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Constructing Consumers' Mental Models: Towards Technology-rich Products Tuned for the Needs of the Elderly

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Abstract

Intelligent and technology-rich systems, such as assistive robots, or whole smart homes have a great potential to improve lives of the elderly. Cutting-edge knowledge from variety of fields has to be combined to develop and manufacture such a product, which escalates the relevant costs. Even subtle psychological or sociological aspects, likely unexpected or underestimated, play significant role in how consumers perceive and either accept, or refuse products. Under such conditions it is a serious challenge for managers, designers, engineers, and others involved to prevent a business failure. Our ongoing interdisciplinary research, based primarily on cognitive science, rational choice theory, and applied technology, has concluded in a proposal of an engineering approach, which elevates innermost feelings of potential consumers to a centre of design gravity, for all stages of design, development and subsequent marketing. On top of the findings, we have constructed a chain of models providing structured view on consumer reasoning and behaviour starting from a moment when a potential consumer is about to buy or accept a product, and then in the stages which follow. The models demonstrate, how consumer's feelings act as reinforcers during the process, eventually leading to either refusal or final appropriation. Both rational assessment and common cognitive biases causing irrationality in consumer's judgement have been involved in the models. The research has brought up implications applicable in design, development, and marketing communication, such as about the role of enthusiasm in the process of evaluation. Though the research aims primarily the elderly, proposed principles are not limited for this specific target group. The paper summarizes our previous work, provides a quick overview of available methods and techniques aiming to understand needs of consumers, and identifies intersections with other works on consumer behaviour.

Key words: consumer behaviour; product evaluation; deep design; mental model

The elderly as a target group

Proportion of elderly population grows steadily in developed countries. According to the statistics published by Eurostat there were 15.8% of people over 65 in 27 member states of the European Union in 2001, and the number has reached 17.8% in 2012. (Eurostat, n.d.) People affected by age-related decline may benefit from various intelligent technologies, either simple appliances, advanced web services, to greatly complex systems, such as whole aware, smart or intelligent homes. But the technology can't serve as a silver bullet. (Singh, 2010) Though some of the technologies have potential to suppress negative aspects of the process of ageing, to improve safety and health conditions of the users, sadly, often they are not warmly accepted by users, or even refused. Development of products based on advanced technologies is a complex task. Features and functions of such systems can neither be comprehensively predefined nor anticipated, because of various emergent or synergistic effects. (Olsevicova and Mikulecky, 2008) Reasons for refusal may be both fundamental, if a product totally misses needs and wishes of consumers, and quite trivial, such as using a metaphor which does not fit their mindset, placing or framing of the product, or even a detail of its design, as shown e.g. in an experiment with photo frames. (Swan and Taylor, 2008) We don't wish to focus on task-centric optimization, because it may rather lead to dehumanizing outcomes. (Jordan, 2002) Our goal is rather to reveal true and important needs of consumers and target them as precisely as possible. Success in this effort may help to overcome scepticism, qualms, and anxiety which many older people feel towards technology and motivate them to learn new things. Interdisciplinarity seems to be a key to deal with many of the current challenging issues. (Tokoro, 2010) In order to understand how elderly consumers reason about advanced products, we combine knowledge from the relevant technology, such as online social networks or ambient intelligence, with economy, cognitive science, consumer behaviour, product design, marketing and other fields.

Human-centric design

Our research keeps consumer in the centre of attention. In our view, consumers are human beings with hopes and dreams, sorrows and fears, desires and aspirations. Human-centric design is not a new idea. Variety of methods and techniques have been developed in order to keep consumers in the centre of the development process, such as kano model (Kano, 1984), design for emergence (Vogiazou et al., 2006), or technology probes (Hutchinson et al., 2003). Products may aim goals such as to increase social effectiveness of consumers (Kikin-Gil, 2006) or provide joy and pleasure (Veldhoven et al., 2008).

Van Kleef et al. developed a generic categorisation scheme against which similarities and differences between methods and techniques aiming to understand consumers needs can be made more apparent. (van Kleef et al., 2005) They distinguish 1. an information source for need elicitation as product- versus need-driven, 2. task format allowing to capture evaluation of a single product or compare multiple products available, 3. response type either association or direct preference or perceptual judgement, 4. whether needs are self-articulated (directly expressed or derived) or derived indirectly (statistically, or e.g. through observation), 5. structuredness of data collection - e.g. highly structured questionnaires with predefined answers vs. unstructured interview, 6. actionability - purpose of the model for application either in marketing or technical development . The scheme has been applied to describe and compare ten common and influential techniques and methods – category appraisal, conjoint analysis, empathic design, focus group, free elicitation, information acceleration, Kelly repertory grid, laddering, lead user technique (or lead user method, considering its complexity), Zaltman metaphor (ZMET), and elicitation technique.
Among the methods and techniques mentioned, only four of them target consumers more than products – emphatic design, e.g. (Leonard-Barton, 1998; Leonard and Rayport, 1997), focus group, e.g. (Calder, 1977; McQuarrie and McIntyre, 1986), lead user technique, e.g. (Urban and Von Hippel, 1988; Von Hippel, 1986), and ZMET, e.g. (Coulter et al., 2001; Zaltman and Higie, 1993). Emphatic design requires a multi-functional team to observe the actual behaviour and environment of consumers. A visual record including photographs, videotape, sketches and notes are gathered through responses to further researcher's inquiries about what the consumers are doing and why, all with a goal make tasks of consumers easier or more pleasant. Brainstorming and quick prototyping is used in further stages of the method. Focus group is a highly informal technique, which employs a semi-moderated open-ended discussion about a product or a topic between a group of eight to ten participants. The discussion is summarized in a report, which points out what was said and what was not said and infers relevant conclusions. Lead user method helps to identify lead users in a product category of interest and involved in the design process.

To identify the lead users techniques such as 'Delphi', trend extrapolation or econometric models may be used. Expressed user dissatisfaction with properties of available products, evidence of active modification of products by users, and other measures of potential benefit are identified within the group. Questionnaires and other techniques are used to screen potential market to identify more members of the lead user group. They usually participate in a creative group, which may lead to proposed innovations or totally new concepts. Prototypes of products developed with help from lead users are eventually evaluated by a wider group of common users in product tests. In ZMET involved participants are told to take photographs and/or collect pictures that indicate what the topic means for them. After several days a personal interview follows, the discussion starts around the pictures, storytelling plays significant role. Combination of triadic sorting, 'why'-probes, laddering, and other techniques may be used to determine relations between attributes, consequences and values. Interviewer keeps looking for both positive and negative feelings toward topics, pictures and products. An interview conclude in creation of mental map to illustrate connections among important constructs. Digital imagining technique is used to express further important issues. Eventually, a consensus map is created by analysing constructs, connections and their frequency.

The needs-focused human-centric approaches, such as those mentioned above, may lead to concepts, which are both novel *and* acceptable by consumers. That's how they may outweigh the potentially high costs and time requirements. The methods and techniques have certain common limitations. One of them is their low level of formalism. Main information has to be gathered typically through unstructured interviews conducted by an expert interviewer. Thus, the information is likely to be significantly influenced by level of his experience, his subjective view and preferences over the topic. Validation of results using more groups of consumers and different interviewers leads to substantially higher costs. Other fundamental characteristic of all the methods is the low level of generality of derived conclusions. Research leads to suggestions for a specific market and a specific user group. The lack of a method, which would be both reasonably formally describable (potentially leading to a model) and able to provide more general leads without the necessity to perform a complicated research in every single case, motivated our research.

The deep design

Our research stands on a premise, that cognitive processes in minds of potential consumers are the main determinants of a market success or failure of a product. A product which will likely succeed both in competition at the moment of purchase, and in long-term when consumer fully integrates the product in his daily habits (an appropriation), has to harmonize with his needs. We don't aim our research on fast-moving consumer goods, but mainly on technologically advanced products. So, as main driving forces for the evaluation we consider not immediate wants, such as momentary hunger, but rather innermost wishes, aspirations or passions, which are quite stable at least during the evaluation period. We are concerned with so-called 'deep needs', such as an aspiration for self-fulfilment or yearning for pleasurable and meaningful life. Our goal is to help designers, engineers, merchants to deliver advanced products directly targeting the deep needs of customers.[1]

The process of appropriation has been studied e.g. by Carroll et al. Though they focused

1 Dix argues, that it is virtually impossible to design for long-term appropriation, because, according to him, an appropriation is something unexpected or even unexpectable. (Dix, 2007) Though it's not an easy task, our opinion is, that through reflecting consumer's deep needs into purpose and features of a product, we *may* design intentionally *for* appropriation.

on a different target group, youngsters, their approach provide a vital parallel with our efforts. They identified youngsters' deep needs, such as power, identity, and fragmentation. They act as high-order reinforcers, which cause whether certain product reaches its appropriation. (Carroll et al., 2002) Also other studies suggest, that an affinity towards a pleasurable appliance stems mainly from deep needs. Many of the things which matter most to people have certain psychological or social extent, either hidden or apparent. A souvenir or an old grey picture carry precious memories. A communication device serves to keep in touch with the close (Swan and Taylor, 2008). Deep design approach (Zejda, 2010) recommends to follow the real needs, wishes, desires or passions as sources of affinity as the most important target. It is built upon previous human-centric design approaches, but emphasizes deep needs as the most important foundation for subsequent design. Tab. 1 captures differences between different methods and techniques aiming to understand consumers needs, ordered from rather shallow to rather deep, as explained above.

Table 1: Comparison of different design approaches

The object	Product focus	Key variables	Methods and techniques examples
task	application	effectiveness, efficiency	use cases, goals, scenarios, ...
product	purchase	sensory preference, perceptual attributes, immediate associations	category appraisal, conjoint analysis, free elicitation, information acceleration , Kelly repertory grid , laddering, ...
consumer	usage	usability, accessibility	usability testing, prototyping, ...
human emotions	feelings	immediate emotional benefit, pleasure, purchase likelihood	kano model, emotion-driven design, affective computing, ...
human-environment	handling	routines, tacit behavioural patterns, unspoken needs	technology probes, design for emergence, emphatic design, ...
human well-being	appropriation	harmony, satisfaction, perceived quality of life	deep design

On the needs of the elderly

Primary objective of our research is potential of advanced technologies to improve quality of lives of the elderly. As a first step in the deep design, the target group and her deep needs have to be identified. Age is not the only criterion how to define the elderly. Ageing may be viewed as simply getting more years, as a biological process, or e.g. as a process of transition through certain life stages. Ageing is often indicated by a progress of age-related diseases, such as diabetes, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease and by gradual cognitive decline. By contrast, real old age brings sharp decline in both mental and physical abilities. (Degnen, 2007) Because of negative connotations, the elderly only seldom perceive themselves as being old, rather they tend to view themselves as ‘getting old’ (Lindley et al., 2008). With our work we are aiming those who are likely retired, facing physical and mental decline, but able to live independently, only with partial or occasional care and support. Some of them live in households of their families, others live alone, maintaining their own household, or take advantage of institutional care. They are not a homogeneous group, because social setting, health state, religion, cultural heritage, country of residence, wealth or social status, hobbies, previous experiences, and variety of other factors form each individual. But we may assume, that certain impairments, habits, patterns of thinking are likely to occur within the group with a significant frequency.

To find deep needs of the elderly, we performed an explorative research, based on published sources from fields ranging from consumer behaviour, design and engineering methods, sociology, psychology, and gerontology, to ambient intelligence and on-line social networks. (Zejda, 2010) As a result, we identified interrelated clusters of deep needs of the elderly, which might be targeted by technology-rich products: social touch, autonomy with anticipated support, and perceived competence and helpfulness. A short summary follows.

Social Touch

The elderly wish to keep their social connections alive and healthy. The elderly prefer relationships with strong positive emotional to wide, but shallow relations. Social touch cover variety of modalities, such as *social connectedness*, ‘a positive emotional appraisal, characterized by a feeling of staying in touch’ (Romero et al., 2007) (focus on emotions), *awareness of daily life*, a ‘daily contact between family members, as opposed to the lack of an alarm’ (Mynatt et al., 2001) (focus on information), feeling of closeness, *ambient intimacy*, ‘being able to keep in touch with people with a level of regularity and intimacy’ (Java et al., 2009) (focus on persistence), *social presence*, ‘to carry interpersonal communication cues’ (John Short, n.d.) (focus on non-verbal aspects), *affective awareness*, ‘the general sense of being in touch with someone’s friends and family’ (Liechti and Ichikawa, 1999) (just the ambiguous sense). They wish to look in lives of their close, but do not like to be looked upon. (Lindley et al., 2008) Keeping in social touch brings comfort and peace of mind (Mynatt et al., 2001) and lowers a pain of cognitive decline. (Morris et al., 2004) Sadly, the needs are often not fulfilled (Hutchinson et al., 2003).

Autonomy with Anticipated Support

Family and other caregivers should be at hand, ready to offer assistance when needed, but it is preferred by the elderly if the support won't have to be ever provided. (Adams and Blieszner, 1995) The elderly desire to be autonomous and independent. (Kawamura et al., 2008) Krause distinguishes four fundamentally different types of support – emotional support, tangible support (e.g. cleaning, cooking), informational support (providing information), and anticipated support, the feeling that a help will be provided if necessary. Both emotional and anticipated support improve perceived quality of life. Informational support has no clear effect, but tangible support caused decrease in perceived quality of life. Inability to reciprocate tangible support results in sense of dependency, or implies incompetence. (Krause, 2007) Over-protectiveness feels as a loss of perceived independence and stigmatizing. (Lindley et al., 2008)

Perceived Competence and Helpfulness

Social links within a local community are desired too. (Gaver and Dunne, 1999) Particularly the elderly in an early phase of cognitive and physical decline appreciate higher diversity and extensiveness of their relations. While asymmetry in relations with close family is desired – the elderly prefer to watch instead of being watched – with social peers they wish to feel more equal. (Lindley et al., 2008) It is vital if the elderly accept their own impairments and if they do not strive to hide them. Rather than pretending competence, they are likely to feel happy if they have opportunities to exploit most of the remaining abilities. Further, the elderly do not wish only to stay autonomous, but to feel helpful, important to others and to influence them (Morris et al., 2004), their children in particular (Lindley et al., 2008). The elderly should be treated, rather than as needy and dependent, as active participants in a society. (Hofmeester et al., 1999) Renegotiation of roles of importance may be necessary. (Adams and Blieszner, 1995)

Direct design guidelines

Even before any further formalization, the initial research concluded in suggestions regarding technology-oriented products for the elderly. Supportive products, might be well accepted as a way to reduce the need of tangible support. But consumers should be given as much control over them as possible, because products controlled by relatives or care givers could cause increase in perceived dependence. Emotional and anticipated support could be increased by the means of easy-to-use pervasive communication devices. Technologies augmenting or extending social network of the elderly might be successful too. Convenient interfaces avoiding metaphors the elderly are not accustomed to, such as menus, windows, dialogues etc. would have to be provided.

