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Behaviour of young consumers and the seasonality of ice cream consumption

JEL Codes: M31, M37

Keywords: young consumers, generation Z, consumption of ice cream, seasonality, surveys

Summary. There have been quite intensive development of the ice cream market in recent years in Poland, especially of impulse ice cream. The impulse ice-cream market is developing, among others, thanks to young consumers who are increasingly consuming these products and have an impact on the seasonality of the market. In addition, in Poland, on the one hand, there is a belief in seasonality in the consumption of ice cream, and on the other hand the desire to recognize ice cream as a year-round product. Ice cream advertisements in Polish media appear mainly from May to July, in the remaining months there are no such ads. For the above reasons, it was decided to conduct research in the group of young consumers (Generation Z) on the consumption of ice cream and the impact of advertising on their consumer behaviour.

Introduction

The consumption of ice cream in Poland is seasonal and significantly increases during the summer months. Annual sales largely depends on weather conditions. Hot summer makes sales increases of several percent. On average, Poles consume 4–5 litres of ice cream per year. In much colder countries, i.e. Sweden, Finland or Norway, approx. three times more (Palka, 2015, p. 308–319). The impulse ice creams are becoming increasingly popular on the ice cream market. This is due

to the activity of young consumers in this market, who choose from a wide range of this type of ice cream. This group of ice cream consumers are mostly young people, who make the purchase decisions spontaneously. Due to the still prevailing, including in this market segment, very strong seasonality, it was decided to conduct surveys, thanks to which it was possible to verify the thesis that the consumption of ice cream is largely dependent on advertising. The research was conducted in a group of 322 people aged 16–24, so called Early Young Adults. They were gymnasium students (G), lyceum students (L) and students (S), Trójmiasto residents (tab. 1). Intentional selection of the sample was used, the people who were consuming ice cream and ice-cream shopping independently.

Table 1

Characteristics of the surveyed group of young consumers

Sex	Place of living	Age	Status
W: 187 79G; 44L; 64S)	Town: 314 (131G; 76L; 107S)	till 15 y.o.: 37 (G)	Gymnasium student: 136
M: 135 (57G; 32L; 46S)	Suburbia: 8 (5G; 3S)	16–25 y.o.: 175 (99G; 76L)	Lyceum student: 76
		26–35 y.o.: 110 (S)	Non-working student: 25
			Working student: 85

G – gymnasium student, L – lyceum student, S – student

Source: own elaboration.

The research material consisted of original questionnaires, containing 9 questions about the respondent's attitude to TV and internet advertising and his behaviour on the impulse ice market. On the basis of the conducted research, it was found that young consumers watch television very rarely or never and use the internet very often. They have claimed that advertising does not affect their buying behaviour, and if it is, then very seldom. The most popular brand of impulse ice cream is Magnum. The other three popular impulse ice creams among the youth of the Trójmiasto are Kaktus, Calipso and Big Milk.

Review of the literature

The ice cream market in Poland has been growing more and more dynamically lately. This development depends both on the offer of manufacturers and the attitudes of consumers (Palka, 2017b, p. 53–62). Impulse ice creams are more and more popular and the consumption of this kind of ice cream will grow. The biggest advantage of this ice cream is that they are ready for consumption and do not require the preparation or portioning. Their goal is to meet the temporary needs of the consumer and they fulfil this function perfectly. The availability of these

ice creams is great, because one can buy them almost anywhere, even in the newsstand. That is why they are so popular (Palka, 2017a, p. 86–93).

Youth is a social group that has reached adolescence but is still under the care of parents or carers. The youthful age is characterized by features that are crucial for further stages, which allow the evolution of the young person's character and shaping their own views or behaviours. It is also a period of rebellion and the need to express sometimes extreme nonconformity, manifesting itself in a desire to belong to some subculture, organization (Zięba, 2010, p. 271–279).

