues, sometimes I research by myself.

D: When it comes to technical devices or cars or any farm equipment, we seek for reviews. Reading interviews on Internet, often in thematic groups. I ask my colleagues if anyone had experience with specific brands. Overall it is extensive research. We go to fairs, we ask relatives, colleagues, we seek reviews. We do not complicate with simple categories. If I want to buy shoes I just go to the shop and look for good quality pair, if I want to buy car or electric bicycle, I make a research. I feel that when you come to the shop, all cars are similar and you really have to dig which model has which characteristics, ask for potential issues with particular model.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

T: If there is a deal on item we want to buy, we will definitely use an opportunity to save. Yet If I know that we want something which is not on sale, I will not buy goods that are on sale. I want a bag for 100e I will never buy 10 bags for 10e. We always go for quality.

D: Sometimes if we know that soon will be a nice sale, we can wait with a purchase to check if there is a deal on product we want but I never catch a deal as quite often items of a good quality are sold out before sale.

T: Yet for personal care and especially with more expensive self-care such as perfumes, make up, I wait until sales. I do not want to spend full price on such categories, but if there is a nice discount I might purchase some expensive perfume that I really like. Otherwise, it is not a must have. Just I might sometimes use a deal to treat myself as some kind of self-care.

D: If we do not need something – we will not buy it even if price on it is cut in half.

6. Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

T: Yes I believe that the price is higher thus materials of a higher quality were used. There are limits though. I will never buy any premium brand as often they just include marketing. Prices on some premium brands are sometimes ridiculous.

D: I agree with this on 59%. As Tatjana said I would not like to overpay for brand just because they push their product through marketing but quite often you have to pay premium for high quality. However, it also depends on category, I can splurge on shoes but will never pay premium for T-shirts.

7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

T&D: And yes and no. We know what we have to purchase and we always purchase only what we need.

T: I made a list of clothes that our kids use the most and so when I shop I follow that list but again it is very rare for us that we purchase something randomly or because of discount.

D: Also I am not a fan of purchasing in advance. For example, I cannot buy winter shoes in spring. Just have to wait until next season and then according to my needs I will select model I will purchase.

T: We also do not have particular budget, there are just limits of what price we are ready to pay for particular item.



8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

D: Not at all, I don't think that you should be wearing particular clothes or use devices of a particular brand to be appreciated in community. It is true though that I like to dress properly but that means for me clean clothes, shoes. I think appropriate look is what counts not branded clothes. I would say that if I see a person fully dressed in branded clothes with brand names written all over I feel that that person has a little to offer in terms of personality. Not always though, depends from case to case but I always appreciate personality.

T: I also like to look tidy and well-dressed. I never felt pressure in my circle of friends to show my status or dress appropriately to be accepted.

9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

D: Difficult to say, we go for quality and behave as rational consumers, we do not purchase an item to throw it without using. Moreover we try to give our old clothes or furniture to those in need. Honestly it is difficult to track whether company is ethical or no as many companies have outsourcing or production in countries such as China, Morocco, Turkey, you name it, and it is impossible to know what is going on behind closed doors. Of course if we see some ethical innovators on the market who produce re-usable or eco products such as reusable glass bottles for water or products in jars from re-used plastic or anything in degrading package we try to support those brands and at least try their offers. Unfortunately not all eco- products suit our needs.

T: I try to minimize our plastic waste by using refillable person care, so we buy bottle once and then we only buy refills. I believe that it is not enough to fully rely on companies to change the world, every customer should start from their consumption habits.

10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

T: I try to avoid Zara because I heard that they had poor work conditions and used cheap labor to produce their clothes. Overall we avoid fast fashion brands and non-reusable personal care packaging. I try to support Slovenian organic personal care producers who can offer reusable or fully degrading packaging also recently I tried Scandinavian brand that offers organic cotton.

D: There are companies I do not buy as they overall offer poor quality items. However if I like the brand and hear that they have any good initiative, I would support them with my next purchase when I would need to replace anything I had from them before. Again, I will not purchase anything for the matter of supporting.

11. Do you make compulsive purchases?

T&D: Never, only what we need.

12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

T&D: Definitely picture 1. Pic 2 looks way cluttered.

13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

D: I think minimalism is more about having a very limited amount of possessions. We try to buy what we need but I have 3 pairs of jeans as I am comfortable with that number, if I would be a true minimalist I would have to have only one jeans. I still prefer to have several shoes depending on whether I am going on hiking, whether it is rainy or snowy or just simply my leg is tired of same model of shoes if it makes sense and I like to swap it over for another model.

T: I also imagine minimalism as more of life with a backpack of possessions. We are not hoarders but I can fit my possessions in a backpack for very limited time. We like to go outdoor (hiking, camping) so then we take only what we really need but still our car is full of things that we have to take.

14. Can you say that you are minimalists?

T: Not really, we are more as rational consumers. We buy exactly what we need.

D: I would say that I might be more of a minimalist as I might maybe even live without some furniture but maybe it is because man need less things .

15. Can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

T: Definitely. In my family we were taught how to be rational with money but my parents for example have hard times to even throw away broken kitchen devices. Danilo and me on the other hand are throwing away or recycling anything that is broken or of no more use. We also often use old clothes to work in garden or as a home wear. Of course only if items are looking decent.