In the area of communication, designers should support existing relationships, rather than building new (Lindley et al., 2008), leverage relations instead of supplanting them (Vastenburg et al., 2008), augment existing awareness-gathering techniques instead of replacing them (Neustaedter et al., 2006). The technology should provide 'mediated awareness' – surrogate or re-establish natural social structures disrupted by distance, pace of life, or by dehumanizing technology. (Mynatt et al., 2001) Products which would help to re-establish the role of the elderly within the local community are desired too. The elderly should be given means to use their memories, experience, and time to serve the community as e.g. a living memory, a guide, or a commentator. (Hofmeester et al., 1999)

Principles of the mind

In order to deepen our understanding in how consumers reason about new products and which forces drive and influence the process, our further goal was to formulate a model. Finally, we decided to rely primarily on two conceptual frames, rational choice theory and cognitive science. Rational choice theory is superior in the area of precise formal models and relevant tools describing rational reasoning in variety of life situations. But, as cognitive science reveals, we, do not think, recollect, decide, or behave always rationally, precisely, logically, and deterministically. So, where rational choice theory answers rather the question how *should* we think and behave (normative nature), cognitive science can reflect also inconsistencies, biases, and flaws in our reasoning, thus answer how we *indeed* think and behave. Share of irrationality in our reasoning seems to be higher in more automated (less-conscious) tasks. Merge principles from the two is actually a pathway entered by Kahneman and others first, which eventually concluded in formulation of a new interdisciplinary field of study, behavioural finance. (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). A quick overview of 'principles of mind' founded in the said theories, relevant to our goal, follows.

Rationality in evaluation

The benefit of an evaluated product has to significantly outweigh the relevant costs, where the costs involve not only or necessarily a financial value, but also e.g. an anticipated effort necessary to master a complex use interface. The rational reasoning applies step-by-step in all phases of the evaluation – when a consumer is comparing expected benefits with expected costs, as well as when he compares the benefits achieved with the real costs.

Utility and resources

Both in economy and rational choice theory, utility acts as a measure of perceived benefit. Personally unique utility (pay-off) function reflects personal preferences. Actions driven by the utility function are constrained by budget, abilities, time available. While in traditional economy both advantage and cost is usually measured with money, rational choice theory is not necessarily limited in this sense.

Steps of Evaluation

Process of evaluation of a new product is a complex task with an inner structure. Among the attempts to apply by means of cognitive science to understand complex decision making we may name e.g. a study on performance of brain-injured patients (Bechara et al., 1997), or a study describing performance of participants in a sequential balloon inflating task (Lejuez et al., 2003). Human mind tend to break a complex problem into distinctive steps or episodes, framed due to the character of the task, such as single blows in the balloon experiment, distinct days, or weeks in longer-lasting evaluations (Hastie and Dawes, 2009, p. 314).

Anchors or Reference Points

Instead of reasoning rationally in absolute quantities and final outcomes and in contradiction to traditional economy, our mind tends to think in relative comparisons and in shorter time frames. Both positive and negative outcomes of our decisions have diminishing returns proportionally to the distance from the reference point, or anchor. The concept constituted a foundation of prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Though initially introduced by an economist for money-related decisions, the concept of labile, vague, adaptive reference points which is not always rational has never been adopted by the mainstream economy, respecting its primary focus on normative description and rational reasoning. As subsequent research revealed, palette of various reference anchors exist, either related to the problem, or totally irrelevant, as proven e.g. in (Tversky and Kahneman, 2000). Some of them are more prevalent and more influential. At least three reference points seem to play significant role in our evaluations under uncertainty (Lopes and Oden, 1999) – main reference point (usually status quo), aspiration level, and security level (danger of loss). A model of mind built around the concept of reference points might compete with prospect theory with its ability to describe our reasoning (Hastie and Dawes, 2009, p. 274).

Gradual Adaptation

If we apply the concept of mental anchors in complex problems with successive decision chains, we reveal another important phenomenon – gradual adjustments (Hastie and Dawes, 2009, p. 204). When we respond to stimuli, such as loudness or temperature, the past and present context of the experience defines an adaptation level, or reference point. Stimuli are perceived in relation to this point. Cyert and March revealed, that we tend to search for alternatives in the neighbourhood of our previous try. (Cyert and March, 2005) In complex schemes with successive steps, we tend to follow an *anchor-and-adjust strategy*, which leads to successive adjustment on-the-fly. E.g. Slovic et al. confirmed the effect in pricing and choice in successive virtual gambles. (Slovic et al., 1982) Justification for reasoning on consequences with status quo on mind can be found in the general principle of adaptation – the stepwise adjustment of the mind anchor allows to adopt our mind to the always changing environment. On the other hand it may easily lead us to a money pump (or 'Dutch book') (Finetti, 1974) and other highly suboptimal conclusions. (Hastie and Dawes, 2009, p. 77)

Two Chains of Reasoning

One of conclusions made by neuroscience is the fact, that our reasoning runs over internally in two trails (chains, circuits). While dopamine-mediated system is responsible for assessing positivity, acetylcholine-mediated circuit ensures negativity (Damasio, 2000). Consumer evaluates benefits, utility, rejoice, pleasurable surprise etc. on one hand and negative aspects such as costs, pain, anger, disappointment on the other hand at the same time.

Modelling of consumer's mind

Based on principles of rational choice theory and cognitive science and with the identified deep needs of the elderly on mind we started work on models able to capture the mental processes behind a product evaluation. First of them describes early stages of technology evaluation, when a prospective consumer is thinking whether to try a product or not. (Zejda, 2011a) Instead of using money to define utility in the model we stick to the needs identified, such as social touch, an autonomy with anticipated support, and call them comfort sources. Utility function assigns utility value to each combination of comfort sources according to personal preferences. The model further defines aspects of life, such as living with the family', 'having a daily contact with the family', or 'able to do my grocery shopping'. Each aspect of person's life may influence each of the sources of comfort either positively or negatively, which is captured in a form of influence vectors. Comfort sources are fully determined by the complete set of influence vectors. Finally, adopting a product leads to a change in consumer's aspects of life. The chain 'product – aspect of life – source of comfort – utility' defines one side of the problem.[2] The model further includes effort, time and need for external support as main resources. Exert function defines how much resources are necessary to adopt an aspect of life. The model aims to describe the reasoning of a consumer until he makes a decision to try a product (or refuses to do so), so the influence on his comfort and required resources are both defined as *expected* by the consumer. A product has to go through a sequence of three successive steps and pass three levels of rational evaluation to be accepted. In the contrary, three kinds of refusal may occur, refusal of the first kind if a product is not beneficial, refusal of the second kind if a product is not reachable and refusal of the third kind if a product does not belong to the most beneficial reachable set of life aspects. If a product seems to be 1. to be beneficial, 2. reachable, and 3. the best choice from all available options, it passes the evaluation stage and may enter the following stage of appropriation. The evaluation model in its initial simple version may be solved as an optimization problem of binary programming. If we leave the presumption of binary exert function, which says that an aspect of life is either reachable or not, the problem may be solved by the means of linear programming. Further simplifications have been discussed and released in refined versions of the model, such as limited and incommutable resources (Zejda, 2012).

Our further goal was to construct a model of the following stage of evaluation, appropriation. The process of appropriation has more complicated inner structure and requires more time to reach a conclusion, so, principles revealed by the cognitive science, such as anchors and gradual adaptation are likely to play much bigger role there. The appropriation starts with certain expectations on consumer's side – the anticipated utility difference on adopting the aspect of life related to the product. The expectations consist

2 To make it simple, the initial model assumes, that one product is directly assigned with one aspect of life.

base for initial enthusiasm, lowered by initial qualms. Further sources may surge the consumers motivation – an external component[3] (encouragements, support form others), and a habitual component, which grows gradually during the process if the product fulfils expectations. Patience with the product is successively adjusted by the anchor-and-adjust strategy in iteration loops. Enthusiasm falls since the beginning, which is caused by two factors in the model, gradually rising and almost inevitable bore and potentially rapid, but avoidable disappointment. In general, product is rejected, whenever consumer runs out of patience before a level of stability is reached. A model built upon the said principles (Zejda, 2011b) recognizes different causes of rejection – caused by lack of initial enthusiasm, if the appropriation takes too long (e.g. because of a complicated interface), caused by disappointment (if expected benefits seem to not be fulfilled). The model suggests, that a high level of enthusiasm induced in the initial evaluation stage may lead to a lower chance of success in the following appropriation stage. The optimal level of enthusiasm is probably even below the level not inducing disappointment, but this is something yet to be examined.

Conclusions

The paper provided a brief summary of our interdisciplinary efforts to understand consumer behaviour more deeply. The goal of the research is to assist researchers, designers, engineers, merchants, and others with well-founded advices how to reduce likeliness of failure caused by dissonance between users' needs and product focus and features, making them *truly* beneficial. As a contribution of the paper we presented a categorisation scheme for different methods and techniques aiming to understand consumers needs, complementary to the scheme published by other researchers (van Kleef et al., 2005), and positioned the deep design among other methods. Our final goal is to construct models of mind on top of the relevant theory. Our models covering both the moment of decision whether to try a product and the subsequent evaluation, potentially leading to appropriation, were quickly described at the end of the paper. Though the models have been constructed on top of relevant theory and though they are able to provide certain useful guides, more work has to be done. Experiments should follow not only to evaluate the conclusions derived from the models, but also to find specific shapes of used functions, and their coefficients.

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3 In the initial version of the model we did not involve external forces to keep the model simple.

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Extending sustainability from food to fashion consumption: the lived experience of working mothers

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to understand whether consumers transfer sustainable principles to fashion consumption behaviours. In recognising that the food industry has widened access for consumers concerned with fair transactions between the producer and retailer, environmental degradation and animal welfare through mainstream availability of Fairtrade, organic and free-range food, the research seeks to explore how consumers translate this into their fashion consumption behaviours. This paper presents the idiographic voices of mothers working in a professional occupation who have embraced sustainability in other consumption contexts and are beginning to transfer similar principles to their fashion consumption behaviours. Previous research identified that this demographic were most likely to embrace sustainable behaviours, however this was found to be juxtaposed within a myriad of lifestyle implications, such as financial and time restrictions. Underpinned by phenomenology (Thomson et al., 1989), unstructured interviews of 28 participants living in Edinburgh were interpreted through phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009). The results identify that fashion consumption is more complex than that of food, primarily as fashion is expressive of self and status, whereby the participants were reluctant to sacrifice their identity for production issues from which they are distanced. The use of fashion as a visible indicator within society extended to the children's appearance. Using Holbrook's (1999) Typology of Consumer Value as a framework, the paper argues that certain values are substituted to cope with chaotic lifestyles; the mothers' focus centred upon providing for the family. This offers justification for behaviours that may be perceived as a misalignment with moral ideology and was interpreted as appealing to a higher loyalty: that of the family over unsubstantiated claims of social and environmental exploitation. Moreover, when the participants understood the implications of their behaviours in relation to sustainability, this has been adopted as part of the family's everyday behaviours.

Keywords: fashion, consumer behaviour, sustainability, mothers, children

Introduction

Sustainability has increasingly become of interest to consumers, encouraged by government and non-government organisation (NGO) campaigns (Weise et al., 2012; Carrigan and de Pelsmacker, 2009). Sustainability includes consideration for social-wellbeing, the environmental impact and stability of production (WCED, 1987), a concept which is increasingly prevalent within mainstream food sector (Szmigin et al., 2009). Campaigns to raise awareness for sustainability, such as reusing and reducing plastic bags, addressing the implications of food production and the country of origin to reduce carbon footprints are all addressed by mainstream food retailers (Yates, 2009). It has been argued that this stance has been shaped by market preference (Zabkar and Hosta, 2012; Shaw and Riach, 2011), whereby UK supermarkets now compete to illustrate their commitment to sustainable issues in an effort to align with consumers moral value (Yates, 2009). For example, consumers are encouraged to recycle waste, a behaviour motivated by marketing intermediaries and supported by doorstep collections and recycling facilities which are available in supermarkets (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Downing et al., 2004).

Thus, supermarkets are nudging consumers to incorporate sustainable behaviours, as also identified within the increasing availability of local, Fairtrade and organic produce in the dominant supermarkets in the UK.

The Centre for Sustainable Fashion (2009) believes that the food industry has successfully positioned sustainably produced food as addressing consumers concerns, not only for production practice, but to communicate personal attributes that encourage consumer perceptions of sustainable food as added value. In contrast, the fashion industry encourages planned obsolescence of fashion consumption with continuously evolving fashion trends and reducing pricing (DEFRA, 2007) to encourage consumption. It is alleged that decreasing prices are a result of exploitative working practice for those working in the garment industry (War on Want, 2008; McMullen and Maher, 2009) as well as a reduction in the quality of the garments. For example, fast fashion garments are expected to last for around ten wears (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). Increased consumption and reduced quality ultimately results in more garments being resigned to landfill (Winakor, 1969), however landfill is not infinite and it is anticipated that the UK will run out of landfill space within the next decade (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). Little is known about how consumers engage with sustainability within the context of fashion consumption. This research postulates that consumers increased awareness for sustainability has encouraged their consideration for sustainability in other consumption contexts through an effort to transfer sustainable principles. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to better understand how consumers perceive their ability to incorporate sustainability with fashion consumption.

