PL ISSN 1897-2721

Olsztyn Economic Journal

14(3/2019)

Wydawnictwo
Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego
w Olsztynie

Olsztyn Economic Journal is indexed and abstracted in:
BazEcon, BazHum, Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL),
Index Copernicus Journal Master List, POL-index, RePEc,
The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH)

The Journal is also available in electronic form on the websites
http://www.uwm.edu.pl/wne/olsztyn-economic-journal
http://wydawnictwo.uwm.edu.pl (subpage Czytelnia)
https://czasopisma.uwm.edu.pl/index.php/oej

The print edition is the primary version of the Journal

PL ISSN 1897-2721
e-ISSN 2083-4675

Wydawnictwo UWM
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phone: 89 523 36 61, fax 89 523 34 38
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Publishing sheets 6,5; printing sheets 5,5; edition copies 95
Print – Zakład Poligraficzny UWM w Olsztynie, order number 344

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SPIS TREŚCI

OLSZTYN ECONOMIC JOURNAL
2019, 14(3), 243–254
ISSN 1897-2721 e-ISSN 2083-4675 DOI: 10.31648/oej.4371

ORIGINAL PAPER

Received: 18.12.2018
Revised: 17.02.2019
Published: 10.09.2019

PART-TIME WORK AND THE WORKERS' AGE AND SEX

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JEL Classification: J14, J21, J22.

Key words: part-time work, older workers, European Union, employment.

Abstract

The goal of the paper is to present spatial diversity in the use of flexible forms of employment with special emphasis on part-time work among women and men aged 50+ in the European Union. Demographic changes, including the ageing of the EU population, show the necessity of rationally utilizing available labour resources. Because the level of occupational activity is declining with age, while the share of people aged 50+ in the population is growing, the possibility of doing part-time work that allows reconciliation between occupational life and non-occupational life seems important. This form of employment can also constitute an important transitional stage between occupational activity and retirement. The analyses presented in the paper are based on data from Eurostat and include the years between 2003 and 2017. The conducted studies show significant differences in the utilization of part-time work in EU countries especially when age and gender are taken into consideration.

PRACA W NIEPEŁNYM WYMIARZE GODZIN A WIEK I PŁEĆ PRACOWNIKÓW

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Słowa kluczowe: praca w niepełnym wymiarze godzin, starsi pracownicy, Unia Europejska, zatrudnienie.

How to cite: Skórska, A. (2019). The Age and Gender of Part-Time Workers. *Olsztyn Economic Journal*, *14*(3), 243-254. https://doi.org/10.31648/oej.4371.

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie przestrzennego zróżnicowania stosowania elastycznych form zatrudnienia w Unii Europejskiej, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem pracy w niepełnym wymiarze godzin wśród kobiet i mężczyzn w wieku 50+. Zmiany demograficzne, w tym starzenie się społeczeństwa w UE, wskazują na konieczność racjonalnego wykorzystywania dostępnych zasobów pracy. Biorąc pod uwagę, że wraz z wiekiem poziom aktywności zawodowej maleje, podczas gdy udział osób w wieku 50+ w populacji wzrasta, istotna wydaje się możliwość, jaką daje praca w niepełnym wymiarze godzin, co pozwala na łączenie życia zawodowego z pozazawodowym. Taka forma zatrudnienia może również stanowić ważny etap przejściowy między aktywnością zawodową oraz emeryturą. Analizy przedstawione w artykule opierają się na danych pochodzących z Eurostatu i obejmują lata 2003-2017. Wyniki przeprowadzonych badań wykazały znaczne zróżnicowanie wykorzystania pracy w niepełnym wymiarze godzin w krajach UE, szczególnie z uwzględnieniem wieku i płci.

Introduction

Labour is characterised by complexity, multidimensionality and specificity that result, among others, from the conditions it is determined by. Its heterogeneous nature is prejudged by the socio-demographic characteristics of workers, including their age, gender, education, skills or health condition (Skórska *et al.*, 2018, p. 120). Age is one of the key factors affecting the way in which individuals and their potential are perceived in the labour market. Consequently, it can influence an increase or decrease of employment chances, an improvement of qualifications or a promotion.

Considering the progressing process of population ageing and lifespan extension due to the simultaneous improvement of the health condition of the older generation, an increasingly greater emphasis has been put on the issues of increasing and expanding the period of professional activity, including the period of employment. The determination of the limit of workers' "mature" or "older" age remains a disputable issue.

On the basis of a literature review (*Employment in Europe…*, 2007, p. 1, Stypińska, 2015, p. 143-165, Urbaniak, 2011), analyses of the results of conducted research, and taking into consideration the comparative character of analyses, the paper adopts the age limit of older people in the labour market to be 50-64. However, the adopted age limit has a conventional nature because the old age limit was determined not only by belonging to a specific age group. Being over 50 does not automatically affect the change in the attitude towards the performance of work; however, older people are often discriminated against in the labour market.

Considering the above reasons, it seems important to present the changes occurring in the sphere of employment of the population aged 50+ while using flexible employment forms. Part-time work can become a transition stage between full-time employment and retirement. It allows the avoidance of early deactivation that brings a lot of negative socio-economic results both in the individual dimension and for the entire society. Low pension benefits make work an important, often necessary supplement of income for older people. Furthermore, for many older people it constitutes one of the few opportunities for the establishment of relationships with other people while motivating them to care about heath as well as physical and psychological well-being, while giving meaning to their life (Skórska, 2018, p. 302, 303).

Considering this, the issue of employment, including the growth of participation of older people in the labour market, has been taken into consideration in many strategic documents both on the national and international level (*Europa 2020…*, 2010, p. 5, *Program Solidarność pokoleń…*, 2014, *Rządowy program…*, 2014). They focus on the issues of equality of all people before the law and the need for protection against discrimination on any grounds, including age (Council Directive 2000/78/EC…). Despite many actions implemented in this sphere, many problems remain unsolved both on the employers' and co-workers' side (stereotypes, ageism), as well as in the view of the older people themselves (outdated qualifications, unwillingness to change profession).

Materials and research methods

The goal of the paper is to present the diversity of part-time employment of people aged 50-64 in the European Union states, considering their gender. The following research questions have been formulated in the paper:

– is part-time work an alternative for full-time work for workers aged 50+? Or is it a stage of transition to retirement?

– how much does gender diversify the share of workers employed part-time among the people aged 50+?

– what is the trend and dynamics of changes in this sphere in the European Union member states?

– what are the main reasons for taking part-time work?

Analyses of the literature and comparative methods were used in the conducted research. Empirical analysis was based on data from Eurostat including the years 2003–2017. The analysis comprises all 28 countries of the European Union (United Kingdom included).

Analysis and interpretation of results

For the labour market, demographic changes occurring in the European Union states represent firstly the decline in the working-age population, and secondly, the growth of the population of the so-called immobile age within this group. The level of occupational activity is decreasing with age and consequently, the employment rate in this age group is considerably below the mean value for the population. Furthermore, activity and employment rates achieved in Poland are lower than the average rates for the European Union member states. This means that intensification of the problems related to occupational activity of the immobile age population constitutes a vital challenge to Poland.

Part-time work is one of the methods of occupational activation and maintenance of employment of older people who cannot or do not want to work full time due to several reasons. The basic regulations in this sphere are specified in the directive on part-time work (Directive 1997/81/EC…), whereas in Poland the issues related to this type of employment form are regulated by the Labour Code.

Considering the workers' age, it must be noted that part-time employment is more popular among older people (aged 50-64, especially people aged over 65) than among middle-aged people (between 25-49). This phenomenon is observed in the majority of analysed countries, but not in all of them. In Poland, the rate of people aged 65, working part-time, is over eight times higher than the middle-aged population. This is reflected in the data presented in Figure 1. However, it must be noted that the share of people aged 25-49 in the population of part-time workers in 2017 was not higher than 5%, whereas in the EU-28 it was higher by over 12 percentage points.

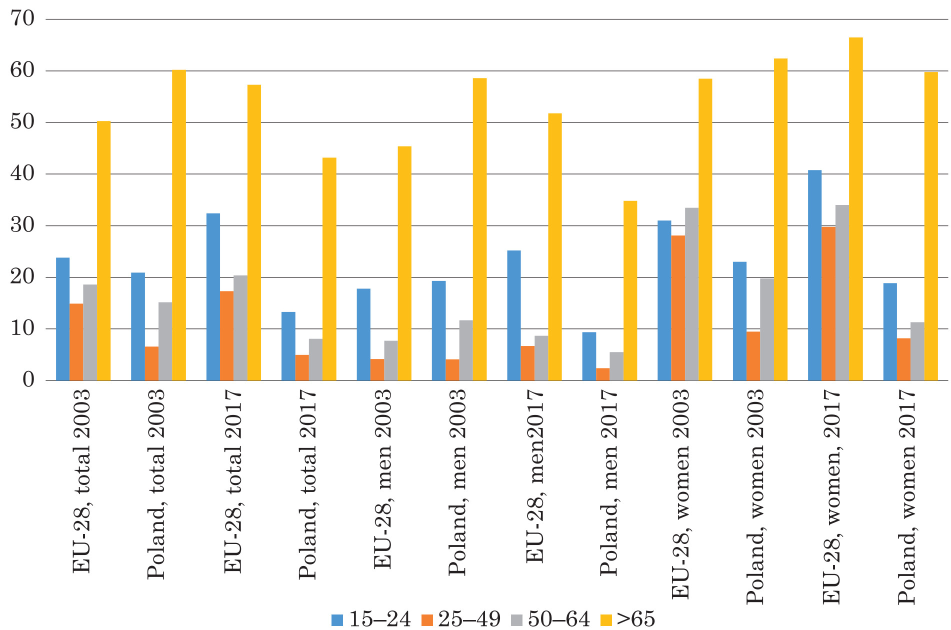

Fig. 1. Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment, by gender and age [%] in 2003 and 2017

Source: own case study on the basis of data from Eurostat (2018).

Analysis of data taking gender as well as age into consideration shows that women aged over 65 constitute the highest rate of people employed part time in the total working population (almost 60%). This is mainly the consequence of the retirement age limit for women, however, their share observed in the 25-49 age group is the lowest (8.2%) which is shown in Figure 1. Within the working male population aged 50-64, the share of men employed part-time in the EU-28 in 2017 did not exceed 9% and it was higher in comparison with 2003 by only 1.2 percentage points. On the other hand, in the case of women, it was almost nine times higher, even though the dynamics of changes remained equally small.

Perceiving women's and men's roles in social and professional life in a traditional way, as well as prevailing stereotypes often cause approaching women as workers of "poorer" quality. Qualities attributed to them, including excessive emotionality, indecision or little availability contribute to their worse position in labour market in comparison with men. Furthermore, the barriers in the access to institutional childcare and the lack of a division of family responsibilities make women who try to reconcile professional and family duties, take advantage of part-time work more often than their partners. In 2017, in the entire EU, nearly 32% of women, in comparison to only 9% of men worked part-time. In Poland this difference is much smaller, as the rate of women working part-time reached 9.7% when compared to 3.7% of men, which on the one hand can be a result of a relatively inflexible labour market and on the other hand, the economic situation of many families who cannot afford to abandon full-time work or reconcile it with better childcare or care for other dependents.

Taking the age criterion into consideration in the conducted analyses confirms great diversity in the utilisation of flexible employment options observed in the EU states. In 2017, the difference in the case of women reached 76.5 percentage point, whereas in the case of men 19.5 percentage points. The smallest values persisting in the entire research period both with respect to men and women were reported in Bulgaria (2.3% and 2.8% respectively in 2017) which can prove a lack of knowledge about flexible forms of employment or a lack of relevant regulation in this sphere. In Germany, the rate of women working part-time in 2017 was higher than 51% while the dynamics of change were negligible. The Netherlands is a country with the highest level of utilization of this form of employment among women – in 2017 it was close to 80% whereas in the analysed period, a small decline of this value occurred as presented in Table 1. Portugal and Croatia belong to the countries that reported the greatest decline in the share of women aged 50-64 working part-time (by over 10 percentage points), whereas the largest growth was observed in Italy (12.7 percentage points) and in Austria (11.4 percentage points). In the case of men, the changes were considerably smaller; the largest decline was reported in Poland (6.4 percentage points), whereas the greatest growth was in Luxembourg (5.5 percentage points) and in Austria (4.4 percentage points). It is presented in Table 1.

Part-time workers aged 50-64 as percentage

Country	2003		2005		2007		2009	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
EU-28	7.5	33.1	7.8	33.3	8.0	33.8	8.3	33.7
Belgium	10.1	45.7	11.7	45.0	11.6	48.7	13.4	51.4
Bulgaria	2.3	3.7	2.2	3.6	1.4	3.3	2.4	3.6
Czech Republic	3.8	10.8	3.2	9.6	3.2	10.1	3.3	9.8
Denmark	6.5	28.9	7.4	30.4	8.9	34.1	9.9	36.6
Germany	6.3	46.6	7.1	48.3	8.6	50.0	8.6	49.4
Estonia	:	13.9	4.6	9.7	5.5	10.4	7.7	12.2
Ireland	6.6	44.7	:	:	8.1	42.0	10.8	43.5
Greece	1.7	8.0	1.6	9.9	2.2	10.8	2.3	10.1
Spain	1.5	17.5	2.9	24.0	2.9	22.4	3.2	21.2
France	7.4	32.4	6.6	31.0	6.4	31.4	7.0	31.3
Croatia	7.1	18.9	8.1	19.3	7.0	14.9	7.7	15.6
Italy	3.1	14.3	4.6	18.5	4.5	19.7	4.3	20.9
Cyprus	6.6	19.0	5.5	20.1	4.6	14.7	3.2	14.6
Latvia	:	19.4	7.6	10.9	5.5	8.5	7.8	9.4
Lithuania	7.5	13.2	8.0	11.1	10.2	13.1	8.3	11.3
Luxembourg	:	35.9	3.2	47.0	3.1	46.8	6.1	38.4
Hungary	4.3	8.8	4.7	7.7	4.7	8.2	5.8	10.0
Malta	:	27.6	4.9	23.1	3.7	29.7	5.8	33.4
Netherlands	21.2	80.4	21.6	81.5	22.5	80.1	22.4	80.8
Austria	5.2	35.9	7.2	41.2	7.6	41.7	8.3	44.5
Poland	11.7	18.1	10.4	18.9	9.1	17.7	8.5	16.8
Portugal	8.2	26.1	7.3	23.4	8.6	24.0	7.6	21.9
Romania	13.8	19.4	11.1	14.4	9.9	14.0	9.8	14.4
Slovenia	5.7	11.5	7.3	12.7	9.0	15.5	8.7	14.0
Slovakia	2.4	7.1	2.3	7.3	1.7	7.1	3.4	6.8
Finland	10.4	17.6	11.1	16.7	10.5	16.7	9.4	17.1
Sweden	10.4	33.9	12.3	37.6	12.5	39.7	12.7	39.2
United Kingdom	11.6	49.9	11.5	47.4	11.6	47.2	12.2	46.6

M – men, W – women.
Source: own case study on the basis of data from Eurostat (2018).

Table 1

of the total employment, by sex in 2003-2017 [%]

2011		2013		2015		2017		Changes [p.p.]	
M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
8.8	33.9	9.0	34.3	8.8	34.1	8.7	33.9	1.2	0.8
14.8	53.1	13.7	51.6	14.2	50.4	14.2	49.8	4.1	4.1
2.3	2.9	2.0	3.7	2.2	2.9	2.3	2.8	0.0	-0.9
3.1	8.8	3.7	10.3	3.3	9.2	3.3	11.0	-0.5	0.2
8.9	33.1	7.9	29.5	8.9	28.1	9.2	29.8	2.7	0.9
8.8	50.1	9.1	51.6	9.1	51.3	9.0	51.3	2.7	4.7
6.1	15.3	6.3	13.9	7.5	10.4	8.1	12.3	3.5	-1.6
12.5	44.0	14.1	43.7	11.8	41.5	10.9	37.2	4.3	-7.5
3.5	10.3	4.4	11.1	4.7	11.7	4.4	11.8	2.7	3.8
3.6	20.5	4.5	21.1	4.6	21.6	4.4	20.8	2.9	3.3
8.3	31.9	7.9	32.7	8.6	32.5	8.9	32.4	1.5	0.0
8.9	13.5	7.6	11.3	6.1	8.4	5.0	7.3	-2.1	-11.6
5.0	22.5	6.6	24.4	6.4	26.4	6.3	27.0	3.2	12.7
5.8	14.9	9.6	17.8	11.5	18.4	8.9	17.1	2.3	-1.9
7.9	11.4	6.9	11.6	5.5	10.9	6.5	11.9	-1.1	-7.5
8.0	11.7	7.7	12.1	7.2	12.0	5.7	11.0	-1.8	-2.2
6.1	44.0	7.7	46.4	6.1	47.3	8.2	44.8	5.0	8.9
6.5	10.2	7.0	10.6	5.7	10.8	3.7	8.3	-0.6	-0.5
6.2	36.3	7.3	33.9	7.1	31.2	5.6	33.6	0.7	6.0
22.9	79.9	23.0	80.3	21.9	80.2	21.8	79.3	0.6	-1.1
8.5	44.6	9.2	47.1	9.1	47.0	9.7	47.2	4.5	11.3
7.1	14.9	6.5	13.3	6.0	11.6	5.3	11.4	-6.4	-6.7
11.4	22.2	12.1	19.2	9.7	16.4	7.5	15.6	-0.7	-10.5
11.4	15.5	10.3	15.1	10.6	14.4	8.3	10.3	-5.5	-9.1
7.8	14.4	7.4	13.5	7.6	12.5	7.9	13.2	2.2	1.7
3.4	7.1	3.8	7.5	5.0	8.2	5.3	8.4	2.9	1.3
10.9	17.4	10.5	16.8	9.5	14.3	9.3	15.0	-1.1	-2.6
12.1	38.2	11.4	34.5	11.3	33.8	10.5	31.8	0.1	-2.1
12.6	46.2	12.7	44.3	12.2	43.9	13.0	43.5	1.4	-6.4

Such significant diversity in the use of part-time work among people aged 50-64, especially women, results from the overlap of many factors that support remaining active in the labour market or early deactivation of this social group. Apart from determinants occurring in the broadly perceived material, infrastructural, social, legal and institutional environment; individual determinants, including personality features, having children, education level, qualifications, experience, attitudes towards work or non-wage sources of income perform a vital role.

Depending on the share of women in the population of part-time workers aged over 50, the EU can be divided into 4 groups:

– countries of the lowest share of women employed part-time in 2017 (less than 10%) – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia;

– countries with a mid-low level of employment (11-25%) – Estonia, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland;

– countries with a medium level of employment (26-45%) – Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy, Malta, Great Britain, Sweden;

– countries with a high rate of employment (over 45%) – the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Germany.