D: Older people really like to accumulate items and I believe that is because they still remember times when some items were scarcity while youngsters are still in search of their true self and position in society so they often experiment. I think that consumption more depends on in what stage of your life you are. When people have families their priorities naturally shift. It might though greatly depend on personality.

16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

T&D: No, we buy exactly what we want. We would not upgrade any of categories.

17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

T&D: Definitely putting aside to later buy real estate.

18. Can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing?  
Things that you buy and feel thrilled and happy?

T: I like to purchase online books, we do not have space to have library at home that is why I have quite big online library.

D: I do not have any feelings with purchases. I just buy what my family and I need, however I really feel happy and thrilled when it comes to travelling or going to the new restaurant. Materialistic things come and go and they are always replaceable so that is why I like to make memories with my family.

### **Interview 3 & 4**

Nejc and Helena

7.10.2021

Basic info:

Name:	Nejc	Helena
Year of Birth:	1992	1996
Gender:	Male	Female
Region:	Lokovica, Velenje	Prevalje, Koroska
Occupation:	Farmer, entrepreneur	Engineer
Education:	Higher educational program	Higher educational program
Current position:	Full time farmer	Employed
Income:	1501+	>1000

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores?  
Via Internet?

N: Once a month , I only buy something when I really need it. Usually I buy in physical stores but I can say maybe 10% of my purchases I make online. I still like to come to the store to check the quality, size, look for other possible options.

H: I am not regular with purchasing online, I would say I started to order more often during lockdown. I would say I buy clothes and shoes somewhere 3 times a year or if I need any category that I do not have yet and I buy personal care products once a month.

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

N: Difficult to say, I often buy things that I need on farm for work: farm clothes, tools, products for welfare of my animals.

H: Personal care definitely as I run out of basic care such as shampoos and shower gels quite fast.

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

N: I have quite high standards. It is: price, quality, fast delivery, also professional help on post-purchase stage.

H: Quality, visual features ( not too bright, natural, classic colors ), comfort ( regarding shoes it is the only characteristic I look at).

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

N: Reviews on Internet almost never, I have professional adviser regarding farm equipment. I also ask other professionals and colleagues.

H: Not really. I just go around and search for what I like. I try a lot before to understand if the item is comfortable for me.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

N: Regarding farm equipment I wait until special deals, but if there is a deal on what I do not need- I would not buy it. Regarding personal care, clothes, shoes, etc. I only buy when I need it. Mentioned categories are such a small percent of my budget that I do not have to wait for any sales. I buy basic items, quite cheap, but not cheapest. I still look for natural fabrics so it feels soft on skin and does not irritate me or restrict my movements.

H: Sales are not important for me as not always I can wait until sale comes and as I have standard size not always I get my size on sale. On the other hand I often search for personal care items that are on sale or have particular discount. For example, if I see that there is a

discount on a particular brand in pharmacy I would buy only products of that brand so I save on personal care while I do not mind using different shampoos or shower gels.

6. Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

N: Not always. I would say that in some cases, price might reflect quality. Many good farm devices cost a lot yet they are of high quality and it would take longer until I will have to change them. In case of clothes or personal care, I do not think that high price reflects quality, it reflects marketing and hype. Also some brands positioned themselves as must have to keep some status or as something that communicates that you are a professional. I do not believe that. If performance is good and it optimizes the process I might pay more, yet if I know that big percent of the price goes for marketing I will not pay for that brand.

H: With shoes definitely. I can say that only high price models does not cause pain to my leg all cheap models are always pain to walk in.

7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

N: For farm equipment yes, other categories no.

H: Maybe I have list of items I should stock up but I never had any strict list or budget.

8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

N: As I said, I would not do that to signal my status, yet if it helps to optimize process thus work faster and more efficient, I might. Moreover, if particular product has high safety parameters ( special clothes for work), I might also consider buying it. Buying special clothes for farm just to look cool or like a professional is not interesting to me as I know my performance and I prefer to position myself in society based on what I can really offer rather than how can I look.

H: Not really. I am not that easy to be influenced.

9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

N: I would say that ethical production is nothing more than a new marketing strategy. I do not want to pay to companies my money so they would get socially and environmentally responsible. That what they had to do by default.

H: No, I never look at that.

10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

N: Yes I have such companies. I always look at: quality and professionalism on post purchase stage ( in case I need help or have questions). If companies leave me with my problems on post-purchase stage, I would never return to that company.

H: Not really, I just ignore some brands as they have low quality or really high prices for poor performance.

11. Do you make compulsive purchases?

N: Once I did, sometimes I can purchase something randomly but usually it is something I would need anyway. Last time it was tractor.

H: Sometimes I can buy what I did not initially planned to but it is very rare.

12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

N: Definitely minimalistic.

H: Second design yet I lack personality there. I would add some small decorations so it feels more like a home.

13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

N: I understand minimalism as strategy when you purchase something when you need it and you know that with that item you can be more efficient and productive than without so that purchase would be economically beneficial ( ekonomsko opravicen)

H: I would say people who can fit their life in one bag. So those who have really limited amount of possessions and who buy only what they need.

14. Can you say that you are minimalists?

N: For sure. I am definitely more of a minimalist.