Consumers seek value in their consumption, focusing decision-making on the idiosyncratic attributes that are important within their lifeworlds. This influenced the design of the research, whereby idiographic voices were sought through in-depth phenomenological interviews which offered an opportunity to explore the existential experience of the participants' lifeworld (Thomson et al., 1989). Contextualised within Holbrook's (1999) Typology of Consumer Value, the data was interpreted using phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009) to understand the participants perceptions of sustainability along with the practicalities of implementing sustainability within their everyday behaviours. Although previous research contends that demographics are insufficient to determine the likelihood of sustainable behaviours (Bray et al., 2011), it has been acknowledged that some factors increase engagement. For example, motherhood is considered as increasing awareness of sustainable issues, and in particular, results in a desire to purchase organic food to avoid their children ingesting the chemicals utilised during production (Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009; Shaw et al., 2006). Similarly, higher education results in increased awareness of environmental issues (Kriwy and Mecking, 2012; do Paço and Raposo, 2010), which in turn results in motivation to adopt sustainable issues. As women are more interested and involved in fashion and tend to be the main shoppers in a household (Goldsmith and Clark, 2008; Mayo and Fielder, 2006; Gutman and Mills, 1982), the sample focused upon mothers working in a professional occupation.
The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the literature exploring consumer decision-making, particularly for fashion consumption, is examined, utilising the Typology of Consumer Value (Holbrook, 1999) as a framework to understand how consumers apply value. This is followed by describing the methodological approach and subsequently the findings and discussion. The findings illustrate the complexity of fashion consumption, where the visible statement of identity induces a conflict between functional behaviours and moral beliefs. This resulted in a trade-off of values, whereby sustainable behaviour

was less of a priority than familial provisioning, particularly within the chaotic lifeworlds of working mothers.

Consumer decision-making

Consumers evaluate consumption through an alignment with their needs and aspirations (Moisander et al., 2010; Workman and Studak, 2006). This includes lifestyle requirements, adherence to social conformity and marketing intermediaries (Olshavsky and Granboius, 2002). Holbrook (1991) asserts that this consists of eight interconnected types of consumer value that consumers consider within the transaction exchange (see Table 1), as consumers seek to maximise value. The purpose of the Typology of Consumer Value is to offer a 'systematic classification of social phenomena' to guide the data enquiry and identity pattern formation (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994: 73). This approach is empirically explored to understand the 'interactive relativistic preference experience' (Holbrook, 1999: 2). The interactive experience delineates that value is perceived objectively and subjectively, deriving not only from the product purchase, but the pleasure gained from ownership. This is of particular importance for fashion consumption, due appearance expressing self-identity, orientation and social reference groups (Webb, 2007). Therefore, fashion consumption extrinsically projects an image that may or may not be a reality (Belk et al., 2000), as well as intrinsically satisfying personal moral integrity. The relativistic experience includes decision-making that incorporates individual preferences based upon individual context or requirement. For example, the anticipation of an event may introduce the need for new fashion, or fashion consumption may be restricted by the time to source and access fashion selection. Consequently, Holbrook (1991) advises that consumption value is not only considered within the actual consumption act, but includes decision-making, the consumption experience in the retail environment and reflections upon the consumption choice.

Table 1 Typology of Consumer Value

		Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Self-orientated	Active	Efficiency (Convenience)	Play (Fun)
	Reactive	Excellence (Quality)	Aesthetics (Beauty)
Other-orientated	Active	Status (Success, Impression, Management)	Ethics (Virtue, Justice, Morality)
	Reactive	Esteem (Reputation, Materialism, Possessions)	Spirituality (Faith, Ecstasy, Sacredness, Magic)

(Holbrook, 1999: 12)

Having established the nature of the Typology of Consumer Value, the next sections will focus upon the interconnected types of value perceived within fashion consumption identified within the extant literature.

The value of efficiency is measured through the time it takes to select and purchase fashion. Lifestyles are said to induce time poverty, an aspect of increased importance for working mothers: the demands placed upon the working mother impact upon decision-making, reducing opportunities to source information, as well as allocating time to shop; therefore, solutions are often sought to simplify the process (Lepisto et al., 1991) and decisions are often based upon 'time, money and effort' (Schiffman and Kanul, 2010: 23). Thus, efficiency is perceived extrinsically as a competing role within a busy lifeworld and often convenience is sought to minimise the time devoted to consumption, a factor which Carey et al. (2008) believe to be unrepresented within academic research. Consequently, consumers are increasingly purchasing supermarket fashion due to the ability to reduce shopping trips through purchasing food and fashion simultaneously (de Kervenoal et al., 2011; Ross and Harradine, 2009). Excellence traditionally includes price, quality and convenience (Hansen et al., 2005; Mohr et al., 2001) and is reactively evaluated prior to consumption (Abraham-Murali and Littrell, 1995). Often consumers consider the price in relation to the quality of the product and this guides perceptions of value (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Chen-Yu and Kincade, 2001).

Status is actively sought due to extrinsic communication of self-identity and orientation, therefore symbolic attributes are often prioritised over utility (Bannister and Hogg. 2007; Phau and Lo, 2004). Fashion is intrinsically linked with lifestyle characteristics (Park and Burns 2005) self-identity and seeking peer acceptance (Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara, 2008; Faber et al. 1987). This has an impact upon social interaction, where appearance is evaluated and used to judge conformity, resulting in consumers dressing for acceptance or differentiation (Damhorst, 2005; Miller-Spillman, 2005), which Cherrier (2009) refers to as positional consumption. Status is connected to esteem, although esteem is reactively constructed to extrinsically conform to social expectations and acceptance within peer groups (Richens, 1999), as aspect reliant upon understanding symbolic agents within social reference groups (Kaiser, 2005; Ehrenberg, 2002).
Play is actively sought for intrinsic pleasure through, for example, the pleasure gained from the shopping experience (Workman and Studak, 2006) and the satisfaction of ownership (O'Cass and Choy, 2008). This links with aesthetic values, which are self-orientated, unfulfilled by utilitarian needs (Holbrook, 1999) and further enhanced through the being seen wearing fashionable attire (Wagner, 1999). In contrast, applying ethical concern reflects other-orientation, through consideration of extrinsic factors, such as garment-workers and the environmental, which are judged upon understanding what constitutes production and whether this is viewed as exploitative. Cherrier (2006) suggests the diversity of applying moral principles is both situational and temporal, reflecting lifestyles which are subject to continuous change; within a lifetime consumers portray many roles, for example wife, professional, mother and self (Carey et al., 2008; Evans, 1989), all of which impact upon consumption behaviours. Often consumers are integrated within social groups of similar characteristics (Cherrier, 2006) which subjectively impacts upon their desire to align with within these social networks (Bannister and Hogg, 2007; Yurchisin and Johnson, 2004), resulting in the sharing of information which can lead to behavioural change. Akin to ethics, spirituality is other-orientated and reactive, the embodiment of the experience as mystical for intrinsic value, adding to the 'emotional experience' of consumption (Park et al., 2006: 440). As such, fashion consumption is assumed as more complex that consumption within other contexts, therefore the decision-making process is not just a reflection of responding to consumers' needs, but includes psychological factors which dominate evaluation.

Methodology

The extant literature has described fashion consumption as depicting self-identity; a self-orientated process which contrasts with the other-orientated application of moral value, this aspect is further exacerbated within a lifeworld of conflicting responsibility. Therefore, phenomenological interviews were considered as appropriate to explore the application of meaning, for example feeling, knowing, thinking, remembering (Thomson et al., 1989). To examine perceptions of the tenets of sustainability within the context of fashion consumption, it was considered appropriate to use garment labels which are currently available from UK high street fashion retailers depicting sustainable status to gain an insight into the decision-making process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006; Pink, 2005; Schwandt, 2003). The introduction of the labels offered an opportunity to observe the decision-making process, albeit without the actual garment, along with introducing concepts of sustainability. The labels included: M&S child's fleece made from recycled plastic bottles; M&S eco factory label; M&S organic cotton school shirts; John Lewis enzyme washed child's top; Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) charity t-shirt; Global Girlfriend woman's top (Fairtrade and organic). The EJF label contained information about child exploitation within the cotton industry and the Global Girlfriend label presented information about the woman workers non-profit, fair trade organisation in Nepal.

The participants were recruited initially through convenience sampling (Smith et al., 2009; Szmigin et al., 2009; Warren, 2001); the five pilot participants were requested to recommend five further participants who fitted the criteria of mothers who work in a professional occupation. To ensure that the participants were responsible for the children's fashion selection, mothers whose children were either pre-school or in primary education were selected. This mixture of convenience and snowball sampling resulted in 28 interviews which coincided with rich theoretical data saturation (Nutt Williams and Morrow, 2009). The interviews were held in the either the home of the researcher or participant, the researchers university, or a café and each lasted approximately an hour. Once transcribed in full, the narratives were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to explore the everyday meaning (Smith et al., 2009) applied to evaluating fashion consumption. This included double hermeneutics, where the researcher analysed the participants' interpretation of the application of meaning. The transcripts were coded within three categories: descriptive, linguistic and conceptual prior to determining recurrent themes (Smith et al., 2009). This was followed by grouping the themes into hierarchies and relationships, which resulted in emergent themes. The analysis of the application of value when selecting fashion for consumption follows in the next section.

Findings

The participants illustrated an increased awareness of sustainability, facilitated through campaigns to apply the sustainable principles of reducing consumption, reusing commodities and recycling waste. Similarly the widened access of sustainably produced food in mainstream supermarkets enabled their ability to align consumption behaviours with moral ideology. This is important to note, as the participants describe chaotic lifeworlds (Lepisto et al., 1991) of managing work, home and child centric responsibilities (Carey et al., 2008; Cherrier, 2006; Evans, 1989) and this inspired a reliance on values that focused on managing the centrality of concerns that impacted on their everyday responsibilities (Schiffman and Kanul, 2010). As this was less obvious for fashion consumption behaviours, the participants had to translate sustainable principles and make assumptions as to what would pertain to an alignment with their moral ideology. It is this effort that contributes to knowledge of how consumers are extending sustainability into their behaviours and provides an insight of how fashion retailers can capitalise on this growing consumer trend. Beginning with the participants responses to encapsulate their efforts to transfer sustainable principles to fashion consumption behaviours (reduce, reuse and recycling), the narratives extend to consider consumption decision-making all of which are explained through Holbrook's (1999) Typology of Consumer Value.

Reducing consumption

The participants tended to shop less for fashion for themselves since becoming mothers. This was due to a mixture of reduced time, finances and social occasions that necessitated new garments. However, fashion was still considered as expressing their sense of self and status (Webb, 2007), particularly within the working environment where professionalism was representative of their occupations (Bannister and Hogg, 2007; Park and Burns, 2005; Phau and Lo, 2004; Richens, 1999; Faber et al., 1987). Further, it was important to some of the participants that they maintained awareness of fashion trends as this was illustrative of their active participation in an external world (Cherrier, 2009; Damhorst, 2005; Miller-Spillman, 2005; Wagner, 1999). Although their internal lifeworlds were focused closely on familial provisioning and well-being, the participants did not want to feel that they had 'let themselves go' (participant 14). Infrequent shopping trips for fashion were viewed as time for indulgence (Workman and Studak, 2006; O'Cass and Choy, 2008), where their focus temporarily transferred from the family to self. Higher priced fashion was viewed as pertaining to garments of a superior aesthetics, quality and fit, resulting in higher expectations of longevity (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Chen-Yu and Kincade, 2001). This resulted in a trade-off of value to ensure they had fashion that contributed to the image they wanted to portray as professional women, through efficiency and excellence that their garments were stylish and fitted them well. It also meant that clothing lasted for longer, reducing the need to replace garments. Consequently, the participants expressed that fashion was both self and other-orientated, extrinsically reacting to societal expectations of appearance and intrinsically validating their sense of self within their external lifeworlds. This process manifested as active, through seeking excellence of the garments fabric and construction, as well as reacting to current fashion trends. Efficiency was indicative through the reduced trips when time allowed fashion shopping and the experience sought transposed esteem and spiritual values that increased their satisfaction through placing a higher value of the garments purchased.

The disparity between the approach to purchasing fashion for themselves and their children was evident and motivated through the children's continuous growth. This encouraged values of efficiency through seeking convenient access and excellence where quality was substituted for lower pricing as a trade-off. Longevity was not required as the garments would not fit the child for very long. Consequently, supermarket fashion provided opportunities to purchase fashion when shopping for food (de kervenoal et al., 2011; Ross and Harradine, 2009), particularly as supermarkets are often open longer, located conveniently on bus routes and have ample parking facilities. Although the motivation to access fashion from the supermarket responded to self-orientated values, there was acknowledgment for other-orientated values, such as ethics, whereby the participants expressed awareness of NGO campaigns alleging exploitation of garment-workers in developing countries. However, concern for garment-worker exploitation and potentially child labour were viewed as extrinsic, diverging from Holbrook's (1999) theory, as the implications were abstractly evaluated and overshadowed by intrinsic values of coping with their chaotic lifeworlds (Schiffman and Kanul, 2010: 23). Therefore, although the in other consumption contexts, notably food, the alignment of Fairtrade products in supermarkets provided an intrinsic ethical value of contributing to the wider implications of societal equality, for fashion familial provisioning and lifeworld management were prioritised. This indicates that moral integrity was a trade-off for lifeworld management; it was recognised that to align children's fashion consumption with moral ideology would result in less convenient shopping behaviours, such as internet shopping where the pricing would be far more prohibitive and depended on the reliance of being available for postal deliveries.

Purchasing fashion for the children also consisted of other values particular to the child, adding to the complexity. This included acknowledging the children's emerging socialisation and sense of belonging among their peers. Most of the participants allowed their children to choose fashion which was affordable and available in conveniently located retailers. This is self-orientated and intrinsically located through play as both mother and child gained pleasure from the shopping experience (Workman and Studak, 2006; O'Cass and Choy, 2008; Holbrook, 1999). The mother enjoyed observing and facilitating her child's emerging sense of self, resulting in feelings of intrinsic esteem through providing the child with desirable fashion (Wagner, 1999). The child also experienced feelings of esteem, albeit this was reflected extrinsically through an alignment with peers (Webb, 2007). Although it could be argued that children do not need fashionable garments, as children's fashion was purchased in high street and supermarkets, the styles resembled current fashion trends. Additionally, research identified that following fashion contributes to a child's socialisation, where the need to be considered as cool was important to a child establishing a sense of self (Pole et al., 2006; Main and Pople, 2011). Although this research did not include investigating the children's experience, the participants were aware that their children were establishing their sense of self among their peer groups and that their appearance played a role in their acceptance (Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara, 2008; Richens, 1999; Faber et al., 1987). This indicates that fashion is a visible indicator of self and status, an aspect that was not compromised for either the participants or their children (Cherrier, 2009; Damhorst, 2005; Miller-Spillman, 2005).