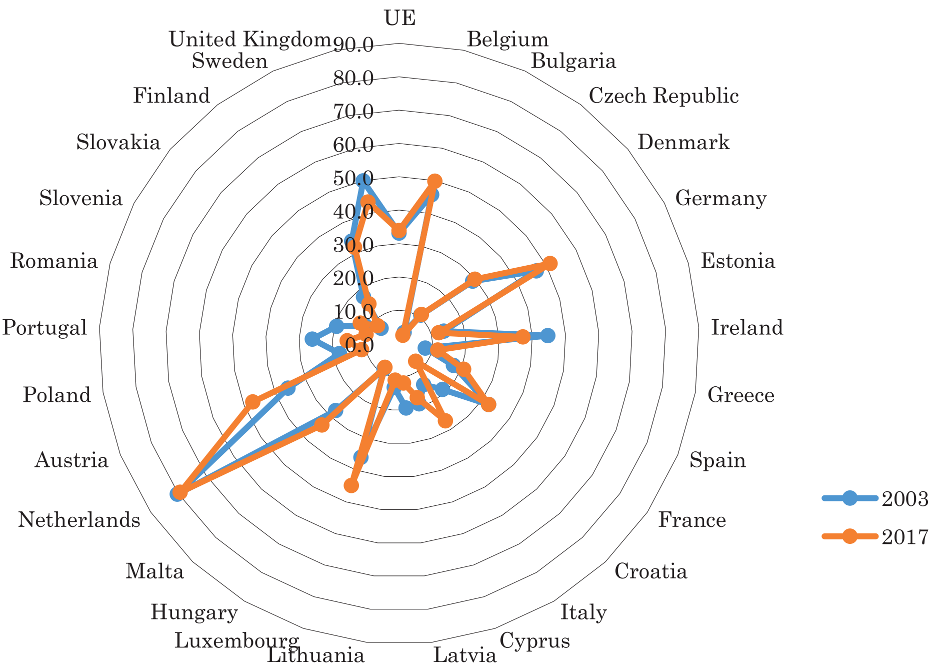

Fig. 2. Part-time employment of women aged 50-64 as a percentage of the total employment in 2003 and 2017 [%]

Source: own case study on the basis of data from Eurostat (2018).

However, it must be stated that the Netherlands is an exception, because the share of women employed as part-time workers exceed 79-80%, while in other countries from the last group it is about 50%. It is presented in Figure 2.

It can be assumed that allowing older people to work part-time will more and more affect the growth of employment in this age group. However, the reasons for taking part-time work are important. This is because part-time employment can be caused by economic and social determinants. The first can comprise the reasons observed in the demand side of the labour market. The lack of demand for full-time work can result from economic, technological, organisational and structural determinants. For the workers, this represents the inability to get full-time work even though they want and look for such employment. This forced part-time work can be interpreted as a form of *underemployment*. According to ILO, it concerns people who work part-time, but want and can work longer (*Resolution*…, 1998, p. 2). The situation is different in the case of social factors determining part-time work that result from labour preferences. People are interested in taking part-time work and they look for such employment in various periods of life. In the case of older workers, it can prove to be an interesting transition stage between full-time occupational activity and retirement.

Analysis of the available data shows a worrying growth of taking part-time work due to economic reasons which in practice means the lack of possibility to get employment with more satisfying conditions, see Figure 3. "Forced" part-

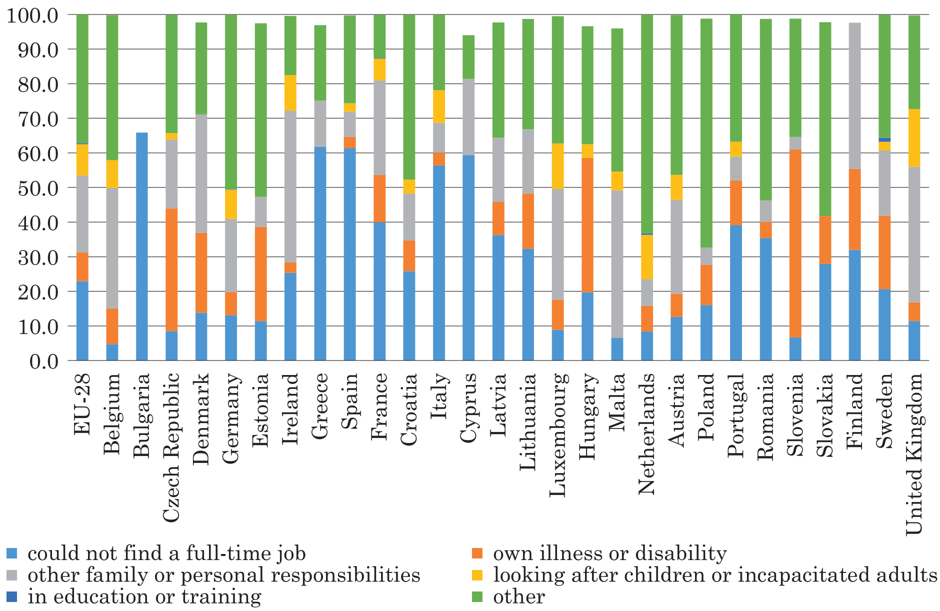

Fig. 3. Main reason for part-time employment among workers aged 50-64 in 2017 [%]
Source: own case study on the basis of data from Eurostat (2018).

-time work in 2003 concerned over 18% of the EU-28 population aged 15-64 and in 2017 almost 27%. The most difficult situation was observed in Greece (70%), Cyprus (67.7%) and in Italy (62.5%). The smallest rate (less than 8%) was reported in 2017 in Estonia, Belgium and Holland, regardless of the age group. In Poland this issue concerns slightly more than 28% and in comparison with 2003 a decline by 12.6 percentage points was observed.

In the case of the population aged 50-64, the rate of people taking part-time work due to economic reasons in all countries was lower, while in Poland there was a growth from 13.5% in 2003 to 16% in 2017. It reached its smallest value in 2008, a little over 10%, which should be associated with a good economic situation. However, in successive years it grew almost twice under the influence of the economic crisis. Gender was not a determinant that could significantly diversify this situation. The largest growth of the rate of people who could not find full-time employment was reported in 2017 in Greece and Spain, where this rate exceeded 60%. It is still associated with an unfavourable economic situation in these states, and consequently with the situation in the labour market. The reverse situation occurred in Lithuania and Latvia where a decline in the rate of people taking part-time work because of economic reasons was observed, while their share remained at a relatively high level (over 30%). This reason for taking part-time work was least frequently indicated in 2017 in Belgium, Slovenia and Malta. In Poland this rate was 16%; whereas in 2003 it was 2.5 percentage points lower.

Other equally often indicated reasons for taking part-time work by people aged 50-64 include family or private responsibilities. This group mainly comprises women whose possibilities of continuation of occupational activity are limited by family responsibilities, especially the need to care for dependent family members. This resulted in the fact that they are often called the “sandwich generation”, i.e. the generation that cares about grandchildren on the one hand, and their parents on the other hand (Pierret, 2006, p. 3-9; Wassel & Cutle, 2016, p. 63-70; Wiemers & Bianchi, 2015, p. 127-176).

It must be noted that there was a large proportion of people who indicated “others” as the reason for taking part-time work in all EU states – see Figure 3. Maybe in this group there are people who approach part-time work as a transition stage towards retirement. However, there are no clear grounds for such a conclusion. Illness or disability did not constitute an important reason to take part-time work in the majority of EU countries. For example, in 2017 it represented only 3% of the inhabitants in Spain and Ireland aged 50-64. Slovenia and Hungary were the exceptions here (54% and 39% respectively).

Summing up, it must be stated that part-time work is more often undertaken for economic reasons than as a form of transition between full professional activity and retirement. However, it should be unsettling that education and training is the least-indicated reason for taking part-time work.

Conclusions

Demographic changes observed in all European Union member states affect many areas of social and economic life, including the labour market. The analysis of available data allowed the identification of key challenges facing national labour markets on the one hand, and on the other, the problems encountered by older people in those labour markets. They include, among others:

– a decline in the level of occupational activity with age (especially after being 65) and its significant diversification depending on gender in specific EU states;

– little interest and utilization of flexible forms of employment in many EU countries, for example part-time work;

– many examples of the underemployment phenomenon among workers aged 50-64;

– not approaching part-time work as a transition stage between full-time activity and retirement.

The change in the way mature workers are perceived, the growth of their economic activity and the utilization of flexible forms of employment can bring benefits both from the macro-economic and social perspective. This is because professional deactivation that is too early leads to material, health-related and psychological negative consequences. Part-time work can and should be approached as a transition stage between full-time employment and retirement. Unfortunately, in many countries it is more often taken due to economic reasons while leading to the growth of the underemployment phenomenon.

Due to the specific character of national labour markets, it is difficult to identify specific solutions that would lead to a situation in which non-typical forms of employment would affect an increase in the occupational activity of people aged over 50. However, it is important that functioning solutions and those that will be implemented in the future should not lead to a situation in which non-typical work options are or will be perceived as the employment of last chance for people of immobile working age while leading at the same time to labour market segmentation and its dual division into primary and secondary segments.

Translated by Bernadeta John-Jankowska
Proofreading by Michael Thoene

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OLSZTYN ECONOMIC JOURNAL
2019, 14(3), 255–270
ISSN 1897-2721 e-ISSN 2083-4675 DOI: 10.31648/oej.4372

ORIGINAL PAPER
Received: 18.12.2018
Revised: 11.03.2019
Published: 10.09.2019

COMBINING PAID WORK AND ELDERCARE IN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE PRACTICE OF SELECTED DUTCH ORGANIZATIONS

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JEL Classification: J140, J180, M540.

Key words: eldercare assistance, work-life balance, the Dutch legislation.

Abstract

The possibility to balance work and eldercare in the Netherlands is determined by legal and institutional factors (such as special employment entitlements for a career in the form of leaves and a flexible working arrangement). In our paper we compare the Dutch legislation in this field with the HRM practice of four Dutch public and private (non-profit and for-profit) organizations. The aim is to check what kind of workplace eldercare assistance is provided by the organizations and what forms are applied due to legal regulations and what goes beyond these regulations and why. The results show that the relationship between employer and employee is based on mutual trust. Dutch employers are – as far as circumstances permit – more generous in practice than the specific legislation requires, mainly due to the minimum rights in the legislation. A reason for the generosity is self-interest. The Dutch regulation of sick pay can be seen as an incentive to prevent sickness as it obliges employers to continue paying the wages during sickness for a long period. Moreover, they want to build loyalty and motivation among their employees by developing a form of corporate social responsibility.

How to cite: Furmańska-Maruszak, A., & Heeger-Hertter, S. (2019). Combining Paid Work and Eldercare in the Netherlands in the Practice of Selected Dutch Organizations. *Olsztyn Economic Journal*, *14*(3), 255-270. https://doi.org/10.31648/oej.4372.

ŁĄCZENIE PRACY I OPIEKI NAD OSOBĄ STARSZĄ W HOLANDII W PRAKTYCE WYBRANYCH ORGANIZACJI HOLENDERSKICH

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Słowa kluczowe: pomoc w zakresie opieki nad osobą starszą, równowaga praca-życie, holenderskie ustawodawstwo.

Abstrakt

Możliwość zrównoważenia pracy i opieki nad osobą starszą w Holandii jest determinowana przez czynniki prawne i instytucjonalne (jak specjalne uprawnienia dla pracującego opiekuna w formie urlopów i elastycznych warunków pracy). W artykule porównano holenderskie ustawodawstwo w tej dziedzinie z praktyką HRM czterech holenderskich organizacji publicznych i prywatnych (non-profit i for profit). Celem było sprawdzenie, jaki rodzaj pomocy w zakresie opieki nad osobami starszymi jest zapewniany przez te organizacje i jakie formy są stosowane ze względu na przepisy prawa, a co wykracza poza te przepisy i dlaczego. Wyniki pokazują, że relacje między pracodawcą a pracownikiem opierają się na wzajemnym zaufaniu. Holenderscy pracodawcy są – gdy tylko pozwalają na to okoliczności – bardziej hojni w praktyce, niż wymaga tego konkretne ustawodawstwo, ze względu na minimalne prawa w ustawodawstwie. Powodem hojności jest własny interes. Holenderskie przepisy dotyczące zasiłków chorobowych mogą być postrzegane jako zachęta do zapobiegania chorobom, ponieważ obligują one pracodawców do dalszego wypłacania wynagrodzenia w czasie choroby przez długi czas. Ponadto pracodawcy chcą budować lojalność i motywację wśród swoich pracowników, rozwijając podejście społecznej odpowiedzialności biznesu.

Introduction

Only recently (*Proposal for a Directive*…, 2017) has the combination issue of work and care for a dependent relative been recognized as an important part of a work-life balance (WLB) approach that makes work sustainable throughout the life cycle (*Sustainable work over*…, 2015, p. 8). Taking into consideration recent developments in European societies, the Commission introduced a broader approach to work-life balance referring this issue to parents and caregivers separately. The research of WLB measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives has been conducted for 35 European countries and presented in the form of a joint report (Bouget *et al.*, 2016) as well as individual reports for each country (European Commission 2016) facilitating international comparisons. The issue has been raised due to the problem of low employment rates, especially among women (*Proposal for a Directive*…, 2017, p. 2) and a growing demand for eldercare (Billings *et al.*, 2013, p. 3; Wittenberg, 2016, p. 13) in European and OECD countries. Managing an ageing and multigenerational workforce requires a particular HRM approach that answers the needs of older workers and helps them with the problems they experience while combining work with giving care to their parents, their spouse or other relatives (Calvano, 2015). It requires an adequate work-life balance policy including care leaves, flexible working arrangements and also sufficient formal care services (*Proposal for a Directive…*, 2017, p. 2).

In the Netherlands, the system of support for family caregivers is regulated by law. The possibility to balance work and care is determined by legal and institutional factors, such as: special employment entitlements for a caregiver to ask for care leave, flexible working arrangements such as the adjustment of working hours or work place, flexible working time, etc. In our paper, we compare the Dutch legislation in this field with the human resources management (HRM) practice of several Dutch organizations. The aim is to check how the Dutch legislation helps organizations to balance work and care of their employees in the Netherlands. In order to do so, we assess the legislative approach to work-care balance in the Netherlands and present four cases of Dutch public, private non-profit and private for-profit organizations that support their employees in balancing work and care.

Measures supporting the balance between work and eldercare in the Netherlands

Access to formal long-term care services in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands the provision for formal long-term care (LTC) is well-developed. In 2015, the proportion of the elderly aged 65 or more receiving this type of care equaled 18.4%; placing the Netherlands in the third position next to the OECD countries with the highest LTC coverage – Switzerland (21.6%) and Israel (20.7%). In 2005, the Netherlands was the leader among analyzed OECD countries with more than one fifth of over-65s receiving long-term care (20.5%) (*Health at a Glance 2017…*, 2017, p. 207). The decrease in LTC coverage in this country is not substantial, but it mirrors the tendency of an increasing role for informal care.

The majority (71% in 2015) of formal long-term care recipients in the Netherlands receive care at home. Moreover, in 2015 the Netherlands had the highest number of beds in long-term care institutions and hospitals (87 beds per 1,000 people aged 65 and over) among OECD countries. This kind of care is necessary for people with intensive LTC needs and often costs more to public budgets in comparison to informal care (*Health at a Glance 2017…*, 2017, p. 213). In the Netherlands in 2015, the long-term care expenditure for the health and social component incurred by the government and compulsory insurance schemes was the highest among OECD countries and equaled 3.7% of GDP. It was more than twice as high as the OECD average (*Health at a Glance 2017…*, 2017, p. 215).

In the Netherlands, long-term care for people in need has undergone radical reform. Since 2015, the availability of centrally funded care to people who require permanent supervision or who require residential care within an institution has been strictly limited. As a consequence, the focus has increasingly been away from publicly funded care, and has shifted towards familial social responsibility and towards promoting informal care (Verbeek-Oudijk *et al.*, 2014).

An important objective of government policy with regard to labour and care; therefore, is "to encourage employees to combine work and care" (*Beleidsdoorlichting Arbeid en Zorg…*, 2006). Policy in this area is mainly a consequence of the increasing labour participation of women and the disappearance of the breadwinner society. It is recognized that this changing reality not only has positive aspects (in terms of better use of human capital and greater financial independence), but it can also lead to coordination problems, time pressure, health and financial risks, etc. When these negative aspects are at least partly met by government policy, the chance of labour market participation is maximized.

Flexible forms of employment are widely spread among the Dutch workforce. In 2016, the Netherlands had the highest proportion of workforce aged 20-64 years in Europe reporting that their main job was part-time (46.6%). This form of employment is particularly popular among women, and in 2016 74.8% of women in the age group 20-64 worked part-time (Eurostat 2018). Such a high percentage of part-timers indicates better possibilities of organizing one's working life around care duties (van der Woude *et al.*, 2016, p. 17).

It is estimated that 33% of all adults in the Netherlands provide informal care to relatives, friends and neighbours. The large majority of these caregivers (73%) give less-intensive informal care (de Klerk *et al.*, 2015; van der Woude *et al.*, 2016, p. 13). The Netherlands belongs to the group of countries with the lowest rates of daily care provision due to developed formal long-term care sector and comprehensive public coverage (*Health at a Glance 2017…*, 2017, p. 208). However, the recent tendency of shifting care from publicly funded care to informal care makes the issue of work-life balance among working caregivers particularly relevant.

Measures supporting the balance between work and eldercare regulated by the Dutch law

The right to request care leaves and flexible working hours is regulated by law. Caregiver leave has been organized under the Work and Care Act (Wet arbeid en zorg, hereafter: Wazo). It provides short and long-term care leave as well as emergency leave. Employees are entitled to care leave for a legally defined group of people in need of care. Until 2015, this group was limited to family members in the first degree (parents and children). To encourage informal care, the caregiving group has been extended enormously[1]. The extension was necessary because, due to increased mobility and an increasing participation of women in the labour market (which is also the aim of the law that extended the group of caregivers), a growing group does not have access to immediate family members or housemates who can be recruited for performing the necessary informal care (*Modernisering regelingen*…, 2014).

Caregivers are allowed to take short-term care leave with a maximum of two times the weekly working time in each period of 12 months. It can be taken in several spells within one year. Short-term care leave is at the expense of the employer. It is paid at a rate of 70% of wages or higher if it is regulated differently by an employer or collective agreement. The leave enables the employee to provide the necessary care in case of the illness of a person belonging to the group. The requirement of "necessary care" means that there is a need for care of a person as well as that the employee is the person to provide the care, i.e. care cannot be given in another way (Article 5:1 Wazo j° Cantonal Judge Gouda, 24 February 2005; JAR 2005/86).

Long-term care leave is unpaid unless an employer or collective bargaining partners decide differently. Caregivers can take this leave for a maximum of six times the weekly working hours per year. Long-term care leave could originally only be taken for family members who were life-threateningly ill. However, the scope was broadened in 2015 with care for the sick and needy. Employees have no absolute right to short and long-term care leave. The employer does not need to allow leave if the taking up of leave impedes compelling business or service interests, for which the interest of the employee in taking up the leave must deviate according to standards of reasonableness and fairness (Article 5:4 Wazo).

The employee is protected against dismissal *due* to taking short or long-term care leave (Civil Code, Article 7:670 par.). The termination prohibition, however, does not apply *during* the duration of the leave. Despite care leave an employee can also take up holidays. Only during the unpaid long-term care leave, a caregiver is not insured for sickness, disability and unemployment benefit (Asscher-Vonk, 2001). It is possible for him or her to join a voluntary insurance contract for sickness during leave but it means paying the contributions out of his/her own pocket.

[1] Now it includes the husband or wife, registered partner or life partner cohabiting with the employee; his/her child and the child of the husband or wife, registered partner or life partner cohabiting with the employee; a foster child living at the same address as the employee; a kinsman in the first and second degree; a person (not being an employee of the caregiver) living at the same address as the employee and a person with whom the employee has a social relation, as far as the care is directly linked to this relation and reasonably should be provided by the employee.