According to the Central Statistical Office, the number of residents in Poland is over 38.4 million women and men. Most people are between 30 and 40 years old, and the least is those over seventy. When analysing data in terms of the number of generations, we have the largest representatives of the Z generation (8.983 million and 23.4% of the Polish population) and Y (22.8%) in the society. These are generations of internet users, the most active on social media platforms. More and more people use social networking sites from morning to night and this number will grow. The cause is generational change. Almost 73% of our society uses the internet (*Szokujący...*, 2018).

The profile of a young consumer is changing: he/she is much more dynamic in accepting market realities and trying to actively participate in the market. Young people are an important part of every society and have great financial potential. For a long time they were not noticed by producers and acted as passive participants in market processes (Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, 2014, p. 50–59; Grzybowska-Brzezińska, 2010, p. 195–204).

The specificity of the adolescence period is limiting the influence of parents and the family environment on youth behaviour in general, including purchasing behaviour. The peer group is becoming more and more important; the individual features are clearly visible, including, inter alia, the degree of innovation, expressed in the interest of novelties and time necessary to demonstrate a specific response. Young people have their own financial resources, choices and purchases food (Jeżewska-Zychowicz, 2011, p. 816–819).

Advertising has been accompanying the modern consumer for many years, on various occasions and has a big influence on his behaviour, shapes patterns and attitudes. In today's world, one of the main tasks of advertising is shaping the awareness of the existence of a product or brand, as well as creating consumer needs. Advertising is still developing, evolving, going through the next phases of its existence. Along with the development of the first civilizations, the first forms of advertising also began to shape. First commercials occurred in ancient Babylon, where an earthenware plate with engraved remarks about the seller has been found. In Greece, on the other hand, there was a special institution of the herald who sang songs of praise about carried cargo. In ancient times, advertising took

the form of paintings, inscriptions on the walls, as well as signboards. The commercial boom turned out after the invention of printing by Gutenberg. The first newspapers began to appear, and in them the first press advertisements. With the development of civilization, new media began to appear, that is: radio, television, cinema, internet. The development of new media allowed the advertising to increase the range of impact, make the message more attractive, and also become a publicly available promotional measure. Currently, online advertising is becoming more and more important. Its most important features are interactivity and global reach (Rybowska, 2016, p. 385–394; Szopiński, 2010, p. 133–144).

Advertising is one of the tools that serves the company to present its offer and convince the customer that the product is the best and worthy of choice. Nowadays, advertising and the information on products and brands presented in it, bombard us from every direction. We can see them everywhere, at bus stops, cars, buildings, signs by the road, buses and sports fields. Every day we find them in internet mail, we watch on television, the internet, newspapers, we hear in radio stations. Focusing on more information that comes to us from the world seems impossible. The role of advertising is to attract attention and increase brand awareness; advertising affects the recipient even before making a purchase and has a weak impact in comparison to elements such as price. Another impact of advertising is the so-called “Pushing”: it takes place after purchase and relies on weak influence on the recipient, to encourage him to re-purchase the product of the given brand (Roszkowski, 2009, p. 115–120).

In Poland, TV advertising reaches 98% of citizens. However, such an advertising message in recent years has caused a lot of controversies and reservations regarding the submission of false data, advertising forbidden products, etc. The research of the impact of advertising on consumer behaviour showed that their attitude to advertising messages was the result of perception, assessment and trust of information content. It is important that the last years are characterized by a decrease in the trust in advertising information. An additional factor deforming the obtained results is a kind of unwillingness to admit being vulnerable to the impact of advertising. Also, the recipients of television programs are not satisfied with the broadcasting ads in the time of watched programs. Entrepreneurs as well as its recipients are interested in online advertising, due to the precise definition of the recipient and quick access to it, and getting feedback from internet users, among them particularly scientists, officials, students, professionals and youth. An important limitation of online advertising is the ability to reach only people who use the internet. In Poland, the population of internet users is made up mostly of young people and middle-aged people, while seniors constitute a negligible part of them (Nowacki, 2010, p. 443–454; Rybowska, 2016, p. 385–394).

