

IDENTIFICATION OF LEADING CONSUMER TRENDS ON THE FOOD MARKET

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Abstract. The article identifies and characterizes selected consumer trends that occur on the food market. These are, inter alia, consumerism, greening of consumption, smart shopping, presumption, etc. These trends can occur in parallel, and some of them like consumerism and greening of consumption are counterposed to each other. The review of domestic and foreign literature related to the subject of the considerations has been carried out. The empirical part of the article contains the results of research conducted among 244 respondents on the knowledge of selected trends and participation in them. Not all trends are well known to respondents, although they often undertake activities in their field. Participation of respondents in prosumer activities consisting in co-creating the offer of the company, addressed at consumers is surprisingly low.

Key words: consumer trends, food market, eco-consumption, smart shopping, prosumption, home-centrism.

JEL code: E21, M31, D12

Introduction

Intensive development of the modern world, in addition to positive aspects, also provides many problems related to the consumption of food. We live in times when access to products is very easy and their offer is very rich. Consumption overwhelms the actual needs of buyers, is carried out in an excessive and unbalanced manner. On the other hand, resources on our planet are limited, and their excessive exploitation destroys the environment. The response to this is the emergence of new consumer trends such as prosumption, deconsumption, greening of consumption, smart shopping, ethnocentrism, home-centrism and others. It is important to emphasize that the growing consumer awareness is manifested in the increasingly rational purchase of products and budget management.

The main goal of this article is to identify contemporary consumer trends on the food market. Detailed goals come down to:

- characteristics of selected consumer trends on the food market,
- examining the level of knowledge and level of consumer participation in selected consumer trends on the food market.

The research part of the article focused in particular on the trend of greening of consumption, smart shopping and prosumption. The literature review also includes other trends identified on the food market. The empirical part of the article was written on the basis of surveys carried out among consumers. The survey involved 244 people who voluntarily completed the questionnaire posted on the social networking site. The research is of an illustrative nature, and the conclusions drawn based on it refer only to the surveyed group of people.

Characteristics of selected trends on the food market

A trend is a widely known concept that accompanies many areas of life, referring to both products and consumer behaviour. Most often under this term, a general trend, a direction of events or a current style, etc. is understood. Kotler (2005) defines a trend as a direction or series of events characterized by a certain momentum and durability. It can also be defined as a visible change prevailing at least one season, which has a specific direction, is perpetuated by repetition, and the measure of its prevalence is the extent of penetration into society (Polanska K., 2016). A trend may be short or long-term and its range may be global or local. Characteristic features of trends are coexistence (penetration of trends) and divergence (the emergence of counter-trends at the same

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time) (Tkaczyk J., 2012). Many authors describing the issue of a trend are inspired by one of the major experts on the subject matter, Henrik Vejlgaard. In his book he describes both the phenomenon of a trend and its analysis in great detail (Vejlgaard H., 2008). Characteristics of selected consumer trends occurring on the food market are presented below.

Deconsumption, greening of consumption *versus* consumerism

Contemporary changes in consumption do not have a unified direction and tend to have opposite tendencies. At the same time, there are completely different trends, such as consumerism, which has been growing for many years and is a legacy of the modern era, and greening of consumption and deconsumption, in turn being concepts of sustainable consumption (Sodhi K., 2011; Black I., 2010). Consumerism is excessive consumption, within which social, ecological and individual costs do not count. Negative consequences of consumerism are the cause of waste of natural resources, human labour and wealth. Contemporary consumerism can be described through its three basic elements: a materialistic approach to life, a willingness to consume to show off and an increasingly common dependence on compulsive buying (Kacprzak-Choinska A., 2007).

In developed market economies, changes in consumer behaviour, referred to as deconsumption, have been observed for several years. Deconsumption is a trend opposite to consumerism. It is characterized by rejection of behaviour that focus on buying for rational, conscious, ethical and responsible purchasing decisions related to satisfying important and actual needs, rather than those that are created by marketers (Kiezel E., 2010). Global brands, especially exclusive ones, are not only symbols of high quality, but also belonging to a specific social class, and attaching a high importance to their possession and assessing people through the prism of their possessions is a symptom of consumerism (Janos-Kresło M. and Mróz B., 2006; De Lanuaze G.S. and Siadou-Martin B., 2013). On the other hand, rejection of brands or their marginal importance when making purchasing decisions are characteristic features of the deconsumption phenomenon (Cova B., 1997, Albinsson P.A. et al., 2010). Such behaviour arise from the fact that some consumers are clearly tired of massive consumption, unreasonable in biological and socio-cultural terms. Ecological considerations are also important here. The trend of greening of consumption is very often included in the trend of deconsumption (Black I., 2010; Freestone O.M., McGoldrick P.J., 2008). Greening of consumption is associated with a reasonable use of resources without environmental degradation, selection of environmentally friendly products, and avoiding any activities devastating the environment. It is the result of increasing awareness of the negative effects of human activities on the environment and health. Eco-consumption is based on the economical use of durable products and thus the avoidance of one-off products, and above all on the selection of those that are produced in accordance with the idea of clean production (Witek L., 2017). Acquisition and consumption of organic products made without the use of artificial fertilizers and using methods that respect the natural environment are of significant importance in the trend of eco-consumption.