Giving care to the dependent relative is related to physical and emotional effort that if lasts for a long period and is not provided with adequate support can lead to a caregiver's incapacity for work. Not being able to work due to sickness is at the expense of the employer. The income protection for an employee who is incapable for work due to illness is provided by an employer who is obliged to pay 70% of wages (the first year it must amount to at least the statutory minimum pay) to his/her employee during his/her sickness for the period of one hundred four weeks (Civil Code, Article 7:629). Legally there is a maximum daily wage, but collective labour agreements often regulate that the full wage is paid in the first year of illness and 70 per cent in the second year of illness. Employers can bear the risk of the employees' illness themselves or take out private insurance to cover this risk (Pennings, 2017, p. 75).

The right to flexible work arrangements was settled under the Flexible Working Act (Wet flexible werken) in 2016 (replacing the Working Hours Adjustment Act – Wet aanpassing arbeidsduur) in order to "effectively support the combination or work and private life" (*Wijziging van de Wet*…, 2014). Currently the following three forms of flexibility are acknowledged:

– a change of working hours (number of hours);

– a change of working time (when the work has to be done);

– an adjustment of the workplace (the place where the work is to be performed, mostly involving work in the home office, teleworking).

An employer must agree to a request to change the number of working hours (1st type) and the right to change working time (2nd type) if he or she cannot give a valid business reasoning against it. With regard to the right to change working time (2nd type), serious safety risks may justify a refusal. Adjustment of the workplace is actually only the worker's right to apply for home work. The employer may reject the application without needing to file serious business or professional interests (Dijkhoff, 2017).

The research shows that the take-up of care leave is relatively low among Dutch informal caregivers (de Boer *et al.*, 2019). They are more willing to take holidays than care leave to provide care. In 2016, of all informal caregivers 10% took paid care leave and 6% took unpaid leave. A substantial proportion of informal caregivers (40%) took up holidays in order to provide care. An explanation for the relatively low shares of employees taking paid or unpaid leave is given that employees are often not aware that this type of statutory leave scheme exists (*Op weg naar een mantelzorgvriendelijk*…, 2018). The low use of unpaid leave may also indicate that the financial consequences of taking care leave play a role (Zwinkels, 2018). Finally, it might be that people do not need these forms of support, because they can combine caring for their family and work well.

Workplace-based eldercare assistance (not regulated by law)

A good combination of work and informal care is not only determined by leave possibilities and shortening the working hours. There is more attention in the workplace for the dialogue about informal care. Eldercare assistance at work is shaped by the external environment – by the welfare policy of a particular country and by family-leave laws (Calvano, 2015, p. 167). Some of the company HRM solutions are directly influenced by law, some go far beyond this and some are independently developed at an organizational level. They may develop formally as a part of official HRM policies and programmes or informally as practical and emotional support provided by supervisors and co-workers. It is difficult to measure the costs and benefits of workplace-based eldercare support. Research shows that employers are willing to introduce such forms of support as long as they do not need to spend extra money or they expect a positive return on investment (Calvano, 2015, p. 168).

In the Netherlands the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) initiated in 2015 the campaign How the Netherlands works?' (*Hoe Werkt Nederland?…*, online) which gave examples of agreements that employees had made concerning the combination of work and informal caregiving. The Ministries of Public Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) also support the activities of the Foundation for Work and Informal Care (*Op weg naar een mantelzorgvriendelijk…*, 2018) which offers employers tools to give input to a caregiving-friendly employership (*Op weg naar een mantelzorgvriendelijk…*, 2018).

Research problems and methodology

In the paper, we investigate the relation between the Dutch legislation regarding work-care support for employees and the practice of human resources management applied in several Dutch organizations. We examine the way they use work-care measures in order to check which of them are applied due to legal regulations and what goes beyond these regulations and why. We take into account organizations from the public sector (one organization) and the private sector – both for profit (one organization) and non-profit (two organizations of different sizes) in order to check whether there are important differences between work-care measures used according to sector, size and the goal of profit maximization. We formulate three research problems:

– To what extent do surveyed organizations apply the measures supporting work-care balance regulated by the Dutch law?

– To what extent do examined organizations apply other measures supporting working caregivers?

– What motivates employers to support the work-care balance among their employees?

The study is based on the qualitative analysis of data obtained by means of unstructured interviews conducted with the owner of the company and HR managers. Some questions for these interviews had been prepared in advance and were related to the following topics: the impact of eldercare on employed caregivers, workplace-based eldercare assistance and the effects of eldercare assistance at work. Some of the questions developed during the course of the interview.

The investigated organizations differ according to the size – from a big organization (employing more than 6,000 people) to a small family business (employing 15 workers). Three of the examined organizations employed highly and very highly qualified staff working full time and part-time. In two of them, having an MA diploma was not sufficient. They expected additional scientific involvement (post graduates courses, PhD studies or others) and also other social or political involvement from their employees. These organizations with highly and very highly qualified staff operate mainly in the field of higher education, research and consultancy. The private for-profit organization is run in the form of a family business and specializes in the clothing trade. It employs only 15 people, all working part-time.

The majority of the examined organizations have a long history dating back even to the 17th century (in the case of the public organization). One of the private non-profit organizations is relatively young. It emerged from a combination of several foundations in 2012. This company specializes mainly in partnership building and consultancy to local authorities. The other private non-profit organization has quite a long history dating back to the times before the Second World War. It was setup in 1938 as a family business. Now this organization provides consultancy in the field of energy transitions, project teams, as well as soft and hard human resource management. The clothing trade family business dates from 1924.

Table 1

Characteristics of analysed organizations

Organization:	Public	Private non-profit	Private non-profit	Private for-profit
Employment	>6,000	75	300	15
area of activity	higher education, research	research, consultancy	consultancy	trade
The beginning of activity	1636	2012	1938	1924
Staff	very highly qualified	highly qualified	very highly qualified	secondary education (MBO)
Form of employment	full-time and part-time	part-time preferred (32 h), full time – 36 h	full-time and part-time (min. 60%)	only part-time (4 days a week)

Source: own research.

Work-life measures for persons of working age giving care to the elderly in selected Dutch organizations – results

Measures supporting work-care balance regulated by the Dutch law

All investigated organizations declare they make use of the measures supporting work-care balance of their employees regulated in the Dutch law such as short-term and long term care leave, as well as flexible working arrangements. The results show that the companies go beyond the legal regulations offering their employees better conditions than it appears from state regulations. Two of the examined organizations offer their employees short-term care leave paid at 100% of wages for caring duties. Moreover, they do not register the number of days-off due to care declaring that "the law is the minimum". This is based on mutual trust and openness of the organization to help employees who struggle with difficult family situations. Managers assume that their employees will not overuse this right, remaining loyal to their company and its goals.

For employees who struggle with caring duties for a longer period, there is a possibility to go on long-term care leave. In this case an organization uses a mixture of tools to help an employee remain in employment as it was in the case of the private non-profit consultancy company employing 300 people. The measures used to help an employee giving care to the dependent relative were used at various moments of the caring period depending on the needs and involved: working from home, working part-time, one year unpaid care leave and also short-term paid leave (100% of wages). This employee came back to work after more than one year of giving care and remained valuable to the company.

Another example of help given to the long-term caregiver, which is possible according to the law, but requires additional effort and willingness from an employer is related to the combination of paid and unpaid leave – long-term care leave taken on a part-time basis. In the situation of a terminally ill family member, a public organization made possible a spread leave, namely: one day off for half a year, whereas at that time, the spread out use of the long--term care leave was only possible during a period of 18 consecutive weeks. Moreover, the employer continued the payment at half the salary; the other half was at the expense of the employee. This is a nice example of customization. An extraordinary situation asks for an extraordinary solution and the legal basis is the open standard for a good employer and a good employee.

Flexible working arrangements including the right to request adjusted working hours and an adjusted workplace are used to help family caregivers by all investigated companies. An adjusted workplace in all companies appeared to be a possibility to work from home (for positions for which it is possible) and in one organization also by the possibility to change the tasks performed due to care (in the case of a private non-profit consultancy company employing 300 people).

The HR manager of this company declared that they give their employees “space and time to create their own job”. Their so called “output driven” approach gives their employees a lot of flexibility as long as they perform well. What counts is the initiative of an employee. It was stressed by both non-profit organizations. The HR manager of the smaller non-profit organization (employing 75 people) admitted that organizing the job when caring duties appear is “on the employee shoulder” and “it is your problem and we (the organization) can always help”. This company decided to reduce all additional days-off, retaining only those that are regulated by law. Instead they decided to increase the number of days taken as holidays (above the obligatory limit) in order to leave to employees the decision as to how they want to spend it. To make it more flexible once a year (usually in December) there is a possibility of buying or selling holidays. Employees can plan how many holiday days they will need during the coming year and then decide whether they want to have more or less than they had been already given.

Table 2

Work-care balance measures regulated by the Dutch law

Measures:	Public (6,000)	Private non-profit (75)	Private non-profit (300)	Private for-profit (15)
Short-term care leave	• 2 weeks (70%) • registered	• 2 weeks (70%) • registered	• 2 weeks (100%) • not registered	• 2 weeks (100%) • not registered
Long-term care leave	unpaid leave, individual combination of paid and unpaid leave	unpaid leave	unpaid leave (coming back to work after one-year unpaid leave)	unpaid leave
Flexible working arrangements	• possibility to work from home and adjust working time	• more paid holidays • possibility of buying or selling holidays • possibility to work from home and adjust working time • initiative of an employee	• possibility to work from home and adjust working time • employees have “space and time to create their own job” • possibility to change the tasks performed	• possibility to work from home and adjust working time

Source: own research.

Other forms of workplace-based eldercare assistance (not required by law)

In order to combine work and care, it is very important to have a supportive employer. Eldercare assistance at work can be more formally organized (as it was in the case of a big public organization) or be completely informal based on empathy and the personal experience of an owner (as it was in the case of a small for profit company). In the first case, eldercare assistance had been institutionalized. There are formal ways and procedures a caregiver can use in order to receive adequate help. Up-to-date information about the rights and conditions to request short-time, long-time or emergency leave is available for employees on the Internet. If an employee struggles with the problem of combining work and care, he or she can ask the reintegration manager for help. The reintegration manager helps both employees and managers to solve the problem of a worker's incapacity for work due to health problems and tries to find a tailor-made solution to "keep an employee on their feet" as long as possible preventing his or her burn-out as a working caregiver. Moreover, if a caregiver feels that he or she is treated unequally due to giving care or if other difficulties appear, he or she can talk to a trust person about his or her personal problems. There is also a social worker employed by the organization in order to guide employees struggling with difficult family problems.

In a small family business, the relationships between the owner and her employees are closer and less formal. Working caregivers can receive adequate emotional support and counseling from the owner. It is the owner's decision to share her personal experience in solving and understanding the problems of her workers.

In the two analyzed profit and non-profit organizations, the initiative and awareness of an employee is very important. They both offer support provided by the supervisor or HR manager on deciding what kind of working adjustments are necessary. The HR manager of the non-profit consultancy organization (employing 300 people) emphasized that they (as a company) "have no taboo", so it means that employees can easily talk about their personal problems that harm their work involvement.

Table 3

Other measures supporting working caregivers

Public (6000)	Private non-profit (75)	Private non-profit (300)	Private for-profit (15)
counselling and formal support reintegration manager social worker trust person tailor-made solutions	the duty of giving care is a problem of an employee, the organization helps an employee decides what kind of adjustments he or she needs	support in organizing the caregiver's work provided by a supervisor and/or HR manager „when employees struggle, we will help them" there is "no taboo"	informal, empathy and personal experience of an owner employees "come to work crying and leave it with a smile"

Source: own research.

Employers' motivation to support the balance between work and care

There are various reasons for employers to support employees who struggle with caring duties. The first group of motives is related to making use of human capital in the best possible way. The examined companies, especially those employing highly and very highly qualified staff, do not want to lose their capital – employee knowledge, attitudes and loyalty. They know it is very difficult to replace a good worker and losing him or her might mean a great loss for the whole company. Being generous and building employee loyalty brings a better outcome in terms of efficiency and motivation. Even in a small family business, the owner feels that it is to her advantage to help with solving employee problems.

Table 4

Employers motivation to support work-care balance among their employees

Reasons:	Public (6,000)	Private non-profit (75)	Private non-profit (300)	Private for-profit (15)
Retainment of valuable employees, better job performance	„employees are the human capital of our organization" being generous means better outcome	„we are not making cars. My workers are my capital. You don't want to lose this capital (attitude, knowledge, loyalty)" it is not easy to replace a worker	it is difficult to replace the worker due to his/her special expertise Loyal employee -> more effect	„it is a small business. It is to my advantage to solve it (employee's problem) asap"

Source: own research.

Moreover, employers are motivated to support working caregivers due to institutional and legal factors related to the risk they take in the case of an employee's incapability for work caused by illness. The examined public organization is an own risk bearer in case of sickness, disability and unemployment of employees. Thus it is understandable that „treating their employees well" and „keeping them on their feet" is in the interest of an organization. Otherwise, it (the company) bears the risk of a workers' incapability for work and is obliged to pay him or her a sick benefit for a duration of 104 weeks maximum. A small for profit company decided to insure the sickness benefit on the private insurance market.

The approach to working caregivers is a part of the general company's philosophy – the way they treat their employees, build relationships and the kind of values they consider as crucial for their organization. „It is a human thing to help employees" – admitted the HR manager of the non-profit organization employing 75 people. Empathy, solidarity, the feeling of responsibility and

Table 5

Employers motivation to support work-care balance among their employees

Reasons:	Public (6,000)	Private for-profit (15)
Preventing long absence from work – institutional factor (sickness benefit)	in case of employee's sickness the benefit is paid by an employer (full responsibility of the organization) it is important „to keep an employee on his/her feet"	sickness benefits insured on the private insurance market (from 6 weeks on)

Source: own research.

an individual approach seem to be the most important elements motivating employers to support caregiving workers. What is more, both the family business and the non-profit company (employing 300 people) emphasized the goals of their organization going far beyond profit-maximization. „A company is about working together for the society" – admitted the HR manager of a non-profit organization (300). The owner of a family business emphasized that the goal of her company is to help society. She defines „a sustainable company as a company that gives work" to all the people that need it. The profit is necessary to maintain and „if you maintain, it means that you (as a company) are sustainable".

Table 6

Employer motivation to support work-care balance among their employees

Reasons:	Public (6,000)	Private non-profit (75)	Private non-profit (300)	Private for-profit (15)
Philosophy of an organization (approach to employees, building the relationships and declared values)	empathy individual approach – „extraordinary situations are for extraordinary solutions"	„it is a human thing to help" in such situations	employees share about their problems „a company is about working together for the society" „it is OUR company" „we spoil our employees"	empathy, solidarity within a group, strong feeling of responsibility „sustainable enterprise is about giving work to people" „the profit is if you maintain" „it is not neces-sary to swim in money but to paddle" „you can eat only one beefsteak a day"

Source: own research.

Conclusion

Eldercare support at work in the examined organizations goes far beyond what is regulated by law. The results give us only examples of an employer perspective but are in line with more general research outcomes (de Klerk *et al.*, 2015) showing that the best way of combining work and care is based on flexible work arrangements (including part time work, the possibility to work from home and adjust working hours). Both short-term and long-term care leaves were taken-up together with a combination of other measures related to the aforementioned working conditions. It must be recognized that current legislation and regulations provide hardly any public support during a longer period in which intensive care is required, for example in the case of a seriously ill partner or child. What counts is a “tailor made solution” which requires the employers’ involvement and awareness.

Their awareness goes in line with their general philosophy of an organization which in all examined cases is related not only to profit maximization but to serving the society. This approach makes them more open to meet their employee needs, especially when the necessity of giving care arises. They know that in this way they will not lose valuable workers and will be able to gain better performance. There were no significant differences between the examined organizations from the public and private sectors, as well as between big and small analyzed organizations in the way work-care measures were perceived by employees.

The easiness of combing work and care using flexible work arrangements declared by employers refers in the majority to highly educated people (3 out of 4 examined organizations employed only highly qualified staff) which goes in line with the outcomes of the European Working Conditions Survey from 2015 according to which the ability of a worker to vary his/her start and finish times differs considerably between the highly and poorly educated (van der Woude *et al.*, 2016, p. 13). Due to a limited sample of examined enterprises, the differences in education level of employees and their impact on work-care balance were not taken into account in this study.

Work-life balance measures for working caregivers with a dependent relative regulated by the Dutch law were the minimum in HRM practice of examined organizations. The pressure has been put on companies through the regulation of sickness benefit payments that made employee health a matter of particular importance. Thus lowering the risk of physical and psychological health deterioration of a working caregiver is in the interest of the employer. The way he or she introduced the work care balance measures was more or less institutionalized depending on the size of the organization. The relationship between the employer and employees was based on mutual trust and governed by the legal principle of reasonableness, building a sense of responsibility and having an openness for individual solutions, at least in the opinion of employers.

The fact that only their point of view was taken into account is definitely a limitation of this study and opens the space for further research including the perception of work-care arrangements by employees.

Translated by Authors
Proofreading by Michael Thoene

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OLSZTYN ECONOMIC JOURNAL
2019, 14(3), 271–286
ISSN 1897-2721 e-ISSN 2083-4675 DOI: 10.31648/oej.4373

ORIGINAL PAPER

Received: 03.11.2018
Revised: 07.03.2019
Published: 10.09.2019

CAUSES AND DIRECTIONS OF STUDENT MIGRATION USING POLISH AND PORTUGESE STUDENTS AS AN EXAMPLE

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JEL Classification: D8, D83, J110, J130.

Key words: information society, Generation Y, migration, Poland, Portugal, students.

Abstract

This paper analyses the directions and causes of student migration in the information society at economic universities in Poland and Portugal. An international survey was conducted among students born between 1981 and 1995. The research included a group of 121 Polish and 55 Portuguese students. The conclusions of the study confirm the hypothesis that the place of residence/country of origin has a significant effect on the direction of migration. Furthermore, the causes of migration are largely dependent on the gender of the respondents and their professional status.

How to cite: Kowalewska, G., Nieżurawska, J., & Duarte, N. (2019). Causes and Directions of Student Migration Using Polish and Portugese Students as an Example. *Olsztyn Economic Journal*, *14*(3), 271-286. https://doi.org/10.31648/oej.4373.

PRZYCZYNY I KIERUNKI MIGRACJI STUDENTÓW NA PRZYKŁADZIE STUDENTÓW UCZELNI POLSKICH I PORTUGALSKICH

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Słowa kluczowe: społeczeństwo informacyjne, generacja Y, migracja, Polska, Portugalia, studenci.

Abstrakt

W artykule przeanalizowano kierunki i przyczyny migracji studentów społeczeństwa informacyjnego (SI) wytypowanych uczelni o profilu ekonomicznym w Polsce i Portugalii. Przeprowadzono autorskie, międzynarodowe badania ankietowe, skierowane do grupy studentów urodzonych między 1981 a 1995 rokiem. Badania objęły grupę 121 studentów polskich i 55 portugalskich. Wnioski z badań pozwalają na potwierdzenie hipotezy, że miejsce zamieszkania/kraj pochodzenia istotnie wpływa na kierunki migracji. Z kolei przyczyny migracji w głównej mierze zależą od płci respondentów i ich sytuacji zawodowej.

Introduction

The information society (IS), regarded as identical to Generation Y, is the generation which perceives state borders, emigration and a change of the place of residence and work differently than previous generations. The IS was the first to perceive the European Union (owing to the European integration and the Schengen Area) as a space accessible to everyone. Representatives of the Y generation are of the opinion that by emigrating they will improve their position and life opportunities. At the same time, the people of Generation Y are proud of their national identity and declare their attachment to tradition. They do not have an emigration dilemma. They perceive leaving the country only as a change of the place of residence (Kisiel, 2016, p. 85-83). Looking at the generations from the view of the information society and mobility shows the importance of information and the use of modern technologies in studying the reasons for migration.