H: I do not think I am minimalist. I would say that I am more of a rational consumer now. Plus I have a goal to buy myself a nice car and I do not know how my shopping habits would change when I achieve my goal.

15. But can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

N: Definitely more minimalistic than some of my friends. My family though are similar as me. I think I learned a lot on how to be rational and efficient with my money and resources overall from my family.

H: I would not say so. I think I have similar shopping habits as my other family members.

16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

N: No, nothing at all.

H: Maybe shoes, I would like to try wearing premium shoes to understand if it is really worth the money. I really have problematic leg and so I would invest fortune only so I can walk with no pain.

17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

N: Difficult to say, I would just put it aside and use it when I need to invest in something.

H: Onto my car budget definitely.

18. But can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing or collecting? Things that you buy or collect and feel thrilled and happy?

N: I do not have any. I enjoyed purchasing my car and I was happy that I got it totally new and just as I wanted but I would not collect cars because I enjoy working with them. Just I was happy when I made that particular purchase even though I had already car and technically I did not have to change it for newer but again I like to optimize and be efficient so I bought car that is safer for long distances and it has better characteristics.

H: I do not have such category. Though any purchase makes me happy as I know I have something new to try.

## **Interview 5**

Barbara

8.10.2021

Basic info:

Name: Barbara

Year of Birth: 1983

Gender: Female

Region: Čečovje, Ravne na Koroskem

Occupation: Economist

Education: Higher educational program

Current position: Employed at accounting company

Income: >1000

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores?  
Via Internet?

B: Online almost never as I am not used to it, otherwise if I see any store I get in and I never get out without any purchase. I like shopping and I always find something for myself to purchase.

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

B: I can buy whatever I see and I like. Every category a bit. I buy a bit of clothes, a bit of personal care, maybe one shoes and list goes on.

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

B: Just if I like how it looks or if someone would really persuade me to buy it. I also buy cheapest so I can afford myself more.

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

B: Not really, it really only matters how it look.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

B: If I want something which is not on sale I would get it definitely yet there is 100% possibility that if something is on sale I would get it.

6. Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

B: No. But if I really want something of a higher price I would get it anyway.

7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

B: No. It is randomly and quite often compulsive. But shopping is something I do for relaxation and soul so I just look that I do not spend too much.

8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

B: Not really.



9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

B: Not at all.

10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

B: I can boycott companies based on poor product performance. Not as a punishment rather I do not want to buy bad products anymore.

11. Do you make compulsive purchases?

B: More often than I want to.

12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

B: I like how minimalistic design looks but I do not think it can be achievable in real life. Or it is achievable with particular financial investments that I do not have. Non-minimalistic design is alright too, looks more like real life.

13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

B: I think minimalism is a buzz and something that people who can afford constant financial investments can do. To have fancy minimalistic house you definitely need to make expensive renovation. Plus, it is expensive to always keep it limited to particular amount as you always have to repurchase what you need. From side of having all organized it sounds good but I do not think that it could be as organized always. Either they have cleaning stuff or it is only for a picture to say that they are minimalists. I think it is for attention just as not eating meat or gluten or what else is cool now.

14. Can you say that you are minimalists?

B: No.

15. But can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

B: I do not know anyone who is minimalist. At least I had never paid that much attention to it.

16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

B: No.

17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

B: I would go traveling.

18. But can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing or collecting? Things that you buy or collect and feel thrilled and happy?

B: Shopping makes me feel happy and relaxed.

## **Interview 6 & 7**

Ožbej and Urška

9.10.2021

Basic info:

Name:	Ožbej	Urška
Year of Birth:	1985	1990
Gender:	Male	Female
Region:	Holmec	Holmec
Occupation:	Engineer	Nanny
Education:	Bachelor degree	Higher educational program
Current position:	Employed	Employed
Income:	1001-1500	>1000

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores? Via Internet?

O: I go to the physical stores and almost never shop online. Online shopping is what my wife does a lot.

U: I really like shopping, it provides me some kind of distraction. Otherwise, we do big family shopping 3-4 times a year.

O: Due to our location we either go to Maribor or to Austria and we spend whole day buying necessities we run out of. That is usually as kids grow and we have to replace many things at once. Most time efficient is to take one day to go and buy all we need.

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

U: Clothes.

O: I am only going to the shop to purchase food but as it does not count I would say I often buy something that kids need for school. When we are going home from school my daughter just notifies me what she needs or wants. So I would say stationary. Often I also buy personal care but mostly I just pick a shampoo or shower gel during grocery shopping.

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

O: To me most important I would say is to buy replacement of what I run of as soon as possible. I do care about quality and I am trying to invest a reasonable price in anything I buy but often I just come to the shop where I usually shop and take something of my size that I need. I do not look much at quality and I shop at the same place so I know their price range.

U: To me it is quality and visual part. If I like how the item looks I will buy it even if I do not need it. Also I often buy items on sales but again discount can persuade me but if I like something which is not on discount, I would either wait for discount or I would buy it full price.

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

O: No

U: When I was shopping at AliExpress I was always reading reviews as in case that the product is a scam I had to throw it away as it was not worth to send it back. If I have option to return I am not reading reviews.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

O: I am not interested but I like to take an opportunity to save.