Smart shopping

Another trend is smart shopping, expressed in the consumers' tendency to invest considerable time and effort in finding and using information about promotions in order to save money (MaNo H., Elliot M.T., 1997). The term smart shopping developed in the United States in the first decade of the 21st century, from where it spread to Europe. It is recognized that the global economic crisis of 2008 directly contributed to the creation and subsequent development of this trend. Consumers, not wanting to give up the current level of consumption, sought other ways to reduce spending. They began to approach the issue of shopping in a more economical way. To achieve the greatest benefits,

modern technologies, and above all the Internet, proved to be helpful. It is believed that the Internet is the father of clever shopping, while economic crisis is the mother (Reformat B., 2013). Smart consumers are mostly better educated people. They use their own knowledge to verify quality, so they make informed purchasing decisions. They pay attention to the composition and functionality of the product, as well as whether it is actually needed. In addition, an important aspect is the adequacy of the product or service price to their quality.

Home-centrism

The basis of the occurrence of the next trend called home-centrism is the change of lifestyle and forms of meeting needs. Home-centrism is understood as the transfer of consumption from outside of home to home, which becomes a place to satisfy not only the needs related to running family life, but also cultural, educational or recreational needs (Kozłowska W., Rutkowska A., 2018). This trend results from the change in the consumers' lifestyle. The main idea is to extend the function of home. It is no longer just a place where family life happens and everything that is associated with it. Home-centrism is closely related to the phenomenon of privatization of consumption, which is explained as a transformation of consumption from the public to the private sphere (Lebiejko A., 2010). Since 1974, Faith Popcorn has been forecasting how people will think, work and live. She predicted the well-known trend and called it "Cocooning" (the stay-at-home syndrome) (Popcorn F., 1992). Several factors influence the development of home-centrism. It is important to individualize lifestyles and improve economic conditions. Another one is technological progress, with particular emphasis on the development of the Internet and its tools, as well as the development of telecommunications services. Consumers can shop or work remotely from home. The deepening need for privacy is also important, paradoxically being a reaction to its disappearance. The interpenetration of professional and private life and transferring it to the home ground saves a lot of time. Consumers no longer have to spend a long time in stores to shop. They can make purchases or deal with official matters online without leaving home (Tkaczyk S., Koluda J., 2013).

Consumers are looking for a balance between private and professional life. Once these two worlds were separated by clear boundaries; now they intermingle strongly. The consequence of this is the creation of a prosumer, for whom the time of consumption evolved into the time of prosumption (Rachock J., 2003)

Prosumption

Prosumption is the crossing of elements, processes related to production and consumption, until the boundaries between them disappear (Bywalec Cz., Rudnicki L., 2002). The term was created from the combination of two words: production and consumption. It is defined as a form of buyers' activity in the active creation of an enterprise's offer, so it is every consumer activity initiated in order to co-create new or modified products with the offeror.

In the traditional approach to the consumer goods market, there was a clear tendency to separate the production and consumption spheres from one another. The consequence of this was a categorical division of roles between consumers and producers and the allocation of a specific scope of market activity to them. Producers manufactured goods, so they made them available, while consumers used them, so they were recipients. The changes noticeable for several years have disturbed this division and a clear increase in the activity of buyers has been observed (Baruk A., 2017).

A prosumer is a very conscious and active consumer who does not want to be just a passive recipient, but also a co-creator. They are people who have a lot of knowledge about their rights and their position on the market. That is why companies must treat consumers as equals and create a

positive relationship with them. Taking into account the degree of prosumer's involvement, three groups can be distinguished (Szulc E., 2013):

- the most active innovators - they willingly take part in the activities of producers themselves
- those actively participating in actions organized by producers
- those least engaged - they only express their opinion and opinion on existing products and the activities of producers.

In the food industry, there are many campaigns that encourage prosumer activities. An example is Pepsico, which encouraged consumers to invent a new taste of Lay's chips, and in return they offered a share in profits from the sales of this product. Another example is Dr. Oetker, which asked consumers to vote for one of Giuseppe's two pizza flavours, which would be introduced into sales permanently. Another example is the campaign of „Reds“, which consisted of encouraging consumers to design their own beer cans. Many companies also use the ingenuity of consumers when designing food packaging.