It was assumed in this paper that the information society (IS) can be regarded as identical to Generation Y – people born in the period between 1981 and 1995. They are often called “the network generation”. They were brought up in the world of new technologies. There is no life for them in a world without computers, smart phones and the Internet. Therefore, they are more mobile and open. Owing to the Internet and the knowledge of foreign languages, they

Table 1

Characterisation of the information society by the following criteria: life priorities, application of new technologies, methods of communication and migration

Criteria	Information society (1981–1995)
Priorities	life around the media, learning through experience, lifelong education, "closeness" of peers important
Application of modern technologies / information society	continuous use of modern technologies (Laptop, tablet, iPhone); the information society generation – they cannot imagine a life without modern technologies
Methods of communication	communicating through social media: Instagram, Facebook, Skype; at work: teleconference, Skype
Foreign migration	they do not remember borders or how difficult it may be to cross them; migration is not a problem to them; for them to emigrate is only to change the place where they live and work (temporarily or permanently), rather than to depart from their family and friends

Source: prepared by the author based on Kowalewska *et al.* (2018).

find it easier to travel and get to know new cultures. This generation does not remember border checks and information controls.

The main aim of this paper is to determine the causes and directions of the migration of students of economic majors representing Generation Y in Poland and Portugal.

A diagnostic survey was applied to achieve the main aim of the study. A non-probabilistic technique of convenience sampling was applied. This study allows for the generalisation of results for the entire population, although a significant margin of error can occur. The survey was conducted in 2017 in Poland on a group of 172 students from the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn and from the Porto Polytechnic – School of Management and Technology of Felgueiras. The same questionnaire was used in Poland and in Portugal. The survey was conducted as a direct auditory questionnaire. Due to the high number of people emigrating from Poland and from Portugal, especially young and educated people, the research subject taken up seems interesting from a cognitive point of view.

Information society and migrations

An information society (IS) is a society in which information plays a key role as an element of socio-economic activities and change (Casey, 2001). It has access to well-developed means of communication and information processing (Krzysztofek, 2002, p. 170). In an information society "everyone can create, access, use and share information and knowledge, which allows individuals to achieve the full potential of approaching sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life (World Summit on the Information Society, 2003, 2005)". This young generation makes use of both information and knowledge to a much greater extent than previous generations have ever done before (Nieżurawska *et al.*, 2016). Technology is not a barrier for the information society (like for earlier generations), but is perceived as an opportunity, or even a necessity, for contact with the world around. Technology allows (e.g. Internet, social media) for the collection of information about the country of migration, the living standard, wages, the cost of living, the unemployment rate, employers, as well as methods and costs of transport (Kowalewska *et al.*, 2018).

Migration has been known for ages; it is associated with the spatial mobility of the society, which results in a relatively permanent change of the place of residence (Lee, 1966; Okólski, 2005; Kaczmarczyk, 2005; Organiściak-Krzykowska, 2013). However, these flows are not limited to the territory of one country (internal migrations). They often involve crossing state borders (external migrations). Currently, European countries considerably influence the contemporary migration processes. The migration policy is a result of the integration processes in Europe and establishing the European Union.

According to the latest recommendations of the UN (*Recommendations on Statistics…*, 1998) an *international migrant* is a person who changes their place of usual residence, i.e. the place where they usually stay (i.e. live and spend most of the time). There are long-term migrations (for at least 12 months) and short-term migrations (between 3 and 12 months).

Literature review

The literature on the subject of the theory and phenomenon of foreign migration is extremely rich (including Ravenstein, 1885; Lee, 1966; Piore, 1979; Todaro, 1976; Pryor, 1985; Iglicka, 1995; Arago, 2000; Górny & Kaczmarczyk, 2003; Okólski, 2005; Kaczmarczyk, 2005; De Haas, 2008; Organiściak-Krzykowska, 2013; Kowalewska *et al.*, 2016, 2018; Zdrojewski & Kisiel, 2017; Skibiński, 2017). Articles and research on youth emigration in Poland usually refer to a specific region, eg Opolszczyzna (Jończy, 2006), Lower Silesia (Spatial mobility of young people in the Lower Silesian labor market, Center for Social Analyses and Cultural Education, 2013) or Podkarpacie (Piecuch & Piecuch, 2014). There is also literature analyzing the motives of student emigration (Witczak-Roszkowska & Okła, 2015; Stanimir, 2015; Szyszka, 2016; Kowalewska *et al.*, 2018). The issue of youth migration concerns not only Poland. It is also discussed in the foreign literature. For example, research carried out in north-east England refers to the problem of adapting the educational offer and the labor market to the needs of young people and counteracting the phenomenon of their emigration through the policy of prominence (Henderson, 2005). Migration is a serious problem in Estonia and Romania (Tverdostup & Masso, 2015). In Romania, the biggest issue of youth migration is the outflow of highly educated young people and Italy is the most popular destination for them (Feraru, 2012). In Portugal, a significant issue associated with a high rate of unemployment is the emigration of young and educated people (Cerdeira, 2016). David Cairns is involved in the discussion on student mobility. He presents migration plans and directions of trips for Portuguese and Irish students. He also examines the impact of the economic crisis on the decision for emigration (Cairns, 2017). The issue of youth migration also concerns countries from outside the EU, ie: the USA, Australia, Russia, Peru, and Ghana. For example, in the USA there are regions with a negative net migration rate of young and educated people. The largest group of emigrants is in New England. These are people aged 25-35, with higher education (there is an excess of well educated young people) (Brome, 2007).

Dynamics of emigration from Poland and Portugal in light of public statistics data

The migration of Poles and citizens of other EU member states is a serious socioeconomic problem (Jończy, 2006). Emigrants are usually young, educated people of production age. They represent economic and social potential, which the state fails to make use of (Kowalewska *et al*., 2018).

The migration issue has been important for Poland, especially since 1 May 2004. According to the literature and statistical data, the considerable size of this phenomenon warrants migration studies. The scale of migration is the result of lifting restrictions on international traffic (1989) and Poland's accession to the EU (2004). Data on temporary migrations show that the number of migrating Poles increased from 1 million in 2004 to 2.5 million in 2016 (*Informacje o rozmiarach*..., 2017). The years 2009 to 2010 were a period with a downward trend, and were followed by an increase of migrants (2016, Information on the size and directions of the migration from Poland in 2004-2016) (*Informacje o rozmiarach*..., 2017).

According to data published by GUS, the most popular EU target countries of Polish migrations in 2004-2015 included: the United Kingdom (720 thousand), Germany (655 thousand), The Netherlands (112 thousand), Ireland (111 thousand) and Italy (94 thousand) (*Informacje o rozmiarach*..., 2017).

Portugal is the EU country with the highest emigration index. According to the World Bank (*Bilateral Migration*..., 2017), there were a little less than 1 million emigrants in Portugal in 1960. This number increased in the 1980s (1,872,211), to begin a downward trend. Next, the number of emigrants leaving Portugal grew from 2011 to reach a maximum in 2014, when as many as 1,350,000 Portuguese left their country (Rapazote, 2015). The number of emigrants started to decrease again after 2014. 1.7 million Portuguese people live in Europe, but not in Portugal, and half of them are second generation. It must be remembered that the population of Portugal is only approximately 10 million people. The majority (65%) of emigrating Portuguese choose the EU and countries like the UK, France and Germany as their destination (outside the EU – Switzerland). Outside of Europe, the Portuguese preferred Brazil and Africa, especially the former Portuguese colonies – Angola and Mozambique. The reason for migration to former colonies is the ability to use the Portuguese language (no language barriers), the cultural closeness as well as the demand for a highly qualified labour force. The majority of emigrants are without a university education. The Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark are the only countries where a third of the Portuguese population are qualified people (Rapazote, 2015). Considering the emigrant profile (including in the European countries), the majority are young people with 56.6% of them aged 15 to 24 years.

Study methodology

The main aim of this paper is to identify the causes and directions of the migration of students of economic majors representing the IS in Poland and Portugal. The following study hypotheses were put forward:

H1: The main reasons for emigration among SI students are: opportunities to achieve higher earnings and improve the quality of life.

H2: The reasons for migration are mainly dependent on the respondents' gender and professional position.

H3: The direction of migration for students representing the IS society are determined by the country of origin.

The main objective of the study was pursued by means of a diagnostic survey. The survey was carried out in March 2017 at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn on a sample of 121 students (46 men and 75 women) of regular studies (99) and extramural studies (28), in the Faculty of Management. The survey was also conducted at the Polytechnic of Porto, School of Management and Technology among 51 students in the Faculty of Management (28 men and 23 women). The respondents' date of birth (their belonging to the IS) was the selection criterion. The survey was not obligatory. Only volunteers participated in it, hence the different size of the research group at the analyzed Universities. The subjects of the survey were representatives of the Y generation – people aged 23-37. The paper presents the results of a pilot study for a wider survey study.

The respondents from Poland and Portugal were asked to assess the effect of selected causes of migration on the attractiveness of emigration using the Likert scale with the following scoring: 1 – unimportant factor, 2 – factor of little importance, 3 – factor of medium importance, 4 – important factor, 5 – very important factor.

Study results – willingness to migrate in the study population of students

One of the aims of the research was to examine the willingness to leave the student's home country, that is, to determine how they subjectively evaluate their willingness to emigrate (Fig. 1).

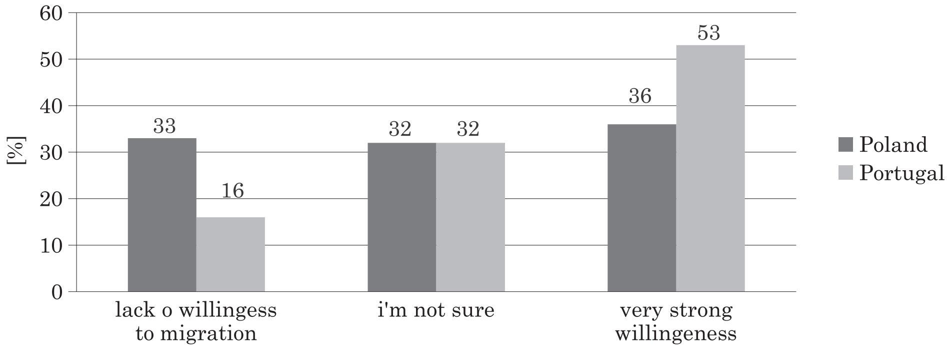

Fig. 1. Willingness to migrate among students from Poland and Portugal
Source: prepared by the author based on the surveys.

A very strong willingness to migrate was observed among the Polish students – representatives of the IS. The survey data show that as many as 36% of respondents from Poland declared a strong or very strong willingness to migrate. 33% did not want to leave the country, and as many as 31% refrained from answering. In Portugal, over half of the surveyed students (53%) described themselves as people willing to emigrate. Only 16% of respondents were reluctant to leave the country, and 32% refrained from answering.

In the case of Poland, 36% of respondents decided to leave the country, 20% were women and 16% men. Of the 33% of respondents who were not willing to emigrate, 17% were women, 16% were men. In Portugal, 53% of respondents decided to emigrate, with an equal number being male or female (26%) (Fig. 2). Interestingly, 16% of the male population from Portugal did not want to emigrate. There was not one female among the respondents who was not willing to emigrate. This shows that women in Portugal are more willing to emigrate, although the same percentage of men and women (26%) declared being willing to emigrate. The percentage of those undecided was also the same at 16%.

With 36% declaring their willingness to leave Poland, as many as 23% of respondents had a job and over 13% did not. Also among people who do not want to leave Poland, a larger percentage (as many as 23%) were employed and only 10% were unemployed. Almost 26% of the surveyed Portuguese students who work wanted to emigrate. In the case of people not working, about 26%

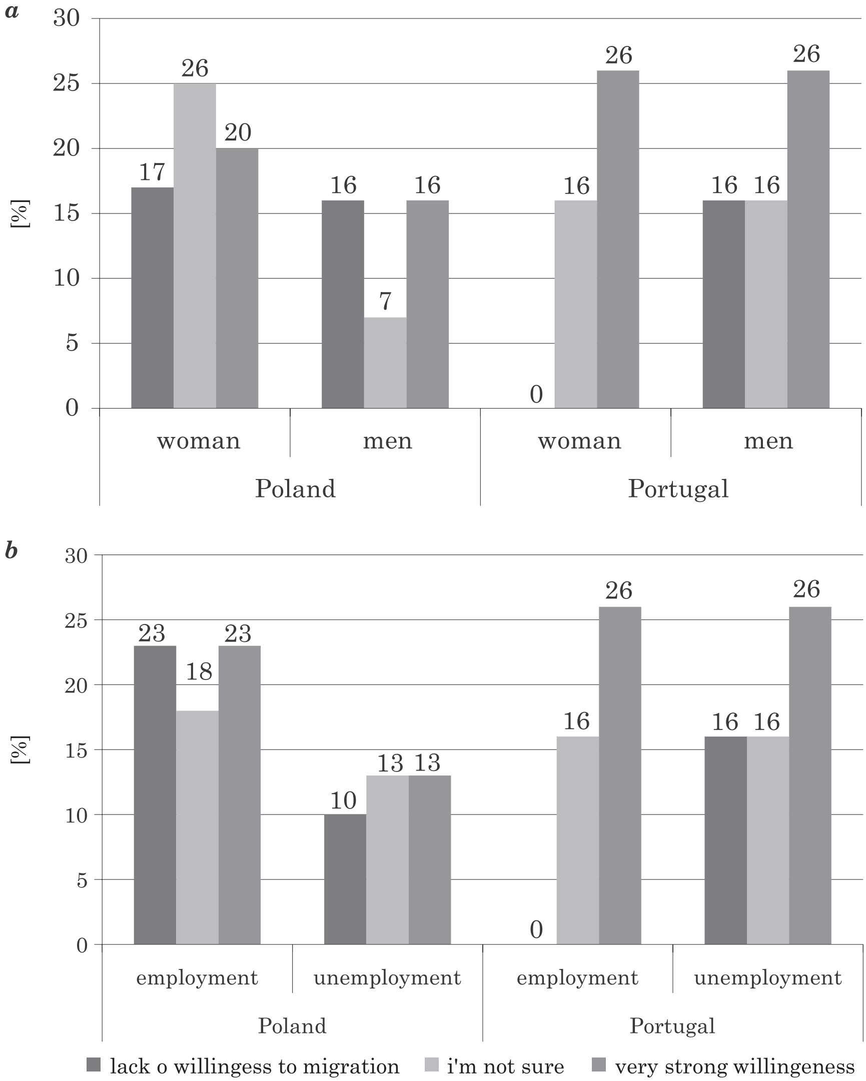

Fig. 2. Willingness to migrate among students from Poland and Portugal: *a* – gender, *b* – employment
Source: prepared by the author based on the surveys.

of respondents would like to leave the country, with less than 16% being not inclined to do so. It turns out that both working and non-working people (in Portugal and in Poland) declare a greater tendency to emigrate than to stay in the country. However, people with professional work experience are more likely to leave the country than the unemployed or the learner. With knowledge and experience, they are not afraid to make a migration decision.

The study found a greater willingness to emigrate among students in Portugal compared to those in Poland (53% vs. 36%) and a relatively small percentage – 16% – of the respondents unwilling to emigrate (Poland was 33%). Surprisingly, the percentage of students in Poland and Portugal unwilling to emigrate was high (31% and 32%). This is caused by the personal situation of the respondents (study and/or work) as well as by the political and economic situation in Europe, in Poland and in Portugal (the migration crisis in Europe, Brexit, terrorist attacks). All of the respondents were studying, so they could postpone the decision of whether to emigrate or stay until they complete their education. An analysis of the willingness to emigrate with respect to the gender and professional situation provides some interesting information. People with jobs were more strongly motivated to emigrate than those without one. They had professional experience and they saw emigration as something that could give them more opportunities than staying in the country. People without jobs see emigration as an opportunity; however, they were willing to stay in the country more often than people with jobs.

Reasons for migration

The economic reasons for migration are the most important to respondents from Poland. They saw it as an opportunity to achieve a higher living standard, to get a better-paid job and to have an opportunity for promotion (Fig. 3). For Poles, the social security offered by the target country is less important. The aspect of family reunification is of medium importance, and the willingness to change one's situation and the threat of terrorist attacks is of the least importance.

The most important reason for migration for Portuguese students included: social security as well as (like Polish students) achieving an opportunity to achieve a higher living standard, to get a better-paid job and to have an opportunity for promotion.

For the Portuguese an increase in earnings was less important. The lack or low probability of terrorism in the destination country and the willingness to change one's situation were of the least importance (Fig. 4).

Directions of migration

As many as 79% of the respondents from Poland mentioned one or more countries to which they would like to emigrate. Most people indicated their willingness to go to the UK (17.95%), Germany (17.09%), the USA (16.24%), Norway (11.11%), The Netherlands (6.84%) or Denmark (5.13%). These are the countries mentioned by 74.36% of the respondents (Fig. 5).

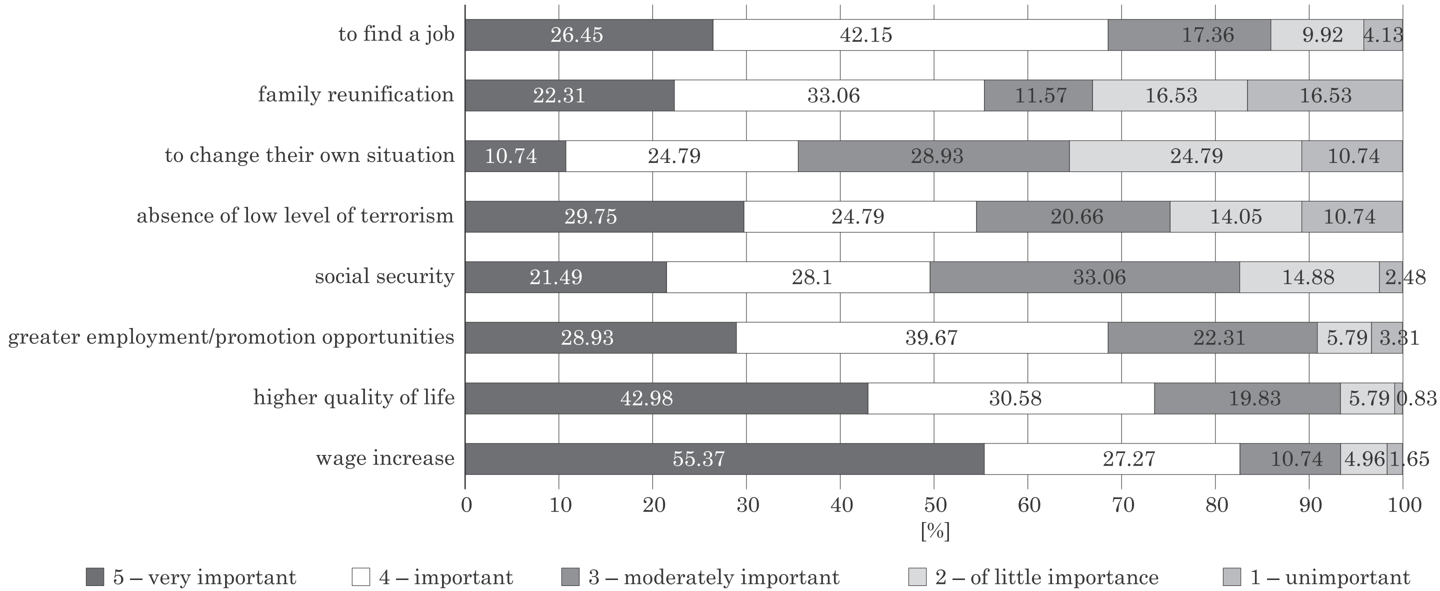

Fig. 3. The effect of the selected reasons for migration on the attractiveness of emigration in the opinion of respondents – students from Poland

Source: prepared by the author based on the surveys.