U: I like sales but only if it is big sales where nice items are on discount too.

6. Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

O: Not always and depends on category.

U: To me higher quality matters regarding shoes, accessories and clothes. I would never spend really high price on perfume.

7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

O: Yes without a list I would forget what to purchase. We also have budget on some categories.

U: My salary is my limit. So it means I have to limit my purchases but often I order and see what comes and if I am not satisfied I return and wait until I receive refund and buy something else again, so it is constant circle.

8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

O: No

U: No.

9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

O: No.

U: No.

10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

U: Not really. If I order something from the shop and quality is low then there is a high possibility that I will never order from them again. But I would not say that I would boycott company just based on whether they are ethical or not.

O: I also do not return to shops that once did not met my expectations.

11. Do you make compulsive purchases?

U: Sometimes I cannot resist

O: Never, sometimes I even forget what I have to buy.

12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

U: Second design looks more cozy but I like first one as it is cleaner. I would still add some personal decorations to the first design such as pictures maybe.

O: First one definitely.

13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

U: Buying only what you need when you need it. It is also about covering basic needs.

O: I would agree with Urska's definition.

14. Can you say that you are minimalists?

O: I would say so. I am quite minimalistic.

U: I would not call myself minimalistic, I really often have way more than I need.

15. But can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

O: I can say so.

16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

O: No.

U: I have quite a list of what premium items I would like to get once.

17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

O: I would give that amount aside to later invest in something valuable.

U: I would spend it for something luxurious and when I would make all my wishes come true I would start saving.

18. But can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing or collecting? Things that you buy or collect and feel thrilled and happy?

O: Nothing like that.

U: I would say that I like to purchase clothes.

## **Interview 8 & 9**

Raya & Baha

12.10.2021

Basic info:

Name:	Raya	Baha
Year of Birth:	1995	1995
Gender:	Female	Male

Region:	Baku	Baku
Occupation:	Economist	Economist
Education:	Master's degree	Master's degree
Current position:	Employed	Employed
Income:	1000-1500	1000-1500

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores?  
Via Internet?

R: I usually purchase clothes in physical stores as I like to see item before and check its quality and whether it suits me well. Personal care I mainly order online as it does not require such involvement as clothes. Moreover, many brands that I use are not presented in Slovenia so only possible option is to buy them online.

B: I mainly buy once a month only in physical stores, very rarely online

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

R: It really depends. I would say home décor and personal care items would be most often purchased category.

B: I would say personal care items

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

R: Depends on each category. Clothes I chose based on quality and its visual features. Personal care I choose based on whether the product would suit my needs. Home decor I choose mainly based on whether the items adds comfort and whether we need that item.

B: I would say quality and comfort are most important features for me regarding clothes, shoes, accessories.

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

B: Not really, maybe only for some items such as electronic devices. Otherwise on items that I use daily such as personal care, clothes and shoes I almost never read reviews and I am not bothered purchasing those categories as anyway I am not investing in following categories big percent of my budget.

R: I read reviews on items of personal care to find whether the product would suit my needs as I have very high standards regarding what I apply on my face and body. For other

categories I cannot say whether I read reviews as sometimes I can purchase from a brand if I hear positive word of mouth or someone really recommends me some products.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

B: Not really interested but I plan some of my purchases during sales season to save a bit. Yet if I urgently need something I would not wait for sale, I would buy full price and enjoy the product when I really need it.

6. Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

B: Depends on category yet I would agree with that statement. Often good and quality items have high price tags.

R: I agree that it depends on category, I would also say that it depends on brand. Some brands are specialized in some areas and so I can say that it is reasonable to buy professional skiing clothes from brands that are known for making good skiing accessories rather than from “X” famous brand that are using topic of for example winter sports to make marketing around it. Also some brands are just so hyped about that some customers automatically think that if that brand is well known and they have high price tag they must be of a high quality. Unfortunately given my experience many hyped brands only invest in marketing and they quality is quite standard if not even below average.

7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

B: I plan budget only when I have ahead of me a big purchase. Otherwise daily needs do not take any big percentage of my budget to worry about it.

R: I deduct monthly expenses to make a budget for shopping and then I make purchases based on my needs. I do not have budget for any particular categories but for example if I need shoes and I want particular perfume I would rather purchase shoes and leave perfume for next time or for time when I will have higher budget.

8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

B: No

R: No. I would say I am quite resistant to such pressure.

9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

R: Overall it is quite important but it really depends on category. For example, I am trying to support ethical brands yet often such products are quite pricey and thus I am not able yet

to afford them. Otherwise, I am recycling and I am limiting my consumption to items I know I need and would .

B: I would say that it is quite difficult to track whether particular company behaves ethically on the market. Many companies are still not very transparent and some are transparent partially due to marketing reasons yet as production is a very complex function and many big companies have it outsourced it is really difficult to track further whether all supply chain is behaving ethically or not.

R: We are not very principal about it.

10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

R: There are some companies I am not pleased to support. Mainly I make my choice based on CEO, in my case I dislike the behavior of the CEO of one particular brand and thus I really does not want to support them. However it really depends on situation: how close to me the issue is, how overall brand behaves and what are their products.

B: It depends on situation but I really rarely boycott or support.