Young people are an important and a separate part of every society. They are special participants of the market, because – unlike adults – they feel the needs, perceive the world, understand the messages addressed to them differently, have different value systems, ways of acting. Their full participation in the market is limited by numerous barriers, first of all legal conditions, age, social influences, means of consumption implementation, level of market education, understanding of market functioning mechanisms or access to information. Today's young consumers represent significant purchasing and decision-making power, because they have more and more financial resources, which they manage according to their own needs and have a significant impact on purchasing decisions taken in the family. They take on different roles – from passive shopping participants, through initiators, informers, advisers, to decision makers. Product innovation and modernity are very important factors when making decisions by young people. Expenditures on food products, mainly for drinks, sweets and snacks, also have a significant share in the expenditure priority (Adamczyk, 2014, p. 5–16; Newerli-Guz, 2010, p. 223–229).

Methodology of the research

The study used the results of a survey conducted in 2018 on a group of 322 people. The research material were original questionnaires. The questionnaire was composed of two parts: the first one being a collection of 8 questions regarding television and internet advertising, the ratio of respondents to these advertisements and consumption of ice cream; the second part of the questionnaire was the so-called a metric, or sociodemographic characteristics of the consumer. The results were elaborated using Microsoft Excel 2010. 187 women and 135 men took part in the survey. The population of the respondents was represented by people aged 16-25. The respondents were gymnasium students (136 people), lyceum students (76 people) and students (110 people), had primary or secondary education, living in large cities or suburbia.

Research results

It is assumed, that young people spend too much time in front of TV set (fig. 1). According to conducted surveys it must be disputed, because the respondents watch television rarely, only 18% of youth watch television often or very often. They spend much more time on internet. About 55% of the respondents used internet often or very often, no one answered, that never used the internet, but there were people who never watched television. That is typical for generation Z, also called the internet generation.

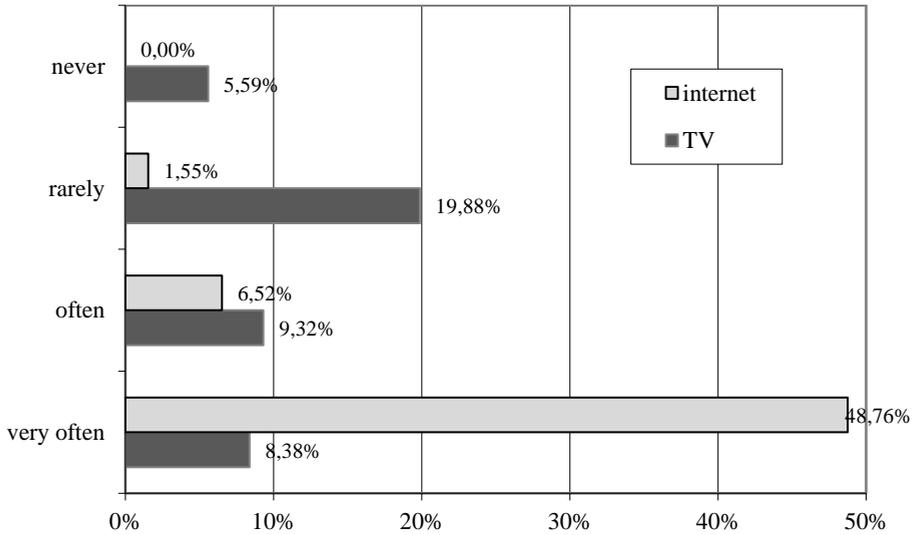


Figure 1. How often do you use these mass media (total answers)?

Source: own elaboration.

The respondents were asked if the advertising influences their choices during shopping (fig.2). Almost 75% admitted, that it does, but only 10% given the answer “yes, often”. The rest of asked respondents claimed that it influenced only once or rarely. More than 25% stated that they were never influenced by advertisement.

