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Issues of Marketing and Management in a Changing Business Environment

(Problematyka marketingu i zarządzania w zmieniającym się otoczeniu biznesowym)

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Spis treści

Introduction

The sphere of management and marketing is very complex and refers not only to entities operating on the market but to their surroundings as well. The articles deal with issues related to new challenges faced by enterprises and other institutions concerning, among others, changes in the expectations and needs of recipients. New approaches applied to the recipients and management in enterprises are highlighted, emphasizing the combination of different areas and emphasizing the importance of research based on various data. In the age of technology development, quick changes should be looked at more broadly, not only from the point of view of benefits for a given company. It is worth undertaking cooperation with various entities and using various forms of communicating with their surroundings.

The authors of the articles demonstrate individual and multi-threaded approaches to the issues raised, representing various academic centers from different countries. Thanks to this, the presented content can be useful for a wide audience.

The editors would like to thank all the authors of the papers for making an effort and preparing original scientific papers that enrich knowledge in the field of broadly understood management and marketing.

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Rethinking Tourism Education in Georgia

JEL codes: E24, M5, M12, O15

Keywords: tourism education, academic education, curricula design, knowledge transferability, tourism research

Summary. Tourism is the second largest industry in the world and one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Georgia. Successful development of tourism in the country is largely depended on the quality of education, skills and competences of the people involved in the process of building the sector. The purpose of the research is to investigate the compliance of tourism education programs with the practical needs of the tourism sector challenges in Georgia that will reveal where we are at present and what resources we have for further development. The research showed that the tourism curriculums not always reflect the needs of the industry in case of Georgia. The paper attempts to show the complexity of tourism phenomenon and the challenges tourism education faces to meet the need of the industry. Therefore, the state and universities need to rethink the way they provide academic education in tourism. While making efforts to stay academic, knowledge transferability and applicability need to be considered when designing the curriculums. Fitting education to the practical needs of the tourism industry will enable the state and university to respond to the need of the country's economic development, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, such a policy will increase chances to justify the expectation of students to get higher education, which is being competitive on the labor market.

Introduction

Tourism has been described as the world's largest and fastest growing industry by the World Tourism & Travel Council (WTTC). The organization actively works on investigation of the worldwide economic impact of tourism. According to the WTTC, in 2014, Travel & Tourism's total contribution to the global economy rose to 9.5% of the global GDP, not only outperforming the wider economy, but also growing faster than any other significant sectors such as financial and business services, transport and manufacturing (WTTC, 2014). Around 266 million jobs were generated by Travel & Tourism, which is 1 out of 11 job places in the world. The increasing demand on tourism activities, showed the importance of this sector for economic growth and job creation. As a result, interest towards tourism sector is increasing within governments, businesses and academics.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Georgia as well. In 2007, it was named to be the priority economic sector for the country. According to the Georgian National Statistics Department, the tourism contribution to the country's GDP was 6% in 2014; and jobs generated by the tourism have achieved 11%. International arrivals to Georgia have been growing rapidly over the recent years, reaching the record number of 5,515,559 in 2014. The highest growth rate was registered in 2012, when the number of international arrivals increased by 57%. According to the World Tourism Organization, it was the highest growth rate in Europe as well (UNWTO, 2013). In the same period, the World Economic Forum named Tourism to be the third most competitive economic sector in Georgia.

Hence, Georgia has made a big success in terms of tourism quantitative development. But still, there is a problem of qualitative development. At present, the declared purpose of the Georgian National Tourism Administration is to double the value and profitability of Georgia's tourism sector and create the high-end tourism destination out of Georgia by the year 2025 (GNTA, 2015). In the mentioned strategic document, there are listed different strategic activities to achieve the goal, but unfortunately no attention is paid to tourism education.

Objective of the research and methodology

The objective of the research is to define what the demand of the industry is in terms of tourism education; what the supply secured from the side of university is in terms of graduate students qualification; and, what needs to be done to diminish the gap between the above demand/supply chain.

The work is done with qualitative and desk research methods. The qualitative research method was used to organize industry research, which involved conducting deep interviews with company representatives. The desk research was used to make situation analysis, which involved investigation of tourism education programs provided by Georgian Universities and Georgian legislation framework for tourism education. Alongside, different academic literature and research were reviewed to see worldwide experiences existed in the field of tourism education and curricula design.

The research outcomes are divided into three parts. Among them, the first is aimed at investigating the needs of the industry in terms of competences of the personnel and their behavioral patterns when recruiting new staff. The second responds to the question what the level of tourism education is in Georgia, what the key barriers are to translate employers' needs into improvements in the education programs. And the third one represents the solutions how to increase compliance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills when providing academic education in tourism.

1. Industry/employer's research method: 50 companies were selected for the interview, who are operating in Tourism & Hospitality sector of Georgia. In our case, main employers are big businesses (150 employees and more), SMEs (up to 150 employees) and state agencies. To make research representative, we gave them more or less equal share in the consecutive order: 40%, 30%, 30%. The research participants comprised the following types of companies: hotels, HoReCa management groups, travel agencies, air-line and travel companies, tourism state agencies.
2. Method of review of tourism education programs and legislation of Georgia: the evaluation of tourism education programs was conducted by Georgian Universities. Overall, there are 33 public and private universities in Georgia that provide education in tourism. As for the legislation basis, Georgian Education Qualification Framework is universal and applies to each acredited university. Here we shall discuss the framework which stands for tourism education.
3. Method of review of worldwide tourism education developments and experiences: the literature that provides international theoretical frameworks and practices for tourism education is not vast. Although, there are several reliable sources and we selected them taking into consideration the popularity of the author and the work. Due to the lack of academic literature, we also used different non-academic research studies, published by authoritative international tourism organizations.

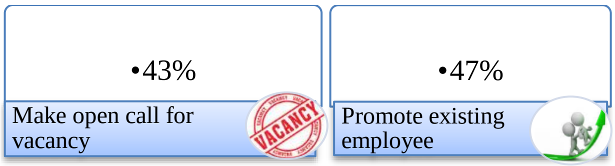
Industry/employer's research

Industry research revealed many interesting facts that are far away from the perception of education offered by universities[1]. To be more precise, the employers' interest is absolutely pragmatic and egocentric, unlike universities that are more prone to idealism and bringing common good for the society. The attitude of private sector is very natural, since the quality of its performance has a direct effect

[1] The point is the University does not give the student practical skills – i.e. after graduating the student cannot manage the tasks set by employers.

on its profits. Although, it is “business as usual” to take a risk, it does not apply to the qualification of stuff when recruiting a new personnel.

During private interviews, company representatives admitted that it was not their interest to employ students, since it was a loss of time and efforts for them. It was safer to recruit experienced candidates or develop their existing human capital. To the question – how you seek for a new employee in case of a vacant position – responses were distributed as follows:



Responses were more in favor of practical experience, rather than academic education, when asking employers about their preferences during recruiting or promoting a personnel – figure 1.

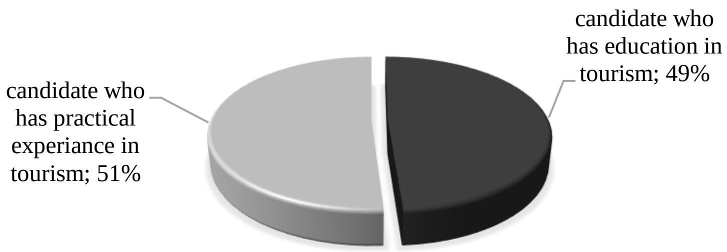


Figure 1. Which one would you give privilege when recruiting or promoting a personnel?

Source: own elaboration.

It is worth admitting that tourism is a new specialization for Georgia. Therefore, there is a great lack of knowledge about tourism business in Georgia. A fast increase in tourism product/services demand has resulted in quick raise of supply, which still has not caught up the qualitative criterion. Another problem is a nature of Georgia’s entrepreneurs. There is a lack of development will on the part of companies, especially in case of SMEs, which are driving forces for massive employment. Based on the research, which was conducted within Georgian private sector representatives (DAI Europe, 2014), most of the companies are not seeking for growth and development, they are rather oriented to surviving. It seems entrepreneurship is not our DNA characteristics at this phase of the country’s development. The implication of this type of attitude may be found in the responses below, which were addressed to the financing behavior of the companies, when it comes to the employee's development:

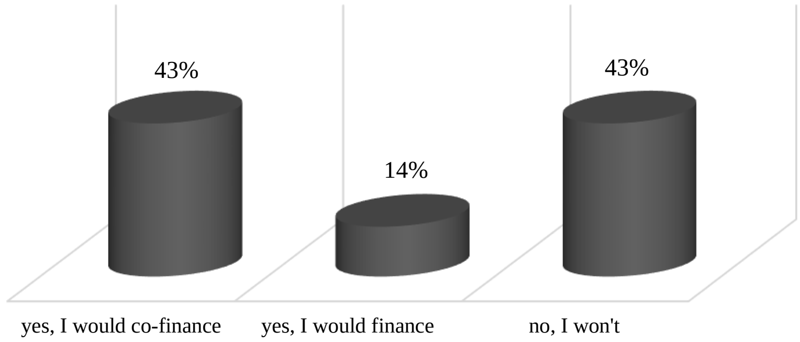


Figure 2. Would you finance or co-finance education of the employee?

Source: own elaboration.

Another reason for the above mentioned lack of will of employers to finance employee's education, is lack of trust towards education institutions and the country's education system. Industries are experiencing disappointment when hiring students, even the ones with excellent academic records. Students' knowledge is far too theoretical and not practical or transferable. That is why, industries prefer to hire people with practical experience, who have already learned from practice.

This attitude reveals itself during negotiations between universities and companies on internships as well. According to the research, it is a very common type of behavior of private sector in tourism to recruit young non-professionals and train them in accordance with their own needs, starting from the very low positions. Here the interests of industries and universities are different: universities seek for professional internships, while industry is not eager to involve students in real business activities as they do not see long-term benefit from them. And, university does not agree to train students in the types of jobs that are not responding to the curriculums of the tourism academic program.

Review of tourism education programs and legislation of Georgia

Tourism education is in the process of development in Georgia. Sharp increase on the demand side, provoked by the boost of the tourism industry, has stimulated development of the tourism education in a short period of time. Tourism has become one of the most popular and demanded specialization within education institutions since 2007. Naturally, tourism curriculums broadened beyond the vocational sphere and tourism has emerged as a field of Bachelor and Master Degree studies. Currently, there are around 33 Public and Private Universities providing academic degree courses in tourism. Tourism is based on Faculties of Business in case of each Georgian University.

So far, the only tourism program, provided at Bachelor and Master Levels, is "Tourism and Hospitality Management" subfield, under the umbrella of "Business Administration" or "Management" specialization fields. A range of options on Tourism specializations are provided only at Professional/Vocational education institutions. The fact that tourism as an academic specialization is rather new puts it in a permanent struggling process for acquisition within universities. While tourism is a more practical field of specialization, universities, as well as the state, keep staying conservative about university education, considering that they need to provide only academic education.

Below there is a National Qualification Framework of Georgia on tourism education, which defines the range of specializations for all accredited education institutions in Georgia:

Table 1

Tourism Qualification Framework in Georgia

Direction	Field/Specialty (at Bachelor Degree level)	Subfield/Minor specialties (at Master Degree level)	Professional Qualification specializations (Vocational Education)
Business Administration	Management	– Tourism and Hospitality Management	– Flight-attendant /steward – Event organizer – Event manager
Interdisciplinary Fields (Since late 2015)	Tourism	– Nature tourism and preserved territories – Ecotourism – Cultural tourism – Medicinal tourism and resort business – Recreational tourism – Agro tourism	– Guide – Tour operator – Hotel manager – Restaurant manager – Receptionist – Bartender – Waiter – Sommelier – Hiking Guide – Cleaning Specialist

Source: Higher Education Qualification Framework of Georgia, 2015.

Based on the requirements of academic tourism, last year tourism was put in the section of "Interdisciplinary Fields", which means that now there is a chance that tourism will become an independent field of study. Although, there is one danger: independent tourism program cannot provide "Tourism and Hospitality" management course, when the ultimate demand comes to this direction. Respectively, tourism still prefers to be within the faculty.

The problem “Tourism and Hospitality Management” subfield experiences, under the umbrella of “Business Administration” or “Management” specializations, is: the overall teaching program is dominated by the General (University) Business and Management disciplines. As it is shown in the Figure 3, limited ECTs are left for tourism specialization subjects. No credits are left for shifting from general tourism subjects to narrow specialized disciplines.

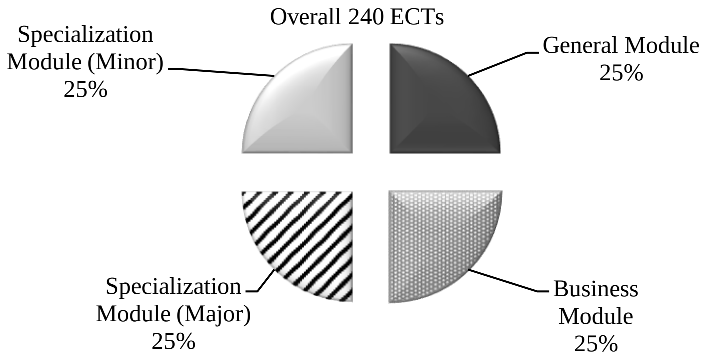


Figure 3. Credit (ECTs) distribution at Bachelor’s degree program

Source: own elaboration.

It can be declared that the qualification framework and ECTs limit prevent tourism program from development and make it more diversified and sophisticated. Tourism specialists must have a broad range of skills and competences (socio-cultural, linguistic, cognitive, narrow specialization competences), but the national framework creates a deteriorating factor that does not allow to be focused on narrow disciplines and to provide real practice.

Review of worldwide tourism education developments and experiences

Tourism education began as a development of vocational schools in Europe. Gradually, the interest and demand from the public and private sectors have pushed the growth and development of tourism education. There are three main stages of tourism education development (Airey, Tribe, 2005):

a) first, there was a massive increase in the numbers of students, institutions and teachers of tourism;
b) second, the curriculums have broadened beyond the vocational and tourism has emerged as a subject for at different levels of education;
c) third, this rapid growth and changes have led to tensions in the development of the curriculum.

Having passed through all these stages the present-day European universities enjoy more diversified and sophisticated tourism teaching programs and curriculums at HEIs, which are oriented to development of either professional or intellectual skills. As a result, graduate students are equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to know what to do, how to do and how it could be done in a more creative way. The focuses of teaching programs are ranged from general tourism management to specializations in various sectors, even extremely narrow ones, like e-Tourism (Maurer, Egger, 2014).

Tourism is a complex field of studies. It is just as wide-range, multi-layered and rapidly changing as the human nature is. While tourism is perceived as a set of business activities or movements of people, it is also a social phenomenon: "tourism needs to be considered not just as a type of business or industry, but as a powerful cultural arena and process that both shapes and is shaped by people, nations and cultures" (Rojek, Urry, 1997). Intercultural dialogue, which is provoked by tourism, shapes not only countries' economies, but also social opinions and ideologies.

Indeed, Renaissance Era in Europe was the result of increased tourism activities which helped people increase the scope of knowledge and accumulate experiences. Therefore, a sociological insight is a great weapon to help tourism managers explore the social impacts of tourism; such as: tourism culture, tourism tendencies, gender and ethnical perspectives, etc. Some academic workers even consider tourism education to be the "marginal branch of applied sociology". Tribe (2002) recommends education institutions to produce "philosophic practitioners", who would be able to reflect and act on the basis of the "reflective process".

That is the reason why academics emphasize the necessity of combining two types of approaches while providing tourism education: vocational and philosophical (Inui, Wheeler, Lankford, 2006). Concentration only on vocational studies decreases the chances of students to become able to: 1) respond to the needs of the developing tourist society; and, 2) develop the tourism concepts and long-term strategies. Concentrating only on philosophical approach results in lack of professional skills in students.

The Harvard professor David Perkins proposes clear and short message explanation what education needs to stand for. According to him (Perkins, 2006) the aim of education needs to be retention of knowledge, understanding of knowledge and active use of knowledge beyond the classroom walls and academia. Perkins calls it to be a "generative knowledge", which is developing a knowledge base that encourages the learner to generate or learn/create new knowledge in the future within different circumstances.

Sonntag, Schmidt and Rathjens (Zehrer, Mössenlechner, 2009) have developed a classic concept for tourism education competences in 2004. The authors have figured our four core competences, such as: technical competences, social competences, methodological competences and personal competences, to be crucial for producing professional decision-making competences in future tourism specialists. Each of the above competences help students to work out specific cognitive powers:

a) technical competences – the specific knowledge of work components to deal with professional tasks successfully;
b) social competences – the communicative skills necessary to achieve objectives through social interactions;
c) methodological competences – the capacity of a person to solve situation-specific and complex tasks independently;
d) personal competences – the emotional and motivational attitude behind activities, as well as values, standards and mindsets for actions.

The ultimate idea of the above mentioned powers is to provide in-depth theoretical knowledge, however with practical orientation (Maurer, Egger, 2014). While providing tourism education, it is important to keep the optimal balance of information provided that will create basis for production of well-rounded tourism professional, and able to transfer knowledge into practical actions in specific situations, make adequate decisions and be self-organized which is crucial for career development and advancement.

There are good organizational patterns of tourism educations. According to Maurer and Egger, tourism programs are more productive if studies begin with general tourism subjects and it goes to narrow specializations. Studies need to be based on research, practical activities and professional internships. Different research studies made it evident that internships are more profitable if they are provided in-between studies, sandwiched between first and last years of studies.

Main findings and conclusion

The problems of development of tourism education are multifold and they derive from different layers of state, education system and industry:

1. The research showed that the tourism curriculums not always reflect the needs of the industry in case of Georgia. Therefore, the state and universities need to rethink the way they provide academic education in Tourism. While making efforts to stay academic, knowledge transferability and applicability need to be considered when designing the curriculums.
2. One of the biggest problems lies in legislation. National Qualification Framework establishes sharp frames, which prevents tourism programs from further development, sophistication or diversification. The question whether tourism is a serious or worthy area for study is still hanging in the air.
3. Tourism is not only a set of business activities or movements of people, and it is not only a social and cultural phenomenon as well. Therefore, the focus

of tourism education must not be only development of managerial skill, neither philosophical knowledge, which is associated with cultural relationships. It was not a well thought-out policy, when separating tourism programs within the fields of "Business Administration" and "Interdisciplinary Direction".

4. To make tourism programs more relevant to the needs of the employment market, curriculums need to be designed in the way that it equips tourism specialists with a broad range of skills and competences (socio-cultural, linguistic, cognitive, narrow specialization competences). A limited number of ECTs for specialization module disables this changes. Fitting education to the practical needs of the tourism industry will enable the state and university to respond to the need of the country's economic development.
5. It is impossible to achieve a high quality of tourism education through searching for the perfect theoretical frameworks without practice in Tourism. There is lack of mechanisms to integrate students in working life. Employers do not agree to accept students for internships for real tourism practice. On the other hand, universities are bounded with regulations to give credits only for professional internships. As a result, graduate students lack ability to transfer theoretical knowledge into practice at the job place, as they have only theoretical knowledge.
6. Tourism education development is largely intertwisted with the development of country's tourism industry. There is a strong linkage between labor market demand and demand on academic education. The slow development of tourism education is the result of weak private tourism sector that lack professional skills and intuition, as well as entrepreneurship spirit.

Conclusions

1. It is true, tourism is a great tool for economic growth and job-creation, but as it is a service sector, only highly qualified people can shape and develop it. Therefore, to achieve an increased value and profitability of tourism, the state needs to increase the quality of goods and services provided for tourists. Respectively, the ultimate goal needs to be development of tourism industry (which is the driving force for the sector growth) and tourism education (which is providing future professionals for the sector).
2. Collaboration of the key actors involved in the process of tourism development – state, industry and academia – is essential to make the process more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable.
3. It is the right time for universities to demonstrate their real role in a broad development picture of the state. To be capable of getting in charge of this process, universities need to enquire a real value of their work and then to start rethinking the way they provide education. New developments require

totally different employability skills and competences from graduate students that would enable them to handle the changing circumstances of the global tourism industry. Students see university education as an investment in their future career. Diplomas need to offer economic value to the graduates. Therefore, tourism programs need to regard the employability issue as one of the core product of education.

4. While redesigning curriculums, universities need to use both academic and vocational approaches in order to secure generative, functional and transferable knowledge. This will provide a productive basis for students to further build and develop new knowledge and skills in the future. Such program would provide tourism sector with highly competitive human capital that would be useful to its further development.
5. Greater involvement of international expertise is needed for harmonization of the qualification frameworks and creation of curriculum designs. Sharing knowledge through international academic exchange programs is essential for students and professors to increase the scope and the value of their knowledge and experiences.
6. Development of learning resources is vital for Tourism education. Contemporary and professional literature needs to be translated in order to catch up with the worldwide developments in Tourism and make education more relevant to contemporary challenges of the industry.
7. The State needs to work with the private sector to show them their role in the overall country's development scheme. The youth is high potential workforce able to develop. This is the ultimate advantage of the youth which is not used yet by Georgia industries. There is a great need to change the perception of industries that the youth are less skillful. Indeed, the youth are good investment projects. Putting investment in their development will result in their own benefit in the future.
8. The State needs to promote joint research projects and activities among universities and industries to stimulate collaboration. Joint projects would rebuild the trust towards universities. Usually, the committed interest of cooperation demonstrated by both sides – universities and industries – contributes to the production of more benefits for both the parties. A consultative framework needs to be elaborated among tourism industry and tourism academic representatives to receive feed-back and design more employer tailored teaching programs. This would be useful to respond the increased challenges of the industry development and contribute to the economic growth of the country.
9. Tourism needs to be developed at grass-root level. Existence of tourism professional associations and councils encourages development of tourism education and research. Forums, conference, summits and other professional

events organized by civil society organizations and universities increases the attractiveness of the field for highly qualified professionals and as well as for future tourism specialists.

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Przemyślenia dotyczące edukacji turystycznej w Gruzji

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja w zakresie turystyki, edukacja akademicka, projektowanie programów nauczania, przekazywanie wiedzy, badania turystyczne

Streszczenie. Turystyka jest drugą co do wielkości branżą na świecie i jednym z najszybciej rozwijających się sektorów gospodarczych w Gruzji. Pomyślny rozwój turystyki w kraju w dużej mierze zależy od jakości edukacji, umiejętności i kompetencji osób zaangażowanych w proces budowania sektora. Celem badań jest zbadanie zgodności programów edukacji turystycznej z praktycznymi potrzebami wyzwań stojących przed sektorem turystyki w Gruzji, które ujawnią, gdzie jesteśmy obecnie i jakie zasoby mamy na

dalszy rozwój. Badania pokazały, że w przypadku Gruzji programy nauczania turystyki nie zawsze odzwierciedlają potrzeby branży. W artykule starano się pokazać złożoność zjawiska turystycznego i wyzwania stojące przed edukacją turystyczną w celu zaspokojenia potrzeb branży. Z tego też względu państwo i uniwersytety powinny przemyśleć sposób, w jaki zapewniają kształcenie akademickie w turystyce. Podejmując wysiłki, aby pozostać akademickim, podczas projektowania programów nauczania należy uwzględnić transfer wiedzy i jej zastosowanie. Dostosowanie kształcenia do praktycznych potrzeb branży turystycznej pozwoli z jednej strony państwom i uczelniom odpowiedzieć na potrzebę rozwoju gospodarczego kraju. z drugiej strony taka polityka zwiększy szanse na uzasadnienie oczekiwania studentów na uzyskanie wyższego wykształcenia, które jest konkurencyjne na rynku pracy.