11. Do you make compulsive purchases?

B: Not really often, maybe only if I really need something and when I see it I might purchase it. But it is almost never that something can persuade me to buy an item that I never saw or heard about before.

R: Really rarely and only what I was looking at for a while.

12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

R: Second one definitely. I like to see some items that can signal that this house is mine.

B: First one yes

13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

R: You are buying only what you need.

B: I would only add that you buy it when you need it. As people can purchase what they think they crucially need but at the end it would be because they want it or because they do it to find comfort.



14. Can you say that you are minimalists?

R: I would not say so.

B: I think we are more minimalists. We really buy what we need at the times we need it.

R: However I sometimes make purchases that comfort me rather than I need them and that is why I would not say I am minimalist.

15. But can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

B: I would say so.

R: It depends in my case, I can say that I am more minimalistic than some of my friends yet I know some true minimalists.

16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

R: I would say there are some items I would like to buy from premium segment yet I do not see any crucial need in them. In case my income would change I might look at some clothes and bags from premium segment.

B: I do not have any items I would like to get from premium segment.

17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

R: Savings

B: Savings definitely

18. But can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing or collecting? Things that you buy or collect and feel thrilled and happy?

R: I like to purchase personal care: skincare, makeup, etc. yet I try to be reasonable with my purchases and I do not purchase anything if I already have something to go through. I feel pressure if I have many jars opened.

B: I do not have any.

## Interview 10

Andraž

12.10.2021

Basic info:

Name:	Andraž
Year of Birth:	1996
Gender:	Male
Region:	Prevalje
Occupation:	Engineer
Education:	Master's degree
Current position:	Employed
Income:	1000-1500

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores?  
Via Internet?

A: 2 or 3 times a year depending on what I need and whether I find something I would like to buy. Usually I shop in physical stores as I have to try an item before purchasing it. I never purchase clothes, shoes or accessories via Internet.

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

A: Difficult to say. Maybe basic clothes such as socks and personal care : shower gel, toothbrush and toothpaste.

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

A: Quality, price, comfort

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

A: Not really, but I go for brands that I know or experiences previously.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

A: I am not interested in discounts. If I do not like quality I would not buy product even if it is on discount.

6. Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

A: It does to some extend yet I strongly believe that some premium brands are unnecessary and ridiculously overpriced. For example, I am ready to pay high price for good product of a high quality for example I always look for middle or premium brands while choosing travel and hiking gear, footwear and outwear. Clothes and some personal care I never purchase from premium brands as cheap cotton T-shirts sometimes are of better quality than ones from middle segment.

7. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

A: I only have list of items I need not to forget something.

8. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

A: No

9. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

A: I am not interested in ethical brands as I believe many are using ethical label for marketing purposes. However, I would rather support local producers or farmers.

10. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

A: I do not have any that I boycott based on their market behavior or my perception of it. There are however companies that I would rather support with my purchase as I believe in their values and I find their actions to be a positive change of market trends.

11. Do you make compulsive purchases?

A: Never .

12. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

A: Minimalistic one. I really like minimalistic designs and I find them to be clean and easy to maintain. I am also easily disturbed by mess that is why I like to have as less mess and so unneeded items as possible. What I do not use I get rid of.

13. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

A: I would say it is about purchasing only what you need and what you will use.

14. Can you say that you are minimalists?

A: Yes, I can say so.

15. But can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

A: I would say so. Definitely more minimalistic but as well compared to my parents I do not have issues with disposing items I do not longer use

16. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

A: Not really. However if I see an items of good quality in a higher price segment I might consider buying it yet I would still be careful as there are reasonable limits of how high price can be and I do not want to pay for brand name or marketing.

17. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

A: Savings or real estate.

18. But can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing or collecting? Things that you buy or collect and feel thrilled and happy?

A: I would like to broaden collection of art works or antique items but for now I need room for.

## **Interview 11 & 12**

Urban & Neja

20.10.2021

Basic info:

Name:	Neja	Urban
Year of Birth:	1993	1991
Gender:	Female	Male

Region:	Ravne na Koroskem	Ravne na Koroskem
Occupation:	Chemist	Chemist
Education:	Master's degree	Master's degree
Current position:	Employed	Employed
Income:	1000-1500	1000-1500

1. How often you purchase goods non related to food and beverage in physical stores?  
Via Internet?

U: Once a week I definitely buy something online most often it is any electronics.

N: I mainly buy online to save my time, via internet we buy everything for home: cleaning supply, personal care, sometimes even some organic food or some very basic clothes ( from brands we know sizes or such items as socks and underwear).

2. Which category of goods non related to food and beverage you buy most often?

U: Electric devices or any parts so far.

N: Personal care items or such categories as socks and underwear.

3. Based on which characteristics you choose goods not related to food and beverage ?

U: Regarding basic clothes (socks, underwear) I only look for price and very rarely at materials. Mainly such categories I buy at Hoffer " po Hoffer ceni". There is a perception that they are too cheap and thus products are of a low quality yet I had experience with even premium shops for basic clothes category and I was quite disappointed.

N: We mainly look at so called price/ quality ratio. So we search for good quality items for reasonable price.