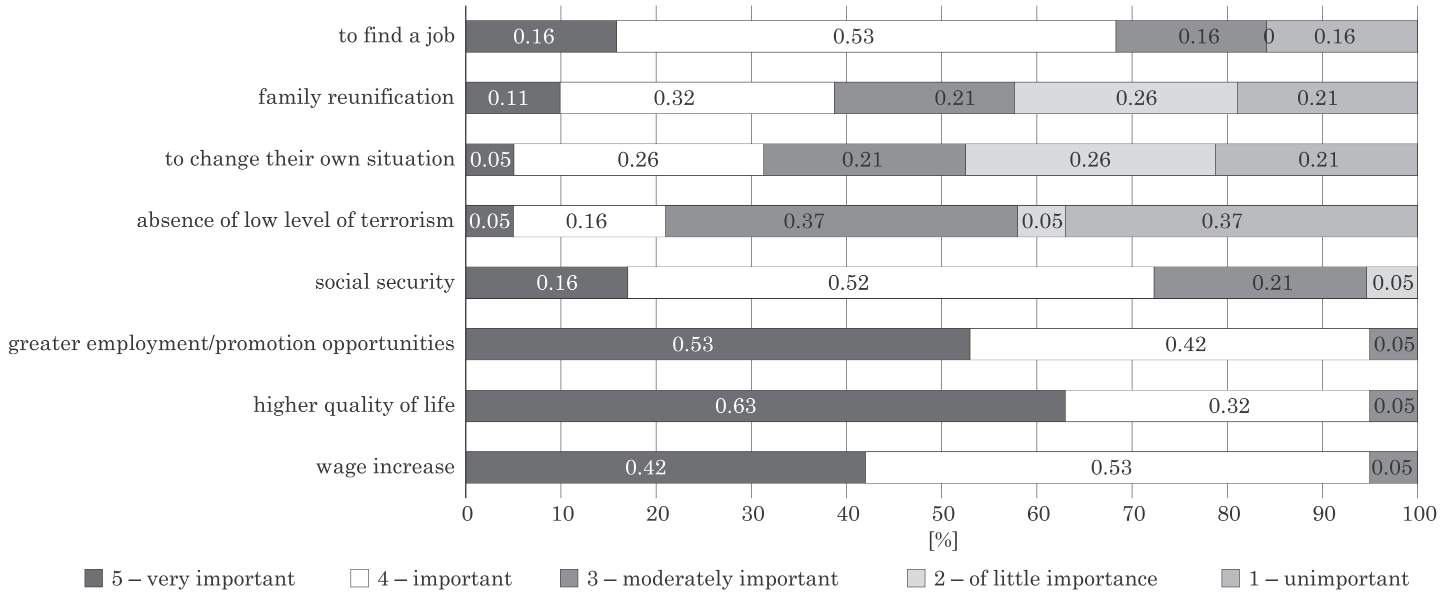

Fig. 4. The effect of the selected reasons for migration on the attractiveness of emigration in the opinion of respondents – students from Portugal
Source: prepared by the author based on surveys.

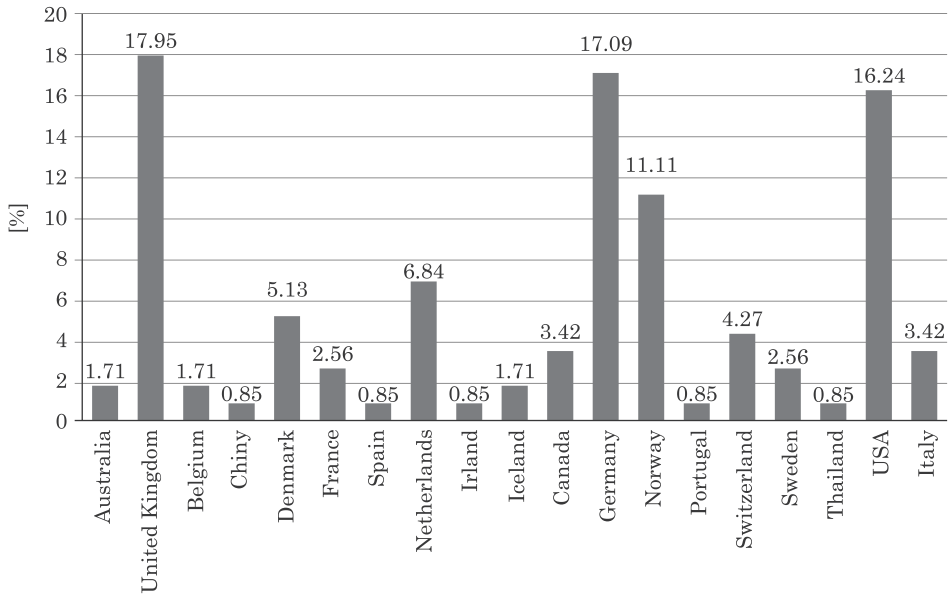

Fig. 5. Preferred directions of emigration for Polish students
Source: prepared by the author based on the author's research.

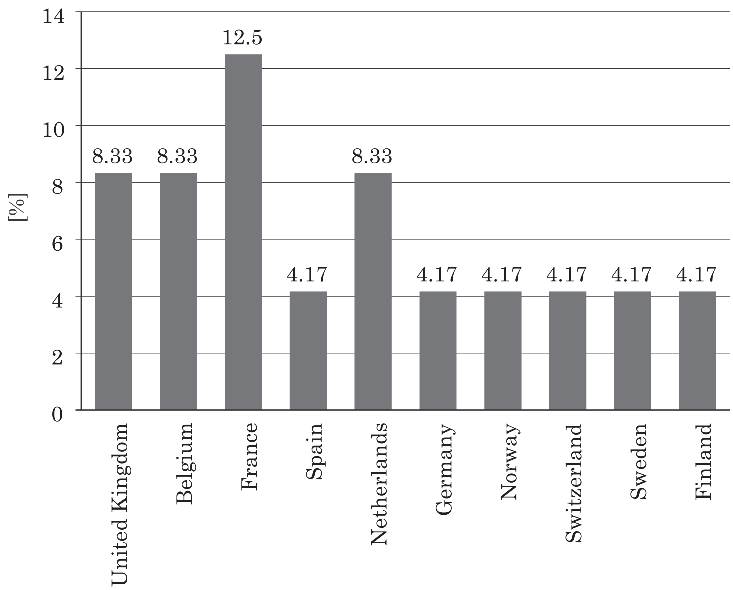

Fig. 6. Preferred directions of emigration for Portuguese students
Source: prepared by the author based on the author's research.

Directions of migration of the students – representatives of the IS – coincide with the directions of migration of other Poles (*Informacje o rozmiarach...*, 2017). The UK and Germany dominate among the target countries of emigration.

Only 29% of the Portuguese respondents defined the direction of migration and, interestingly, a quarter of them mentioned parts of a continent, e.g. Europe, northern countries, or Central Europe. Figure 6 shows the countries mentioned by the respondents. None of them mentioned any non-European country. Among the chosen countries, the dominant position is occupied by France (12.5%), followed by Belgium, The Netherlands and the UK (8.33% each), the Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden and Norway) and Germany.

The destination of migration for both Polish and Portuguese students were characterized as having a very good economic situation in the target country (a low unemployment rate, a high standard of living, and high wages) or as being close to the borders of Poland/Portugal (low cost of migration, contact withfamily and friends or the possibility of a quick and inexpensive return). The research confirmed the diversification of the migration direction of students representing the IS society based on the country of origin. The Portuguese prefer destinations such as France or the Netherlands (Fig. 6), while Polish students prefer directions such as: Great Britain, USA or Germany (Fig. 5).

Summary and conclusions

The information society, represented in this study by students of UWM and Porto Polytechnic, was brought up in the free market economy. Compared to earlier generations, their standard of living has been much higher. They are distinguished by perceiving change as a normal state. A quick pace of life translates into the ability to communicate and move from one place to another quickly. Owing to modern technologies: computers, the Internet, mobile phones and communicators, they can acquire information quickly and create virtual communities. It increases their openness and mobility. Through the Internet and owing to a good knowledge of foreign languages, they establish contacts with other cultures and, owing to the political situation (establishment of the European Union), they do not find it difficult to travel around Europe.

On the basis of this study, the study hypotheses were verified and the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Students – representatives of the IS – exhibit a strong willingness to emigrate. In the case of Portuguese students, it was nearly 53%, and for Polish students it was 36%. The reasons for migration depend mainly on the respondents' gender and their professional situation. Students and people who, apart from studying, were employed on a full-time basis or a contract were more likely to migrate.

2. Students – representatives of the IS – who had a permanent job, were more willing to emigrate. The work experience gained gave more certainty in finding a job and coping with new conditions.

3. Economic (financial) factors increased the mobility of students – representatives of the IS – and allowed for their self-accomplishment and development. Economic (financial) factors were crucial when making decisions about emigration. The desire to improve the financial situation, the vision of higher salaries and promotion opportunities were the most common reasons for the emigration of the information society – representatives of the IS in Poland and Portugal.

4. The research confirmed the diversification of the migration directions of students representing the IS society based on the country of origin. The directions of migration for the information society, represented by students in Poland, included: the UK, Germany and the USA; and the most popular directions of migration for the IS represented by the Portuguese students, included: France, Belgium, The Netherlands and the UK.

The absence of borders and no need for a work permit gives students – representatives of the Generation Y – greater opportunities for the choice of education and career. Therefore, these are often people who are more self--reliant and have higher self-esteem than people of previous generations. However, greater individualism and aspiring for self-accomplishment results in them facing difficulties in interpersonal contacts. The information society, which is represented in this study by UWM students, is a challenge to employers and can also potentially bring many benefits both to employers and to other employees when made use of properly. The study had limitations due to the small sample size (a total of 172 people), the narrowing of the sampling to students of economic studies only and the application of the so-called "comfortable" selection may have caused significant sampling error. Nevertheless, it has a diagnostic value. It allowed the identification of tendencies and trends. Further research by the authors will be carried out in the direction of applying quantitative and qualitative analysis in the study of the phenomenon of migration and expanding the research group to other EU countries.

Translated by Joanna Jensen
Proofreading by Michael Thoene

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OLSZTYN ECONOMIC JOURNAL
2019, 14(3), 287–298
ISSN 1897-2721 e-ISSN 2083-4675 DOI: 10.31648/oej.4376

ORIGINAL PAPER
Received: 18.12.2018
Revised: 20.05.2019
Published: 10.09.2019

SELECTED PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AS PREDICTORS OF CONSUMER CHOICE IN THE MILK PRODUCT MARKET

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JEL Classification: M30, M31, M39.

Key words: milk products, psychological factors, consumer choice, consumer behaviour, personality of consumer.

Abstract

Milk and milk products represent one of the most important components of a well-balanced diet. The average consumption of milk in 2017 in Slovakia was about 176 kg per capita. Because the consumption of milk and milk products is generally considered to be very important for human health, it is also important to convince consumers to buy these products.

The presented paper deals with selected psychological factors that influence consumer behaviour when buying milk and milk products. We focused on 180 young consumers (20-45 years old) who belong to the generation Y and we studied the persuading power of selected tools of marketing communication (mainly visual aspects like colour, features of logos, overall look of packages, etc.) for milk.

Several methods of psychological and marketing research were used in the study, specifically a personality questionnaire NEO FFI, semantic differential based analysis of profile, content analysis and an analysis of dependences (binomial logit). It was found that personality characteristics and the temperament structure of consumers influence their choices in the milk product market. Packages and logos of milk products are strong persuaders if they are associated with the offered products.

How to cite: Rybanská, J., Nagyová, L., & Tkáč F. (2019). Selected Psychological Factors as Predictors of Consumer Choice in the Milk Product Market. *Olsztyn Economic Journal*, *14*(3), 287-298. https://doi.org/10.31648/oej.4376.

WYBRANE CZYNNIKI PSYCHOLOGICZNE WPŁYWAJĄCE NA WYBÓR KONSUMENTA NA RYNKU PRODUKTÓW MLECZNYCH

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Słowa kluczowe: produkty mleczne, czynniki psychologiczne, wybór konsumenta, zachowanie konsumenta, osobowość konsumenta.

Abstrakt

Mleko i produkty mleczne stanowią jeden z najważniejszych składników dobrze zbilansowanej diety. Średnie spożycie mleka w 2017 r. na Słowacji wyniosło około 176 kg na mieszkańca. Spożycie mleka i przetworów mlecznych jest uważane za bardzo ważne dla zdrowia ludzkiego, dlatego ważne jest również przekonanie konsumentów do zakupu tych produktów.

Przedstawiony artykuł dotyczy wybranych czynników psychologicznych, które wpływają na zachowania konsumentów podczas zakupu mleka i przetworów mlecznych. Skupiono się na 180 młodych konsumentach (20-45 lat) należących do pokolenia Y i badano siłę przekonywania wybranych narzędzi komunikacji marketingowej (głównie aspekty wizualne, jak: kolor, cechy logo, ogólny wygląd opakowań itp.) do zakupu mleka i produktów mlecznych.

W badaniu wykorzystano kilka metod badań psychologicznych i marketingowych, szczególnie: kwestionariusz osobowości NEO FFI, analizę profilu opartą na różnicach semantycznych, analizę treści i analizę zależności (logit dwumianowy). Stwierdzono, że cechy osobowości i temperament konsumentów wpływają na ich wybory na rynku produktów mlecznych. Opakowania i logo produktów mlecznych są silnie przekonujące, jeśli są związane z oferowanymi produktami.

Introduction

Cow's milk and cow's milk products have long been associated with good health, making them one of the most consumed products throughout the European countries. Milk has long been seen as a healthy beverage, because it is high in a range of nutrients (Ware & Wilson, 2017). Milk is a rich source of quality protein that contains all nine essential amino acids that may help reduce age-related muscle loss and promote muscle repair. Milk also contains a variety of nutrients that benefit bone health, such as calcium, vitamin D, phosphorus and magnesium (Kubala, 2018). The consumption of cow's milk, however, can be potentially risky, mainly because of bacterial pathogens (Yoon *et al.*, 2016), allergic reactions and the inability to digest lactose (sugar found in milk and dairy products). According to experts from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (*Lactose intolerance*, 2018), approximately 65 percent of the human population has a reduced ability to digest lactose after infancy. The prevalence of lactose intolerance is lowest in populations with a long history of dependence on unfermented milk products as an important food source (for example Eastern and Northern Europe). Despite different disputes among experts, cow's milk and cow's milk products can be considered very beneficial for human health.

In the Slovak Republic, milk and milk products represent a considerable part of the consumer's diet. The estimated average consumption of milk in 2017 in Slovakia was about 176 kg per capita (Masár, 2018). However, the consumption of milk is decreasing in Slovakia and represents only a half of the recommended dose. In 2016, the average Slovak consumed 45.1 litres of milk, which is about a third less than in 1996 (71.5 litres). Within the EU, Slovakia participates at a rate less than one percentage point of total cow's milk production (Sadovská, 2018). Because the consumption of dairy products is generally considered to be very important for human health in the Slovak Republic, it is important to convince consumers to buy these products and support smaller and bigger farmers within the Slovak regions.

Consumer choice is traditionally considered to be a rational, well-judged cognitive process. Increasingly however, research has shown that a significant part of consumer decision-making is unconscious (Fitzsimons *et al.*, 2002). Clegg (2000), Dijksterhuis *et al.* (2005), Dhar (2012), Krishna *et al.* (2014) and others have found that only a limited number of consumer choices are based on conscious information-processing strategies. A significant part of consumer choice is unconscious and results from different cues present in the environment of individuals. Many experimental studies in behavioural consumer research and social psychology have confirmed that environmental cues together with various factors strongly influence the final choice of the consumer (Jacob *et al.*, 2011).

The paper presented here investigates the persuading power of selected tools of marketing communication (mainly visual aspects like colour, features of logos, overall look of packages, etc.) for milk products. It explores how the design of different packages of milk products is associated with this type of product and how these packages are perceived by selected consumers according to their selected psychological characteristics.

Material and methods

The investigated sample consisted of 180 young adults (86 men and 94 women), aged 20-45. All respondents, according to their age structure, belonged to the segment known as "Generation Y" or "Millennials". Participants aged 20-45 were chosen intentionally because this study is a part of wide-ranging research focused on Millennials. Young adults of generation Y are the most studied segment under our conditions, because they represent a purchasing power that can influence the processes in the food market, and thus the processes in the market of milk products. The selected segment can also significantly influence the buying behaviour of the next generation. All respondents have completed a minimum of secondary education and they live in the Slovak Republic. Further characteristics of participants are stated in the following table (Tab. 1).

Table 1

Participants according to gender and residence

Specification		Residence		Total
		town	village	
Gender	male	47	39	86
	female	50	44	94
Total		97	83	180

Source: own elaboration.

The representativeness of the sample was verified by a Pearson's Chi-square test. It was found out that the sample of respondents is representative according to gender and residence (a = 0.49).

A comprehensive questionnaire was constructed to achieve the research objectives. First of all, an association experiment was conducted. Respondents were asked to write down at least 3 words that they associate with milk. Then the personality traits of selected consumers in the sample were investigated by using the NEO Five Factor Inventory personality questionnaire. Considering the results of previous research, only three personality traits (neuroticism, extroversion and openness to experience) were taken into consideration. In the next step, consumers were presented two logos (Fig. 1) of companies that produce milk and they evaluated the logos on a scale of semantic differential. In the last step, respondents had to choose the packaging of milk that they liked the most. They were presented eight packages of milk from different producers (brands were removed) (Fig. 2). Also, the content analyses of logos and packages were conducted in connection with the questionnaire.

a ***b***

Fig. 1. Explored logos of companies producing milk: a – Liptov, b – Rajo
Source: Liptov. Z horskeho mlieka… (online), Rajo (online).

Fig. 2. Explored milk packages

Source: own elaboration.

The dependences between the psychological characteristics of respondents and their preferences and choices were investigated by the chosen statistical methods (binomial logit). The analysis of the profile was also made on the basis of the evaluated results from the scales of the semantic differential.

Results and discussion

Representation of the selected temperament traits (extroversion, neuroticism and openness to experience) of respondents investigated by the NEO Five Factor Inventory corresponds with the anticipated representation of these characteristics and temperament structure in the worldwide population, which was found on the basis of longitudinal studies based predominantly on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator whose items are significantly correlated with the NEO FFI. These findings indicate that there are about 25-30% of introverts in the population. In our sample there were 26% identified as introverts and 74%

identified as extroverts. About 65% of respondents were emotionally stable and 35% were emotionally unstable.

The results of the association experiment showed that the word "Milk" is mostly associated with positive or neutral words from the everyday life of consumers. Milk is mostly associated with the words: cow, white, health, strength, cocoa, breakfast and Alps. From these results we can conclude that milk is generally assumed to be a healthy beverage that is popular among young adult consumers. All associated words were taken into consideration in the content analyses.

Two presented logos of companies that produce milk were well-known among respondents. The logo of the brand Liptov was evaluated more positively than the logo from the brand Rajo. It was considered to be more interesting, prettier, more positive and more pleasant (Fig. 3). We can assume that it is because of the present visual cues that are connected with Slovak nature and culture, mountains and freshness. All of the mentioned features can be easily associated with physical health and strength on a conscious and subconscious level. The results are identical with the results of the content analysis that takes into consideration associations, used colours and other visual cues.