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How to Realize Diversity in the Workplace? The Business Model Point of View

JEL codes: E24, M5, M12, O15

Keywords: business fundamentals, competitiveness, diversity, equality, HRM

Summary. Human beings have been moving through the earth globe since the dawn of history, and as a consequence, each community is heterogenic, which means that inhabitants from one place are different from inhabitants from another place not only in terms of gender or age, but also in terms of personal history, education and style of life, etc. Nowadays everyone agrees that the issue of diversity is becoming more and more important, from the point of view of growing migration of people for example. Therefore modern entrepreneurs cannot ignore the presence of diverse clients, as well as diverse employees, and have to adapt their business model to the new circumstances. That is why the purpose of this paper is to show the process of diversity implementation from a business model perspective. This text includes discussion of business models, and indicates main advantages and disadvantages of a diversity management-based model. The article is theoretical in nature.

Introduction

When someone is looking for sources of diversity, they should point to migration, which was beyond doubt the root of diversity. People have been moving around since the dawn of history, and their main motives were either business, warfare, colonization, or geographic discoveries. Migration is also observed nowadays – people leave their homelands primarily in search of work. As Y. Zografova

(2013, pp. 93–100) writes, new forms of intergroup behaviour and relationships appear especially in European countries as a result of integration, open labour market and tourism development. This is connected to four freedoms specific to the Single European Market: the free movement of capital, people, goods and services (Simionescu, 2018, pp. 23–34). The existing law, which grants free will of movement, definitely contributes to the diversity formation too.

As it is known, an organization is understood as a social system, where people use an obtainable intellectual and material resources to accomplish their ideas (Sudoł, 2007). In the midst of them, human resources (HR) play a vital role; therefore, special interest should be paid to the management of people in terms of motivation, stimulation of their originality and imagination, and common relations (Czermiński, Grzybowski, Ficoń, 1999). Human resources give an area for other management activities as well, such as: time management, culture management, customer relations management, conflict management, stress management, emotion management, and – as a final point – diversity management (Holck, Muhr, Villesèche, 2016, pp. 48–69).

A crucial part of any business is seeking competitive predominance by distinguishing itself from other participants of market game (van Ewijk, 2011, pp. 680–694). One way to attain this predominance is to choose HR based on the diversity idea. Nowadays everyone agrees that the issue of diversity is becoming more and more important, from the point of view of growing migration of people for example. Therefore modern entrepreneurs, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and other developing regions, cannot ignore the presence of diverse clients, as well as diverse employees, and have to adapt their business model to the new circumstances (Hernik, Minguez Vera, 2016, pp. 57–63). So, the purpose of this paper is to show the process of diversity implementation from a business model perspective. Very often international migration, which has been growing significantly, and has changed demographic structures of societies, is discussed from social and economic problems in negative light (Mikalauskiene, Streimikiene, Mazutaityte-Cepanoniene, 2017, pp. 25–45). Here we want to underline first of all the advantages of migrations and diversity in society. This article is theoretical in nature.

Research method

The purpose of this work was reached by an analysis of publications on HRM, as well as organizational diversity management from the positive and negative perspectives. Discussion on conceptions is shown, and the advantages and disadvantages of diversity management-based model were summarized. The article was written using documentary research and critical analysis method.

Business model in the literature

The expression ‘business model’ has been analyzed in the management system for more than fifty years; for the first time it was used in 1957 by Richard Bellman and Charles E. Clark (2009) in the work entitled ‘On the Construction of Multi-Stage, Multi-Person Business Game’. Then, the term occurred irregularly, while in the early 1990s it began to stir broader importance (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Frequency of appearance of the term “business model” in English-language business literature

Source: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=business+model&year_start=1850&year_end=2015&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cbusiness%20model%3B%2Cc0 (10.06.2018).

At the end of the 20th century, problems related to the creation and operation of business models began to be visible in the literature more frequently, which was most likely due to the rising role of the Internet and its pressure on the functioning of the market. The Internet has changed the method businesses function, and the idea of business model was principally applied to those businesses which used new technological solutions. Regardless of many works, it is not easy to define this term precisely. Nevertheless, it is vital to write down that most definitions centre on creating worth and flows, as shown in the following examples.

1. “A business model is a description of how your business makes money. It’s an explanation of how you deliver value to your customers at an appropriate cost” (Parsons, 2018).
2. “A business model is nothing else than a representation of how an organization makes, or intends to make, money” (Osterwalder, 2018).
3. “The essence of a business model is in defining the manner by which the enterprise delivers value to customers, entices customers to pay for value and converts those payments to profit. In essence, a business model embodies nothing less than the organizational and financial ‘architecture’ of a business” (Teece, 2010).

It may be said that a good business paradigm answers Peter Drucker's questions, "Who is the customer? And what does the customer value?" It also answers the vital questions every executive must ask: How do we make money in this business? What is the underlying economic reason that explains how we can relocate value to customers at an appropriate cost? (Ovans, 2015). As an outcome, several main elements of each business model may be identified: venture position in the distribution chain, value (together with products) offered to customers, assets/competencies, sources of income, expenditures, partnerships, and economical strategies (Bis, 2013). The business model may be described as a manner of market activity, but also as a tool which helps the business get bigger and raise.

There is a number of model structure types. Lecocq and Demil (2010) mention three main components: resources and competencies; organizational configuration; and value scheme offered to customers. In turn, Johnson, Christensen and Kagermann (2008) suggest four characteristics: customer value proposition; income recipe; main resources; and key procedures (Fig. 2).

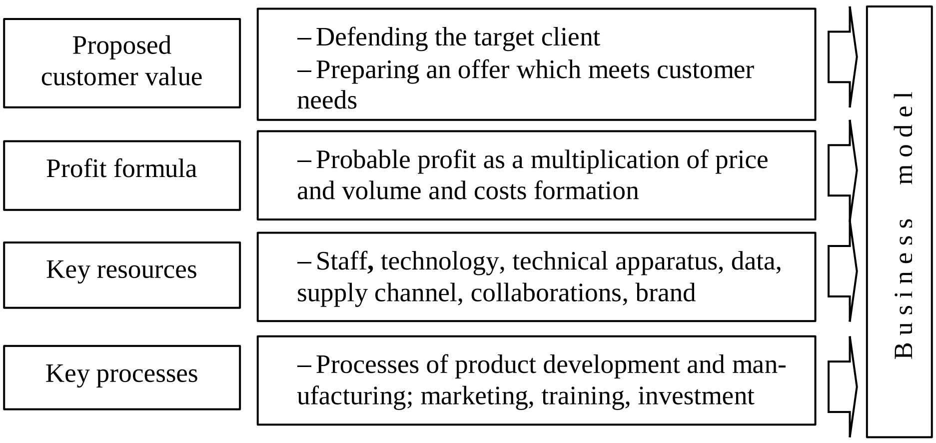

Figure 2. Example of model composition

Source: own work based on Johnson, Christensen, Kagermann, 2008, pp. 50–59.

It is essential that all business models refer to resources, which obviously include HR. There seems to be an agreement that HR are a vital part of every business model. However, an issue arises of how these resources should be shaped, and this will be a background for reflection in further parts.

Diversity and HRM

Along with the worldwide expansion of social migration phenomena traditional human resources management (HRM) is not enough. What does it mean in practice? It means diversity management. Diversity more and more often is discussed in terms of organizations and their workforce, which became the focus of research as early as in the 1960s (Rakowska, 2014; Holck, Muhr, Villesèche, 2016, pp. 48–69). According to B. Jamka, "diversity can encompass every, i.e. visible, natural and acquired, employee characteristic which determines similarities and differences between employees" (Jamka, 2011). Kossek, Lobel and Brown (2006) identify diversity in a slightly broader style: "diversity of the workforce includes a range of factors which differentiate employees, such as age, gender, marital status, social situation, disability, gender orientation, faith, personality, moral values, culture (beliefs, values, perception of the world)". It should be noted, however, that the evaluation of organization diversity may also be related to its objectives, structure, strategy, culture and resources; what is more, the scope of the concept depends on the mission of an enterprise. From a worker perspective, diversity may be understood as a respect for differences in the workplace (except for behaviours that are generally unacceptable), and also as a system promoting coexistence and co-operation of different people in the company, with respect for human dignity and labour standards (Wawer, 2014; van Ewijk, 2011, pp. 680–694).

Based on this employee-focused definition of diversity, some elements may be identified, namely: primary identity (gender, age, race, nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity, [dis]ability); secondary identity (place of residence, level of education, family status); as well as the organizational identity (length of service in a company, job position, etc.). According to Roberson and Stevens (2006), differences may be visible and unobservable. In these authors' opinion, observable features are those that are covered by anti-discrimination laws in many developed countries (for example: gender, age, race, ethnic origin or physical disability). The non-observable differences constitute the second aspect of diversity, which refers to the conviction of person's identity in relation to other groups of employees. This includes, for instance, education, seniority in the organization, professional experience, as well as life attitudes or everyday life preferences. Anchored in the aforementioned categorization, A. Wziątek-Staśko (2012) attempted to create a construct of leading diversity determinants in modern organizations, and proposed yet an added partition of diversity aspects: into "predictable" and "unpredictable". As the author mentions, qualities such as gender, age, education, culture, or disability may be effortlessly identified and therefore go to the "predictable" group. Verifying passions, sexual orientation, religious relationship or values is not that uncomplicated, which makes them "unpredictable". All this involves building an organization model taking human resources as a starting point.

HRM concepts (or models) provide an analytical framework for identifying and better understanding of important factors that shape human resources as a crucial asset of the enterprise (Holck, Muhr, Villesèche, 2016, pp. 48–69).

Fombrun, Harvard, Guest and Warwick's models are the most popularly mentioned concepts. The original model of HRM was the concept developed by Charles J. Fombrun, Noel M. Ticha and Mary A. Devanna (1984), which included four functions and their interrelationships, that is: selection, evaluation, development, and rewards. That method was criticized because it did not consider any outer factors, so innovative models were developed. One of the best-recognized concepts is the Harvard model, which presumes that effectual human resources management should contain stakeholders` interests, current factors, HR strategy and outcomes, long-term results, and reaction (Fig. 3).

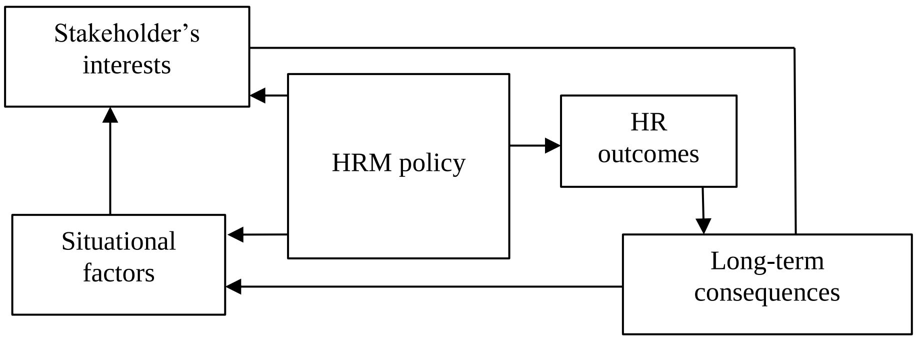

Figure 3. The Harvard model of HRM

Source: own work based on Price, 2011.

The core of this concept is the involvement of numerous interested groups (Price, 2011). The Harvard model emphasizes that – from the HRM perspective – the most vital actions are those that shape the organization vs. employee relationship. Effectual management is only achievable when the manager is involved in the growth of the employee, while the employees themselves are seen as special resources, requiring different approach from the rest of the organization's resources (Mazur, 2014, pp. 113–130). Additionally, the social and cultural context of management plays an important role (Natale, Fenton, 1997).

The previously mentioned Wawrick model is an enlargement of the Harvard model, as it is created on the basis of market strategy, while Harvard model focuses on the current circumstances, not the strategic ones. Furthermore, Wawrick model divides main aspects of HRM into: outside (such as culture) and inner (strategy).

Another model was developed in 1997 by David Guest, who stated that when managing human resources, the manager must use certain tools to achieve the desired results. That model assumed that management was based on HR strategy, HR practices, results of resources and behavioural outcomes, performance results and financial consequences. In other words, financial results depended on the effects produced by the staff, which in turn was the result of their commitment and focus on action. What is more, employees' actions were related to commitment, quality and flexibility, which were all influenced by HR practices. Regardless of the model, it is obvious that HRs need to be managed (Mazur, 2011, pp. 533–543). Both the Harvard and Wawrick models make it evident that the specifics of human resources need to be taken into account and managed in a dissimilar way than any other resources. Moreover, they assume that fundamental elements of the HRM approach, as commitment for example, have a direct relationship with business consequences.

The process of diversity implementation

How to achieve diversity in a workplace is a primary question in this work. So, first of all, one should understand that always it involves a series of complex actions which an enterprise should take as part of the company strategy (Hernik, Minguez Vera, 2016, pp. 57–63). The implementation of diversity management may be divided into six stages: creating a diversity project team; developing scenarios for the future; vision and strategy; conducting diversity audits; corporate goals; and implementing diversity management (Kubica, 2014, p. 200). At the beginning the problem is that most organizations are monocultural, which poses a risk that the environmental analysis may be conducted in a conservative manner. In order to broaden the perspectives, the management may set up a Diversity Project Team (DPT), which will consist of people of different cultural backgrounds. The team should have appropriate skills and clearly defined tasks. But it means also, however, that the manager must know employees better and identify their visible and invisible features. DPT in the initial stage should build and implement the so-called "Scenario-building workshop". Three different scenarios for what the world will look like in 10–20 years (what its external and internal business shape will be) should be developed, with an emphasis on diversity. Finally, one scenario should be selected as an actionable base for the company. It is good to have this exercise done with external help, such as a moderator.

Usually companies already have their missions and visions of action, but at this moment the vision and mission should be reformulated (Hernik, Bieniecka, 2017, pp. 35–49). This stage should engage the company management and key stakeholders. It is important to analyze the company's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats from this scenario. Based on the findings, the vision and mission of the company should be developed. The next step, which is vital from our point of view, is to formulate a strategy which defines how to implement diversity management. When the above elements have been formulated, the company should return to the present situation and determine its status quo. This requires a diversity audit, or – in other words – analyzing existing HR. The audit is conducted through interviews with all stakeholder groups and may be accompanied by a standardized questionnaire on attitudes to diversity. The results should be used by the DPT to present a broader audience with main suggestions related to the status quo. They should be the starting point for planning actions for change, i.e. adopting company's approach to diversity management (Hernik, Bieniecka, 2017, pp. 35–49).

It is essential that company objectives related to the implementation of diversity management should be determined by board members and the diversity project team. They must refer to the developed strategy and guarantee participation of relevant departments and other structural units. They should all be obliged to accept these goals and to set clear criteria for assessing their achievement. The company is finally ready to implement diversity. At this stage, the DPT plays a key role, as it oversees, controls and accompanies all activities. The team also functions as a 'communication centre'. This is what the below Figure 4 refers to.

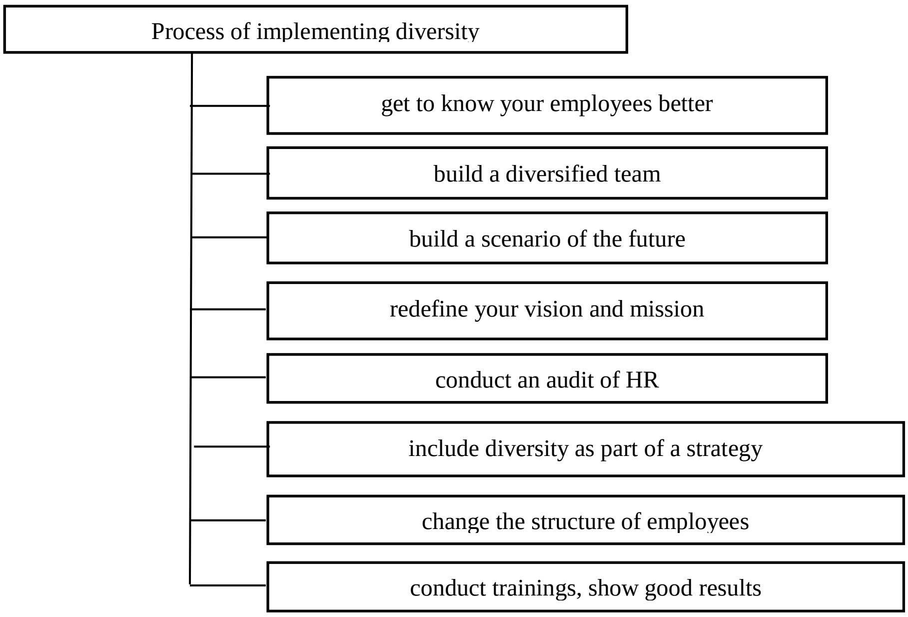

Figure 4. Process of implementing diversity

Source: own work based on Kubica, 2014, p. 200.

It should be mentioned here that the DPT team may be responsible e.g. for: group building trainings which include diversity in all company's departments; events; meetings with a large number of employees to provide information on diversity management; leadership development programmes for diversity management amongst lower-level management; and a change of tools for assessing the performance of managers in order to enhance diversity management and to allow for the evaluation of its performance (Kubica, 2014, p. 200). One should remember that diversity management is a multi-faceted process leading to the creation of a work environment which benefits different aspects of a business.

Advantages and disadvantages of diversity management

The essence of a business model is in defining the manner by which the enterprise delivers value to customers. And, it is essential that all business models refer to resources, which obviously include the human ones. The main reason for implementing diversity in HR is to create a framework for creativity, innovativeness and, as a result, better efficiency. Moreover, apart from the economic results, social effects – such as greater job satisfaction and empathy – may be expected (Hernik, Bieniecka, 2017, pp. 35–49).

There are other benefits of diversity, for example some of the employees can unleash an untapped potential in themselves and others, and thus better meet their own needs and expectations, as well as expectations of the employer. Respect and understanding for others and using diverse talents and skills of the staff help optimize the work of employees (and thus it benefits the company), while on the other hand it allows for full use of the employee's potential. A homogeneous group of people is associated with a risk of using old patterns and methodologies, which may inhibit creativity. Hence, diversity is important, as it initiates and integrates a variety of ideas, perspectives and employee experience, which may lead to groundbreaking discoveries and increase company's chances of success. A more open environment attracts better and more creative people who hope to be able to implement their ideas in that environment (Hernik, Minguez Vera, 2016, pp. 57–63; Zografova, 2013, pp. 93–100).

As mentioned above, diversity may have a positive impact on the competitiveness of an entity. Having a diverse workforce that is able to adapt to changing environments and respond better to emerging challenges, may build a stronger market position with a competitive advantage. A diverse team of employees is better suited to the needs of diverse clients, as they will understand them better. And the fact that we have more and more diverse customers around, and diversity is a symbol of our time, is indisputable (Hernik, Bieniecka, 2017, pp. 35–49; Parsons, 2018; Zapata-Barrero, 2010, pp. 383–402).

Another consequence of implementing diversity in the company may be meeting the requirements of corporate social responsibility. A diversity-based business entity better complies with the anti-discrimination laws and therefore builds its reputation (Zapata-Barrero, 2010, pp. 383–402). It also means building an image of a modern company and understanding the problems of the modern world. What is more, such a reputation creates an image of a good employer which attracts the best employees, while those who are already employed, will not want to leave to work for competition. Naturally, implementation of diversity may encounter resistance of employees who are not positive about change, so it is important to be aware that diversity management is a long-term process (Lauring, Selmer, 2013, pp. 631–646.) And introducing changes in HRM may be problematic, especially if one of the underestimated groups suddenly becomes a favoured one. In an enterprise, managers think about diversity due to the lack of women in managerial positions, or the lack of disabled people. And suddenly, these groups become the centre of interest, and become favoured. Such situations should be avoided, and this should be consistently included in the diversity implementation strategy, because the essence of diversity management is that everyone benefits, not just privileged groups. If one group of employees has more rights than others, the implementation of diversity will not succeed. However, still current employees may have a weaker sense of security and may feel stressed by the prospect of change. They may not understand the need of change and do not want new elements of their environment (new job positions, new regulations, new colleagues). It is therefore important for the rules of diversity implementation to be widely known in the organization (i.e. used and presented in internal communication). What is more, the implementation of new ideas, such as diversity, depends largely on the leaders of the organization and their positive attitudes (Karaszewski, Lis, 2014, pp. 53–70). Without this introduction of diversity implementation will be impossible. It must be added as well that in the pursuit of being ‘trendy’, the organization may lose sight of the objective it strives to achieve. Rather than utilizing diversity management as a tool for improving HR policy, it may become merely a strategy to improve company’s PR, which, in the long term, will bring negative effects. This should be avoided.

One can also address broader social issues, such as immigrant problems and integration with the society (Zapata-Barrero, 2010, pp. 383–402). Besides, we can also refer to gender equality in general and notice that the Western culture is still the only one, in which the gender egalitarianism has been implemented in full, at least in law regulations. On the other hand, the poorest results concerning the gender inequality and violation of women’s rights are fixed in the low-developed and poor countries of Asia and Africa (Berishvili, 2016, pp. 108–115; Hernik, Bieniecka, 2017, pp. 35–49). So, implementing diversity in business could improve the situation of women in the society, but these are not issues directly related to business management, so it will not be a matter of discussion here.

Conclusions

Very often international migration, which recently has been growing significantly, and has changed demographic structures of societies, is discussed from social and macroeconomic perspective. It has to do with the fact that people have been moving around since the dawn of history, and as a consequence, every community is heterogenic, which means that people are different from each other not only in terms of gender or age, but also in terms of background or education. But this statement applies not only to countries, but also to smaller communities, such as employees in a company.

A business model can be understood as a company's plan for how it will create revenues and make a profit. The design of business can contain a mixture of ideas, including conception of human resources. In particular, the bottom of a business model can be formation of HR by conception of diversity. The key reason for using diversity in business activity is to build a frame for inspiration and inventiveness, and, as a result, improved effectiveness. Aside from the financial outcomes, social effects – for example better job fulfilment and understanding – may be assumed. And at last, a value of introducing diversity in the organization may be meeting expectations of CSR.

Answering the question of how to achieve diversity in the workplace, it should be concluded that:

a) the manager should assess the company's functioning and get to know its current status, especially from human resources point of view;
b) the manager needs to create a group of leaders ready to implement changes (this should not be done by one person, for example the owner);
c) a scenario of changes is necessary, and, at the same time, educational and informational campaigns should be conducted among all employees;
d) the manager must ensure that every employee feels satisfied thanks to changes;
e) the manager needs to gradually hire new workers and also to offer newcomers help at the workplace;
f) the manager must constantly inform about the positive effects of changes.

As results from the above points, implementation of diversity must go through several stages, which is not easy, and lasts quite long (even dozen of years). But bearing in mind many positive effects, it is worth taking such a process and bringing it to an end. Naturally, introducing changes in human resources management may be challenging, for example present employees may have a weaker sense of security and may feel stressed by the prospect of revolution, but this should be predicted and consistently included in the diversity implementation strategy.

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Jak realizować różnorodność w miejscu pracy?
Punkt widzenia modelu biznesowego

Słowa kluczowe: konkurencyjność, różnorodność, równość płci, HRM

Streszczenie. Ludzie przemieszczają się od zarania dziejów, a co za tym idzie, każda społeczność jest heterogeniczna. Oznacza, że społeczności różnią się od siebie nie tylko pod względem płci czy wieku, ale także pod względem historii osobistej, edukacji, stylu życia itp. W dzisiejszych czasach, ze względu na wiele otwartych granic i możliwości podróżowania, wszyscy zgadzają się z tym, że kwestia różnorodności staje się coraz ważniejsza. Z tego też względu przedsiębiorcy nie tylko nie mogą ignorować obecności różnorodnych klientów, a także różnorodnych pracowników; muszą zatem dostosowywać swój model biznesowy do nowych okoliczności. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie procesu wdrażania różnorodności z perspektywy modelu biznesowego. W artykule omówiono modele biznesowe oraz wskazano główne zalety i wady modelu opartego na zarządzaniu różnorodnością. Artykuł ma charakter teoretyczny.

