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Offerors and final purchasers as co-creators of an image — the relationship context

Oferenci i nabywcy finalni jako współkreatorzy wizerunku — kontekst relacyjny

The article is of a theoretical and empirical nature. For the theoretical aspect, literature was cognitively-and-critically analysed. The results indicate the existence of a cognitive and research gap in analysing the activity of purchasers in the relationships between purchasers and offerors, including their activity in the co-creation of the offerors' image. The aim of the article was to identify the significance attributed by purchasers to mutual relationships and find any dependencies between the significance of mutual relationships and the way in which offerors are perceived as the initiators of purchaser activity. A questionnaire (for gathering primary data) and statistical analysis (for statistical reasoning) were used in the empirical part of the paper. The results of the analysis indicate that respondents attributed a relatively high significance to a good relationship with offerors, especially service providers. For service providers and manufacturers, there were statistically important dependencies between the significance of a good relationship and the way offerors are perceived as the initiators of purchaser activity. The manner of evaluating the offerors affected the respondents' behaviour. However, respondents did not simultaneously demonstrate inter-purchase behaviours and relationship behaviours. This also applied to communication behaviours leading to the formation of a particular image of the offeror.

Keywords

offeror, final purchaser, relationships, image, co-creation

Artykuł ma charakter teoretyczno-empiryczny. Do przygotowania części teoretycznej zastosowano metodę analizy poznawczo-krytycznej literatury przedmiotu. Jej wyniki wskazują na występowanie luki poznawczej i badawczej w zakresie analizowania aktywności nabywców, w tym współkreowania przez nich wizerunku oferentów, w kontekście relacji między nabywcami a oferentami. Dlatego też w artykule dążono do osiągnięcia celu, jakim było zidentyfikowanie znaczenia przypisywanego przez nabywców wzajemnym relacjom i zależności między nim a sposobem postrzegania oferentów jako inicjatorów aktywności nabywców. Do przygotowania części empirycznej wykorzystano metodę badania ankietowego (do zebrania danych pierwotnych) oraz metody analizy statystycznej (do wnioskowania statystycznego). Wyniki tej analizy wskazują, że ankietowani przypisywali relatywnie duże znaczenie dobrym relacjom z oferentami, zwłaszcza z usługodawcami. Między ich znaczeniem a sposobem postrzegania oferentów jako inicjatorów aktywności nabywców występowały zależności statystycznie istotne w przypadku usługodawców i wytwórców. Sposób oceniania oferentów decydował o strukturze zachowań ankietowanych. Nie wykazywali oni jednak jednocześnie zachowań internabywczych oraz zachowań podejmowanych w relacjach z oferentami. Dotyczyło to także zachowań komunikacyjnych prowadzących do kształtowania określonego wizerunku oferenta.

Słowa kluczowe

oferent, nabywca finalny, relacje, wizerunek, współkreowanie

JEL: M31

Introduction

The contemporary consumer market contains complex system of relationships between its participants, mainly offerors and final purchasers.

Fulfilling both the role of the offeror and the role of the purchaser requires establishing and shaping relationships with other entities. All market behaviour is associated with creating specific values and making them available to other

entities. These values may be of a material nature, such as products, or non-material, such as opinions about the offeror or the offer, which form the basis for a particular perception of the offeror. When forming of mutual relationships, the purchasers take over functions traditionally attributed to offerors (Fyrberg Yngfalk, 2013), who, in turn, also cease to fulfil exclusively the role of suppliers, and at the same time play the role of recipients of values created by purchasers. The values are primarily intangible assets, including the offeror image. The functioning of the system of relationships, which the contemporary consumer market displays, entails clear changes (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010; 2017), including a definite increase in the activity of each participant. In this way it is distinguished from the functioning of the traditionally understood consumer market.