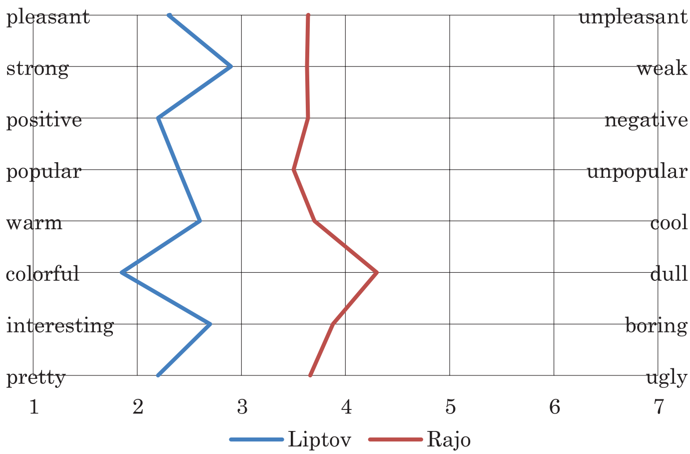

Fig. 3. Evaluation of the presented logos of "Milk" on the scales of semantic differential
Source: own elaboration.

The dependencies between temperament, personality traits and other psychological characteristics of respondents and their choices and evaluations were tested with the use of a binomial logit (Tabs. 2, 3).

It was observed that the investigated personality traits influenced the choices, evaluations and preferences of consumers. Respondents with higher neuroticism evaluated the first logo more positively on several scales. Females (rather than males) considered the first logo to be less strong. The second logo was considered

Table 2

LIPTOV – Dependences between psychological characteristics and evaluations of the logo

Endogenous variable	Exogenous variables	
Colorful	openness to experience (0.2786)*	:
Strong	neuroticism (-0.05294)*	female (-1.66163)*
Active	neuroticism (-0.04989)*	:

Signif. codes: *** – 0, ** – 0.001, * – 0.01, . – 0.05, : – 1
Source: own elaboration.

Table 3

RAJO – Dependences between psychological characteristics and evaluations of the logo

Endogenous variable	Exogenous variables		
Pretty	neuroticism (0.07911)**	age (0.0613)*	village (residence) (1.59361)**
Colourful	openness to experience (0.06529)*	:	:
Warm	openness to experience (0.06859)*	:	:
Positive	extroversion (0.05765)*	female (-1.5953)**	:
Interesting	neuroticism (0.076)**	openness to experience (0.07792)*	village (1.45054)***
Strong	village (1.3883)**	:	:
Active	neuroticism (0.05105)*	age (0.09398)**	village (1.63203)***

Signif. codes: *** – 0, ** – 0.001, * – 0.01, . – 0.05, : – 1
Source: own elaboration.

to be prettier and more interesting by respondents that are more emotionally unstable. Neuroticism (emotional liability) is the personality trait that usually triggers stronger and deeper emotions – the more emotionally unstable the consumer is, the stronger are their emotions regardless of their valence.

Differences in the evaluation of logos by different types of consumers are shown in following figures (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7).

Surprisingly, consumers with a phlegmatic temperament evaluated the first logo the most positively and the second logo the most negatively. Melancholics evaluated the first logo more negatively (despite overall positive evaluating) and the second logo more positively (despite an overall negative evaluation).

The slice differences were also detected between extroverts and introverts. Extroverts considered the first logo to be less pretty, less interesting and less pleasant in comparison with introverts. The second logo was generally evaluated more positively by extroverts. Emotionally unstable consumers were generally more critical.

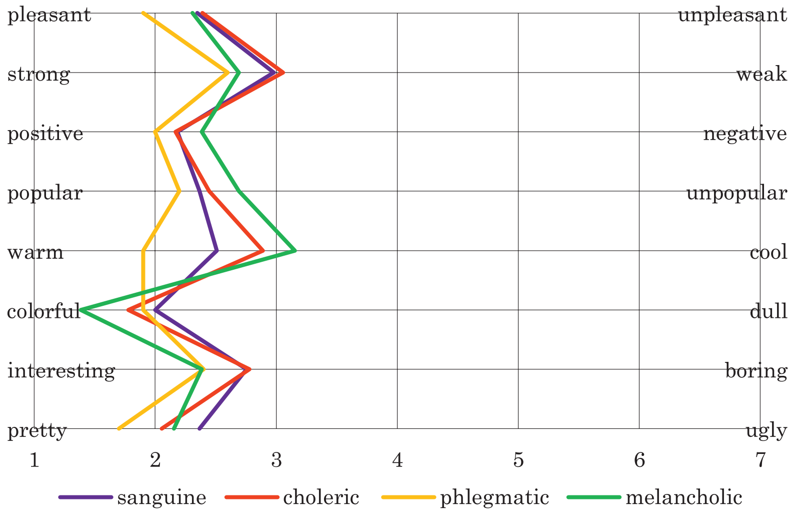

Fig. 4. Evaluation of the logo LIPTOV on the scales of semantic differential by consumers with different temperament (analysis of profile)
Source: own elaboration.

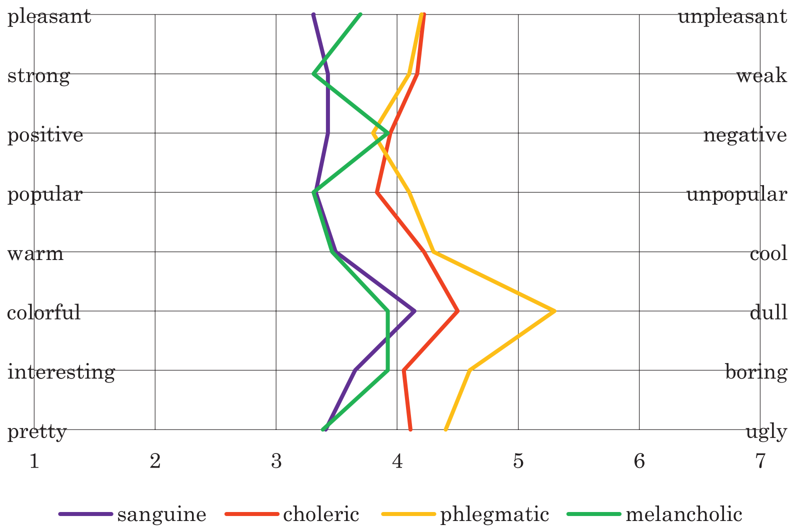

Fig. 5. Evaluation of the logo RAJO on the scales of semantic differential by consumers with different temperament (analysis of profile)
Source: own elaboration.

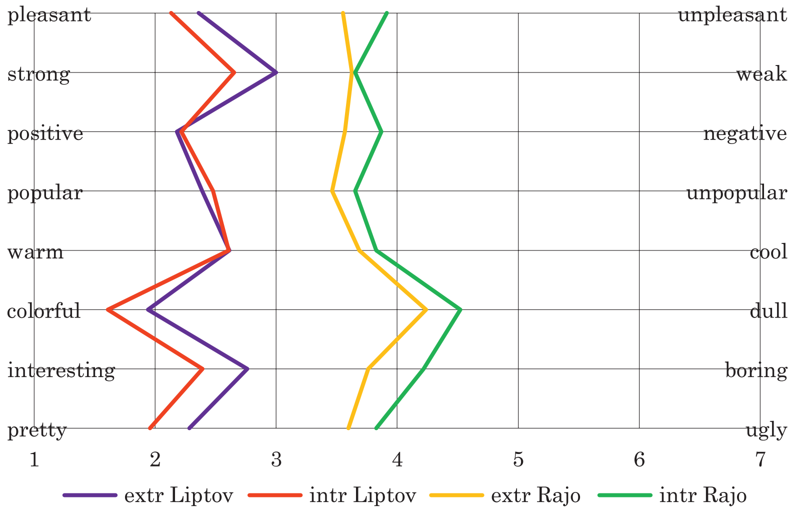

Fig. 6. Evaluation of presented logos on the scales of semantic differential by consumers with different levels of extroversion (extroverts – introverts)

Source: own elaboration.

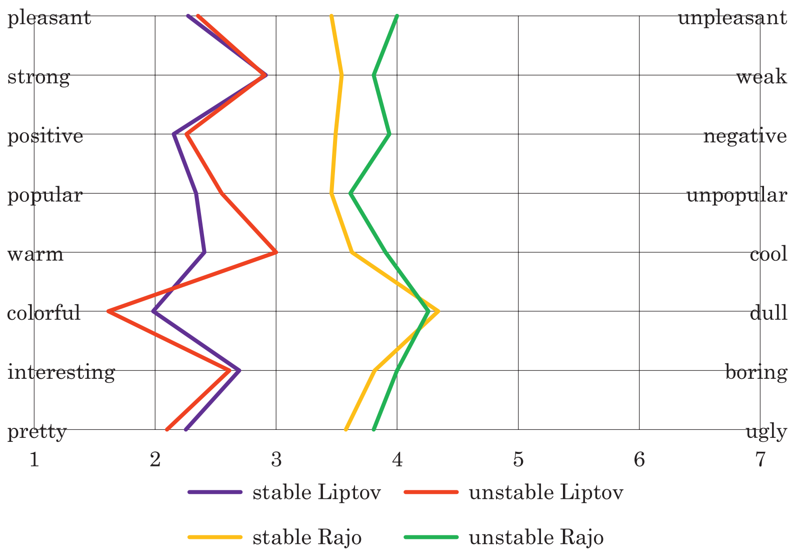

Fig. 7. Evaluation of presented logos on the scales of semantic differential by consumers with different levels of neuroticism (emotionally stable – emotionally unstable)

Source: own elaboration.

In Figure 8 there are evaluations of packages of different brands of milk. The most favourite is the packaging that contains the largest number of associated features and cues. The results are identical with the results of the content analysis that takes into consideration associations, used colours and other visual cues. The most favourite packaging tended to contain natural motifs and a cow, which has the strongest association with the product "Milk". The second most popular choice contained milk itself on the blue background of the packaging.

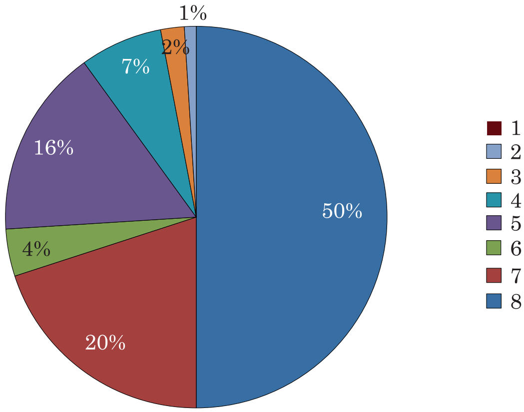

Fig. 8. Evaluation of the presented packages of different brands of Milk
Source: own elaboration.

Conclusions

The presented study is part of a wide-range of research focused on Millennials (young adults, aged 20-45) that has investigated conscious and subconscious incentives of consumer behaviour. Similar studies have been conducted many times so far, all of them are based on basic psychological principles of human behaviour.

The influence of personality traits on consumer behaviour is often discussed, but it is a rarely explored topic of marketing research. There are only a few authors that have paid attention to the mentioned problematics. Based on our results and the results of other authors, we can assume that the personality of the consumer is a very important factor that influences buying behaviour. For example, Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) found a positive dependence between impulsive buying behaviour and extroversion and the negative dependence between impulsive buying behaviour and conscientiousness. Matzler *et al.* (2006) confirmed the dependence between extroversion, openness to experience and the hedonic value of products. Chen (2007) proved the significant influence of personality with the selection of food products.

Besides personality, temperament and psychological characteristics, there are other important factors that can lead a consumer to the final decision when buying food products, specifically milk. Fazio *et al.* (1982), Higgins (1996), Fazio and Olson (2003), Jain and Posavac (2004), Singh and Verma (2017), Jaeger *et al.* (2018), etc., found that associations and provided information significantly influence consumers´ perception and their decision-making process. Previous experiences are important as well, mainly for the creation of associations with selected products.

Because the consumption of milk and milk products is generally considered to be very important for human health, it is also important to convince consumers to buy these products. When the right visual features and the right communication for different segments of consumers are used, the promoted product can be successful in the market and consumers can be persuaded to make beneficial choices as well. Several limitations may have occurred in our study, because several factors were not taken into consideration. We suggest further research of consumer behaviour in the market of milk.

Translated by Authors
Proofreading by Michael Thoene

Acknowledgement

The paper is a part of the research project APVV-16-0244 “Qualitative factors affecting the production and consumption of milk and cheese”, solved at the Department of Marketing and Trade, Faculty of Economics and Management, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra.

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OLSZTYN ECONOMIC JOURNAL
2019, 14(3), 299–311
ISSN 1897-2721 e-ISSN 2083-4675 DOI: 10.31648/oej.4374

ORIGINAL PAPER

Received: 18.12.2018
Revised: 23.05.2019
Published: 10.09.2019

INFLUENCE OF B2C SUSTAINABILITY LABELS IN THE PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR OF POLISH CONSUMERS IN THE OLIVE OIL MARKET

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JEL Classification: D12, D83, Q31, Q56.

Key words: sustainable consumption, sustainability labels, certificates, olive oil, willingness to pay (WTP).

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of B2C sustainability labels on customer purchasing behavior in the olive oil market. Primary data was collected using an online survey (CAWI method) conducted among a sample of 234 residents of large cities (over 50.000 people) of the Mazowieckie voivodship who declared regular purchase of olive oil. A validated questionnaire containing an experimental part regarding willingness to pay (WTP) was used as a tool of study. Collected data showed that sustainability labels were not an important factor in olive oil choice. A large part of the studied group did not know the certificates and did not understand their meaning, or showed no motivation to look for such information on the product label. Most of this group also did not express any willingness to pay a higher price for certified olive oil. For other respondents, certificates regarding the idea of sustainable consumption were an added value; however, this added value differed among individual certificates, which was evident in the form of a varied level of WTP. The results of the study show that the sustainable consumption issue determines purchasing behavior only to a small extent. However, it can be expected that the dissemination of knowledge and pro-environmental awareness will lead to an increase of the importance of sustainable labels in making purchasing decisions in the food market.

How to cite: Kaczorowska, J., Rejman, K., Halicka, E., & Prandota, A. (2019). Influence of B2C Sustainability Labels in the Purchasing Behaviour of Polish Consumers in the Olive Oil Market. *Olsztyn Economic Journal*, *14*(3), 299-311. https://doi.org/10.31648/oej.4374.

WPŁYW CERTYFIKATÓW TYPU B2C ODNOSZĄCYCH SIĘ DO IDEI ZRÓWNOWAŻONEJ KONSUMPCJI NA ZACHOWANIA NABYWCZE POLSKICH KONSUMENTÓW NA RYNKU OLIWY

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Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważona konsumpcja, etykieta, certyfikaty, oliwa, gotowość do zapłaty (WTP).

Abstrakt

Celem badań była ocena wpływu certyfikatów poświadczających cechy produktów spożywczych właściwe zrównoważonej konsumpcji na zachowania zakupowe nabywców na rynku oliwy z oliwek. Wykorzystano dane pierwotne zebrane metodą CAWI wśród 234 mieszkańców dużych miast woj. mazowieckiego (powyżej 50 tys. ludności), którzy zadeklarowali regularne kupowanie oliwy. Narzędziem był walidowany kwestionariusz, zawierający część eksperymentalną dotyczącą akceptowalności ceny (WTP). W badanej grupie respondentów certyfikaty nie były ważnym czynnikiem wyboru oliwy. Znaczna część nie znała symboli, nie rozumiała ich znaczenia lub nie wykazywała motywacji do poszukiwania takich informacji na etykiecie. Większość z tej grupy nie wyraziła również gotowości zapłacenia wyższej ceny za certyfikowaną oliwę. Dla pozostałych respondentów certyfikaty dotyczące idei zrównoważonej konsumpcji stanowiły wartość dodaną, różną dla poszczególnych certyfikatów, co widoczne było w postaci zróżnicowanego poziomu WTP. Wyniki badania wskazują, że aspekty zrównoważonej konsumpcji w niewielkim stopniu determinują zachowania nabywcze. Można jednak oczekiwać, że rozpowszechnianie wiedzy i świadomości prośrodowiskowej spowoduje wzrost znaczenia certyfikatów w podejmowaniu decyzji zakupowych na rynku żywności.

Introduction

The production and consumption of food has a significant impact on the environment, and consumer choices are reflected in economic (e.g. energy consumption), environmental (incl. utilization, recycling) and social costs (i.e. health protection, combating poverty (Tobler *et al.*, 2001). Processes in the food chain, including consumer behaviour in households (food choice, dietary patterns and habits) affect greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to soil degradation, water use and food wastage. Responsible dietary choices consistent with the principles of sustainable food production and consumption are therefore essential for sustainable development (*Przekształcamy nasz świat…*, 2015).

More and more consumers declare that when choosing food, as in the case of other categories of products, sustainable consumption issues (i.e. environment protection, respect for human rights, animal welfare, support for local producers, organizations and products, etc.) are desirable and important (Lucas *et al.*, 2018; Jaros, 2016; van Dam & van Trijp, 2013; Brécard *et al.*, 2009). This should affect the increase in demand, especially as the supply side of the market increases the offer of products that are more sustainable alternatives to products purchased so far. However, research shows that the declared positive attitudes towards sustainable development aspects do not translate into consistent consumer behaviour (Zander & Hamm, 2010; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

Sustainability is an abstract and difficult to verify feature that cannot be seen, tried or easily checked. Its credibility is often communicated to the buyer using the logos of B2C (Business to Consumer/Customer) certification schemes placed on the product labels (Gracia & de-Magistris, 2016; Grunert, 2011). Certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs provide assurance (through a certification mechanism) that certain characteristics or attributes of the product, including the production and processing methods are compliant with the specification (*Wytyczne UE dotyczące najlepszych praktyk*…, 2010). A survey by the European Commission identified 129 public and private sustainability-related food information schemes available at the EU or national levels. The objective of these schemes is to increase transparency along the food chain and inform the consumer in a way that can promote sustainable consumption (Grunert *et al*., 2014).

The aim of this research was to assess the influence of olive oil sustainability labels on the purchasing behavior of customers. An attempt was made to clarify whether previous knowledge of selected certification scheme symbols would favor the purchase of certified olive oil. It was also checked whether sustainability labels would affect an increase in the added value of olive oil in the opinion of customers, which would be manifested in a willingness to pay (WTP) a higher price.

Taking into account that the idea of sustainable consumption concerns three main areas: environmental, economic and social; three sustainability labels appropriate for each of these areas were chosen for the research:

– EU organic farming logo, also called Euro-leaf, which assures that the product was produced with respect for the environment,

– Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), which indicates the support for regional producers and local communities; granted to products whose high quality and reputation are related to the place of production; buying such products contributes to the sustainable development of the regions,

– Fair Trade, which indicates an economic system created for manufacturers from developing countries to ensure their worthy functioning and community development; this certificate scheme promotes social and economic justice as well as crop cultivation with respect for the environment.

– These certificates are used worldwide and can be considered the most widespread among all sustainability labels (*Consumer market Study*…, 2013).

The choice of olive oil as the subject of the research was deliberate. The offerings in the Polish extra virgin olive oil market include products labeled with these three certificate logos, and their retail prices vary widely (Barszczewski

& Kowrygo, 2011). In addition, the WTP method for the valuation of olive oil labeled with sustainability certification schemes has already been used in other studies, which created the possibility of comparing the results.