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Tourism as the Principal Sphere for Economy Growth and Intercultural Relations in Georgia

JEL codes: Z32, M39, O40

Keywords: tourism industry, accommodation, travel agencies, ICCT

Summary. The study shows the involvement of private businesses in the tourism industry. It has covered the research of hotels, guesthouses and travel agencies, which was carried out in 2016 by The International Center for Caucasus Tourism (ICCT). The aim of the study was to determine the level of tourists' satisfaction during their visits to Georgia: whether they were happy or not (if not, why?) with services in Georgia, whether they liked the tourist sites and how they evaluated the potential of tourism situation. All materials and data are stored in the ICCT archives.

Introduction

Tourism is the international trend, on which the most part of the economy of Georgia depends. Therefore, each research aimed to study the tourism and its problems is very important. Based on the modern-day challenges foreign tourists are in search for new tourism destinations, i.e. looking for fresh and different impressions. From this standpoint Georgia has the potential of becoming a popular destination for tourists, as the country with such a small area. Georgia comprises the features characteristic both of Europe and Asia, due to the crossroads location between the two continents.

Georgia – a country no larger than Ireland – ranks in the world's top 12 for geographical diversity (Fig. 1). Set in the heart of the Greater Caucasus, it contains the highest mountains in Europe, semi deserts, subtropical wetlands with different climatic zones, national parks and forests, healing environment and mineral waters, a rich wine district and the Black Sea coast, much of it peppered with ancient stone towers, the beautiful and untouched nature. Add to this more species of animals and birds than in any European country and you have a walker's paradise (Nasmyth, 2013, p. 183).

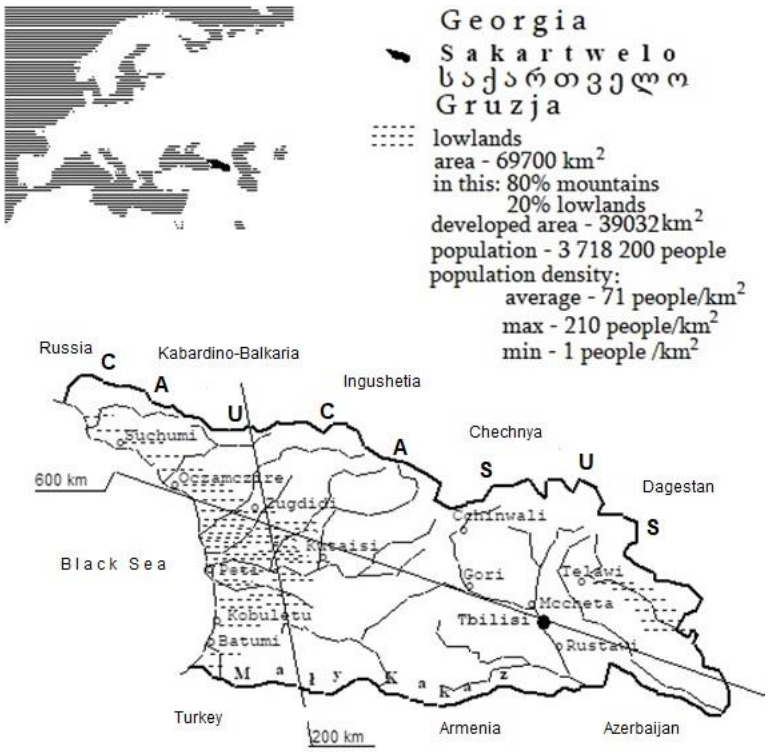

Figure 1. Scheme of Georgia

Source: Pirveli 2000, p. 20.

Additionally to the above mentioned attractions, Georgia is famous for its ancient history, multiethnic and rich culture, wine and cuisine and exceptional Georgian hospitality (Pirveli, 2000, pp. 5–30). That is why the majority of tourists visit Georgia not only to rest, but also to participate in recreational and educational events and to learn the local culture (Pirveli, 2010, pp. 7–17). Heritage in

Georgia is almost synonymous with religious inheritance. Few countries in the world possess such an intensity of built religious patrimony in a small territory as the foundations of their heritage tourism sector as Georgia does.

Georgia is already an increasingly popular destination, but owing to its important religious history, the multitude of ancient churches and holy relics and the inseparable mix of religious and natural heritage escapes, the country has the potential to develop further in three areas of heritage tourism: domestic pilgrimage; international pilgrimage among Orthodox Christians from Eastern Europe and countries of the former USSR; and non-religious cultural tourists from all over the world (Metreveli, Timothy, 2010). Rural tourism is an old and a new phenomenon at the same time. The UNWTO has rated Rural Tourism as one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry, with an annual growth of 5% worldwide and representing 6% of the world GDP (Dilys, Grieg-Gran, Schalken, 2001).

One of the problems of agro tourism is, that it is a poorly researched field of the tourist industry, as well as the lack of a specific definition of the tourism terms. At present there exist many definitions of "agro tourism." It is quite difficult to choose the most suitable definition for Agro tourism. Some authors consider agro tourism as one of the areas of eco-tourism (Volkov, 2012, pp. 30–38; Kundius, Chermjanina, 2011, 49–54). However, most of the popularity and rapid development of this type of tourism allow to consider agro tourism as an independent segment of the tourism industry.

Agro tourism essentially is environmentally friendly, but is fundamentally different in its objectives, the specifics of the organization and the nature of the ecotourism, though, in our opinion, both types of tourism motivation are very similar. Therefore, we believe that eco-tourism and agro-tourism are the elements of the concept of sustainable development of rural areas, implying use of natural resources and they can maintain their level also in future (Kosenchuk, Blinov, Novikov Yu, Rabkanova, 2015).

Successfully developing tourism finds its reflection in the development of main spheres of the country or of separate regions. To transform the structure of economics it is necessary to establish the broad network of tourism industry. It is a well-known fact that the mountainous regions are treasure of cultural heritage of Mankind. That is why mountainous regions including Georgia may be considered to be a sphere of stable development of special kinds of tourism such as: cultural tourism, ecotourism, agro tourism, sustainable rural tourism, youth and adventure tourism, wine tourism, business tourism, medical tourism.

The most active and busy period for tourist visits are from late spring to early fall. Traditionally, the number of tourists reaches its peak in August. September was noted as the most active season of the last year. However, the main problem of mountainous skiing resorts is its seasonal character. Ski resorts work and get income only for 100 days in a year, when they are obliged to spend money during the whole year. Georgia has a great opportunity in this direction as the slopes of the mountains are covered with snow from November till April (Gelashvili, 2012, pp. 85–89).

The focus on tourism development does not only contribute to creation of the infrastructure (roads, health facilities, sports, fitness centers) or necessity of preservation of historical, religious and archeological sites, local folklore, traditions, art and cuisine, culture, but also contributes to bringing the Nations closer and developing cooperation between them, as the increase of the number of tourists in the country promotes the establishment of friendly relations between the representatives of different countries and cultures. The example of this is close cooperation between Georgia and Turkey (Baramidze, 2012, pp. 187–189).

Nevertheless, awareness of the world about Georgia as a tourist destination is still low. Georgia is trying to maximize the level of knowledge and the awareness of the world community by means of marketing and PR activities. The country participates in International exhibitions; hosts tour operators and journalists, and also cooperates with such TV Channels as National Geographic, CNN, Travel Channel and others.

The National Tourism Agency often organizes Georgian Culture Days abroad.

Research design and methodology

The research had been conducted in the frames of the project "Tourism Paths of the Black Sea Region", implemented by ICCT in BSB-TOUR and was financed by the European Union through the Joint Operational Programme "Black Sea Basin 2007–2013"[1]. The study was carried out in 2016 in target cities and municipalities – covering 12 administrative units (Fig. 2): Ambrolauri, Tbilisi, Rustavi, Signagi, Gori, Kvareli, Batumi, Poti, Mestia, Mtskheta, Telavi, Kutaisi. About 500 respondents were questioned. The questionnaire for self-assessment of the infrastructure quality contains 31 inquiries; the vast majority of them are semi-open (the complete database is for inspection and is stored in the ICCT archiver; the questionnaire template is located at the end of the article, before the list of literature).

[1] At this point we want to give our special thanks to: GNTA for their support in conducting this research, Dr. N. Chakvetadze for her help to present the region's tourism potential assessment in Georgia and to all relevant Resource Centers and their employees, whose materials were used in the present work.

Area of the questionnaire survey conducted in 2016 by ICCT covers: Tbilisi (capital), Telavi (center of Kakheti), Kutaisi (center of Imereti), Signagi (town in Kakheti) and municipalities of Akhalcihe, Ambrolauri, Bolnisi, Borjomi, Gori, Kvareli, Mtskheta, Mestia. The total number of completed surveys is 488.

Figure 2. Researched area

Source: development on the basis of Geo-Trip Advisor.

During the survey of the less tourist-active regions the family hotels of the private sector and tourist agents were questioned. The study revealed the problems they had faced in this process and what they mostly needed to promote the further development of tourism in their regions.

Private Sectors in Tourism Industry

Family hotels' owners who have been operating in the market for more than 8 years were interviewed. Despite the vast work experience none of them has been given the opportunity to expand the business that is why they can accommodate only 20 guests at a time. In their business they can employ not more than 2 persons. They describe their work as small-sized accommodation possibilities which are focused to create a cozy, warm and family atmosphere. Besides the accommodation their services include the provision of excursions in the region and the offer for tourists to involve them in the process of preparing traditional food and wine (Fig. 3).

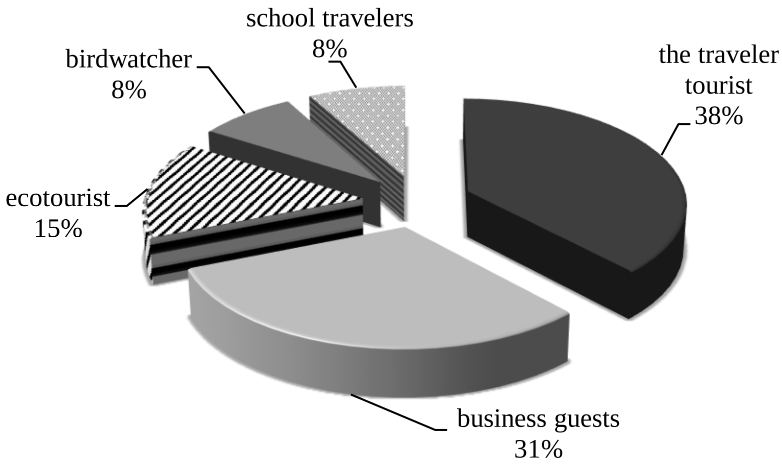

Figure 3. Types of tourists

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

56% of tourists using guest houses are Georgian tourists, while 44% are foreign tourists. Among these tourists most are 20–60 year-old traveler tourists – figure 4.

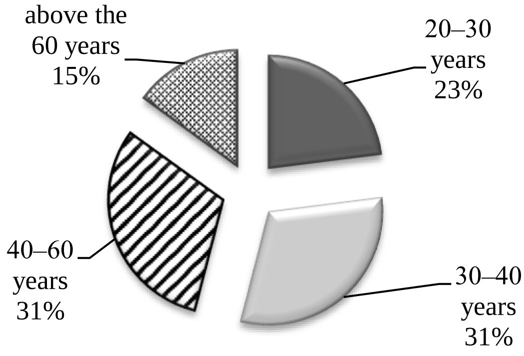

Figure 4. The age structure of tourists

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

During the survey it was visible that tourist promotional materials for private tourist facilities and their representation are missing on the Internet, which is an integral part of modern tourism activities. The absolute majority of the hotels are not listed on international reservation portals, which makes it very difficult to find any information about them. In fact, they only exist due to social networking and unexpected tourists (Fig. 5–6). The region preserves its actual number of visitors through the amount of the tourists who got some recommendations from their friends and relatives to visit the region.

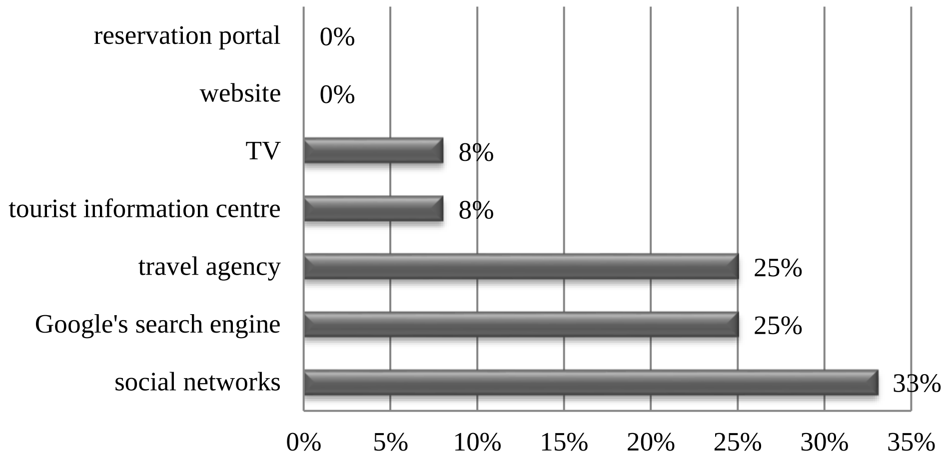

Figure 5. Information retrieval ways of tourists

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

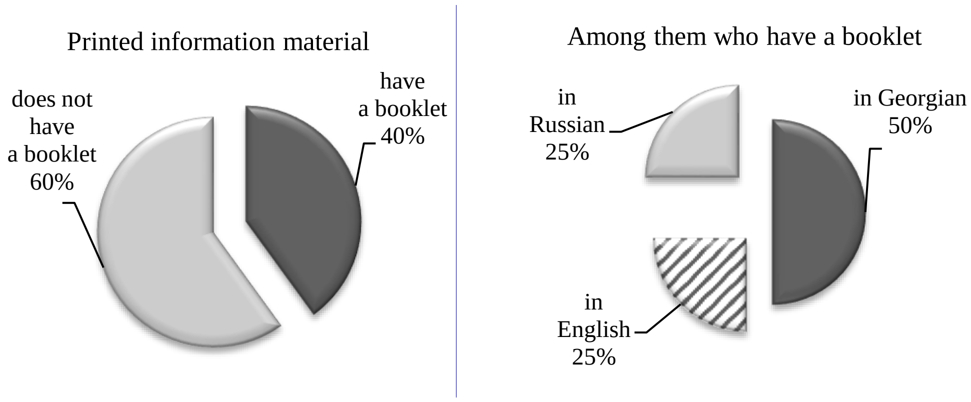

Figure 6. Provision information material for visitors

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

Travel motivation, in most cases, is a sightseeing tour or business trip. Less share comes on other activities (Tab. 1).

The consumer segment consists mainly of Georgian tourists on vacation with a family, who usually stay at a guesthouse more than 2 weeks (Fig. 7).

Table 1

Family hotel consumers travel motivation

Motivation	Answer (%)
Visits to historical and cultural sights	26
Business trips' purposes or a conference attendance	21
Rest and relaxation in the countryside	16
Participation in extreme sports activities	16
Improvement of health and spa services	5
Attendance of Entertainment Events	5
Trade purposes	5
Visiting of relatives and friends	5

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

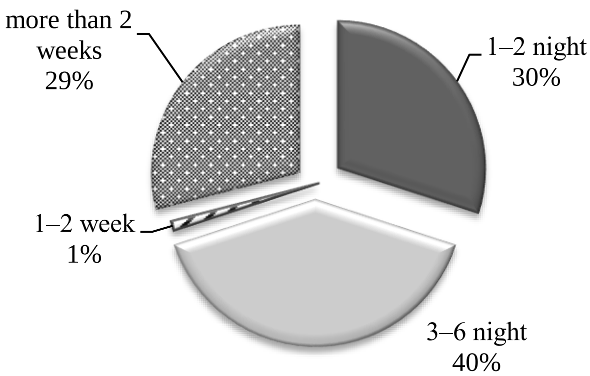

Figure 7. Tourists visit duration

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

Family hotel businesses, as well as tourist agencies' services are dependent on seasons. According to the respondents, the main tourist season begins in April and lasts until mid-September. In contrast, tourists' agencies are active due to New Year celebrations. Proceeding from the questionnaire 50% of family hotel services provide beds and breakfasts, 33% – beds and only 17% provide guests full board/full package. 80% of the surveyed private sector family hotel owners do not provide training courses for their employees. Only 20% of respondents said that they attended training sessions for managers organized by NGOs (non-governmental organizations).

Small businesses are aware of the crucial importance to provide satisfactory service to the tourists and the sustainability in everything they do. They say that their guests are mainly permanent customers or visitors who got the recommendations from their permanent customers.

The region's tourism potential assessment of the private sector

One of the most serious problems in the region is the migration of young people from their regions to the cities. The main reason identified was unemployment. Many picturesque resort places rich with natural resources are not rationally examined as the sites for economic growth and local people’s engagement. This concerns the government and private sectors, both. The respondents believe and hopefully declare that the government will facilitate the development of business in the regions and will assist migrants to return.

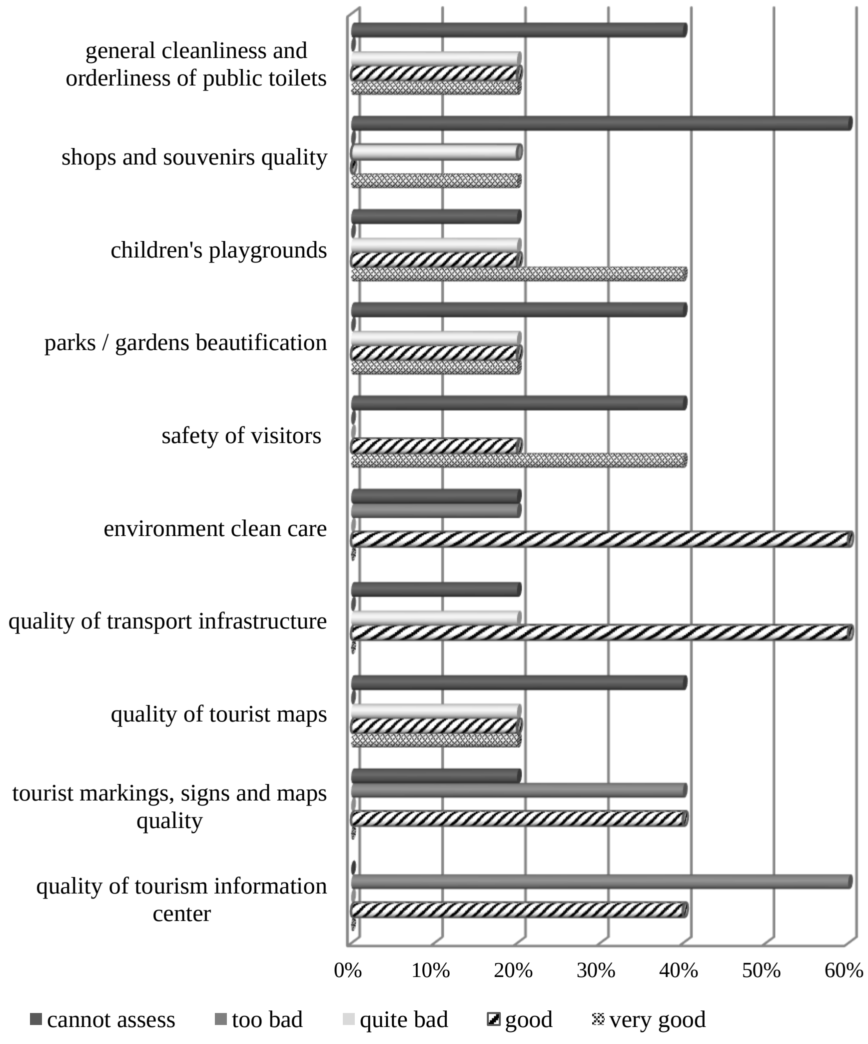

Figure 8. Self-assessment of the infrastructure quality

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

Special attention should be devoted to Sustainable Rural Tourism as the major part of Georgia belongs to rural areas and the most attractive tourism destinations are accumulated there. According to the respondents' opinions it will be preferable to arrange summer camps for school children and students that would promote the development of local tourism and arise an interest and curiosity in the youth to get acquainted with tourist resources.

The representatives working in the private sector express their regret on the lack of attention from the government which does not assist in providing enough tourist information to the regions. They noted that the regions were in need of many things necessary for the development of tourism in their regions. According to their opinion the government supports many other activities and advertisements on international and local levels, makes a lot of effort and spends money but they do not pay attention to the work performed by the private sector. They believe that all the regions have the potential for tourism development in Georgia, but only possession of historical and cultural resources is not enough. Attention should be drawn to the below given directions that will provide an extra motivation for local and foreign tourists to travel in different regions of Georgia (Tab. 2).

Table 2

Directions for Development

Extra motivation directions	Answer (%)
Restoration of historical monuments	80
Promotion of rural tourism	80
Organizing of Sports Tournaments	80
Creation of Wine roads	60
Promotion of Religious tourism	60
Organizing of festivals and cultural activities	60
Arrangement of Mountaineering paths for Climbers	60
Arrangement of Entertainment	60
Cycling Development	45
Organizing of Spa, fitness Centers	40
Improving of the people's qualification,employed in tourism	40

Source: ICCT data base, 2016.

Conclusion

The Presented research has shown that Georgia possesses a great potential for tourism development. The Analysis of the received results clearly revealed the problems existing in the country's tourism sector development. The increased interest of visitors to different regions of Georgia should be especially noted. Based on the foregoing state, the government must take into account the results of our research, i.e. to choose the relevant measures for tourism development as the principal sphere for economic growth and intercultural relations with an external world. Especially maximum of attention should be directed to sustainable rural tourism as the sources of livelihood improvement. Rural tourism has the potential to leave a positive impact on the economic environment and development of the study area, through increasing employment opportunities, increasing business diversity and activity, improving sales of goods and services, higher amounts collected in taxes, renovation and maintenance of cultural and historical heritage. This will make the local population take pride and care of the natural and historical values of the region, the development levels between regions start to equalize. Rural tourism development can play an important role in the diversification of the state tourist supply and in the creation of a more complex and colorful country image. On the other hand, rural tourism is not only the end, but the means to stimulate economic growth in the rural areas, to increase the viability of underdeveloped regions, and to improve the living standards of local populations. If rural tourism is to fulfill all these roles, it has to be developed in a way that ensures the long-term sustainability of the resources and that of the development process itself (Oruonye, 2013, pp. 1–6). Thus the motivation of rural recreation – oneness with nature, clean air, organic food, change of conditions, a smaller number of people, the lack of population density, different lifestyle, schedule, and the culture of life, the opportunity to participate in agricultural work and horticultural care animals, participate in the harvest, and of course most importantly, low cost of vacation (Birjakov, 2000, p. 192).

It is generally considered that tourism in modern marketing system is one of the highly profitable direction of business for the state budget. Moreover, it is very important for improving the socio-economic status of the population, the growth of employment and reduction of migration. Thus, the development of tourism, the achievements of high level hospitality standards and their maintenance in the country should be acknowledged as the priority activities, which will be supported by the results of our research.