Summing up, it should be emphasized that prosumption is a dynamically developing trend that affects building positive relations between the producer and the consumer. By taking into consideration the individual needs of consumers and by engaging them in the creation and production processes, producers gain consumers' confidence and strengthens their position on the market.

The above characteristics have not exhausted the subject of leading trends on the food market, but they have pointed out those that are very important. Characteristics of other trends exceed the requirements for the volume of this article and therefore they will be the subject of other scientific articles. It should only be mentioned that today we also observe trends such as ethnic consumerism, freeganism, foodsharing, etc.

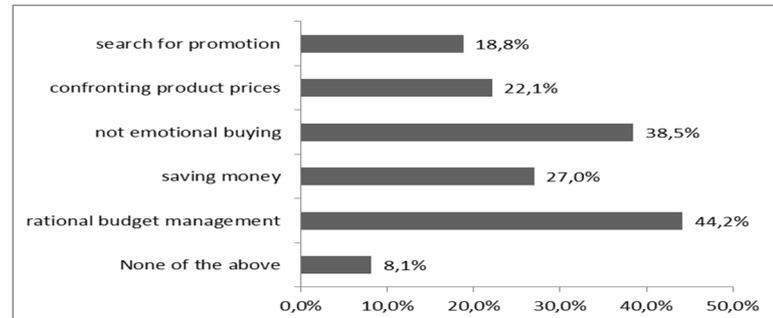
Research results

In order to test the knowledge of selected trends by consumers and the level of participation in them, a survey was conducted among 244 consumers (74.6 % women, 25.4 % men). They were mainly young people aged 18-25 (63.1 %) and 26-36 (28.7 %). The remaining 8.2 % were people over 35 years old.

Among all respondents, 45.9 % of people declared that they buy organic food, of which 71.4 % were women. Considering the reasons that determine consumers' choice of organic food, respondents most often indicated concern for health - 64.2 %, the composition of products - 51.7 %, as well as taste values - 50 %. Such a large percentage of indications for health care may result from the growing awareness of people about the impact of food on the human body. Over 1/3 (39.2 %) of respondents chose a higher quality of products as compared to conventional products as an argument for buying organic food. Respondents were also people for whom good environmental status is important and as a factor influencing the choice of food they chose care for the environment (28.5 %). The least frequently chosen response was currently prevailing fashion for this type of food (3.5 % of respondents). Among organic products, products most often bought by respondents were: vegetables 82.1 %, fruit 76.7 %, meat and its products 51.7 %, bread 35.7 %. Among responses, 14.2 % of respondents chose the „other“ option, in which products such as dairy products, eggs and cereals were provided.

Another smart trend was smart shopping. It is characterized by rational behaviour of consumers during shopping, unemotional buying, as well as preparation for shopping (e.g., comparison of product prices, search for promotions, etc.). Respondents were asked about what they understand

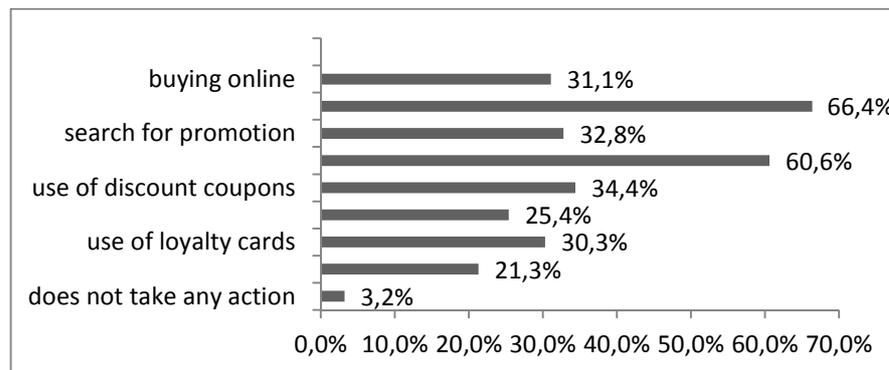
as the concept of smart shopping (Figure 1). They had several suggestions to choose from and they could provide their own, but none of the respondents did. Most respondents chose that it is rational budget management - 44.2 %, a large part of people understand this concept as the confronting product prices with quality – 22.1 %. For many, this is unemotional buying - 38.5 % or saving money - 27 %.



Source: Authors' research

Fig. 1. Respondents' understanding of „smart shopping“ concept

Respondents were also asked to choose activities they undertake on the food market from among the smart shopping activities mentioned above. The most popular activities were the preparation of shopping lists and the use of promotions (66.4 % and 60.6 % respectively). A significant number of respondents use discount coupons (34.4 %), search for promotions for goods (32.8 %) and use loyalty cards (30.3 %). Only 2.5 % of respondents do not undertake smart shopping activities on the food market (Figure 2).