It should be emphasised that contemporary offerors and final purchasers often fulfil both of these roles not only in practice, but they also frequently co-create particular marketing values as part of the cooperation undertaken at various stages of the marketing process. Obviously, the redefinition of market roles mentioned above is not tantamount to the purchasers' fully acquiring all responsibilities which in the classical approach are assigned to the offerors. It is rather concerned with shifting the existing boundaries, which used to clearly distinguish the range of functions fulfilled by the offerors from the functions fulfilled by the purchasers. This often leads to closer mutual relationships, without which it would not be possible to establish effective cooperation that meets the expectations of both parties. Within these relationships, one can talk about active offerors and active purchasers who are co-creators of particular marketing values. Considering the fact that in the literature, the context of relationships in the cooperation between final purchasers and offerors with reference to image creation has not been analyzed (as will be shown later in this article), this article aims to identify the importance attributed by purchasers to mutual relationships and determine the dependencies between those relationships and the perception of offerors as initiators of purchaser activity.

Literature review

Final purchasers as participants of the consumer market may display primarily purchase behaviour (passive purchasers) or both purchase and extra-purchase behaviour, including

communication and creation behaviour (active purchasers). All market behaviour requires establishing relationships with other market participants, especially with offerors and other purchasers. The relationship is defined as "the way in which people or social groups are connected" (<https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/relacja.html>). Undertaking a particular behaviour is even tantamount to initiating a specific relationship (Grönroos, 2012; Grönroos & Voima, 2013), and the orientation, length, strength and durability of the relationship depend on, among others, the type of a particular behaviour.

In the case of purchase behaviour, the purchaser enters into a relationship with the offeror. The relationship may be short-term, with little strength in a single manifestation of a purchase activity. The relationship may also be relatively stronger, referring to a longer time horizon, if the purchase of products offered by a particular enterprise comes to a recurrent behaviour. Purchase behaviours may be accompanied by communication behaviours addressed to the offeror and/or other buyers, which require a relatively greater involvement of the buyer (Oldemaat, 2013). However, communication behaviours may also be a result of purchase behaviours occurring as part of the extra-purchase stage, although they may also constitute a separate form of activity not related to the specific purchase behaviour of a particular person. In that case, communication behaviours may in turn accompany or even precede creation behaviours for example through transferring to other entities, including offerors, ideas about a modification of the marketing offer.

In each case, communication behaviours are closely related to establishing relationships with offerors or other purchasers, and the relationships are relatively the strongest when communication behaviours are taken along with creation behaviours. In this case, relationships are also associated with the highest commitment of the purchaser, who not only joins into the marketing process by sharing opinions or even knowledge, but also shows specific solutions for improving the offer. Purchasers who indicate such forms of activity are referred to as active, which distinguishes them from passive purchasers (O'Hern & Rindfleisch, 2010), that is people following the traditional pattern of market functioning based on the unequivocal division of market roles into the role of the purchaser and the role of the offeror. By limiting their activity mainly to purchase behaviour, passive purchasers do not engage in marketing activities undertaken by other market participants, and thus they have much smaller impact on them.

On the other hand, people who are more strongly involved in creating the marketing offer have a much greater impact on its features, which makes them valuable co-creators of marketing values as the holders of specific experience, skills and knowledge (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The use of the experience, skills and knowledge allows integrating the marketing potential of purchasers with the marketing potential of the offerors. What is more, assigning active purchasers to fulfil the following three roles (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015): the ideator, the designer and the intermediary appears to narrow the scope of their activity, as purchasers can also act for example as the initiator, activating other entities, or the educator, who increases the market awareness of other entities.

Active purchasers can co-create both material and non-material values (Pilgrimiene, Dovaliene, & Virvilaite, 2015). One of the key non-material assets is the co-created image of the offeror and/or the offer, much more credible (Deloitte, 2014) than the image shaped by the enterprise alone. Purchaser activity additionally increases the importance contemporary purchasers, placing them even in the role of marketing partners of offerors. Shaping the image by active purchasers takes place primarily as part of their communication behaviour during direct and indirect contacts with other purchasers. Sharing opinions based on one's own experience or on the experiences of other people is inextricably linked to establishing more or less permanent relationships. Therefore, it can be concluded that the relationship and image are interpenetrating areas. Each activity which leads to the creation of a particular picture of the offeror and/ or the offer has a relationship overtone, and it often determines other forms of activity related to purchase and creation behaviour. It can thus be said that the effects of communication behaviours are extremely important from the point of view of offerors. Not only do communication behaviours influence the way offerors are perceived, but they also determine the nature of purchase decisions and decide whether to engage in marketing activities or demonstrate inactivity in this area.