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Turystyka jako główna sfera wzrostu gospodarczego i stosunków międzykulturowych w Gruzji

Słowa kluczowe: przemysł turystyczny, zakwaterowanie, biura podróży, ICCT

Streszczenie. W artykule przedstawiono stopień zaangażowania prywatnych firm w aktywność branży turystycznej. Badaniami objęto hotele, pensjonaty i biura podróży. Ich celem było określenie poziomu satysfakcji turystów podczas ich wizyt w Gruzji: czy byli zadowoleni, czy nie (jeśli nie, to dlaczego?) usługami w Gruzji? Czy podobały im się miejsca turystyczne i jak oceniają potencjał warunków turystycznych. Prace badawcze przeprowadzono w 2016 roku przez międzynarodowe centrum turystyki kaukaskiej (ICCT). Wszystkie materiały i dane przechowywane są w archiwum ICCT.

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Effects of e-Commerce Functioning on Customer's Need Satisfaction

JEL codes: M30, L81

Keywords: e-commerce, customer, customer need satisfaction

Summary. Online sales are at present one of the most dynamically developing forms of sales in business. Despite consumers' concerns, the sector is thriving and there is no indication that its growth rate will decrease any time soon. The purpose of the article is to present the effect of e-commerce operations on customer's need satisfaction. The research materials used in the study comprise data derived from a questionnaire/interview regarding the scope of customer online shopping. Research demonstrated that the majority did online shopping several times per year. Most respondents said that they had been driven by large product range and the ability to shop without leaving home, at any given time. The vast majority of respondents believed that online shopping largely or greatly affected customer's need satisfaction. We can conclude that due to competitive prices, a multitude of special offers and a broader product range, online shops are attracting more and more customers, whereas the confidence of consumers in internet shopping is steadily growing.

Introduction

Modern global economies require ongoing effort to support new challenges. Clearly, one of such challenges is the operation of companies providing online services.

E-commerce functioning is a response to the problems and demands of the contemporary world. The late 20th century features dynamic growth of instruments and technologies allowing rapid information exchange. E-commerce is probably not a serious threat to traditional trade, in its first phase of development at least. However, there are now plenty of customers willing to buy online and, unarguably, their number will grow (Szewczyk, 2006, p. 62).

Nowadays, we are witnessing a gradual stabilisation of e-commerce, accompanied by a formation of a group of market leaders and a focus on professional management of online shops and the like. To attain this aim, companies started to apply deliberate strategies of development and to select suitable online marketing tools (Teneta-Skwiercz, Sarnowska, 2016, p. 309).

The purpose of the article is to present the effect of e-commerce operations on customer need satisfaction. The research materials used in the study comprise data derived from a questionnaire/interview regarding the scope of customer online shopping.

E-commerce development in Poland

E-commerce (or electronic commerce) is a process involving the sale and purchase of products and services – in other words, the process of concluding business deals – via electronic means and the internet. Traditional tools, such as fax or phone, are also conducive to the process. The whole course of presenting and selecting offers or tenders, placing and taking orders, concluding and maintaining agreements and related document processing, has been transferred to the electronic platform. Purchased goods and services can be delivered either electronically or traditionally. Present-day e-commerce employs not only the internet, but also EDI, telephony, cable and satellite television, Intra- and Extranet, e-cards, etc (Gregor, Stawiszyński, 2002, p. 79).

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), e-commerce means production, advertising activities, sale and distribution of goods with the use of ICT networks. E-commerce may be also understood as a process, which consists in business transactions conducted via the internet or other methods, such as telephone or fax.

E-commerce is strongly correlated with online shopping. When the branch was booming, internet distribution channels were created, allowing customers to reach products and services. This, however, did not mean physical access, but rather mobile technology and online transactions (Antonowicz, 2016, p. 6). Figure 1 demonstrates a classic diagram for online shopping.

According to Rzeczpospolita (a Polish newspaper), the value of the e-commerce market in the year 2015 in Poland was estimated at PLN 30–33 billion. It is comparable to the pharmaceutical market, which in 2015 was estimated at PLN 30 billion. According to Genius company, which conducted the research, the

Polish e-commerce market between 2014 and 2015 increased by 20%. This tendency is said to continue this year and in the years to come, whereas the value of the e-commerce market in Poland should double in the next few years. The dynamic growth of the Polish internet trade clearly translates into its share in the total general trade turnover, which in 2014 was ca. 4.5%. Previous estimates indicated that e-commerce was gaining value seven times faster than the traditional trade in a comparable period. We can see that customers spend more and more money online, with the method of online shopping being convenient and superior to traditional shopping (Golatowski, 2016).

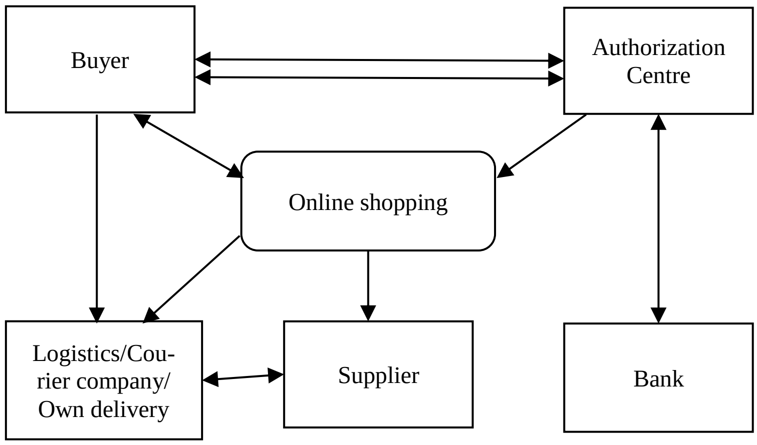

Figure 1. Classic diagram for online shopping

Source: Antonowicz, 2016, p. 6.

According to the e-commerce Report published by Interaktywnie.com, the e-commerce market exceeded PLN 30 billion in 2015. Experts claim that the Polish electronic commerce market growth dynamics in 2016 surpassed PLN 36 billion. This state of affairs is, without doubt, an effect of activities of commercial networks operating in the e-commerce area. We can say that it is actually the big retail chains and their online activities which build trust among Polish consumers. Experts project that the growth rate of the Polish e-commerce sector in the year 2020 will amount to approximately 10% of the value of retail. Every year we can observe an increase in the number of internet users, which is reflected in the raise of the number of online consumers and sellers. Assuming that such growth will continue at the level of ca. 15–20%, the value of the Polish electronic commerce market in 2017 will be around PLN 36–37 billion. Hence, we can also predict that thanks to the new Polish programme entitled 500+, the value of e-commerce will more likely be close to PLN 40 billion. Experts believe that resources originating from the state programme will inject funds to the economy, for people aged 25–40. People at this age have little free time and significant needs regarding consumer goods at the same time, which makes them frequent online shoppers (Chochołowski, 2016, pp. 10–11).

According to the report entitled "E-commerce w Polsce 2016", developed by Genius at the request of the Chamber of Electronic Economy (IGE), there are 25.8 million internet users in Poland, with a total Polish population of 38.5 million. The largest group is composed of 34–year-olds, secondary school or university graduates, residing mainly in cities, and declaring good financial standing. Those who buy online pay particular attention to the price of products, which is often compared with that at traditional shops. Online customers like comfort and what is of importance to them is the ability to shop from home at any time, 24/7. The goods which are most popular among online shoppers are clothing, home appliances, home electronics, books, hardware and software, footwear and mobile devices, such as smartphones, mobile phones or tablets (Sass-Staniszewska, Binert, 2016, pp. 8–10.)

Without doubt, e-commerce is one of the most crucial economic motors of the European Union member states. It is observed that year by year the number of new companies and consumers availing themselves of the internet network to purchase goods is growing. Nowadays, we can say that e-commerce is undergoing a natural evolution, as it favours European market integration and seeks ways to minimise barriers and obstacles in this regard. It is a great opportunity for Polish companies to become globally important, which includes the need to compete effectively on foreign markets. Before that, however, it is crucial to get an insight into the principles of their operation, their characteristic features and some useful facts (Kruszewska, 2016).

E-consumers have various needs, which can be directly satisfied when the goods and services acquired on the market are consumed. The said goods or services may be manufactured in households or obtained as part of benefits and services, and as such they will be referred to as consumption goods and services. In the mind of an e-consumer, the sources of needs are some regrettable tensions, the reduction of which will be of great satisfaction to him/her. The difference between a desire and a true need is the main driving force for consumption (Jaciow, Wolny, Stolecka-Makowska, 2013, pp. 11–12).

Conditions which an e-consumer should meet in order to satisfy his/her needs are as follows (Jaciow, Wolny, Stolecka-Makowska, 2013, pp. 11–12):

a) a feeling that a given good or product, resultant from e-consumer development, is not in his/her possession;
b) acquisition of information regarding a product which is about to enter the market; in such a case, an e-consumer broadens his/her knowledge regarding the product of interest to him/her;

c) generation of more and more needs, related to the finding of a given product online;
d) changes in the financial situation, which – to some extent – guarantee that an e-consumer is able to buy a product he/she had not had before or which had been too expensive for him/her to buy;
e) changes in expectations regarding products, which may result from e-consumer's past experience with product use; e-consumer chooses quality, for example.

Time, or more precisely, shortage of time, largely affects e-commerce development. Internet offers fast, convenient and safe shopping. Therefore, e-consumers can satisfy variable needs from the comforts of their own houses, which saves, most importantly, time and money. Online companies quite often offer goods and services at competitive prices because they have no costs related to conducting standard activities, such as rental fees or employee wages. Consumers are under no obligation to conform to specific opening hours, e.g. those of a standard shop, and can buy at any time. Entrepreneurs who believe in development can meet the ever growing demands of the present-day consumer owing to latest technologies (Sass-Staniszewska, Binert, 2016, pp. 9–10).

Electronic consumers and their needs have a serious impact on the way e-commerce is developing, for they constitute a separate and simultaneously latest market segment. The following consumers' characteristics may be identified as crucial for branch development (Jaciow, Wolny, Stolecka-Makowska, 2013, pp. 12–13):

a) convenience, i.e. the ability to buy seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and product delivery at a convenient time;
b) individualism of every consumer expressed by his/her anonymity, which is associated with specific opportunities of online shopping;
c) time-saving effect, which means the ability to devote a specific amount of time to online shopping; electronic consumers have a complete control over the time devoted to seeking information and ordering goods;
d) respect for value, which involves finding best offer and online shops, considering the optimal satisfaction of e-consumer's needs;
e) tendency to pay more for the same product elsewhere, provided that shopping safety is ensured or the delivery time is shortened;
f) ability to modify one's offer so that the product is suited to customer's needs.

Materials and methods

Research was conducted with the application of a research tool – the questionnaire (survey). With the help of the web portal www.ankietka.pl, an electronic survey was generated by the researcher, and then forwarded to a group of respondents thanks to a specially assigned link. The survey was made available via a social network. The respondents were informed on the purpose of the research and instructed on how to complete it. The questions included in the survey were construed in such way that abundant data regarding the effect of e-commerce development on consumer needs satisfaction could be provided. The survey was completed by 60 people. It comprised two parts: the first part was statistical data, the second focused on the main issue under analysis. Questions which were presented to the respondent were to show how popular e-trade was, if it was safe, and if consumers were satisfied. While majority of the questions in the survey were closed, single-choice selection questions, many key questions had a multiple-choice selection option.

Research results and analysis

Overview of respondents

63% of respondents were women, whereas 37% – men. The largest group were individuals aged 25 to 34, university or college graduates, residing in cities, with a monthly income per person of over PLN 1,200, most willing to express their opinions regarding online shopping.

Analysis of own research

The study was addressed to people using the internet and online transactions. Not everyone shops online every day. Frequently, these are one-time situations, e.g. when you cannot find a given good in traditional shops or if the difference in the price is big. The frequency of online shopping is presented in Figure 2.

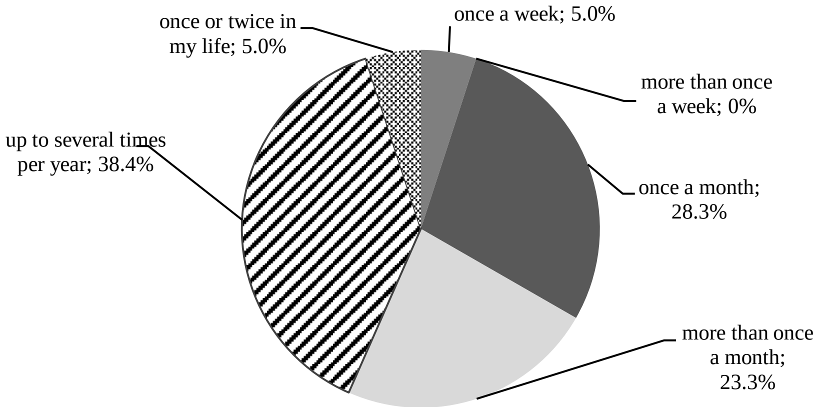

Figure 2. Respondents' frequency of online shopping

Source: own research.

Research demonstrates that 3.4% of respondents shop online up to several times per year. 28.3% of respondents buy online once per month. 23.3% of study participants shop online more than once per month.

The key feature attributed to online shopping was low price. It was selected by approximately 80% of respondents (Fig. 3).

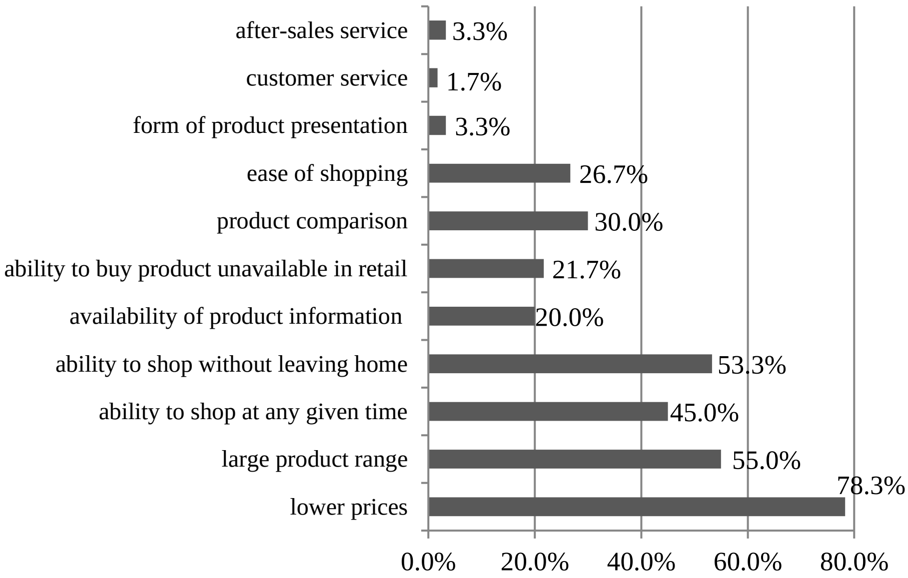

Figure 3. Factors which persuade respondents to shop online

Source: own research.

The second most dominant characteristic was a large product range, next the ability to shop without leaving home and the ability to shop at any given time. The following factors turned out to be of little importance: after-sales service, the form of product presentation, or customer service. This question had an option of choosing more than one answer (multiple-choice selection).

Studies indicate that by far the most popular were goods in the following categories: clothing, goods for children, house and garden products, books, automotive products (Fig. 4). This may be related to their low availability in traditional shops. In addition, they can be often found online at much lower prices than in traditional stores. Many products are simply unavailable in traditional shops, or the product range is limited. What is more, online shopping provides an opportunity to prepare an original, unique surprise for family and friends.

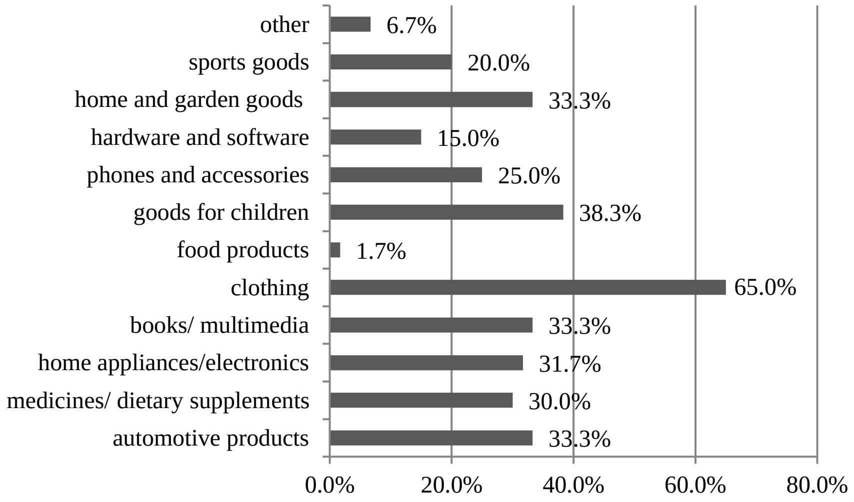

Figure 4. Groups of products bought online by respondents

Source: own research.

Goods' safety is critical when shopping online. Research shows that online shopping is safe: 73% of respondents believed so (Fig. 5). On the other hand, 21.7% of the study subjects had no opinion regarding the subject. This may indicate that although consumers are not fully convinced by online shopping yet, they generally believe in its safety.

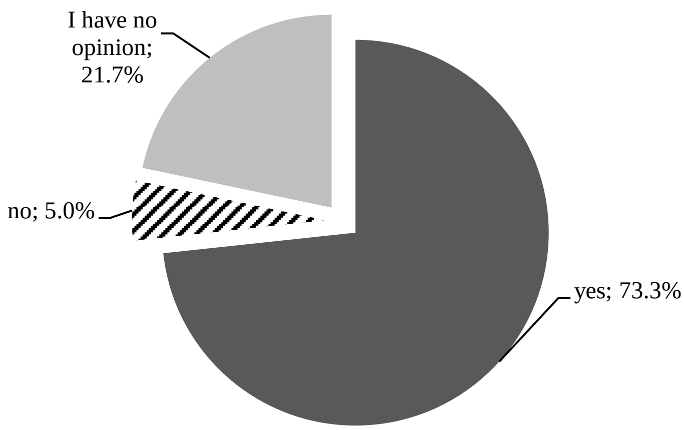

Figure 5. Respondents' opinions regarding online shopping safety

Source: own research.

Figure 6 shows findings concerning respondent satisfaction with the ability to shop online. A comparative scale was employed, with (1) representing a lack of satisfaction and (5) – great satisfaction. The analysis of study results demonstrated that 46.6% of the study subjects were satisfied (4) with shopping online, whereas 45% were very satisfied (5). 6.7% of respondents expressed a moderate satisfaction (3), whereas the smallest number, i.e. 1.7%, was satisfied at a low level (2). None of the respondents was fully dissatisfied with shopping online.

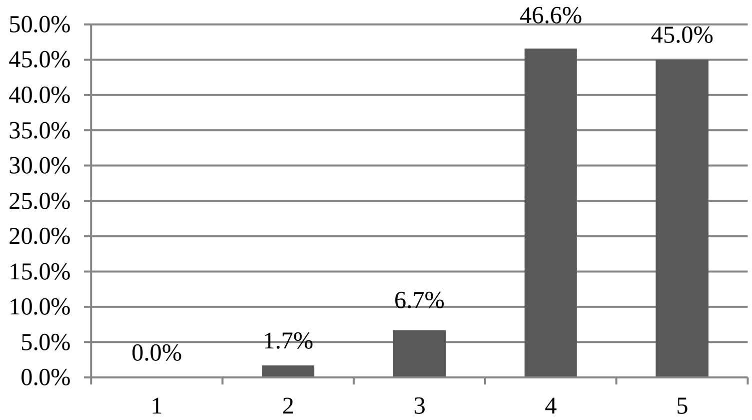

Figure 6. Respondent satisfaction with the ability to shop online

Source: own research.

Figure 7 shows respondents' opinions regarding an increase in population's life quality thanks to online shopping. A comparative scale was applied, with (1) representing no life quality improvement and (5) – great improvement in the quality of life of the population. The analysis demonstrated that 38.3% of the respondents believed that the quality of life largely improved (4) thanks to online shopping and 26.7% thought that the standards of life of the population improved greatly (5). Next, 28.3% reckoned that life quality improved moderately (3), whereas 5% of the persons surveyed believed that improvement was low (2). The smallest group (1.7%) expressed that there was no improvement in life quality of the population as a consequence of online shopping.

Figure 8 shows respondents' opinions regarding an increase in their own life quality thanks to online shopping. A comparative scale was used, with (1) representing no life quality improvement and (5) – great improvement in the quality of respondent's life. Research analysis showed that the largest group of respondents, i.e. 48.3%, believed that the quality of their lives largely improved (4) thanks to online shopping and 20% thought that it improved greatly (5). 21.7% advocated that their life quality improved moderately (3), whereas 5% of the persons surveyed believed that improvement was low (2). The same number of respondents said that they saw no improvement of the quality of their lives as a consequence of online shopping (1).

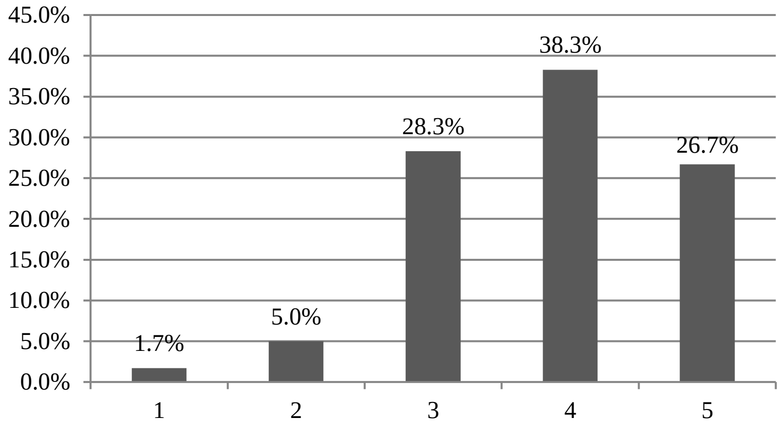

Figure 7. Respondents' opinions on life quality improvement of the population as a consequence of online shopping

Source: own research.

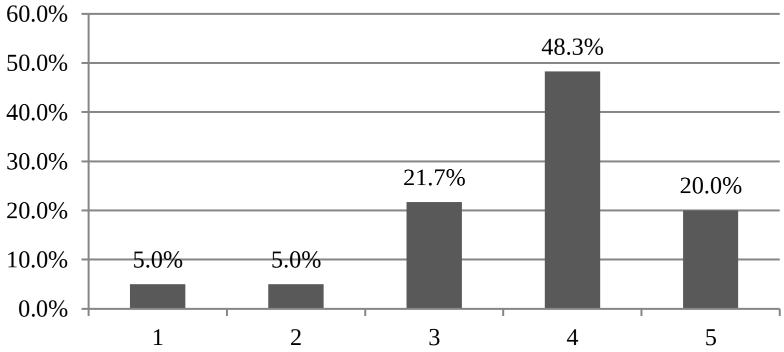

Figure 8. Respondents' opinions on their personal life quality improvement as a consequence of online shopping

Source: own research.

Figure 9 shows that most respondents, i.e. 83.3%, believe that online shopping has an impact on customer's need satisfaction. On the other hand, 15% of the study subjects has no personal opinion regarding the subject matter.

Figure 10 shows the level of impact of online shopping on the satisfaction of customer needs. A comparative scale was employed, with (1) representing no impact of online shopping on customer need satisfaction, and (5) indicating a great impact of online shopping on need satisfaction.

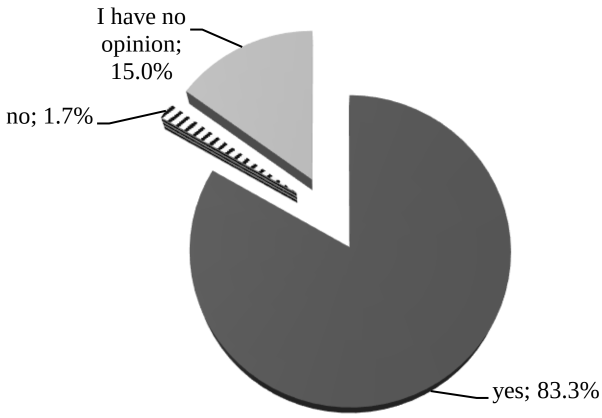

Figure 9. Respondents' opinion on the effect of online shopping on customer's need satisfaction

Source: own research.