4. Do you seek for reviews/ information about product before purchase? Who you contact before making a purchase?

U: Regarding electronic devices, cars or other purchases that require higher investment, I definitely check reviews or ask professionals for advice. Yet for basic categories I don't.

N: It really depends on category. For example all items that anyhow interact with our child we try to research about before purchase not to cause any allergies for our kid. We also keep an eye on what we eat so I check ingredients before we purchase any new item but otherwise we are not deviating a lot from what we are used to so we are rarely trying new products.

5. At what extend you are interested in sales or special deals for goods non related to food and beverage?

N: If we need something and it is on sale we would buy it, otherwise no. Also if I need something and know that soon is a sale I would rather wait for the ale and then purchase it.

U: We also use sales to buy bigger quantities of items that we regularly use to make a stock.

Can you agree that higher price tag reflects quality?

U: Depends on category.

N: Not always, sometimes you pay for the brand marketing.

6. Do you plan your shopping list/ budget beforehand?

N: If I am shopping I do not plan anything as I can decide on a spot if we need something, while when my husband is going shopping , I have to prepare him a list.

U: I always have to write down what I need to purchase otherwise I forget it.

7. Are you ready to pay premium for products that can signal particular status?

U: No.

N: No.

8. Is it important for you that brand has ethical production: is transparent with production, recycle on post-production stage, etc. ?

U: Not really.

N: If I see any good initiative and I know that product quality is good I might consider purchasing it. For example, quite often I purchase product from the initiative “ Follow the frog”.

9. Is there any companies that you boycotted or is there any that you are supporting ?

U: No, yet good companies I like to support with purchase.

N: Not really, I do not think about that as much.

10. Do you make compulsive purchases?

U: No.

N: No.

11. Which design is more aesthetically pleasing for you ? (2 pictures of minimalistic and non-minimalistic designs)?

N: Both are looking good, I would say that until it is tidy, I am up to any design. I would however choose first picture yet I would add more personalization.

U: First one looks clean but I agree that it lacks soul.

12. Who are minimalists in your opinion and how can you describe their purchasing patterns?

N: Those who purchase only what they need at times when they need it. I would say I quite believe that minimalists are also disposing items they no longer use or need.

U: I would say minimalists can fit their possessions in one bag and those people are often having very ascetic homes.

13. Can you say that you are minimalists?

N: We are somewhere in the middle. I would say that we are between rational consumers and minimalists.

U: I think we are more rational with what we purchase.

14. But can you say that you live more minimalistic lifestyle in comparison with your friends or other family members?

N: Quite possible, I would say we are similar in the circle of our friends and our family members are not very consumeristic too.

U: I would say we are more minimalistic than my parents simply as we dispose items we no longer need and we also use what we have. Even if we purchase some items in advance we always use it up later.

15. Is there any item that you already have but would rather like to get from more premium segment?

N: I do not think so, maybe we would choose better TV.

U: Or maybe we can go for a better car.

16. If your income would increase by 500e for every month, how would you allocate this extra amount?

N: Savings or real estate.

U: All spare income we are allocating to investments to have a passive income in future.

17. But can you name some materialistic possessions that you really enjoy purchasing or collecting? Things that you buy or collect and feel thrilled and happy?

N: We enjoy purchasing anything which is connected to our hobbies or travelling.



## **Appendix 7: Scales for measuring variables for quantitative analysis**

**Level of minimalism** - Wilson & Bellezza (2021) scale:

### ***Number of possessions***

I avoid accumulating lots of stuff

I restrict the number of things I own.

“Less is more” when it comes to owning things.

I actively avoid acquiring excess possessions.

### ***Sparse aesthetics***

I am drawn to visually sparse environments

I prefer simplicity in design.

I keep the aesthetic in my home very sparse.

I prefer leaving spaces visually empty over filling them.

### ***Mindfully curated consumption***

I am mindful of what I own.

The selection of things I own has been carefully curated.

It is important to me to be thoughtful about what I choose to own.

My belongings are mindfully selected.

**Level of personal well-being** - Flourishing scale:

I lead a purposeful and meaningful life

My social relationships are supportive and rewarding

I am engaged and interested in my daily activities

I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others

I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me

I am a good person and live a good life

I am optimistic about my future

People respect me

**Financial security** - Hampson, Grimes, Banister, & McGoldrick (2018) scale :

***Consumer financial distress***

- My present financial situation makes me... upset/ agitated/ struggle to relax

***Consumer financial guilt***

- In the current economic climate, spending on major items makes me feel ... guilty/ irresponsible/ ashamed

***Financial security level***

- Ability to pay rent/mortgage
- Ability to pay for utilities (electricity, phone cost)
- Ability to pay unexpected bill of \$1000

**Ethical consumption measurement** - Lee & Cheon (2018) scale:

- Purchasing energy-saving products
- Purchasing organic food
- Purchasing recycled products
- Participating in Boycotts

**Level of de- ownership** - Lindblom & Lindblom (2017) scale:

- In my opinion, lending and renting are good alternatives to buying and owning
- I am willing to rent property from others
- I am willing to lend or lease my property to others
- I prefer renting or lending than buying and owning

## Appendix 8: Online survey questions

Pozdravljeni, sem študentka Ekonomske fakultete. Za magistrsko delo raziskujem vedenje slovenskih mladih. Moj vprašalnik vam bo vzel približno 10 minut časa. Vnaprej se vam zahvaljujem za vaše odgovore!