It should be emphasised that the aspects of the co-creation of the offeror image by final purchasers and joining in other marketing activities have not been analysed in literature in conjunction with the aspects of the relationship. The forms of online and offline activities have not been analysed together, either. In addition, the forms of activity undertaken in contacts with offerors and in contacts with other purchasers have not been studied together, which made it impossible to make comparative analyses between

those behaviours. The authors of particular studies limited the subject scope of research either to online behaviours or to offline behaviours (although such studies are less common), or they dealt either only with purchaser activity displayed together with offerors, or only with the activity displayed in relationships with other purchasers. One can therefore talk about the existence of a cognitive and research gap in this area.

The research known to the author conducted in foreign countries concerned, among others, the co-creation of marketing values by an enterprise with purchasers in the following online environments: thanks to the use of the social media (Kao, Yang, Wu, & Cheng, 2016); in the context of the big data era (Xie, Wu, Xiao, & Hu, 2016); the interaction of purchasers with other purchasers as part of virtual communities (Faraj, Kudaravalli, & Wasko, 2015), etc. The research presented in literature also concerned the cooperation between purchasers and offerors outside the Internet, for example with reference to contacts with sales service employees (Baumann & Le Meunier-Fitzhugh, 2015). Polish researchers considered the cooperation with offerors and the cooperation with other purchasers rather as two separate areas of purchaser activity. For example, J. Wiechoczek and M. Kieźel (2018) analyzed the cooperation with offerors in the context of the 'consumer engagement' concept. In turn, A. Rogala (2015) examined the activity of the internet buyers in the context of the network society, and A. Łaszkiwicz (2018) in the context of the 'business design' concept.

Therefore, it seems important to find an answer to the following question: how significant are good relationships with offerors for final purchasers and what are the dependencies between those relationships and the perception of offerors, taking into consideration various forms of purchaser activity undertaken in relationships with offerors and other purchasers? In order to solve this research problem, the following research goals were to be realized:

- 1) to specify the significance attributed by respondents to good relationships with offerors;
- 2) to define the perception of offerors as initiators of purchaser activity;
- 3) to identify the dependencies between those aspects;
- 4) to identify the diversity of respondents' opinions regarding the importance of good relationships with offerors due to the way they are perceived as the initiators of purchaser activity;
- 5) to group the forms of respondents' activity due to the perception of offerors as initiators of purchaser activity.

In the process of achieving these goals, two research hypotheses were verified: H1: there is a statistically significant dependence between the significance of good relationships with offerors and the perception of offerors as the initiators of purchaser activity; H2: communication activity undertaken as part of the inter-purchase behaviour is accompanied by communication activity undertaken in relationships with offerors.

Research methodology

In order to achieve the research goals and to verify the formulated hypotheses, primary research was conducted. The research was implemented as part of the research project 2013/11/B/HS4/00430 financed by the National Science Centre. The proper research was conducted in the third quarter of 2015 among 1200 people representing Polish adult final purchasers. A number of 1012 correctly completed questionnaires were qualified for statistical analysis. In the surveyed population, 61% were women. Non-random selection of the test sample was applied¹. The research was direct in nature, requiring the interviewer's personal contact with respondents, which made it possible to obtain a high return rate of completed questionnaires.

The primary data collected during the proper research was used in the further stages of the research process, that is the statistical analysis conducted by means of the Pearson chi-square independence test, the V-Cramer factor, the Kruskal-Wallis test (KW) and the factor analysis. The chi-square test was applied to determine whether there were dependencies between the analyzed variables, and the V-Cramer factor was used to determine the strength of relationships between the analyzed variables.

The Kruskal-Wallis test allowed finding an answer, whether the diversity in terms of separating individual groups (e.g. opinions of respondents) was statistically important enough to say that the respondents' opinion determined by the analyzed response was significantly different. This test is a non-parametric equivalent of ANOVA (<http://www.statystyka.az.pl/test-anova-kruskala-wallisa.php>). It consists in checking whether the number of independent results from a particular group comes from the same population or from a population with the same median. Individual samples do not have to be equal. The input data is an n -element statistical sample divided into k of disjoint groups of respondents, ranging from n_1 to n_k .