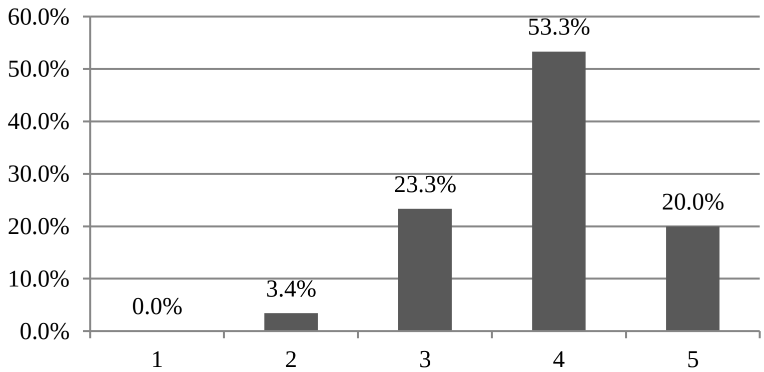

Figure 10. The level of impact of online shopping on customer's need satisfaction

Source: own research.

The analysis of the survey revealed that most respondents, i.e. 53.3%, considered online shopping as having a large impact (4) on customer's need satisfaction, whereas 20% believed that the impact was great (5). 23.3% reckoned that this impact was moderate (3), whereas 5% of the persons surveyed believed that the impact was low (2).

Conclusions

All in all, research data regarding online shopping indicate that despite consumers' fears, the study sector is blooming and there is no indication that its growth rate will decrease any time soon. More and more people are shopping online. As far as the frequency of online shopping is concerned, the majority claims that they shop online several times per year. Most respondents say that they are driven by a large product range and the ability to shop without leaving home, at any given time. In line with the study group, goods which are most popular among online shoppers include clothing, goods for children, home and garden goods, automotive products, books and multimedia. The majority of respondents reckons that online shopping is safe. Respondents are mostly either satisfied or very satisfied with the ability to shop online. Most of those surveyed think that online shopping improved life quality of the population and, consequently, that of their own. The vast majority of respondents believe that online shopping largely or greatly affects customer need satisfaction. Thus, we can conclude that due to competitive prices, many special offers, and broader product range, online shops are attracting more and more customers.

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Funkcjonowanie e-commerce w Polsce a zaspokojenie potrzeb konsumenta

Słowa kluczowe: e-commerce, konsument, zadowolenie klienta
Streszczenie. Internetowa forma sprzedaży jest jedną z najbardziej rozwijającą się formą sprzedaży w biznesie. Mimo obaw konsumentów branża ta przeżywa nadal swój rozkwit i nie zapowiada się, aby zwolniła tempo w swoim rozwoju. Celem artykułu było przedstawienie funkcjonowania e-commerce a zaspokojenie potrzeb konsumenta. Materiałem badawczym wykorzystanym w artykule były dane pochodzące z kwestionariusza wywiadu dotyczące zakresu korzystania przez klientów z handlu internetowego. Badania wykazały, że najwięcej osób opowiedziało się za tym, że przez internet robi zakupy do kilku razy w roku. Najwięcej osób stwierdziło, że skłaniają ich do tego niższe ceny, duży wybór produktów, a także możliwość dokonywania zakupów bez wychodzenia z domu w dowolnie wybranym momencie. Przeważająca liczba respondentów stwierdziła, że robienie zakupów za pośrednictwem internetu ma wpływ na zaspokajanie potrzeb konsumentów w dużym i bardzo dużym stopniu. Można stwierdzić, że dzięki konkurencyjnym cenom, licznym promocjom i większej ofercie produktowej sklepy internetowe zyskują większą liczbę konsumentów; rośnie również zaufanie konsumentów do zakupów w internecie.

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Dynamic Structural Equation Models in Momentary Assessment in Consumer Research

JEL code: M31

Keywords: experience sampling method, consumer momentary assessment, dynamic structural equation models

Summary. The aim of the paper is to provide methodological framework to model intensive longitudinal data (ILD). The specific types of such data are consumer moods and emotional feelings that constitute the satisfaction states of the consumer. The research process of ILD involves ecological momentary assessment and experience sampling methods that are characterized by higher ecological validity. In the paper the special type of structural models, namely dynamic structural equation model (DSEM) are developed for proper analysis of multilevel longitudinal data. The models are built on the basis of consumer mood scale. The data were gathered from a convenient sample of 33 respondents and a systematic sample of time moments that provide a total of 640 observations. The results show the insignificant role of the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents (gender) in explanation of very flexible psychological states.

Introduction

The measurement of momentary states of the consumers (moods, feelings, physiological reactions, health, facial expression) is related to a specific method of data gathering and sampling that is the experience sampling method (ESM) and ecological momentary assessment (EMA). Originally, the ESM approach was focused on internal experiences (thoughts, feelings, physiological reactions, etc.) in a given time moment. In health and medical sciences, the term ecological momentary assessment (EMA) is commonly used to extend ESM and include subjective judgements, health and environmental factors (Stone, Shiffman, 1994).

The objective of ESM/EMA is to capture and test both the place- and time-bound phenomena and events that cannot be emulated in laboratory/experimental and survey-based methods. In comparison to experiments and surveys, the real-world and real-time context of data gathering enable to obtain a higher level of the ecological validity of research. The ecological validity stems from the fact that the ESM/EMA measurement is very close to the moment when the measured event occurs. Therefore, the responses have lower recall and reconstruction biases. The sources of bias can be rooted in a telescopic error, phantom responses, retrospective biases like personal heuristics, recency, salience and mood-congruent memory effects.

Additionally, the measurements are taken over-time, so it produces large number of repeated observations that are basis for identification of within-person processes, temporal dynamics and trajectories and response sensitivity over time. Although these two methods are strongly interlinked, EMA is very popular in clinical research and medicine and ESM in psychology, education, management and marketing applications. In marketing research, the experience sampling method is very rarely used but may be applied in the area of Consumer Experience Marketing, and related fields like customer journey research (CJR) and quality of life analysis (QoL). The application of ESM/EMA in marketing seems to be very promising.

The objective of the article is to broaden the scope of consumer research and to model the level of nano-structures of consumer behaviour that are consumer journeys, psychophysiological reactions, moods and feelings. These types of consumer reactions are very important for identification and modelling the consumers' satisfaction states with respect to product-services. Especially, in the modelling the perceived service process quality, the identification and explanation of temporal dynamics of consumer mood are crucial for understanding the satisfaction feelings. However, the very labile emotional states are hardly explained. In modelling the mood states of the consumer, the special type of recently developed structural equation models for intensive longitudinal data (DESM/RDSEM) are used.

ESM data

On the contrary to experimental and survey-based techniques, the collection of momentary data is based on variety of self-report techniques. There are multiple self-report assessment methods using traditional paper-and-pencil devices (P & P) and modern mobile technologies. Data gathering methods includes a) daily diaries, b) experience sampling forms, c) electronically activated recording systems

(EAR), d) smartphones, smartwatches, smartglasses, e) personal tracking devices like emotive insights, pip biofeedbacks, spire stones, spire health tags, SCRAM systems for alcohol level measurement, etc. Daily diaries and experience sampling forms are very often used P & P techniques for qualitative and quantitative deconstruction of consumer's time maps and consumer journeys. Also, smartphones and web surveys are very popular methods of data gathering in marketing.

There are plenty of mobile-web survey platforms like Survey Monkey and Survey Signa and smartphone applications (i.e. iForm, iSurvey, DataField, DREAM, mEMA, ESmCapture, MovisensXS, PACO-iOS). Also, popular mood-trackers enable to monitor the emotional feelings (i.e. Moodtrack Diary, Mood Tracker, T2 Moood Tracker, Moodlytics, Moody, etc.). Personal tracking devices are related rather to monitor the psycho-physiological and health-related reactions, however some of them (facial expressions, blood pressure) serve as indicators of the latent emotional state of the consumers.

The intensive longitudinal data are gathered on the level of individual consumers. It shapes the hierarchical and multilevel structure of data that needs specific approaches to data analysis and modelling (Nezlek, 2012). Measurement moments are nested in time (days, weeks, etc.), time stamps are nested in respondents and finally, the respondents can be nested in the families, social and brand-oriented groups or other institutions. The sampling of experiences (time moments) is usually computer-aided. The computer packages like Experience Sampling, Experience Sampler, Pendragon Software, LifeData, Survey Signal can assist the process of sample selection. Sampling process is technologically intensive. Respondents should be equipped with pagers or smartphones that send the random beeps during the day. Each of the respondent fulfils short experience sampling form (ESF) concerning their actions, presence of others, surrounding, feelings, emotional states (happiness, sadness, satisfaction, stress, anger, etc.). The sampling units are therefore related to person-situation (person-event) interactions in real-time and real-place context.

The average number of time points per respondent sampled is 5–12 during the day and 1–3 weeks of observation. As a result each respondent is characterized by 35–210 time moments during the whole period of data gathering. The non-response rate decreases as the rate of contact per respondent increases. As Hektner, Schmidt, Csikszentmihalyi (2012) suggest average response rate at 1–2 contact a day is 90% but increasing the number of contacts to 8–10 would decrease the response rate to 50–80%. Therefore, the greater representativeness of the sample, the higher non-response error and sample bias. Specifically, experience sampling belongs to highly obtrusive methods of data gathering, violating the privacy and intimacy of the respondent. It enables the high level of consumer involvement. Also, the self-selection bias is relatively high (i.e. refusals, self-censorship, socially desirable behaviour).

There are three strategies of experience sampling: a) time-based sampling, b) event-focused (event-contingent) sampling and c) mixed sampling as a combination of time-based and event-focused (Hektner, Schmidt, Csikszentmihalyi, 2012; Trull, Ebner-Priemer, 2009). In time-based sampling schemes, the random sampling (signal-contingent) or fixed sampling (interval-contingent) can be used. A simple random sample consists of a random selection of time during the day in which the respondent is asked to respond. It is used when there is no need to take into account contextual factors for given emotional states (working time vs. free time) and when the respondent's behaviour is not expected to occur at specific time points (e.g. morning or noon). Time-based sampling is generated using the electronic forms of sampling moments of time (beeper studies). It enables random selection of time moments distributed throughout the day and is preferred when it is necessary to obtain high-frequency contacts (about 10–20 during the day). However, it is less convenient for respondents and requires electronic forms of communication (pager, telephone, etc.).

The fixed sampling is used when time points are drawing at specific time of the day. It resembles a random systematic sampling in which respondents are asked to reveal their behaviours and attitudes at specific time intervals, e.g. every 2–4 hours for interview and every 15–30 minutes for a short voice response (EAR). It is most often used to collect data on relatively frequent and cyclical behaviours and experiences of respondents with the use of daily consumer diary. Its advantage is low cost and convenience in implementation and less inconvenience for respondents due to predictability of test moments.

A fixed random sample is used to draw time points at specific time of the day. It resembles a random systematic sampling, in which respondents are asked to reveal their behaviour and attitudes at specific time intervals, e.g. every 2–4 hours for an interview and every 15–30 minutes for a short voice response (EAR). It is most often used to collect data on relatively frequent and cyclical behaviour and experiences of respondents using daily consumer diaries. Its advantage is low cost and convenience in implementation. Respondents can relatively easily predict the survey moments. In the case of irregular events occurring in specific situations, it may provide biased results.

In an event-oriented sample, time points are selected when certain events that occur during the day (e.g. going to work or school, meeting friends, entering a shop, lunch, etc.). This type of sampling scheme is used for atypical and less frequent events, social interactions, and when the researcher has a predefined list of events to be analyzed. It entails the necessity of training the respondents in the correct recognition of the examined events, which take place at moderate intervals (they are neither too frequent nor too rare). Usually, the saturation of the sample takes place after the identification of about 30 events by one respondent.

Models for ESM data

Modelling of intensive longitudinal data on the individual respondent level can be regarded from various perspectives. Bolger and Laurenceau (2013) distinguish three types of research questions: 1) aggregation over time, 2) modelling the time course and 3) analyzing the within-person, between persons and between-time processes. High intensity of longitudinal data enables quantitative analysis. The analytical approaches involve multilevel hierarchical and non-hierarchical models because:

- measurement moments are nested in time (days, weeks),
- time is nested in respondents,
- respondents are nested in social groups/institutions.

The most general approach to model ESM data is based on multilevel structural equation modelling[1]. Many dynamic analytical frameworks have been recently developed like cross-classified multilevel structural equation modelling, dynamic structural equation modelling (DSEM), residual dynamic structural equation modelling (RDSEM). DSEM is general approach to the analysis of intensive longitudinal data that incorporates time series analysis, latent variable modelling, multilevel models and time – varying effect modelling (Asparouhov, Hamaker, Muthen, 2018).

In the family of cross-classified DSEM models four sources of correlation are decomposed: 1/ specific inter-individual variability (multilevel modelling), 2/ data autocorrelation due to measurement proximity or nonindependence (time – series modelling), 3/ correlations between variables (structural equations modelling) and 4/ correlations due to the same stage of evolutionary process (time-varying effect modeling) (Tan et al., 2010). Specifically, types of DSEM models can be divided with respect to a number of levels that are taken into account and need of accounting for interpretation of structural part of a model is based on specificity of longitudinal data. Regarding this fact, general multilevel non-hierarchical random effects structural equation model (DSEM model), general multilevel non-hierarchical random effects residual structural equation model (RDSEM model), two-level hierarchical random effect model (measurements are nested in the respondents only), N = 1 uni-level model of time series (lack of nested data) can be distinguished. Additionally, ordinary time-series models (ARMA, ARIMA) are special cases of DSEM and RDEM models.

[1] The cross-classified DSEM models can be estimated by the latest version of Mplus 8.2 (Muthen, Muthen, 2017).

In DSEM model decomposition of variability is based on decomposition of individual-level measurement in time *t* for between-respondents, between-time variability (Asparouhov, Hamaker, Muthen, 2018):

$$Y_{it} = Y_{1,it} + Y_{2,i} + Y_{3,t} \tag{1}$$

Y_{it} – measurement of dependent variable for respondent *i* in time *t*
$Y_{1,it}$ – residuals ($Y_{1,it} = Y_{it} - Y_{2,i} - Y_{3,t}$)
$Y_{2,i}$ – between-respondents variability
$Y_{3,t}$ – between-time variability

The decomposition above, involves the non-hierarchical multilevel model in which within-group and between-group measurement models as well as respondent- and time-specific structural model are developed.

The within-group measurement model is given in equation 2.

$$Y_{1,it} = \tau_1 + \sum_{l=0}^{L} \Lambda_{1,l}\eta_{1,i,t-l} + \sum_{l=0}^{L} R_l Y_{1,i,t-l} + \sum_{l=0}^{L} K_{1,l} X_{1,i,t-l} + \varepsilon_{1,it} \tag{2}$$

$X_{1,i,t-1}$ – lagged covariate
$\eta_{1,i,t-1}$ – respondent-specific lagged latent variable

In the within-group model the measurement of respondent *i* in given time *t* is function of lagged dependent variable ($Y_{1,i,t-1}$), lagged covariate ($X_{i,t-l}$) and lagged respondent - specific latent variable.

The between-group measurement model on respondent level is given in equation 3.

$$Y_{2,i} = \nu_2 + \Lambda_2\eta_{2,i} + K_2 X_{2,i} + \varepsilon_{2,i} \tag{3}$$

$X_{2,i}$ – respondent-specific covariate
$\eta_{2,i}$ – respondent-specific but time-invariant latent variable

In the between-group measurement model, the individual responses are a function of respondent-specific covariate (Xi) and time-invariant latent variable on the individual level.

The between-group measurement model on time level is presented in equation 4.

$$Y_{3,t} = \nu_3 + \Lambda_3\eta_{3,t} + K_3 X_{3,t} + \varepsilon_{3,t} \tag{4}$$

$X_{3,t}$ – time-specific covariate
$\eta_{3,t}$ – time-specific but respondent-invariant latent variable

The between-group measurement model on time level is characterized by time-specific covariate (X_t) and latent variable that is time-specific but respondent-invariant.

The structural part of the model consists of two parts: respondent-specific and time-specific structural model.

The respondent-specific structural model is given in equation 5.

$$\eta_{2,i} = a_2 + B_2\eta_{2,i} + \Gamma_2 X_{2,i} + \zeta_{2,i} \tag{5}$$

$X_{2,i}$ – respondent-specific covariate

In the respondent-specific structural model, the latent variables on the individual level is explained by other endogenous latent variables and respondent-specific covariate (X_i).

The time-specific structural model is presented in equation 6.

$$\eta_{3,t} = a_3 + B_3\eta_{3,t} + \Gamma_3 X_{3,t} + \zeta_{3,t} \tag{6}$$

$X_{3,t}$ – time-specific covariate

In the time-specific structural model, the latent variables on the time level is explained by other endogenous latent variables on that level and time-specific covariate (X_t).

The residual dynamic structural equation model (RDSEM) is a version of DSEM that fills the gap between time-series DSEM (structural relations across between-time variables) and the multilevel longitudinal model (contemporaneous relations between the variables). The RDSEM model assumes the separation of structural and autoregressive parts of the within-level measurement model. The autoregressive part is absorbed by a model of residuals that takes into account the dependencies among measurements. On the other hand, the structural part is based on the relations between variables (without lags). This type of model enables the interpretation of the cross-sectional structural model that is built on time-series data. As the special case of DSEM, in RDSEM model the residuals are treated as latent variables and variances of the new residuals of the models are fixed to a small positive number (Asparouhov, Muthen, 2018). In RDSEM model the between-level model is the same as in DSEM. Decomposition of the within-level model into the structural part and the autoregressive part includes the residuals for dependent and latent variables in the structural and autoregressive part of the within-level model.

The structural part of the within-level model is shown in equations 7 and 8.

$$Y_{1,it} = \tau_1 + \Lambda_{1,0}\eta_{1,it} + R_0 Y_{1,it} + K_{1.0} X_{1,it} + \hat{Y}_{1,it} \tag{7}$$

$$\eta_{1,it} = a_1 + B_{1,0}\eta_{1,it} + Q_0 Y_{1,it} + \Gamma_{1.0} X_{1,it} + \hat{\eta}_{1,it} \tag{8}$$

The variables $\hat{Y}_{1,it}$ and $\tilde{\eta}_{1,it}$ are regarded as residual variables (without autoregressive relations).

The autoregressive part of the within-level model is given in equation 9 and 10.

$$\hat{Y}_{1,it} = \sum_{l=0}^{L} \Lambda_{1,l}\,\hat{\eta}_{1,i,t-l} + \sum_{l=0}^{L} R_l\,\hat{Y}_{1,i,t-l} + \varepsilon_{1,it} \tag{9}$$

$$\hat{\eta}_{1,it} = \sum_{l=0}^{L} B_{1,l}\, \hat{\eta}_{1,i,t-l} + \sum_{l=0}^{L} Q_l\, \hat{Y}_{1,i,t-l} + \zeta_{1,it} \tag{10}$$

In the autoregressive part of the model, the residuals of dependent and latent variables are explained by the same residual variables with lags. The choice between DSEM and RDSEM models depends on the purpose of modelling. As T. Asparouhov and B. Muthen suggest (2018), DSEM models explain structural relations across time, whereas RDESM are used to model contemporaneous relations between the variables on time-series data.

DSEM models of customer mood

The application of DSEM model in consumer research is mostly related to mood and feelings data. In the following section, the modelling of individual time-series is based on the data gathered on the convenient sample of 33 respondents (young consumers) from Southern part of Poland (university students)[2]. The data were taken from the systematic sample of time moments during the day (3 measurement occasions: in the morning, afternoon and evening). Because of P & P format of experience sampling form, single 10-point Likert scale of bi-polar mood was used, with no multi-item scales. Additionally, gender served as a covariate on respondent level only.

On the basis of intensive longitudinal data, three models were developed, namely uni-level model of time-series for N = 1, DSEM/RDSEM two-level models with random effects on respondent level and three-level DSEM model with random effects for respondent and time level. The final model of cross-classified dynamic confirmatory factor model are developed and presented, with Bayesian estimation of the parameters. In Bayesian estimation of the parameters, the Mplus 8.2 was used[3].

Because of multilevel cross-classified structure of data, the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) for both respondent and time levels have been calculated. The ICC shows the relationship between group-level and the sum of group-level and individual-level variability. The high ICC suggests strong inter-correlation within-level units and violation of independence of observation assumption. The formula of ICC is given in equation 11.

$$ICC = \frac{\sigma_B}{\sigma_W + \sigma_B} \tag{11}$$

[2] Convenient sample was used due to technical and organizational problems with random sample selection on individual level.

[3] In Bayesian estimation non-informative priors and two chains of MCMC were used (half of iteration were burnt). For observed dependent variable (Mood) and regression coefficients normal priors was used (0, infinity). For residual variances inverse gamma priors were used (–1, 0).

σ_B – between-level variance
σ_W – within-level variance

In order to calculate ICC, the baseline cross-classified model with random intercept of mood was calculated. The estimates for the baseline model with no predictors and latent variable structure is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Intraclass correlations

Level	Estimates of mood	ICC
Within	19.920	–
Between-time	0.192	0.009
Between-respondents	0.099	0.005

Source: own research based on Mplus 8.2.

The low value of the intraclass correlation coefficient indicates a very small unexplained variance of dependent variable (mood) on both levels and lack of necessity to include predictors from respondent- and time- level to explain the within-level inter-correlation.

In order to check this assumption, the within-level model and between-level models on respondent and time levels were estimated. The gender was used as predictor on the respondent level. The estimation of parameters, the autoregressive single-indicator factor model has been used. The stability of parameters estimation and distribution of key parameters (variance of mood and gender – mood regression) under study (trace plots and posterior distribution of parameters) is depicted on Figure 1.

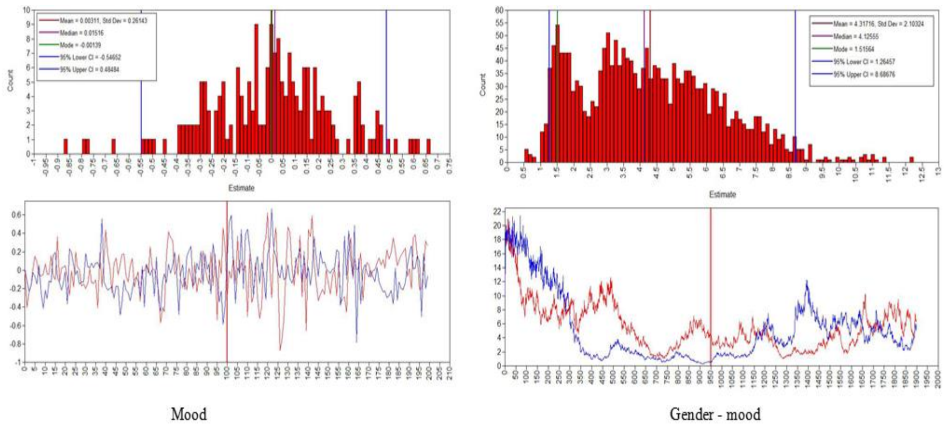

Figure 1. Distribution of parameters and trace plots of variable mood and regression gender-mood

Source: own research based on Mplus 8.2.

The parameters distribution of estimated parameters shows mood variances. The within-level model is presented in Table 2 (upper panel). The point estimate of the parameters is taken as a median of distribution. The lower panel presents two MCMC chains that show the stability of estimates across MCMC iterations.