Although the participants preferred to pay more for their own fashion to ensure that the garments consisted of a superior quality which aligned with excellence and status values, both these values were inverted for the children's fashion selection. As described above longevity was not expected due to the limited time the child would fit the clothing. Additionally, it was expected that children's clothing experienced more friction through play, thus the participants were reluctant to pay more for clothing that was more prone to wear and tear. Paying less meant that the participants were not precious about children's play, as clothing could be easily replaced. Lower pricing also enabled the intrinsic value of status, as the visibility of providing children with new clothing to address their continuous growth ensured that the children looked smart (Bannister and Hogg, 2007; Phau and Lo, 2004). This was of particular importance for school clothing, whereby a smart appearance transmitted shared values of the worth of education and communicated that the child was well cared from at home, with the aim that this would transfer to the child's experience at school. Thus, values of self-orientation are evident extrinsically, as supermarket fashion enabled efficiency and excellence which allowed the children the freedom to play without worry of damaging clothing as new garments were easily accessible. This was a trade-off for moral integrity, as the participants suspected that low priced fashion was produced under exploitative working conditions. Self-orientation is coupled with other-orientated values that actively reflect the status of the family through respecting a smart appearance, particularly at school, and intrinsically enabling esteem and spirituality through providing visual evidence of the care given to the child. This was also evident within the social groups within which the participants existed and led to the sharing of used children's clothing, as described next.

Networks of reusing children's clothing

The participants' reliance on mothering networks that systematically passed used children's clothing was unexpected, due to the reduced price of children's fashion which reduced barriers to access. As established in the introduction, pricing reflected a reduction in the quality of garments, limiting longevity (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). Therefore, it was unexpected that some children's garments were of sufficient quality to be passed on for re-wear. Nevertheless, the participants described active networks of passing clothes that pertained to a number of values, including efficiency, excellence, status, esteem, ethics and spirituality. Efficiency was experienced as the participants passed children's clothing within their social networks, which were founded upon shared lifestyle values (Bannister and Hogg, 2007; Cherrier, 2006; Yuschisin and Johnson, 2004). Stigma of accepting hand-me-down clothing was not experienced as ethical values were both shared and focal within the activity of reuse, central to sustainable behaviours through diverting garments from landfill. Excellence was evident in the quality of clothing that was suitable for reuse and this contributed to feelings of esteem through superior familial provisioning that did not include a financial consequence. Status and esteem included involvement in network of shared ethical values, thus contributing to conformity within a social group where information was shared and endorsed (Kaiser, 2005; Ehrenberg, 2002; Richens, 1999). This led to feelings of spirituality, whereby emotional feelings of moral ideology and behaviours align (Park et al., 2006), enhanced by the belief that exploitation of both garment-workers and the environment have been avoided. Within this aspect, there were no value trade-offs experienced as behaviours aligned with moral ideology and this further endorsed the sharing of used children's clothes. This ethos extended to recycling of household waste.

Recycling textiles

The participants took a great deal of pride in their active contribution to recycling waste, detailing at length the reduction of household waste destined for landfill. This was supported by the children, whose awareness for sustainability came also from school, many of which had achieved eco-school status. Information of the types of material which could be recycled came from the local authority and what was collected through recycling schemes. However, this was inconsistent depending on which area of Midlothian the participants lived in. For example, some doorstep collections were limited to glass and cardboard, whereas others collected plastics. Only one participant was encouraged to recycle textiles through the doorstep collection. This illustrates that awareness originates from campaigns to encourage consumers' sustainable behaviours and without supported activities reduce many barriers to participate. Although there was limited knowledge of recycling textiles, a number of values were evident in the recycling of other household waste, including efficiency, play, status, esteem and spirituality.

Efficiency was experienced through doorstep collections, whereby putting waste out for recycling was viewed as similar to putting out rubbish. Often waste not collected by the local authority was saved up for recycling while shopping at the supermarket, therefore this was regular and convenient as it did not require a separate trip. Play was involved as the children were active in the recycling activity, motivated by what they had learned at school. This led to familial behaviours being endorsed through the education system and as such, the recycling behaviours were integral to family life. This expanded upon the social conformity of such behaviours (Kaiser, 2005; Ehrenberg, 2002; Richens, 1999), which was also linked with status and esteem through shared ethical values (Bannister and Hogg, 2007; Cherrier, 2006; Yuschisin and Johnson, 2004) that prioritised extrinsic concern for the environment through limiting waste to landfill and protecting scarce resources. Feelings of spirituality were experienced as the participants felt that they had "done my bit' (participant 3) to contribute to the wider implications of sustainability and protecting resources for future use. However, this was not as evident with textiles, particularly for the recycling of shoes, and the participants expressed confusion of where to donate textiles no longer required, especially when the clothing was not suitable for re-wear. This illustrates that once provided with information to guide behaviours, as well as supporting behavioural change with facilities that are convenient, consumers are prepared to contribute to sustainability, an aspect that fashion retailers could capitalise upon. Currently, much of textile waste is designated to landfill, even when consumers are actively recycling other household waste materials.

Purchasing sustainably produced fashion

As indicated, sustainable produce was often sought when shopping for food. This contributed to a number of values that not only reflected wider environmental and societal implications, but also added value to familial provisioning, such as the belief that as organic food is grown without pesticides this was a healthier option for children (Kriwy and Mecking, 2012). The widening of Fairtrade produce in supermarkets also enabled the participants to align their food consumption with moral ideology, whereby previous restrictions included access and price. Mainstream availability and global brands adopting Fairtrade principles meant that pricing was only marginally more expensive. This contributed to a number of extrinsic values for the participants, such as efficiency, excellence, status and esteem. The participants were not required to make personal sacrifices in terms of the convenience to access sustainable produce and there was also an assumption that sustainability contributed to a superior quality. Additionally, organic and Fairtrade products were considered as ‘middle class’ (Zabkar and Hosta, 2012; Cervellon et al., 2009; McEachern and McClean, 2002), thus reflecting the family’s status (Kaiser, 2005; Ehrenberg, 2002; Richens, 1999). This links with Griskevicius et al. (2010) who identified that sustainable consumption was linked with transcending status and displaying wealth, which they refer to as conspicuous conservation through depicting pro-social behaviours as opposed to pro-self. The participants expressed esteem at being able to provide food that included personal attributes of increased health properties and contributing to the wider implications of sustainable consumption (Cherrier, 2006). Therefore, sustainable food consumption also contributed to intrinsic values of ethics and spirituality, compounded by superior familial provisioning and aligning behaviours with moral ideology.

This did not transfer to fashion consumption as both Fairtrade and organic garments are not integrated within mainstream retailers. The labels indicating sustainably produced garments available in high street retailers were appreciated by the participants, particularly as the price points were not prohibitive. Additionally, some participants had purchased garments from the Conscious Collection available at H&M, which resulted in feelings of added value similar to purchasing sustainable food in the supermarket. However, such opportunities were sporadic and primarily the participants focused on self-orientated values of efficiency, excellence, play and aesthetics, attributes that are marketed to consumers to entice fashion consumption. In contrast the participants expressed that ethical fashion, such as Fairtrade and organic status, was more expensive, not available in high street fashion retailers and did not follow fashion trends, concurrent with research by Joergens (2006), Shaw et al. (2006) and Valor (2007). Without availability in mainstream fashion retailers, the participants were not prompted to consider other-orientated values of ethics and spirituality. This resulted in a value trade-off, where the time to source fashion and information to guide consumption was limited by their chaotic lifeworlds and the participants could not ascertain the same assurance that fashion had not been produced without exploitation as they could with food labelled Fairtrade or organic.

This illustrates that within the current fashion market, sustainable consumption has to be actively focused; consumers must prioritise extrinsic values of concern for avoiding garment-worker exploitation. Whereas within the food sector, consumers are reacting to prompts, such as labelling products with Fairtrade and organic that indicate that production is sustainable. Further, this implies that the transferral of sustainable principles is evident within fashion consumption and disposal behaviours, where consumers are taking guidance from the food sector, as indicated by the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (2009). The food sector has drawn consumers attention to what contributes to unsustainable practice within food production, such as pesticides containing chemicals that not only pollute the environment, but can be ingested and negotiations often include producers being exploited by the power of global companies. Although fashion is not ingested, there was still a perception that reducing chemical applications would be a purer option for children's textiles. Therefore, consumers can make choices to include the wider implications of their everyday behaviours rather than just cope with managing the myriad of responsibilities that constitute their lifeworlds, reflecting positional consumption that both aligns with intrinsic and extrinsic values (Cherrier, 2009) and reducing the conflict of moral ideology and fashion as indicative of self.

Conclusion

This paper has contributed to deepening understanding of the value placed on sustainability within the current retail sector. This will be of interest to fashion marketers and managers who aspire to increase market share in a highly competitive retail sector that is driven by consumer demand. The widened access of sustainably produced food in mainstream supermarkets has enabled consumers to align their moral value with consumption behaviours, recognising that the added attributes contribute to values which are important for family provisioning. This was evident within the food sector, where sustainable behaviours were supported by the availability of sustainably produced food in local supermarkets, which also included other sustainable facilities, such as recycling provisioning. This did not transfer to sustainable fashion behaviours due to the lack of sustainably produced fashion and a lack of information that supported recycling textile waste. This was further exacerbated through encouragement from the fashion industry to purchase more frequently garments with a limited lifespan, as well as fashion being a visible indicator of self and status. However, the participants illustrated the emergence of transferring sustainable behaviours from other consumption contexts to fashion. This was evident through networks of passing on children's clothing which included both self and other-orientated values of financial savings and diverting textile waste from landfill. However, the findings also illustrate that fashion consumption is primarily self-orientated, whereby sustainable sacrifices of conveniently accessing fashion, low pricing to enable consumption for children's continued growth and fashion expressing self, status and the children's socialisation were prioritised. To encourage consumers to consider the sustainable implications of their fashion consumption behaviours, more information of the impact of fashion production as well as the opportunity to recycle textiles is required. Fashion retailers that address those concerns have the opportunity to appeal to consumers concerned with sustainability, an ethos that is moving into mainstream consumption markets, and enable consumers to address the conflicting values that currently constitute fashion consumption decision-making.

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Cultural Innovations and Consumer Behaviour: the Case of Museum Night

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore creativity dimensions of the Museum Night event held in St. Petersburg for the sixth time in 2013. This distributed event annually organised throughout more than 160 countries, is characterized in St. Petersburg by a number of single events arranged in the same time and devoted to one theme during late hours.

The study uses mixed-method approaches applied for two editions of the event in 2012 and 2013. Visitors' surveys (911 respondents in total) and semi-structured interviews (62 interviews in total) were conducted with managers of cultural institutions (museums, exhibition halls, galleries, creative spaces, libraries), who are engaged in preparation and organisation activities of the event. In addition, semantic analysis of text visitors' comments left on the official site of the Museum Night was made.

The study addresses creativity and innovativeness of the event in terms of consumer behaviour and cultural institution development. The results reveal that the event affects visitors' behaviour and leads to shifts in structure of target audiences for particular cultural institutions. While organising the event cultural institutions utilize innovative solutions applying more creative approach towards arranged activities and visitors. This, in its turn, encourages positive development of internal communication network at the cultural institutions. Moreover, the event promotes second tier museums, which are often in the shadow of "brand" museums. There are more than 200 museums in the city and most of them are not even known by residents and tourists. Raising awareness, creation of positive image and attracting of visitors to plethora of St. Petersburg's museums are key functions of the event.

The paper provides a detailed insight on the importance of the Museum Night event as an effective tool for development of creative methods in cultural institutions and attraction of visitors to cultural institutions.

Keywords: cultural services, museum, creativity

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore creativity dimensions of the Museum Night event held in St. Petersburg for the sixth time in 2013. Despite of its name, not only museums take part in the event, but also other cultural institutions such as libraries and art galleries do. The event organised annually throughout more than 160 countries originated in Germany, where the Long Night of Museums (Lange Nacht der Museen) was arranged in Berlin for the first time in 1997. The main feature of this distributed event (Schaller et al 2012) is a number of single events held simultaneously and devoted to the same theme during late hours (some cultural institutions stay open till 6 a.m.). The first Russian

Museum Night was organised in capital city Moscow in 2007. The initiative has found support in many other cities. Last year the event was arranged in more than 20 Russian cities and towns. St. Petersburg is not an exception. Since 2008, when the Museum Night was arranged for the first time in the city, the number of participating cultural institutions has increased from 33 to 84 entities and the number of visitors has increased from 24 000 to more than 100 000 visitors in 2013.

Much of academic literature highlighted the role of events in raising attractiveness of such traditional cultural institutions as museums (Tobelem, 1998; Kotler, Kotler, 2000; Prentice and Andersen, 2003; Kolb, 2005; Gyimothy, 2009; Barbosa and Brito, 2012). This paper seeks to explore the role of the Museum Night in development of creative methods for audience and cultural institutions development. One of the main functions of cultural events explored by scholars is related to their social role of strengthening ties within community (Falassi,1987; Ekman,1999), enhancing a sense of belonging and raising interest among public (Kotler, Kotler, 2000). By creating informal atmosphere (Tobelem, 1998) events organised at museums attract new visitors to museums (Kolb, 2005; Gyimothy, 2009; Barbosa and Brito, 2012). However, event goers interested in culture not necessarily will become frequent museum visitors due to existence of other strong preferences such as leisure and socialization (Prentice and Andersen, 2003). Thus, people attracted by events to museums come mainly for entertainment and museums have to make further efforts to keep interest of those visitors (Barbosa and Brito, 2012).

The Museum Night as a worldwide event has attracted attention by few scholars (Krause, 2007; Jiwa et al, 2009). These studies explore economic, cultural and social gains of such type of the event for community cohesion, tourism development and territory regeneration in the UK and France (Jiwa et al, 2009) and potential of using this event as an instrument for city marketing in Germany (Krause, 2007). Case of St. Petersburg's Museum Night has already been discussed in academic literature (Dedova, 2012) as a tool for development of public cultural services management.

The main hypothesis of the present study suggests that the Museum Night event attracts new visitors to cultural institutions, primarily museums, and contributes to development of cultural institutions' creative approaches towards arranged activities and visitors. It seeks to contribute to the knowledge in this area by presenting the results from a study in Russia that investigated visitors' behaviour, motivation and experience from attending the Museum Night event as well as standpoints of managers of cultural institutions engaged in preparation and conduction of the event. The findings of the study should hopefully be of interest to cultural institution practitioners, especially to those, who are making decisions on arrangement of cultural events.

Museum Night as a special event

Cultural institutions such as museums, art galleries and libraries face the need to compete with other leisure providers and attract increasing visitor numbers (Gilmore and Rentschler, 2002). In order to meet requirements of government for public funding they have to use more market-oriented approaches aiming at audience development (Tobelem, 1998; Rentschler, 2004; McNichol, 2005; Sandell, 2003; Scott, 2000). One of the most popular strategies using by the cultural institutions for inspiring new audiences is the staging of special events (Getz, 1997; Caulton, 1998; Axelsen, 2006).