The factor analysis allowed for an in-depth analysis of the collected primary data. It was used to reduce the number of variables constituting the primary data obtained from the survey and to detect the structures in relationships between those variables, that is, to classify the variables. To determine the number of common factors (the so-called principal components), the Kaiser Criterion method was used, leaving only those factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. Each factor explained a certain level of overall variation of the considered system, defined by a percentage of variance, which can be interpreted as a measure clarifying the problem. Within individual factors, the variables with the highest factor loadings were distinguished (the value ≥ 0.7 was assumed) (Sztemberg-Lewandowska, 2008; Abdi & Williams, 2010).

The factor analysis does not allow finding the answer whether the diversity in terms of separating particular groups (e.g. the perception of offerors) is statistically important enough to say that the respondents' answers determined by the analyzed response are significantly different. The Kruskal-Wallis test gives the answer to this question. The higher the value of the factor loading is within a satisfactory level of significance, the greater is the diversity.

The statistical analysis was performed using the Statistica 8.0 package.

Research results

As it results from the conducted research, the respondents attributed the relatively highest significance to good relationships with service providers (table 1). The highest percentage of people believed that good relationships are very important in that case (over 1/4 of all respondents), and the largest part of the respondents believed that mutual relationships are at least important. At the same time, the lowest percentage of the respondents concluded that good relationships with service providers are of little or no importance. In turn, producers turned out to be a group of offerors where good relationships were considered relatively the least important. On the one hand, clearly the smallest part of the respondents believed that good relationships with producers are very important (less than every fifth respondent), and the lowest percentage of people rated them as at least important. On the other hand, clearly the largest part of the respondents in total stated that good relationships with producers are of little importance or totally unimportant; however, the total lack of significance was also emphasized by the largest percentage of the respondents.

Table 1. Significance attributed to good relationships with offerors (%)

Good relationships with	Very important (rating 4)	Important (rating 3)	Total ratings 4 and 3	Of little importance (rating 2)	Totally unimportant (grade 1)	Total ratings 2 and 1
Producers	16.29	42.65	58.94	33.37	7.60	40.97
Traders	22.01	49.95	71.96	23.69	4.24	27.93
Service providers	27.25	45.01	72.26	22.61	5.03	27.64

Source: the author's research.

Assigning a greater significance to good relationships with service providers and traders than with producers may result from the fact that contacts between the first two groups of offerors are relatively more frequent, while contemporary purchasers enter into relationships with producers less frequently. Contacts with particular groups of offerors often have a different character, which is associated with the specificity of their functioning. On the consumer market, relationships with producers are rather established in the process of extra-purchase behaviour, whereas relationships with service providers and traders are established more often in the process of purchase behaviour. It is worth noting, however, that for each of the three analyzed groups of offerors, more than half of the respondents attributed at least great importance to good relationships, with the percentage being much larger than the total percentage of indications depicting the underestimation of good relationships.

Establishing a relationship with an offeror may be initiated by the purchaser or by the offeror. Obviously, it depends, among others, on the situational context. It seems, however, that offerors should play a particularly important role in building mutual relationships, fulfilling an educational and activating function towards purchasers. A question can be asked, how the

respondents perceived offerors in that role. It turns out that more than half of all respondents (68.9%) negatively evaluated the offerors' activities undertaken to encourage purchasers to cooperate. Therefore, it can be stated that although good relationships with offerors were at least important for the majority of respondents, they did not perceive offerors as an inspiration towards purchasers. A conclusion can even be drawn on this basis that the respondents' expectations were not fulfilled concerning the specificity of relationships between them and the offerors, which may lead to the creation of an unfavourable image of the offerors.

It is, therefore, worth checking whether there are statistically significant dependencies between the significance attributed to good relationships with offerors and the way they are perceived as activating agents. It turns out that the dependencies occur in the case of two groups of offerors, that is, service providers and producers (table 2), although their strength is small. The relationship is relatively stronger in the case of service providers; however, taking into account the value of the V-Cramer's correlation coefficient in the range of 0.1–0.03, it can be defined as weak. The statement included in hypothesis H1 is therefore valid in the case of service providers and producers.