Research methodology

Primary data were collected in 2016 through an online consumer survey using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) method. The sample consisted of 234 participants aged 19-65 and living in the seven large cities (over 50,000 people) of the Mazowieckie voivodship. Respondents were selected using the quota method according to the criterion of number of inhabitants in these cities. Recruitment and data collection were conducted by a commercial market research agency, ARC Rynek i Opinia. The sampling panel was the internet database of this company. The criterion for participation in the study were regular consumption of olive oil and making decisions about purchasing at least half of the food products for the household. The socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 1. The sample consisted mostly of women. The largest share of the sample constituted young people aged 19-35, and represented households consisting of more than two persons. Respondents declared an average financial situation with a higher level of education. In the case of education level, the sample occurred to be significantly better educated when compared to the average in the country (the percentage of people with higher education in 2017 amounted to 26.4%). This was determined by the assumed selection criteria of the respondents.

A validated, authorial questionnaire consisting of two sections was the tool for the research. The first part concerned shopping habits and consisted of close-ended questions, including the 5-point Osgood semantic scale and the ranking method, with a random order of response presentation. The second part of the survey was experimental and concerned the readiness to purchase and the acceptability of price. To understand the importance of sustainability issues in food choice, several authors have applied experimental methods, such as the Choice Experiment (Janssen & Hamm, 2012; *Consumer market study*…, 2013; Erraach *et al.*, 2017), Conjoint Analysis (Rotaris & Danielis, 2011), and Contingent Valuation (Yang *et al.*, 2012). In the presented study, the Choice Experiment (CE) method was used to find consumer preferences and their willingness-to-pay (WTP) a higher price for products labelled with different B2C certificates. CE methods are based on Random Utility Theory assuming that the person who makes a choice from different alternatives strives for maximization of utility and therefore it is accurate in imitating a real-buying situation (Breidert *et al.*, 2006). Four Extra Virgin olive oil pictures were presented to the respondents on one screen in order to create the impression of online shopping. Three products

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent sample (*N*=234)

Specification	Respondents	Familiarity of B2C certificates before the study: number and [%] of „yes" answers			None is known
	n [%]	Euro-leaf	PGI	Fair Trade	*n* [%]
Total	234 (100)	130 (55.6)	73 (31.2)	76 (32.5)	55 (23.5)
Gender					
Female	144 (61.5)	82 (63.1)	43 (58.9)	50 (65.8)	30 (54.5)
Male	90 (38.5)	48 (36.9)	30 (41.1)	26 (34.2)	25 (45.5)
Age (years)					
19-34	83 (35.5)	48 (36.9)	24 (32.9)	27 (35.5)	17 (30.9)
35-50	75 (32.1)	36 (27.7)	21 (28.8)	23 (30.3)	21 (38.2)
51-65	76 (32.5)	46 (35.4)	28 (38.4)	26 (34.2)	17 (30.9)
Education level					
Vocational and below	8 (3.4)	4 (3.1)	2 (2.7)	2 (2.6)*	2 (3.6)
Secondary	77 (32.9)	45 (34.6)	27 (37.0)	19 (25.0)*	20 (36.4)
Bachelor's degree	34 (14.5)	24 (18.5)	13 (17.8)	6 (7.9)*	5 (9.1)
Master's degree or above	114 (48.7)	56 (43.1)	31 (42.5)	49 (64.5)*	28 (50.9)
Refusal	1 (0.4)	1 (0.8)	-	-	-
Household size					
Up to 2 people	105 (44.9)	58 (44.6)	31 (42.5)	38 (50.0)	27 (49.1)
More than 2 people	129 (55.1)	72 (55.4)	42 (57.5)	38 (50.0)	28 (50.9)
Financial position					
Very bad or bad	16 (6.8)	8 (6.2)	4 (5.5)	3 (3.9)	4 (3.6)
Average	125 (53.4)	72 (55.4)	36 (49.3)	39 (51.3)	27 (29.1)
Good or very good	89 (38)	48 (36.9)	32 (43.8)	33 (43.4)	22 (30.9)
Refusal	4 (1.7)	2 (1.5)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.3)	2 (3.6)

* – statistically significant at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$.
Source: own research.

were labelled with the following sustainability certificate logos: Euro-leaf, PGI, Fair Trade, and a fourth bottle of olive oil always appeared without a certificate.

The order of the simultaneous presentation of photos on the screen was random to avoid the mistake of the first impression. At the beginning of the experiment, the same standard price was shown for each olive oil bottle (PLN 12.99 for a 500 ml), and participants were asked to choose the one they would buy while shopping in a store.

If the respondent chose a bottle of certified oil, then for the next choice the price of this product would increase by only 10%. Then the respondent could maintain the choice of a previously chosen olive oil at a higher price or choose another (with or without a different sustainability label), which was kept at a lower price. The price increase was carried out until the respondent changed preferences and selected the product without a certificate.

Statistical analysis of the results was carried out using SPSS software, version 1.0.0.1012. In the description of individual variables, frequency analysis and cross-tabulations (with the Pearson Chi-square independence test) were used to verify equal distributions between variables. The significance of the studied determinants in the ranking method was measured with the sum of ranks, Friedman's test. The strength of the relation between variables was determined at the level of significance $p \leq 0.05$.

Familiarity of sustainability labels and their impact on purchasing decisions

After presenting the names and graphic symbols of the sustainability labels Euro-leaf, Protected Geographical Indication and Fair Trade, only 8.5% of respondents declared a familiarity with all three. Every fourth respondent (25.6%) admitted knowing two sustainability certificates, and 42.3% only one. The knowledge of these symbols in total was declared by 76.4% of respondents, and the share was 55.6% for Euro-leaf, 31.2% for PGI and 32.5% for Fair Trade. These data indicate a high level of familiarity of certificates, taking as a reference point the average for all EU Member States and for Poland (almost a thousand respondents) obtained in the DG Agri survey from 2017 (Tab. 2).

Table 2

Data from the Eurobarometer survey presenting familiarity of selected sustainability labels among the population of the EU28 countries, including Poland, % of respondents

Familiarity	Euro-leaf	PGI	Fair Trade
EU28- average	27	18	37
Poland	29	15	9
Poland – own research*	56	31	32
The highest & country abbrev	58 LU, 54 SE	38 FR, 33 IT, 30 CZ	88 NL, 86 SE, 84 LU
The lowest & country abbrev	8 RO	6 NL, 6 UK, 7 DK	3 BG, 3 ES, 3 RO

Source: *Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP*. (2018) and * own research.

Undoubtedly, this familiarity assessment should be linked to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents: residents of large cities of the Mazovia Region, including Warsaw, about 2/3 of the sample aged under 50, with a higher education level, and almost 40% with a good or very good financial situation.

It is worth mentioning that in comparison to 2012, the percentage of people declaring familiarity of sustainability certificates increased. In the case of the organic farming label, the average EU growth amounted to 3 percentage points, the regional product to 4 percentage points, and Fair Trade (which has been well recognized by EU residents for many years) – one point (*Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP*, 2018).

In the presented own research, more than half of the respondents were aware of the impact of B2C sustainability labels on their purchasing decisions. This opinion was expressed by 54% of those declaring familiarity of the Euroleaf certificate, 64% – PGI and 54% – Fair Trade.

Again, it is worth pointing out that these declarations positively characterize the respondents in the context of the desirable implementation of the idea of sustainable consumption and are similar to the results (*Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP*, 2018) obtained in the study conducted for EU28 countries. On average, in the Community Countries, 66% of consumers declared that the symbol of organic farming is a food choice determinant during shopping. In the case of Poland, declarations came from as many as 80% of respondents and set Poland among the three countries with the highest declaration rate. The PGI label was important in the food choice of 77% of European consumers and was nearly the same percentage (76%) for Polish consumers.

In order to determine the influence of sustainability labels on olive oil choice, respondents were asked to indicate their rank (weight) among six other factors, usually determining food selection (Tab. 3). It turned out that the most important determinants were quality and price, and the certificate was the least important. None of the respondents recognized the sustainability label as the most important determinant of olive oil choice and only 3% of respondents indicated this factor as the second most important. Almost half of the respondents (47.9%) considered this attribute of oil as the least important (rank 6). The cultivation method was also of minor importance (second last), which confirms the fact that the certificates, in this case organic production, are not relevant for the respondents.

Table 3

Sum of ranks of individual olive oil choice factors (N = 234, the most important feature – rank 1, the least important feature – rank 6)

Food feature	Sum of ranks	Preference group
Quality	422	*A*
Price	686	*B*
Brand/Producer	829	*C*
Country of origin	857	*C*
Method of cultivation	938	*C*
Certificate	1,182	*D*

A, *B*, *C*, *D* – features that respondents identified as the most important. There were no statistically significant differences between factors classified in the same group (marked with the same letters). Between the features included in other groups (marked with other letters) there is a statistically significant difference ($p \leq 0.05$).

Source: own research.

Similar results were obtained in 2016 in a study of 146 people, in which among the nine factors of food choice the least important were sustainable consumption determinants: certificate, country of product origin and method of cultivation/ breeding (Kaczorowska *et al.*, 2018). The Eurobarometer survey (2018) also showed that only in the case of a small percentage of Polish consumers, certificates are a very important criterion for food selection, although several times more people declared them as a choice factor. In the case of both European labels (Euroleaf and PGI) it was 19% of responses (*Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP*, 2018). It should be added that among the groups of respondents who declared and denied the presence of sustainable labels, no significant differences in the ranking of the olive oil choice factors were noticed. Accordingly, 45 and 56% of them classified the certificate symbol as the least important choice determinant.

The small significance of sustainable consumption aspects when choosing food consistently translates into low activity and even a lack of consumer motivation to look for sustainability labels during grocery shopping. Only one fifth of the respondents declared such behaviors (often or always looking for a certificate on the packaging). Almost half (46%) admitted that they are not looking for any sustainability symbols or they do it very rarely, the others (33%) from time to time.

Willingness to buy and readiness to pay a higher price for certified olive oil

A significant part of the respondents, 70% (164 people), declared a willingness to buy olive oil labeled with sustainability logos certificate schemes at the price of PLN 12.99 for a 0.5-liter bottle, i.e. as much as for oil without a sustainability label. Among them, 80% declared a previous knowledge of at least one of the three certificates considered in the study, thus the remaining (20%) declared not having this knowledge.

Statistical analysis did not show any significant differences in the structure of the responses regarding the knowledge of certificates among both respondent groups. Among those interested in buying a certified product, 45% chose the olive oil with the PGI certificate, 31% with the organic farming logo and 24% with the Fair Trade logo. Slightly less than half of those originally declaring the purchase of olive oil with each sustainability logo declared the readiness to purchase it again for a price higher by 10% (i.e. PLN 14.29). The amounts of the answer were 48, 47 and 35%, respectively (Tab. 4). The remainder of respondents changed their choice to a cheaper product with another certificate or without any sustainability label. It can be stated, therefore, that these buyers of olive oil were not aware that certified products must be more expensive due to higher producer costs and they resigned from the purchase. Among those who did not change their choice, the share of respondents declaring knowledge of certificates prior to the research slightly increased (up to 83%). It means that they were more aware of the importance of certificate schemes and the resulting necessity to pay a higher price. There was a significant difference between these respondents and those who did not know the certificates ($p = 0.026$). With each subsequent price increase, fewer and fewer consumers expressed their willingness to pay for certified olive oil. They resigned from buying it in favour of a product without a sustainability label. At the same time, as before, the share of respondents who knew the certificates prior to the study was larger among those who expressed the willingness to pay a higher price. Similar observations resulted from the research of Greek customers, because those who knew the idea of sustainable consumption accepted paying higher prices by two-thirds for organic olive oil and by one-third for regional ones (Vlontzos & Duquenne, 2014).

Table 4

Number of people declaring readiness to buy olive oil with sustainability labels while increasing its price

Sustainability label	PRICE				Change of price max/stand.
	standard PLN 12.99	+10% PLN 14.29	+20% PLN 15.59	max PLN	
Organic farming	105	49 (-53%)*	26 (-75%)	38.99	3.0
PGI	100	48 (-52%)	26 (-74%)	77.99	6.0
Fair Trade	124	43 (-64%)	28 (-77%)	41.59	3.2

*in brackets the percentage of respondents giving up their purchase.
Source: own research.

During the experiment, respondents 20 times accepted the increase of organic olive oil price, 22 times of the Fair Trade product and 50 times of regional olive oil. The data in the last column of Table 4 (the proportion of extreme prices) confirms that the respondents' willingness to pay a higher price depended on the type of certificate. The lowest willingness concerned organic olive oil, because respondents agreed to pay at most three times the standard price. A slightly higher willingness to pay was found in the case of the Fair Trade certificate, as the price changed 3.2 times. In the case of the olive oil with the Protected Geographical Indication certificate, the maximum acceptable price was 6 times higher than the initial price, which means that the product with this sustainability label was much more resistant to price increases than the products with other labels. The lowest rating of an organic certificate can be explained by the observation from surveys carried out among respondents from six EU countries (five so-called "old" and Poland). It was shown that at the general level, consumers express concern with environmental issues, but at the product-related level this concern diminishes and does not translate into a responsible food choice (Grunert *et al.*, 2014). Also from the Eurobarometer survey quoted above, it appears that Polish consumers perceive organic products primarily through the prism of price (54% totally agreed that they are more expensive than conventional counterparts) and to a much lesser extent in the sustainable consumption issues (31-33% totally agreed that organic food products are of better quality, are produced using environmental practices, without pesticides, fertilizers or medical supplies) (*Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP*, 2018). Regional food products seem to be more unique for the Polish consumers, and therefore worth paying a higher price, not necessarily because they are perceived in terms of sustainable development. This may result, in part, from the active policy of promoting regional and traditional products, at the EU, national and local level, including the "Three Signs of Taste" campaign implemented in Poland in 2013-2015 and activities undertaken by the Polish Chamber of Regional and Local Products.

The results of the presented study show that the individual certificates represented differing levels of added value for the respondents. The logo confirming the product relationship with a region had the highest added value. Similar results were obtained in a Canadian consumer survey, as they were willing to pay higher prices for PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) extra virgin olive oil compared to the product without a sustainability label. The results also indicated that consumers valued PDO-certified olive oil more than PDI-certified (Menapace *et al.*, 2011). Research among Italian consumers showed that both certificates of regional origin PDO and PDI, and organic farming positively affected the olive oil choice decision. Moreover, the willingness to pay a higher price increased when the certificate logo was accompanied by information about the importance of the scheme (Aprile *et al.*, 2012). Different price acceptability depending on the information and the certificate logo indicates that consumers have a different level of trust, and the valuation of certificates depends on their knowledge about European certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Conclusions

Sustainability labelling is an important tool to communicate to the customers about the quality features of food and to guarantee the credibility of products (Aprile *et al.*, 2012). In the presented study, an assessment of Polish consumer knowledge on three fairly widespread B2C sustainability certificates, i.e. Euro-leaf, PGI and Fair Trade, was made. Their significance in olive oil choice was assessed using the WTP method.

It has been shown that the olive oil label with a B2C certificate motivates the purchase for a considerable group of consumers, but only on the condition that the price will not be higher than the standard one, even if they do not know what a given certificate means. It seems, therefore, that the symbols of certificates are perceived more as a marketing tool for manufacturers and not as a determinant of responsible purchase behavior, as consumers will not accept a higher price for higher value added of the certified olive oil. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the increased price of a product is an important barrier for consumers, even if they declare knowledge and a positive attitude towards sustainable development. For consumers who knew the chosen B2C certificates before the study, they constituted a higher value added manifested in the tendency to accept higher prices compared to the products without certificates. Furthermore, a higher loyalty to certified olive oil was a feature of consumers who knew the B2C certificates before the study, because they accepted paying higher and higher prices.

To summarize, it can be concluded that sustainability labels have a high potential for shaping responsible food choices and promoting a sustainable consumption model. However, it is necessary to increase the consumer knowledge about certification schemes, so that they understand that premium prices for products that meet the sustainable consumption rules are justified. The issues of sustainable food consumption and production should become the subject of broad public debate, and educational activities should be undertaken by many stakeholders from the sphere of food and nutrition, including educational and scientific establishments, producers, decision makers or non-governmental organizations (some of them have already implemented activities in this field). It is worth noting that the Danish government is considering introducing the obligatory labeling of food products according to their environmental impact (Quackenbush, 2018). Understanding the link between the method of food production and the state of the environment and, as a consequence, the conditions and quality of life, seems to be a key factor for consumers to make responsible purchasing decisions. As a result, more conscious and sustainable purchasing behavior should improve the health of the population and the state of the environment, contributing to ensuring food security for the present and future generations.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge some limitations of the presented research. During the experiment, the sustainability certificate logo competed with the price, which is considered a key factor in food choice. In fact, the sustainability label must also compete with other product attributes, such as brand, quality, country of origin, etc. In addition, when buying food, consumers may be overwhelmed by too much information on the label and may deliberately ignore symbols in order to simplify their choice. In further research, the issue of visual attention (for example, using eye-tracking technology) in relation to sustainability certificate logos is worth exploring in order to gain insight into the actual decision making process during food choice, including the willingness-to-pay a higher price.

Translated by Ewa Halicka
Proofreading by Michael Thoene

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OLSZTYN ECONOMIC JOURNAL
2019, 14(3), 313–324
ISSN 1897-2721 e-ISSN 2083-4675 DOI: 10.31648/oej.4375

ORIGINAL PAPER

Received: 14.02.2019
Revised: 19.03.2019
Published: 10.09.2019

FOOD IN RETAILERS' COMMERCIAL OFFER – POSSIBILITIES OF BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONSUMERS

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JEL Classification: M31, D12.

Key words: retailing, food, relationships, consumer behaviours.

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to identify the possibility of building relationships with consumers in the area of shaping the food offer in retail trade. The subject of the article also concerns consumer needs and changes in their behaviors essential to building these relationships. A critical analysis of the literature of the subject and case study were used to implement the purpose of the article. A diagnosis of solutions implemented by retailers show that the scope and form of activities conducted in the area of building relationships with customers depends on the retail format. Relationships are mainly built on the basis of physical proximity, but also by referring to key consumer needs and trends in their behaviors (mainly "health", "comfort", "convenience", and "new family model"). Retailers in the creation of the food offer refer to the needs of consumers as being related not only to selecting and buying food, but also to their future purchases.

ŻYWNOŚĆ W OFERCIE HANDLOWEJ DETALISTÓW – OBSZARY BUDOWANIA RELACJI Z KONSUMENTAMI

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Słowa kluczowe: handel detaliczny, żywność, relacje, zachowania konsumentów.

How to cite: Kucharska, B. (2019). Food in Retailers' Commercial Offer – Possibilities of Building Relationships with Consumers. *Olsztyn Economic Journal*, *14*(3), 313-324. https://doi.org/10.31648/oej.4375.

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja możliwości budowania relacji z konsumentami w zakresie kształtowania oferty żywności w handlu detalicznym. Przedmiotem artykułu są również potrzeby konsumentów i zmiany w ich zachowaniach istotne w budowaniu tych relacji. Do realizacji celu artykułu wykorzystano krytyczną analizę literatury przedmiotu oraz studium przypadku. Wyniki przeprowadzonej diagnozy działań podejmowanych przez detalistów wskazują, że zakres i forma działań prowadzonych w zakresie budowania relacji z klientem zależy od formatu handlu detalicznego. Relacje są budowane na bliskości fizycznej, ale także przez odwołanie się do najważniejszych potrzeb konsumentów i trendów w ich zachowaniach (głównie: zdrowie, wygoda, komfort, nowy model rodziny). Detaliści w tworzeniu oferty żywności odwołują się do potrzeb konsumentów związanych nie tylko z zakupem żywności i jej doborem, lecz także z dalszym jej wykorzystaniem.