Table 2 includes parameters of the within-level model. The mood is measured as single-item latent variable with fixed factor loading as 1. There is a significant and positive autocorrelation between factor and lagged factor, so the mood in *t-1* period influences the mood in *t*.

Table 2

Within level model

Variables	Estimates	Posterior s.d.	P-value
F –>Mood	1.000	0.000	0.000
F–1 –> F	0.250	0.050	0.000
Residual Mood	4.126	2.104	0.000
Residual F	15.014	2.350	0.000

Source: own research based on Mplus 8.2.

Between-level models are estimated in cross-classified framework of multilevel analysis because individual measurement moments are nested in time (days) and respondents, but the latter grouping variables are not hierarchical (each respondent is nested in various (all) time points and in each day are nested all of the respondents).

The between-day level model is presented in Table 3. On time level, no time-specific covariate is used, so the variance of mood factor and error variance of mood are calculated.

Table 3

Between-day level model

Variables	Estimates	Posterior s.d.	P-value
F –>Mood	1.000	0.000	0.000
Variance F	0.252	0.971	0.000
Residual Mood	0.277	1.296	0.000

Source: own research based on Mplus 8.2.

Variance of mood factor is significant, so it indicates the mood differences across days. The distribution of mood over week days shows a relatively higher level of positive mood at week-ends in comparison to the beginning of the week. It is shown in Figure 2.

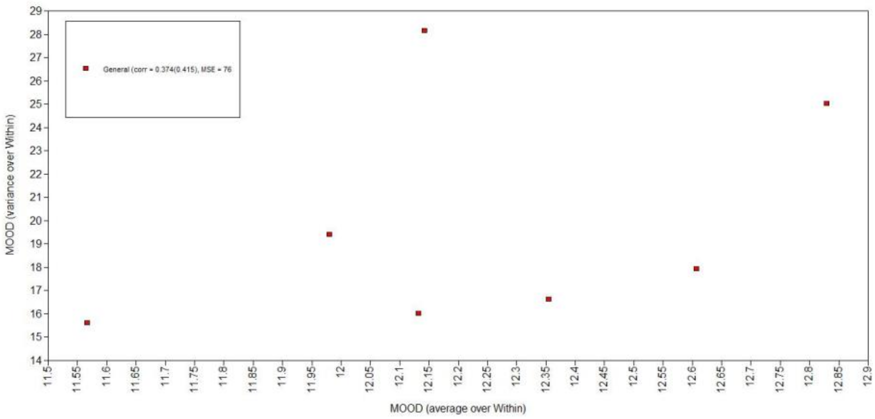

Figure 2. Means and variances of mood across weekdays
Source: own research based on Mplus 8.2.

The between-respondent level model is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Between – respondent level model

Variables	Estimates	Posterior s.d.	P-value
F –>Mood	1.000	0.000	0.000
Gender –> F	0.012	0.246	0.467
Residual Mood	0.154	0.211	0.000
Residual F	0.167	0.273	0.000

Source: own research based on Mplus 8.2.

Table 3 presents the parameters of the between-respondent level that include regression between gender (time-invariant covariate) and mood. The parameter is insignificant and therefore being the males (1) rising insignificantly mood by 0.012 in comparison to females (0). Significant disturbance term (residual F) shows that there are unobserved factors that may explain mood variability.

Conclusions

The non-significant gender parameter across respondents confirms the general presuppositions that such a volatile indicators of latent states as moods and feelings of happiness or satisfaction can hardly be explained by time- or respondent-invariant attributes. Therefore, one can stress that ”De Gustibus Non Est Explanandum” and the low ICC across time and respondents indicates no substantial predictors that explain the between-level variability of the mood. However, finding time- and respondent-varying covariate on within-level may enhance the explanatory power of the model.

Further development of mood measurement like dynamic factor analysis (DCFA), Dynamic IRT models (DIRT), Dynamic latent state-trait models (DLST) is needed. The DSEM models are promising methods of intensive longitudinal data analysis on respondent level that overcome the problems with ecological validity and accuracy of measurement scales that are used to identify very flexible states of consumer moods and feelings.

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Dynamiczne modele równań strukturalnych w ocenie chwilowej w badaniach konsumenckich

Słowa kluczowe: metoda próbkowania doświadczeń, ocena chwilowa klientów, modele dynamicznego równania strukturalnego

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest dostarczenie metodologicznych ram modelowania intensywnych danych wzdłużnych (ILD). Specyficzne rodzaje takich danych to nastroje konsumenckie i uczucia emocjonalne, które stanowią stany zadowolenia konsumenta. Proces badawczy ILD obejmuje oceny chwilowych stanów konsumenckich i prób procesowych, które charakteryzują się wyższą trafnością ekologiczną. W artykule opracowano

specjalny typ modeli strukturalnych, a mianowicie dynamiczne modele równań strukturalnych (DSEM) do analizy wielopoziomowych danych wzdłużnych. Modele budowane są na podstawie skali nastrojów konsumenckich. Dane zebrano z dogodnej próby 33 respondentów i systematycznej próby losowej momentów czasowych, która daje łącznie 640 obserwacji. Wyniki wskazują na nieistotną rolę charakterystyk społeczno-demograficznych respondentów (płci) w wyjaśnianiu bardzo zmiennych i niestabilnych stanów emocjonalnych klientów.

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Product-Service Systems as an Opportunity for the Enterprise Producing Injection Molds

JEL codes: L60, M11.

Keywords: Product-Service System, product, service, servitization

Summary. The aim of this article is to present the results of the literature analysis concerning products, services and production and service systems. On the basis of the analysis the differences between the product and services as well as the most important features of PSS systems were presented. Using the literature analysis, a conceptual model of a PSS system for a manufacturing company was created and discussed.

Introduction

The changes in the global economy, such as fast development of the service sector and servitization of the economy, together with strong competition among entrepreneurs and the demand for customers, are forcing producers to implement new solutions in their companies. Moreover, the clients' needs are becoming more and more complex. These needs are no longer met by the product itself, but by its utility, possibilities and results that it provides. The combination of all these factors prompts companies to go beyond production, to focus also on services and development of new solutions. An example of such solution are product-service systems, which combine the features of the manufactured products and the whole set of services associated with them, provided by the given production company. Providing the systemic solutions based on the combination of services and physical products is not only a possibility for a production company, but it is becoming a necessity to increase revenues and ensure a competitive position on the market. The goal of the article is to present the issues concerning products, services and product-service systems as business solutions for both producers and customers. The paper also aims at showing a conceptual model of a product-service system for companies producing injection molds and their clients.

The concept of a product

The product is a very dynamic category with different degrees of complexity. The marketing concept defines a product as a set of features and properties serving satisfaction of specific needs of the buyer, owner or user. In the economic meaning a product is an outcome of a production process, satisfying the consumer's needs. Holistically speaking, products can be: services, ideas, physical things, organizations, projects, meetings and other creations of human potential, interacting with the environment (Malcolm, Hugh, 2013, p. 45).

In the marketing theory, on the other hand, a product is anything that satisfies the human needs and what can be offered on the market. In other words, anything, service, idea or a connection of these elements, that can be an object of a market transaction. A product is a set of material and immaterial features including usability and functional, psychological and social benefits. For a manufacturer, a product is something that must be sold with a profit, whereas for the consumer, it is everything that can bring him satisfaction or provide some benefits (Boothroyd, Dewhurst, Knight, 2011, p. 30).

It is possible to distinguish various elements of a product, which together form the whole piece. An exemplary concept presents three components of a product:

a) the core – includes the elementary benefits referring to customers' needs, it is the essence of the product;
b) the real product – is made out of elements influencing the customers' perception of the product, among the mentioned components quality, brand, material, customer service or price can be distinguished;
c) the extended product – consists of additional benefits for the client, including: spare parts, delivery, user manual, warranty, credit, service (Michalski, 2009, p. 167).

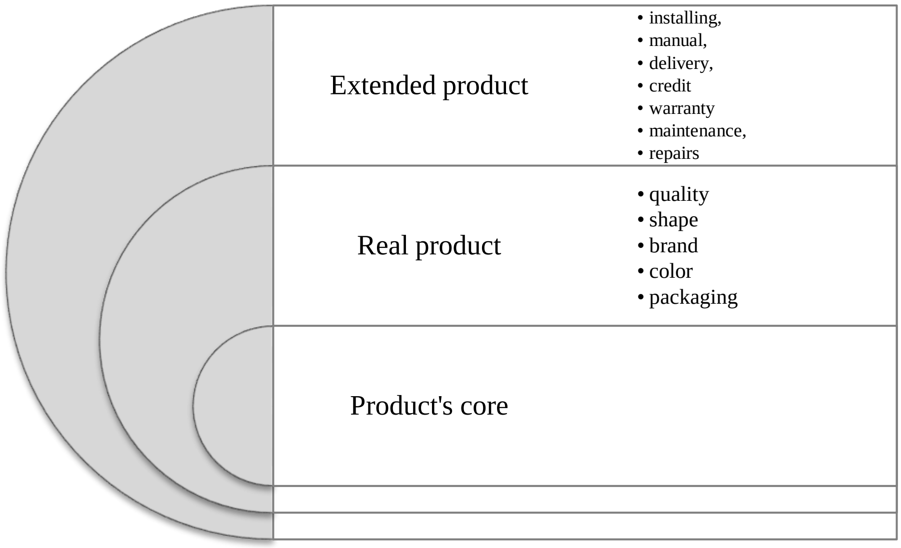

Figure 1. Product level structure

Source: Mruk, Pilarczyk, Szulce, 2005, p. 105.

Products can be divided into consumable and industrial. Consumable products are purchased in order to satisfy the individual needs of the buyer, the needs of his family or household. Industrial products, on the other hand, are purchased for the needs of producers, service enterprises, intermediaries and other organizations (Michalski, 2009, p. 169).

Characteristics of services

In the classical understanding, a service is defined as all activities that are directly or indirectly related to the satisfaction of human needs, however not to the production of objects (Lange, 1959, p. 50).

A service can be defined as a set of actions aimed at providing service content through service channels from their suppliers to their final recipients. A service is an activity in which the service provider seeks to change the existing state to the new one, requested by the customer (Sakao, Sandstrom, Matzen, 2007, pp. 590–604).

Another possibility is to describe a service as a set of functions offered to the client by the company. It is the effect of the activities carried out between the service provider and the client. In other words, s service is a number of activities done by the service provider in order to satisfy the customer’s needs (Hollins, Shinkins, 2009, p. 23).

A service can be presented as any activity or benefit one party may offer to another. In the most cases it is immaterial, it does not lead to obtaining property. The process of providing a service may be related to a material object, but does not have to (Kotler, 1994, p. 465).

Thanks to the service, a new value is created or the value of already existing material product is enhanced (Flejterski, Panasiuk, Perenc, Rosa, 2005, p. 41). Services may arise in the processes of providing (customer service), manufacturing, delivery of value (tangible or intangible), sales, including the buyer into the process (the buyer is part of this process, without him obtaining the result of the service is impossible) and experiencing a service (it is based on trust or material confirmation of service provision) (Borowski, Gaworski 2009, p. 28).

The service is a benefit or intangible activity, which is offered by one party to the other one. In comparison with the product, it does not necessarily have to be related to the sale of goods or services that can be purchased.

Differences between the product and the service

The first feature differentiating the product and the service is tangibility. The product is a material thing, it can be measured, touched, smelled and the client is ready to buy it at a specific price, while the service is immaterial, it cannot be seen or touched, it is a result of human activity. The next difference is the property right. The product is someone's property and can be resold to another person, e.g. house, flat, car. The service is not transferable and cannot be resold to another person. The service is the benefit offered by another person. Another issue differentiating a product and a service is the way of evaluation. The product is tangible, therefore it is easy to evaluate it. The items can be touched, they have some shape and appearance, quality, durability so that a client can immediately assess one. The evaluation of services is more difficult. Different service providers have different attitudes towards their activities so that every service is unique and unrepeatable. An important difference is also the client's satisfaction from the product and service. A customer can complain about the product or return it to the seller when he is displeased, whereas the service cannot be replaced while being provided. The client's engagement during purchasing products and services can be included in the differences too. The sale of the product can be one-time, the customer comes to buy the item and usually it takes place once. There is no personal interaction with the buyer, except for some particular circumstances. In the sector of services the clients' engagement is much greater than of products. The service provider must build a personal relationship with the buyer and next take care of it, otherwise the sale will be unsuccessful. Resources can also be included in the differences. Products usually must be stored, in order to be used afterwards. The storage of services is unnecessary, they are used at any given time if needed. The last difference is the way of generation. The product is manufactured and later it is the object of a transaction, the service, on the other hand, is being generated and consumed at the same time.

Characteristics of product-service systems

Times Product-service systems are significantly related to productization and servitization. Servitization is the phenomenon of offering a product together with services in order to satisfy all the needs of people interested in buying them or by expanding the service that is an element of a given product. Productization is a holistic approach, aimed at systematizing development and creation of services, without omitting any of their elements (Jaakkola, Orava, Varjonen, 2007, p. 15). This also refers to activities related to offering services related to the product itself, systematizing its various components (Valminen, Toivonen, 2012, pp. 273–289).

Product-service systems are described as a marketable set of products and services capable of meeting the user's needs together. The product service ratio in that set can vary depending on the function or the economic value (Goedkoop, van Halen, te Riele, Rommens, 1999). In these systems traditional methods of product exploitation are replaced by the possibility of satisfying the customers' needs by providing dematerialized services, which are often associated with changes in the ownership structure (Mont, 2002, pp. 237–245).

Product-service systems are the market offers combining products and services, presenting them as separate solutions for consumers (Goedkoop et al., 1999). In contrast to traditional services connected to products (guarantees), the service in the system is significantly increasing the consumers' utility value.

For example, by purchasing a copying machine the customer can get access to service warranty. However, that warranty does not have particular influence on the interaction between the customer and the machine or experiences related to it. On the contrary, in the case of product-service systems, both the product and the service are part of the solution, and therefore are important for the customers' interactions and experiences connected to them. An example of such system can be a system of copying machines. Such product-service system is made up of photocopiers (products) which are easily accessible to consumers for self-service purposes (service). The benefits of this system for consumers include the unique cost of purchasing professional machines, but also the access to on-site services, such as designing, binding, folding, cutting, laminating and document scanning by staff of the service place.

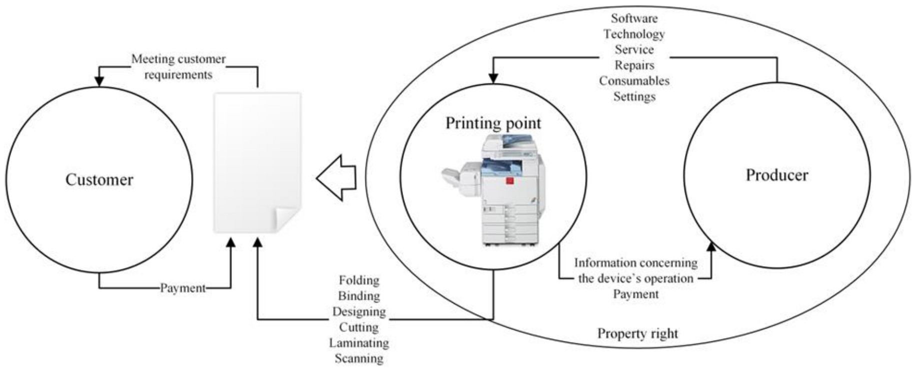

Figure 2. Product-service system scheme

Source: own elaboration.

Evaluating such a system the clients will take into consideration the aspects of the product such as effectiveness and productivity, but also the aspects connected to the customer service such as politeness of the staff, the atmosphere of the printing place and also the quality of the final result.

Product-service systems consist of three fundamental elements:

– the product – the physical right good manufactured in order to be sold, satisfying the buyer's requirements and needs,
– the service – the activity, which is an added value for the recipient, which is implemented on the basis of commercial rules,
– the system – the set of elements and dependencies between the product and the service (Baines et al., 2007, pp. 1543–1552).

To other very important elements of described systems, which influence the delivery of solutions and satisfaction of the customer's needs, belong also:

– infrastructure – artefacts of various type required mainly to deliver a product or service (IT systems, technologies),
– suppliers' net – producers/suppliers and partners (repair workshops, services, sellers) (Lim, Kim, Hong, Park, 2012, pp. 42–53).

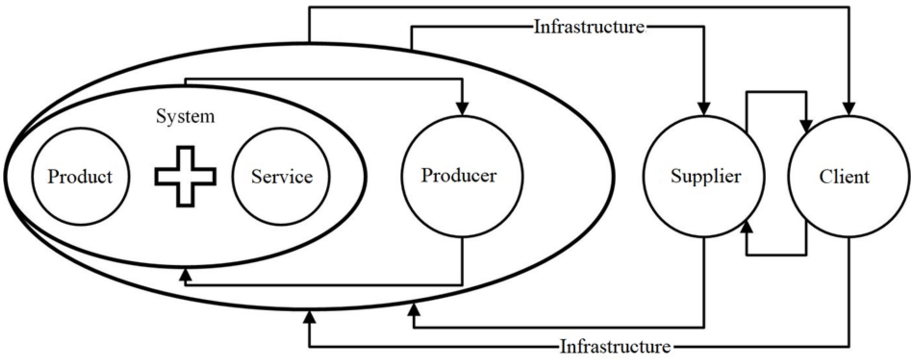

Figure 3. Elements of a Product-Service System

Source: own elaboration.

Product-service systems lead to re-recognition and re-understanding of development strategies and valuable goals of manufacturing enterprises. In addition, the traditional product values are changed for service-oriented values. Product-service systems are classified on product-oriented, use-oriented and result-oriented (Tukker, 2003, pp. 109–118; Baines et al., 2007, pp. 1543–1552; Sakao, Shimomura, 2007, pp. 590–604; Yang, Moore, Pu, Wong, 2009, pp. 224–235). In the product-oriented systems, manufacturers provide products and services related to the consumers who have the ownership of the products. The services include maintenance, repairs, distribution, reuse, recycling and helping customers to optimize the product's use through trainings and counselling. In such a case, the product is perceived as the means of delivering services. In the use-oriented systems producers owning the products give the customers a possibility to use the products and their features. Typical examples of systems from this category is lending/renting, leasing or sharing a product. In the result-oriented systems producers supply clients with a result or ability instead of a product. The producer offers adjusting the service in order to grant a particular result and the customers pay only for that result.

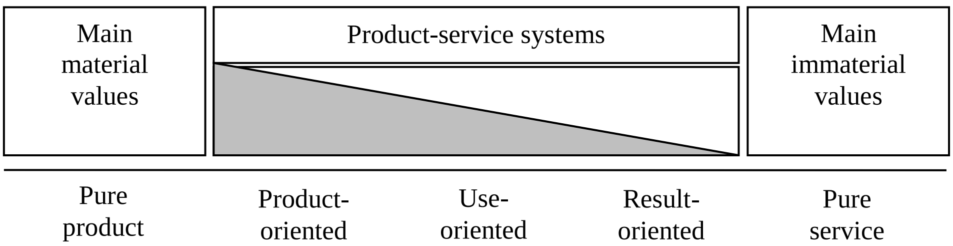

Figure 3. The essence of Product-Service Systems

Source: Tischner, Verkuijl, Tukker, 2002.

Changing the way of functioning, to base it on product-service systems, is the strategic decision for a traditional enterprises. The organization has to move from designing and selling physical products to designing and selling systems of products and services which together can satisfy the needs and requirements of the users. Such a shift requires high level of innovation and the ability to change structural aspects of the organization (Manzini, Vezzoli, 2003, pp. 851–857). It is worth noting that the use of discussed systems may put the producer in a better strategic position, closer to clients, which would enable making more flexible and convenient offers for them.

Product-service systems presuppose various benefits. For the companies they bring primarily new market possibilities related to broadening their offer, possibility to increase the value added for the customers and also improvement and continuity of the relations with the customers. Another very important issue for the enterprise in this model refers to the access to the data and information about the product while it is being used by the client. One of the major advantages for the client in this system is high quality and big number of offers. The supplier bears the responsibility for the product, which frees the customer from certain obligations. From the customers' perspective, the fact that their needs are better satisfied thanks to these systems plays also an important role. There are some benefits for the environment too, they are connected mainly to dematerializing, lower flow of materials and consumption of energy, longer product's life-cycle, decreased waste production and more efficient use of products. Social benefits are associated with the creation of cooperation networks, diversification of markets, awareness of the roles of stakeholders and access of poor people to basic services through municipal support systems. In economic terms, the benefits are related to new market possibilities, increased competition, more efficient operations and strong concentration on innovations (Mont, 2002, pp. 237–245). From technical perspective, the benefits concern the possibility of continuous monitoring of product operation and collection of information regarding possible errors in its work by the manufacturer, as well as the development of more innovative and more durable products with a range of related services.

A technical product-service system – the case of injecting forms

An example of servitization in production companies may be a product-service system for injection molds. In such a case, the enterprise manufacturing injection molds instead of only selling their product, offers to their clients a wide range of services related to it.

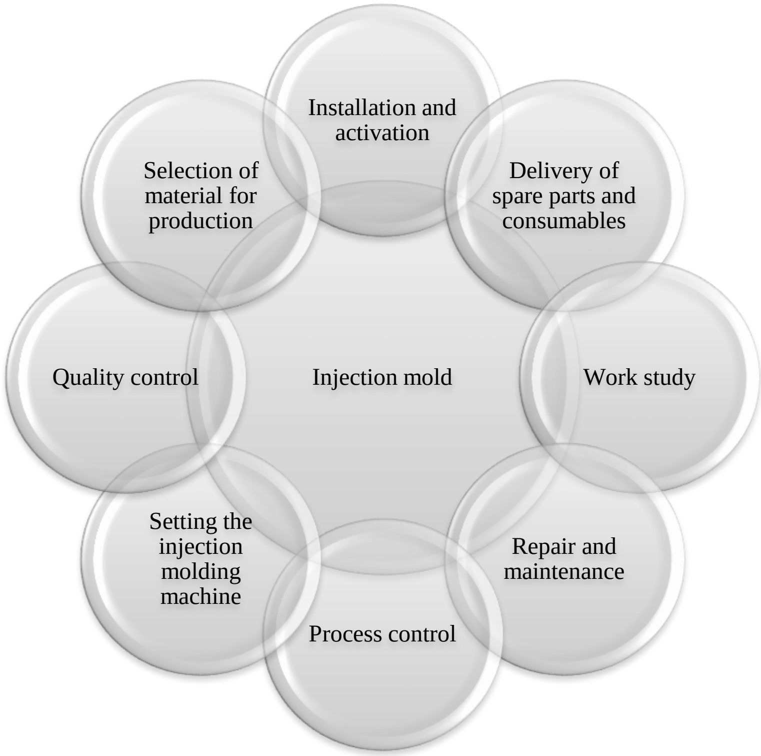

Figure 4. The essence of Product-Service Systems

Source: own elaboration.

It is worth noting that in this model the supplier maintains the property right of his product, here – the injection mold. The company delivers injection molds to the client, charging the previously determined fee per each molded piece, as well as the monthly subscription fee. In this case, the manufacturer of a form offers services related to exploitation and professional maintenance of a form. The supplier provides repairs, cleaning and alterations of the product too. On the client's request, with additional payment, organizes trainings of safe and efficient usage of forms, as well as counselling regarding the whole injection process or work study. It is worth noting that the client's need refers only to using the injection mold and to making molded pieces, not possessing the form and managing its work and exploitation.