Table 2. Results of the analysis of dependencies between the significance attributed by respondents to good relationships with offerors and the way offerors are perceived referring to their effective encouragement of purchasers to cooperate

Analysed variable	Value of the chi-square test	Value of the V-Cramer coefficient	Significance level <i>p</i>
Relationships with producers	6.029	0.077	0.011
Relationships with traders	1.323	0.036	0.724
Relationships with service providers	17.873	0.133	0.000

Source: the author's research.

In order to analyze the significance of differences between the respondents' answers regarding the importance of good relationships with offerors depending on the opinion on how effectively offerors encourage purchasers to cooperate, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used (table 3). The results of that analysis indicate that the perceived effectiveness of encouraging purchasers to cooperate is a feature which in a statistically significant way differentiates respondents' opinions on the significance of good relationships with offerors only in the case of service providers, that is the group of offerors where the importance of good relationships was relatively the most important for the respondents. Only in this case was the value of the designated significance level p lower than the assumed critical value equal to 0.05.

respect. On the basis of the Kaiser criterion, four essential factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were distinguished for each group respectively. In total, the factors explain at least 74% of the total variability of the studied phenomenon (table 4).

The first factor, with an eigenvalue of 7.091 in the case of respondents positively assessing the effectiveness of the offerors and 6.844 in the case of respondents negatively evaluating offerors in this respect, explains to over 45% of the total variability of the system for both groups. The factor includes six forms of activity for the respondents who perceived offerors positively and five forms for the respondents who evaluated offerors poorly, with factor loadings of at least 0.7 (table 5).

All forms are activities undertaken in contacts with offerors in the Internet or outside. It is worth

Table 3. Results of the analysis of the significance of differences between the respondents' answers regarding the importance of good relationships with offerors due to the perception of offerors as agents effectively encouraging purchasers to cooperate

Analysed variable	Effective encouraging purchasers to cooperate	Value of the Kruskal-Wallis test	Significance level p
Relationships with producers	yes	532.08	0.051
	no	495.68	
Relationships with traders	yes	518.06	0.381
	no	502.01	
Relationships with service providers	yes	467.79	0.002
	no	524.69	

Source: the author's research.

Table 4. Hierarchy of factors due to their eigenvalues determined on the basis of the Kaiser criterion (regarding respondents' opinions on offerors' effective encouragement of purchasers to cooperate)

Factor	Eigenvalue		% of total eigenvalues (variance)		Accumulated eigenvalue		Accumulated % of eigenvalues	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
1	7.091	6.844	47.272	45.628	7.091	6.844	47.272	45.628
2	1.753	1.880	11.689	12.531	8.844	8.724	58.960	58.159
3	1.230	1.388	8.200	9.253	10.074	10.112	67.160	67.412
4	1.026	1.194	6.840	7.959	11.100	11.306	74.000	75.371

Source: the author's research.

In order to identify the structure of respondent behaviours undertaken as part of joining marketing activities, a factor analysis was carried out for the respondents who believed that offerors effectively encourage buyers to cooperate and for people who have a different opinion in this

noting that the activities included two other forms of activity which lead to the mutual creation of promotional activities, the effect of which may be, among others, a specific image of the offeror and/or the offer. It should also be emphasized that in the case of the respondents who negatively

Table 5. Results of the factor analysis of the respondents' activity due regarding their opinions on offerors' effective encouragement of purchasers to cooperate