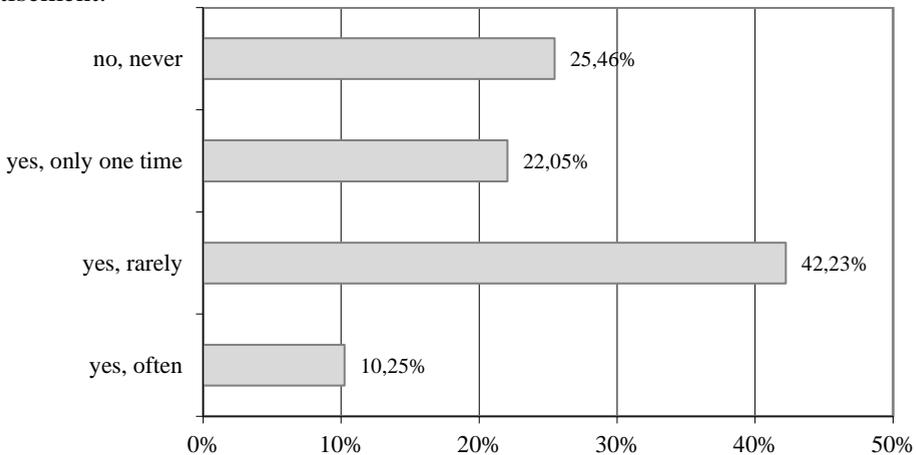


Figure 2. Does advertising influence your choices while shopping (total answers)?

Source: own elaboration.

Ice creams in Poland are most popular at summer, from April to September. This is mostly due to eating habits, advertisements and so called tradition. Ice cream were advertised as a product for refreshment during hot summer. They were not available during winter for a very long time. Polish producers of frozen foods made ice cream for summer and frozen fruits and vegetables for winter. The respondents asked about their observations about the season for ice cream ads in Poland answered that they could see such ads in spring and summer (tab. 2). Some students claimed that such ads are in television all year but these usually were respondents, who didn't watch TV at all.

Table 2

In what season of the year does ice cream TV advertisement occur? (in %)

	Gymnasium	Lyceum	Studies
Summer	100,00	96,05	100,00
Spring	100,00	96,05	100,00
All year	8,09	9,21	13,64
Winter	0,00	0,00	0,00
Autumn	0,00	0,00	0,00
There are no such ads	0,00	3,95	0,00

Source: own elaboration.

Ice cream ads, according to the respondents, occur in the internet during summer, but also during other seasons of the year (tab. 3). That would be a kind of novelty in Poland, proving that ice cream companies have found a great way to reach young consumers. On the other hand there were respondents, mostly among lyceum students, that stated there were no ice cream ads in the internet.

Table 3

In what season of the year does an ice cream internet advertisement occur? (in %)

	Gymnasium	Lyceum	Studies
Summer	93,38	72,37	95,45
Spring	3,68	0,00	2,72
All year	93,38	72,37	95,45
Winter	0,00	0,00	0,00
Autumn	12,5	2,63	20,91
There are no such ads	6,62	27,63	4,55

Source: own elaboration.

Over 55% of respondents answered, that ice cream advertisement didn't influence their choice while shopping ice cream (fig. 3). The rest admitted that ads

influenced their purchase decision, often, rarely or only once. There are some people who follow the ads to get knowledge about novelties and they treated them as an encouragement to trying them.

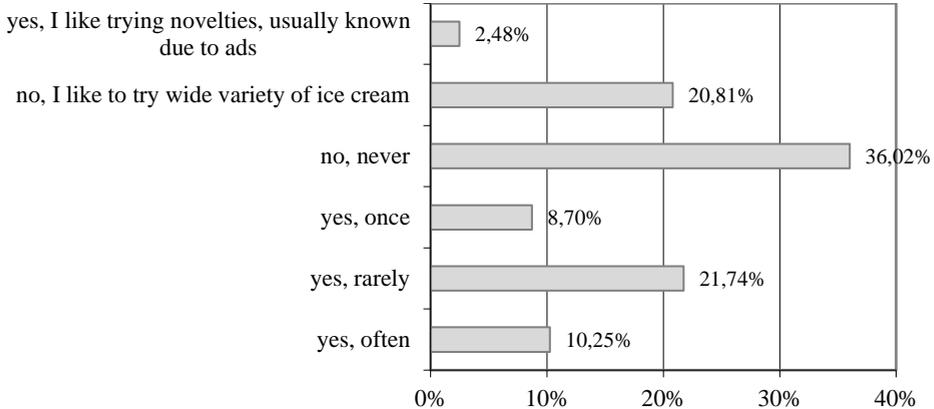


Figure 3. Does an ice cream advertisement influence your choice while shopping ice cream (total)?