'Speciality' of events is defined by its occasional character, limited time duration and difference from typical organisational activities (Getz, 1997). By combining various types of events such as lectures and film screening, workshops and seminars, concerts and theatre, themed guided tours and behind-the scenes tours, audio-visual installations and other highly interactive activities (Brown, 2002; Axelsen, 2006) cultural institutions diversify their ordinary practices. Extremely important features of special events are also entertainment value and provision of educational experience (Savage, 1996).

Museum Night held in St. Petersburg is usually taken place in second tier museums. Popular "brand" city museums prefer to stay away from the event experiencing long visitors' queues almost every day. There are more than 200 museums in the city and most of them are not even known by residents and tourists. Being in the shadow of large world-renowned museums, others have to struggle for their audience and actively participate in organization of special events that enable utilizing of joint resources. Museum Night is arranged annually on the weekend that is closest to the International Museum Day celebrated on 18th May. The event receives significant support from the City of St. Petersburg, in particular from the Committee of Culture of St. Petersburg. Cultural institutions benefit from free advertising campaign, shuttle bus services for visitors during the event and volunteer network. Hence, those museums that in regular time cannot afford neither comprehensive promotional campaign, nor additional man power are eager to take part in the Museum Night event. As for libraries and galleries, there is no such a strong differentiation by popularity. For this reason, investigation of the event's impacts on museums is, to our view, more illustrative.

Within the event museums seek to surprise their visitors by introduction of innovative and inspirational solutions. They widely employ interactivity and experiment with new approaches to working with audience. To some extent, this is a desperate measure for them caused by influx of visitors. During Museum Night queuing before getting to some of museums can take several hours. To keep people interested in a museum and to avoid spoilt experience museums start working with queues initiating various quests, quizzes or staging themed performances. Museums demonstrate high level of flexibility that is also typical for organisation of special events (Brown, 2002).

Using Museum Night as an example of special event we aim to explore new patterns used by museums and other cultural institutions in attraction of new audience and subsequent organisational development.

Methodology

This study is built upon the mixed-method empirical research involved a few data sources. Firstly, a survey of visitors, who attended the Museum Night, was conducted in 2012 and 2013. Visitors were surveyed in pre-selected cultural institutions clusters based on geographical factor and guided by previous research on cultural clustering in St. Petersburg (Gordin and Matetskaya, 2010). Visitors were interviewed at entrance of cultural institutions. As it was mentioned above, during the event most of institutions experienced queues. Interviewers approached every tenth respondent waiting in a queue. In rare cases, if there was no queue, every tenth visitor was surveyed at the exit of an institution.

The questionnaire includes open-ended and closed-ended questions on visitors' behavior (number of annual visits to cultural institutions and to hosting institution), motivation (reasons for visiting the event and hosting institution), satisfaction (event satisfaction, public services satisfaction, expectation fulfillment) and demographic questions (age, gender, occupation). The questionnaire used in 2012 had been further developed in 2013 on the ground of ATLAS event visitor questionnaire and adjusted to specificity of the Museum Night event. In total, 911 valuable questionnaires (370 in 2012, 541 in 2013) were completed at two editions of the event. The results of the survey were analyzed using SPSS software.

Secondly, managers of museums and other cultural institutions engaged in preparation and organisation of the event on-site were interviewed both in 2012 and 2013. In-depth semi-structured interviews were aimed to explore motivation, expectation, and daily preparation practices as well as an impact of the event for a cultural institution. The interviews were held both with representatives of those institutions that took part in the event for the first time and those, which had already participated before. The structure of interviews slightly differs for these two types as we assumed that they can have different motives for participation, especially in terms of their expectations and commitment. In total, 62 interviews were conducted (31 interview in each year). Representatives of some cultural institutions took part in the interview both in 2012 and 2013. For this reason we present the findings for two editions of the vent separately to avoid overlapping. For analysis transcribed interviews were further processed with the help of Nvivo software.

Thirdly, semantic analysis of comments left by visitor at official webpage of the event was carried out after two editions of Museum Night in 2012 and 2013. This analysis is focused on visitors' satisfaction and feedback provided for cultural institutions information. By comparing comments of each analyzed year we aim to trace changes in the event organisation noticed by visitors.

By employing various data sources we can create a more detailed picture of the events role and analyze it through the lenses of both visitors and cultural institutions, in particular museums. It is worth mentioning here that this study is to be continued and it is planned to collect new empirical data from different sources at Museum Night 2014.

Findings

The demographical profile of visitors based on results of the survey was predominantly 16-29 years old (with the 30-39 age group also being well represented), about 60% female, 45% have higher education qualifications.

Regarding the practice of visitors to take part in the event, the study found that at each edition half of respondents visited the event for the first time. Answering the question on probability of the future visit, 40% of respondents indicated it as high. The same pattern is observed on probability of recommending the event – 47% answered positively.

The study probed the motivation of visitors and found that the key motivating factors for the respondents to attend the event were the interest in the event (30%), desire to learn something new (24%) and perception of the event as a good opportunity to spend time with family or friends (22%). Motivating factors identified in the survey of were slightly different due to the fact that the questionnaire used had a few alternative questions and multiple-choice answers. In 2012 about 50% of visitors were motivated by interesting activities in museums, 46% named opportunity to see something extraordinary. Thus, findings of surveys from both editions of the event lie in the same dimension and suggest that visitors are eager to visit the event due to their personal interest and possibility to learn or see something new and unusual. Answering the question on reasons for visiting a particular cultural institution 31% of visitors stated that the main reason is that they had never been before there, 17% indicated convenient location.

The study sought to identify the role of the event in audience development and attraction of new visitors to museums. The results of the survey of 2012 showed that 35% of visitors attend museums ‘once-twice a month’, 26% of the event’s visitors attend museums ‘once-twice a year’. In 2013 visitors were asked about their visits to other cultural events and leisure activities during previous 12 months. The majority (22%) visited cinema, 19% of respondents visited museums (besides the Museum Night event).

The study explored the role of the event for visitors’ behaviour including their perceptions of the event as a tool for gaining new knowledge and experience, emotional state and feeling a part of a bigger community as well as positive changes in perception of St. Petersburg. Those indicators were presented in the questionnaire of 2013 in a Likert scale. The findings suggest that 35% of visitors were strongly agreed with the statement ‘During the event I gained new knowledge and experience’. In addition, 36% of visitors were agreed with the statement to some extent.

The majority of the visitors (38%) strongly agreed with the statement ‘During the event I felt emotionally charged’. In total, 63% of respondents agreed with this statement with various level of confidence.

The study found that 42% of visitors are strongly agreed with the statement ‘This event made me feel part of a bigger community’. 24% also expressed agreement. Regarding positive changes in visitors’ perception of the city, 43% of visitors strongly agreed with the statement ‘The event improved my image of St. Petersburg’. In addition, 25% shared this view with distinct level of confidence.

Using interview texts with managers of cultural institutions engaged in preparation and conduction of the Museum Night event as evidence a number of themes for exploration of the event’s role were identified. Among the key motivating factor for participation in the event the majority of managers (71% of managers interviewed in 2012 and 74% of managers interviewed in 2013) indicated aspiration to promoting the institution and attraction of new audience: ‘We take part in the event to attract audience in our museum as it is not as famous as other museums in our city’; ‘This is an opportunity to attract attention of visitors, mass media to the museum, because the museum is small and needs to be promoted among as many people as possible’; ‘This is an interesting event that attracts visitors and improves image of the museum’.

The findings suggest that museums aimed their activities within the event at attraction of new visitors that are non-frequent and not typical for them: ‘In the first turn we wanted to see people, who rarely visit us <…> We wanted to see during the Night middle aged people, 25-35 years old, working in absolutely different spheres, not related to the art. And those people indeed came and there were many’; ‘We try to organize everything in such a manner that everyone would find something interesting and enjoyable. Moreover, we are interested in attraction of visitors in the age from 20 till 40 years old’. The most part of the managers (26% in 2012 and 74% in 2013) indicated that they are focused in attracting youth to the cultural institutions: ‘This is a good event as it enables attracting young people, those cannot visit museums during the daytime. Young people work during the daytime and, in general, they prefer evenings, night-life, that is why they like Museum Night'.

Regarding organisational development caused by the participation in the event, the study identified four main impacts that were widely discussed by interviewees. Firstly, participation of the event stimulates cultural institutions' employees to generate new creative ideas (23% in 2012 and 77% in 2013): 'It [the event] is a possibility to develop new programs that we prepare specially for the Museum Night event and then utilize in our daily work'; 'The event provides good chance to implement new ideas', 'This is always a very good impulse for creativity in the museum'.

Secondly, within this special event cultural institutions actively employ new spaces extending traditional ones. Managers pointed out that they sought to develop new forms of exhibition by organising tours outside buildings and opening behind-the-scenes: 'This year we revealed our secrets, secrets of working with animals and organised a tour in premises that are closed in regular time'. Adjustment of visitors flows to museums' capacities during the event is also an important issue: 'We divided the museum into special zones, where on the visitor's way various entertaining activities were arranged – interactive zones, workshops, new exhibiting space, contemporary art exhibition'; 'We tried to avoid queues in our museum, develop clear and convenient system for people not to crowd beforehand'; "We prepare special navigation for the event'; 'We managed to organise the traffic of flow, this year we had a schedule for tours that helped to avoid crowds'. Changes were related not only with exhibiting spaces, but also with such services as catering, souvenir shops and toilets: 'Last year we realised that we need to prepare more simple and fast food in the café, sandwiches that we don't have in regular time'. Urban space provides a lot of opportunities to extend boundaries for museums and other cultural institutions and this event encourages managers to do so.

Thirdly, the Museum Night event becomes a challenge for the most of cultural institutions demanding concentration and competent allocation of all available resources including experienced labour force. The study suggests that participation in the event positively influences internal communication and turns into team building: 'For the beginning Museum Night brings together all employees of the museum, makes them working as a team, with creative approach. Then this is passed on our visitors'; 'The event is a good driver for the personnel, it unites co-workers'; 'The Museum Night for the museum is a good way to demonstrate teamwork – at this event work almost everyone, all employees regardless departmental division'.

Fourthly, interviewed managers noted that the event significantly contributed to development of external communication network with other cultural institutions and intensified experience exchange: 'The Museum Night event is the event, when we can learn and share experiences'; 'Experience exchange is always taken place'; 'Every cooperation opportunity with other cultural institutions of other organisational forms is always useful, it is not harmful to learn how other entities work, which methods they use, which innovative solutions they can share'.

The findings of the semantic analysis of comments left by visitors at the official webpage of the event www.artnight.ru enabled evaluating of visitors' satisfaction level and identifying subjective advantages and disadvantages of the event. The total amount of comments valid for the analysis was 73 in 2012 and 120 in 2013. Four main themes of comments were identified within the analysis: comments on specific museums and exhibitions, comments on organization of the event and responsible for its implementation persons; comments on general ambience of the event and other miscellaneous comments. The majority of comments (64% in 2012 and 73% in 2013) are positive meaning that visitors were satisfied with the event and left comments on the most memorable cultural institutions they had visited and exhibitions they had seen. Comparing two editions of the event the distinctive feature of 2013 is intensification of dialogue between cultural institutions representatives' and visitors. Thus, cultural institutions are interested in getting feedback to improve quality of provided services.

Discussion

This study is based on a few data sources and provides critical information for organisation of special events in cultural institutions. The findings of the study confirm the main hypothesis that suggested that the Museum Night event attracts new audience to museums and contributes to development of creative approaches towards organization of activities and visitors by cultural institutions. The study suggests that the Museum Night event in St. Petersburg affects visitor's behaviour in terms of their perceptions of the event as a tool for gaining new knowledge and experience, emotional state and feeling a part of a bigger community as well as positive changes in perception of St. Petersburg. Based on evidence from cultural institutions' visitors and managers of the event the findings suggest that the event attracts new audience to the institutions, mostly young people. It also impacts fourfold organisational development of cultural institutions, in particular museums, by stimulating cultural institutions' employees to generate new creative ideas; extending traditional spaces; positively influencing internal communication and team building; significantly contributing to development of external communication network with other cultural institutions and intensifying experience exchange between them. It is worth mentioning that according to the findings the event contributed to promotion of second tier museums. The research findings are summed up in Table 1.

Table 1 Role of the Museum Night event

Evidence of visitors	Evidence of cultural institutions
•Attraction of new audience •New knowledge and experience •Positive emotional state •Feeling a part of bigger community •Positive changes in perception of St. Petersburg	•Attraction of new audience •Promotion of second tier museums •Generation of new creative ideas •Extension of traditional exhibiting spaces •Development of internal communication and team building •Development of external communication network and intensification of experience exchange

An important implication of these findings is that the Museum Night event should be considered by decision makers, responsible for arrangement of such distributive cultural events in the city, as a platform for testing innovative and creative approaches in cultural institutions. The study showed that the event has a plethora of impacts meaningful for various types of stakeholders – visitors, cultural institutions and society. One of the crucial challenges that modern cultural institutions face today is attraction of young people. The findings of the study revealed that this issue can be tackled by such an event. However, it should be noted that event goers will not necessarily become frequent visitors (Barbosa and Brito, 2012) and this socio-cultural problem needs further research. One of suggestion that is derived from the study is diversification of cultural products developed by cultural institutions for making them creative and innovative.

Conclusion and future research

The study sought to contribute to the knowledge on event's role for attraction of visitors to cultural institutions, primarily museums, and development of creative approaches towards arranged activities and visitors. By the case of the Museum Night in St. Petersburg the role of such special distributed event on visitors' behaviour and organisational development of cultural institutions was investigated. The results reveal that the event affects visitors' behaviour and leads to shifts in structure of target audiences for particular cultural institutions. While organising the event cultural institutions utilize innovative solutions applying more creative approach towards arranged activities and visitors. This lead to a whole range of positive changes caused by the event in organisational development.

These findings can be utilized for future research purposes that, to our view, should be focused on comparative study of visitors' perceptions of other cultural and creative events in the city. As for managers' perspective, it is important to include into future research those cultural institutions that no longer take part in the Museum Night event and investigate reasons for this decision.