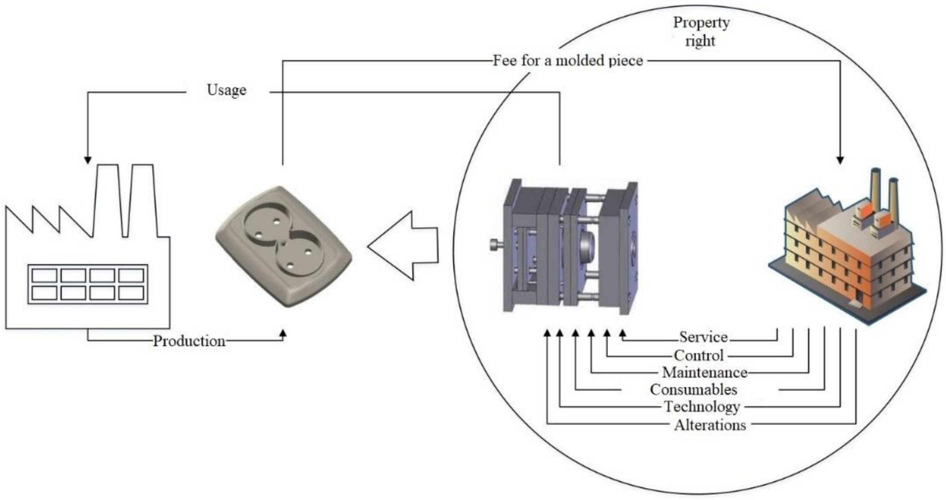

Figure 5. The concept of a Product-Service System for injection molds

Source: own elaboration.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Product-Service System for the injection molds concept

The system characteristics	
Ownership of the product	Producer/supplier
User	Client
The level of product use	Adjusted to client's needs
Relationship between the producer/supplier and the client	Permanent during the use of the form by the client
Financial flows	Subscription fee plus a fee per each molded piece produced
Impact on the environment	Low

Source: own elaboration.

This approach presupposes a number of benefits for both parties of the transaction. The client is focused solely on his core business – production and sales of molded pieces. He is neither interested in the activities related to the manufacturing of a new injection mold, machines used in this process, nor needs additional designers. The company saves also time and resources. Thanks to this approach, the customer can increase his production, open an additional department instead of the toolroom (if he had one).

While using product-service systems the manufacturer has constant access to them, therefore he controls their work and collects data about their usage, failure frequency and possible faults in the production process caused by the injection molds. This information enables improving the molds' or cooling systems' parameters, but also modifying or creating a completely new injection method. It contributes to the development of recommendations on how to use the form in a particular company as well. The data collected in this way let to optimize the maintenance schedule, reducing costs and the impact on the environment. Another benefit of that information for the producer is a possibility to introduce new services related to them, such as assembly, optimizing exchange of die, trainings or production counselling. Solutions of this type enable better modernizations and creation of innovative ideas for injecting molds. It is worth noting that thanks to this solution, the mold producer gets access to plastics technology. The supplier of injection molds earns both on production of molds and on services connected to them. It is also in his interest, to produce molds from high quality materials, so that the product has a long life-cycle and is failure-free, reducing therefore costs of potential repairs. Thanks to that, the negative impact on the environment is diminished, so are the company's expenses.

An important issue is the property right that, as mentioned before, is not transferred to the client. The customer pays only for the number of produced molded pieces, so for the actual use of the mold. After the period of usage by the client, the mold is returned to the producer and can be shared with another customer on the same basis. The enterprise can also renovate or alter the mold according to the requirements of the current or new client. This approach significantly reduces costs for both the producer and the customer.

Conclusion

Until now, products and services were perceived as two separate sectors of the market economy. Product-service systems give the possibility to join products and services in various combinations that satisfy the customers' needs. Thanks to these systems, products and services no longer go as two separate concepts, but merge into one. The integration of tangible products with intangible services becomes inevitable even for the production companies, which used to focus mainly on manufacturing and sales of the products. The integration of the product and the service in the industrial sector or beyond it can lead to creation of many innovative solutions. Product-service systems presuppose many economic, social and environmental benefits. The benefits of these systems concern all parties of the transaction.

The goal of the article that was achieved was to present issues related to products, services and product-service systems, as well as to show a conceptual model of a product-service system for enterprises producing injection molds and their clients.

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Systemy produktowo-usługowe jako szansa dla przedsiębiorstwa produkującego formy wtryskowe

Słowa kluczowe: system produktowo-usługowy, produkt, usługa, serwicyzacja

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie wyników analizy literaturowej dotyczącej produktów, usług i systemów produkowo-usługowych. Na podstawie przeprowadzonej analizy przedstawiono różnice między produktem i usługami oraz najważniejsze cechy systemów PSS. Dzięki wykorzystaniu analizy literatury stworzono i omówiono koncepcyjny model systemu produktowo-usługowego dla przedsiębiorstwa produkcyjnego.

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Viral Marketing Communication for Brand*

JEL codes: M30, M31, M37, D83

Keywords: viral marketing communication, viral, generating activity online, effectiveness of marketing communication, brand

Summary. In the current new economic reality, the marketing experts can and should use internet as the powerful information and communication, as well as sales channel. The article aims at providing an overview of viral marketing communication related to the brand in the internet, from the theoretical and empirical perspective. The research methodology covered literature studies, secondary research, including internet resources, case studies of viral campaigns for selected brands, and primary research by means of an online survey. Results of conducted research prove the attractiveness, effectiveness, and growing role of viral communication campaigns associated with various brands on the internet. They produce various benefits, such as creation of brand community, generating activity on-line, publicity effect, creating positive experience for stakeholders, enhanced satisfaction and closer participant-brand relationship, as well as measurable sales results.

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Introduction

An important role in the effective management in the current market conditions is played by mainstreaming of circumstances such as: development of resources and functionalities of the internet, especially the social networks; specific customer expectations; fashionable trends related to sustainable development; social responsibility and care for social issues; technical and technological progress; and strong competition between the market players.

New economic reality creates circumstances in which marketers can and should (Roberts, Zahay, 2013; Scott, 2015; Tarczydło, Kondak, Konior, 2018): use internet as a powerful information and sales channel; collect more complete information on the markets, clients, and other stakeholders; get involved in social networks to strengthen and enhance the signals related to the brand; send advertisements, coupons, samples and information to partners; gain access to mobile clients by means of mobile marketing; produce and sell individualised goods; improve the processes of shopping, recruitment, training as well as the internal and external communication; and increase cost efficiency by smart use of opportunities created by the internet. Therefore, the subject of this study is the selected area of viral communication in the internet.

In an effort to find an answer to the following question: what is the role of viral campaigns in marketing communication for today brands, the research encompassed literature studies, analysis of secondary sources of information, including online resources, selected case studies, and primary research by means of an online survey.

For the purposes of this article, it is necessary to define the basic concepts.

Basis for viral marketing communication for brand

Popular understanding of viral communication is linked with viral tools (such as short videos, postings, memes, etc.) and their spreading on the internet (Bowden, 2017; Nalty, 2010; O'Guinn, Allen, Semenik, 2012). In the online resources the term "viral advertisement" (Hackley, 2010) is used, however it raises objections since an advertisement is defined as a paid, addressed at anonymous recipient form of mass communication with the market. Quite unlike the viral communication, which is aimed at generating news to stir a spontaneous interest among internet users to a degree which makes them regard it as worth sharing with friends (a completely different mechanism).

In practice, various tools of marketing viral communication are used, the so-called news and/or virals (Nalty, 2010; Roberts, Zahay, 2013): short videos, images, games, infographics, memes, etc.

It is accepted that marketing communication (in the past called promotion) encompasses a set of activities and measures by means of which the company provides the market with information on the market object, shapes the purchasers' needs, directs the demand, and reduces its price flexibility (Taranko, 2015; Wiktor, 2013). Today's communication acts and/or processes are characterised by bi-directionality, interactivity, digitalisation, as well as integrated and multimedia activities (Kitchen, Proctor, 2015; Stawarz, 2015).

Viral marketing communication constitutes a part of the so called holistic marketing communication for brand (Franzen, Moriarty, 2015, Keller, 2013; Pogorzelski, 2015), which includes (Jose, Romero, Consolacion, 2013; Tarczydło, 2014a): a creative concept, identifying partners, engagement of experts, knowledge of purchasers' preferences with respect to the values presented in the communications (reference to stakeholders' emotions and creation of experience), objectives, tools (appropriate, innovative, exceptional when compared to the competitors), adequate and multimedia communication channels, schedule of activities, the scale of the undertakings which guarantees maintaining the target audience attention, methodologies for estimating results, and flexibility. It is associated with inducing the human central nervous system, especially the brain, and specifically the conscious and subconscious processes (Tarczydło, 2014c). In the centre of attention it places the targeted recipient who is guided in his/her behaviour by the reason, heart, and spirit. This model incorporates various techniques, stakeholders' involvement, technical and technological progress, and development of functionalities of the internet.

The viral marketing communication essentially aims at making the internet users spread the viral message voluntarily (Finne, Grönroos, 2017). This aim is achieved by a variety of channels, such as social networks, internet fora, blogs or content aggregators (Tarczydło, 2014b). Usually the process results in a snowball effect: internet users who are infected by the message pass it over to further participants. The viral spontaneously reaches the expanding consumer groups at no additional costs to the marketer.

The procedure for conducting a viral campaign may include the following stages (Chaffey, Smith, 2017; Scott, 2015): 1) studies focused on the buyers (defining the user) and the circumstances in which they function; 2) design of the viral and making it available in the appropriate place and time; 3) involving the opinion leaders and celebrities, finding partners, if possible, to have a one covert brand; 4) monitoring the developments; 5) estimating benefits for the brand and all the partners; 6) controlling the results and undertaking further actions. As part of the campaign, cyclical actions can be implemented to maintain interest, and for this purpose new virals need to be created.

It should be stressed that viral marketing communication constitutes a part of the activities in the area of viral marketing which belongs to today's marketing measures, there are also proponents of such a scientific concept (Chaffey, Smith, 2017). Viral marketing is a set of marketing activities (such as research, buyer's behaviour, communication, analytic processes, etc.) which result in a piece of news being passed around by the internet users in a way similar to a virus. In this study, the analysis is deliberately limited to viral marketing communication online as a part of viral marketing concept which evolved from whisper marketing consisting in spreading of word-of-mouth to create a wide media coverage for the brand, product or event.

In the economic reality, it is not always the marketer who initiates the analysed phenomena. In the era of prosumption expressed through increased activity of the internet users and their desire to get involved in marketing activities (Pogorzelski, 2015; Scott, 2015), the viral related to a brand may actually have its origin in their community. Viral marketing communication is facilitated by the fact that people enjoy being in the centre of attention, and by initiating interesting subjects for conversations they are stimulated to become active and involved (Jose, Romero, Consolacion, 2013; Tarczydło, 2014c; Tarczydło, Kondak, Konior, 2018) which is accompanied by emotions. The fact that information is passed by a person we know clearly helps in this respect. The affect towards the person is transposed to the category which is the subject of conversation. The stakeholders of the viral marketing communication are organisations, brands, ordinary internet users, celebrities, experts, and all interested parties.

Overview of reports from thematically related research

In the accessible sources of information, the following thematically related research reports are of interest: “Konsumpcja treści online a marketing” (Kolenda, 2017), “Oglądanie różnych rodzajów contentu tv/video na różnych urządzeniach” (Hupa, 2018a), “Wideo w internecie (Interaktywnie.com, 2017a), “Content marketing” (Interaktywnie.com, 2017b), “Social Media 2016” (Niżnik, 2018), “Rynek reklamy internetowej w Polsce – kontekst i content marketing 2015/2016” (Netsprint, 2018), “Marketing szeptany” (Interaktywnie.com, 2010). Their analysis provided valuable information related to viral marketing communication for brand.

Viral content is made available predominantly via internet communicators, and the most popular applications among the internet users are: WhatsApp (800 million users); Facebook Messenger (700 million); QQ Mobile (603 million); WeChat (600 million); Skype (300 million); others: Viber, LINE, Kik, BlackBerry Messenger, KakaoTalk (Kolenda, 2017).

A video containing valuable content is one of the most readily shared viral materials online, whereas social media users’ preferences turn to short films on music and telediscs, sports coverage, information reported by acquaintances, content uploaded by influencers/vloggers (Hupa, 2018b).

Video materials which attract attention to the largest degree and therefore increase the chances for subsequent sharing are: surprising, moving, exhilarating, striking, appalling (Interaktywnie.com, 2017a).

Opinions published online are reliable for 75% of Poles, each internet user passes information on the content found on the internet to on average five further persons (Interaktywnie.com, 2010).

Looking from the perspective of practical aspects, the most effective forms of communication are the forms which engage the audience in a subtle way and influence their behaviour.

Almost 16% of marketers pointed out to viral communication as the top priority in the activities online (Netsprint, 2018).

Content most often shared by Facebook users in their profile is funny graphics/films (34%); charity actions/social campaigns aimed at helping others (31%); charity actions/social campaigns aimed at helping animals (31%); national/international news (29%); articles/interviews/sessions/short commentaries, etc. (22%); content from official brand fanpages (18%); blogger/vlogger publications (18%) (Niżnik, 2018).

Expert assessment (ranging between 1 – unsatisfactory and 5 – very good) showed the following effectiveness of the tools applied in the framework of viral marketing: content video, i.e. video material with valuable content: 4.5; articles: 4.4; infographics: 4.2; photographs: 3.5; when the activities referred to above are incorporated in organisation management, they have an impact on the attainment of the following goals: improved image – 4.7; supporting other marketing activities – 4.4; sales activities – 3.8 (Interaktywnie.com, 2017a, http).

Analysis of available reports supports the view that the studied area is important, and revealed a research gap consisting in lack of studies on the role of viral actions/campaigns in marketing communication for brand.

Methodology and results of own research

For the purposes of this study, case studies have been conducted on viral campaigns of selected brands, as well as a survey among internet users to obtain their opinions on the phenomenon of viral communication.

Some types of content are passed around by the internet users more readily than other. The examples of campaigns and undertakings with viral element provided in Table 1 were observed during the case study research.

The presented examples provide the basis for the conclusion that viral modes of transmitting content effectively guarantee the active involvement of internet users, as well as other stakeholders (enterprises, internet portals, celebrities, bloggers, YouTubers, etc.). In the analysed cases, the viral materials were: films, textual elements, photographs, images, and infographics.

Table 1

Undertakings with viral effect for selected brands

Name of campaign or undertaking	Description of activities	Viral effects obtained
“Star Wars: Classic Stories”	Following the release by De Agostini in January 2018 of the series of cartoons, during the period of two months a cooperation was initiated with journalists and well known bloggers who were interested in the subjects related to Star Wars and cartoons, under the motif “For true Jedis only”. Twenty two personalised messages were sent with the motto and a letter to the recipient	Upon the receipt of the messages, the journalists and influencers readily published content related to the campaign, including: – 40 articles and short texts related to the Star Wars cartoons funny pictures in social networks, – the published content triggered the viral effect. They were shared by the readers, which resulted in the campaign reaching 630 thousand consumers. The number of views totalled 400 thousand (Wołczuk, 2018)
Promotional campaign for Vogue Polska magazine.	The first issue of the Vogue Polska took place on 14 February 2018. The premier edition featured a controversial cover by Jurgen Teller with two internationally renowned Polish models Anja Rubik and Małgorzata Bela. The project stirred emotions and received a widespread response among internet users, but also other stakeholders	The photograph on the cover echoed in the social networks, resulting in postings, commentaries, as well as Real-Time Marketing cover remakes. The access to new projects was provided by, among others: Wavelo, MyTaxi, official fanpage in the Krakow AGH Facebook site, “Polska w dużych dawkach”, CoffeeDesk, SOLGAZ, Onet Rano, Jakub Kralka, as well as ASZ Dziennik (Kuchta, 2018). According to data published in the Wirtualne Media portal (2018), the premier issue of the Vogue Polska magazine was the subject of 75 thousand entries. The content related to the magazine obtained 1.3 million likes, 60 thousand comments and 4.7 thousand shares. Moreover, a well-known YouTuber Olfaktoria made a film entitled “VOGUE POLSKA - HIT czy KIT?” (HIT or CRAP), which was viewed by over 171 thousand internet users (Goldmann, 2018). A vivid discussion developed under the screen with almost one thousand comments. The video material was also shared when using official Facebook profile

Source: own work on the basis of the conducted research.

An internet survey has been conducted for the purposes of this article and its results have been presented below.

The survey involved 235 persons, 46% women and 54% men. The majority of respondents (58%) were 21–23 years old. The age structure of the remaining participants: below 18 years (2% respondents), 18–20 years (23%), 24–30 years (3%) and 4% over 30 years. The research on the internet was conducted to increase the probability of approaching the users who came across the viral marketing communications practices. Digitalised respondents spend a significant part of their time surfing the web and communicating with others via the social networks. In particular, the attention was focussed on obtaining the respondents' views on methodological use of viral marketing communications.

The first part of the survey covered questions related to identifying the discussed phenomenon and the capability to define it. All the respondents declared they had continuous access to the internet via their mobile phone, and almost 65% indicated they were familiar with the concept of viral marketing communication as a modern marketer's tool.

The respondents were asked to list the types of virals; the following results were obtained:

- nearly 90% of the responses mentioned video films as viral tools,
- slightly fewer respondents (87%) pointed out to images,
- to 25% of the respondents such a tool can be slogan or a textual information,
- approximately 11% of the survey participants indicated computer games and audio files.

To sum up, the viral marketing communication tools which were listed most often by the respondents were video films and graphics files, e.g. postings and photos.

In the quest for information on the popularity and significance of the viral marketing communication, the respondents were asked to specify the brands which were the object of such activities. The participants most often mentioned the representatives of the mobile telephony sector. The questions concerned also the impact of the analysed activities on the recognition of the brand which served as an umbrella for the viral campaign or action.

Figure 1 shows that in the respondents' opinions actions involving viral marketing communications related to brand have a significant impact on brand recognition according to 24% of the respondents, and have a limited impact on brand recognition for 67% of the respondents. The remaining members of the surveyed group (9%) indicated that viral elements in the campaigns have no impact on brand recognition. In the authors' view the responses can be interpreted as indicating that the respondents were not aware which brand was the object of the viral marketing communications activities.

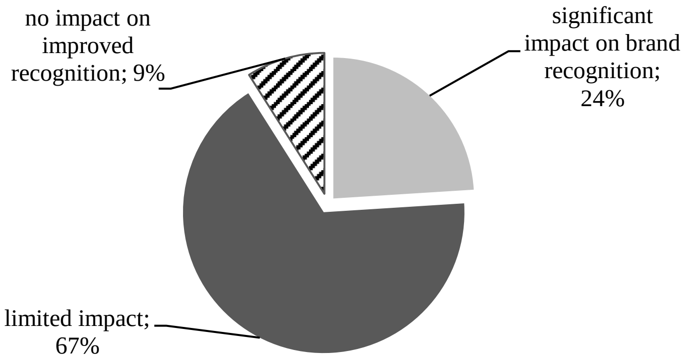

Figure 1. Use of viral marketing communications and brand recognition in the respondents' opinions

Source: own work on the basis of the conducted research.

To the question if the viral marketing communications stimulated them to use the offer (Fig. 2), the majority of the respondents (66%) answered negatively, whereas only 18% responded positively.

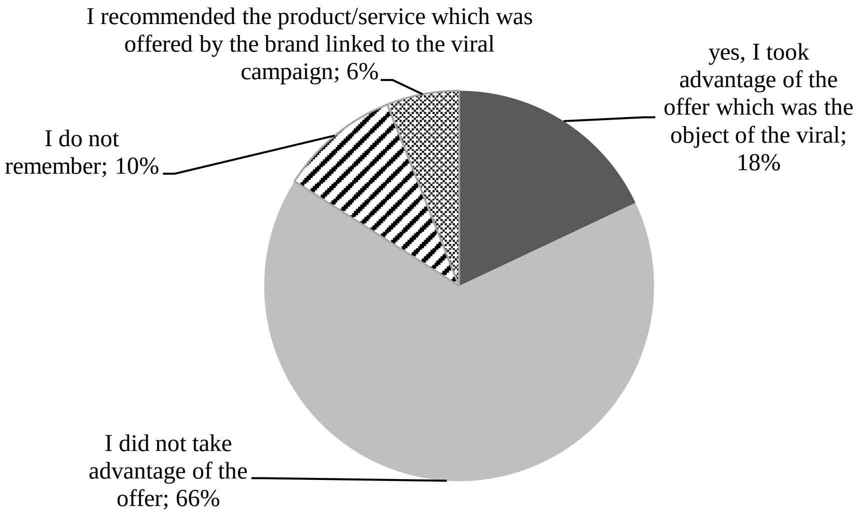

Figure 2. Viral marketing communications and use of the related products

Source: own work on the basis of the conducted research.

Only 6% of the respondents declared they had recommended the product to friends/family as a result of their involvement in/knowledge about the viral communications campaign related to the brand which served as an umbrella for the products/services.

The respondents provided their opinion on the motives for launching a brand-related viral campaigns (multiple-choice questions with a possibility to choose more than one answer):

- over 83% of the respondents think that viral communications campaigns launched for the benefit of a brand were aimed at increasing sales of the concerned products and services,
- slightly fewer, i.e. 74%, of the respondents pointed to the desire to expand the brand community,
- more than half of the survey participants (52%) expressed the opinion that the activities are aimed at stimulating the involvement of the internet users,
- 23% of the surveyed responded that viral communications campaigns are organised because of the presence and popularity of such activities in today's market environment (i.e. they are fashionable),
- over 15% of the respondents indicated the provision of entertainment and obtaining active leads as the main reasons for using the analysed campaigns.

The survey participants were also asked about the role played by the viral marketing communications in the current activities constituting methodological brand creation. Almost all of the respondents (90%) stated that viral marketing communications were a proper tool for brand creation in modern times. Only 10% of the respondents expressed their negative attitude to the analysed activities. The most often indicated risks involved in the use of viral marketing communications for brand promotion included:

- stimulating anger/irritation among people,
- the risk of reaching a wrong destination,
- poor alignment with the other elements of the campaign for brand promotion,
- the risk of losing control over the propagated viral.

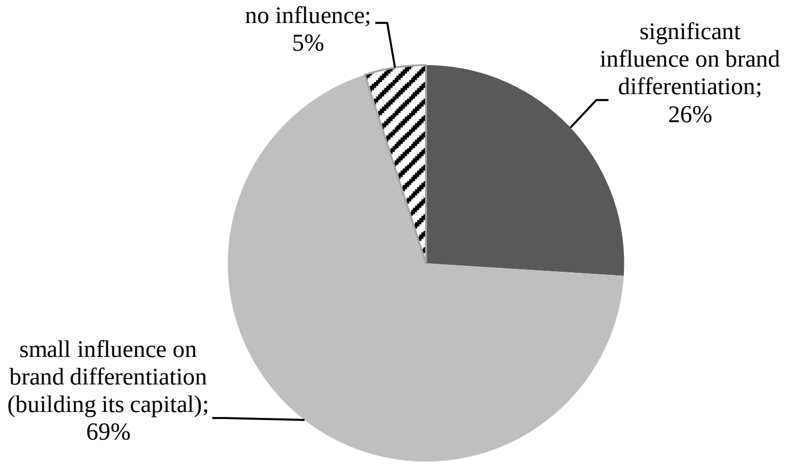

Figure 3. Viral marketing campaign as a tool which differentiates a brand from the competitors (expands its capital)

Source: own work on the basis of the conducted research.

Approximately one third (26%) of the surveyed think that the use of viral marketing communication allows for effective differentiation of the brand from the competitors. According to 5% of the respondents, viral communication has no influence on the creation of brand capital. A significant majority of participants in the survey stated that the analysed activities had a limited impact on brand differentiation, which has led to the authors' opinion that the respondents' awareness of the effects of viral marketing communication is low, which increases the attractiveness of this tool among the marketers.