Analysed variable	Factor							
	1		2		3		4	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
I express my opinions about products I use via the Internet (e.g. on the online forum or on the store's website), but I do not contact the producer directly	0.500	0.350	0.082	0.230	0.716	0.689	0.177	0.316
I express my opinions about products I use without using the Internet (to friends / family, or directly in the store, etc.), but I do not contact the producer directly	-0.011	0.101	0.793	0.806	0.055	0.100	-0.045	0.012
I add comments about the products I use to other consumers' opinions in the Internet	0.393	0.221	0.171	0.258	0.693	0.647	0.333	0.447
I get acquainted with opinions of other consumers posted in the Internet about the products I use or intend to use	0.204	0.169	0.372	0.417	0.692	0.702	0.042	0.129
I get acquainted with opinions of other consumers, not posted in the Internet, about the products I use or intend to use (e.g. from friends / family, seller)	0.017	0.001	0.822	0.808	0.106	0.131	0.008	-0.008
On my own initiative I contact producers via the Internet expressing my opinion / giving advice about products I use or intend to use	0.142	0.300	-0.001	0.029	0.048	0.242	0.873	0.792
On my own initiative I contact producers without using the Internet to express my opinion / give advice about products that I use or intend to use	0.630	0.233	0.000	0.037	0.090	0.004	0.551	0.862
On my own initiative, I contact producers in various ways via the Internet, asking questions about products I use or intend to use	0.637	0.389	-0.024	-0.026	0.247	0.195	0.483	0.775
On my own initiative, I contact producers in various ways without using the Internet, asking questions about products I use or intend to use	0.738	0.367	-0.113	0.058	0.083	0.003	0.389	0.739
I participate in activities / actions organized by companies via the Internet, thanks to which I am a co-creator of the product or its attributes, e.g. packaging, brand	0.853	0.734	0.069	-0.004	0.185	0.160	0.130	0.415
I participate in activities / actions organized by companies otherwise than via the Internet, thanks to which I am a co-creator of the product or its attributes, e.g. packaging, brand	0.890	0.824	0.083	0.055	0.145	0.077	0.064	0.350

Table 5 (continued)

Analysed variable	Factor							
	1		2		3		4	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
I participate in activities / actions organized by companies via the Internet, thanks to which I am a co-creator of promotional activities, e.g. advertising slogans, advertising campaigns	0.886	0.852	0.023	0.038	0.212	0.211	0.097	0.249
I participate in activities / campaigns organized by companies otherwise than via the Internet, thanks to which I am a co-creator of promotional activities, e.g. advertising slogans, advertising campaigns	0.908	0.859	0.011	0.073	0.156	0.105	0.066	0.200
I participate in activities / actions organized by companies, thanks to which I am a co-creator of any other activities / elements of the company, apart from the product and promotion	0.853	0.848	0.021	0.102	0.206	0.146	0.127	0.246
I produce products myself (without contacting the producer whatsoever), for reasons of economy or practicality	0.024	0.000	0.418	0.449	-0.585	-0.672	0.169	0.280

Source: the author's research.

evaluated offerors in terms of their effectiveness, the first factor included only the forms of activity initiated by the offerors, whereas in the case of persons who positively evaluated the offerors, the first factor, apart from the forms of activity initiated by the offerors, also included spontaneous communication behaviour. Thus, it can be said that the respondents who positively perceive offerors showed a wider spectrum of behaviours in relationships with them, as the behaviours were both spontaneous and initiated.

The remaining factors separated have much lower eigenvalues and explain a much lower part of the analyzed phenomenon. The second factor includes two analogous forms of activity both in the case of the respondents who positively evaluate the offerors and in the case of the respondents who perceive them negatively. Both forms are part of extra-internet interpurchase behaviours. The environment in which an activity is undertaken distinguishes the behaviours from elements included in the third factor. For both groups of the respondents, the third factor is formed with interpurchase activity, yet undertaken in the Internet, and in the case of the respondents who positively evaluate offerors such

activity requires relatively greater involvement as it requires expressing opinions. In the case of the respondents who negatively perceive offerors, this activity involves getting acquainted with the opinions of other purchasers, and thus is associated with less involvement. It is worth adding that the elements forming the second factor and the third factor are similar in a way that they all reflect interpurchase activity, which is specific in its nature, being part of communication behaviour. The contribution of communication behaviour, especially in the case of expressing opinions, is building a specific image of the offeror and/or the offer.