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Mass customization: modularity in development of fashion products

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Abstract

The concept of mass customization had the first appearance with Stanley Davis in 1987, and later with Joseph Pine in 1993, where he defined it as "developing, producing, marketing and delivering affordable goods, and services with enough variety and customization that nearly everyone finds exactly what they want.". In fact, this strategy is based on the satisfaction of the consumer by the individualization of products, and for this the successful implementation depends mostly on the use of a modularity approach in terms of product development and production system.

In this study was done a theoretical approach based on the concept of modularity as part of a strategy of mass customization in the fashion industry, as well as to modular design principles and their implications on the development of fashion design products. This theoretical review results as a foundation for the practical exploration of modularity on fashion accessories.

With this research was possible to identify the positive and negative aspects of the development of products considering modular design/modularity, considering the production system and the consumer satisfaction. Some prototypes developed under a research project on fashion accessories and modular design are presented as demonstrative of possible modules that can be created allowing mass customization. Thus, modularity allows the reliability and quality of the product, enable maintenance, repair, simple assembly or disassembly, and also differential consumption. So, be capable of thinking in terms of modularity or even modular design, encounter tremendous benefits, for both company and consumer satisfaction.

Keywords: Consumer Satisfaction, Mass Customization, Modularity, Modular Design, Fashion Accessories

Mass customization

In the last few years we have witnessed a change of the marketing paradigm, going from company-centric view to a customer-centric view. This customer-centric view that relies on the satisfaction of consumer needs and wants and put him in the position of co-creator of value, (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) goes in line with the characteristics of mass customization, as well as the concept of relationship marketing that embraced it as a key tool to company's development (Gordon, 1998).

In the case of mass production is offered a variety and amount of products all equal or similar and sometimes with features customers do not need, which generates a feeling of dissatisfaction (Blecker et al., 2005, Chan et al., 2012, Franke & Schreier, 2007). Thus, is a rising desire of customized products, with the possibility of co-creation, similar to the DIY movement, and companies have understood that to stay competitive they need to produce according to customer desires and to meet their needs more completely (Ulrich et al., 2003). Therefore, mass customization is becoming a reality in commerce and industry worldwide, where companies select this strategy to optimize their production and offer products adjusted to the consumer's needs.

Mass customization is a complex strategy which implementation and success depends on numerous factors. Fogliatto et al. (2012) in their literature review identified the most recognized success factors: customer demand, markets, value chain, technology, customizable offer and knowledge. They also identified mass customization enables: methodologies, processes, order elicitation, design-postponement, design-product platforms, manufacturing, supply chain coordination, manufacturing technologies and information technologies. These factors and enablers are incontestable key tools. Therefore, this work will focus on design-product platforms and consequently in modularity by its importance in the development and in the production system of customized products.

Modularity / modular design

The concept of modularity has been decisive in the development of the mass customization strategy, because it enables to put the "mass" in mass customization, providing product variants by limiting the costs of variety and also to create products according to the customer's specifications (Pine, 1993, Duray, 2002).

Modularity is related to product development but also with production processes and company organization. It has led to a new form of company-customer relationship, with benefits to producers and customers.
On the producer side, modularity leads to innovation since been easier to try and test new approaches, reduce the complexity of products by its decomposition, allows parallel work where teams work in the development of different modules, the quality of products is better because each module can be tested separated. In the customer side modularity enables product differentiation because consumers can individualize the product replacing some modules through others, also maintenance, repair or upgrade can be easily done (Blecker et al., 2005, Tu et al., 2004).

Considering the modularity in the product development is common to denote modular design as a strategy to build systems or complex products from smaller subsystems/ modules that are individual, but that function as an integrated whole. Each module is at least one functional unit more or less complex which together with the remaining modules contributes to a functional product. Therefore a module can be defined as a unit, a structurally independent building block with defined interfaces (Holtta & Salonen, 2003).In modular design the different modules should be well defined, the interfaces between components are specified and each one can be separated and transferred to other products in the same group (Lau et al., 2011). Thus, modularization is the process of decomposing a product structure into modules. This process is essential for the success of a modular strategy, if it is in the new product development or in redesigning existing products.

Modular design must be guided by defined objectives, knowledge of different processes as the technologies involved and the application area of modularization has to be clear before the design or redesign because it is nearly impossible to make all components to have interchange functionalities (Campagnolo & Camuffo, 2009, Kusiak, 2002, Zhang & Gershenson, 2003). The approaches or methods to achieve modularity can be defined according to Daniilidis & Enßlin (2011) by three parameters, the product generation (product reengineering or new product development), the product variety (single product, product family or product portfolio) and the product life-cycle (design, assembly, services and recycling).

Application of modularity in fashion accessories

As was referred previously, before opting to modular design approach is necessary to have objectives well defined. It is also important to have enough knowledge about the product, the exact component structure, and the relationships between the objectives and the modules, to be able to define them.

In fashion accessories, namely bags, the basic modules, depending of the type of bag that can be easily identified are: the body (outer shell and lining/interior), pockets and divisions and handles (shoulder/hand/ none). The basic function/objective of bags is carrying objects, essentials as personal documents, coin purse, keys and cell phone, or others as make-up, paper tissues, cigarettes, laptop/tablet, gloves and a small umbrella.

The attributes can be split up in terms of performance, comfort/ergonomic aesthetic/ fashion trends and longevity. Performance can be determined by size (quantity of objects or use occasion), handles (shoulder, hand or none, according to quantity of objects or use occasion), pockets (allow placement of essential objects or others), and by protection of inside contents (strong material, waterproof; closure solutions: zipper, springs, buttons, Velcro); Comfort/ergonomic depends of size (quantity of objects), handles (shoulder, hand or none, according to quantity of objects); and Aesthetic/ fashion trends can be determined by fabrics, prints and other surface modifications according to trends.

Some prototypes considering modules have already been tested and developed. In the development of these accessories were identified the proper functional modules and the interfaces among different ones. Was considered the development following a platform product design methodology in a family of products.
One of the latest bags (figure 1) developed have a modular structure, one module is the body, outer shell and lining, and other module is a front panel. The body is reversible, allowing two use options, and the front panel can be exchanged for others considering an aesthetic function, but is itself another accessory, a scarf.

Conclusion

Mass customization and customized products are becoming each day more popular, and consequently modularity. So, above all modular design is a methodology that should be explored, because encounter enormous benefits not only for companies which can achieve a number of strategically important competitive advantages and benefits in a global marketplace, but also for consumers which can acquire and define products according to their needs and desires.

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Consumer attitude toward payment for recommendations

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Abstract

Today's consumers may have different priorities and buying habits, but trust remains the most critical factor in making their purchasing decisions. Looking for the best buying alternative, the consumer follows family's and friends' recommendations which prove to be one of the most trustworthy communication channels. Currently, social media offers a valuable tool for firms where a satisfied user of a product can recommend that product (good or service) to other potential users. What is not known in today's research literature, however, is the extent of consumers' acceptance of recommendations that have been paid by firms. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to investigate consumer attitudes about paid product recommendations. For this study, we conducted quantitative research with the use of a questionnaire (CAWI) concerning attitude toward paid recommendations, interpersonal influence and material values. The respondents are business students as they qualify as one of the most sensitive groups to social influence. The results of the research reveal pros and cons for the use of paid recommendations as a part of marketing strategy. The project was funded by the National Science Centre on the basis of the decision DEC-2012/07/D/HS4/01761.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, purchase decision-making, recommendations

Introduction and objectives

Word-of-mouth recommendations from consumers satisfied with their purchase constitute one of the most important sources of information for new buyers in the purchase decision-making process, as 84 percent of global respondents across 58 countries to the Nielsen online survey said this source was the most trustworthy. Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated that they trust consumer opinions posted online, which ranked third in 2013, up seven percentage points from 2007 (Nielsen 2013). As the previous research findings indicate, also in Poland, an acquaintance's opinion is the most important source of information for products and services for buyers (63 percent); in addition, 61 percent of respondents read posts on Internet forums, while 57 percent consult with their families (CBnDZ 2010).

The process of recommending products has widened its scope with the Internet, as that medium is effective not only in relationships with close relatives, friends and acquaintances, but also in the case of strangers through on-line discussions forums, consumer review sites, weblogs and social network sites. For companies, product recommendations given by some customers to others has a double meaning. First, it contributes to the acquisition of new buyers, and second, it has a financial aspect, as according to the research findings, referred customers have a higher contribution margin, though this difference erodes over time; have a higher retention rate; and are more valuable in both the short and the long run. The average value of a referred customer is at least 16 percent higher than that of a non-referred customer with similar demographics and time of acquisition (Schmitt et al 2011). The utilisation of customers' tendency to recommend products is thus closely connected with the companies' pursuit of maximizing the net present value of both current and future pools of customers, i.e. customer equity (Villanueva & Hanssens 2006). Enterprises do this by launching referral programs, consisting of offering previous buyers material benefits in return for their product recommendation that results in winning a new client. As the popularity of such programs keeps growing – they can be found in such diverse sectors as financial services, hotels, automobiles, newspapers and contact lenses – their efficiency has become more and more of an acute problem.

Substantial research has been done to understand the word-of-mouth effect, including the phenomenon of recommending. The antecedents to consumer recommendations, already widely recognized, represent a particularly important element of this research. The identification of antecedents allowed for understanding the reasons why customers engage in the recommending process and the methods of motivating them to do it. The relatively less-recognized area regards causations of the recommendation acceptance by people to whom such recommendations are made. As such acceptance is the second prerequisite for referral programs' efficiency, researching these causations is important not only for cognitive reasons, but also for practical ones.

The primary purpose of the research is to better understand the circumstances surrounding referral programs. In particular, we address the following research questions:
(1) Do recommendation recipients accept the fact of remunerating recommendation makers by companies whose products are recommended? (2) Which form of remuneration, products or money, are more accepted in such situations?
In addition to this introduction, this article consists of four main parts. First, relevant literature is reviewed. It examines word-of-mouth as the source phenomenon for recommendations, with special regard to economic circumstances, according to their importance for the development of referral programs. The third element of the literature review applies to these programs and their efficiency toward the recommendation addressees. The second part of the article includes the research approach and methodology, while in the third one, the findings and conclusions are presented, followed by the limitations and further study suggestions, constituting the final part.

Literature review

World literature in the field of social sciences and managerial sciences has been dealing with the word-of-mouth term since 1957. Currently, 1871 scientific texts exist on this subject (according to Web of Science database), including 44 that have been cited more than 100 times. Since 2010, every year more than 200 texts have been published on this subject, but only in English (Cheung & Thadani 2012, Breazeale 2009, Lin & Liao 2008).

Academic literature offers two approaches to define WOM: narrow and wide. The narrow approach focuses on customers as participants in the communications process and on products as the subject of discussion (e.g. Arndt, 1967; Kotler, 1991; WOMMA, 2012). Arndt (1967) defined WOM as "oral, person-to-person communication between receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product or service" (Arndt 1967).
In the wide approach, employees and stakeholders of an organization are usually added to the participants of the communication process. Carl (2006) divides WOM into "ordinary" and "stimulated by organisations," indicating that the messages don't have to be initiated

by customers, as people can be inspired by an organisation. Harrison-Walker (2001) and Mazzarol, Sweeney, and Soutar (2007) treat WOM as the process under which the discussion is held around an organisation and its offerings, and during these discussions, recommendations may appear.

The basic elements of the WOM process include the object (message), the subjects (participants of the WOM process) and the context, in which the exchange of information (time of emergence and receipt of the message, way of transfer) is made (Tkaczyk 2009). The message passed by WOM can be positive, negative or neutral. The participants of the process may act as the source of the message, its recipient and also the intermediary; they can take an active or passive role in the process. The message may be conveyed orally, written, face-to-face or through the use of devices (telephone or computer, for example). It may proceed in real time, in the form of talk, or with some delay (posts on discussion forums, for example). It can be of unilateral or bilateral nature. All elements of the WOM process may interact with one another. The nature of relationships between the participants of the process may affect the nature of the message and the way it is transferred. The character of transmission can determine the way it is transmitted (Tkaczyk, Awdziej 2013).

The origins of interest in WOM are closely connected in researching the purchase decision-making process, and particularly the sources of information used in this process. Since researchers identified that thanks to the reliability of information sources and the flexibility of interpersonal communication, WOM was more influential than any marketer-controlled source of information (print ads, personal selling, and radio and TV advertising), the studies of this phenomenon were developed in successive years (Arndt 1967, Engel et al 1969, Day 1971, Sheth 1971, Richins 1983, Buttle 1998).

The importance of WOM has gained a new aspect with the Internet dissemination and the differentiation of opinion-expression forms that include reviews of products on weblogs, discussions forum, review websites, e-bulletin board systems, newsgroups and social networking sites (Cheung & Thadani 2012). At present, the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is distinguished from the classic WOM because of a number of features: larger scope and speed of message dissemination thanks to multiplication of contacts and asynchronicity of communication; larger durability and accessibility of messages thanks to its preservation in a written form; easier measurability; and generally lack of direct acquaintance between message senders and recipients (Cheung & Thadani 2012). On the whole, it can be stated that the development of the Internet allowed average consumers to share their market experiences with a definitely larger amount of people and in a less elusive way than in the case of personal contact.

In research projects addressing WOM, one can find studies where this phenomenon occurs as both the dependent variable and the independent one (Nasr Bechwati & Nasr 2011, Lin & Liao 2008). This article is more focused on the first group of research, as we are more interested in the mechanism of influencing people to be WOM providers. The dominant part of research in which WOM appears as the dependent variable refers to its antecedents. A positive connection has been identified between the following phenomena: satisfaction (Matos & Rossi 2008), pleasant service recovery (Maxham 2001), and involvement and opinion leadership (Richins & Root-Shaffer 1988) and WOM (Bechwati & Nasr 2011). In his fundamental work for the entire stream of WOM research (see Nasr Bechwati & Nasr 2011), Dichter (1966) presented the concept of four categories of motivation leading to positive WOM: product involvement, self-involvement, involvement (concern) with others and message involvement. Other factors, taking also the negative word-of-mouth into account, were added by Engel et al. (1993) and Sundaram et al. (1998) (see Table 1). It should be noted, however, that none of these typologies includes the aspect of the material interest of a person being engaged in WOM.