Source: Authors' research

Fig. 2. Actions taken by respondents in the field of smart shopping

In the survey, respondents were asked if they succumb to emotions when shopping for groceries, which translates into purchases of unplanned products. 52 % of the respondents said that they succumb to emotions when shopping, and therefore buy unplanned products, 44 % of whom stated that they often succumb to emotions when shopping, and therefore buy unplanned products, and 8 % always buy unplanned products. 32 % of respondents do not succumb to their emotions, of whom 27 % stated that they usually stick to shopping lists, and 5 % that they always do so.

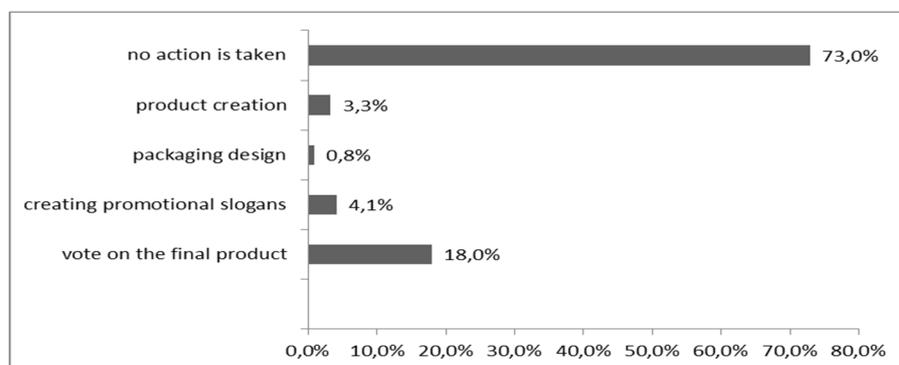
Another trend that was the subject of the survey was prosumption. As we know, prosumer activities are important for enterprises and we observe that companies are increasingly encouraging consumers to prosumer activities. Respondents were asked three questions.

- 1) What do you understand as prosumption?
- 2) What activities in the field of prosumption they undertake?
- 3) How often do they undertake such activities?

When it comes to understanding the concept of prosumption, respondents were given four options of answers.

- 1) It is active participation of consumers in creating a company's offer.
- 2) It is an activity of consumers in creating new products.
- 3) It is consumers sharing their knowledge and ideas with producers.
- 4) None of the above statements refers to prosumption.

The results obtained indicate that consumers do not fully know this concept. The first response was chosen by 37.7 % of respondents, the second by 48.4 %, the third by 35.2 %, and the fourth by 12.3 %. It should be noted that all correct answers (i.e. 1,2,3) were chosen by only 12.3 % of respondents. Respondents were also asked about which activities in the field of prosumption are most often undertaken. Answers to this question are quite surprising, as 73 % of respondents said they were not involved in any prosumer activities addressed to them by food producers (Figure 3). Other respondents chose such activities as: voting for the final product, e.g. its taste (18 %), creating promotional slogans for companies (4.1 %), participation in creating new products (3.3 %), participation in packaging design (0.8 %).



Source: Authors' research

Fig. 3. Prosumer activities undertaken by the surveyed consumers

These results are surprising for the author of the research, because it would seem that young people, and such mainly participated in the survey, are willing to undertake various activities in the field of prosumption. On the other hand, we observe a high level of activity of enterprises, which encourage consumers to participate in such activities, in particular by organizing various competitions, lotteries, often awarding consumers' ingenuity with valuable prizes.

Conclusions, proposals, recommendations

- 1) We observe the co-existence of various consumer trends on the food market. Completely different trends function on the market at the same time, e.g. consumerism, which has been growing for many years, which means excessive consumption, as well as greening of consumption and deconsumption, being part of the concept of sustainable consumption.
- 2) Increasing consumers' awareness is manifested in an increasingly rational purchase of products. Care for health, as well as paying attention to the composition of products and their quality contribute to the development of the trend called greening of consumption.
- 3) Rational budget management, comparison of product prices with their quality, unemotional buying, buying only necessary items, etc. constitute consumer behaviour that are part of the smart shopping trend.
- 4) Prosumers constitute an innovative potential of enterprises, which is why it is important to encourage them to cooperate. The phenomenon of prosumption is the next stage in shaping the

producer-customer relationship. Although this phenomenon is beneficial for both producers and consumers, the results of the conducted research do not confirm high engagement of respondents in prosumer activities.

- 5) According to the author, producers should actively encourage consumers to undertake activities in the field of prosumption, offering them more attractive forms of remuneration, e.g. participation in profits from sales of a new product, which was created thanks to consumers' engagement.

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