Source: own elaboration.

One of the important elements of consumer behaviour is choosing from the available brands of a given product. The respondents were asked to choose one of the given ice cream brands and to motivate their choice (tab. 4).

Table 4

Imagine the situation: You want to buy an ice cream, there are several such products available in the store. Which product will you choose? (in %)

	Total	Gymnasium	Lyceum	Studies
Calypso	15,84	8,09	9,21	30,00
Big Milk	13,66	15,44	23,68	4,55
Cornetto	2,48	2,21	3,95	1,81
Grand	1,55	0,74	5,26	0
Kaktus	18,94	19,12	18,42	19,09
Magnum	39,13	45,59	32,89	35,45
Jeżyki	0,93	0,74	0,00	1,81
Other	7,45	8,09	6,58	7,27

Source: own elaboration.

The choice of Magnum ice cream by a large group of young consumers was motivated by the statements that the ice cream are “tasty”, “the best”, “have good

chocolate”. The respondents also claimed that they buy Magnum ice cream because they can “afford them”, meanwhile the material situation of young people does not have to be as good as they think. Young people can make such choices also wanting to impress their peers and join the group. Probably such behaviours concern only a part of the respondents, because many people chose from the proposed brands much cheaper products motivating this choice with “brand attachment”, “family tradition”, “attractive offer” and “low price”. According to Jaska (2015, p. 120–130) buying behaviour is divided among others into rational and irrational ones. The consumer's rational behaviour is based on the assumption that the given unit will achieve the maximum level of satisfaction with the budget constraint. The behaviour of consumers taking part in the survey, choosing cheaper, but equally tasty ice cream can be included here. In turn, the irrational behaviour of the consumer is contrary to his interest and he does not count on the wealth of his budget. The consumer is guided by imitation, impulse and motives inherent in the subconscious, which he usually does not realize. Among the young consumers of the Z generation, you can also notice such behaviour.

According to previous research, the form of ice cream on a stick is not the most comfortable in the opinion of the respondents, but the most popular brand of impulse ice cream is still Magnum ice cream, which types are changed every year, and the range increases (Palka, 2017a, p. 86–93).

Respondents were asked when (in what season) they buy ice cream (fig. 4). All of them answered that in spring and summer, but what was much more interesting, the respondents also declared buying ice cream throughout the year, with 75% of lyceum students making such purchases.

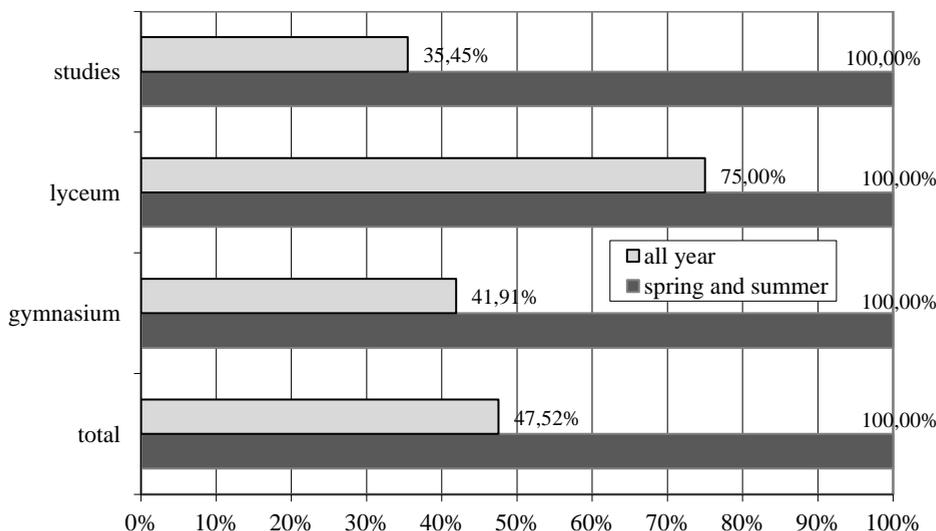


Figure 4. In what season of the year do you usually buy ice cream?