Introduction

Retailers aspire to satisfy not only functional consumer needs in the sphere of buying food, but also cognitive, symbolic and social needs, which increasingly result in the use of diverse ways of building complex commercial offerings that complement food. Retail offerings in this sphere constitute the response to recognised trends and megatrends in consumer behaviours – firstly including those that are associated with lifestyle, concern about quality, convenience and consumer comfort, as well as virtualisation of their world. Actions implemented by retailers in the sphere of the food trade are part of a group of solutions adequate to changes occurring in consumer behaviour, and certainly support building relationships with customers in the retail food trade.

This paper adopts a marketing approach to relationships with customers, while attributing special importance to perceiving relationships as bonds built on the basis of values essential for the customers, and defined in the literature of the subject as relationships in the sphere of values (Bilińska-Reformat, 2015, p. 35-39; Grönroos, 1991, p. 7-13). The customer is the starting point for shaping these relationships, whereas trust and customer loyalty are the result. Building relationships with customers demands from retailers having and using databases of customers established on the basis of their presence on social media, use of mobile applications, loyalty cards and accounts, as well as their activity on websites among others (Michalska-Dudek, 2014, p. 40-48; Bazarnik, 2013, p. 82).

The purpose of this article is to identify the possibility of building relationships with consumers in the area of shaping the food offer by retailers and recognizing consumer needs and changes in their behaviours essential to building these relationships.

Research methodology

The paper is prepared on the basis of a critical analysis of the literature of the subject and case study. The use of the case study as a research method is associated with specific procedures and the application of relevant tools (Majetun, 2012, p. 349-366; Visaak, 2010, p. 371-382). Recognition of the ways in which relationships with customers are built by retailers on the basis of the creation and extension of the food offer suitable to their needs and behaviours was the main research problem. Analysed cases concerned retail trade formats of key importance for trade in food (hypermarkets, supermarkets, proximity, convenience stores) that belong to the largest commercial chains in Poland. The analysis of the content of the websites (classification key/observation sheet) (Babbie, 2003, p. 342-352; Szczepaniak, 2012, p. 83-112) was applied in the study.

Consumer needs and changes in their behaviours are vital in the shaping of the food offer in the retail trade

Individual customers in the retail trade buy food to satisfy their own needs, as well as the personal and / or shared needs of other household members. Individually, they have no direct impact on the shape of the commercial offer, however, they have the right to decide what needs, how much and in what way they should be satisfied (Kucharska, 2014, p. 78-81). The consumer is a demanding market partner who expects an optimal satisfaction of their needs by a commercial enterprise; as well as continual interest and communication based on reliable information and mutual trust that supports building relationships (Mróz, 2006, p. 191).

In actions implemented by retailers in the sphere of offering food, it is important to take into consideration diverse types of consumer needs that reflect multiple dimensions of value. Consumers often expect something more than the possibility to buy food; they expect that retailers will refer to the functional, symbolic, cognitive and social needs reported by them (Tab. 1).

In highly-developed societies changes observed in the consumer systems of values concern strengthening intangible aspirations associated with the quality of life at the expense of losing the importance of traditional values. The significance of post-material values associated with self-expression and individual development is growing, and the tendency for self-development through "fun and pleasure" from buying, as well as having and using goods is occurring (Bylok, 2012, p. 49, 50).

The growing importance of an orientation toward pleasure is also reflected in consumer behaviours in the sphere of buying and using food. Pleasure is shifted from the peripheries to the centre of many people's value system and

Table 1

Customer needs in the retail trade within the sphere of the commercial food offer

Needs	Description
Functional	stimulating customers to search for the food offer satisfying their expectations directly associated with nutrition – for the satisfaction of basic needs of consumers, prevention of problems or the provision of solutions to them
Symbolic	related to self-fulfilment, belonging to a group, building a sense of own value, self-perception through the use of an extended commercial offer of a retailer enhanced by additional services
Cognitive	associated with the buyer's experience of sensual pleasure, but also stimulating the buyer to gain knowledge not only in the sphere of offered food, but also with reference to the ways of its use
Social	associated with general conditions of coexistence and cooperation. Satisfaction of social needs is reflected among others in linking consumers of food in communities according to lifestyle, diet, culinary hobbies or health problems

Source: own case study based on Sagan (2011, p. 36).

starts to perform the function of an internal value controlling people's actions. The balance between utilitarian shopping and shopping for pleasure, especially in wealthy societies has been transferred. Consumers still consider the functional value of food, its capability to satisfy basic needs, and take into consideration the prices, promotions and discounts, but they obviously look for something else in buying food. For example, they find pleasure in shopping, which results from a special atmosphere, an appropriate environment or the ensuring of specific standards. While doing shopping and using food, the emphasis is increasingly more frequently shifted from the content to emotions – the consumer does not want to think only, they want to feel. The very image of feeling pleasure from buying and using a given product becomes a source of pleasure (Uncles, 2010, p. 212, 213).

Consumer behaviours in the food market are shaped by many determinants. They constantly include those that belong to the group of economic determinants (e.g. the level and source of income, household equipment of durable consumer goods used to store and process food, supply, the level and relations between prices as well as commercial agriculture among others), non-economic determinants (including demographic ones – the number and structure of households, civilizational and cultural determinants) and subjective determinants (attitudes, personality, habits and traditions).

Changes occurring in consumer behaviours in the food market result from continuous changes observed in the group of factors determining those behaviours – both internal, concerning consumers and their household, as well as external ones regarding the environment in which they function. The latest trends determining new market conditions for making decisions in the sphere of food consumption, and consequently in the sphere of its storage, processing and purchase, occur in consumer behaviours (Tkaczyk, 2012, p. 126-134).

Table 2 shows selected trends and megatrends in consumer behaviours that should be considered by retailers in making decisions related to the creation of the commercial offer of food and searching for the possibility to build relationships with customers.

Table 2

Selected trends and megatrends in consumer behaviours, vital from the point of view of shaping the commercial food offer by retailers

Specification	Behaviours of food consumers
"Health" trend and related "wellness" lifestyle	buying safe food, organic food paying attention to food ingredients great importance of product quality/freshness drinking a lot of liquids using dietary supplements following the professional advice of dieticians control over diet in a household
"Convenience" trend	using semi-finished products and ready-made meals eating out using payable services associated with food preparation using culinary recipes linked with the retailers' offer
"Sensual" trend	searching for entertainment, adventure and pleasure associated with leisure time cooking searching for trendy, fashionable diets / culinary recipes
"Individualism" trend	buying small packages of food products having an own vision, idea of the use of food
"Comfort" trend	using high-tech equipment and devices for food processing and preparation of meals at home using the Internet and social networking sites to search for ready solutions – tested and recommended by others
"Slowdown of the speed of life" trend	de-consumption – conscious reduction of consumption to a reasonable amount compliant with natural, individual, physical and psychological features of consumers, reluctance to mass consumption, smart shopping – rational planning of household budget through buying necessary products at a low price ("expect more, pay less")
"The need to establish contacts" trend	functioning in a network community, sharing purchase-related experience with others, food storing and processing as well as preparation of food on the Internet, among others popularisation of own vision of a culinary recipe
Overlapping of the virtual and real life Eat, pray and use innovative technologies Widespread internet and mobile technologies	consumer behaviours associated with food occur both in a real and virtual world. Depending on the needs and possibilities, the consumer transfers individual elements of their behaviours into the virtual or stationary offer dimension, which is convenient for them easy and general access to information thanks to the development of the latest information technologies
New family model	increasingly more and more often occupationally active women growth of the number of single-person households

Source: based on: Kucharska (2014, p. 83-86), *Polski rynek handlu spożywczego w 2010-2020 roku* (2016).

The possibility to build and shape relationships with food buyers by retailers has been and will significantly be determined in the future by the growing virtualisation of consumer behaviours. General access to the Internet and the intense development of innovative information technologies will support not only the growth of buying food online, but also consumers' expectations regarding the capability of using mobile solutions at the level of retail trade that are consistent with the trends and megatrends that were previously presented (Dubbs, 2015; Verhoef, 2015). Searching for ways to solve their problems, customers believe that the retailers' offer will penetrate into the world in which they function. According to the Roland Berger Report (2016), consumers will also expect a more personalised retail approach which in the case of food will mainly refer to the assortment, and personalisation in the sphere of communication (Borusiak & Pierański 2016). Frequent, personalised interactivity "always and everywhere" means receiving information from users, recognising their behaviours and reacting to them. This will support building relationships between the retailer and the customer (Kucharska, 2017).

Retail trade formats in food distribution

Retail trade enterprises perform a key role in food distribution. They implement fundamental tasks and the basic functions of retailing (complete, regular, continuous supply for the market consistent with demand while considering its spatial, time and structural diversity), but also enhance the food offer with a specific set of services. These tasks are implemented by retail enterprises in several ways depending on the type of format they follow. Aggregated and standardised product designations, i.e. the services of retail trade enterprises, represent the retail trade format (Reynolds *et al.*, 2007, p. 647-660). The features that describe the format mainly include assortment, the way in which the offer is presented to the customer, the method of delivery of the purchases to the customer, the type of production factors as well as the way in which they are organised, and the scope of the provided services (Borusiak & Pierański, 2017, p. 155). Retail trade formats that have food in their assortment are highly diversified. They include supermarkets, discount stores, hypermarkets/superstores, convenience stores, small grocers, food/drink specialists, concept stores and the forecourt. The formats that perform a key role in food distribution in Poland have also been selected for the needs of this paper.

Retailers play a crucial role in food distribution. They select products supplied to final buyers, thus determining the scope of products offered on the market. This also translates into demand and consumer buying behaviours. The retailers' advantage over producers results among others from the fact of a limited possibility to increase the number of offered products, since the amount of shelf space does not increase as fast as the number of new products), the consolidation of retail trade and the fact that existing technologies make it possible to very precisely determine the sales of specific products (information asymmetry: the retailer has more information about sales than the manufacturer) (Borusiak & Pierański, 2017, p. 157; Stern *et al.*, 2002, p. 85). Strengthening the retailers' advantage over food producers supports a decline in food prices (the scale of the retail operation, searching for a reduction in production costs by producers) among others, and tasks performed by retailers in distribution channels contribute to the construction of the commercial offer of the food that is close to the final buyer – the consumer (in the physical and psychological dimension).

Table 3

The specific character of selected retail trade formats predominant in food distribution in Poland

Type	Description
Discount stores	most often no more than 1–1.2 thousand m^2 of sales area 1,000-2,000 products – fast moving, mainly grocery products expanding assortment of fresh products, fruit and vegetables as well as bakery products made on site; large share of own brands) quality of products and the relationship between the price and quality represent the communicated feature of the offer the largest chains: Biedronka, Lidl
Hypermarkets	innovative form of trade using space (more than 2,500 m^2) broad assortment of food products of all sectors and non-food products of frequent purchase rather low level of prices most frequently suburban location or in peripheral districts, in a shopping centres or as an element of commercial parks long opening hours and self-service complex application of information technologies largest chains: Tesco, Kaufland, Suchan, Carrefour
Supermarkets	the strongest distinguishing features of the offer: wide offer, large share of brand products and the level of customer service wide assortment of fresh products expanded by products of the convenience type – ready for immediate consumption or fast preparation at home highly diversified format: supermarkets, proximity (90% of the offer is food, convenient location, smaller area) (Dino, Spar, Polo); big supermarkets (70% of food products) with a broad offer of deli products and high quality own brands (Piotr i Paweł); supermarkets with a developed offer of industrial products and fresh products (Super of Intermarche chain)
Convenience stores	small area – often up to 100 m^2 usually poor and narrow assortment of fast moving products, mainly food relatively high level of prices very convenient and suitable opening hours largest chains: Żabka, Małpka Express Spar Express

Source: own study.

In Poland, the formats that are of key importance for food distribution include discount stores (around 26% in 2015), hypermarkets (around 16%) and large supermarkets (8.4%). In recent years, the importance of stores of the convenience type and the proximity to supermarkets has grown (7.6% and 6.2% respectively) (Tab. 3).

Specialised stores (butcher shops, liquor stores and confectionery shops) are also a popular place of buying food (*Polski rynek handlu spożywczego…*, 2016). Foreign enterprises are predominant in the food products trade (over 50%) (Karasiewicz & Trojanowski, 2016). Customers' expectations concerning low prices, convenient location and access to the offer of high quality food products encourage retailers to implement solutions that make their existing formats of operation closer to the complex satisfaction of these expectations. This causes an evolution of formats popular in Poland towards the format combining the key qualities of discount stores, convenience stores and deli stores, sometimes referred to as "dis-convenience" (Kucharska, 2016, p. 43, 44).

Ways of shaping relationships with consumers – food offers in selected formats of the retail trade

The shaping of relationships by retailers with customers takes place through taking actions that reflect an understanding of consumers' needs and the changes occurring in their behaviours. The formats of the greatest importance for food distribution (discount stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores) belonging to the most important retail trade chains in Poland (including Biedronka, Lidl, Tesco, Carrefour and Żabka) were selected to recognise these actions and implement the purpose of the paper.

The "health" trend and related "wellness" lifestyle are extremely important in the way food is offered by retailers. Retailers' actions in this sphere are firstly associated with:

– expansion of eco-product (bio) assortment and fit products (Tesco, Lidl, Biedronka);

– strengthening of the offer by the Internet proposition of a set of exercises (proposition of exercises Tesco);

– shaping of own brand products with reduced sugar, fat and salt content ("Little Helps" Tesco plan);

– implementation of educational programs for shaping healthy eating habits (Tesco Free Fruit for Kids);

– limiting the availability of products especially harmful for young consumers (removal of sweets from the till zone, limiting the availability of energy drinks for people younger than 16 years old – Tesco "Little Helps");

– promoting healthy eating habits through providing information ("Tradycyjnie czy nowocześnie?" Lidl program) and/or with the use of price (Carrefour

"Dowiedz się, jak samkuje zdrowie"). Helping to change the diet through the provision of culinary propositions (Carrefour – "Dowiedz się, jak smakuje zdrowie" with an offer of products from the "Carrefour Healthy Shelf", dietician's advice and healthy inspirations for the whole family);

– educating customers in the sphere of dietary food products rich in nutrients, bio, eco, lactose and gluten free (Carrefour "Dowiedz się, jak smakuje zdrowie");

– taking into consideration consumer health problems (special recipes of Lidl: vegetarian, gluten free, lactose free, light and fit);

– informing about product content;

– initiating cooperation with health research institutions.

In response to consumer trends described as "convenience", "comfort" and "family", retailers try to minimise consumers' time and effort related to buying food and its further use. For this purpose, they provide consumers with:

– an expanded offer of semi-products and ready-made meals;

– an offer of appliances for food processing and preparation of meals,

– culinary recipes arranged according to preparation time and the level of difficulty, with the possibility to send the shopping list via e-mail and collect favourite solutions ("Szybkie i łatwe przepisy", "Typy dań" – KuchniaLidla.Pl),

– solutions to culinary problems (culinary ticks KuchniaLidla.Pl);

– culinary suggestions adapted to circumstances (Lidl – For special occasions – Valentine's Day, Easter, For a party, Barbecue).

The retailers' culinary propositions also contribute to the satisfaction of the needs of customers associated with a search for fun in their leisure time and also experiencing pleasure from being trendy in the way of eating and preparing meals (sensual trend) (Biedronka "Codziennie odkrywaj nowe smaki"). Retailers combine culinary propositions with major events in the customer's life (Tesco "Historie pisane piaskiem").

The family trend has been growing in importance and finds its reflection in the offers of the studied commercial chains. On their websites, they specifically note the fact of having children, and refer to various stages of their lifecycle (Tesco – pregnancy, baby, toddler, kindergarten, school) in the sphere of behaviours, health and diet.

Retailers' actions are also consistent with the consumers' pursuit of responsible behaviours in the sphere of consumption. The Tesco "Food recycling" website educates consumers in the sphere of preventing food waste, presenting methods of preserving freshness, as well as extending and using waste is an example of such actions.

For consumer convenience, the retailers' propositions are available online through mobile applications as well. Within the "Zdrowy apetyt" Tesco project, thanks to the application, it is possible to prepare a customer-tailored eating plan with the function of a reminder to drink water and the time of meals, as well as access to culinary recipes tailored to a specific customer. The virtualisation of behaviours of commercial enterprises is noticed by discount stores (especially

Biedronka and Lidl). Applications enable the adjustment of notifications to preferences for specific customers while appreciating their individual character at the same time.

The goal of the retailers' actions is breaking consumer resistance to specific formats of retail trade, such as the location of buying food. Such a necessity mainly appears in the case of discount stores. A low level of prices suggesting a lower level of product quality was a distinguishing feature of their offer for a long time. Discount stores are currently taking many actions focused on the creation of the image of a high quality food offer. The most important include:

– in the sphere of fruits and vegetables – emphasising the country of product origin, their locality, the farmers' concern for cultivation (the farmer is

Table 4

Retailer actions to consumer trends – examples of building relationships with customers

Specification	Examples of activities
"Health" trend and related "wellness" lifestyle	eco-products (bio) assortment Tesco, fit- products, program of exercises Tesco, Carrefour Healthy Shelf own Brand products with a reduced content of sugar, fat and salt Tesco plan Little Helps Tesco Free Fruit for Kids Healthy eating programs – "Traditionally or in a modern way?" Lidl program, Carrefour – catalog „Learn what health tastes like" dietitian advice (Carrefour „Learn what health tastes like") taking into account the health problems of consumers (Tesco, Lidl special culinary recipes) cooperation with research institutes (Tesco)
"Convenience" trend „Comfort" trend "New family model"	semi-finished products and ready meals equipment for food processing and cooking culinary recipes (Quick and easy recipes, types of dishes – KuchniaLidla.Pl) solutions to culinary problems (Culinary tricks KuchniaLidla.Pl) culinary solutions adapted to circumstances (Lidl – For special occasions – Valentine's Day, Easter, For a party, Barbecue) physical proximity of food offer (place, time) – Żabka
„Sensual" trend	Tesco stories written in sand
„Individualism" trend	personalization of the assortment and price offer (Tesco Club Card) mobile applications
„Slowdown of the speed of life" trend	Tesco Recycling smart shopping Tesco Club Card
Overlapping of the virtual and real life eat, pray and use innovative technologies Widespread internet and mobile technologies	mobile applications Auchan application Healthy appetite Tesco retailer Websites Scan & Shop Tesco

Source: own study.

a passionate person), frequency of deliveries, the development of the amount of information, the promotion of consumption (care about consumption quality and quality of life);

– in the sphere of packaged goods – the introduction of own brands that guarantee high quality;

– use of the image of celebrities in the formation of offer reliability – if they use it, then it is a trustworthy offer.

The selected actions of retailers in the sphere of the shaping of the food offer correspond to consumer behaviour, and are presented in Table 4.

Conclusions

A diagnosis of actions implemented by retailers shows that the scope and form of actions conducted in the sphere of building relationships with customers depends on the format of retail trade. In the case of convenience type stores, these relationships are built on the basis of physical proximity (food availability in the place and at the time expected by customers). In the case of the largest hypermarket chains and discount stores, the proposed solutions associated with the food offerings clearly refer to consumer behaviours and their key needs satisfied by the retail trade. In their actions, they mainly refer to "health", "convenience", "comfort" and the "new family model" trends. They take into consideration the presence of their consumers in the virtual world and also provide access to online solutions associated with the food offer, whereas access is guaranteed through every possible communication device.

Translated by Bernadeta John-Jankowska
Proofreading by Michael Thoene

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