Table 1 Motives for Word-of-Mouth Communication Behaviour

Author(s)	Motive	Description
Dichter (1966)	Product-involvement	a customer feels so strongly about the product that a pressure builds up in wanting to do something about it; recommending the product to others reduces the tension caused by the consumption experience
	Self-involvement	the product serves as a means through which the speaker can gratify certain emotional needs
	Other-involvement	word-of-mouth activity addresses the need to give something to the receiver
	Message-involvement	refers to discussion which is stimulated by advertisements, commercials, or public relations
Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard (1993)	Involvement	level of interest or involvement in the topic under consideration serves to stimulate discussion
	Self-enhancement	recommendations allow person to gain attention, show connoisseurship, suggest status, give the impression of possessing inside information, and assert superiority
	Concern for others	a genuine desire to help a friend or relative make a better purchase decision
	Message intrigue	entertainment resulting from talking about certain ads or selling appeals
	Dissonance reduction	reduces cognitive dissonance (doubts) following a major purchase decision
Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster (1998)	Altruism (positive WOM)	the act of doing something for others without anticipating any reward in return
	Product involvement	personal interest in the product, excitement resulting from product ownership and product use
	Self-enhancement	enhancing images among other consumers by projecting themselves as intelligent shoppers
	Helping the company	desire to help the company
	Altruism (negative WOM)	to prevent others from experiencing the problems they had encountered
	Anxiety reduction	easing anger, anxiety, and frustration
	Vengeance	to retaliate against the company associated with a negative consumption experience
	Advice seeking	obtaining advice on how to resolve problems

Source: Hennig-Thurau et al 2004

Only the continuation of research on the motivation of WOM engagement in the virtual environment brought about the effect of identifying not only psychological or social motivation, but also that connected with material interest. Inspired by the concept of various types of utility gained by people participating in virtual communication (focus-related utility, consumption utility, approval utility), developed by Balasubramanian & Mahajan (2001), Henninig-Thurau et al (2004) added the next two utility types (moderator-related utility and homeostasis utility) and confirmed through their research that the main reasons for sharing consumer experiences on the Internet were social benefits, economic incentives, concern for others and extraversion/self-enhancement. The result of the above-mentioned research was also the identification of four WOM provider segments according to the motivation criterion: self-interested helpers, multiple-motive, consumer advocates and true altruists (Henninig-Thurau et al 2004). Due to the subject of our study, the first of the above segments is worth noticing, because self-interested helpers follow economic incentives in their behaviour. The existence of such groups justifies the choice of the subject for our research.

In the initial stage, the WOM-focused studies addressed the issue of consumer behaviour. In the 1990s, to a larger extent, scientific interest turned to the strategic aspects of this phenomenon (see: Breazeale 2009). The main research streams in this field concerned customer acquisition, and maintaining customers and firm value. A separate area includes consumers' perceptions of WOM providers and their influence on purchasing decisions (see: Allsop et al 2007, Gershoff et al 2007).

Recommendations given by consumers to other people indicate WOM engagement, but cannot be identified with it. Word-of-mouth has a wider meaning, as it may not encourage purchasing in a direct way, having only a generally positive connotation about a company. It may also have a negative connotation (Nasr Bechwati & Nasr 2011). Recommendations are a special type of positive WOM.

Within the area of research focused on recommendations, two streams can be distinguished. The first one regards antecedents. Similarly to WOM, in general it addresses the question of motives inducing consumers to recommend products to other people on the basis of other intentions of action (e.g. the desire to complain to a firm, compliment a firm or warn against). Curren and Folkes (1987) manipulated dimensions of attribution, i.e., locus, controllability and stability, to understand experiences leading to recommendations (Nasr Bechwati & Nasr 2011). Johnson, Zinkhan and Ayala (1998) worked out the four-element model, consisting of the following predictors of willingness to recommend a company: affect, outcome, competency and courtesy. It was afterwards developed by Nasr Bechwati & Nasr (2011), who distinguished two groups of direct triggers of recommendations: two circumstantial triggers and two internal triggers. The first group was described as being approached and asked for advice and hearing a complaint about a currently used product or a problem needing a solution. The second one included extreme passion for the product/firm and self-interest and the desire to make money out of the recommendations. The latest research findings confirm that the material interest in particular is popular for opinion leaders who expect their recommendations to be materially appreciated, on condition that their image doesn't suffer from an unfavourable societal attitude (Shi & Wojnicki 2014). In view of this occurrence, it is justified to seek an answer, as we do in this paper, to the question about barriers, as coming from people being recipients of recommendations, one may run into the situation of trying to use recommendations.

The other stream of research focused on recommendations results from the first one; the confirmation of economic motivation in the case of people recommending products to others has enlarged the scope of research regarding referral management (Nasr Bechwati

& Nasr 2011) that consists of remuneration for recommendations made. The subjects of the study included, among others causations, facilitating the launch of such programs and acceptance of various forms of remuneration, i.e. rewards (for example vouchers, gifts, free minutes, miles) or price cuts (Biyalogorsky et al 2001). As for causations, it was proven that the willingness to give recommendations depends on the delight threshold level (Biyalogorsky et al 2001). The relations between the strength of a product brand and the strength of connection binding recommendation provider and recipient of such a message, as well as the question of possible benefit sharing between these two, were also addressed in the research. The findings showed that in the case of weak brands and weak connections, remunerating the recommendation provider is important, while in the opposite situation, profit-sharing works better (Ryu & Feick 2007). Another issue discussed in the literature was the optimal design of referral rewards in enhancing a company's profitability (Kornish & Li 2010, Xia et al 2011); furthermore it was proven that customers acquired through referral programs are 16% more valuable than those acquired through other means (Schmitt et al 2011). One of the latest studies focused on the question of perceiving recommendations by their providers (i.e. metaperception). Its findings show that referral programs can have a positive, neutral and negative effect on recommendation behaviour depending on the relative strengths of the negative indirect effect of incentives on recommendation behaviour via metaperception, and the positive effect of the perceived attractiveness of the incentives on recommendation behavior (Wirtz et al 2012).

On the basis of the above literature review, it can be stated that the academic research in marketing only recently has begun to examine rewarded referrals. In hitherto prevailing studies, to a large extent, attention was paid to the recognition of causations regarding recommendations in customers' behaviour and then to the development of programs supporting this activity. So far, the questions whether recommendation addressees accept the fact of remunerating its providers and which form of remuneration (products or money) are more acceptable in such situations haven't been answered. Since the efficiency of referral programs depends on this acceptance, the present study was designed to explore this area.

Research approach and methodology

In order to examine attitudes toward remunerating for recommendations among students, who often partake in activities connected with word-of-mouth, research was conducted via the computer-assisted web interview (CAWI) method.

The respondents included students of economic faculties in four Polish cities: Warsaw, Szczecin, Katowice and Olsztyn. The sample was selected in a purposive and convenient sampling approach. The survey covered 145 people, aged 21-35, including 44 percent men and 55 percent women.

The main objective of the research was to analyse/examine the acceptance of remuneration for recommendations, with special regard to the form of remuneration: products or money.

Three main research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Acceptance of remuneration for recommendations depends on the level of materialism.
H2: Acceptance of remuneration for recommendations depends on gender.

H3: Susceptibility to societal influence increases the willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations.

Each of the main hypotheses was extended by more detailed research hypotheses.
For H1 hypothesis:

H 1.1 Acceptance of remuneration for recommendations increases with the level of materialism.
H 1.2 Acceptance of material remuneration for recommendations increases with the level of materialism.
H 1.3 Acceptance of monetary remuneration for recommendations increases with the level of materialism.

For H2 hypothesis:
H 2.1 Men are more willing to accept remuneration for recommendations.
H 2.2 Men are more willing to accept monetary remuneration for recommendations.
H 2.3 Women are more willing to accept material remuneration for recommendations.

For H3 hypothesis:
H 3.1 Susceptibility to informative influence increases the willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations.
H 3.2 Susceptibility to normative influence increases the willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations.

The research questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first included questions examining ethical attitudes in business and willingness to recommend to acquaintances a product in return for remuneration, as well as measuring acceptance for remunerating with products or money for product recommendations. In the second part, two scales were adopted: the scale measuring the attitude toward materialism 3-item Material Values (MVS) Short form (Richins 2004) and 12-item Interpersonal Influence Scale (Bearden, Netenmeyer, Teel, 1989). In both parts of the questionnaire, the 5-item Likert scale was used (from 'I definitely disagree' to 'I definitely agree').

As with Richins and Dawson (1992), Richins (2004) views materialism as a consumer value that involves beliefs and attitudes so centrally held that they guide the conduct of one's life. MVS reflects possessions as defining a success dimension, an acquisition centrality dimension and acquisitions as a pursuit of happiness dimension.

Table 2. Material Values Short Form Scale

	Dimensions	Statements
1.	Success	I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.
2.	Acquisition Centrality	I like a lot of luxury in my life.
3.	Happiness	I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.

Source: Richins 2004

The construct of the Interpersonal Influence Scale is defined as the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions, and/or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others or seeking information from others (Bearden et al. 1989, p.474). That is, the construct is multidimensional in that both normative influences (e.g. value expressive and utilitarian) and informational influences are considered (e.g. Burnkrant and Cousineau 1975, Deutsch and Gerard 1955).

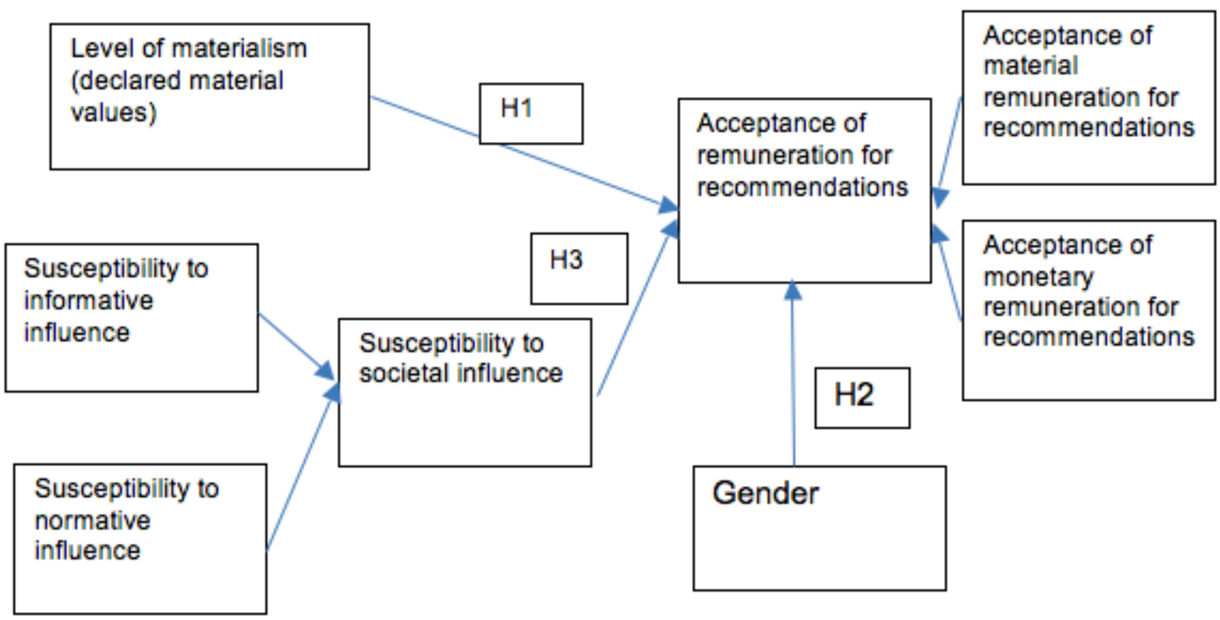
Table 3 Interpersonal Influence Scale: Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence

	Influence dimension	Statements
1.	informational	I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class.
2.	normative	If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.
3.	normative	It is important that others like the products and brands I buy.
4.	informational	To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using.
5.	normative	I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my friends approve of them.
6.	normative	I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase.
7.	informational	If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.
8.	normative	When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think others will approve of.
9.	normative	I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others.
10.	informational	I frequently gather information from friends or family about a product before I buy.
11.	normative	If other people can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.
12.	normative	I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase.

Source: Bearden et al. 1989

The third part of the questionnaire included respondents' data (age, gender, faculty, place of residence).

Chart 1. Research model



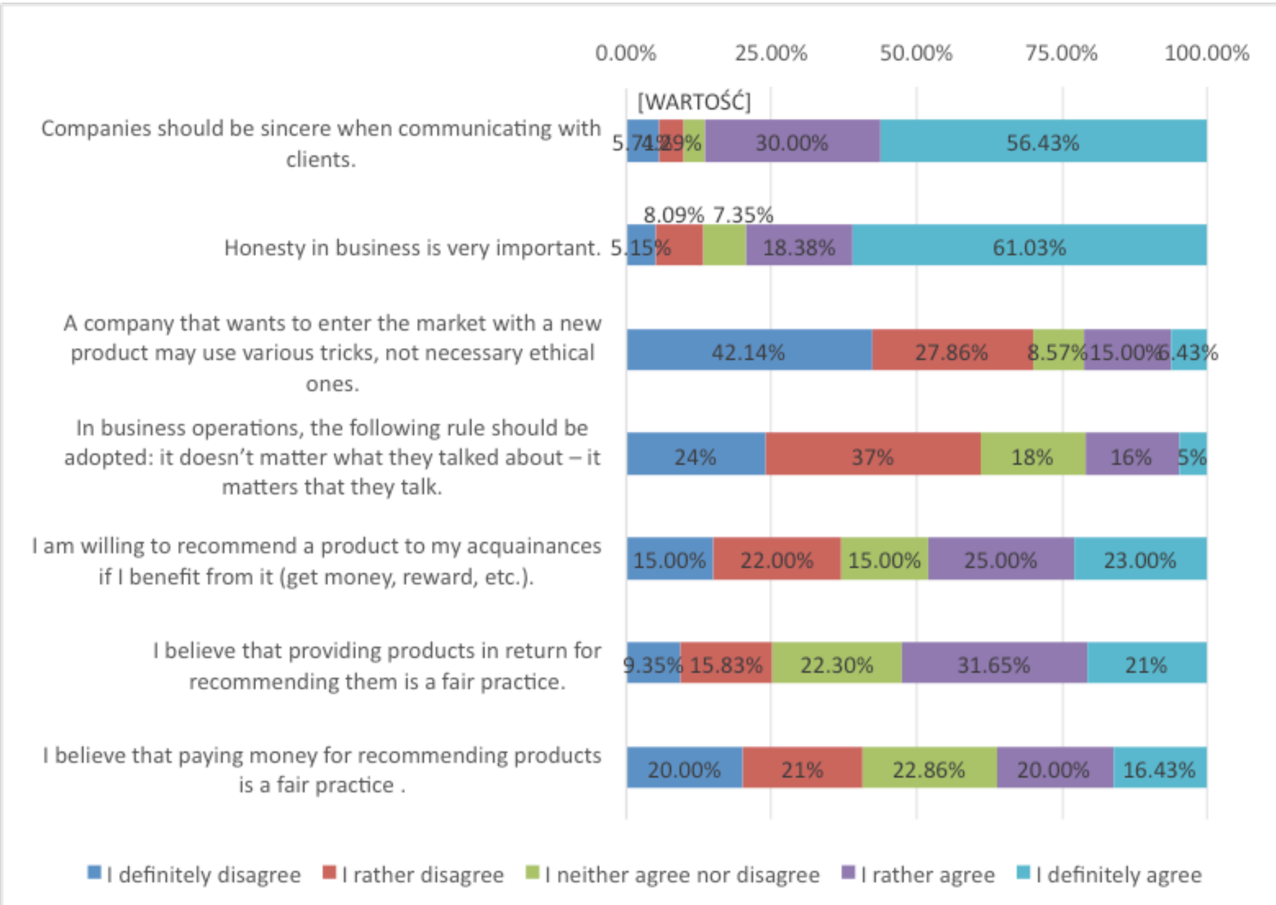
Findings and conclusions

In general, the definite majority of students participating in the survey believe that companies should be sincere when communicating with their clients (86.43 percent), and honesty in business is very important (79.41 percent). Additionally, 70 percent of respondents don't approve of unethical methods being used during the launch of new products to the market, and 61 percent disagree with the opinion that it doesn't matter how a company is talked about. If the statements don't refer directly to respondents, they basically don't have any problems with indicating what is ethical behaviour and what is not – they are quite concordant on this issue.