The fourth factor, both in the case of the respondents who positively evaluate offerors and in the case of the respondents who perceive them negatively, includes exclusively activities undertaken in relationships with offerors on one's own initiative, which distinguishes them from the activities that make up the first factor. It applies especially to the respondents who negatively evaluate the offerors. In addition, the fourth factor identified is the only factor which does not include any activity leading to the creation of the offeror image and/or their offer either in the case

of the respondents who positively evaluate offerors, or in the case of the respondents who have a different opinion in this respect. However, it should be remembered that the fourth factor explains the lowest part of the analyzed phenomenon; therefore it has the relatively lowest importance.

Individual factors can be identified with groups of respondents showing specific behaviours, the specificity of which distinguishes them from other groups. The same can be said about making a typology of respondents due to the forms of market activity they undertake. From the point of view of the subject matter of this article, it is important that representatives of none of the respondent groups showed both interpurchase behaviours and behaviours connected with relationships with offerors at the same time. This also applies to communication behaviours. Thus, hypothesis H2 is not valid. The scope of behaviour undertaken by the respondents displaying any activity in relationships with offerors was much broader (with the exception of the group corresponding to the fourth factor distinguished for the respondents who positively evaluated offerors) than the scope of behaviour undertaken by the respondents displaying the interpurchase activity. In the case of the latter group, the activity was much more homogeneous. In addition, the perception of offerors regarding their effectiveness in encouraging purchasers to cooperate was of little importance when it comes to the entities with which the respondents cooperated, the environment of this cooperation, as well as the specificity of the initiators of the cooperation.

Conclusions

On the basis of the considerations presented in this article, it can be stated that for the majority of respondents, good relationships with offerors,

regardless of their specificity, were at least of great importance. The importance was relatively the largest regarding relationships with service providers, and the lowest in the case of relationships with producers. Despite the significance assigned to good mutual relationships, almost 70% of the total number of respondents negatively evaluated offerors as initiators of purchase activity, which has an unfavourable image effect. It also turns out that there are statistically significant dependencies in the case of two groups of offerors, that is service providers and producers, between the significance attributed to good relationships and the way offerors are perceived. As far as the respondents are concerned, hypothesis H1 is therefore valid in the case of service providers and producers.

The perception of offerors also influenced the structure of the respondents' marketing activity. The results of the factor analysis conducted indicate that interpurchase behaviours were not accompanied by relationship behaviours. This also concerned the co-creation of the offerors image and the offer image, including communication behaviours. Therefore, it can be said that hypothesis H2 is not valid in the case of the respondents.

The results of these research have a cognitive value, filling the gap identified during the analysis of the literature. The research is also of an applicability value, as on its basis offerors can take actions to improve their perception and jointly shape good mutual relationships with purchasers. Obviously, the research has certain limitations, which include the following aspects: the subject scope (only the representatives of adult final purchasers were examined), the object scope (only the selected aspects of the image and relationship were examined) and geographical scope (only the representatives of Polish final purchasers were examined). The pursuit to eliminate these limitations will guide the future research undertaken by the author.

Endnotes

¹ According to M. Szreder (2010), it is not always necessary to apply random selection; moreover, more and more often non-random selection can even be treated as an opportunity for the researcher.

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PWE poleca



Prezentowana książka ma charakter teoretyczno-empiryczny. Trzy początkowe rozdziały stanowią część teoretyczną. W rozdziale pierwszym omówiono genezę prosumpcji i jej istotę. Wskazano na duże rozbieżności w jej definiowaniu przez różnych badaczy, proponując własną autorską definicję tego pojęcia. Rozdział drugi poświęcony jest prosumpcji jako złożonemu zachowaniu rynkowemu. Przedstawiono ją również w ujęciu procesowym. Omówiono cechy prosumenta jako aktywnego uczestnika rynku i marketingowego partnera oferentów. W rozdziale trzecim przedstawiono natomiast prosumpcję w ujęciu czterowymiarowym, przyjmując, że ma ona wymiar innowacyjny, relacyjny, wizerunkowy i etnocentryczny. Dwa kolejne rozdziały tworzą empiryczną część opracowania, w której na podstawie wyników badań pierwotnych dokonano empirycznej weryfikacji założeń przyjętych na podstawie wyników poznawczo-krytycznej analizy literatury przedmiotu. Podsumowaniem dokonanych analiz jest opracowany przez autorkę finalny model prosumpcji.

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