Source: own elaboration.

Table 5 shows places and circumstances that respondent choose most often. According to this data, generation Z eat ice cream in ice cream shop, in a café, with friends or family, but very often alone. They buy ice cream in the estate shop or supermarket and don't do it at home themselves.

Table 5

Where / under what circumstances do you eat ice cream most often ? (in %)

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
In an ice cream shop	4,07	2,79	2,20	0,53	0,40
In the cafe	1,11	1,86	3,32	2,50	0,90
In the restaurant	0,37	0,96	2,42	4,01	2,24
In the supermarket	2,48	3,57	1,93	1,09	0,93
In the hypermarket	2,11	3,39	2,20	1,61	0,68
In the estate shop	3,66	3,14	1,24	0,84	1,02
I'm doing home myself	0,16	0,56	1,09	0,96	7,24
When I'm with my family	2,11	3,58	3,04	0,56	4,04
When I'm with friends	3,35	4,10	1,49	0,59	0,47
When I'm alone	2,61	2,79	2,36	1,43	0,81

Source: own elaboration.

Conclusion

On the basis of the conducted research, it can be concluded that young consumers rarely make purchases under the influence of advertising, and if they do, they do it premeditatedly. Most often, an advertisement is a source of knowledge about the product and an incentive to try. This is the type of function that ads perform, which is why young consumers' conviction about their resistance to advertising content is not real. According to the fact that young consumers spend a lot of time on the internet, where they watch advertisements of various products, including ice cream, it can be stated that the increase in interest in ice cream throughout the year results from ice cream advertisements, which are available there all year round. The most popular ice cream among young people is Magnum, although this product is not targeted at them. Magnum ice cream belongs to the luxury brands of ice cream, so that their popularity among young people may indicate their desires for "a little luxury", good brand, high quality. On the other hand, the Kaktus ice cream is also popular in this group of consumers, which are aimed at younger consumers and children. Their popularity among high school students and students may indicate their need to "be a child".

The results of survey can provide information feedback to manufacturers of ice cream, in the approach to advertising ice cream, which affects their consumption. Advertising ice cream in various media throughout the year may increase the consumption of ice cream in Poland, which is what many manufacturers want.

As the population of this study consisted of young consumers from Trójmiasto, the results cannot be generalised for all consumers or all ages. Performing the study on a large sample of consumers of all ages would be useful. Instrument validation for all ages of consumers through more testing and observational studies is needed.

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Wpływ reklamy na sezonowość spożycia lodów przez młodych konsumentów

Słowa kluczowe: młodzi konsumenci, pokolenie Z, spożycie lodów, sezonowość, badania ankietowe

Streszczenie. W Polsce w ostatnich latach następuje dość intensywny rozwój rynku lodów, szczególnie impulsowych. Rynek ten rozwija się m.in. dzięki młodym konsumentom, którzy coraz częściej spożywają te produkty, co ma wpływ na sezonowość rynku. Ponadto w Polsce z jednej strony panuje przekonanie o sezonowości spożywania lodów, a z drugiej dążenie do uznania ich za produkt całoroczny. Reklamy lodów w mediach pojawiają się głównie od maja do lipca, w pozostałych miesiącach takich reklam nie ma. Z powyższych względów postanowiono przeprowadzić badania w grupie młodych konsumentów (pokolenie Z) na temat spożycia lodów i wpływu reklamy na ich zachowania konsumenckie.

Translated by Agnieszka Palka

Cytowanie

Palka, A. (2018). Behaviour of young consumers and the seasonality of ice cream consumption. *Marketing i Zarządzanie*, 3 (53), 151–162. DOI: 10.18276/miz.2018.53-14.