Asked openly about their willingness to recommend products in return for remuneration, they no longer agree. 48 percent of respondents declare their willingness to recommend a product for remuneration, while 37 percent wouldn't be willing to do so and 15 percent have no opinion about it. Material remuneration is perceived to be a more honest solution (52.65 percent definitely and rather agree with the statement: 'I believe that providing products in return for recommending them is a fair practice.') than monetary reward (only 36.43 percent agree definitely and rather with the statement: 'I believe that paying money for recommending products is a fair practice.').

The respondents' willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations against their general ethical attitudes is presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2 Willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations vs. general ethical attitude



The verification of the H 1 hypothesis was possible thanks to the application of the MVS scale. The basic scale values accomplished/acquired by the authors of this paper were similar to values obtained by the author of the scale (Richins 2004).

Mean and standard deviations (SD) were reported as follows for the 3-item scale:

	Richins 2004	Research
Mean	2,86	2,82
SD	1,19	1,64

In order to examine relationships between the acceptance of remuneration for recommendations and materialism, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated. The MSV scale values for each respondent were summed up.
The correlation coefficient values are presented in Table 3.

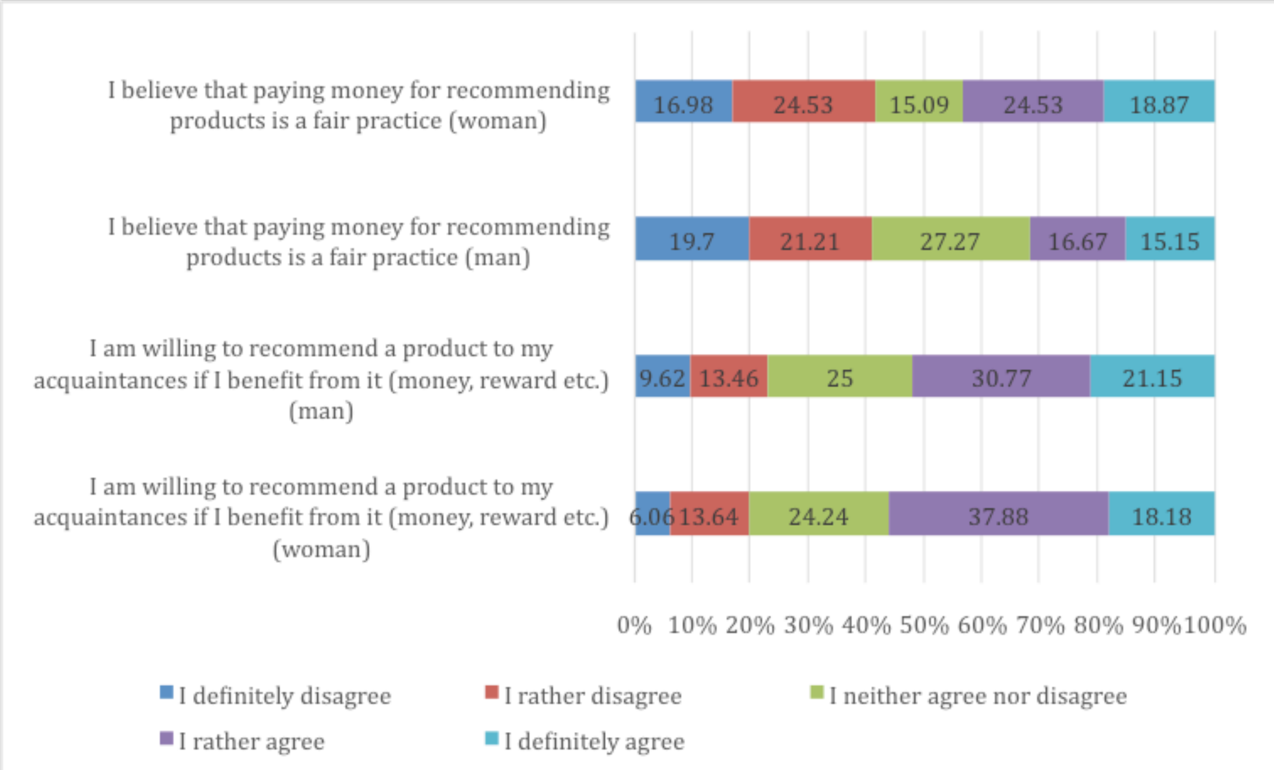
Table 3 The correlation coefficient values

Statements	Material Values
I am willing to recommend a product to my acquaintances if I benefit from it.	r=0,29 p<0,05
I believe that providing products in return for recommending them is a fair practice.	r=0,28 p<0,05
I believe that paying money for recommending products is a fair practice.	r=0,22 p<0,05

As was expected, the authors of this paper found confirmation of the existing relationship between the material values professed by respondents and the acceptance for obtaining remuneration for recommendations, regardless if it were money or product. Thus H 1.1, H 1.2 and H 1.3 hypotheses were positively verified, with the conclusion that the acceptance of remunerating for recommendations depended on the materialism level.

In order to examine the influence of gender on the acceptance of remunerating for recommendations, respondents' particular answers were analysed according to gender.
Results are presented in the Chart (below).

Chart 3. Influence of gender on the acceptance of remunerating for recommendation



As expected, men are more willing to accept remuneration for recommendations, although their preponderance is slight (50 percent of men and 44 percent of women definitely and rather agree with the statement 'I am willing to recommend a product to my acquaintances if I benefit from i.t'). Rewarding with products in return for recommendations is perceived to be more honest by women (56 percent) than men (51 percent), while monetary remuneration is perceived to be more honest by males (42 percent) than females (31 percent). As much as 27 percent of women don't have an opinion about paying money for product recommendations. Only the difference observed in perception of monetary remuneration for recommendations is statistically meaningful.

Having analysed the data, the H 2.2 hypothesis can be confirmed. Men are more willing to accept monetary reward for recommendations; however, there are no reasons for accepting the following hypotheses:

H 2.1 Men are more willing to accept remuneration for recommendations.
H 2.3 Women are more willing to accept material remuneration for recommendations.
Thus, the H2 hypothesis can be confirmed only in part – acceptance of monetary remuneration for recommendations depends on gender.

The respondents' susceptibility to societal influence, divided into normative and informative influence, was measured with the use of the Interpersonal Influence scale. The relationship between susceptibility to societal influence and acceptance of remuneration for recommendations was measured using the Pearson's correlation coefficient (scale values for particular respondents were added up). The results are presented in the Table 4 (below).

Table 4 The relationship between susceptibility to societal influence and acceptance of remuneration for recommendations.

	Interpersonal Influence	Informational	Normative
mean	31,56	13,31	18,44
SD	9,26	3,58	7,33
I am willing to recommend a product to my acquaintances if I benefit from it.	r=0,33	r=0,18	r=0,28
I believe that providing products in return for recommending them is a fair practice.	r=0,08	r=-0,01	r=0,05
I believe that paying money for recommending products is a fair practice.	r=0,07	r=0,07	r=0,04

Having analysed the obtained data, it can be concluded that there are no reasons for accepting the H 3.1 hypothesis (*Susceptibility to informative influence increases the willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations.*), because the value of the correlation coefficient is very low.

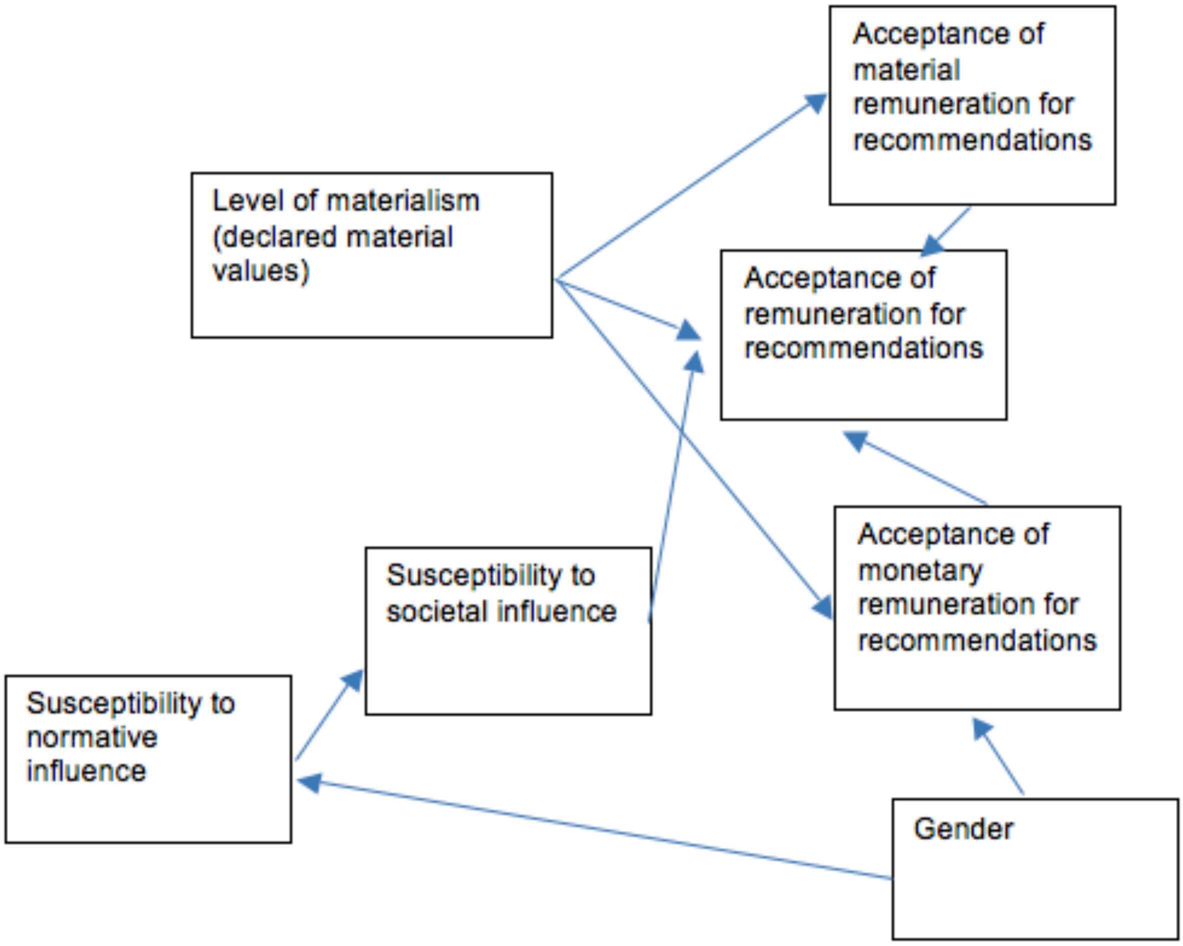
The last H 3.2 hypothesis (*Susceptibility to normative influence increases the willingness to accept remuneration.*) can be accepted.

As the correlation coefficient for the summed value of indicators reflecting susceptibility to societal influence reached 0,33, despite the lack of positive verification of the H 3.1 hypothesis, the main hypothesis – H3 (*Susceptibility to societal influence increases the willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations.*) can be considered proven.

On the basis of additional analyses, it was stated that there is a statistically meaningful relationship between susceptibility to societal normative influence and gender. The male respondents demonstrated higher susceptibility to societal normative influence. According to Cialdini, the group's susceptibility to normative influence grows together with our belief that we are not very knowledgeable about certain issues. The results obtained from the survey can be associated with the conviction that the shopping world is dominated by women, where men don't feel very self-confident.

Concluding, out of three presented main hypotheses, two were verified positively in full, proving that acceptance of remuneration for recommendations depended on the materialism level, and that the susceptibility to societal influence increased the willingness to accept remuneration for recommendations. The second hypothesis H2 was accepted in part with modification of its content – the acceptance of monetary remuneration for recommendations depended on gender. No correlation was found between gender and acceptance for giving products in return for recommendation.

Chart 4. Verified model of relationships



Limitations and further research

The main limitation of the conducted research is first the sampling method. The convenient approach to sampling that was accepted for this research doesn't allow for generalization of results beyond the population of respondents. The choice of this method was, however, dictated by limitations - in terms of both time and cost. The quality of the conducted research was ensured by data triangulation (the sample was composed of business school students from four Polish cities of various sizes and geographical location). It should be mentioned, however, that business school students constitute a specific group that may be guided to a larger extent by mercantile values. It would be interesting from a cognitive perspective to compare declarations made by students of various faculties, particularly technological, medical and humanistic ones. It would be also worth consideration to extend the research model by verifying the relationship between acceptance of remuneration for recommendations and the way of passing such recommendations (online vs. online), status of research subjects (recommendation provider or recipient) and nature of relationship between recommendation providers and recipients (close or distant relationship).

The conducted research can be treated as the initial test of the presented model of relationships.

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