The respondents pointed out the benefits and weaknesses related to the viral communication campaigns:

a) to 85% of the surveyed viral campaigns provide a low-cost possibility to reach potential consumers;
b) 70% of the respondents indicated that an ordinary image file can become a viral element;
c) to 54% of the surveyed enhancing the brand value, awareness and position is of secondary importance;
d) 43% of the respondents think that the fact of free propagation of the viral campaign constitutes an advantage;

e) the most important weaknesses of the viral campaigns were: critical opinions and untrue rumours which damage the brand (66% of the respondents) and modifications resulting in the change of message (65% of the respondents);
f) in the opinion of the participants, lack of control over propagation of the elements of the viral campaign, as well as stopping the viral plays a secondary role (according to 50% of respondents); of secondary importance is also the possibility that the message arrives at an undesired location (32% of respondents).

Conclusions

The results of the conducted literature studies, analysis of research performed to date, case studies of selected viral campaigns for brand, as well as the authors' primary research, lead to the conclusion that the role of a methodically implemented viral marketing communication is growing in the current market conditions. Research confirmed attractiveness and effectiveness of the analysed activities within viral marketing communication for brand. Analysed campaigns produce various benefits, such as creation of brand community, generating activity online, publicity effect, creating positive experience for stakeholders, enhanced satisfaction and closer participant-brand relationship, as well as measurable sales results. At the same time they pose a threat due to the virus mechanism and unpredictable internet users' behaviour.

The strength of the analysed activities is derived from the fact that a viral may be an ordinary image file or a film recorded by means of a mobile phone, which is highly accepted by the mobile and digitalised stakeholders who engage in the world of brand.

As a consequence of development of IT systems supporting marketing activities online, organisations are capable of indicating who should be targeted and by which effective means, and how it can be used for the benefit of the brand they own.

From the marketers' perspective, viral campaigns related to brand have proved effective in attracting and engaging internet users. This allows effective spending of the budgets allocated among other to marketing activities, distinguishing oneself from the competitors, reaching a larger audience in the most effective way, building relations by creative experiences, building a community around a brand, and generating various benefits for all the involved entities.

Undertakings in the analysed area match very well the current market tendencies. It has been observed that viral marketing communication campaigns produce above-average results with high degree of participant acceptance and attractive costs incurred by the marketers.

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Wirusowa komunikacja marketingowa na rzecz marki

Słowa kluczowe: wirusowa komunikacja marketingowa, viral, generowanie ruchu w sieci, skuteczność komunikacji marketingowej, marka

Streszczenie. Nowa rzeczywistość gospodarcza powoduje, że marketerzy mogą i powinni wykorzystać internet jako istotny kanał informacyjno-komunikacyjny i sprzedażowy. Celem artykułu było przybliżenie wirusowej komunikacji marketingowej na rzecz marki w sieci, w ujęciu teoretycznym i empirycznym. Metodyka badawcza objęła studia literaturowe, analizę wtórnych źródeł informacji, w tym zasobów internetowych, studia przypadków kampanii wirusowych dla wybranych marek oraz badania pierwotne z wykorzystaniem ankiety internetowej. Przeprowadzone badania potwierdziły atrakcyjność, skuteczność i wzrastającą rolę wirusowych kampanii komunikacyjnych wokół marek w internecie. Przynoszą one różnorodne korzyści, takie jak: budowanie społeczności marki, generowanie ruchu w sieci, efekt publicity, kreowanie pozytywnych doświadczeń interesariuszy, wzrost satysfakcji czy zacieśnianie relacji uczestnik-marka, a także wymierne wyniki sprzedażowe.

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Tourist Space and its Role in the Activities of Tourism Enterprises

JEL codes: M30, R11, Z32

Keywords: tourism space, tourist enterprise, business environment

Summary. The tourist space is very diverse. It is shaped by both natural and anthropogenic factors. For many entities, it is of key importance in operations. Tourism is a spatial phenomenon – its essence is based on moving people in space and using assets and infrastructure. It requires a special reference to individual elements of space. Tourism enterprises base their activities on spatial conditions, but also affect the changes taking place in the environment themselves. The aim of this study is to show the key role of spatial aspects in the operation of tourism enterprises. The work consists of two parts – literature analysis of the problem and presenting the empirical study. In the second part, an attempt was made to present entrepreneurs' opinions on the role of space in their activities. The survey was carried out by means of a diagnostic survey among tourist service providers (owners of hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, carriers). The research was carried out in 2018 on a sample of a total of 34 respondents from the Pomorskie Voivodeship. The results show that space is a key element of the business conditions of the surveyed enterprises. The surveyed entrepreneurs undertake to a large extent activities favoring the geographical environment, being aware of its impact on the results of their activities.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to show the key role of spatial aspects in the operation of tourism enterprises. The literature analysis method and the diagnostic survey method were used to achieve the goal.

Literature analysis clearly emphasizes the key importance of space in the development of tourism, and thus tourism enterprises. The specificity of tourist enterprises' operations is mainly based on servicing tourist traffic in a given space. This space is the basic element of the company's environment. No enterprise can exist in isolation from its surroundings. Therefore, it is essential for tourists that the elements of the surroundings related to space, such as value, attraction, infrastructure or tourist accessibility, should find a suitable place. In literature, many authors emphasize this fact and give space an important place in the company's activity.

The primary study carried out by means of a diagnostic survey was made in the form of a standardized survey carried out among participants of the Gdynia Maritime Economy Forum in 2018, participants of the seminar "Tourism from the Sea". 36 entities expressed their willingness to take part in the survey, the results of two forms were rejected due to the lack of answers to most questions. The research is incomplete – the results cannot be generalized, but nevertheless they signal the basic problems concerning the role of space in the activities of touristic enterprises by expressing opinions by the surveyed entities.

From the study, it can be concluded that spatial factors are the most important factors for the group of entrepreneurs under study. The respondents are also very aware of the tourism space as the main factor shaping the opinion of tourists. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the respondents take a number of actions that positively affect the geographical environment of their activities, and thus the entire destination.

Tourist space – its types, characteristics and interaction with the functioning of tourism enterprises

Tourist space is a complex concept (Liszewski, 2006; Włodarczyk, 2011, pp. 15–28). S. Liszewski defined it as a functionally distinguished part of geographical space, which is a product of human activity that uses geographical and social environment for tourist purposes (Liszewski, 1995). Many factors affect its functioning. Among others, these are natural, historical, economic, social, infrastructural and other factors that are subject to exploitation and shaping by tourist business (Pender, Sharpley, 2008, pp. 31–88). Tourist space is not homogeneous, which has been noticed by numerous authors (e.g. Meyer, 2004, p. 436; Liszewski, Baczwarow, 1998, pp. 37–67; Liszewski, 1995, pp. 87–103; Liszewski, 2006, pp. 7–20; Stachowski, 1993, pp. 171–180; Oppermann, 1993, pp. 536–556; Miossec, 1976, p. 62). Tourist space has its own structure and internal organization composed of primary (starting) elements and secondary ones – conditioning and facilitating the implementation of tourist needs. Tourist space is a functionally distinctive part (subspace) of the geographic space understood sensu largo, i.e. as a space that consists of natural elements of the earth's shell (natural environment), permanent effects of human activity (economic environment), as well as the human environment in social meaning (Kurek, 2008, p. 38). Space understood in this way is a functionally distinct subspace of geographical space, it is a product of man who uses a geographical environment for tourism purposes, and the motive for its creation is meeting the needs of tourists (Kurek, 2008, p. 39).

From the economic point of view, space is a scarce good, i.e. it is consumable and cannot be increased by production (Domański, 2006, pp. 20–24). Therefore, aspects of the use of space by tourists and tourism enterprises should be particularly analyzed (Wanagos, Studzieniecki, 2018, pp. 262–268). The basic features of tourist space include (Włodarczyk, 2007):

1. Relative character – cannot exist without an entity, which is a human being. There are three basic types of geographic space that relate to tourism activity. These are:
   - tourist eco-tourism – this is the part of geographic (tourism) space, which is used for tourist purposes throughout the year. It is characterized by the continuity of the phenomenon of tourist traffic,
   - tourist sub-eco-tourism – this is the part of the geographical (tourist) space that is used for tourist purposes seasonally or incidentally. It is characterized by seasonality, discontinuity or occasional tourist traffic,
   - tourist anoecumene– is the part of geographical space that is not used for tourist purposes (non-tourism space). It is characterized by the lack of tourist traffic.
2. It is global – there are few places where tourists do not reach. The areas of exploration and tourist penetration are high mountains, glaciers, ocean depths, etc.
3. It is limited – due to the natural, ecological, political and cultural conditions or the level of technological development. Restrictions of tourism space can be of a formal nature (e.g. national borders, sanctions), as well as informal (e.g. cultural, technological).
4. It is dynamic – it changes its character over time. New tourist spaces are created, the old ones cease to be tourist spaces.
5. It is used seasonally and its operation is subject to economic cycles.
6. It is a space that is constantly expanding due to the permanent appropriation of new areas for the needs of tourists.

7. It is a functionally diverse area – there are several types differing in the intensity and nature of tourism processes.

The conditions of tourism space generate very significant effects of tourists' decisions regarding the place of travel and its inhabitants (Włodarczyk, 2009, p. 131). Familiarity with them is necessary both from the point of view of companies offering a tourist product as well as the travelers themselves. The tourism product development (among others, infrastructure investments, service organization) as well as the method and intensity of promotion will depend to a large extent on the importance of tourism (natural and anthropogenic). The dilemmas of shaping space can be an element of pro-ecological policy based on sustainable development and competitiveness of the area (Małachowski, 2015, pp. 225–235).

Each area has its own specific conditions and requires an individual approach by tourism enterprises. For example, areas with a high tourist rank tend to be conducive to high tourist traffic, which causes additional organizational problems (especially related to environmental aspects), but does not require such intensive promotional activities. The promotion of enterprises is focused on showing the attractiveness of their offer in relation to (probably quite large) competition. Another example may be areas that have high-ranking tourist values, but tourist penetration is still very limited. Then, promotional activities mainly concern information on values, and many enterprises shaping a tourist product are focused on infrastructure investments. Promotional activities are also undertaken by self-governments, which significantly affect communication between entities (Smalec, 2011, pp. 489–502). The development of space depends on the concept and policy of tourism entities focused on a given area (Alejziak, 2001, pp. 43–53, Marciszewska, 2017, pp. 319–334).

Tourist space is the dominating factor affecting the manner and scope of operation of tourism enterprises. On the other hand, tourism entrepreneurs shape and change tourism space (Szostak, 2008, p. 210). Bearing in mind this interaction of space and tourism enterprises, attention should be paid to the parameters that are important for the optimal development of tourism and the preservation of spatial order in tourist areas (Jędrzejczyk, 1995, pp. 18–50). They are mainly:

1. Types and patterns of behavior of participants in tourism, determined inter alia by factors recognized as, for example, social and psychological profiles of the consumer.
2. Technical and organizational parameters of tourism development.
3. Natural parameters of environmental resistance, e.g. the absorbency of the area.

In the impact of space for tourist activity of enterprises one should bear in mind above all:

a) the resistance of natural elements to the impact of tourism (its size and intensity over time) (Krzymowska-Kostrowicka 1999);

b) the efficiency of adaptation mechanisms – the ability of companies to adapt to the conditions of space (from the point of view of individual elements of the geographical environment, as well as entire complex systems, i.e. the system's adaptability).

In the impact of tourism enterprises on space one should bear in mind above all:

a) the ability to change the rank of tourist values (e.g. through promotional activities raising the rank of values), and thus changes in tourists' behavior;
b) changes in tourism infrastructure – this is a continuous process, resulting from the constantly changing needs and requirements of tourists;
c) organizational and spatial changes, including conscious control of tourist streams moving in the tourism space, coordination of the dates and lengths of stays of a given number of people in a given place.

The geographical and spatial system enforces some adjustments and changes in tourist enterprises (Rapacz, 1998, pp. 58–70). Spatial factors may change and, consequently, entrepreneurs must adapt to these changes. At the same time as the development of tourism in a given area new infrastructure is being created, there are also facilities for accessibility to various attractions, and competition is also being created. The possibility of these changes means that space is an element of a dynamic environment. Enterprises operating in this space are constantly forced to verify their activities.

Method and results of empirical testing

The aim of the study was to get to know the opinions of tourism enterprises on the role of tourism space in their activities. The main problem was whether the opinion of entrepreneurs coincides with the point of view of many authors of literature (geographers, economists, specialists in marketing and management, or ecologists), who unequivocally consider aspects of tourism space as a leading place among determinants of tourism enterprises.

The primary study carried out by means of a diagnostic survey was made in the form of a standardized survey carried out among participants of the Gdynia Maritime Forum in 2018 during a seminar on "Tourism from the Sea". 36 entities expressed a willingness to take part in the survey, the results of two respondents were rejected due to the lack of answers to most questions. Finally, the results of 34 respondents were used for the analysis. The research is incomplete – the results cannot be generalized, but they signal the basic problems concerning the role of space in the activities of tourist enterprises by expressing opinions by the examined entities.

The questionnaire contained a set of four questions. It was addressed to a group of respondents who conduct business activity in the field of tourism: hotel industry, gastronomy, travel agencies and passenger transport. 63% of hotel enterprises, 17% of gastronomic enterprises, 6% of travel agencies and 4% of transport enterprises took part in the survey.

In the first question, the respondents were to assign weight to particular groups of conditions of their activity (spatial, technical, economic, social communication and organizational), where the sum of the assigned weights was to amount to 100. The results are shown in Figure 1.

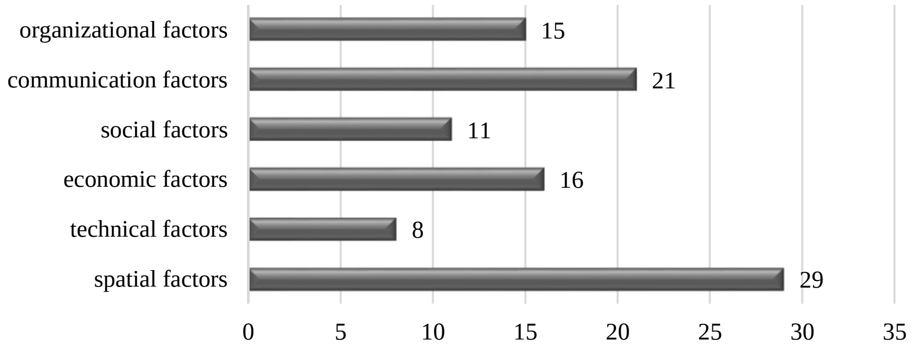

Figure 1. Weight assigned to particular groups of conditions of their activity (the sum of weights is 100)

Source: own research.

The average sum of weights assigned to spatial conditions was as high as 29. The assigned weights for the remaining factors were: for communication factors 21, for economic 16, for organizational 15, social 11, technical 8. This means that spatial and communication conditions (indirectly related to spatial) constitute the most important group of factors according to the studied group of entrepreneurs.

The respondents in the next question assigned the score (on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 was the lowest and 10 the highest) to the individual tourist destination characteristics that they think would affect the tourists' satisfaction. A list of features has been proposed. The list included: the condition of road infrastructure, transport accessibility of tourist attractions, a variety of nocturnal services, high standard of accommodation services, a large selection of gastronomy services, a high degree of tourist events, clean air, tourist aesthetics, promotional activities of enterprises, promotional activity of a tourist town, integrated offer of subjects in a tourist town, others (what?) - respondents could add other factors proposed by them and assign them a weight according to the same scale, but they did not take advantage of it. The results are illustrated in Figure 2.

Respondents attributed the highest score to the following features: aesthetics of the tourist town, clean air, transport accessibility to tourist attractions. The smallest impact on satisfaction according to the respondents has: diversity and high standard of accommodation services as well as promotional activities of enterprises.

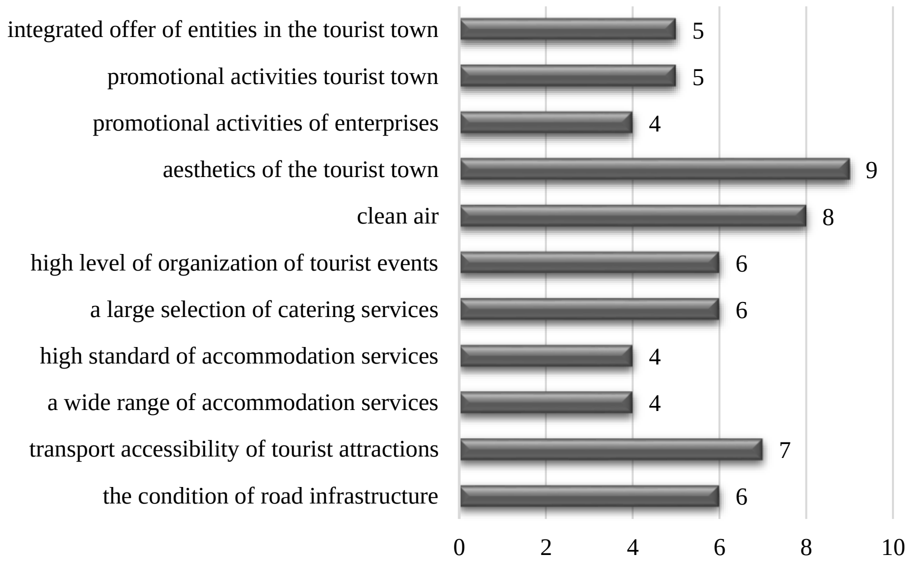

Figure 2. Assessment of the characteristics of tourist destination that affect the satisfaction of tourists

Source: own research.

Then, the respondents were asked to indicate whether the features of the space in which they conduct tourist activities had a decisive impact on the company's business performance (if not, what else?). Respondents in 87% responded "Yes", only 13% of the respondents reported a different condition (including the connection with their permanent place of residence, the location of previously conducted activities, or good cooperation with local entities). The results are illustrated in Figure 3.

In the last, fourth question, the respondents commented on their attitude towards shaping elements of the space in which they operate in the field of tourism. They were asked if they are involved in the shaping of tourism space, and if so, what positive actions are taken. A list of proposed actions was given, from which they could indicate any number of answers (introduction of technologies that do not pollute the air – sources of energy, water filters, fuel type for cars, etc.), shaping of infrastructure that interacts visually with the surroundings (refers to specificity and function of the environment), cooperation with other entities in the field of environmental protection (e.g. organization of events with environmental slogans, etc.), shaping own tourist products based on the principles of sustainable development, shaping of network products based on securities of space (routes, network attractions, etc.), financing of pro-ecological activities (permanent financing of non-profit ecological organizations, participation in occasional actions, others). The results are illustrated in Figure 4.

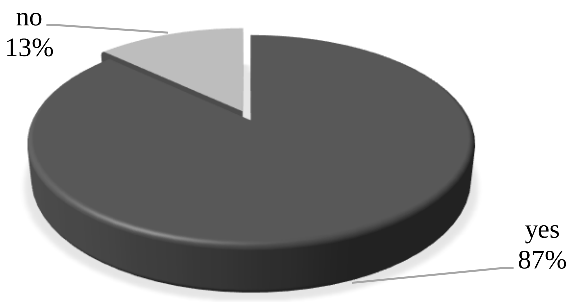

Figure 3. Do the features of the space in which they conduct a tourist activity have a decisive impact on the company's performance?

Source: own research.

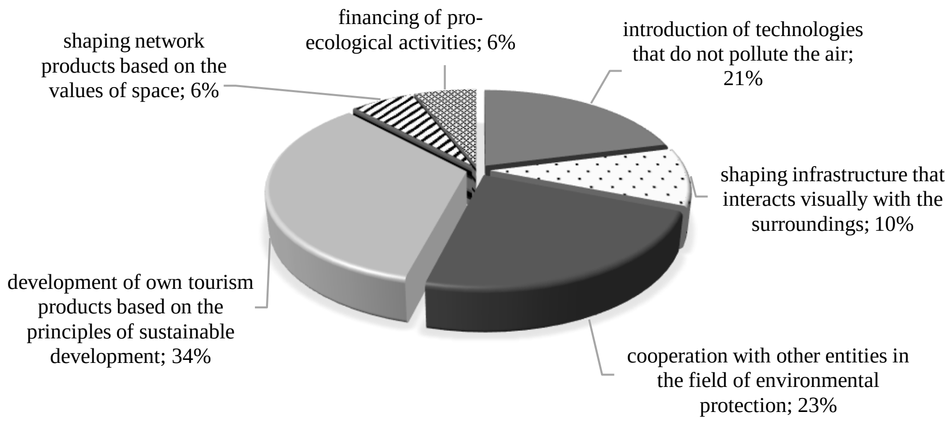

Figure 4. Respondents' actions on the scope of positive shaping of the geographical environment

Source: own research.

It turns out that the surveyed entrepreneurs take a number of positive actions for the geographical environment. Most respondents indicated “shaping their own tourism products based on the principles of sustainable development" – up to 34% of responses, "cooperation with other entities in the field of environmental protection" – 23% of responses. It is also important that respondents undertake activities related to the introduction of technologies that do not pollute the air – 21% of responses.

Conclusion

This study presents an attempt to show the significant impact of tourism space on the activities of enterprises in this industry. Literature research unambiguously indicates that space is a basic factor in the development of tourism. Enterprises and their effects are often determined by the characteristics of the natural and anthropogenic environment. This applies to every degree of transformation and adaptation to tourism. Values are often a starting point, an inspiration to travel, and entrepreneurs adapt the space accordingly to the needs, so that on one hand, it satisfies tourists, and on the other hand gives them adequate profits.

In their own research carried out by means of a diagnostic survey, respondents indicated spatial factors as the most important factors of their activity. The respondents are also very aware of the tourism space as the main factor shaping the opinion of tourists. Destination, which has high-ranking assets, but also a well-organized offer is becoming more attractive for tourists, and for entrepreneurs it will translate into economic effects.

According to the survey, entrepreneurs care about the environment and undertake important activities that positively affect the tourism space. It should be remembered, however, that the research undertaken covers a rather small group of respondents and should be expanded in the future.

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Przestrzeń turystyczna i jej rola w działalności przedsiębiorstw turystycznych

Słowa kluczowe: przestrzeń turystyczna, przedsiębiorstwo turystyczne, otoczenie biznesu

Streszczenie. Przestrzeń turystyczna jest bardzo zróżnicowana. Jest kształtowana przez czynniki naturalne i antropogeniczne. Dla wielu podmiotów ma to kluczowe znaczenie w działalności. Turystyka jest fenomenem przestrzennym – jej istota polega na przemieszczaniu ludzi w przestrzeni i wykorzystaniu zasobów i infrastruktury. Wymaga specjalnego odniesienia do poszczególnych elementów przestrzeni. Przedsiębiorstwa turystyczne opierają swoje działania na warunkach przestrzennych, ale także wpływają na zmiany zachodzące w samym środowisku. Celem artykułu jest ukazanie kluczowej roli aspektów przestrzennych w funkcjonowaniu przedsiębiorstw turystycznych. Artykuł składa się z dwóch części – analizy literatury dotyczącej poruszanego problemu i omówieniu badań empirycznych. W drugiej części podjęto próbę przedstawienia opinii przedsiębiorców na temat roli przestrzeni w ich działaniach. Przeprowadzono badanie diagnostyczne wśród usługodawców turystycznych (właścicieli hoteli, restauracji, biur podróży, przewoźników). Zrealizowano je w 2018 roku na próbie łącznie 34 respondentów z województwa pomorskiego. Wyniki pokazują, że przestrzeń jest kluczowym elementem wa-

runków biznesowych badanych przedsiębiorstw. Badani przedsiębiorcy podejmują w dużej mierze działania sprzyjające środowisku geograficznemu, mając świadomość jego wpływu na wyniki swojej działalności.

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