

Swedish female consumers are most stressed

Women have a huge influence over all purchasing decisions in Scandinavia, even in traditionally male areas such as cars, insurance, and lawnmowers.

Meanwhile, the female consumers are very stressed. Especially in Sweden, where 5 out of 10 feel that the time is not sufficient.

The study of gender differences in our consumption habits is commissioned by the Danish advertising agency Lowe Friends and presented at the **conference Women Buy in Munich in late February**. It is based on nearly 5,000 interviews with women and men in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

“This shows both that it is very profitable for companies to turn to women and that companies can develop smart solutions that reduce women's stress of everyday life would be very successful,” says Bodil Czarnecki, head of & Friends Communications, which cooperates with Lowe Friends and specializes in communications directed at women.

The survey reveals considerable gender differences, both in terms of what makes men and women happy and what to worry about. While women emphasize social values such as family, friends, and shopping, the men are made happy by money, computer games and sex. There are no major differences between the Nordic countries.

What worry the Scandinavian women first and foremost are others' demands and expectations. And while the Norwegian and Danish men worry about their sex life, shopping is the thing that makes the Swedish men most miserable.

“We perceive ourselves as very equal, yet there are large gender differences. Women take a lot more responsibility in the family, both socially and practically. It is also noticeable in our shopping behaviour when women shop for the entire family, while men in a much greater extent spend money on themselves. But Swedish women do not want to admit that they are not equal, then you are a failure or have chosen the wrong man, says Bodil Czarnecki.

Several other speakers at the conference highlight the different consumption behaviours of women and men. Professor Linda Scott of the University of Oxford describes how women of 45-64 years constitute the largest part of the market in Europe, USA and Japan, as they both controls much money and like to try new products and services.

Something else that will change consumption patterns in the future, according to Linda Scott, is that a very large proportion of households will not have any children. In 2030, it is about 74 per cent in Japan, almost 60 per cent in the UK and 68 per cent in the United States.

“This will in turn affect the marketing tremendously, says Linda Scott, Women will take care of the elderly parents rather than children. They will both control parental finances and possibly their in-laws. They will then buy for between two and six adults and will mainly seek products and services that make life easier for the frail elderly. Then the money is neither going to be spend on trips nor on expensive watches.

Gemma Cernuda from Barcelona and founder of the network Ella deciden (She decides) speaks on the theme "Pink Tax" and shows that women in many countries pay extra for products targeted directly to them. In the US it is about approximately 1400 dollars more than men in a year for the exact same products.

“You could say that women pay extra to be women. The same toy cost more if it is pink and caters to girls. It's the same for example, hair clippers, razors and shampoo. The companies make money by splitting the exact same product in two and take more money for the pink one,” says Gemma Cernuda

Uta Brandes, professor at the Köln International School of Design, talks about her research and the book with the same name "Frauenzimmer im Hotel", how female business travellers are different from men.

“We did a survey on 500 female business travellers and then repeated the same with as many men to find out if their views on hotel room are different. It turned out that the men first and foremost care about three things, good wifi, a hard mattress and a good shower. The women listed 39 things they found important, says Uta Brandes.

The survey was then supplemented with hidden observations made by her students at a number of hotels in Cologne. The result in brief is that women emphasize safety, social meeting points and sensuality as more important for their hotel stay.

“Women appreciate getting pampered. This includes everything from a nice hotel bar, a good lighting and extra pillows and slippers in the room. But it turns out that also men appreciate such things, even if they do not emphasize it in the first place. Hotels that are adopting a more female perspective has much to gain in a time when more and more business travellers are women,” says Uta Brandes.

Carina Järvenhag