Za začetek bi vas prosila, da vpišete leto rojstva:

1. Leto rojstva: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Prosim, da na lestvici od 1 (najmanj) do 5 (največ) označite, v kolikšni meri se strinjate z naslednjimi trditvami o vašem načrtovanju stroškov:

Sploh se ne strinjam - 1

Ne strinjam se - 2

Niti se strinjam niti se ne strinjam - 3

Strinjam se - 4

Povsem se strinjam - 5

Postavljam si finančne cilje, kaj želim doseči s svojim denarjem.

Vnaprej se odločim, kako bo moj denar porabljen v naslednjih 1-2 mesecih.

Aktivno razmišljam o korakih, ki jih moram narediti, da se držim svojega proračuna.

Discipliniram se, da čim bolje izkoristim svoj denar.

Nekaterih stvari namenoma ne kupim, zato da lahko prihranim denar za prihodnje.

Izraz »Vidim, kupim,« me dobro opiše.

Pogosto kupujem stvari brez razmišljanja.

Pogosto kupujem stvari spontano.

3. Prosim, da na lestvici od 1 (najmanj) do 5 (največ) označite, v kolikšni meri se strinjate z naslednjimi trditvami o lastnini:

Sploh se ne strinjam - 1

Ne strinjam se - 2

Niti se strinjam niti se ne strinjam - 3

Strinjam se - 4

Povsem se strinjam - 5

Izogibam se kopičenju stvari.

Omejujem število stvari, ki jih imam.

Ko gre za lastništvo, velja pravilo "Manj je več".

Aktivno se izogibam pridobivanju odvečne lastnine.

Zavedam se stvari, ki jih imam v lasti.

Stvari, ki jih imam, sem skrbno izbral/a.  
Pomembno mi je, da premislim, kaj bom imel/a v lasti.  
Pritegne me "sčiščeno" okolje – okolje brez nepotrebnega balasta.  
Pri oblikovanju imam rad/a preprostost.  
Estetika mojega doma je zelo minimalistična.  
Raje pustim bivalni prostor bolj prazen, kot da ga preveč zapolnim.

Živim minimalističen življenjski slog.

4. Prosim, da na lestvici od 1 (najmanj) do 5 (največ) označite, v kolikšni meri se strinjate z naslednjimi trditvami o vašem vedenju:

Sploh se ne strinjam - 1

Ne strinjam se - 2

Niti se strinjam niti se ne strinjam - 3

Strinjam se - 4

Povsem se strinjam - 5

Kupujem energijsko varčne izdelke.

Kupujem ekološko pridelano hrano.

Kupujem reciklirane izdelke.

Sodelujem v bojkotih- ne kupujem izdelke od podjetij z vizijo katerih se ne strinjam.

5. Kaj pomeni za vas "minimalizem"? Kako bi to opredelili? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Prosim, da izberete razloge, zakaj ste postali minimalist: (Možnih je več odgovorov).

Zmanjšati vpliv na okolje

Duhovni ali verski razlogi

Zmanjšati stres

Zmanjšati finančno breme

Izboljšati psihično počutje

Za izboljšanje odnosov z drugimi

Zmanjšati obremenitve gospodinjskih opravil

Pridobiti več časa

Vizualna privlačnost minimalističnega prostora

Drugo (prosim opišite): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Katera DVA vira motivacije sta bila **za vas najpomembnejša**:

Zmanjšati vpliv na okolje

Duhovni ali verski razlogi

Zmanjšati stres  
Zmanjšati finančno breme  
Izboljšati psihično počutje  
Za izboljšanje odnosov z drugimi  
Zmanjšati obremenitve gospodinjskih opravil  
Pridobiti več časa  
Vizualna privlačnost minimalističnega prostora  
Drugo (prosim opišite): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Prosim, da na lestvici od 1 (najmanj) do 5 (največ) označite, v kolikšni meri se strinjate z naslednjimi trditvami o dobrobiti:

Sploh se ne strinjam - 1  
Ne strinjam se - 2  
Niti se strinjam niti se ne strinjam - 3  
Strinjam se - 4  
Povsem se strinjam - 5

Živim življenje z namenom in smislom.  
Moji odnosi z drugimi me podpirajo in nagrajujejo.  
Vsakodnevne dejavnosti me zanimajo in vpleten/a sem vanje.  
Aktivno prispevam k sreči in dobrobiti drugih.  
Pri dejavnostih, ki so mi pomembne, sem kompetenten/a in sposoben/a.  
Sem dobra oseba in živim dobro življenje.  
Optimističen/a sem glede svoje prihodnosti.  
Ljudje me spoštujejo.

9. Zaradi mojega trenutnega finančnega položaja se počutim:

Razburjeno, vznemirjeno, težko se sprostim – 1  
Dokaj razburjeno – 2  
Nevtralno - 3  
S svojim trenutnim finančnim stanjem sem zadovoljen/a – 4

10. Navedite, kako težko je bilo (oz. bi bilo) v zadnjem času plačati naslednje:

Sploh ni težko –6  
Rahlo težko – 5  
Precej težko - 4  
Težko – 3  
Zelo težko – 2  
Nimam the stroškov - 1

Sposobnost plačila najemnine/hipoteke  
Sposobnost plačila komunalnih storitev  
Sposobnost plačila telefonske naročnine, interneta, televizije, itd.  
Sposobnost plačila nepričakovanega računa v višini 1000 EUR

11. V trenutnih gospodarskih razmerah se zaradi plačevanja glavnih stroškov počutim:

Krivo, v stiski, sram me je – 1  
Dokaj krivo, lahko bi bil/a bolj racionalen/a s svojo porabo – 2  
Precej nevtravno, sem racionalen/a, a včasih bi se dalo izogniti nekaterim nakupom – 3  
Nevtravno, sem racionalen/a potrošnik/ca in kupujem, kar potrebujem – 4  
Uživam v nakupovanju in nimam težav s sprejemanjem svojih stroškov – 5

12. Prosim da na lestvici od 1 (najmanj) do 5 (največ) označite, v kolikšni meri se strinjate z naslednjimi trditvami o usmerjenosti k nelastništvu:

Sploh se ne strinjam - 1  
Ne strinjam se - 2  
Niti se strinjam niti se ne strinjam - 3  
Strinjam se - 4  
Povsem se strinjam – 5

Raje imam najem ali posojanje kot nakup in lastništvo

Svoje premoženje sem pripravljen/a posoditi ali dati v najem drugim

Pripravljen/a sem najeti lastnino od drugih

Po mojem mnenju sta posojanje in najem dobri alternativni za nakup in lastništvo

Nazadnje sledi še nekaj demografskih vprašanj.

14. Spol: moški - 1 ženski - 2

15. Območje bivanja: podeželje – 1 mesto – 2

16. Izobraževanje:

Osnovna šola - 1  
Srednja poklicna šola - 2  
Gimnazija, srednja šola – 3  
Visokošolska diploma – 4

Magisterij – 5

Doktorat – 6

17. V primerjavi s povprečno mesečno neto plačo, ki znaša 1.218,40 EUR, je moj osebni neto mesečni dohodek

Podpovprečen - 1

Povprečen - 2

Nadpovprečen - 3

Ne vem - 4

Ne prejemam dohodka - 5

## Appendix 9 : Tables for descriptive analysis

*Table 17: Percentage distribution of answers for each statement of Q2*

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q2a	0,0	3,0	15,2	61,8	20,0
Q2b	0,0	7,3	20,0	57,0	15,8
Q2c	0,0	8,5	26,1	50,9	14,5
Q2d	0,0	7,3	22,4	56,4	13,9
Q2e	1,2	8,5	21,2	57,0	12,1
Q2f	17,6	36,4	30,3	14,5	1,2
Q2g	18,2	38,8	29,1	11,5	2,4
Q2h	13,9	35,8	33,3	15,2	1,8

*Source: own work.*

*Table 18: Percentage distribution of answers for each statement of Q3*

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q3a	4,2	17,0	21,8	46,1	10,9
Q3b	4,8	15,2	20,0	52,7	7,3
Q3c	8,5	18,8	24,2	41,2	7,3
Q3d	8,5	26,7	23,6	35,8	5,5
Q3e	0,6	3,6	12,1	69,1	14,5
Q3f	0,6	0,6	9,1	77,6	12,1
Q3g	0,0	0,0	7,3	78,2	14,5
Q3h	1,2	5,5	15,8	67,3	10,3
Q3j	3,6	7,9	42,4	40,6	5,5
Q3k	3,6	9,1	29,1	49,1	9,1
Q3i	1,2	6,1	19,4	64,8	8,5
Q3l	10,9	17,6	47,9	21,8	1,8

*Source: own work.*



Table 19: Percentage distribution of answers for each statement of Q4

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q4a	3,0	12,1	18,8	53,9	12,1
Q4b	3,0	10,9	18,2	53,9	13,9
Q4c	3,6	12,7	21,8	50,9	10,9
Q4d	18,2	13,9	30,3	32,1	5,5

Source: own work.

Table 20: Percentage distribution of answers for each statement of Q8

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q8a	0,6	0,0	4,2	55,2	40,0
Q8b	0,0	0,0	7,3	52,7	40,0
Q8c	0,6	0,6	5,5	52,7	40,6
Q8d	0,6	0,0	11,5	48,5	39,4
Q8e	0,0	0,0	1,8	53,9	44,2
Q8f	0,0	0,6	1,8	58,8	38,8
Q8g	0,6	0,6	6,1	51,3	41,2
Q8h	0,0	0,6	6,7	53,3	39,4

Source: own work.

Table 21: Percentage distribution of answers for each statement of Q10

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q10a	1,2	2,4	10,9	50,3	35,2
Q10b	0,0	1,2	10,3	70,9	17,6
Q10c	0,0	1,8	10,3	84,8	3,0
Q10d	12,1	11,5	24,8	50,9	0,6

Source: own work.

Table 22: Percentage distribution of answers for each statement of Q12

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q12a	6,7	9,7	21,2	45,5	17,0
Q12b	3,0	10,9	20,6	48,5	17,0
Q12c	3,0	9,1	20,6	49,1	18,2
Q12d	3,6	6,7	12,1	53,9	23,6

Source: own work.